The Threshold

by virginea

Summary

A decade after the Coronation of King Brandon I, Westeros couldn't find its way out of chaos and instead ended up in a new civil war, while the infamous King remains confined in the Red Keep, amongst the ruins of the city.

Now its people flee in masses to the eastern continent, where lies on their last hope: Daenerys Targaryen, Queen of the restored Valyria and protector of Essos.

Notes

First of all, I am not a native English speaker. So if you find some grammar mistakes or incoherent sentences, please point it out so I can fix it. Any constructive criticism in regards
to this will be well received. Basically, I'm using Spanish punctuation use.

See the end of the work for more notes.
PART ONE: A SONG OF ICE - How Far the Dream Was (Jon)

Chapter Summary

After ten years, Jon and Daenerys reunite.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 1: How Far The Dream Was

The Great Keep, Realm of Valyria – 315 A.C

He shouldn't have done what he did. He shouldn't have done many things he did anyway. However, as beyond reckless and stupid it was, the urge had possessed him the moment he saw her figure from his hiding place in the rose bushes that surrounded the ramparts of the Great Keep. Years had passed by but not his imperative need to have one more moment with her. He just wanted one more time to explain himself, even if it meant having to face the punishment of her anger.

He has dreamed of this reunion, many times, even more after learning about her return. And in those dreams, she would look at him with the same sadness and despair, begging him to not take her life away. He wanted and would try to reach her and implore for her forgiveness, but in her place he would always find ashes, snow, and blood. A reminder of a presence lost long ago.

That is why he couldn't be wiser when he finally got the opportunity. He had to take it.

It was a foolish move that could have cost not only his own life, as the lives of everyone who depended on her goodwill.

Now, sitting in a dark corner in the depths of the dungeons of her castle, he felt like that man from his distant past, begging whoever god that have brought him back to return him to his place amongst the dead, where he might see her again. But his pleas weren't heard, at least not in the way he would have thought.

Nothing turned out as he expected, not even in his most pessimistic expectations.

The sound of a door opening and steps approaching irrupted in the silence, and he lifted his stare without much encouragement, believing it to be the guard's shift change.

As soon as he saw the platinum hair that contrasted with the darkness of the room he rose to his feet in a slight movement, facing those frozen eyes of her.

It was the very same expression of contempt she gave him long ago but instead of standing fierce and resolved, he couldn't recognize what feelings were hiding under her gaze.

For some time they stood there, looking at each other in utter contemplation, a strange oddity he hadn't felt previously. Both had death impregnated on them, but in her, it looked different.

"Dany ..." he began to say but was interrupted by his inability to produce a coherent sentence.
She tilted her head with curiosity in her countenance.

"Do you remember what I told you the first time you called me that?" She asked, in a monotonous way.

Of course, Jon remembered that only her brother and himself had called her that way. The only two members of her family she'd known, and the two who'd betrayed her. He understood that it was best to not address her informally. They were strangers again.

"There are no words that could express what I would like to tell you," he started again.

She frowned, less concerned than before like if he hadn’t surprised her at all.

"Then say nothing," she replied almost like an order.

She crossed the small room to lean against one of the walls, her hands folded in front of her. It was hard getting used to see her dressed in armor, but the stories telled she was no longer a queen of elegant dresses and intricate hairstyles.

Seeing her at all was considered an achievement. Since the restoration of Valyria, finding her in the same location for more than few moons was out of chance. With her dragons she appeared from time to time, taking cities from tyrants and delivering them to slaves or peasants, only to disappear suddenly.

Some had said it was because her appearance became hard to appreciate, but he knew it had more to do with the reason he, after being brought back, couldn't felt so comfortable anymore.

He heard her sigh heavily.

"You can't kill me again," she stated.

He felt puzzled.

"I..." he began to defend himself. "I didn't want to hurt you, I came unarmed"

"There are many ways to attack someone, even unarmed," she said.

“I never want to hurt you again," he confesses wholeheartedly. "I just wanted to reach you”.

“To reach me?"

She was getting more confused as if she couldn’t think better of him.

“I wanted to talk. They wouldn't let me get to you any other way”

And it was true. From the moment they sailed from White Harbor, Tyrion and Sansa had been harassing him, assuring that he would not show himself so freely. The others also wanted him away, but he never changed his mind.

"Don't do it again,” she asked moving slowly closer, allowing her face to be observed from little distance. “Reassuring the Common Council that you are not a threat is not getting easier"
He had heard of them, and all the hate that Essos had accumulated against the people who had dishonored their true protector.

"Why?" he questioned.

She raised an eyebrow, annoyed "Because you all continue giving them reasons to dislike you..."

“No,” he interrupted her “I want to know why I'm still alive. Why do you keep sparing my life?”

It hadn't sounded as he had wanted, but it actually was his main worry.

She looked down at a point in the ground, almost rueing over his questioning.

“When Jorah betrayed me,” she replied, being stopped by the sudden memory of her loyal companion. Jon could notice how it hurt her to speak about him, but she continued. “I was unable to forgive him, so I exiled him with a warning to never come back to my city, alive or dead.

A new sentiment appeared in her pale face, one he was waiting to see before: anger. But that anger was directed towards herself, for now.

“However, he returned, multiple times, while I kept exiling him until one day I was the one asking him to come back”

He felt baffled. What she was trying to say?

“Did you wanted me to come to you?” he concluded, not really sure about it.

"No,” she denied, “I think Jorah kept coming back because he believed in himself,” she walked closer to the bars, and he wanted to approach but restrained himself from doing so “Only people who believe in their value can return.”

It was an odd statement, but it confirmed to him she was lucid.

“So you are aware of what happened in King’s Landing? Do you understand why I did it? ” He asked the letter as if it was a plea.

Her anger disappeared in an incredulous grin, “That's what you expecting from me, then?” she presumed “After all this time, you are still a naive man”

She walked away, turning her back on him.

He felt disappointed but rapidly understood that she doesn't owe him any reasons. He was the one who came all this way to explain himself.

“King’s Landing was a mistake, yes,” she admitted, taking him aback before he could start with his explanation. “But so were Cersei, Tyrion, Varys, the North, Westeros… and you.”

He swallowed hard and closed his eyes. “I’d regretted it since the moment it happened…”

“It didn't just happen. You made it happen”

“Because I was afraid of you,” He said, finally stepping forward and standing a few inches apart of
her, separated only by the bars.

“Afraid of what exactly?” She inquired turning away and looking with terrible contemplation “of my rage? Of my love? Of what I am after all?”

“I was afraid of you” he repeated, graceless.

She withdrew her long gaze, blinking tiredly in a gesture that for a moment transported him to the past.

“To being a scared man with no regard for his own life, you have come quite far” she stated, shaking his head “You are not a coward. You are anything but a coward. You are simply weak”

He trembled. A different kind of anguish bursting in his chest and making him go distant.

“It does not matter, you were right and we were wrong. Your new world is better than our old one, and the people I tried to save ended up dead in famine, disease or war” he walked backward and let himself fall in the solitary bed. ”Nothing truly matters at the end”

“You sound extremely disappointed with it,” she said with a bitter smile “how is her name? The wildling girl that warms your bed now?

He suddenly reacted. How did she know?

“Don’t be afraid, mad man, I have no intentions to hurt her nor your sister” she assured him. “I almost did it some time ago, when I saw all of you in the flames”

The flames. He had suspected that her new alliance with the servants of the red god had strengthened her. Would she be one of them now?

“I waited for you…” he wanted to confess what she might already know but wouldn’t let him say. She wasn’t consenting to anything.

“No, you were waiting for death and I will not give you that.”

It was like she was touching with her own hands some of the worst thoughts in his mind, and it reminded him of Tyrion’s words that day. She has all the right to be angry, to wanting to hurt him but something about him was avoiding that response of her.

“She’s good. She’s more than I deserved,”

“…and you tried to be happy with her but you couldn’t,” she said, stealing his words from him "I start to believe that you don’t want to be happy."

“I shouldn’t have brought her with me,” he explained almost like an apology. “But I needed to come here and tell you face to face that I regret it. That I don’t deserve to live after what I’ve done”

“And why would I want your apology? How is that useful to me? In all these years, haven’t you realized why I haven’t returned?”

She stared at him in disbelief.
From time to time he had heard about her campaign of conquest and would pray that she would come back safe and sound from her battles.

Tyrion believed that, after coming back to her senses, guilt had stopped her from coming for the west. But this woman in front of him was not remorseful, nor victorious.

"You are small men, living and fighting in your stupid little games. Incapable to see that there’s a world outside your castles and fortresses. You all stand in a position of power but you don’t understand that power. You only understand chaos and that’s the reason you couldn't contemplate life after defeating the dead, neither see beyond the darkness"

And with this she approached the bars and looked at him from above, her short hair now frozen like the waterfall they left behind.

"Tyrion, Sansa and you are incapable to see what I can see clearly: power is power. You do something with it, or others will use it against you.”

She walked backwards, restoring the space between them.

“I hope she doesn't end up like Ygritte and I, dying in the arms of a weak man.”

The pain was burning him inside out. But how could he contradict her? She was right.

“Go home or find a new one out there, but do never stand before me, nor your sister or any of your people"

He should have known better. Not even he could forgive the ones who did the same. The fool he was, wanting to believe a part of her would still hold reminiscences of their affection. But from the first time their eyes encountered, he knew there was only cold indifference in them.

He sighed, sorrowful.

“Westeros needs you. The seven kingdoms are yours to take.” at least, he will try to plead the Westerosi case with her. Surely, an absurd attempt.

“Westeros is lost, no one can defeat the power of the Raven and as long as he stands it also will chaos”

The mention of the Raven, his brother, awoke his senses completely.

“You have that power,” he said, genuinely believing it.

The subject completely dislodged her, and she began to move away, turning her back again. She must know everything about it, he was sure. That confirmed his suspicions.

“Your wildling girl is coming, I have no wish to face her arrows so you better get up,” she said, changing the subject while walking towards the gate.

“Daenerys,” he called her, from the bars “if not for yourself at least do it for the people you slaughtered!”

He knew it was a terrible mistake but absolute despair spoke for him. He would realize later, that
seeing her go again, without a resolution, broke him even worst. She was his blood, the woman he’d loved but not enough to spare her life.

And then, he saw the anger coming. Her shoulders tensed, and she slowly turned to look at him from a healthy distance.

“Viserion died for your incompetence, my people died for your North, and for the rest of that ungrateful land. Rhaegal died, Missandei died, back in chains, because that monstrous woman gained strength by deceiving us, while Tyrion and you would speak about heroism and honor” she got closer in her rage but still distant enough for him not to touch her. Every word was laced with hardness and hatred.

"I, myself died in the last place that I would thought dangerous but I'm not going to lie to you, I was waiting for your betrayal, and I was just in... a fool"

She loved him, and he used that as an advantage. Because it was necessary, terribly necessary. Until it was not.

“Nor you or anyone will tell me how to pay for my sins,” she said in a whisper.

“I don’t want to leave” he confessed, looking at the ground with tears that would fall anytime.

She softened her expression, her mask of dispassion on.

“Tyrion told me that there’s no worse punishment than the weight of the consequences of our decisions. Who are we to defy it?” she rhetorically questioned in a soft voice. “Jorah believed he deserved a second opportunity, that’s why he kept coming back. Neither of us can say the same, not even Westeros”

He stared straight into her lifeless eyes, waiting for a relief he wouldn’t receive.

“Stop being a prey of the past. Walk forward and never look back, Jon Snow”

And doing as she said, she didn’t look back.

Jon stayed in the same place long after she was gone, just like the last time. When he was freed, he recalled his last day in King’s Landing, before sailing to the Wall again.

He would kill himself before experiencing that pain again.

Chapter End Notes

Update: This chapter was corrected by Consistencia!
Chapter Summary

The Great Council has chosen a new monarch. Will the monarch chose them?

Chapter Notes

Omg guys, I'm so grateful for your comments and encouragement wishes. You are simply the best!!

I would like to clarify some things again: my fic will not be completely truthful to the characters presented in the books nor the show. This is more of a catharsis for me. Just an idea that has been developing in my head. I'm so sorry if something bothers you, really. It's not my intention to hurt anybody's feelings.

In regards to the tagging, you need to understand I'm new in all of this and there are some things I don't know. Be nice and explain it to me in the comments, you gain nothing by being rude.

Finally, to the ones who offer to be beta readers, thank you so fucking much! I know my writing must have tons of errors. If you wish to contact me, I'll let my email visible on my profile!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: Bittersweet Victory

I

TYRION

From his place in the quarterdeck, he saw the Valyrian coastlands again. Tyrion asked himself if it was there that he lost his intelligence, back when Jorah Mormont saved him from imminent death at the hands of the Stone Men. An old, distant memory only he kept.

What could have happened if Jorah just had let him drowned? Or if both men had been successfully killed by those monsters? He recalled that moment with horror. What if this was again a path to an horrid end? Sometimes one establishes ideas that are destroyed in an instant by other events. Jorah Mormont would never know that he saved the life of the man who would conspire to murder the woman he had loved so devoutly, and for whom he died.

The ruins, Jorah, and the Stone Men existed no more. The decay he remembered was gone and turned into a place they called the home of the known world. Rising on the horizon, was the port city named after the man who brought him there first.

Jorah's Port.
The closer they were, the sickest he felt. There was no other path but death for him, and at least he wanted to make something more than drinking his life out while everything else is crumbling. If for that would be required of him to come straight into the nest of the dragon, he gladly will.

_Dragons, he thought, where are the dragons?_

The early reports they received mentioned Daenerys had five new dragons. He should have known better, that dragons cannot simply be killed. Valyria itself had needed a cataclysm to finally fall, yet the Targaryens survived and lived for at least four hundred years. After that, the Targaryens were gone, yet Daenerys remained. Then she died and somehow relived.

Dragons cannot simply be killed.

That last knowledge led him to think about the other Targaryen that was left, and who was probably also traveling towards certain death. Ask me in ten years, he’d told him and here they were, a decade after, both knowing the matter can’t be resolved that lightly. The answer was awaiting them on the shore.

He went down to the main deck where, like himself, both passengers and fleet members gathered to contemplate the end of their long journey. Some impressed, some scared.

“It is said that the Mad Queen got’em enchanted, ” said a little kid, even smaller than him, to another, both over the railing.

“Do not say that! If she hears you her dragons will burn you alive” respond the little girl, between fascination and fear “Mother said she is like a god. ”

Tyrion snorted.

“Benevolent if you venerate her, wrathful if you oppose her will? ” He asked amused.

The children didn't seem surprised by his sudden interruption and just stared at him, in silence. He smiled a little before passing by them, going straight down to his cabin, where he’d find some relief for his anxiety in his stale, old wine.

Walking inside the modest room, he began to make up a small speech in his mind that could appeal to her compassion; deep down he knew that nothing he said would be enough. Neither kneeling nor giving her some gifts.

_Sorry for conspiring against you, he would say. Sorry for having had your lover and nephew convinced to kill you. _And then one of her dragons would proceed to eat him or burn him alive.

Yet once again he remembered that surviving was the only thing that had motivated him in the past. Being born dwarf and killing your mother in the process, makes of escaping the fury and rejection of others almost an instinct. One he had used very well.

He sighed and drank the little wine he had left. At least he expected to have enough of it in his blood when they saw each other again.

How does it look a revived person? Sure Jon Snow was resurrected too, but it happened shortly after his death. Her body should had spent several days on Drogon's claw, flying across the Narrow Sea. Would it be like seeing a living corpse? The idea made him shiver. An image of the crypts of Winterfell during The Great War came to his mind, and he hoped Daenerys didn't look like that.

A knock on the door pulled him out of his thoughts and before he could give his permission to
enter, he saw Sansa's Stark dark red hair lean out. He rapidly stood and bowed before the presence of the Queen in the North.

“I hope not to interrupt you, my Lord,” she apologized.

"There is nothing to interrupt, your grace" he replied.

The young, stoic woman he once knew turned into a woman who seemed to hold the weight of the world on her shoulders.

"We’ll have a last meeting with the Lords. We need to discuss what will happen when we arrive at the shore," she said, her hands intertwined behind her "And once again, you must stop addressing me like that" she warned.

He politely smiled and nodded, "I imagine you already summoned the relevant ones?"

"Of course, my Lord."

He took the last sip of his already emptied goblet and picked up a couple of papers from his desk. They unlikely would contribute to the meeting but at least could serve him as a distraction if the northern voices began to rise.

He opened the door and let the former queen pass before he could follow her.

Once in the halls, he asked, "Where is your brother?"

Sansa shrugged “Could be anywhere.”

“He knows he can't show himself there, right?”

Sansa understood what he meant.

“He knows it,” she responded. “But you also know he has little interest in following our orders.”

Tyrion knew it, better than anyone, and had naively hoped that the years would have changed the stubborn man.

“Of course I made him reunite the Wildling’s leaders first,” she added. “And for the sake of this mission, I’ve asked him to refrain from meddling in diplomatic affairs until we reach an agreement with Daenerys Targaryen.”

“And you are sure this is a surrender?" he asked, astonished “Are you aware that this is rather a surrender?”

She stopped and stared at the ceiling like if there was an interesting point there “I think I have witnessed firsthand our plight, Lord Tyrion. However, we must raise our heads when we face her. Women like her despise weakness.”

Tyrion was bewildered by her words. In the past, Sansa and Daenerys only had time to let themselves be misguided by the preconceived ideas they had of the other. He didn't think it would be Sansa, of all people, the one interested in regaining her sympathy.

“Are you startled, my Lord?” she questioned him, “It surprises you that I do care for the image we’ll give to the woman who slaughtered King's Landing after being repeatedly betrayed by us?”

“It surprises me that you think to know her so well”, he replied.
“I thought I could understand her, and it was my first mistake,” she said, continuing her path towards the meeting room. “Petyr Baelish once told me to always assume the worst - now he celebrates my stupidity in his grave. I must be cautious this time.”

Tyrion stirred. They didn’t know yet if they weren’t prisoners, sentenced to die. That actually would be a well-taken decision, he thought.

When they entered the captain’s cabin, granted by himself, he greeted with a slight nod at those present. Between them were some of the former members of the small council, Ser Davos, Ser Brienne of Tarth and Master Tarly.

Ser Davos was the only one who, more or less, coped with the long journey at sea. It was logical considering that the knight was a smuggler all his life before becoming Hand of Stannis Baratheon and ultimately Master of Ships during the unfortunate reign of King Bran.

Ser Brienne, impassive as always, did not let the maritime life weaken her strength and kept cautious with things happening around. She had retaken her position as Sansa’s protector.

To everyone’s misfortune, Maester Tarly and his desperate attitude were present there too, with another pile of papers that unlike those he brought, would surely lend some usefulness in the whole matter.

The room was completed with different faces that he didn’t bother to know during the long trip. The pale, worse-looking men were few of the Northern Lords who had secured a place in the boat and who were observing the situation with exasperation. Tyrion sympathized with Sansa, who had dealt with the men every single day of the last decade.

After her coronation, the first missives he received from the North mentioned the pressure exerted on her to assure the birthing of heirs. He knew that it shouldn’t have been a light matter for her but the queen did not hesitate to put duty first, dealing with it as quickly as it was possible. She took for a husband a docile son of house Manderly, who played an essential role in the first years of her rule since White Harbor become the North main source of income, and started to procreate the heirs that were meant to follow up the legacy of House Stark. That calamity did not stop there.

A concoction of voices and accents started to raise. Men and women from The Riverlands, The Vale, The Reach, and The Westerlands were reunited in one same room. It was a miracle they didn’t make a hole in the floor.

The atmosphere began to suffocate him when he saw Tormund Giantsbane coming with a group of other Wildlings, all of them in light clothes. The man allowed himself to look at Brienne for a few seconds, before settling into a corner. At least some harmless, joyful things remained the same.

As he imagined, Jon Snow stayed absent.

“Be silent, please!” called out Ser Davos, trying to placate the bustle “My Lords and Ladies, please!”

The room fell silent.

“We are just hours apart from finishing our journey, but our mission will just begin,” Sansa began to explain. “I called you here to outline our course of action once we step on Jorah’s Port. We all have to agree with the plan…”

“The plan?” Lord Westerling snorted, “What plan? I'm going to hand my damn sword and kiss Daenerys Targaryen's feet, that's the only plan. We will be lucky if she lets us cross the dock.”
"Be respectfull, Lord Westerling," shouted Sansa’s father-in-law, Lord Manderly "mayhap in the South, they’ll get rid of their vows without much trouble, but in the North, we haven’t forgotten where our fealty resides."

Tyrion bitterly recalled the uprising against Bronn in The Reach, which ended the young and unproductive wardenship of his friend. Another sample of his resounding failure in the last decade.

Maester Tarly hurried to appease the mood, taking one of the small rolls between his fingers and shouting "A few days ago a raven came with the answer for our request," he assured, "and it said they, indeed, will allow us to disembark and take refuge in the inns of Jorah's Port."

"Indeed?" Sansa asked. He also was concerned with that part.

The Maester was a little uncomfortable at the suspicious look of the Lords.

"We have to hand any weapons we've brought," he nervously completed the message, "and promise not to cause problems with inhabitants nor move further east."

"Is the Dragon Queen, who lived with savages all her life, afraid that the lords of Westeros will transgress her cursed kingdom of priests and sorcerers?" Another Northerner, Lord Hornwood, questioned. "We have been escaping from damn rebels that took our lands, our homes, and our families. Why opt for an unstable person like Daenerys Targaryen? We should have scattered around the Free Cities!"

"I must remind you, my Lord, that the Free Cities are now ruled by her loyalists," said Tyrion, breaking his silence. "The Braavosi government made it clear when they rejected us. Braavos, the most important of the Free Cities, to not say of Essos!" he explained. “This matter must be dealt with directly, whether it pleases you or not. If you wish to return to your land, we need to appeal to her aid."

"But how are we gonna convince the Dragon Queen?" Tormund asked, dismayed "I speak only for my people, but the truth is that we have nothing to offer. She helped us for nothing in return once, and things went quite bad. Especially for her." he finished that last part with some doubt.

"Isn't the Crown of the Seven Kingdoms enough?" Edmure Tully asked.

“How do we offer her the Crown of the Seven Kingdoms with the Raven seated in the ancestral home of her family?” asked this time Rhea Florent, once the Lady of Hightower, “How are we sure that Daenerys Targaryen has the power to return us to our homes?”

The increasing doubts stirred Sansa's impatience but she never lost her composure. Meanwhile, most of the faces in the room were between worry and fear.

"With a single dragon she reduced King's Landing to ashes," Sansa replied, "now she has six of them, responding only to her" she advanced and rested her palms on the table. "Of all our options, this is the only plausible. By the gods, my Lords, we are talking about a woman who raised from the dead."

"Did she?" Lord Rowan asked, but no one took it as a real question. Instead, a long pause followed it.

"If that's the case, my suggestion is that we go with a peace offer first" began to blaspheme, another lord of The Reach. "The heads of the queenslayer and the Lannister dwarf, so she can see how sorry we are that these two had conspired to overthrow her."
"A woman who torched a city would have been a good queen for you, my Lord?" Brienne of Tarth asked, speaking for the first time.

"Is it any different from what her family has been doing for hundreds of years? She is a damn Targaryen, one doesn't scold a fish for swimming!" He replied effusively. "Lannister, Baratheon, Stark, all of them have done the same thing for years without dragons."

"No one is going to touch a single hair of Jon Snow's head nor from Tyrion Lannister" Sansa stated bluntly. "I remind you, my Lords, that my cousin is still the rightful heir to the Crown. Birthright that he gave up for us.

"Snow is also a kinslayer, and he lost his birthright when he slew the queen he sworn loyalty to," Edmure Tully started to rant. "Daenerys Targaryen won back her ancestors' throne by defeating Queen Cersei. After that, we played no part in the decision that the dwarf of Casterly Rock and the coward bastard of Winterfell..."

Tormund walked towards Edmure Tully, and Tyrion thought that everything would be spoiled even before he could imagine.

"Who are you?” asked the Wildling to the Lord of the Riverlands, who swallowed nervously, "because everyone in this room knows who Jon Snow is and the things he has done to save all of your ungrateful southron arses."

"Tormund, stop it," Sansa asked him with a weakened tone. "Uncle, I’ll ask you to show more respect for my brother."

The room fell back into a sepulchral quietness.

"I will take responsibility for my actions if that helps us to gain even a small chance of overcoming this,” he began to say with certain sorrow in his face. "The gods know how much wrong I have done. Probably, when I set foot on the shore, Daenerys Targaryen will be waiting for me with one of her dragons, ready to impart her justice over me. I am responsible for making Jon Snow believe she was a threat that should be eliminated. What he did, he did for the Realm, not because he wanted to usurp her or any other nonsense. She knows it too and that’s why, in all this time, she did not attempt to seek revenge. She hasn't even looked west."

No one dared to say another thing and for the first time, everyone agreed. The plan was quite simple: another Great Council to elect the monarch.

"Dorne, the Iron Islands, and the Stormlands have already forged an allegiance with the Queen. Momentarily, we don’t know how this alliance works, but something is sure: she’s a conqueror, we have to complete her conquest by extending to her The Reach, The Vale, The Riverlands, The Westernlands," she paused and sighed before continuing, “and of course, the crown of the North."

The Northerners knew that this was coming. However, they could not help but feel upset before the idea of losing again the independence they regained not so long ago.

"I do not intend to question your will, your Grace," Lord Manderly began to say, "but, are you sure? We'll follow you, of course. We will not make the mistake of doubting the fealty of House Stark with the North, never again, but how are we sure that this woman will not take retaliation against you or the North itself?"

Sansa smiled slightly and replied, "Believe me, my Lord, I highly doubt she could inflict any more damage to us. We have to remember that her brother married my aunt Lyanna Stark, and that
makes us family too. I want you to think that when we meet her again. Whatever she decides to do."

Tyrion added something he had tried to tell himself during those nights where he would wonder if it was the right thing, "Eddard Stark hid Aegon Targaryen for almost twenty years to protect him from Robert Baratheon's wrath, going not only against his King but his friend. Jon Snow has broken his vows repeatedly for the sake of a greater good. Keep that in mind when you see Queen Daenerys again. Remember that she lost one of her dragons saving to the King in the North, and risked the other two plus his armies, to allow us a chance against the Army of the Dead."

"The North remembers," Sansa replied, with her chin up. Her confidence renewed.

"The North remembers," the Northern Lords repeated.

The meeting went on, and they outlined the strategy that would consist of Tyrion speaking on everybody’s behalf. Again.

II

SANSA

Slowly entering her cabin, she made sure that her servants were not around before dropping herself to the ground and allow the thick tears to stream down her cheeks. No one ever asks why her eyes are swollen in the morning, and she thought it was for the best. The years and what'd happened over their course had taught her to keep the pain to herself instead of expecting someone else to ease her through the endless nights of crying.

Sansa remembered when the crown was placed on her head, and how finally she felt safe. But the calmness and joy lasted few hours before the callous Northern Lords began to suffocate her with the matters of marriage and the heirs of House Stark. She came to think that they longed for a man’s presence around.

None of the Stark men before her had sacrificed as much for the North as she did, but the Lords will never understand that.

She should’ve let Daenerys Targaryen win, get the North and allow her to deal with the stubborn men. She bitterly remembered the moment when news of the sack of King’s Landing arrived at Winterfell. In spite of all the suspicious looks Daenerys received at first, the northerners disobey Jon to follow up the Queen’s command and pillage the city.

If her brother haven’t done what he did, Sansa probably wouldn’t stand a chance against her.

She quickly pulled away from those thoughts as she recalled the few moments of pride during those early years, thinking that she would be remembered as the solely Stark that continued with the legacy and who fought until the end for independence. Those sweet moments, along with others a little bit sourer, comforted her during the lonely nights at sea. At least she tried.

When she woke up a few hours later, her maidservant rushed to groom her as good as possible for the arrival, though she wasn't expecting any kind of welcoming reception at the dock. Rather sure, soldiers and emissaries were waiting for them. She wished she could have Arya by her side.

At the main deck, Lords and Ladies gathered again, and their gazes were between worry and hope. Tyrion's defeated expression intensified the closer they got, and she started to let nervousness take over her. She thanked the Gods that there were no dragons in sight. Not yet.
At first she didn’t notice that had Jon settled by her side, distracted by Brienne's little boy asking endless questions to his Ser Mother. But when she did, he was looking oddly calm like if this was a simple mission and not a desperate measure.

Sansa despised how unworried and solemn he seemed all the time. Her last remained relative was never a good company, but she needed him with her. Even if his suicidal suggestion ends in getting them all dead.

“I thought I told you to stay discreet,” she exhorted him.

Jon side eyed gazed at her, a soundless mannerism of him to minimize anyone's words.

She looked back at her brother - cousin, “how are you feeling?” She wanted to know.

“Like when Lady Melissandre brought me back to life,” he answered after a couple of seconds.

She was surprised at the statement. Although Jon might have been hoping atonement, Sansa did not expect him to be relieved to see her again.

Nonetheless, he continued, "because it should be impossible, but it is happening. And I'm terrified.”

If he spoke truly, then he was hiding his fright spectacularly. Still, his situation was delicate, and she wanted him to stay as far away as possible from Daenerys or her dangerous loyalists.

When it came the inevitable moment of getting off the ship, and they perfectly saw the soldiers waiting at the dock, Tyrion let out a small curse beneath his breath. Only Jon and Sansa looked down at him.

“What is it?” she inquired.

“Another good friend of mine,” he said in great lament.

First, she didn’t notice that amongst the soldiers there was a man who stood out. He was a tall, dark brown-haired man, whose stare stuck on Tyrion the moment they had put step in the mainland. It was more than obvious this would not be a welcome part.

Valyria three main islands were the seat of the new regime of the Dragon Queen, and Jorah's Port was the city located on the Western Island. Nonetheless, Maester Tarly informed them that the capital city was settled in the center island, and it would take another week, and another trip by water, to reach there.

It surprised her that the infamous Common Council would send them there instead of respecting the queen's desire not to deal with them directly. The fact that she seemed impartial in the diplomatic conflict between the two continents, and completely ignored the aggravating situation of the realm she once wanted to rule, left them with no other choice but to go straight to her.

It was, after all, her sign of good faith that motivated them to make this drastic decision.

Sansa recognized the red-black colors of House Targaryen in the uniforms of the soldiers. But there weren’t any sigil or banner upon them. They carried swords and daggers, leaving the long spears of the Unsullied behind like a distant memory. The last thing she heard about them was that they had perished on Naath, shortly after the death of their queen. No, these were soldiers of the royal militia she centralized in Essos.
Tyrion hastened to take the first step, with his hands clenched on his side and his trembling voice addressing the man.

“Daario Naharis.”

Undoubtedly they knew each other, and she lamented not having exchanged more information with him.

“I should have killed you, imp,” he said harshly, “I saw your betrayal coming the moment you advised her to leave me behind.”

Tyrion nodded a little, “She came back to you.”

“Just Drogon by her side,” he replied fiercely, “two of her dragons dead. Her Khalasar lost in the sea, the Unsullied dead in Naath. Without the Seven Kingdoms you have promised her. And the prospected marriage for which she left me in Meereen, never happened.”

Suddenly, Jon began to unease at the man's accusations, and Sansa could imagine how difficult it was for him after all.

“So have you come here to impart the Queen's peace?” Tyrion inquired.

“If that day comes, I prefer that you met my peace,” he assured.

“It's been years, Daario,” he replied defeated, “I will never be able to mend my mistakes with her. I don't come to cause more damage. We have come almost crawling, ready to give her what she always wanted…”

Daario Naharis looked beyond them, to the rest of the fleet. His gaze stopped on Jon, and she could swear he recognized him, yet he continued to maintain his composure, once again questioning Tyrion.

“Did you bring half of Westeros?”

“No, half of Westeros perishes in Westeros,” Tyrion replied. “Hopefully, we are a little more than one thousand people. Most of them children who have not eaten anything decent in days. Please, at least let them pass.”

“The Queen's order is clear: everyone must hand over their weapons to enter.”

“Okay, we will give you anything. We come here aware of our situation.”

Daario Naharis spoke in a language unknown to Sansa, which could have been some variation of the High Valyrian, and the soldiers began to advance in front of them.

Jon reluctantly handed Longclaw and a small dagger with his belt, allowing the soldiers to pass from him and disarm the rest of them coming down from the ship. There were no incidents, and if there were any, she didn't find out.

“Let’s go,” indicated Daario, “your fellow countryman and Princess Arianne will receive you.”

They marched behind him, careful to follow every order the man would give them. The more they dived into the port city, the less fog perched on the air. There was a huge archway that welcomed newcomers, three dragons carved in the center of it, and it was the closest thing to a banner. When they finally crossed, Gendry Baratheon and a beautiful dornish young woman were waiting on the
The lad she barely knew in the past but was King Robert’s son had a big smile on his face.

“You take your time, my friends,” he said with excitement. “I thought the worst when I heard you had to cross through a storm at the sea.”

Ser Davos stepped forward and hugged Gendry, like a father meeting his son again after long years. Daario stood at one side, always watchful of the situation.

Arianne advanced and put a polite smile on her face, “Welcome to Valyria, home of the known world.”

“You grace,” Sansa responded, bowing.

“You must be Queen Sansa,” she presumed. “It’s not necessary to address me by the status I hold in another land.”

Sansa understood. “I guess I should say the same.”

Arianne grinned again, then she looked at the rest of them.

“Women and children must follow me,” she said with a tone softer than the orders Daario was giving to the men but still resolute. “We’ll accommodate you in the north inns” she pointed to the dark stone buildings near the coasts “The men will be grouped in the inns on the south side of the city.”

“Your grace” interrupted Jon, with his rough voice, “I mean, my Lady,” he corrected himself, “some men are fathers without wives.”

“We need the men separated until we have a proper register of all you. No child will be harmed, and all of them will meet at the inns with plenty of food, toys, and entertainment to get through the process.”

“I’ll be the liaison between the men and women if it pleases the Queen,” she answered, trying to calm her brother’s concern. Most of the Wildling’s children were orphans, and Jon cared for them.

Princess Arianne looked indifferent towards the offer and just nodded.

“May you follow me, please?”

III

TYRION

“You’ll have a translator to communicate with the workers,” Daario explained while they explored the inn. “I warn all of you, they are all free people whom the queen estimates. They are not your servants. No disrespect will be tolerated.”

Tyrion decided to stay with Jon Snow and the wildlings since he didn’t want to have to share the same space with the Westerosi Lords, ever again. Ser Davos was the only one allowed to stay in Gendry’s place on the east side of the city.

“Do not touch the women,” Daario specified.

“But if they want to?” Tormund asked, genuinely concerned.
Daario frowned and dismissed the matter.

“When can we see her?” Tyrion asked, bringing up the real matter.

“That depends on what intentions you have.”

“You know what we want.”

“It is what you always want from her, yes I know it,” he said but kept avoiding a proper answer.

Both men walked outside the inn and stood in the center of the village, watching the newcomers.

“She wasn't expecting her murderer to come with you,” he suddenly said, taking him off guard.

Tyrion knew this would happen and had suggested leaving Jon in Braavos, but Sansa was more afraid of the Common Council than Daenerys herself.

“How you knew?”

“His sword,” he simply replied.

*Stupid, stubborn bastard.*

“I promise he won’t get near her,” his desperation speaking through him.

Daario laughed, “Your words are lighter than the air, imp.”

“Believe me when I say that the Lords also want his head ripped off.”

“I don’t want to kill him” he confessed, and Tyrion looked at him confused, “I want to make him suffer. I want to eliminate his people, behead his sister in front of him and make him watch his world fall apart. That’s what I want, but she won’t let me do it.”

“How is she?” he rapidly changed the subject.

“Alive,” he paused a long second. “Your people will rest a week while they adapt. Scheme all you want, you know what answer she will give you.”

“What would you do in her stead?” Tyrion questioned but trailed off to add, “besides killing us.”

Daario looked forward, where the Lords kept moving their things from one place to another.

“When we defended Dorne, the fight was not easy. In Westeros, people don’t know to fight alongside their saviors.”

“So, that’s what you think happened at King’s Landing?”

“No, that’s what happen when you wait too much time to do things properly,” he was blunt, “If I had gone with her, we would have taken the stupid chair and killed your bitch sister before going north. If I had gone with her, I wouldn't have let the Dothraki cavalry face the dead in a suicidal move. If I had gone with her, I would have forced Jon Snow to marry her the moment he learned the truth while taking Sansa Stark to the Wall and throwing her from there. If I had gone with her, Westeros would be safe now. Unlike all of you, I loved her and would have done my best to make her happy before she had seen herself unwanted, betrayed and destroyed.”

Tyrion had known since the moment he knew Daario that he was sincerely in love with Daenerys.
Yet he never imagined he would hold that kind of loyalty towards her.

“And what would you have done after the unnecessary slaughter of thousands of innocent people? What would you have done if you had seen her become that same thing she wanted to destroy?”

“Not killed her, that’s for sure.”

IV

SANSA

Arianne gave the Northern women the most spaced inn with a beautiful view of the Smoking Sea. A courtesy she was not expecting, at all. She was provided with a solar and her maidservants were settling her things when the princess approached to ask if she was comfortable.

“Can I ask why the Queen is being this attentive?”

“I am the one in charge of your accommodation, my Lady. Eventually, if you come to an agreement, then she will decide your next destination.”

“In charge?” she asked with curiosity, “Excuse me for my boldness, Lady Arianne, but may I ask what your position in the Queen’s court is?”

“I am under her protection as her ward,” she replied, “There are matters that keep her away, so I take care of the Realm’s affairs in her name. My father wanted me to learn to rule by actually ruling.”

“It must be hard for you to be away from home,” she opined trying to find common ground, “I was your age when I was taken away from my home and family.”

“I miss my land and my people, but I had come on my own will.”

Sansa was trying to find falseness in her words, remembering that she once was forced to say the same things, but the young princess spoke with great assurance.

“My presence will be required in the other lodgings, so if you excuse me, Lady Sansa.”

“Of course, my Lady,” she dismissed her.

That night they took their first proper supper in a long time. She would have wished to stay in her chambers, but she needed to check on the kids as she promised Jon. When she reunited with the other ladies and the wilding women, she found the children joyfully entertained with their bellies full and new toys.

Sansa caught a glimpse of the wildling girl named Val who was Jon’s companion, and couldn’t avoid but wonder how she would be feeling. In the time she has known her, they just shared a few words with Jon always present in the room. She didn’t entirely understood the nature of their relationship, and honestly wasn’t interested.

The scenario repeated itself for a week, with the presence of the princess being constant, as well as the soldiers patrolling the village. She felt glad for not having to listen to the southern ladies whispering under their breath every time she would cross their way.
She rested, thought, and organized those thoughts while the others enjoyed the comforts offered. Just once she was allowed to visit Jon to communicate that the children were doing fine. He told her about a small disagreement between Lord Manderly and Lord Westerling that almost ended in a fight. Those moronic men, she cursed.

As Tyrion had told her, Daario returned in a week to take them to The Great Keep, where it would take place the meeting with Daenerys. Tyrion, her uncle Edmure, Andar Royce, Lord Westerling, Lady Rhea, Tormund and herself formed the new Great Council. Gendry and Ser Davos also joined their party, with the former bastard being less excited than the last time she saw him. She supposed they had told him about Arya.

The journey wasn’t as long as they initially believed it would be. It just took three days to cross the land, one night to cross the sea and to finally arrive at the capital, where for the first time they saw the famous Great Keep.

Now, that’s a sight to behold. She thought. The building was designed to resemble the castle in Dragonstone but with the colors of the Red Keep. The fact that it was restored from the ruins of a Valyrian castle made it even more spectacular.

When they entered the city, the streets were full of life and activity, people from everywhere in all shapes and colors. Arianne smiled widely to some people who approached to speak with her in words she couldn’t understand. Tyrion said it was a Ghiscaric Valyrian.

“They must be, in the majority, former slaves,” he said.

She was about to ask him some other questions when a sound she had heard so long ago almost made her lose her balance and fall from the horse.

Dragons.

She must have been so distracted by the array of peculiarity that she didn’t notice them approach. Not till they announced themselves and a big shadow was cast upon them.

V

TYRION

He barely could see her from this distance, but what he saw perfectly was the demon she was mounting and the company that followed them. Drogon was ridiculously enormous. How is that he can fly being that size? His heartbeat accelerated at the thought of face the beast again. Tyrion now felt true, palpable fear.

They watched them disappear in the distance, behind the towers of the Great Keep. It took them another hour to reach it, but when they did, he completely forgot about their mission and just wanted to be drunk in some brothel. He cursed beneath his breath.

The magnificent castle was filled with the common people, who would come and go as they pleased. The citizens were not afraid of the soldiers placed in every corner nor of the flying dread in the sky.

“Daenerys wanted people to know the castle from the insides,” Gendry explained while they advanced through the filled halls. “Sometimes it gets a little bit annoying but most of them just come to kill some time.”

“There’s a private wing where we receive our guests,” Arianne added. “When we get there we’ll
That last part worried him deeply.

Outside the gates that led to the Throne Room, or the meeting room as they called it, there was another woman to greet them. Her name was Ornela, and he hardly remembered seeing her one time in Meeren, when the Khalasar had arrived.

She opened the gates and gestured for them to walk in.

And there she was.

His breath stopped for a moment and he noticed Sansa, Ser Davos, and Tormund were also strucked by the sight.

Her skin was paler and her hair white and frozen like snow. Sure she still carried that unnatural beauty but the image contrasted greatly with the woman they once knew. Quite disturbing.

She is wearing a fucking armor! He exclaimed to himself. Gods fuck me.

Though it was just a leather, chainmail armor, still, it was a far cry from the delicate dresses she used to wear.

Daario, Arianne, Gendry, and the Dothraki maid positioned themselves on each side of her Throne. In the room was the very same red priestess that all those years ago he and Varys had summoned in Meereen.

“You stand in the presence of Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Queen of the Realm of Valyria and Protector of Essos.”

They rapidly bowed, except for Tormund who kept looking at her in awe. Daenerys returned a mild smile back to him.

“You don’t need to kneel before me, my Lords and Ladies,” she said in a monotonous tone that made him shiver. “I’m not your Queen.”

A long silence followed her words because nobody could get out of their astonishment. She lifted an eyebrow in response.

“May I ask you how, your grace?” Ser Davos inquired, breaking the silence.

Daenerys nodded to the priestess, and she stepped forward.

“As I told Lord Tyrion long ago, Daenerys Stormborn is the one who was promised. Her fire was reignited by our Lord, for a purpose only he knows.”

“I met another of you who chanted those exact words, my Lady” Davos insisted, “She also resurrected someone from the dead and told us he was a promised prince.”

“Melissandre of Asshai was human. She learned about her mistakes when she returned to Volantis and met with me.”

“So she resurrected the wrong person?”

“She didn’t resurrect anybody, at all.”
“But he died. And was brought back.”

“I’m sure Kinvara will clarify all your doubts, Ser Davos,” Daenerys interrupted. “But you haven’t come here to discuss matters of religion, have you?”

“Apologies, your grace,” he bowed his head.

She dismissed him and looked directly towards Tyrion. “I guess it was just a matter of time for us to meet again.”

He walked closer till she was just feet apart.

“We are here to extend you the Crown of the Seven Kingdoms. Before you respond, we decided to do it by the same means King Bran was chosen. A modality inspired on the premise of breaking the wheel, just as you had once wanted. I know the Iron Throne is gone, but you know that you don’t need it to prove yourself a Queen. A queen who is chosen by her people. A queen who does not need to wear a crown.”

“Westeros is a troubled land, as you must already know. Millions are suffering the consequences of the decisions I took without taking into consideration what the rest of the realm wanted. If you need to unleash all your wrath over me, I’m most than willing to accept that. But please, listen to the pleas of these people who had lost everything because of me.”

He didn't realize how desperate it sounded until he needed air to keep going. Please do not sentence me to die.

Daenerys kept calm and meditative, knocking her fingers against the armrests of her throne. She gazed at all of them, especially at Sansa but kept an indifferent expression.

“I thank you for coming. If you consider that I can help you, I will do it. You can stay in whatever place of your choose in Valyria, and if you desire to reside in a specific part of Essos, we can work out that option with the Common Council's consent. But in regards to Westeros and its problems with the rebels, that's not my concern.”

He was about to protest when she stood and look upon them “I don’t want your Crown. I don’t want it.”

Chapter End Notes

Well, that was a first take on the remained highborn left after that disastrous ending that was S8. Some of you might complain about this fatalistic view of Westeros, but in real life, elective monarchy ends in more war.

How do you feel with this characterization of Sansa and Tyrion? I tried no to be so harsh on them because this is just chapter 1.

I know some of you will not like this good guy Daario, but in my opinion, he was like that. He truly was in love with Dany. Yet, they are not lovers in this fic.

This Arianne is not Arianne Martell from the books, it's just a free form character.

Let me know what you think.
Thanks to Consistencia for the beta!!

Next chapters:
- Chapter 2: A Mummer's Dragon (Jon)
- Chapter 3: A Queen Who Wears No Crown (Daenerys)
A Mummer’s Dragon (Jon)

Chapter Summary

He was a young man.
He wanted no more wars.
He wanted to plant trees.
A dream of spring.

Chapter Notes

I mostly based my version of Jon according to the comments made by Kit Harington and Ramin Djawadi.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: A Mummer's Dragon

I

Beyond the Wall – 305 A.C

It began with a hum in the air that evolve in a strong wind that lifted the earth from the ground and spread it everywhere. Like most of his problems, Jon only could hope for it to get worse.

In the beginning, it was not easy. There were days where his dejection will not let him stand out of his tent. That he was tired was the excuse he used. Too many wars, two battles in a row, countless deaths and everything that happened after that was just too much, even for the boldest of the men.

Tormund took care of him, providing food and supplies while he just wanted to sleep and dream about the dark, tranquil space.

When they abandoned Castle Black and he saw a green sprout emerging from the white ground, he almost felt hope. In his mind, this was the only way for him to live free and move into something pure.

He wanted no more wars.

It was not that he was enthusiastic to feel the warm again, but he knew the North needed spring to face this new independence from the rest of Westeros. Moreover, the Free Folk needed it to survive.

Two moons passed between his imprisonment and the Free Folk new settlement, but he didn't understand why it kept hurting him so much. There were some moments of peace, where he would think about what could have happened if he hadn't done it. The things that would have happened if
he had let her go on. He thought in Ned Stark, who might be loathing him as once he did with Jaime Lannister, but at least his children were safe in the highest of the places. Even Catelyn Tully would have loved him.

_She had loved you when you were still a bastard_, said the voice in his head who would speak unceasingly to him, making the pain come again, from his chest, where his lethal scar rested, slowly climbing to his throat, choking him.

It was different from what he had experienced before. It was not like what he felt in those nights praying before the Heart Tree that his father's wife could accept him so that he could be a legitimate Stark, which he had always wanted. It was not the urgency that afflicted him when he learned of his father's execution at King's Landing. Nor was it the empty anger he had, knowing that Robb would never see him dressed in black. Perhaps, what he felt when Ygritte died was closer, because every time he remembered it, the day became night and the light became darkness.

Nonetheless, there was something unnatural in that feeling he could not describe. It started shortly after what happened, back in the dungeons of King's Landing. It awoke him one night, intensely and brusquely, cutting his breath and squeezing his chest out. It was horrid and he wished to have had a sharp object within reach to put an end to his life.

He begged Grey Worm to make his justice, but the commander looked at him, despise all over his face, telling him to _live with it_, which was something that both men would have to share.

This is how it has been since then, and how it will be the more time pass.

A few moons later, he allowed himself to get out of his tent and approach to the bonfire. He would drink Tormund’s gross beverage and listen to the man’s stories, who carefully avoided some fundamental elements of the real events.

When he arrived at Castle Black, the Free Folk had already heard of what had happened in the south. There were no questions about it. Beyond the wall, words like “kinslayer” or “queenslayer” were unknown. For them, everything was just another tragedy of life, one more of all those they experienced not long ago.

Just another stain in his black.

Only when the drink hit his senses is that he let that strange animosity of them reach him. They laughed, danced, drank, and ate as if nothing was wrong. Their population reduced to a single clan, yet they believed there was no time to waste in painful memories, and he admired and longed to feel the same way.

“Life goes on,” said Mother Mole, one of the healers. “You must do the same or soon that heart of yours will dry up.”

Nevertheless, her words were soon soundless when his mind again is gone.

One night something odd happened. Usually, he would not look at the faces of the people gathered around the fire. However, when he saw that blonde, long hair standing out, he couldn’t look away. It reminded him of _her_.

He recalled seeing her one or two times before. She was the sister of Mance’s wife, Val.

They weren’t exactly the same, but the view made him shiver and turn back to his tent.

Therefore, he started to watch her more often to get used to her presence. He was cautious that no
one would notice to avoid misunderstandings.

Eventually, she caught him watching.

306 A.C

He wasn’t sleeping that much, and the slow recovery gave him time to explore the true north while helping the Free Folk to rebuilt their huts in Hardhome. He also started to teach archery to the many children left. One of them whose name was Devyn get so attached to him that sometimes it had become annoying in a sweet sense. His father died in the battle against Ramsey Bolton, while his mother perished in the hands of a wight in the crypts. He felt somehow in duty with him and reminded him of Bran and Rickon in distant memories of a simpler past.

They would beg him to teach them to use the sword, though it wasn’t a traditional wildling weapon like an ax or a knife. One day he was talking about the basic armament the northern forces would use in battle when a curious mind asked about his dagger.

He kept frozen for a moment, his weaken mind trying not to go back at that place, pointlessly.

“I lost it in my last battle,” he replied too harsh to be an innocent question.

Val was there too, working with the knives.

“A dragon took it away,” he heard her said while looking at him, sharply. She seemed to be the only one of them who still condemned him, and he liked that way.

The kids gasped and started retelling stories while remembering the creatures. He swallowed hard and just nodded.

II

White Harbor – 307 A.C

He had forgotten the salty taste in the air of White Harbor, and the powerful bustle of a city after months of just hearing the empty sound of the wind. The last time he was here, there was implicit nervousness in the environment instead of celebrations. The independence of the Northern Kingdom seemed to arouse the suspicious hearts of its inhabitants.

At the time, he had the certainty that his sister will be a good queen; her regency during his time in Dragonstone had proven it. But, again, he didn't know much about being a good ruler, after all.

He used to believe that knowing between right and wrong was enough, but every time power would have fallen upon him, things went astray. In the first try, he ended up in a pool of his blood. In the second, he lightly gave his crown away. And in the third time, he simply didn't want it but things somehow turned in his disfavor.

He recalled Lord Manderly cheering him up, telling everyone he was the hero in the north, who saved the land and secured independence. However, few voices joined, much of them knowing what had happened at King’s Landing. They knew what the honorable army of the North did. The dragon in the sky and men in the ground.
For most of them, he was just another queenslayer and kinslayer, nothing else.

No, he definitely would not have crossed the wall again if it wasn’t because some men had fallen sick in their settlement, and the healers’ treatment was getting pointless. He suggested starting trading in the merchant city to afford medicines. They were nomads but they needed proper medicine, and the Night’s Watch had not a Maester anymore.

He did not notice at first that there were so much more people than normally used to. It startled him to hear some southern accents, but then again, White Harbor was a port city, which is supposed to be full of foreigners.

No, no one paid attention first. The trade with the Free Cities became extremely important that nobody realized those newcomers were not Essosis.

Before heading towards the city, he had made sure that Sansa knew of his intentions through one of the letters he sent. She insisted that the Free Folk should return to the Northern Kingdom and occupy the empty castles in the Wall, but he knew that the offer was conditioned, implicitly, to bend the knee. Still, she let him do as they wanted, writing that, “it was the least she can do for him.”

Tormund and Dewyn went with him. They traveled for a month to reach there, and only spent one week offering the Free Folk crafts. It was hard to sell and trade but Tormund knew how to persuade the foreigners into buying his milk of giant.

Jon kept a low profile, leaving his sword back in the camp since it was the first thing people would relate to him. He searched for a Maester in the library, who told him about the spring disease brought by the Essosi’s troops, which he thought ridiculous.

He ignored the old man's suggestions but took some of the medicines he offered. He wished to have a wise mind like Maester Aemon with them, or at least the curious intelligence of Sam. He felt good staying with the wildlings but a part of him missed the commodities of his previous life.

He came back to find Tormund and Dewyn already dining in the common hall of the inn where they were staying. It was ironic that they only were accepted in a lodging specially made for non natives.

Was in this common dining hall that he heard it for first time.

“…and she killed every single one! Noa single soul escaped!” one man exclaimed, speaking the common language with a strong eastern accent. Was a big man, his skin bronze like the chains in his belt. “They should have taken the city immediately when she sailed west!”

“I don’t know,” his friend replied, “She had three dragons then”.

He choked with his ale. Tormund, who was in front of him, opened wide his eyes.

“I don’t want to be here more time,” the bronze belt man said, his voice trembling with sudden fear. “When the Dragon Queen returns to Westeros, this place will fall first.”

That is all he needed to get up and walk towards them.

“What happened in Essos?” he asked, shivering with anxiety.

The men turned a looked at him, both confused by his appearance.
“I have family here,” he excused, realizing how rough he sounded.

Bronze belt snorted, “You should take them away. The Dragon Queen is not merciful exactly.”

He felt unsteady and sick, his sight starting to fade. Why he hadn’t thought about that?

“The Dragon Queen is dead!” exclaimed Dewyn, incapable of perceive Jon’s breakdown. “Jon Snow kill her! It did it to save everyone!” he affirmed vehemently, as if the world could be that simple.

“Well, he did a shitty job,” said his friend with a mocking laugh.

Tormund pulled the boy away and asked, “how long since she attacked those persons?”

“A year ago, maybe,” replied the other man. “She appeared with that beast of her, the black one.”

“Drogon,” Jon whispered but no one heard it. “Who she killed?” he questioned again, this time cautious to not seemed like a maniac.

The foreigners stared at them with distrust, thinking how odd the situation had become.

“Who else? The slavers who took Bay of Dragons after her demise!” he responded, not sure if he was happy or just in awe with it. “They retook Astapor and Yunkai while Naharis and the Second Sons retained Meereen, barely,” he made a long pause and sighed hard, “Those damn men looked for it! In Astapor and Yunkai they celebrated her death for weeks. The stories tell that the freedmen who escaped alive chose to die soon after. If that is not to provoke the mother of dragons…”

“Mother of the dragon! The others are dead!” his friend corrected him.

"Oh do not worry; she just needed one to make the earth shake in King’s Landing.”

They kept laughing when he was already in the door, walking outside the inn straight to the stable, where he took borrowed a horse.

Tormund followed him, “what are you going to do, little crow?” he asked afraid of his reaction.

“Winterfell,” he responded, short and gruff.

“It will take you days!” Tormund exclaimed.

He did not listen and just ride away from all of them.

**Winterfell**

She knew it. He naively believed she would ignore the sailors’ stories, and being too distracted with her kingdom matters to actually care, but the walls of her castle said another thing.

He arrived in one week, and he would have arrived before if it was not because the horse needed to rest, and he, eat. The road did not make it easy, too much time to think and too many memories he wished he could just erase from his mind, otherwise, they will never leave him alone.

When he stood upon a hill and saw the castle for the first time since he left to go to King’s Landing, the view startled him. *Scorpions*. Winterfell’s battlements armed with scorpions.
Sansa knew it and did not inform him.

In front of the gates, the guard immediately recognized him. One would think this was a foolish move: he was a deserter of the Night’s Watch and Sansa was the Queen, she could have him hanged or beheaded if she wanted to.

There was not much uproar when he walked in, dismounting rapidly and letting her queen’s guard known about his intentions. They knew him too; some of them even were that day at King’s Landing.

He was taken to the Great Hall where she was currently breaking her fast with her ladies-in-waiting. When he saw her almost stumbled down, impressed by the image she presented. A real queen with a crown on her head. He had seen this image before, in Cersei.

“You stand before…,” started to say one of her guards, but she lifted her hand and interrupted the formality. She rose and the big, swollen belly of her was shown. He knew by her last letter that she married Will Manderly. It did not surprise him that she was already heavy with child. The Starks needed heirs.

“Your last letter said you will pay a visit in my child’s first name day,” she said, her hands poised in her abdomen.

It was true. They've been communicating through letters she sent to the Night’s Watch, pretending that he was there, while Tormund would be the one bringing and delivering the missives, with the help of some men in Castle Black, with whom he remained in contact.

“In your last letter you never talk about Winterfell’s new artillery,” he replied.

She contemplated with a serious face, breathing hard because of her state. Sansa dismisses everyone out, and some of her guards doubted to let the queen with a man who killed the last queen he was left alone with.

“He won’t hurt me,” Sansa stated with her northern accent stronger than ever.

When both were left in private, she told him to take a seat in front of her.

“Have you eat?” she politely asked.

“I don’t want to,” he replied. “I want answers.”

She sighed, “Go ahead. What you want to know?”

“How long since you know?”

Her blue eyes looked at him with harshness.

“First I heard the rumours, then the stories came,” she told him, always keeping her lady manners, “the confirmation arrived from King’s Landing a couple of moons ago.”

Bran. He also should have known for a long time ago. Probably, he always knew it. You were exactly where you were supposed to be, he remembered it.

“How Bran didn’t see this coming?”

“Bran won’t talk about lots of things,” she affirmed with notorious annoyance in her tone, “believe me; he’s not reliable as everyone thinks.”
Sansa’s comment was tainted with a certain disdain. *Had something happened between them?*

“I assume Tyrion and you keep in contact,” he explored the ground.

She simply looked down over her meal, her hands occupied with the cutlery. “The south is still an ally,” she said, clear and confident “Communication will always be sustained.”

He sensed that something still was keeping from him, and he wanted to know more but knew that Sansa was a tough one.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” he went straight to the matter that concerned him the most.

“You are not easy to find, exactly,” She excused. Still, she could have summoned him but had chosen not to. “Also, there’s this issue with the Lords.” She concluded. And there it was.

“What issue?” he inquired knowing that probably they must be insisting on had his head chopped off for deserting. On the other hand, maybe they were scared “Are they afraid? They should.”

“Besides that,” she looked straight to him with a different expression, like doubt. “They don’t exactly believe she was ever killed.”

It was the last thing he expected to hear. He stood up to leave.

“Jon!” she shouted, but he ignored her until, almost in the doors, she added, “Your queen demands you to stop right there!”

He turned away, ferocity lighting his face.

“Excuse me, my Queen?” he asked wryly, “I don’t know to whom monarch I respond anymore.”

Sansa, who was standing distressful and agitated just looked away, avoiding his gaze, “I didn’t mean it like that. I do not want you to leave yet. It has been so long since I had family with me, Jon.” He didn’t notice but she was about to cry.

He advanced towards her again, still upset by her words.

“You know what I told her before I put my dagger in her heart? That she will always be my Queen.” His voice wrecked, “No one will query me about it. They would never understand.”

“I do believe you,” she assured. Her watery eyes full of compassion, “you did it for the Realm.”

“No, I did not,” he stated, with self-contempt, “I did it for you,” there was a knot in his throat, “I did it for Arya, for Bran and for all those I love, and who would’ve been an obstacle in her path.”

Her face softened, a feeling of reassuring security invaded her. Sansa knew he always would choose his family, above all.

He looked out to the window, where he saw some soldiers, laughing and playing with the scorpions. He could not believe no one of them had told her about it.

"She has one dragon, the other two were killed with one right shot. That's all we need," Sansa said retaking her composure.

Jon shook his head, dissenting. “Drogon destroyed all the scorpions in King’s Landing. Nothing can stop him once he’s in the air with her.”
She exhaled defeated, “So, what do you suggested?”

“There’s nothing you can do to stop her,” and with this he approached, “but if she gives you a choice, take it. Do not be proud, or you will see this place turned in ashes.” He stared at her belly, “you will have a family, protect it. And protect the North.”

Her countenance hardened again, “Just like that? Shall I surrender my crown?”

“Listen to me Sansa!” he cried out of despair, “She won! She had always had the power to get what she wanted and she did it after losing everything because we told her to wait and be compassionate.”

An incredulous laugh came out of her mouth.

"Is that how you still saw her? Like a compassionate queen who got corrupted?” She asked, disbeliefing, "After everything she did, you still loved her."

“You never gave her a chance,” he said, without denying or confirming.

“I saw what no one of you could see behind that beauty of hers” she accused.

“And with that, you woke the dragon.”

Sansa was taken aback. “What are you trying to say?”

Jon turned around, hardly believing that she would be that cruel and stubborn.

“It’s too late for everyone,” and saying so, he walked away.

III

Beyond the Wall

Everything crumbled after that, and he knew it will happen, but not in the way it did.

First, he let Tormund know where he was about to go and appeased him, assuring she will only look for him. His red-haired friend was notoriously nervous as it wasn’t before, men were falling fast in the camp and the medicines were not helping.

“If she comes at least it will be faster than this,” he said, in a pessimistic note.

“She will not hurt you,” he tried to bring calm but, at this point, he wasn’t thinking clearly. He just wanted to leave.

“I will go with you!” Dewyn insisted, but it was much more dangerous in that way.

Jon didn’t know what kind of punishment she was about to deliver upon those who destroyed her. In his worst assumptions, she would take his family and slowly kill them in front of him. Jon couldn’t risk another life. Even Ghost was in danger, but the beast was harder to persuade.

“I’m sorry, Dewyn,” he replied quickly, before taking his things and disappearing deep into the haunted forest.
Jon stayed in a cave under a waterfall, not the same one they visited one day but perhaps the better place he could’ve found between the ruined, abandoned towns and the mountains. He also believed it was a peaceful spot to live, and eventually, die.

His nights were full of terror and despair, and he wished for the dreams to be empty like they were before. He dreamed of her in the throne room, where sometimes she was crying, and others she just stared straight into his eyes, aware of what he was about to do. The end was always the same, he would put the dagger inside her, and she would disappear. A bloodstain would taint the snowed ground and mourning beast took her away, to never be seen again.

He had thought about where Drogon could have taken her body, and the obvious answer was Valyria. Instead, the beast had found somehow the way to bring her back, fighting for her until the end.

He cried, screamed, spoke to himself and even hear a voice repeating over, and over again in his head.

“You'll be fighting their battles forever,” it said.

He wanted no more wars. He wanted peace, a new beginning, and no more battles. He wanted to forget about her, and the things he could have done to wrong her.

Most of all, he wanted her to come and kill him.

Moons passed, and he waited. Sometimes he would be staying inside the cave. Other times, on the banks of the river with only Ghost and the empty wind as his company. The silence was what he needed, it brought him tranquility and time to prepare for imminent death.

"Dewyn asks for you all the time, he wants to come and visit you," Val told him, one day that she came to bring him some provisions and news from the camp.

He nodded and helped her carry the things she brought, slightly touching her cheek unintentionally.

"Don't let him come," he asked her, ignoring her curious gaze.

Val was a beautiful woman that had the power to attract any man beyond the wall and even south of it, he could not deny. But for him it wasn't just her appearance, there was something else about her that made him feel comfortable when she was around.

However, he felt disgusted with himself at the idea of being using her to replicate the image of another person. He wasn't sure where his feelings were, anymore. There was a persisting feeling inside him.

"When the Dragon Queen comes," she said, kneeling to caress Ghost fur. "The kid will be all alone, again."

Jon frowned, "He has you, Tormund, and his friends. He doesn't need me more than I need to keep living."
Val smiled. "You are a man with no will to live, Lord Crow," she said.

He nodded without giving it much importance, "you have to go, she ..."

"Dying by dragon fire is a dignified death," she replied immediately. "If I were her you would already be dead, Jon Snow. Try to do with me what you did to her one of these days, and you’ll see fulfilled your desire to leave this world sooner than you imagine."

Jon felt as if he has been punched on his face.

“How do you know what I did?” he questioned, evident irritation in his face.

Val lifted and looked at him with a strange disdain, “there’s only one way to kill a queen who got a dragon.”

After saying this, she winked and continued on his way to the camp.

Tormund came two times that year, the first one to extend him a letter that said Sansa’s baby didn’t make it, and a second time, to implore him to stop this madness.

“Hear me, little crow!” he cried out, “things are getting fucked up in your sister’s kingdom and she needs you.”

He knew spring disease had spread through all the North and those who were fortunate enough to survive it was now facing the food shortage. Problems he doesn’t know how to solve.

“I can’t help her,” he murmured, looking beyond him to the trees and the greenery, “If I go, when she comes…”

“She will not come!” Tormund screamed with despair.

She will, his mind said. You don’t know her as I do. She will come a will hurt everyone I love.

“Jon…” he softened his tone, and was one the few time he called him that way, “she will not come. I heard some stories in the harbor, she is moving further east. She will not return.”

Jon started to tremble, it can’t be possible that she would be alive and doing nothing to avenge herself. Not after all she did when Cersei and his family provoked her enough.

“You didn’t see her that day!” he explained, recalling the painful events, “you didn’t see her killing thousands of innocent people, out of pain.”

Tormund’s face contorted with an empathetic gesture, “sometimes we do things we later regret. Might she see what she did was wrong…”

Jon denied, shaking his head. “No, no. If that’s what happened, then I did it for nothing.”

They cannot understand him. They cannot see how wrong everything was.

“Jon please, looked at me, little crow,” and with this he approached and put a hand in his shoulder, looking straight into his tormented eyes. “She forgave you. She moved on.”
Jon pulled his hand out of him and walked inside the cave.

IV

310 A.C

“Quite a place,” said Ser Davos, walking between the things he scattered inside the cave.

“This is awful, Jon,” Arya complained, casting her gaze to the mess and him. “You stink.”

He nodded; though he tried his best to look half a man it did not surprise him that he would have looked more like an animal.

“I’m glad to see you too,” he replied.

She had a new scar on her face, going from her left temple to the cheekbone. It seemed deep. He knew she was a lethal fighter, and probably she’d faced other opponents in those years. She was no longer the little sister he remembered.

“We gonna get you home,” she determined.

“This is my home.”

“No, it’s not, you idiot.” She passed by him and took the papers he left in a corner.

Sansa kept sending him missives through the Night’s Watch and Tormund. After losing her child, she wanted him to come back and take the regency. The Lords also believed it convenient after a problem that surged with the Riverlands and Edmure Tully, who was refusing to fulfill with his part in the grain trade agreement. There was something else about a revolt in The Reach but he couldn’t read more about it.

He wanted no more wars. And they made more wars.

“Tyrion suggested you were ignoring us in your own conviction,” Arya whispered, “I didn’t want to believe it.”

He smiled bitterly and gazed Davos, who looked uneasy and exhausted. If *Tyrion and Ser Davos are in the North, something bad is happening in the South.*

“Lord Bronn was assassinated,” he began, like if he was reading his mind. “It started with a disagreement with the Hightowers. I begged Tyrion to deal with it before it grows unstoppable…”

“And Bran?” he asked, suddenly confused. “Why Bran couldn’t stop this? He knows things, he…”

“Bran is trapped,” Arya shouted, sitting in front of him. “I had come because we need you to save our little brother,” she said, this time with childish despair.

Jon felt dizzy; there was so much in between, that, nothing really mattered for him. Why they made Bran king? Why they made promises they couldn’t fulfill? Why he killed her if Westeros was going to be in war again?

He sighed. He wanted no more wars. He wanted her to come and set all of them on fire.

“Jon,” Arya called, taking his face to unite their gazes, “please, Jon. Come back to us. You are not
“I don’t know what I am,” he confessed, struggling to keep his eyes open and focused.

“You are a Stark, you always will be.”

Jon looked down, his eyelids too heavy and his strength going weaken.

“I saw her,” she said.

Silence fell upon them, and he long stared at her, trying to figure out what she was trying to say.

“The scar here,” she pointed out her face, “she made it.”

All of sudden he felt the pain again, cutting out his chest and choking him. He stood up and walked outside the cave, where Ghost was resting. He didn’t notice but his loyal companion was getting old, not hunting or exploring like he used to.

“Jon,” Arya followed him. “I tried to end her.”

He turned around to contemplate her.

“She’s different now,” she admitted almost disappointed, “I could barely cut her arm. I don’t know where she gets it, but it’s…getting powerful than ever.”

“You also believe I lied and let her go away?” he inquired, more than tired.

“No, I believe you” she assured, advancing slowly to touch him. “Besides, I saw the scar in her chest.”

He was about to faint when Ser Davos appeared from nowhere to catch him.

“Hey, lad. You need proper food!” he scolded him. “You can’t stay here any longer; even your wolf is dying.”

Jon knew that his strength was disappearing after years of stillness and apparent times of peace. Even he had left his sword with Tormund, he was not going to face any enemy who wanted to take his life. He wanted things to be this way.

Jon swallowed, a though rounding his mind. “How is that you escaped from her?” he asked. “How is that she didn’t kill you?”

Arya frowned. “I don’t know. She hit me with her sword and…”

“Her sword?” he questioned with a simper on his face, “she barely knew how to grab one.”

“Everyone can learn. The point is that she put me in a ship and let me go,” she finished.

Jon felt dazzled with so much information. If she didn't hurt Arya if she didn't come back to Westeros if she didn't come looking for him, then why did he killed her?

“Jon, Jon come back to me,” Arya called him. “Bran is in danger.”

“What?” he could not understand.

“They took him,” she replied, desperate to make him go conscious.
All of them kept playing their game of thrones while a major threat was raising beneath their noses. A story he already heard.

Apparently, everything began when Tyrion gave Highgarden to his friend, a former sellsword named Lord Bronn of Blackwater, and the Hightowers were not happy about it. Even Jon could understand how wrong the situation was. After it, this Lord Bronn began to spend the little wealth Cersei left, in the reconstruction of the brothels at King’s Landing. This last thing infuriated the other Wardens, and they insisted to have him out of his place in the small council. Tyrion downplayed the problem until the houses in The Reach began to rise against the Crown.

Meanwhile, the Westerlands had his own problems with the succession of Casterly Rock and the issue with the gold mines, which were empty for a long time. Tyrion was rejected by the vassals of House Lannister, so he could not put a foot near his home, not even to assist the burial of his late sister and brother. His aunt, Lady Dorna, pushed the claim of her remained daughter, Janei Lannister, as the new Lady of Casterly Rock, and things could've ended up there if Tyrion wasn’t a prideful moron. He insisted on being the last male Lannister and admitted he contributed to slow down the Dragon Queen campaign to give a chance the Lannister armies. This last piece of information was something he had suspected long ago but never voice out believing it improbable.

The independence granted to the North eventually led to the Iron Islands and Dorne to seek for seceding. The letter did it more practically: no one dared to face the only kingdom with its armies unscathed.

The major threat came from the Iron Islands, where a man dubbed Crow’s eye, refused to accept the terms with which Yara Greyjoy arrived after Bran’s coronation. They rebelled against her and imprisoned her, this Crow’s eye declared himself as the Salt King, and allied with the different clans in the mainland to assaulted and pillage the Westerlands and rebuilt their fleet. The man indeed kept growing infamous between those discontents with his brother’s reign. A new form of rebellion arose from there.

Between the clashes in The Reach after Lord Bronn’s death, and The Westerlands’ highborn ignoring the invasion in their own villages, the problem in Stormlands seemed almost a mere disagreement.

At first, Gendry wasn’t well received. After all, a queen who ended up not ruling at all legitimized him. Nonetheless, with the help of Ser Davos, he proved himself valuable and begun the rebuilding of the fleet. Unfortunately, after the attack of Crow’s Eye in King’s Landing, Gendry and the Stormlands were exposed.

What a stupid idea was putting a King without armies in the throne, he thought.

In the north there had been no such uprisings yet, instead, the spring disease was unrelenting, and its damage extended through all the population, low and highborn. The stocks were scarce with the wars arousing in the south. *Death was everywhere again.*

The Free Folk were now living in the empty castles Sansa offered them after the spring disease went worse and they needed the assistance of a Maester. Even little Dewyn went infected but, luckily, could beat it.
Tormund and Val kept trading in White Harbor, but the business was getting hard since the ships from Essos stopped coming after a new campaign began in Essos and the Free Cities were intervened.

They tried to hunt and work for the Northern Lords but the gods were not favoring the land for some reason, and the crops were getting less and less every time. Even the animals were moving south, while the people kept coming north avoiding the wars.

A thought crossed through his mind: a broken oath before the heart tree.

V

A weakened Ghost delayed their step, and it took them almost a month to reach Winterfell. Arya never hid how annoyed she was, but never said a single thing neither.

“West of Westeros is east of Essos. Our world is round,” Arya mentioned when he asked about her adventures on the other side of the world. "I spent moons touring those lands, if I told you half of what I saw, you would never believe me."

"I think I've seen enough," he replied.

Between one and another anecdote, they reached the moment she found her again. "She has more dragons," she said, "of the size of a cat when I saw them, but they almost burn me alive. I found her in Yi Ti."

He put all his attention on her.

“She doesn't even need more than one dragon, you know? Imagine everything she would have done with three and the things she will do with six. ”

"Perhaps her disadvantage is that she had no other riders," he said.

She looked at him with narrowed eyes, "Luckily."

"Didn't you think it was risky and stupid to try to attack her?"

"I thought about you, Bran, and Sansa. We are a pack remember? We must protect ourselves. ”

It sounded odd to him the mention of that when each of them was at a different point of the map.

“I didn't think I'd go back to Westeros, much less to Winterfell. Then I heard it for the first time. ”

"To who?"

“Bran. One of his ravens perched on a tree branch and looked me into the eye, so I just knew it. I had to kill her before she becomes too powerful and stoppable. I would be more effective than you, of course.”

Jon tried to ignore the discomfort it caused him to hear Arya talk about killing. He knew that his little sister was not a lady precisely but he had never heard her speak so lightly about murdering.

“I entered her solar, passing her guards was a joke. Luckily, Drogon was hunting, or so I imagine the beast does when he's not with her. I met the little dragons there.”
Arya smiled at the memory, but regretfully.

“Those beasts are beautiful when they are that small. I saw them and for a moment I remembered when we used to play and imagine riding dragons when we were kids, do you remember it?” Her face darkened before he could reply that he also does it. “But then I also recalled that day at King’s Landing, so I grabbed my dagger to cut off their heads. Before I could do it, one of them breathed his flames at me, too weak to burn but enough to throw me back. ”

Jon tried to imagine the scene, but he had never seen a dragon of that size.

“The Dragon Queen appeared and I tried to go for her but she defended herself and put this scar on my face. I could barely brush her arm with the dagger when the little dragons attacked me only with their claws.”

Jon exhaled, dumbfounded with the story.

“His guards held me back, and I thought she was going to cut my throat, but she just took her sword and hit me with the pommel. When I woke up, I was in a ship that took me to several ports until it left me in White Harbor, they did not allow me to leave the cells at any time.”

"Why do you think she spared your life?” He asked.

"I don't know, Jon,” she replied. “But I don't want to trust her. I have heard the things she has done with all those who opposed her in Essos. I was there when King’s Landing was slaughtered; she’s not a good person.”

Back in Winterfell, he saw the scorpions resting intact upon the walls. They ended up being useless, no matter what purpose intended to serve. In one of her letters, Sansa confessed to him that she regretted to purchase them. He thought that she needed a better adviser by her side.

Will Manderly received them in the courtyard and he could see that man was relieved to see him. They have not had any contact in the past, but the little he knew about him is that his temper was fragile. The Northern Lords must have made his life impossible.

“How is she?” he asked.

“Happy to be with her family again,” he replied, ignoring the fact that he, as her husband, was her family too.

Arya crossed the halls, ignoring the royal treatment. When they get to the Great Hall, he saw Tyrion Lannister settled in a corner watching outside the windows.

“The bastard of Winterfell!” he exclaimed, without bothering to hide his early drunkenness.

Jon walked closer, “The dwarf of Casterly Rock” he replied. There were no smiles between them, this time.

“Time has no passed for us, right?” he admitted, “you are still a brooding man and I’m still incompetent.”

“Where’s is the Queen?” Arya interrupted to ask.

Tyrion smirked, “Which one?”
“I’m sorry,” Will intervened, “I have been informed she’s resting in her chamber, you know with her state…”

Jon heavily sighed, losing his patience.

“Bu-but we are here to extend you the regency, my Lord Brother – I mean cousin” Will explained, trailing off with his words. He took out of his coat a parchment. “This is the Queen’s will, where she declares her cousin Aegon of House Targaryen, son of Lyanna Stark, her regent.”

Jon felt uncomfortable with the mention of his real name. He stepped forward and took the parchment from Will’s hand. There were just a few Lords gathered, most of them were not happy with his return. He wondered what kept bothering the most, his lineage or his constants broken vows.

“It’s good to see you again, my Lord,” someone said while he was sitting on the throne of his sister. A Lord Hornwood, he believed.

He nodded, politely. “What’s the situation?”

As soon as he asked this, he regretted it. The Lords had multiple grievances to express, at it seemed like if they'd waited too much time to speak them out loud. His mind was still in another place, but he was careful to show himself interested.

“Why Edmure Tully has stopped sending grains?” he asked.

“Your sister insulted him some years ago,” Tyrion spoke, still cornered near the window.

Jon closed his eyes, lamenting it.

“And what about Bran?” Arya inquired, “When are we going south to save him?”

The northerners just stared at her with curiosity.

“He is Ned Stark last son!” she exclaimed, furious for not being taken seriously. “We can’t let him just die!”

“He is already dead, princess,” Lord Hornwood said, wary with his tone. “Our troops are not ready for a war against the rebels, less to spend a moon traveling to King’s Landing. Our stores are depleted.”

Arya turned to Jon with fear and disbelief on her face.

“Jon,” she pleaded.

He felt tired and hopeless, longing for the solitude that surrounded him in the cave.

“I will deal with this matter the best I can, then I will march south with any man who wished to follow me. I am an exiled man, my Lords. We all know I am here only because the situation requires it.”

He then requested to know how many southern people were moving south. Affected by said amount, he recalled that day in White Harbor when he saw some of them. Lord Glover insisted on putting a patrol in the frontier between both Kingdoms, but they did not have the men for that neither he felt was something fair. He remembered how desperate were the Free Folk to cross the Wall to escape the dead. He won’t do that with the southerners running from war.
He needed to know who this Crow’s Eye was, and how in hells they took the Red Keep with his brother still inside.

“You know, the tunnels under the Red Keep. They knew about them,” Tyrion bitterly replied. “Your brother never left his royal bedchamber. Ser Podrick, the poor lad he...was with him,” Tyrion looked down to his feet. “When we tried to get to them it was too late. At least for Podrick.”

Everyone in the Great Hall fell in silence. They all had heard about the attacks of Crow’s eye and his men, which was almost mysterious as himself.

“How do we know if King Bran is still alive?” asked Lord Manderly, visibly upset.

“He is!” Arya shouted. “He speaks to me.”

Everyone turned around a looked at her, she felt suddenly too conscious of herself.

“You all know he is the Three-Eyed Raven.” She said.

“What’s a three-eyed raven?” asked someone at the bottom, but no one really paid attention.

“If he is this powerful creature, who knows everything, why he didn’t prevent from all of this to happen?” asked Lord Hornwood and other Lords assented to his question.

Jon, Tyrion, and Davos downed their gazes, wondering the same to themselves.

“If King Bran is a prisoner, then the South is headless”, someone said.

“Every domain it’s on its own, as it should be,” Lord Glover pointed.

“Every man is now on its own,” Jon replied before dismissing everyone and retired to his old bedchamber.

VI

King’s Road – 311 A.C

Sansa gave birth to a healthy boy she named Eddar and just like with his mother before him, bells rang all day in celebration. The northern kingdom cheered in the name of the crown prince, and Jon resigned his regency seeing there was nothing else he could do.

Still, there was the problem with Bran’s rescue and Jon could not help feeling embarrassed in asking the Free Folk to fight for him, one more time. Tormund did not hesitate for a second, but the other men were tired of war, and only a few agreed to go. He understood and thanked them anyway.

They took the King’s Road to the Riverlands, where Arya would try to reason with her uncle Edmure and maybe get more men. Well, she said that but Jon didn't doubt that her little sister was desperate to rescue Bran, and she wouldn't hesitate to use less conventional methods to convince him.

In the road, thoughts overwhelmed him while remembering the last time he was there. At that time, he had believed he would not come back north, just as when he departed with the Free Folk
believing he would never cross south again. So why did he keep living the same story again? Why did the wars have no end? He wanted no more wars.

He remembered his conversation with Tyrion, back in Winterfell.

"And now?" He asked in a low, troubled tone. "Do you think it was the right thing?"

Tyrion, who was still emptying the wine reserve, took a big sip from his goblet and replied, "I told you to ask me in ten years."

Jon didn't need ten years to know that it was the worst decision he could have made. He should have let her reduce Westeros to ashes until no one would dare to make war again. He should have persuaded her to forgive the lives of her sisters, use the opportunity she was giving him to rule together.

Any option seemed better now that everything was said and done, Westeros in ruins and she gods know where doing who knows what.

The last thing he heard about her was that she was taking almost every city in Essos with fire and blood. Her plan did not change after all. Maybe they would be lucky, and once she ends with the east, then she will look west.

“She removed those assholes from the Iron Bank, you know,” Davos told him one night at supper, “they were about to bring mercenaries to King’s Landing, but she finished them all before that can happen. I thought she would come for us later, but she didn't.”

He wanted to keep asking about her campaign in Essos but the idea kept smiting him as if she somehow was yelling from the other side of the world that she was right and they were wrong. He desperately wanted to know what she was thinking. When he took the decision, she was a true believer and completely sure to keep going and build a world of ashes.

“They said every time a Targaryen is born the gods toss a coin and the world holds its breath,” had said Varys.

“She’s not her father,” he defended her.

“Not, she’s far prettier,” Sansa insisted.

The truth was that he'd never truly knew her, at all. He'd loved her, he'd mourned for her and gladly waited for her to make the sky fall upon him. But she was now not caring about his existence and it was worse than dying again. It made his sacrifice mean nothing. She was mocking on all of them.

Harrenhal

They took settlement in Harrenhal and send informants to prevent any confrontation with an army they cannot face with their numbers. Arya wanted to go, insisting that Bran was calling her but he convinced her to wait.

“I spent my childhood in these lands,” she said, looking through the windows. “Did I tell you that I met Tywin Lannister here?”

Though he was no longer his regent, Jon kept reading and writing reports for Sansa, who was still
concern about the deficient storages in Winterfell. They had never been under this pressure before, not even when the dead were coming, and the Northerner Lords abandoned him to surrender his crown. He even laughed at the idea of being a King again. It was an awful job.

“No, you never mentioned it,” he responded, stunned with that sudden commentary.

She walked and sat in front of him. “I tried to fool him, making him believe I was low born, the child of some unnamed peasant. I served his suppers and sometimes he would invite me to eat while he stood in that same place,” she pointed out to the window, “and teach me things about legacy.”

Jon swallowed, “It’s seemed an interested a man.”

“He was,” she said with a tiny smile that soon went gone, “also he killed Robb and my mother.”

“Robb was killed because the Bolton betrayed him,” he added.

Arya nodded, “I’m glad Tyrion killed him, though,” she said with her gaze stuck in the night sky, “I never wanted to come back, you know?”

Her confession took him aback. He sighed and rubbed his eyes.

“I didn’t want to cross the Wall neither,” he replied in the same brooding tone, “When I said goodbye to you, I really thought it was going to be the last time we see.”

She smiled, “yes, I believed it too,” she said with her stare lost in the night sky. “Don’t you ever asked yourself why?”

“Why what?”

“Why we couldn’t go back to be a family?”

“Perhaps we found a family in other places,” and with this, a dangerous thought crossed his mind, but rapidly avoided it.

“I didn’t found it,” she admitted. “I spent so many years alone and the things I had done…” she trailed off, “sometimes I wonder what Father would have wished for us.”

The mention of Ned Stark made him shiver. He couldn’t stand the idea of what his uncle would have thought of him now.

“How it happened?” he asked, out of sudden. “I meant how it was? That day in King’s Landing, when he was killed.”

Arya face changed to seriousness, her hand poised on Needle’s hilt.

“I was a child,” she began, “it was awful. Our people were entirely massacred, the peasants cheering and calling him a traitor while Sansa was being held by a golden cloak and screaming I… I was standing in Baelor statue when I tried to get there a saved him. But Yoren stopped me.”

He barely could remember the face of the man he knew all those years ago, in their way to the Wall.

“I didn’t see it, all I could see where the birds flying above in the sky,” she said and looked at him, “Sansa did.”
Jon held his breath, “yes, she told me.”

“She’s brave, you know. The bravest.”

He believed so, too. Both oh his sisters had survived more than he could ever do.

“I didn’t know your Dragon Queen also saw her friend being beheaded,” she suddenly commented, and his heart almost stopped. “She was pretty, the girl that came with her. We spoke a few words, back then.”

Jon has gone through that path almost every night since it happened. The death of Missandei of Naath, a woman who was freed a then chained again, was the last kick Daenerys needed to unleash all her fury towards Cersei. He would be lying if he says that he didn’t know it.

“You said she is a bad person.”

Arya stood and walked towards the window, “She is. I know it because I am a bad person, too.”

Jon stared at him with confusion, “what are you trying to say?”

Arya sighed. “If I had had a dragon when they executed father, King’s Landing would have burned long ago.”

Jon felt sick again, his supper barely retained in his stomach.

“I killed her because I was afraid of her and the harm she could have done to you.”

“I know, Jon.” She calmed him. “I’m trying to be honest. Not to judge you.”

Jon threw his head back, feeling that pain coming again and hitting hard in his chest, suffocating him. He knew this, why it did surprise him? He had pondered over those facts, repeatedly, that something within him was no working anymore.

“I also went there,” she said, her voice childish as he liked to remember. “I also I wonder what could have happened if I had tried to be her friend,” she allowed herself a glimmer of a smile. “Might she would have let me ride one of those beasts.”

She must have seen his eyes going down with pain and tiredness because immediately went by his side and hugged him.

“She made her decisions, Jon,” she tried to comfort him, but he was already done. “And you did the right thing.”

“We all made our decisions,” he replied before getting up and leaving the room.

The next morning, the informants arrived with interesting news. King’s Landing is a dead city. Even more dead than already was. Though he spent the last six years away from the south, people had told him about the unsuccessful attempt to bring life in the city after Drogon’s rampage.

The news of her resurrection, or what unbelievers like to call "her recovery", the citizens of King's Landing were unable to stay there any longer with the continuing fear that the wrath of the Dragon Queen could fall back upon them. In addition to the terrible administration of Lord Bronn, King's Landing became an inhospitable place even before Crow’s Eye could take the city.

“How is that they are gone?” he asked, skeptical.
“Completely gone, my Lord,” the other man responded. “The city is uninhabited.”

“They must have gone South, to Storm’s end,” Davos opined with such concern in her tone. He was worried for Gendry, and Jon could see Arya swallowed hard too.

They gathered around a map in the main hall while the informants detailed more about their expedition.

“Bran is still there,” she assured.

“Princess, there’s something else you must know,” said the soldier with certain fright.

“What?”

They looked at each other nervously.

“Some villagers had heard rumors about persons who tried to go inside the castle,” he hesitated, “and they never come back.”

“So are they confined in the Red Keep?” asked Davos.

“That’s not the way the Ironborn do their pillage,” assured another soldier.

“These are not just the Ironborn,” interrupted the other informant. “They had come with peasants and other villagers. Some were men who rebelled against the highborn in The Westerlands and The Reach. Really infuriated people, they said.”

Jon did not understand how the Lords managed to get into another civil war that soon.

“Ironborn style or not, I’m not waiting anymore. My brother is there!” Arya shouted.

“Princess,” called Lord Mazin, of the few Northern Lord who agreed to come. “You can’t risk yourself; we’ll send a ranger first.”

Jon looked around and saw that the men were suddenly afraid. He, himself could not buy the idea that Crow’s Eye assaulted the city without hurting Bran.

“I can do this alone, I will be the ranger.” She declared, looking straight to the eyes of the men in the room “and stop calling me princess, the only reason I am here is to save my little brother’s life.” She finished.

“She’s right; I haven’t summoned you to fight another senseless battle. I will need you to get back safe to Winterfell.”

“Are you mad?” Lord Mazin questioned, again, “You are royalty!”

“I am not,” both responded, at the same time.

VII

King’s Landing

Tormund had insisted on going with them but Jon had protested, not wanting the Free Folk again exposed to another unnecessary battle against an enemy who outnumbered them, to save his
brother who, in the end, was the King of the kneelers. Jon made them wait in the near forest while they entered the city through the King’s Gate.

They waited until the sun was about to set so they could get into the city with the help of natural light, and then escape from it in the darkness.

There were just a few peasants in the surroundings, but the city itself was dead. For him, it was hard to remember King’s Landing exactly, but still, some distressing memories hit in his mind.

“This is the city she burned?” asked someone in the group, trying to be cautious not to let Jon hear, though he did.

“Yeah, dragons do that,” replied another.

When they approached the gates, they opened with the right thrust and, it surprised them. Both of them took their swords and prepared themselves for anything to happen, but they only found deserted streets, ravaged buildings, and complete silence.

They stayed on alert while advancing through the unscathed city streets and it took them an hour until finally arrive at the half-restored Red Keep.

“From here is easy, we just have to get to him,” Arya whispered.

He did not understand what she considered easy.

“Did he speak to you again? Tell you where is he now?” Jon asked, inspecting around.

Arya denied, “We’ll start in the obvious place, first. The throne room.”

“There’s still one?” he inquired, without awaiting a response.

He found it ironical how this place used to be impenetrable, meant to serve as a great defense against sieges. Yet it fell in Robert’s rebellion, again when Drogon burned the city and one more time when Crow’s Eye assaulted it with his men. It was no easy for them to get in, but they eventually find a path inside that Arya remembered from the last time.

Jon couldn’t help but asked himself why Arya didn’t mention her intentions to kill Cersei during the planning of King’s Landing siege in Winterfell. She could have helped with the matter and avoid a massacre.

“This place will never be livable, again,” she said after grabbing a torch from a wall. The floor was full of vegetation as if it was left to get rotten.

He nodded, but he has never seen the castle in its former glory. When he came, there were just ruins left, and when he departed, the ruins still were there.

“Bran?” Arya shouted, out of sudden. “Bran, is it you?” she asked to no one. He heard nothing.

“Where he is?”

“In the throne room, I told you,” and a great smiled appeared on her face.

They ran to the place in question, finding more destruction and abandoned arrangements. Jon thought he saw bloodstains on the ground but Arya didn’t stop so neither did he.

When they arrived, they slowed their steps and pushed the doors. What they saw shocked them.
The room was in complete gloom and covered with branches that assimilated the thick roots of a tree. But there was no tree above the castle. Jon stared at the ceiling but only found darkness.

He'd sensed something immediately and should have done something right there. Instead, he kept still.

“What in the seven hells is this? Bran!” Arya screamed, “Bran! Where are you?”

They heard no answer. Arya walked forward, careful not to trip over any of the intertwined branches that seemed to end nowhere. He followed her but still felt oddly anxious.

“You are a good sister, Arya Stark,” they heard and startled.

“Bran?” Arya asked, trying to find where the voice came but it felt like an echo inside their heads.

“You are loyal until the end,” the same voice repeated, monotonous as it was the last time he heard it.

“Bran, tell us where you are, we came to save you,” he pleaded, preparing to use Longclaw.

“You can’t save who don’t want to be saved.”

Jon and Arya looked at each other in confusion.

“You are noble and honorable, Jon Snow, Aegon Targaryen” this time the sound felt dark. “Trying to protect the realm, from ice and fire, the great purpose you had to serve.”

Arya frowned and kept staring everywhere until she found a little moonlight coming from an overture between the branches on the wall, where used to be a large window.

“It’s not Bran, it’s…”

“The three-eyed raven,” Arya completed the sentence. “Have you summoned us here for some reason?” she adventured.

“Everything has a reason, evil or good.” It responded.

At that moment, Jon knew they needed to get out. He tried to reach Arya’s hand but she kept moving forward, determined to leave this place with Bran by her side.

“Arya we must go,” Jon rustled.

“You can’t go, Aegon,” the Raven voiced, “you are the shield that guards the realm of men, and I need that shield to be removed now.”

That was all they needed. Arya walked backward, protectively on Jon’s front.

“What you did with Bran?” she inquired with an upsetting tone, “What you want from us?”

“What I needed from you, Arya Stark, you have already given me.”

No, Jon thought, this must be a nightmare. I must be in the cave, still waiting for her.

“Oh, dear heart of yours, the humans, who will not private itself from pain and passion,” the Raven chanted like a song, “a man who desired a woman, a kid who just wanted to be a knight, a woman deprived of her lover’s embrace just to die a few days later in that same thing she wanted.”
Jon felt tears falling in his face, the pain hitting in his chest stronger than ever.

“I was expecting that the flame reignited would come and finish what she started, but the same heart that burned with life once, now has left the ice to consume that passion.”

Arya grabbed Jon’s hand and pressed it, trying to comfort her brother’s pain. She shook her head in conflict and denial.

“You were the one who wanted me to kill the Dragon Queen, right?” she questioned with little doubt, “it wasn’t Bran.”

“You made an excellent job killing the warrior of ice,” he stated, amused. “But you failed to kill the warrior of fire, and she has grown more powerful than ever. Will the shield protect the realm again? Or is this shield too weak to face his destiny again?”

Jon felt more distant the more he spoke, and he wanted to run away but something was keeping him quiescent.

“Yes, he is. The shield is broken and the warrior of fire will return. Good luck I found a new contender to play this new game.”

“Jon, let’s go,” she begged.

The two were too distracted to realize that the branches had curled at their feet. When Arya looked up at the ground and saw themselves trapped, she looked perplexed at Jon, who was still mindless in realization.

She let out a choked breath and her eyebrows arched in dry astonishment.

They were in a trap.

The creaking of the branches was the last thing she heard before being raised in the air, away from Jon. The grip broke her bones, or so she thought it was the great pain she felt before her strength vanished until she only saw how, beneath her, Jon seemed unchanging.

“Jon!” she called with her tiny voice. “Go!”

But Jon couldn’t move.

“Did you want to know what Ned Stark once told to the Kingslayer, here in this same room, exactly where you killed your queen, Jon Snow?” asked the Raven, they couldn’t name Bran to that thing anymore.

Jon contracted his entire face while tears fell down his cheeks as he watched immovably one of the branches approaching his hand.

“ Took my hand, Jon,” he asked, “if you want to see what your father would think about you, take my hand.”

A part of him that was still himself, told him to ignore it, that he didn't need to know that. But like the nights of isolation beyond the Wall, and the mortification that he imposed to himself every day since it happened, Jon walked towards that place again for his own.

He proceeded to take the branch that was offered to him, his vision turning dark.

Jon did not know where he was standing but clearly saw Lord Eddar Stark walking towards the
same room he was just a moment ago. Just that now, the room was clean, unbroken and whole.

The Iron Throne was still there when the gates were opened, and in the steps above, was waiting a young, double handed Jaime Lannister. He granted Ned, with a nonchalant tone, thanking the gods he was now there. His father answered with his always reluctant, strong accent, something about Jaime always being there to protect the throne.

They started to look at each other with less politeness, but Jaime somehow managed to keep looking unworried how he remembered the Lannister was the first time they met in Winterfell. Then the chatting turned about the Mad King.

“And later when I watched the Mad King die, I remembered him laughing as your father burned. It felt like justice,” he concluded.

Jon swallowed hard seeing how his father kept contemplating the man with such incredulity that it felt like he was about to smile.

“Is that what you tell yourself at night? You’re a servant of justice?” he asked with contempt, “that you were avenging my father when you shaved your sword in Aerys Targaryen’s back?”

If he could have moved at all, surely he will be stumbling in the ground right there. He always knew how Ned Stark despised this man. He already assumed what he would have thought of him.

“Tell me, if I’d stabbed the Mad King in the belly instead of the back, would you admire me more?” required Jaime, still arrogant and assured.

Suddenly his father was not looking at Jaime anymore, but beyond him and straight to Jon’s eyes. He felt himself choking.

“You served her well when serving was safe.”

Jon wanted to go.

“Tell me, Jon,” said Ned Stark approaching him slowly, leaving the Kingslayer behind, until he fell on the steps and his father stared him from above, “what you tell yourself at night? That you were protecting your family when you shaved your knife in Daenerys Targaryen’s heart?”

“I chose duty, father,” he excused, sobbing.

“Your duty was to stand by your Queen’s side,” he sentenced. “Love was the death of your duty, Jon.”

He screamed and appeared again in the Raven’s presence. Nonetheless before he could react, something dragged him back again into the dark.

He was gone from the Throne Room, back in Harrenhall. However, it was different because there was daylight. He heard some people speaking and walked towards a barn.

There was a woman with black hair similar to Arya but with eyes as dark as his. She was dressed in Knight’s armour and there was a tree on her shield. A laughing Weirwood tree. She was taking off the armour and pulling off in a lady’s dress when a man appeared behind her.

“What were you trying to gain?” the man questioned, taking her aback. He had white hair and dark violet eyes.
“Prince Rhaegar,” she responded surprised, trying to cover herself. “I mean, Your Grace.” She bowed.

So, this is where everything started. Why the Raven was showing him this?

The man smiled charmingly. “Lady Lyanna Stark, may you answer me why were you trying to do back there? You sure know how to make an appearance that even my father felt attracted to this…” he took the shield. “Laughing tree?”

“It’s a Weirwood Tree, your Grace,” she said still trying to avoid a state of complete nervousness. “From my homeland, I ask for your pardon, I did not intend to offend you or your father. I was trying to protect the honor of my friend, he…”

“What friend?” he asked smirking. “Howland Reed. He was attacked by those men I defeated…” she could not finish when they heard someone approaching. Rhaegar took Lyanna and the armour parts with him and made her hide in one of the stalls.

A group of knights appeared.

“Your Grace, you should not be here alone.” One of them said.

Rhaegar smiled uninterested.

“The King had sent me, Ser,” he replied with his hands intertwined behind him. “To find this mysterious knight, the knight with the laughing tree but he just…has just laughed of all of us.”

Lyanna smile from where she was.

Jon awake again between the branches. There was a fire.

“Jon!” he heard Arya's distant voice calling, “Jon!”

He came back to his senses and grabbed Longclaw, cutting of the branches from his feet. Arya was still up, trapped by a thick limb.

“You there, I see,” the Raven said but he was not listening anymore. “I’m glad you keep saving him.”

Jon started to climb the limbs, Arya's face going in ill blue from the lack of air. The fire climbing next to him but never so close to reach him. He cut the branch that held Arya but it seemed insufficient, an even more powerful grip than the one that tied him to the ground.

“Jon,” she whispered, “go.”

He shook his head, still trying to destroy the branch.

“I will make this easy for you, this time,” the Raven said to no one in particular. “But you know we see each other again. We always do.”

And with this, a branch pierced Arya's chest, and in a gasp, her sister smiled at him for the last time, muttering “go,”

He did not know how much time he kept still there, while Arya closed her eyes and disappear from his view. He fell again in the ground and all he could see was the fire burning the branches in the
He asked himself if this was what Robb felt during his war against Tywin Lannister, the incessant pounding in his head as scenes of the same moment repeated again, and again in front of him.

“You are a good sister, Arya Stark. Thank you.”

The blood coming out of her mouth as the branch dug into her chest and lifted it, just as he used to do when they were little.

He wished he could see her big gray eyes one more time. He wished he could’ve brought her bones with him and give her a proper burial in the crypts of Winterfell. But nothing has sense anymore.

The men gathered around the forest did not understand what had happened, there was no battle, and yet Jon Snow returned without her brother from the keep and without his little sister from King’s Landing. The Red Keep burning again behind him.

When he returned to Harrenhal, he directly climbed up to the highest tower and locked himself there to watch the moon while listening to the owls hooting and the wind whistling.

“You are the shield that guards the realm of men, and I need that shield to be removed now.”

Ser Davos was the only one who dared to knock on his door to found him lying on the wet, cold and dirty floor, with his face stained with the dry tears he didn't know he shed.

"Lad," he said softly, "Jon" called again, but he ignored.

“You are a good sister, Arya Stark. Thank you.”

"Jon, please, men are upset and do not know what to do," the old knight insisted, but he remained lying on the ground facing the moon, which calmed him down and reminded him of the snow, to Ghost's fur, and Daenerys' hair scattered on her pillow in the mornings to White Harbor.

He wanted no more war. He wanted to go back to the bonfire and listen to Tormund tell his stories, hear Dewyn's laugh and answer his questions, teach the children about the use of swords knowing they would never use them and wanted to see Val smile and subtly flirting at him.

He wanted Arya to be alive, like she was just a night ago. He wanted Arya to be his little sister again, the one who will taunt Sansa and fled from the Septa’s lessons to watch the boys train.

"Jon!" Ser Davos shouted but he only heard a choked voice. "Jon!"

He didn't hear anything else.

VIII

Winterfell

By the time they returned to Winterfell, Jon realized that he had grown weary of seeing the walls decorated with scorpions. If it had been for him, he would have destroyed each of them at the same moment, but surely, the Queen in the North would disapprove of his actions, believing them necessary in case of any eventuality.

Now he knew that every effort was useless, and the best thing that could happen to them was
Daenerys coming to burn them all.

He wasted no time with the formalities and as soon as he entered the Great Hall, he informed everyone about the events at King’s Landing, not caring if they believed him or not.

Sansa was stunned, and he didn't have time to comfort her because he decided to ignore everyone and prepared himself to depart to Castle Black with Tormund. Before leaving, he wanted to say goodbye to Sansa and his nephew, but he found her in an intense argument with Tyrion.

"How did you not notice it before?" Sansa yelled, "why did you make him king?"

"If remember well, it wasn't just my suggestion that made him King!" Tyrion replied, his voice full of angst.

Jon ignored them and walked towards the crib where little Eddar was resting, fiddled with his little fist around his fingers.

He kept wandering in his dreams, remembering the calm sound of the wind, and snow falling from the sky. In those days his imagination was the place he frequented most, he liked to be there and ignore any intrusion.

"I said that day, Bran was not fit to be king and nobody listened to me!" Sansa emphasized again, coming and going around the room.

"How were we to know that something like that could happen?" Asks Tyrion defensively. Sansa continues to argue with him, his eyes swollen and his voice broken from so much crying. No one has dared to bother her these days; everyone focused on facing a new reality.

He limited to farewell and hoped to never see them again.

**Castle Black**

He wanted to return to the true North, but the Free Folk felt safer in this side of the Wall. It was for what they had been fighting for many years, it did not surprise him. He returned to the Lord Commander's Tower thought the Night’s watch did not need one anymore.

The people there respected they need for solace, again. He spent much of his time just looking at the embers in the hearth.

They all were fools playing in the game of the Raven, and he played a fundamental part in it. Though the Red Keep burned, he did not believe it was over.

“You know we see each other again,” it assured him.

He wanted no more wars, he wanted Arya back, and he wanted so many things as he never had before. He was weary of this endless game.

A knock on the door pulled him off from his ramblings.

“Lord Crow,” Val said, entering without asking for his invitation. “I just wanted to know if you were still breathing.”
He smiled, “sadly.”

She leaned on the window’s apron. “I heard about what happened with your little sister.”

Jon sighed heavily and nodded.

“I had never heard about the Three-Eyed Raven.”

“I haven’t neither,” he confessed with the rough voice he hadn’t used in days. “I assumed he was
good, I mean- he was my brother.”

“You shouldn’t have trust in magic creatures, Snow.”

“I should not have done many things, I know,” he replied bitterly. “I should not have killed my
Queen, I should not have traveled to Dragonstone because if I remember well that’s what led to
give a dragon to the Night King, I should not have returned from the dead, I should not…”

Val approached him, “Stop, Jon. If you go on you will say that you should have not born.”

“I should not have,” he admitted standing in front of the fireplace, “My parents were two fools who
run away a destroyed their families to conceive me. In addition, of course, they caused a war. My
entire existence it’s the epitome of disaster.”

Val emitted a long breathe and downed her gaze to the ground. “You kneelers complicate your
lives, too much.” She complained, “But I will risk and say that your existence is an excuse to
something greater than all of us.” She walked slowly towards him and put her hands on his chest,
staring with her glow blue eyes to him. “You have the greatest heart and you always know what’s
good.”

Jon felt uncomfortable with the little space between them but did nothing to move. Val's face was
gentle as he never saw before, and the closer she got the warmer he felt.

She kissed him, and he let her.

He had imagined this moment as something exciting but it didn’t feel like that. It felt empty and
wrong, but he could not stop. A part of him needed this type of touch and calm that only she could
provide. She won’t tell him that he was right, that he is the honorable hero everyone wanted him to
be. Being with her mean he was free to feel again, and not worry about what will happen tomorrow
when the world eventually ends.

He embraced it, waiting that someday that could erase the pain.

It seemed wrong and ironic dreaming with Daenerys that night, but he did. It was the first time in
which she was sitting on the Iron Throne, looking at him with an expression he had not seen
before, a mixture of indifference and confusion.

Her hands were resting on the armrests of the horrible chair as she stretched in and out the fingers
of her hand in a gesture that seemed curious, like if she was grabbing the air somehow.

He wanted to say something but before he could, fire emerged from the ground and burned him.

The sensation was so real that it made him wake up and scare Val. Neither of them had time to
react when they saw the fire coming out of the hearth and heading towards the walls almost
They took as much of their clothes as they could and ran away, Val grabbing his hand when he relented to look at the fire one last time.

The Tower almost was destroyed, and they had enough luck to cease the fire before it could reach an unstoppable scale. He never knew what caused it, but the last thing he remembered was putting his cloak too close to the fireplace.

“At least, I finally stole you,” Val said with a grin on her face.

Castle Black - 313 A.C

Jon and Dewyn were in the courtyard of Castle Black in their daily sword training. The little boy he knew a decade ago, now was a man in his almost twenty, the same age he was when he arrived in the same place for the first time.

Dewyn pushed him off when he was caught off guard.

“You are getting old, eh,” he mocked and Jon laughed. The other kids around them, completely amused. This was his little paradise, one no one had dared to touch yet. Still, he knew that nothing remains the same too long, and after settling permanently in the Wall, they needed to be prepared to cover any contingency.

“A convoy from the south!” alerted Ronik, the vigilant in the tower and one of the few men of the Night’s Watch that chose to stay.

He knew it couldn’t mean good and looked reluctant at Val who was training with the girls. The only visits they get were from the other Castles or the emissaries from the Queen in the North.

“Every time we received your sister’s men is to ask for a favor,” Val whispered, approaching to his side.

He hadn’t seen Sansa since Eddar last name day, which was five moons ago.

The gates opened for them and he was taken aback by the presence of his sister mounting a horse, which could mean nothing but a major mess. She slow down and get off the horse, standing still for a moment to see the reaction of the people gathered, but only the brothers of the Night’s Watch bent the knee.

Jon lifted an eyebrow. “I won’t be your regent, again,” he warned her before she can pronounce any word. He regretted in that right moment when her serious expression changed and angst replaced it.

“I haven’t come to ask you that,” she replied with a broken voice, “but I need you to return to Winterfell with me.”

Jon pinched his eyes in a gesture of great tiredness.

“They died,” Sansa stated with a mournful voice, “Will and Eddar,”

“What?” Jon asked, almost fainting. Val put her arm around him, and Dewyn made everyone leave.
“They both get that flux,” she replied bitterly. “I wanted to come and tell you myself.”

He swallowed hard and close his eyes, another pain hitting in the back of his mind. He loved that kid; he was going to be the great heir of House Stark.

“I’m not here to beg, Jon,” she specified, her hand folded in front of her in her always queen manners, “I am here to inform you that the north is suffering a slow death. Southron Lords had come to seek for asylum in Winterfell, their castles and fortress burned to the ground by this man who calls himself Crow’s Eye and his army of rebels.” She started to sob and for a moment, he remembered that little girl who would cry over Arya’s antics. “Soon he will have an enormous fleet and that is all he needs to, finally, assault our lands. My Master of War had died defending the borders. My Lord Husband is dead. I don’t need you to rule, I need you to command our forces. I need you by my side.”

Jon stood up and walked around, unbelieving his sister was here to ask the very same thing he had to avoid for almost ten years: war.

“It is your choice, but you know where they will come first,” she said, and he knew it was true. That is how Stannis Baratheon once did it.

**Winterfell**

There were too many people in the north, much more than it should be. It was the last land where people would thrive, but at the same time, it was the only place where they could still be alive.

This time he also found Sam between Sansa reduced court.

“Oldtown requested for Maester Wolkan and we made the exchange,” Sansa explained not that happy with the swap. Old Town was the only city still sustained by the Hightowers, with the help of the remained militia of the South.

Maester Tarly presented him his younger son little Jon, a chubby little boy who had the disgrace to carry his name, plus a bastard name. *I hope is a girl*, he remembered saying when he learned about Gilly’s pregnancy. Little Sam was also there, looking anything but similar to Sam and his boy.

Both of them with a bastard name.

“I was hoping that, eh, Bran would be legitimizing them someday,” Sam excused when he saw Jon’s annoyed expression.

“You should have married Gilly,” he scolded his old friend.

“I have a duty,” he replied, and Jon did not insist.

“Where’s Ghost?” Sam asked, changing the subject.

Jon felt the pain hitting again. “He passed away.”

Sam’s expression saddened. “Oh, Jon. I’m so sorry.”

“It’s okay, I guess,” he admitted, “he lived happily in the forest until his time came.”

Then he met Ser Davos, who was in charge of the northern fleet, and he explained to him about Crow’s Eye advances in the mainland. Apparently, the Ironborn focused on invading The Reach
and The Westerlands before slowly going south and north. They still couldn’t reach Dorne thanks to their alliance with Daenerys’ troops from Essos.

“What about the east?” he ventured, his face trying to be expressionless.

Ser Davos opened wide his eyes in response, “well, conquering is easiest for her with that big army she united in Essos.”

That last piece of information had surprised him.

“And do we know where is she, now?” he wanted to know everything but was avoiding to sound desperate.

“Yeah, we do,” he hesitated for a little, but after looking at him with a smirk on his face he said, “She has taken seat in Valyria. Sailors said it is a beautiful place now. The home of the known world, they called it. Still under restoration.”

Well, he thought, at least she ended in the place I believed she was after what happened.

“She has six dragons, you know,” Ser Davos continued, “all full grown.”

He must have shown a horrified expression because Ser Davos rapidly changed the subject, “they will be a problem for later, now we had to face this man, Crow’s Eye.”

“What do we know about him?” he asked.

“Well, he is a mysterious man. For what you had told me about what you saw in King’s Landing, it surprised me that he escaped alive.”

“He’s just a man.”

“A man who controls almost every land in Westeros,” Ser Davos made him remember.

“We can fight him if we have enough men; we need to find an alliance with the Riverlands and The Vale.”

Davos seemed reluctant and distant, weighing on other matters. “The conscripts are turning on their liege lords, Jon,” he explained, “It’s not easy to fight against the man who promises you complete freedom while your liege lord starves your family and you, while he kept protected inside a castle.”

Jon suddenly felt on the defensive.

“What kind of freedom is that if there’s not order? How many years these men think they will live under the rule of chaos?”

“I didn’t mean to offend you, Jon,” Ser Davos explained, “I’m just trying to say we need something else than fear to motivate these people. The enemy makes our soldiers ask themselves a simple question, what do we have to offer in return?”

Jon turned around a looked to the men gathered outside the walls of Winterfell.
He went to battle again.

This time the Northern forces aiding The Vale, after furious and hungry peasants deposed and beheaded Robin Arryn and Lord Yohn Royce. Ser Davos was right; Crow’s Eye was capitalizing the commoners’ anger to slowly conquering all Westeros.

He had not forgotten a single thing about the battlefield. He remembered how to fight, he remembered the enemy’s movement and he remembered how it made him feel to put an end to someone else’s life.

They lost too many men but the victory was theirs. For the first time, they face Crow’s Eye army and it was easy enough that he suspected they sent their weakest soldiers to exhaust them until the real warriors come.

He needed to return to Winterfell for recovery, and there he learned about a miraculous event.

“It is a power move,” Sansa said, struggling with the scroll between her fingers. “She’s showing off.”

“Showing off or not, you must admit it was what we needed to raise the morale of your starving kingdom,” Tyrion responded.

Daenerys had sent food supplies. Grains, barley, salted meat and a variety of spices from Essos that they had not seen in years since their ships stop coming.

Dear House Stark,

Take this gift as a gesture of gratitude from Queen Daenerys Stormborn, of House Targaryen, as a recognition for having bothered to feed her troops in their short sojourn in Winterfell during the Great War. Your Grace apologizes for the delay.

Princess Arianne, of House Yronwood. Realm of Valyria.

Sansa read the letter over, and over and he could not make her stop.

“Why the Princess of Dorne is with her?” she asked after reading the letter for a thousand time. “Is she her prisoner? A spoil after taking Dorne?”

“She hasn’t take Dorne, your Grace,” Tyrion clarified her.

“As she hasn’t taken the Free Cities?” she refuted. “She deposed and killed those who opposed her, and in their places, she put her loyalists.”

Daenerys didn’t establish herself as the queen of those cities, she put a council of former slaves and peasants who were chosen by their own people. The Common Council, they called it. The trade with the Free City became in something nearly impossible since the instauration of their government.

“You like it or not, she is more powerful than it was before. She could have sent his army and kill us all but she’s choosing to help.” Jon added.

“For what?” Sansa bitterly asked. “Are you still infatuated with her?”

He was about to respond when Tyrion shook his head and said, “Might, she feels guilty. Or maybe
she has found a way to obtain what she had always wanted,” Tyrion added.

That could be truth too, after all, he had wait all those years for her to come and finish what she started. He remembered the words of the Raven that day. *The shield is broken and the warrior of fire will return.*

He did not want to be a shield anymore.

“How much time this gift will endure?” he asked Sansa, who was working on the storage record.

She sighed, “Maybe six moons, optimistically speaking.”

Well, they would die from famine before Crow’s Eye could reach the north and do whatever they want with its people, in which case they would still be dead.

“How long it will take us a trip to Essos?”

Sansa and Tyrion looked at each other before returning their gazes at him, incredulity in their faces.

“You must be a madman!” Sansa shouted. “She will kill each one of us before we can even bow to her! Your head will be the first to burn!”

“Yeah, it’s a stupid idea, suggested by a stupid man” Tyrion replied with less concern, “yet, I had worst ideas.”

Jon ignored their disparagement, and went on with his explanation, “Most of the Lords, from The Neck above, wants our head in a peak. What is the difference between dying by dragon fire and dying when the rebels’ army arrives at our lands? At least in the first case, we will die doing something to actually save our people.”

Sansa kept denying it, “No, that’s my final word. I cannot willingly cross the Narrow Sea and hand my crown to Daenerys Targaryen. The Lords will never accept her, and she will burn them all for it.” “They will die or turn on us, anyway,” he stated.

“If you want my opinion-” Tyrion was about to say, but Sansa interrupted him.

“Your opinion had put us in this situation, if you are still alive it’s because I am the most merciful stupid Westeros has.”

Tyrion close is eyes, accepting the blunt truth. “The southern Lords will agree, that’s all I will say,” he said anyways.

“Not the northerners, they never will kneel before a Targaryen again,” Sansa assured and Jon couldn’t help but feel a double meaning in her words.

“They will if their Queen does it,” Jon finished.

**Great Council Meeting of 314 A.C**

This time they met in the Great Hall, where they prepared a round table so anyone would feel less than the other. Minor lords as Tyrion and himself, who at this point did not know who was for this people, were allowed to sit behind their respective liege lords and listen attentive but in silent.
There were just a few highborn left after the uprisings. From The Reach, Lady Rhea Florent, Sam’s aunt and former Lady of Hightower.

From The Westerlands, Lord Westerling became Lord Paramount, or at least he believed himself so, after marrying Tyrion’s cousin.

Lord Edmure Tully was there too, incredible unscathed after gaining the common folks’ favor by receiving them in Riverrun and ordering the same in any other fortress in the Riverlands who was not already assaulted. Lady Catelyn’s brother might despise him, but Jon admired the man in some form.

Lastly, the only living son of Yohn Royce claimed his place as Warden of the East and Lord of The Eyrie with little opposition.

What had surprised him the most was the presence of Brianne of Tarth, the former knight that served shortly in Bran’s reign. He hadn’t asked or been told about her whereabouts or why she resigned to her position in the small council, but when he saw the little boy with golden hair and green eyes walking by her side, he immediately knew it.

Winterfell was full of bastards.

After discussing about their alliance with the north, someone suggested to unite the armies under a same banner. Jon wanted to second this idea but Tyrion shot him a look that told to keep himself quiet.

“We have a Queen among us, if we have to choose another monarch then let’s choose Queen Sansa,” said Lady Rhea Florent.

He waited to see some type of joy on Sansa face but she remained indifferent, as if she considered it a ridiculous idea.

“Seven hells, no!” shouted Lord Westerling, “This is the same woman who seceded from the Seven Kingdoms, granted by her brother the King, causing the Ironborn to feel insulted as all of us felt, and then did nothing to aid when the war arouse.”

“Excuse me, my Lord but I had no business with the south affairs.” Sansa defended herself.

“Queen Sansa has nothing to do in this, but while I think she has a good heart and a strong mind, we can’t choose a Stark as our leader in those times. People already has rebelled against a Stark King. We need someone who can lead armies and warm peasants’ hearts,” intervened Lord Andar Royce.

“Well, we have another option,” Sansa started, “we need someone who could inspire and appeased the commoner, who are being deviously seduced by fake ideals. We need someone who can represent hope and, at the same time, have a claim.” Sansa stood up and looked at Jon, behind her. “My cousin Aegon Targaryen, who you know as Jon Snow, is this person we need.”

Had they told him this was their plan all along, he would have beheaded Sansa and Tyrion before the meeting. They were doing exactly the same thing, forcing him to do what he did not want to do, pushing him at the edge of the crag.

He would have walked away of the Great Hall if it wasn’t because all the Lords suddenly started to laugh hard and loud in unison.

“This bastard boy?” shouted Lord Westerling, “The man who supposedly killed Daenerys
“He’s not a bastard!” exclaimed Samwell, sat just steps away from him. “He is the son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark, and they were married by the Septon…”

He felt the urge to punch Sam.

“Rhaegar’s only wife was the dornish woman he abandoned” refuted Edmure Tully, “you can’t just annul a marriage, Elia Martell was alive when Rhaegar and Lyanna Stark ran away, making that marriage just a hoax for Rhaegar to deceive a young girl.”

Jon was feeling angrier the more they speak of him and their parents as if he was not right there.

“Only you northern fools could believe such a thing as truth. Had Daenerys Targaryen recognized him…” Lord Westerling suggested.

“He mounted one of her dragons,” Sansa insisted.

“As you said it, niece, her dragons,” Edmure shouted her off. “This oathbreaker here can’t prove himself a Targaryen. Still, if he is, he would be a bastard.”

“If you would let me speak from myself,” Jon started with a rough voice. “I have no interest in your crown or command your armies.” He walked nearer and looked at them. “But I want to stop this war and there’s only one way to do so…”

“Jon, no,” Sansa asked.

“You right. I can’t prove I am a Targaryen but if you still want a Targaryen so let’s go and bring her here.”

The room felt silent and uncertainty loomed over them.

“Well,” Lord Westerling began to say with his temper lowered, “I was not suggesting exactly that. I mean, she burned down King’s Landing after the city surrendered. She have quite a temper.”

“I heard about what she is doing in Essos and it’s not nice,” Lady Rhea added.

Jon suddenly felt hopeless. Sometimes he just wished for Daenerys to come and finished her job, but other times he would return to that day in King’s Landing and felt the suffocating air around him.

“You don’t need to worry about me, I don’t want to be a king,” he pointed out.

“May I have a word?” Tyrion asked and everyone turned around to see him, expressions weary and distrustful.

“That damn dwarf…” someone cursed.

“Lord Tyrion is under my protection, and he will speak.” Sansa warned and turned to see Tyrion with a gesture that told him not to make her look ridiculous.

“Let’s go to Braavos and deal with the Common Council, first,” he suggested.

Disorder settled amongst them again.

“Essos has a large army led by the Dragon Queen, they will kick us off.” “The Dragon Queen will
burn us alive.” “I will not kiss the feet of formers slaves!”

Jon pricked his eyes as his headache increased.

“My Lords!” cried out Ser Davos and everyone listen. “It’s a good idea. The Common Council is not Daenerys Targaryen.”

“How do you know that?”

“Because I am a sailor and I heard sailor’s stories about the current situation in Essos. Yes, it’s true. Daenerys Targaryen is a ruthless leader that will not hesitate to punish those she believes her opponents, but in those ten years, the incident has no repeated. King’s Landing was an unfortunate event, caused by Queen Cersei’s provocation.”

“The city was already surrendered, Ser Davos,” insisted Lord Royce.

Ser Davos looked defeated, “I know. I was there.”

“It was not just my sister’s fault,” Tyrion admitted. “That same day, hours before the attack, I…” he swallowed. “I freed my brother Jaime and sent him back to rescue Cersei. She must have known and burn the city to avoid her to scape.”

Jon knew Tyrion had freed Jamie but he didn’t know it was to save Cersei. He looked at him incredulously.

“Are you admitting, Lord Tyrion that you last act as her hand was betray and provoke her?”

“He also convince me to kill her,” Jon added, surprising everyone, including himself. He wasn’t thinking seriously, but at the end of the day Tyrion did exactly what he did: protecting the family that had provoke Daenerys’ rage. “We both must go and surrender ourselves after her. Might that will motivate her to return.”

“That’s absurd,” Sansa shouted. “You won’t do that.”

“I like that idea,” Lord Westerling said.

“Aye,” said the other ones at the same time.

Tyrion stared at him with a mixture of anger and contempt.

Sansa shook her head. “Not, we won’t do that.”

“I will,” he replied sharply. “Don’t you understand? I don’t want more war! I want to rest, and I want to responded for my crime against her.”

“You owe her nothing; you killed her because she went mad as her father before her,” Sansa tried to reason.

“I killed her because I was afraid of what she could have done to the people I love! If she would have told me that she will not hurt anyone of you, I will not have done no such thing.” He admitted in front of everyone. “Had I know what it would lead to, I would have never done. I would have rather see Westeros on ashes than going to war again.”

He did not wait for someone to yell at him, he just walked away.
315 A.C

Castle Black

When he told Val what he had planned to do, he expected a stab in his neck. Instead, she yelled at him, punch him repeatedly and then started to prepare herself to go with him, which was worse.

“Did you still love her?” she asked, her glassy blue eyes somewhere between ire and despair, taking him by the neck of his tunic.

“I had always been honest with you,” he said with his voice broken. “It’s not about love, it is my duty.”

“You won’t abandon me as you did with Ygritte and the Dragon Queen!”

“She is my blood and I killed her, I will go and face justice for my crimes,” he replied.

Val released her grip and stepped away, looking at him with disbelief and contempt. “I won’t be insulted, Jon Snow. You can’t leave me because of your duty. If you do so, I will kill you.”

Jon noticed she wasn’t being literal with her threat but some part of him knew she could be lethal.

Dewyn also insisted on going with them, a bit more interested in seeing the lands across the sea.

Jon had to report the situation to his people. He did not expect any of them to object, but many had insisted that if he left, the northerners Lords would try to displace them again beyond the Wall. They did not want to stay behind.

“I can’t take all of you with me to Essos,” he warned after showing them a map of the known world. They were not used to them.

“Is that place far from here?” asked Tormund.

“Yeah, there’s a large sea in between,” he pointed to the Narrow Sea.

“I would like to cross that sea,” he replied.

“It’s a long journey to Braavos; it will take us at least one moon.” He explained. “Its weather and people are different.”

Tormund laughed. “Little crow, I have faced an army of dead people, what’s water in comparison?” he rested importance, “The south is also different, and we did it pretty well.”

“This is still the North of Westeros,” Jon reminded it to him.

Tormund let out a great sigh and put a hand on his shoulder. “Look, Jon, these people have been following you since you saved them in Hardhome, you are something like our King. It won’t be your first suicidal mission.”

Jon had been hearing that kind of thing, that he was the new king beyond the Wall, for quite some time. However, between the Free Folk that title was meaningless, they don’t bend the knee, and a King was just a leader they chose at the moment they need guidance in a difficult situation. cActually, he had thought that Tormund fitted better in the role.
“There’s no guarantee that she won’t hurt you, or help us again,” he added, trying to forewarn of every scenario that could wait if they ever made it to the eastern continent.

“Our people did nothing wrong to her. If I remember well, she even let me fly one of those beautiful beasts,” he recalled, with a grin on his face. “Besides, you are unavailable now. Might I could warm that fire heart of hers, and who knows maybe someday we’ll see a child kissed by fire riding a dragon.”

Jon smiled at the suggestion, knowing that he was just being playful. Or not, who could know with Tormund.

“It won’t be easy.”

“Nothing is, but these are our people. And we want to live.”

Winterfell

He returned in time for the last meeting of Sansa small council, with the not so happy face of Lord Glover there this time.

“How many people are they?” asked Sansa, after he informed her about the addition of his people.

“Three hundred between men, women, and children,” he replied.

“Lady Rhea is bringing her people too, two hundred mouths. Not even a half of them soldiers…” she stated with concern, tired of organizing a mission of such magnitude. “We will need another fleet to transport these people, ours it’s not enough between the Northern Lords and the smallfolk.”

“Excuse, Your Grace,” Tyrion interrupted. “But we never talk about the smallfolk.”

“Some of them had requested a place,” she told him, and Jon empathized with her after a long time. “I won’t let behind those who want to come.”

“I know you want to protect these people, my Queen,” appeased Lord Manderly, Sansa’s father in law, and her constant shadow those days. “But we need to be realistic here. Those people won’t make it to the coming winter. Some endeavors are unreachable.”

“Endeavors?” Jon questioned, staring at the man.

“What kind of Queen I am if I abandon my people?” Sansa insisted with open disgust.

“A Queen who knows what to do to secure the future,” Tyrion responded, and Jon thought if he had told Daenerys the same.

“I insist, my Queen, you shall not form part of this mad attempt to bring the Dragon Queen back to our lands again,” barked Lord Glover, who kept being an unrelenting opposition to the mission. “We don’t need to exchange our enemies.”

“Daenerys Targaryen is not our enemy, at the moment,” Tyrion replied. “The other Lords are sacrificing just as much as the Queen. This is an attempt to save our lands.”

“Do not call yourself from here, dwarf! It is your family who almost kill all of us!” called out the northerner.
“While I still have my reservations on the matter, it was the Dragon Queen who avenged us,” added Lord Hornwood, “She almost kill every Lannister that was left. Our forces followed her command on the battlefield.”

“My Lords, we are not here to discuss what already has been dealt with. I gave my word to the southron lords,” Sansa stated with resolve. “Lord Hornwood is right, our soldiers chose to follow her once, and they will follow her one more time. I prefer her before this man we don’t know anything about.”

“Bu-my Queen!” repeated Lord Glover.

“Stop it! That it’s my last word, and you will obey Lord Glover,” she declared solemnly. And might was because she saw the man’s expression darken or it was a foresight decision, but Sansa then added. “I will name you my regent, Lord Glover.”

Jon looked at her in awe, sensing that nothing good could come from placing trust in that man.

They departed from White Harbor with half of the united armies from the north and south, leaving the other half behind to protect the borders and the smallfolk. Many of them had tried to percolate in the boats and protested when were brought down. Jon saw their emaciated faces and prayed that this mission could work, even if it meant that he would not return.

**Braavos**

He was surprised by how well they endured the long journey in the water. It was not an immense fleet, but still many people gathered to observe them when they arrived at the grandiose city of Braavos.

“I heard that she took Tycho Nestoris to the top of the titan, and burned him alive. Look, look, if you look carefully you will see that the rock is burned!” had said a man to another, probably from the Reach, Jon did not bother to know when they approached the coastlands.

Braavos was the first of the Free Cities she had conquered after taking back Bay of Dragons. She went straight to the ones who bet for Cersei in her war for the Iron Throne. He recalled the moment when Grey Worm executed the surrendered Lannisters on Daenerys’ orders.

Jon breathed the salty air and regretted being further and further from the cool climate of the North. The weather got wetter and the northerners had gradually abandoned their heavy skins and armours, while the southerners from the lands of The Reach and The Westerlands had more chance to show off their extravagant wardrobes.

Only a couple of free men and women accompanied him on the "royal vessel", those who had lived with him in Castle Black. On the nights, they were not included in the elegant feasts organized by Lady Rhea. However, they were happy waiting for new experiences on the other side of the "great water", as they called the Narrow Sea. He even saw Val listening Davos’ stories about free cities and their culture, with sincere attention.

On the other hand, Sansa spent most of her time fulfilling her duties as queen, tempering the feverish behavior of the Lords and attending Lady Rhea’s court. Jon wished he could help her but since everyone knew about his identity, his presence seemed to cause suspicion. He swore to hear the word "kinslayer" several times after crossing the halls.

He expected the landing more than anyone did.
When they stepped on the streets of Braavos for the first time, both Jon and Sansa had a moment. They looked at each other with eyes full of contained tears remembering that Arya spent part of her life in this same place. They stood on the top of a bridge and watched the horizon silently, mourning the sister they lost.

Val, Dewyn, Tormund, and Jon took their own way to explore the city, meanwhile, Tyrion, Sansa, and other Lords moved to look after the Braavosi government.

At first, the idea of going around full-armed did not seem far-fetched. He was aware that Longclaw revealed him as Jon Snow in Westeros, but in Essos who could recognize him? Here he was nobody, a simple foreigner who had never left his land for too long.

He was engrossed, seeing Val with a tender expression, while she was talking to the merchants, fascinated by the array of oddities that stood before her eyes, that he had no time to notice that someone was screaming in his direction.

During the journey, Tyrion and Davos had extended part of their knowledge in bastard Valyrian to them, so they will not feel so lost in Essos. A simple greeting, “please”, “thank you”, and “how much it is”, was the little things he had memorized. He was not expecting to have a dark-skinned young man, yelling and pointing him like a vile criminal.

Tormund altered when the man tried to get too close to Jon. Val and Dewyn positioned themselves around him to protect him, and Jon, almost instinctively, led his hand toward Longclaw's hilt.

All the people turned to see the scandal precipitated. The man was no longer alone many others gathered around him, saying the same words that he so loud that Jon could almost utter them himself.

An old man lifted a rock from the ground and that was it. Jon drew Longclaw and things got bloody.

Tormund almost lost an eye, and Jon had to hurt the old man to avoid people to follow his example. A bad idea that ended with a Braavosi patrol moving them to the dungeons.

Val had broken the hand of a guard who tried to exceed with her, and she received a fist on her face. They were completely screwed.

Sansa and Tyrion arrived three days later, with defeated and exhausted faces. The Queen in the North had thought the worst and arrived desperately demanding the freedom of her brother.

Finally, Tormund was treated by a healer who saved his eye but left a large scar across his face. They were taken in front of the Sealord of Braavos to respond for their crime against the braavosi’s people, and Sansa tried to raise the morale by bringing the army of the North with her, although in a pitiful state.

Tyrion had to intercede for them and explain the origin of the attacks.

"Have you heard about the song of ice and fire?” He asked the night before the trial.
"No," Jon answered,

“Your friend Samwell Tarly,” he began to explain, always with a dark expression on his face, “believed it was a good way to honor your tragic story so he made spread a version of the events to the entire Realm in form of a song.” He proceeded to make a gesture of reverence towards Jon. “His is the song of ice and fire, the brave white wolf that ended the threat of ice and the threat of fire..."

Jon swallowed and a chill ran through his entire body.

“His idea worked well in Westeros where people sing songs to forget their shitty lives,” he went back to sit in the dungeons’ ground. “But in Essos, people are fervent believers of the heroes and their tragedies. Here they called it the White Wolf and the Dragon Queen. And guess who they estimate the most: the Dragon Queen who break their chains or the White Wolf who killed her, condemning millions of them to go back in chains?”

Jon felt his heartbeats accelerated.

"I didn't want any of this," he shouted with despair. “None of this, not a single thing was my decision. Of all of us, it's always me who carries the consequences.”

Tyrion pursed his lips and crossed his arms. "I told your sister that maybe it will be better if you stay on these sides..."

“Stay? Are they going back to Westeros?” He couldn’t believe they were abandoning him.

"No, for now," he replied with regret. Tyrion sighed as he fiddled with his fingers. “The Common Council will not receive us unless Daenerys Targaryen gives us her royal pardon. They want us to return her birthright.”

It was his initial suggestion.

Jon shook his head and closed his eyes, leaning against the wall.

"Gendry Baratheon is alive."

"What?" He replied, suddenly too awake.

“He sent a message from the Realm of Valyria. Apparently, when the rebels took Storm's End, the poor lad saw no better alternative than fleeing east. He eventually went to her and beg for help. Dany let him settle in this new kingdom of her. The Velaryons are also with her,” Tyrion sighed heavily “and Yara Greyjoy, who she rescued after some Ironborn sought for her aid.”

"Daenerys was in Westeros?” He asked, shocked.

"I do not know. I don't know how she did it, but... or it is a good trap, one that in our situation seems to lead us directly to the dragon's snout, or it is the new reality we are living in.”

Jon nodded, looking far into the blue.

"It wasn't the right thing, right?"

Tyrion stood up to leave. "I'll answer you when I see her again."
A week passed, and the Sealord gave up the trial thanks to divine intervention.

However, the government kicked them all out of Braavos with the warning that they shall not return without a royal pardon. Sansa and Tyrion asked him not to get off the ship again in the next ports until they reached Valyria. His sister refused to leave him behind, and he thanked it.

Jon had to return to be a scumbag in the eyes of the great Lords, sneaking from here to there knowing the horrible things that went through the minds of those who saw him. Nothing really mattered, in the end.

"What were they saying that day?" He asked Davos one night at sea, the old knight focused on reading the maps of the lands they would soon arrive. "People on the streets said something I couldn't understand."

Jon pronounced the words and Davos opened his eyes in surprise.

"White wolf," he replied, before returning to his work.

**Volantis**

They did not waste much time on Volantis, and Davos is the one who brought him news after he was forbidden to leave the boat again. Val had wanted to stay with him, but Jon insisted that she should go and see the city with Dewyn.

"Samwell received a raven," Davos said, coming from the dock with maps and extravagant food. "Queen Daenerys agreed to receive us in her fortress in Valyria."

Jon nodded with resignation, knowing that he would not form part of that invitation.

"I didn't know that Essos had ravens," he commented, looking at the Long Bridge from the quarterdeck.

Davos also seemed surprised. "Many things have changed."

They set sail for Valyria with an increasingly dying hope.

**Jorah’s Port**

“Just Drogon by her side,” had said the man named Daario Naharis, the commandant Daenerys once speak to him about, and who was there in the dock to receive them instead of Dany herself.

“Two of her dragons dead, her khalasar lost in the sea, the Unsullied dead in Naath. Without the Seven Kingdoms you have promised her,” he kept naming Dany’s loses, “And the prospected marriage for which she left me in Meereen, never happened.” He finished, shortly looking towards him.

The last mention made him tremble slightly, and Sansa eyed in his direction. At that moment, Jon realized the commandant knew him; not that he was hiding his identity too well.

Tyrion had never suggested a marriage with her, with could had had to solve at least some of their problems back then. Still, the idea rounded his mind thanks to Davos, and his not-so-subtle
insinuations, but the threat that was the Night King had seemed so unbeatable, that he avoided going serious with that possibility.

Then the revelation of his parentage came and he just could not bear the idea of marrying the sister of his father.

Is that alright? She had asked him. He should have to be direct with her at that right moment, but he just couldn’t. He wanted and desired her. Today he can assure that his mind was conflicted; drowning with a wave of feelings that he had no experience before. His father was no his father, his parents ignited a war to conceive him, leading their families to their earlies graves. All because they could not choose duty over love. The woman he loved was his blood, and could not seem to understand all of what he was going through because of her fear of losing her claim.

Eventually, Dany lost everything because of him. Her worst fears became truth. He had carried the weight of this knowledge during all those years, dragging him constantly back to the darkness when he believed he could walk out of it.

Even if it was the last thing he would do in his life, Jon was going to face his mistakes face to face. He preferred to die than keep living bearing this burden. She was not going to forgive him, he knew that but, anyway, he will stand and look at her eyes one more time and insist on her to make justice.

Finally, Daario let them pass after taking all the weapons they had brought. They advanced and cross the threshold with the three dragons carved, the only symbol that had let them know this was a Targaryen domain.

There was a strange type of disappointment in seeing the lack of signs that Daenerys had left in the places she conquered when in Westeros she’d made sure to let everyone know about her power. Sure in Essos people also fear her, but it came from a sentiment of admiration and respect for the person that had freed and helped them. Why she could not do this in Westeros?

As they advanced, the mist coming from the Smoking Sea became less dense, and they could see that there were still ruins of the empire that once was. Tormund and the other Free Folk that accompanied him were stunned, whispering curses under their breath.

Jorah’s Port was not the magnificent, colorful city that Braavos was but neither has suffocated them as Volantis. It was still under construction and there were fewer people than they left behind in White Harbor. Most of them gathered outside of their windows and doors to look at them.

The figure of Gendry Baratheon was the first thing they noticed, waiting for them with a bright smile full of hope on his face. It was the first time Jon see him after ten years.

Beside him was standing with the most formal presence, a young woman with golden skin and black hair, long to the waist, which could not be other than Dorne’s princess, Arianne Yronwood. He heard Dewyn sighing at her view.

“You take your time, my friends,” Gendry said. “I thought the worst when I heard you had to cross through a storm at the sea.”

“Boy, look at you!” Ser Davos exclaimed with a broken voice, stepping forward to hug Gendry.

Arianne smiled at them but it seemed a condescending, necessary gesture for him, similar to the one once Sansa gave to Daenerys.

“Welcome to Valyria, home of the known world,” she greeted.
After exchanging cordial words with Sansa, Arianne informed them that they would be distributed in the different inns and that the children would be taken along with the women. He did not like this last idea and protested, but Sansa was smart enough to try to calm the situation and find a solution.

Val passed him by; hitting his shoulder abruptly with her fast steps in the direction Arianne was guiding them.

Daario took them to a small village with no more than ten houses fenced by a wooden wall, with two vigilant towers on every side. Tyrion chose to stay in the same lodging with them, possibly avoiding a feud with the southron Lords.

Tormund and the others found the inns more “interested” than Castle Black, but still too small after living for years in a fortress.

The people working there wore big smiles and gave kind indications of how to use the installments. Daario made a comment about not harassing the women, noticing that Tormund was especially happy chatting with one of the workers, and the insinuation made him feel bitter.

The commandant step out and Tyrion followed him, and he did not see him anymore.

When Tyrion came back, Jon approached him.

“You never mentioned she had plans to marry,” Jon stated, not as a question but as a truth.

Tyrion eyed at him with a certain disdain, “she was a barren woman, what kind of alliance a barren queen can make through marriage?”

As he had been doing for a long time, Jon repressed the need to drown Tyrion in the sea.

“So why did you convince her to let the commander behind?” he asked in a more serious tone, “was because you were jealous of him?”

The Lannister gave him a severe look. “No, it was because he used to ignite our queen’s worst impulses. Had he been there when we did what we did, we would not be breathing today.”

He said the last sentence as if it was a good thing, but Jon thought the opposite.

“When you will meet with her?” he asked, changing the subject.

“In one week,” Tyrion replied, narrowing his eyes and contemplating at him suspiciously. “I swear if you try to do something stupid…”

Jon ignored him and moved to find his people.

The following days passed by with tranquility, except for a moment where Lord Manderly and another Lord from the south almost transform a noisy argument into an unfortunate episode that the soldiers had to intervene. Tormund made sure they would not do such a thing again.

Sansa visited him once and confirmed to him that the children were fine and fascinated by the treatment.

He spent those many free hours reading the maps Davos bought for him, tracing the route he must follow to go along with the Daario’s party, without him to notice. He assured that not even
Tormund knew about it, and for that, he had to observe and outline a way to escape from the constant vigilance in the village.

He had noticed there was a lieutenant between the soldiers, and one day he approached.

“I…” Jon began to stutter, not sure how to start this conversation.

“I speak the common language,” he responded directly.

Jon nodded, a little intimidated by his strong contexture. “Is there any task that my men and I can do? We want to be useful and return the favor to the city.”

The man’s expression never changed, he replied with his eyes fixed on him.

“West men too weak,” he looked down on him, “and too short.”

Jon sighed defeated, ready to go and scheme a better way to get rid of their vigilance. However, before he could walk away, the soldier spoke again.

“We’ll ask commander Naharis.”

“Thank you.”

The day Daario returned to take those who would be part of the Great Council, Jon was helping some of his men with the tasks they were assigned to perform by the lieutenant. The commander looked at him from afar, his expression was always full of withheld anger and contempt that reminded him of the angry looks Catelyn Stark used to throw at him.

Jon remained indifferent, watching as they moved away to the other side of the island to meet Sansa and Lady Rhea.

That same night, after discussing with Sam and Dewyn about a minor matter, he retired to his bedchamber while the men gathered in the common dining room to drink and tell stories.

It was easy to escape from the inn; after all, he had grown up accustomed to going unnoticed as a shadow. The difficult part was outwitting the guards at the entrance of the village, and although Jon hid a knife he used to skin dinner, he did not intend to harm anyone that night.

Jon chose to surround the village and climb the hills. With the sun rising in the morning, he would find the guide he needed and from there he would intermingle with the people of Jorah’s Port and follow Daario’s convoy.

It took hours to reach the necessary height so as not to be seen by any patrol. The ruins of Old Valyria were all the stories said, and Jon even heard his name whispered several times, inviting him to go deeper into the endless halls of the abandoned structures he passed by.

The sun rose and he had the advantage of being able to see the city again. The village was so far behind, and Jon sensed that they should have already noticed its absence. He hoped Sam and Dewyn were smart enough to let him pass and not alert Daenerys’ soldiers.

Slip past Jorah’s Port was easier this time without Longclaw pointing him like the white wolf. A trader exchanged his Braavosi coins, and Jon was able to get a horse.

If it wasn't for the map, Jon would already be lost. The road was exhaustive, he had to make several stops those three days and nights, using what nature could offer him. He finally reached the
east side of the Island and saw the elegant galleys that transported people to the capital of Valyria.

He approached the docks but had to sneak away to avoid being noticed by Daario's men. He left the horse tied, and bought his place in one of the galleys.

The sea voyage lasted the entire night but he could rest, without having all those voices in his head. He couldn't help thinking if the fact that he was half Targaryen could especially affect him.

The next day, a sailor woke him up, shouting at him in what Jon supposed was Valyrian, and got off the boat still exhausted by the long road he had traveled. However, as soon as he observed the city that loomed before his eyes he gained again his senses.

Ruins were restored, and the buildings that loomed over the mountains looked neat and full of life. Jon felt even smaller in the face of so much magnificence, and only he seemed to find it exorbitant, because people were scattered everywhere, coming and going like a normal day-to-day life.

He advanced until he got in the main street with a direct view of the Great Keep, of Davos’ stories. Majestic like Dragonstone Castle, but with the crimson color that once belonged to the Red Keep.

Jon could not help feeling a sting of anguish at the thought that Daenerys was here all this time, rebuilding the ancestral home of her ancestors, while in Westeros they were dealing with the consequences of her demise.

You could have done this in Westeros; he wanted to shout at her. But you chose to destroy us.

Before he could continue imagining that conversation, the characteristic sound of a dragon cry startled him. Jon looked up at the sky, restraining himself from throwing to the ground at the sight of who appeared to be Drogon, flying over the city with five other dragons, smaller but equally impressive, around him. They flew at a distance that made it hard to perceive if she was with them.

She came from the north, he thought, wondering from what place she was returning.

Jon hated feeling so lost; all he wanted to do was get to the castle that stood on top of the mountain.

He was surprised to find no opposition when he approached the ramps of the Great Keep; people entering and leaving at ease. The soldiers, dressed in the same uniform as the guards in the village, scrutinized him but Jon was unarmed. He even left the knife behind.

When he walked in an immense corridor, he met with two big statues, each one decorated with gold and some other greenish metal.

Viserion and Rhaegal, he deduced, approaching to the dragon he rode once and stroking it with extreme caution. No one seemed as impressed as he was.

He kept moving forward but no longer seemed to know where to go. The number of people around him was making him dizzy, and the headache that constantly tortured him returned. He ended up on a rampart, next to the bushes of roses, and the parsimony of that place helped him come back to his senses.

Jon began to realize that this was an absurd task. What he was waiting for? She would burn him before he could utter a single word, ruining at the same time any chance to obtain her aid. He was risking everything for a moment with her.

He was resting against the rampart when he heard the slight rumour of a voice.
“Sh, come here,” it said.

Jon turned around, looking for the source of it.

“Don’t let him get into you.”

It was Daario Naharis’ voice.

He sighed when he noticed two persons embracing in lower ground, but Jon could only see Daario’s back and two small arms around him.

After a few moments, she pulled away and turned to observe the city.

It was hard for him to make aware that it was Daenerys. Her figure was wrapped in a light leather armour. Her hair, short on her shoulders, so white that it seemed frozen. She still looked tiny and delicate.

Daenerys, without turning around, told Daario something Jon could not heed. Her commander nodded and marched to the opposite side where they came from, leaving her alone.

Daenerys took one last look at the horizon before marching her way back to her dragons, and Jon hurried to follow her until he had to jump over the edge not to lose her track.

She was walking away; he would never arrive if he had tried to walk down the corridors of the Castle. Jon felt that there was no alternative, and he threw himself without thinking that much, falling almost in front of her, only a few steps away.

The fall was extremely painful, and he was sure that some bone in his leg had broken.

Their eyes met again. She, his victim, and he, her murderer. No the best way to re-introduce after ten years.

His throat had closed. Her face was not the same, something was different, hard, cold and sharp, and something was gone.

He felt like hours and days passed, a silence filled with only their thoughts, ignoring the world around them that was about to swallow them whole.

Jon tried to get up, but the pain stopped him. Daenerys remained impassive and he swore to hear Drogon scream in the distance. This made him realize that she was not looking at him in horror because she hated him. She was scared of him.

Jon shook his head, disgusted with himself. She was calling Drogon to come for her, and he wondered if that was what she tried to do in her last seconds, fainting and losing all strength in his arms.

"Dany," he pleaded in a broken voice. "I do not want to hurt you."

But the words were vain and wrongful. Jon didn't notice in time that she was armed. The surprise of seeing her again, and focusing on that face that seemed new, made him ignore the fact that she was carrying a sword on her left side.

"She just took her sword and hit me with the pommel," Arya had said long ago, and that was the last thing he thought when Daenerys drew it and directed it at him with a loud cry.

Jon met darkness again, and he felt relieved.
I couldn't foresight this will end up being in 22k words! Is it too much or are you ok with it?
I know I will receive some amount of hate in regards to Jon/Val scenes and believe me, I really had a hard time writing it. I was asking myself all the time is this too much or is this too little? At the end of the day, is how I conceived it in my head.

I tried to make this Jon in constant conflict with his decision to kill Daenerys. According to the script he did it to protect his sisters and the ones he loves, so after seeing that the decision was stupidly precipitate (because it was, I will hard defend that) and that things did not change for the better, well it led to mess his weak mind.

In regards to the Three-Eyed Raven, well...I have a plan for that plotline but I will let you know beforehand that I have planned to make him a villain but not the only nor the main one. I chose to do it in that way because, in one hand, it was the logical conclusion (hence there's a lot of fanfic writing the same lol) but still I wanted to use another character from the books, that was left out of the show but making it in a free form. Have you already guess who he is?

Finally, I want to excuse myself for overestimate my skill to write and being a law student at the same time hahaha. The next chapter will take me at least two weeks.
A Queen Who Wears No Crown (Daenerys) (P.1)

Chapter Summary

She found the end of the path, but it was the beginning.

Chapter Notes

OMG
It's kinda weird I started posting this with a little conversation of Jon and Dany that was meant to be one shot and right now I'm writing so much that it actually it's taking me so long to update ONE single chapter. I decided to post this first part of the chapter because it's the only way I force myself to finish the other part, that actually it's almost over but I need to work better in the coherence of the narrative. Probably I will update Saturday or Sunday. Read this Dany as another version of the many resurrected Danys. As I said before, I'm not trying hard in being loyal to their book/show counterparts but trying to come with something new out of the events of S8. Same with Daario, who obviously is OOC here.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 4: A Queen Who Wears No Crown (First part)

I

Somewhere in the Narrow Sea – 305 A.C

A strong scent filled the air of her cabin, permeating her mouth with a sweet flavour she despised. Daenerys was still regaining her senses, learning to accept and adapt to her body’s delicateness, and that taste was the first thing she found unbearable. If she could have cried, she would have done it.

Furs covered her entirely, supposedly helping her with the cool environment of the sea. But it had no case, the cold embrace of death had embedded her. She, the Unburnt, no longer could warm.

Daenerys let out a breath when a chill travelled down her spine like a spasm. The pain had grown numb in those days they'd spent crossing the seas, allowing her mind to focus on another type of affliction, more relentless and continuous.

When she stopped bleeding, it felt as if life had drained completely out of her. It had sense. She was conscious, she was breathing and, in some form, she was feeling. But life was no longer in her.

It hasn’t been for a while. Before that dagger had reached her heart, Daenerys Targaryen had stopped feeling alive. She formed part of something greater than herself and she had died with each part of that whole.
Viserion and Rhaegal falling from the sky like a hunted bird, Jorah dying in vain because of her imprudence, Missandei in chains, shaking and shouting those words, before that monster dismember her. Images and sounds that repeated in her mind over and over until all Daenerys saw was red.

“Dracarys”

“Burn them all”

Fire and blood.

Daenerys lost her faith the moment she heard the most innocent person telling her that this world did not deserve to be saved anymore. At that very moment, she could no longer feel what once she had felt. She was resolved to do just one thing: burn.

Be a dragon, had said Lady Olenna Tyrell, who she disregarded to follow Tyrion’s ill advice at the cost of her allies’ lives. She has not been the only one who believed so. Many people had urged her to embrace her instinct and accept what she was; people who had truly believed in her.

Now that her world has ended, she didn’t know what was anymore.

Through their unbroken bond, Daenerys could sense Drogon somewhere waiting for her. He was safe and only that mattered for her. Her last son was her reason, and if she had to kill every red priest with her bare hands to reach to him, she would do it as she did before.

With all the pain she has been enduring, Daenerys had almost forgotten the fact she killed a person with her own hands. Not that it made a big difference with other deaths she had caused, but this time the feeling was strange. She could still feel the men’s neck within her hands crack when she trashed his throat. Maybe it was Drogon through their bound, or the fact that the pain was suffocating her, and she needed to unleash it somewhere. In any case, she did it. She had become a monster herself.

The sound of the door opening startled her, but it could only be one person. She heard steps crossing the cabin but chose to stay in silence and quiescent.

"This is going to help with the pain," said the woman named Kinvara, the only one of the Red God followers Daenerys had let get that close. “We’ll arrive soon, your Grace. It will be great if you could walk again.”

She ignored her pretentions and kept curled up at the top of her bed, head resting on the back of her hand, and pressed between her jaw and neck.

Death is strange, she thought, with all the pain I have known, finally I received her with open arms.

So Daenerys believed until she felt the blood clots slip between her legs when her still cold body rejected that outbreak of life that became nothing more than another memory of something that could’ve been but no longer exists.

"Although, I am afraid there are pains that do not heal with any beverage," Kinvara continued, gently placing the recipient on the bedside table.

She took a deep breath and moistened her broken lips. Her worn voice and her corroded throat did not enable her to speak well.
"My son," Daenerys asked, without opening her eyes or turning to the red priestess. "My son, where he is?"

His wrath seethed in her, still was throbbing in reminiscences. Daenerys should have known better that someday she and her dragon would become one.

"Your dragon is safe, but hidden from the curious stares, my Queen. News of him will reach west soon," she replied.

Another spasm ran through her body at the idea of a lonesome Drogon, away from her. Feared as he was, someone would conclude he must be destroyed.

"I'm not a Queen, anymore. Don't address me like that," she demanded, clinging even harder to the furs.

She did not hear the woman say something, but she withdrew to leave her alone.

At some point, she made a great effort to open her eyes, which still could not get used to the light. She had been told that it would take years to her body to fully recover. She wanted to know how much time had passed but also was scared to hear that response.

She wanted to cry but the tears she could have shed were already lost.

Daenerys’ only hope was to be released and go away from the known world, to someplace where she could rest against Drogon’s scales to warm up. She was a dragon and her place was by his side. Her son was still too young; she had no choice but staying with him.

She must have known that Jon Snow had those intentions when she saw him approach with his haggard face. That’s an implacable thought that always round her mind. She kept days and nights thinking about all the ways he was going to betray her, yet could not foresight he was going to kill her.

In not a single one of her assumptions did she believed he would end up taking her life.

*Jon Snow is a fool too honourable*, she said to herself during the Feast of Winterfell, *he will tell his sisters and Sansa will use it against me.*

She had the bitter certainty that he could not correspond her feelings, anymore, and so she asked him if loving him was right. Why couldn’t he warn her to stay away? Why had he played with her like that, touching her for a moment just to push her away in the next one?

Daenerys could put the blame on him but the truth was that she had lowered her guard. Her infatuation for him had cost her everything.

She held onto a small hope that he would want her as she wanted him, and so she didn't tell him she was pregnant.

At first, she feared he would do it because his honour would forced him to remain by her side; their love turned into a duty. Then she saw his dejection for her and was terrified of what he would think on the matter.

*Well, his dagger killed my daughter, as well as my pride.*

When he was in front of her, Daenerys knew that he would never accept what she had decided to be. She fell victim of despair and walked into the wolf's den without thinking that he would destroy
It was a stupid decision; she should have followed Grey Worm's advice and let the Unsullied protect her. She’d thought that after doing what she did, Drogon would be enough to repel any threat. More importantly, she believed fervently that Jon would never dare to hurt her.

She concluded that he will go to war against her. Jon would want to leave but his sister will insist that he has to take away the throne she won, and his honour will make him accept that he had to try to fight her in battle.

But his armies had no chance, he knew it. So then he had to find the way to cast her aside in a simpler way. And he found it.

*Jon knew I could not hurt him, he knew I would have to forgive his sister's life and let him go. But I can still convince him, make him understand that all this time our reason was this one. Together we destroy the army of the dead and in the process, we had created this new life that grows inside me. We can do it, he knows that I am completely his.*

The time she wanted to buy for them ended up condemning not only her but the daughter she carried. Another life lost for her love for him.

Jon Snow was the worst thing that could have happened to her. The moment he walked into her life, everything crumbled.

The best thing that could happen was Drogon taking her to rest far away. Her remains in a meadow surrounded by roses and butterflies, until one day there will be just ashes in her place and the knife to tell only love could kill her.

She just wished for the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt.

*Not even in death, they have let me rest.*

**Volantis – 306 A.C**

It was the seventh moon after her death. Also, it should be her name day. But dead people has no name day.

Kinvara had promised her that soon she could go back to ride in Drogon and choose which path to take from then on. The priestess was not subtle with her intentions and had let her understand that she had a debt to the red god.

Daenerys did not fear any god, and she did not care that he would rebuke her for not accepting his will. For the world, she was a dead woman, and dead people have no purpose.

"There was one of you, Melissandre, was her name," she said one day, while Kinvara was helping her clean the scar that seemed never heal. "She talk about a prophecy ..."

"The prince that was promised," she interrupted without flinching and focused her task.

Daenerys nodded. "It was him, Jon Snow, Right?"

She had rambled over the matter for a time. Jon united the greatest army the world has ever know, mostly formed with people she brought to Westeros under the promise to build a new, better world,
and then he had killed the world’s worst threat after the dead went gone.

Kinvara continued to spread an ointment over the scar. “I am not who to question the will of our Lord. Everything is his will, but sometimes we humans are perpetrators of our destiny.”

Daenerys hated when she talked so uncertainly as if she was expecting her to deduce the answers in the chattering.

"Why your god wants me alive?" She inquired harshly. Kinvara had an unwavering temper and that only impatient Daenerys more. "Were not enough souls I purified with the fire of my dragon?" She asked again echoing the words she once spoke in front of Tyrion and Varys, and that Daenerys had only heard recently.

The red woman smiled as if it were dealing with a child's tantrum. She wiped her hands and took distance to concentrate on other tasks while Daenerys put on the scented fabrics with rose perfume.

"Time is wise and knows how to put things in their place," she began to recite. "If I tell you what is true and what is not, your purpose will be corrupted."

"I don't want to serve the purpose of your god, Kinvara," she stated firmly.

Kinvara looked up and made a gesture of indifference, before nodding and implicitly asking her to leave.

Inside the Red Temple, she was treated with great deference for the servants of the red god, and a few had approached to offer the different alternatives that would bring her closer to the purpose that R’hollor had assigned her, but Daenerys was fed up with mysticism and destiny.

She once believed in destiny, but it all turned out to be a hoax in which she made herself fall, dragging her loyal followers with her. Now they were gone, and Daenerys would have to continue moving forward knowing that her existence only served the purpose of others obtaining from her what was necessary to continue living.

That inevitably led her to think about the Starks.

When she was told that Jon did not take the throne, but that his siblings were King and Queen in Westeros, she threw back her head and cackled loudly almost destroying her throat.

She was certain that Sansa Stark longed to herself a crown at the moment she used Jon's identity to undermine her, forgetting that Cersei Lannister was still in the middle and without suspecting that such an action could place Jon in a dangerous position. She had to admit the girl was intelligent, she knew Daenerys was unable to hurt him.

But Bran Stark? The child who was always cornering, muttering just when was necessary? That was a real surprise.

Although she was not interested in knowing anything else about it, Kinvara had let her know that Bran Stark was not himself, but the Three-Eyed Raven, an entity that her ancestor, Brynden Rivers had been before him. The Raven had known everything that was going to happen from the moment he crossed the Wall, fleeing from the army of the dead.

She recalled the meeting in the Table Room at Dragonstone when Jon read the scroll Bran send him and realised that everything had started from there.

*Therefore, that is how things meant to be,* she told to herself. *They had to use me to fight those ice*
monsters by undermining me, the fire monster, in the way.

A story that songs will tell forever.

In those days, she would just walk along the Long Bridge of Volantis. She still had to use scented fabrics and a cloth over her head so people wouldn't be curious about her appearance. It was easier to hide now that her long hair was gone and instead there were traces of silver hair that reminisced to Viserys’. *It was more appropriate*, she though.

She hadn’t see Drogon since they left Ibben and if it wasn’t for their bound, she would have thought he was completely gone. No, he was waiting for her. She sensed his impatience, longing for fire and blood.

Daenerys had wandered off that possibility. To go Westeros again and end up what she started. She had no doubt how enjoyable it would be to see Tyrion Lannister’s face, the unlikely hand of the new King, or the Queen in the North screaming for her life before she burns down to ashes that wasted place that it’s Winterfell.

She could go and destroy Westeros, just to prove them all wrong.

But then, what was the use in it? Hadn’t she been enough mocked already? Hadn’t she lost enough pride and self-assurance? A part of her still hurt. She had shown being incapable to be the leader her people needed. She had to protect them, but she left everything to follow Jon Snow until the edge of the world, just for him to abandon her when she was hanging on the verge.

She’d found love in the worst place. The beast fell in love with the hero, and that naturally ended with her dying the most predictable death.

*It had no case to return, my love*, she wanted to tell Drogon, *we both must go*.

She was standing on a corner watching the people hear a Red Priestess chant about the Mother of Dragons, who must be remembered as the Lord of Light champion to defeat the darkness. Daenerys watched their marked faces between awe and fear, ignorant of the fact she later completed the Night King’s desire to wipe out an entire population.

“It was not his desire,” a grave voice said and Daenerys startled.

Behind her was a woman, or so she thought it was because her face wore a mask, covered with hexagonal metal shapes, similar to the one Kinvara used as an ornament in her neck. Another priestess.

Daenerys turned around skeptical and tired. “I already told your friends I don’t need help with R’holor purpose,” she began her response, one she had given too many times but the woman walked forward to stay by her side.

“I’m not R’holor servant. I come from Asshai, from where the Red Priests obtain their training. My name is Quaithe, Mother of Dragons”.

“I just have one dragon, now,” she clarified with a sudden sting of sadness.

“Even if your children have left this world, you will continue to be the mother of them all.”

They started walking off the crowd.

“Many years ago, we met in Qarth. I advised your companion, the Northern Bear, to protect you
because great dangers surrounded you,” she recalled, still nonchalant.

“Jorah,” Daenerys said, her animosity going downer. “He died.”

Quaithe nodded. “He fought bravely protecting his queen.”

“He died protecting me from a situation in which I put myself in danger to save another man. The man who killed me,” she needed constantly voice aloud her mistakes with her people. A punishment she had self-imposed.

“His sacrifice is no less for that,” Quaithe replied but Daenerys could not agree. Jorah, Missandei, the Unsullied and the Dothraki she put in danger to save Westeros, had died in vain.

“I wish it had been me that night,” she admitted.

“At least in that way, Missandei would be still alive. “If you are not a servant of the red god…”

“Sometimes our paths converge,” she answered cutting her off.

Daenerys sighed. “What can I do for you?”

“You haven't claimed your mount, Daenerys Targaryen. Bay of Dragons bleeds again and the Masters rise against the volatile army of the Second Sons.”

Oh, so it was that she thought. She had avoided thinking about the repercussions of her death on this side of the world. While in Westeros that seemed a good thing, here she had no doubt it could mean another.

“If you search for a savior, you search in the wrong place,” she rapidly excused “I can't save them as I couldn't save my people and I couldn't save myself. Daario should run away.”

Quaithe stopped and Daenerys walked some steps ahead of her. She had to turn around.

“You had saved millions that are being slaughtered by those who cheer on your dismissal,” the strange woman repeated.

“I have done the worst. What does it matter? This world can’t be saved.”

Quaithe retook their pace. “The world does not need to be saved, it needs to change. You had paid for what you have done in Westeros, Daenerys Stormborn. You are still paying for it.”

Stormborn. Born during a storm. That should have been her first forewarning.

“As I told you, I’m not a savior,” and she vehemently believed so. She was a monster, a dragon. She cannot fight against her true nature.

“Haven’t you thought about what you saw? After you crossed the threshold.”

That last piece made Daenerys almost stumble. She had not delved in, afraid that it was just a dream or a bad memory. The white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt.

“How do you know?” She inquired, suddenly perturbed.

Quaithe stepped on one side, near an alleyway. “Three times the threshold you’ll cross. One for saving, one for death and one for love. Dragons plant no trees. Remember that. Remember who you are, what you were made to be, Daenerys Stormborn. Remember your words.”
The woman got inside the passage and Daenerys followed her, just to find it empty.

“Love?” she repeated in a whisper. For love to whom she will sacrifice this time?

She asked for news from Bay of Dragons after that, and Quaithe was right. The Masters had invaded Astapor and Yunkai while the Second Sons retreated to Meereen and were under siege.

It had surprised her greatly that Daario kept his word and retained the control over her former stronghold. By this time, he must have already learned of her death, with Tyrion probably embellishing up the truth.

She was no longer sure of the loyalty of the men around her. Tyrion has betrayed her, Jon has killed her, Grey Worm let Jon live and fled with the Unsullied and Daario was a sellsword. What was retaining him behind? His love for her? She laughed at that.

In the eight moon after her death, Daenerys met with Drogon again. He was placid and over the moon, wanting her to mount him. Kinvara approved it and she left Volantis, with a fine-drawn reminder that she will not escape her purpose.

II

Meereen – 306 A.C

Daenerys made her best to not be seen by many eyes, but at some points, people had spotted Drogon and she had to hide better between his horns. He was growing in size more than ever, as his contained fury.

She stood in the same place where she met the Great Masters the last time. On that occasion, she had wanted to go and kill each one of them but Tyrion persuaded her otherwise.

It also was the only time Viserion, Rhaegal, and Drogon were unleashed in battle together. She'd managed to control them enough to target only one boat, though they wanted to go further.

The longing for her children pained her every time she thought in them. In each one. The skies will always be empty as will her arms.

She sank on her knees and watched the bay surrounded by boats with sails of the Harpy. Beyond them was the city, with the Great Pyramid standing almost destroyed for the trebuchets. Daenerys sighed, thinking again if it was a good idea.

Behind her, Drogon snarled in excited approval, and she smiled at her son eagerness.

She cannot save them all, but there is something she can do.

And that is, burn them all.

Drogon released a cry that let them know the siege was over. Daenerys mounted her son and went down to the bay, where she never bothered to look down. She would only see fire and smoke.

And If she could have seen herself at that moment, she would see a woman full of contained anger being released.
It took her hours but finally, there was nothing in the water but ashes and ruins. When she flew over King’s Landing she had to avoid to look down afraid to regret her decision.

“Little children, burned!”

She ignored the memory of Jon’s tortured voice and the chill that went down her spine. This time she over watched her deed and, after the fury was gone, just indifference was left.

Drogon was resting behind her, and she heard him snarling, which indicated that someone was approaching. She rounded the dragon, knowing that little harm could be done to her.

She stumbled on the image of Daario Naharis.

Both got froze in their places, watching for a long moment at the other. He was astonished, wordless eyeing between her and Drogon, who kept vigilant and fearful to let another man too close to hurt her.

“You survived,” he muttered still trying to catch his breath.

Daenerys kept her composure, still doubting his intentions.

“I did not,” she replied, trying to conceal her nervous trembling.

His expression went from incredulity to sadness. Daario Naharis was about to cry, and she would have laughed if it wasn’t because, after a long time, she could shed some tears.

“Do not get close,” she warned him when he attempted to go for her. “I’m not…fine, yet,” she tried to explain and didn’t know if he understood but kept the distance.

“The imp send a message. You burned King’s Landing after winning the war,” he began to say and Daenerys went serious again. “At first I thought he was mocking at me.”

She folded her hands. “It was not a lie. I did burn the city and the Red Keep.”

Daario closed his mouth and looked at her suspiciously. “Whatever monstrosity Tyrion told you I did, I did it.”

“I used to believe he soften you,” he responded with a tiny grin.

“He did, and I lost almost everything because of it.”

Daario nodded and looked at Drogon. “Your dragons…”

“He did,” she cut him off. “Missandei too.”

Daario stared at the ground, disappointed. “The Unsullied and the Dothraki?”

“They tell me they’ve died in Naath,” she told him, with a lump in her throat. “And the Dothraki couldn’t find their way back to Essos.”
“They?”

“R’hollor priests.”

Daenerys knew he was going to ask her for the entire narration of the events, but she still did not know how to explain the fact she was resurrected.

“We would not defend this city much longer without them,” he directed the conversation to what was important to him.

“I haven’t come to defend this city,” she let him clear. “I have come to destroy the Masters.”

Daario stood and she could perceive him openly annoyed. “Daenerys, I have honored my vow to you. I protect the freedmen while they choose their own leaders, I stay here and,”

“Daario, I died,” she interrupted him again. “You are free from your vows.”

“It’s not just about that,” he stated fiercely, denying with his head. “You cannot do this to me, again. I almost die defending your legacy. I was willing to cross the sea to finish that man, Aegon Targaryen.”

Daenerys let out a discouraged and incredulous laugh.

“His name,” she said abruptly, noticing Tyrion’s intent to protect his identity from Daario, “his real name is Jon Snow.”

“I don’t understand,” he said, going into confused again.

She sighed and closed her eyes, growing weary of look through the past. Deep down, she knew he deserved an explanation after being loyal to his word as few had been in recent times.

“Have you keep my solar untouched?” she asked him, minded of hearing that he had taken it for himself.

Daario nodded.

She invited him to climb on Drogon, and together they returned to the Great Pyramid. At first, Daario was even surprised that she let him ride on Drogon, something he had often asked for, in the past, and she had relegated believing it inappropriate. She felt upset at the idea that all this time she was surrounded by knights and Lords of Westeros, who claimed to be the embodiment of honour and loyalty, but it turned out that a simple sellsword was more valuable than all of them.

Drogon landed on the balcony of her former solar, preventing his mother from having to pass through crowds of citizens and soldiers. By the time, they must know Mhysa returned.

But she was Mhysa, no more, she thought.

She walked through the place in silent rumination, receiving the smells and memories sheltered in that room.

Long ago, in that table, had sat my most loyal allies, she thought. Now was only her and Daario who she no longer knew where he stood.

“I met him as the King in the North,” she began to tell with her stare fixated on Dragonstone, the map that was extended in her writing table. One of her last tasks before they had sailed Westeros. “Bastard son of one of the men that deposed my father, loyal friend of the Usurper and brother of
the woman for whom my brother Rhaegal destroyed our family. He came to seek my help to face an army of dead people.”

Daario laughed and interrupted her. “An army of dead people?”

“Initially, I did not believe him neither but they went to hunt one and I had to go and save them in the lands beyond the Wall. I lost Viserion there.”

She still can see her gentlest son falling from the sky and losing forever in that frozen land.

“I fell in love with him, as a little girl would do, and we were lovers for a time. I went to fight his war and he bent the knee to me, but when we reach Winterfell he learned from his brother he was not a bastard at all, but the son of Rhaegal and the lover he made his wife. He was the true heir of the throne I was intending to gain back.”

She recalled the moment when Jon told her the truth. A truth only she could see how dangerous it was. The truth that destroyed her.

“He promised me he did not want it. But his people and his family did not want me. My allies were suspecting that I was losing my patience, so I begged him not to speak about it, never. But he was a man of honour, and couldn’t keep it from his sisters. One of them, a woman who hated me deeply and wanted the North to be independent of the rest of the Kingdoms, Sansa Stark, sits now as the Queen in the North.”

Sansa Stark despised the fact Jon and she were in love. She was convinced her brother was bewitched by her. However, if someone was cursed by that hoax that Daenerys believed was love, were her people and herself.

“How is that…” he wanted to know but she already knew where he was going.

“That I let it happen?” she asked rhetorically. “I was in love,” was the simplest response. “But he couldn’t love me back, not even as his family. He spurned me and only wanted to give me the throne to fulfill his vow. And he did it, in some way.”

Daario continued to watch her in disbelief as the narration of the events slipped with simplicity from her mouth, now that things were clearer and she was not afraid to admit how wrong she has been.

“Why did you burn the city?”

Daenerys frowned, suddenly asking the same question to herself.

She bitterly remembered the first conflicting feelings that began to come to her after the death of Viserion. On occasions, her bound with Drogon made the person she was, lose herself in the dragon, the fury growing stronger that there was only one thought in her mind: burn them all.

Drogon had comforted her in that graveyard where Jorah perished in vain protecting her. Her son also was insisting that they should leave the North as soon as possible, feeling the scorn and disdain with which the northerners were treating them.

When Rhaegal fell from the sky but she desisted on facing Euron Greyjoy, in addition to her own suffering after Missandei’s death, Drogon abandoned her for a few days until he returned for Varys' execution, ecstatic at last for being able to satisfy his desire to burn it all.

She made a last and naive attempt of appealing Jon, to hear him bring some peace to her mind but
he only repeated, again and again, that she was his queen as if that would solve the disaster in
which she had ended up partly because of her love for him. Ha had said he loved her, but she did
not believe him.

Had she taken the throne instead of hearing his bland advice on Dragonstone beach, the Night
King would have never had Viserion, nor would Rhaegal have been massacred for the weapons
Cersei built while she struggled to save his North and the rest of Westeros.

Up in the walls of King’s Landing, she was a person no more. As Grey Worm, Missandei and her
allies had told him before, taking the city was easygoing. She only needed her son and half of her
armies. She had The Reach, Dorne and The Iron Island but lose everything for being the good
queen. The merciful, foreign whore, dragon queen.

“Dracarys,” was Missandei’s last word. And indeed, Drogon was telling her the same. Burn them
all.

Up in that wall, she was not a queen, nor a breaker of chains or a Mhysa. She was a dragon.

“Tyrion, Varys, Jon Snow all of them tell me to wait and deal with Cersei Lannister instead of
using all my forces to take the throne,” she started her explanation, nor waiting for him to
understand. “I listened to them because I wanted to be the queen they believed I was. I chose a path
of stillness and Cersei took advantage out of it. First, I lost my allies, then Cersei gained power
while I lost my soldiers and Jorah fighting the dead. She created a weapon that killed Rhaegal, and
finally, she took Missandei and beheaded her in front of Grey Worm and me. Her last words were
Dracarys. Can you imagine? Sweet Missandei telling me to burn them all?”

“I would have told you the same,” he admitted, as it wasn’t an obvious fact.

“I know that you would tell me so many things that I would have ignored to follow Jon’s or
Tyrion’s advice.”

Daario huffed bitterly. “Their new king, the cripple boy...”

“Bran Stark. Jon’s brother.”

“What do you know about him?”

“Little more than nothing,” she lied, avoiding walking that line. “I don’t want to know anything
about Westeros anymore.”

“Will you let them live after what they did to you?” he questioned it, almost as if the harm was
inflicted on him. Somehow, it was, she thought. By killing her, Bay of Dragons was left vulnerable.
The people she freed were mostly dead or chained. Just as Missandei.

“Imagine if every survivor in King’s Landing had to take revenge of me,” she told him, and a little
to herself.

“I still can’t believe what you did, I can’t get you to kill the Masters here.”

“That is the good thing about crossing that line,” she said thinking in all the innocents’ blood
staining her hands. “The rest does not matter anymore. I will kill all the Masters.”

Daario kept his skeptical stare on her. “And then what?”

Then I’m done, she wanted to say but instead, she responded, “I am dead woman, Daario.”
He took a seat in front of her. “It’s not what I am seeing.”

She smiled but it was a gesture of tiredness. He would not understand her. No one will.

“Papa,” she heard a tiny voice coming from the opposite side of the room. It startled her and she felt the urgency to call for Drogon and run away.

Daario also alarmed, standing to cross the room and lift the little girl that was entering. “Where is your mama?” he asked with a sweet tone she had never heard before. Not from him.

Daenerys kept freeze hiding beneath the fabrics. From all the impossibilities, she had witnessed, this was the unlikely of all. Daario had a daughter.

The girl with bronze skin and cleared eyes was looking straight to her, and Daenerys felt like an intruder or a monster. The infant should not have been older than two but was perfectly conscious of Daenerys’ strangeness that for a moment, she felt back in Winterfell, where kids looked at her with distrust and hate.

“Daario,” called a soft and accented voice she almost recognized. “Daario, are you alone?”

From the entrance appear a woman from her previous life she never expected to see again. Ornela, a khaleen from Vaes Dothrak. She left her in Meereen with all the other Dothraki women to wait for their husbands.

It shouldn’t surprise her the fact Daario took other lovers, she had imagined he will do it before she even had put feet on her royal vessel. But this was different, this was not the Daario she left behind, the unworried sellsword that only wanted her because of her dragons and her power.

Nothing was the same, and nothing will ever will. Her children were gone, her people were gone, and she just had Drogon as he just has her. And both shared the urgency to burn some more before disappearing for good.

Daario approached to Ornela, and just then, Daenerys realized they were speaking in Dothraki. “I will go in a second,” he extended the child to her.

Ornela stared confused between them, but it did not take her so long to recognize her.

“Khaleesi,” she muttered, bending her knee with some nervousness.

Daenerys turned around and led to the balcony, thinking at the moment she dismissed Daario. “Who can ever follow Daenerys Stormborn, the mother of dragons?” he had questioned.

The mother of your child, she replied to herself.

He came back to her side, always keeping the distance she had established.

“Go away, Daario. Take everything you need or stay here, I do not care. I will kill the Master so you can keep them safe, but after that, you are on your own. You all are free. Tell them there is no more Khaleesi, nor more Mhysa.”

That night Drogon made his nest above the pyramid and she rested with him. She grew weary of trying to sleep on soft beds, or warm a body that no longer lived. She was tired of seeing eerie shapes within the shadows that will speak her name, inviting her to go with them.
Drogon’s hard scales and soft whirr lessened her, while she would look at the appeased city and think in her next steps. She couldn’t give the Masters more time to prepare. She had to hit them while they were unsuspecting, celebrating her demise. Pride was always a good abettor.

Her eyelids were getting heavier when Drogon's sudden discomfort altered her. She thought someone was approaching, but their place was unattainable for a simple person. Her son stretched his neck like sniffing something and she alerted herself, getting on his back prepared to fly away from any danger.

Drogon waited for her to be well-placed to slide down the pyramid and take a flight to the catacombs where she once made the huge mistake of locking her children.

"Why are you bringing me here?" she whispered in Valyrian. "Do you want to reproach me?"

Drogon landed at the destroyed entrance of the cave and he did not wait for her to follow him, he got inside destroying part of the staircase structure that led to the bottom. Her son lost in the darkness and she had to make a great effort to get down there and find him.

"Drogon?" She called him, remembering when she came down to look for Rhaegal and Viserion, who rejected her furiously for their unjust punishment.

Drogon growled to get her attention and she found him lying against a wall while trying to lift something with his snout. Daenerys approached to appease him, feeling his nervousness and impatience through their bound.

"Sh, what's going on?" she asked, starting to tremble.

The dragon made a sound that seemed sad but excited, totally committed to the task of scratching something on the ground that Daenerys could not discern. Finally, she carefully reached out to see what was eliciting his agitation, when a spark of colour appeared in the darkness.

Eggs.

Dragon eggs.

Daenerys was stunned and fell to her knees. Her trembling hands attempted to touch them, but she felt too fearful of causing some harm or waking up from a beautiful dream.

Rhaegal and Viserion grew up locked in this cursed place. The idea that they had copulated didn't surprise her at all. Instead of growing free, she enslaved them as the Masters put chains on the slaves' necks.

She cried as she hadn't done since her unborn daughter's slipped from her rotten body. She cried remembering the pain of her soul that will never heal and with which she would have to live until the permanent end of her life. Her only a hint of a hope: knowing that Drogon will not face his many years alone.

But after her what would happen to them? When their children were young, many had tried to take them for themselves. Daenerys was not going to allow her children's children to have the same destiny. She was no more the mother of dragons, because the three of them, she has cruelly failed.

Viserion and Rhaegal's descendants would be free, Daenerys swore. She would find a place, far from the known world, where they all could be free with Drogon.

"Dany," she heard a voice coming from the entrance to the catacomb. It was Daario with a torch
coming down slowly and cautiously. He had never called her that way.

"Don't call me by that name," she asked, wiping her tears and putting herself protectively in front of the eggs. "Men call me that way before they hurt me."

Daario looked at her strangely again trying to adapt to her presence anew. "Okay, Daenerys," he replied. "My men told me that you came here with Drogon, I wanted to make sure you were fine."

She lamented being so hard on him, but this was their new reality, she was dead and he had a woman and a daughter. Their worlds were inevitably divided; He had to protect his family.

Family. How bitter it was to think about how important it was to have one to win a battle. All her enemies were protected by their families. Until the end.

She looked at the eggs and thought if maybe that was her destiny. To be a dragon.

"Is that what I think it is?" He said, looking past her to the dragon eggs that Drogon was guarding very carefully.

Daenerys nodded. "They were hidden and Drogon found them. They are from Rhaegal and Viserion."

Daario was perplexed, and she wondered what had happened if he had found them first.

"Are they going to hatch someday?" He ventured to ask.

She was sure they would, but she did not know when exactly. "I will not leave them here," she made clear. "I'm going to take them."

"I would never ask you otherwise," he replied offended. "Why do you distrust me? I will never harm you. I am not like the dwarf or the bastard."

It's not just you now, she thought. You don't know where your loyalty lies until your family is put on the line.

"I apologize, Daario," she excused, walking towards him. "Of all of them you have been the only one who has not hurt me. That's why I want you to be free. All who have trusted me have ended up dying. You have to protect your family and yourself."

He tilted his face in disbelief. "For the gods, what have they done to you?"

She smiled with some sorrow. "They assassinated me."

Daario broke the implicit code she had established and ran to take her in a hug that no one had tried in a long time. Drogon was bothered by his boldness but let him pass, still concerned about protecting the offspring of his late siblings.

Daenerys felt attacked at first, and kept her arms like a shield between them, afraid to leave her guard low for too long. She recalled a time where that closeness did not bother her and she even longed for it. While she had never loved Daario, she enjoyed their moments together, until she realized that he could be an obstacle between her and the Iron Throne.

Daario's loyalty could have won her the throne, she thought. Or maybe not. She couldn't know for sure since everything seemed to have changed.

"You smell too much of roses," he whispered against her ear.
"It's the fabrics," she replied awkwardly. "My body was... it wasn't right when they found me. It's going to take time for," she trailed off, without knowing very well how to explain it to him. "Might it will never be the same again."

Daario walked away to observe her face. "I saw something different in your eyes," he said caressing her cheek. "I want to cross the sea and destroy them all."

Daenerys let out a sincere laugh. "No good will bring us," she reassured. "The lions and the wolves had eaten me, you know? Like my family before me, they finally joined against me. Because I never belonged there."

"You saved their lives," he complained as if it was a huge mistake from her.

"As I destroyed them too."

"You destroyed a city, others have done it before you. But what harm have you done to them?"

Daenerys hadn't thought it that way. She avoided delving into the thought of Tyrion, Jon, Sansa or even Bran Stark. Everything had changed so fast that she was terrified to return to the past. There was only one time she liked to visit and that was the one in which she was surrounded by people who loved her, and who could continue living, having she abandoned her quest.

It was true that the destruction of King’s Landing did not take place on its own. The northerners openly participated in the sacking, as Grey Worm told her, but it was useless. The bells had rung and she was the queen.

"Aegon and Visenya burned cities for years when Rhaenys was murdered," she said pulling away from his embrace. "No one ever called them mad, but I will always be remembered as the Mad King’s daughter, the Mad Queen."

"Not here," he stated. "When we found out what happened, there were days and days of mourning in your name. People piled out of the pyramid crying for Mhysa."

"Do they know Mhysa slaughtered a city full of innocent people?"

"Do they know how many freedmen have been slaughtered in the celebrations of your death? They do not! I begged the dwarf for help and he only sent his condolences. Westerosis don't care what happens on this side of the Narrow Sea."

Daenerys turned her face, gulping. "Worst of all, I try to feel some form of guilty but I don't feel anything about it. I try to visualize it, children, little children burnt, but nothing comes through my head. I just want to end this and leave."

"You said you will kill all the Masters."

"I'm going to do that, take it for granted."

"Then we’ll do it together."

"No," she said harshly. "You have to take care of your family."

"Ornella knows who I am and what I do; if I don't come back from my battles she knows where to go to be safe."

"Would you let your little daughter growing up without a father?" She asked in pain.
Daario sighed almost surrendered from so many questions. “I didn't plan it this way, I'm not a family man but I care for them, you know? For the first time in my life, I feel that something makes sense and it’s been because of you,” he looked at Drogon who began to doze on the eggs. “You only needed this big one to take that filthy city; I have no doubt that you are going to destroy the Masters in Yunkai and Astapor in less than one moon. However, they will never understand it if you disappear again. You have to make it clear who is in charge.”

_They don't get to choose._

_I offer you a choice._

“I have tried both paths, Daario. I tried to be merciful and it failed. I tried to do it through fear, and I scared them so much that I was finished without even sitting on the throne.”

“Didn't you sit in the damn chair? Gods, Daenerys!”

“I was going to do it when he entered the throne room. He stabbed the dagger when I was kissing him. A stupid move, I know.”

"Damn bastard."

“I lowered my guard; I can't let it happen again. Not at least as long as Drogon lives.”

“Then protect your dragon and let me help you. Our numbers are not the best but I was able to train the freedmen while you were in Westeros.”

"Did you train the freedmen?"

"I did many things while I was waiting for news from you."

Daenerys felt silly for not thinking about it before. An idea suddenly appeared in her mind but she did not want to expose it to Daario because she was not convinced it at all. With Drogon by her side, she was almost invincible.

With Second Sons weakened, and the men Daario had trained yet not prepared they had little chance to win a war against the Masters. However, she had wiped out the twenty thousand men of the golden company like ants, from the back of her dragon. A dragon and a decimated army had won her King’s Landing before. Maybe they could get her a stronger army to protect Bay of Dragons until she was sure slavery would not return.

Daario had a point; the Masters would not get tired until she showed them, once and for all, that she had won. What better way to do it than returning from death and end their kind? A fight between monsters, as with Cersei, that would end in another destroyed city.

No. She didn't want to inflict more damage on the freedmen. Daenerys was tired of half-victories, of unresolved endings that only made things back to the beginning.

There was only one way to end that conflict.

She walked towards the entrance and turned to invite Daario to follow her. "Let's begin.”

III
Daenerys breathed the dry desert air outside Astapor, taking a moment to reconsider her decision. When she began planning this war with Daario, she promised herself to trust only her instinct. No more diplomacy, no more mercy.

Daario, his Second Sons and the freedmen army were gathering outside the scorched walls of Astapor, waiting for her orders after easily had taken the city as she should have done, from the beginning, with King’s Landing. She burn the walls and the soldiers did the rest.

Seeing Drogon doing the hard work in less than a couple of minutes hit the senses of the enemy troops, and they drop their swords. They were sellsword and low-level soldiers, after all. They were fighting for money, while Daario’s armies had some form of a conviction.

Initially, a seed of doubt grew on her when they had accrued what remained of the Masters, in front of the slaves. Daenerys knew they were not all guilty for the deeds of their kind. She recalled the time when the Masters of Meereen were crucified. The memory of her younger self, being full of regret after Hizdahr Zo Loraq claimed his father voted against those children crucifixion. But Hizdahr was killed by the Sons of the Harpy.

Her enemies never care for innocents lives; she did, and they used it against her. Every time.

She was not a savior. She had not come to save, she had returned by the arbitrary will of a being she does not even understand what or who it is.

Nothing had sense and nothing mattered.

Daenerys Targaryen was mocked enough to know the same actions will have the same outcome. The first time she had to rule for every citizen, Masters, and freedmen. She wanted to be effective; she wanted to make a good queen. That’s why she permitted some former slaves to return to their service when they ask for it, that’s why she intended to make peace by opening Fighting Pits and marrying Hizdahr, even when this was directly undermining her quest for the Iron Throne.

It was not power that had ruined her. It was her mercy.

She stood on a cliff with Drogon behind her, satiated with his recent feast. The most she embraced her true nature, the stronger their bond had become.

In front of her, stood Daario and the other commanders, waiting for her victory speech. Daenerys beheld the view of the recently freed people, terrifying and insecure of the whole situation.

They must believe I will go again, she thought. They must believe chains will but put on them again.

The first time she did this, Daenerys hadn't thought carefully enough about the consequences of the freedom she was giving them. Might because she was naive and ignorant of all the kinds of problems it entails.

Some people learn to love their chains, she had told Jorah, partly because she had done so with Khal Drogo and the Dothraki.

This time, they must do this by themselves.

After Daario’s soldiers had put a dagger in every freedman, she stood firmly and began to speak in Valyrian.
“Do not fear me, those who had no wrong me. I should be the one frightened of your rage after what I've done to you. In this same place, in which I had freed eight thousand unsullied, I also enslaved them to follow me blindly when no man should follow any leader without true conviction. In your hands, you hold a weapon, the only weapon I can give you to free yourselves. Your freedom does not belong to me, nor to the Masters and their kind. I have given these men the choice to live in a new world, where you are their equals but they have refused. Many times. They don’t want you free. But as I told you, I don’t own your decisions. In this new world, you have a choice, but the Masters don’t get to choose. Never more.”

“Those who don’t want freedom can walk away and no one will harm you. The Master you serve will be not be harmed, by the mercy of yours. But those who had been violated and abused enough can take those weapons and claim for yourself justice and freedom.”

Cries emerged from the Masters’s mouths, and for a moment, she desired to forget everything, climb on Drogon and fly away.

No, she told herself, dragons plant no trees. Remember who you are.

“Just remember, those who you show mercy today,” she removed the gorget that Daario made her wear above a light leather armour, inevitably thinking in those three times she had saved Jon Snow. “…will show no mercy to you, tomorrow.”

Therefore, the horrible, unhealed scar was visible to everyone. She heard the gasps coming from everywhere, closing her eyes and waiting for the spilling of blood to begin, innocent or not.

The bustle began when one of the freedmen ran screaming at one of the Masters, and sliced his throat with quick determination. Later she would find out that all his daughters were sold like bed slaves to Lys’ houses of pleasures. Little girls.

When the bloodshed took place, Daenerys turned her face to look at Drogon’s eyes and didn’t move till it was all finished. She expected to feel some form of remorse, but it never happened.

The world we need is a world of mercy. It has to be.

Daenerys sighed and let Jon’s voice loose between the outcries and bellows.

She sat at one end of the map table inside her tent, while on the opposite side Daario was reciting the numbers they had found in Astapor. Daenerys didn’t want to waste much time there. They had to find a solid government to rule until they were sure that the Masters' threat was ended for good, just like in Yunkai.

While he was talking, Daenerys was distracted cleaning her scar with the ointments she brought from the Red Temple. A moment of intimacy she had grown to share after exposing the wound to so many eyes.

“Does it hurts?” he asked taking her off guard.

Daenerys tilted her head with dubitation. “Only if I remember it killed me so easily,” she replied, as it was more of an anecdote by now. “I always imagined dying on a battlefield,” she added.

“That’s unlikely,” he assured. “You barely stand on the battlefield.”

Daenerys frowned, feeling insulted by his conclusion. “On my dragon’s back, it’s still a
Daario arched his eyebrow, amused and amazed to finally have a normal conversation, like in the good old days. “If you say so.”

“You right, though,” she admitted, focusing again in her scar. “I am weak.”

His light mood disappeared and was replaced for a sudden seriousness. “You are the stronger person I have ever met, Daenerys.”

“I don’t mean it like that,” she explained to him, cleaning her hands and putting the gorget again. “When I fought the dead, I fell from Drogon and they surrounded me. I would have died if it wasn’t for Jorah. I tried in vain to help him when I grabbed a sword and-”

“You grabbed a sword?”

“Yes I did, but it was old, corroded steel, you need Valyrian steel or dragonglass to kill them.”

She recalled how ineffective it felt shaving the sword on the wights who will not relent their attack.

“You never told me exactly how the old man died,” he asked with a concern she found odd. “It happened there, right?”

“Yes,” she confirmed losing her stare in the fireplace. “The worst part is that I ended there saving the man who killed weeks later.”

His annoyance turned rapidly in admiration. “You know he still gladly would have done it again? He loved you.”

“And that killed him.”

She stood up to walk towards the dragon eggs, which she did not dare to leave away from her or Drogon anytime. Already some poor fools had tried to steal them, and Daario had them executed.

“Once I told him that I saw myself growing old like him,” Daario stated with certainty and Daenerys smiled.

“Pointless dying for this lousy queen?”

“Following the queen I chose to believe in. When I told you weren’t made to seat in a chair on a palace, I meant to say your fight would not stop with your conquest. And it was true. You took that stupid chair, and it killed you. But you are alive and you are still a conqueror.”

“I’m not conquering.” she contradicted him, taking a sip of wine that still felt like ash in her mouth. “But you have a point; my battles would have never ended. That’s why he stopped me.”

“He,” Daario emphasized, “was a coward.”

Daenerys shook her head and thought otherwise; Jon was not a coward if he had dared to kill her. But he was weak, and could never understand power. Because of that, he had to free himself from her. Jon had to save the world from her.

_The hero and his lover the monster._

“You’ll look good with a sword,” Daario muttered, chewing the supper they were sharing. “I can teach you.”
Daenerys smiled and returned to the table. “I thought this was going to be my last battle.”

Daario shook his head and pointed to the map. “You think they’ll give up now?”

She looked down where he was indicating, the Free Cities.

“What about them?”

“You think only the Masters wanted to reinstall slavery?” he asked as someone who has dealt with this matter better than she has. “My soldiers are loyal, and gold solidifies that fealty. Without the Unsullied or the Dothraki, we just have the freedmen army that to being honest, will not endure further than this.”

“You want another army,” she concluded, correctly.

“Aye,” he affirmed.

Braavos

An emissary from the Iron Bank had reached them shortly after Daario laid out the need for a new army and gold. Her return was coming out of the shadow little by little, and she wondered if it would implicate a danger for her and her son.

They were proposing to bankroll her return to Westeros, and she did not have to make much effort to deduce that the Crown had not repaid Cersei’s loan.

The Iron Bank operating mechanism was common knowledge, and Daenerys recalled when the Spider, in one of his last tasks at her service, had informed her about Tycho Nestoris arriving at King's Landing to try a new loan with Cersei.

“The Iron Bank will have its due,” she recited, after the first meeting. “But they did a bad investment,” she told Daario who had become something like her shadow. “There’s no sellsword company that can fight Drogon.”

“Their deal involves retaking the Seven Kingdoms,” he replied in a low voice, sensing the turn of the conversation. “But you made clear that you won’t return.”

She nodded. “They bet against me,” she said with a bitter smile. “They took my ally’s gold and gave Cersei the fund she needed to build her weapons.” She was walking with the goblet around the map table. “Weapons that killed Rhaegal,” she finished looking at him with menacing eyes.

“We need that gold,” he answered, waling closer and taking her goblet from her to drink it himself. “I’ll have that gold,” he assured.

“And I will have my due.”

Daario smiled. That discussion was all they needed to reach the same conclusion.

Taking the Iron Bank did not intend to mean the first step of a new conquest. Nevertheless, the moment she took one of the most powerful men of the Known World, and put him above the Titan to burn him alive for his negligent investment, Daenerys couldn’t control the consequences the surged after.

The Stormcrows were in the city ready to sail for Westeros but Daario ordered them to go and
reinforce the defense of Bay of Dragons. After the fuss they caused, the Sealord presented before her and thanked her for removing the yoke that had been forcing his hand.

“It was rumored they bet against you, your Grace, because of your fight against slavery,” the man was explaining to her. “Braavos had always pride itself for being a land of freedom.”

“We are not taking your city from you,” she replied walking down the bank’s corridor and seeing the faces of the workers curious and terrified, “but you all must know that if you bet against me, you’ll die.”

The Sealord just laughed. “I would not expect less from the Mother of Dragons.”

She could hear his breathing almost on her ear when he continued. “You must excuse me for being too bold, Your Grace, but I have to know why had you decline the offer to take back Westeros from the cripple King? His reign is weak and the land is suffering.”

Daenerys had escaped any information about Westeros and its current situation.

“I pride myself on letting people choose,” she replied staring at him. “At least the ones who deserve it.” She was approaching to a staircase that led to the bank’s deposit, where Daario was taking the gold. “And they had chosen the ill that governs them.”

“The stories tell another thing,” he teased her.

Daenerys stopped before going down the last steps.

“They said your Grace had let the King’s Landing in rubbles and stone.”

She climbed two steps to reach a better glance of his face, “Would you like to test if Braavos resist that well?”

The Sealord flinched a little but kept contemplating at her with mad admiration. Without any response, she returned to Daario’s side and waited for the deposit to be emptied.

“Braavos will serve the Mother of Dragons,” the Sealord proclaim when they were leaving the depleted space.

Daenerys and Daario saw at each other’s stumped face.

**Volantis.**

It didn't take more than that to lift the earth from the ground. Daenerys realized that her desire to fly and get lost in the remoteness of the unknown die out. Reports of her reappearance reached the West, and with that, the small calm she had in being a shadow.

She wondered if Jon would have to look for her again to finish his job. *The prince that was promised*. Daenerys’ sincere wish wasn't unleashing any action that would lead to another death by his hand. She wanted to think that it was not fear what she felt, that it was only her paranoia or her madness, but at times she felt like the same little girl who had to think twice what she say or do so as not to shake off Viserys' fragile good mood. An absurd idea, because she was the one with the dragon and the armies; however, Jon left unharmed the first time. Destiny was his. He the hero and she the threat.
She was not surprised to feel so disturbed when the Red Priests and the slaves took Volantis, in her name.

Daenerys tested the loyalty of Daario and Ornella, leaving them in charge of the care and vigilance of the dragon eggs. She flew to Volantis to find Kinvara and confronted her for what had happened.

The mother of dragons was received with victory cheers that she felt it did not belong to her. Daenerys was aware that Volantis had slavery, which she had witnessed during her staying at the Red Temple, seeing the soldiers of the Fiery Hand, standing in every corner, day and night.

In the center of the Plaza, she found the High Priestess standing pristine and carefree with thousands of people around her expecting to see something great.

“I forewarned you,” she began to say when she stood in front of Kinvara. “I will not be used as a tool for your god’s purpose.”

The red woman stared at her steadfast. “You can run from it but the more you run, the more infatuated it grows.”

Daenerys walked unsteady towards her, redirecting her words to the crown. “I am not the savior she will make you think I am,” she exclaimed. “I burn thousands to relief myself,” she was just feet apart from her now. “I took pleasure out for the suffering of those lives that I took.”

She heard the gasps of the public surrounding them, but Kinvara did not flinch or took away her eyes from Daenerys.

“They know it was our Lord’s will,” she continued. “Thousands of lives that fire has purified instead of being lightly taken by a man’s hand,” Kinvara shout out, extending her arms dressed in long leaves.

Their public chanted with sheer emotion.

“They received a Braker of Chains, a Mother of Dragons,” the red priestess carried on, “we can’t hide behind small mercies, anymore.”

*Little children, burned!*

“You still hearing his voice,” she guessed when Daenerys kept staring at the void. “The voice of the White Wolf that killed you.”

Cries of despair and angst burst from the crown.

“With what right wolves and lions dared to judge the pain of a dragon?”

Daenerys couldn’t understand why her words kept her static, but a flow of anger start rising within her and she was filling bogged down again. She didn’t understand, she went to stop this attempt to make her being who she was.

“Stop fighting against it, do not let ice freeze your fire,” Kinvara was so close that she could touch her cheek. “Fire is power, and power is power.”

Daenerys shook her head, frightening the spell. She was not a savior, and her power was nothing in front of the man who killed her. Daenerys enraged thinking on them. She’d gave them everything, her people sacrificed themselves for that land’s welfare. But it was her failure, her inability to put their well-being in front of Jon’s people. Love not only just killed her, but it also slew everything
she represented.

Grey Worm did well in forgetting her. She will never deserve the people she dragged to the end of the world.

She felt it again, the urgency that blinded her, the sense of Drogon enticing her to burn. Invisible arms pushing her towards madness. Fire tangible between her fingers and the sound of bells mocking at her.

Daenerys was burning. Literal burning. She could not notice until the people gathered around them cried out as if they were in the presence of R’hollor itself. Kinvara’s face was enraptured.

She looked down at her hands and saw the flames emerging from them as if she could grab them. Finally, Daenerys was a dragon. A monster.

_He will come and kill me_, she thought grimly.

**Meereen**

Daario proved himself, and this time, Daenerys knew and apprehend the need to fully trust in him. She lamented to never have loved him as a partner; her life would have been so much easy.

Her body was not fully healed, but she could feel freer to use the Dothraki garments that Ornella had prepared for her. The young Khaleen had offered to braid her hair, as a sign of their recent victories but Daenerys did not feel victorious at all. What victory a dead person can claim? Besides, her hair was short and it seemed that never grew. The priests had taken away the Khaleesi when they threw her braids and locks into the fire.

Drogon continued to dance alone in the sky of Meereen while Daario and the commanders finished discussing how to continue the conquest of Bay of Dragons.

“Braavos recognized the new government of Volantis and the Sealord continues to send his support to the Mother of Dragons,” had said Jornik, a lieutenant from the Second Sons and Daario’s right hand. “Lorath and Pentos always follow Braavos example, so it’ll be not surprising to find allies there.”

“We should take Mantarys for rejecting our approach and killing our men,” another man said, Daenerys couldn’t remember exactly his name. “And then New Ghis.”

“Those are many lands to take,” Daario pointed out scratching his beard. “Soon they’ll be seeing it as an expansion.”

“We have a dragon and big army, let’s take what we want,” Jornik claimed, watching cautiously towards Daenerys.

She was not good at tactics so kept the most part of the time in silence, but at that right moment, the men gathered in her table were expecting some type of command from her.

“I can’t use Drogon for every battle,” she expressed staring at the balcony archway and seeing her son’s soft gliding. “He is my last one, and I can’t risk him until it’s necessary.”

“If you excuse my audacity, Your Grace,” the commander of the Freedmen, whose name was Mossoro, spoke to her. “Last time you had three dragons and they still dare to fight you. Your
alleged defeat in Westeros is their hope, and they will not stop until Mhysa is gone and chains back in our necks.”

Daenerys gulped hard. “It was not an alleged defeat,” she revealed. “In Westeros, there’s a man who was bound to quench my fire, and he found me.”

Daario clenched his jab.

“It was an absolute defeat,” she said almost as a whisper. “Still, I haven’t come here just to let you down one more time. We’ll take those cities, and do whatever it’s necessary to sustain the freedom,” she assured with her gaze stuck on him. “And we’ll take the Free Cities to unite a single army.”

Every one of them took a hard breath, Daario included.

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Her enemies eventually resorted to the use of scorpions, and when they took Mantarys, one of its projectiles ambushed Drogon. Daenerys felt stupid for not have anticipated the situation on time, and when they had to land because of the injury in his left wing, she found herself surrounded by the foe.

After Daario’s wise insistence, Daenerys carried with her a sword she barely had learned to wield. It was absurd to think she could face expert soldiers with her nil ability as a swordsman, but confronting them bought time for her and Drogon until their soldiers came across to defend her.

It was the second time that Drogon faced his dam in the ground, the first time being when he went to rescue her in the fighting pits, where the Sons of the Harpy tried to slaughter him with their spears.

Daario suggested using Drogon on land as in heaven, and the dragon seemed quite delighted with close contact with its prey. Still, Daenerys feared the scorpions would reach him again, so for a while they had to stop their quest and train Drogon to be on the battlefield.

One of the blacksmiths, a freedman named Mizar, had humbly proposed her a design of armour for Drogon, with a type of mace at the end, covering the tip of his tail.

"Aren't Dragon scales as hard as stone?” Daario asked sitting by her side while they were watching several blacksmiths taking Drogon's measurements.

Daenerys sighed remembering how the scorpions pierced Rhaegal as if it were a simple bird flying in the sky. “Rhaegal was my littlest one, and he was cut like a wild boar. I am not afraid that a harpoon will kill Drogon, but soon my they’ll realise that they can improve their weapons by poisoning them, or something else.”

She was expectant for Rhaegal and Viserion's eggs to hatch, not because she had the particular urge to use them in battle, but because she felt the bitterness and loneliness of her last son the longer time passed.

After taking Mantarys, as Jornik predicted, Braavos, Lorath, and Pentos had sworn allegiance to her as a protector. Yes, that is what they called her, a protector. An irony. However, that made
easier for them to take Myr, Tyrosh, and Lys, in this letter case, despite the constraints with the Poison King.

Lys

Her fear that the scorpions would loose with poison to liquidate Drogon, something similar to what had happened to her sun and stars, made them being more discreet, and drawn on to a less conventional strategy than a battle.

Attacking Lys, the lovely land, entailed to finish their crusade in the west Essosi, and Daenerys was elated to move east, to Norvos, Qohor, and finish this affair to secure a stronghold for the freedman. With the west secured, she expected that they would not reach her anymore.

Daenerys had a bad time in this city. She had already hear about the slave trade there, the famous pillow houses where people came to please their most vile, vicious desires.

She had no need to disguise herself to pass between its people; known to be the last vestige of Old Valyria, Lysenis have hair and eyes exotic as hers.

They had spent months designing their attack, and to be as effective as possible, they had to prepare themselves for any eventuality. Daario sent the most skillful freedmen in the army to make a recognition of the city, and bring information about the slave trade.

Governed by a Conclave of Magisters influenced by slaves' providers and owners of the houses of pleasure, Lys needed of a strong and permanent intervention. She would never negotiate with slavers again.

When the freedmen returned, they revealed that there has been some serious uprisings after news of her return reached the island, and because of that the Conclave would have a meeting alongside the most illustrious citizens in the Temple of Trade.

An opportunity in a million for Daenerys.

For months, they focus on establishing a link with the city, buying slaves to trade them to Pentos with the help of Magister Illyrio Mopatis, who after many years had reappeared in front of her with the absurd intention of serving her.

"Have you heard about the destiny of your friend Varys, right?" she asked to the greedy man. "The warning it’s the same for you, use me again or betray me, and I’ll burn you alive."

She knew he was not trustworthy, but for the moment, it was what they needed to create for themselves a reputation among Lyseni merchants.

The day they arrived at Lys, Daenerys gave his commanders a solely warning, that if she discovered any man in the Pillow Houses, she would execute them. She could tolerate their escapes to the brothels of Meereen, where strict control was exercised over the safety of the workers, but in Lys, there were no restrictions as to what one could find.

It was not difficult to request a place in the celebration once several transactions were made with the Lysenis. To reinforce their supposed commitment to the matter, Daenerys had ordered to buy children. She didn't have the strength to see them with her own eyes, but Daario assured him that
once they were out of Lys, the slaves would be safe.

"Have you been to any of these houses?" She asked, afraid to hear an affirmative response.

Daario huffed. "I already told you that I don't pay for women to sleep with me."

Finally, the strategy worked, and if everything went according to plan, the invasion of Lys would take less than a day. They were invited to the meeting.

Daario always had a special talent for flattery, so she allowed him to sweeten the ears of the Magisters and Merchants while she sat beside him, watching carefully the surroundings. There were beautiful women and men, all of them with her same hair or eyes. It made her long for her former beauty.

At one moment she moved away to walk on one of the balconies, where people gathered around a single man who was playing with perfumes and potions. The man indeed could have posed as a Targaryen. His hair was platinum as hers and her eyes of a deep blue as she has never seen before. She imagined that Aegon the Conqueror must have looked like him, except that this man looked thin to be a fighter.

Women as men surrounded him, more interested in his looks than the strongly scented perfumes he was preparing.

"A fragrance it’s not just meant to please the sense of smell," he was telling his audience as she advanced closer. “but it must excite our memory too.”

He was holding two tiny reddish jars in front of a woman, who smelled trying to find the difference between them.

"The only way to know if someone is trying to sweeten our senses or," he interrupted himself to smile with amusement, "to kill us, is by training the mind to recognize a simple hoax," he extended the jar of his left hand "or a betrayal," he raised his other arm, the poison.

People applauded, amazed; but Daenerys knew that the bottle on the left contained Tears of Lys, unmistakable to her who had spent years running away from assassination attempts since she was born.

Someone announced it was time to gather around the big table, and she knew that it was the moment to search for Drogon in his position above the clouds.

Daario seemed nervous about not having weapons to defend themselves. She had assured their only task was to stay away from Drogon, while the armies sieged the city.

The Temple of Trade would be ashes.

One of the Magisters, she didn't bother to know who he was, got up from his chair to give a speech before opening the feast.

"My dear friends, we are here today to announce that Lys will be subjected to an attack today," he began to say at the perplexed gaze of Daenerys and Daario. “But don't fret; we still have loyal connections to the mainland. Lifetime friends, willing to give their lives to protect our liberty from the threat of this Usurper whore and her mount of dread.”

Daenerys tried to keep calm, but the men beside her began to get impatient at the terrible situation in which her plan had evolved.
"Our dear Gerael, come here please," he called to someone as he gestured with his hands. It was the man of the perfumes. “Our loyal servant has prepared us for the attack of the black beast and his mother. Look around,” and everyone turned to look at the soldiers who were entering and rounding the table. “The weapons of our soldiers have been refined by Gerael Dagareon or the Poison King, as some know him. A single scratch under the scales of that beast and his mother will become a mother of nothing.”

The guests cheered as clapped, still in bewilderment. Through the bound, she tried to warn Drogon to stay in his place. They would have to resort to a simple siege and find a way to escape from the island.

The servants came and positioned themselves behind them, with jugs of wine.

"Now, please, extend your glasses and toast with me in the name of pleasure and freedom."

Daenerys startled when the first stream of wine was deposited in the goblets on the table.

"Don't drink it, tell others not to do it," she forewarned, alerting Jornik and Daario that were sitting on each side of her. Daenerys thought she would have to work better, faster communication with her men.

Everyone sipped from their goblets, while Daenerys and her men just smiled and placed them near their faces. First, she thought that the Lysenis were setting them in a trap, that they somehow detected their ruse, and were appealing to the poison to get rid of them cleanly.

When the first Magister fell to the ground grabbing his neck, and the rest of the guests followed him, Daenerys knew that someone had surpassed them.

"I never heard that the Mother of Dragons had a talent for aromas," he said after a long silent contemplation. "I thought the only thing you did was turn cities into ashes."

Daenerys remained unmoved, trying to think if Drogon's armour would be enough to dodge all the spears.

"I have to admit how impressed I feel, many years I waited to see you in person."

"You murdered your people," was the first thing that occurred to her to say.

"This?" He said looking down at the floor where the Magister's body rested. “It is not my people. My people are on the outskirts of the temple, inhabiting the houses of pleasure and waiting for their King to release them.”

Daenerys was confused. "We came to free the slaves."
Gerael rose from his chair to position himself closer to her. Daario tried to move in front of him but she stopped him with her arm.

“Free us?” Asked the Poison King, “We waited for years for your coming, Breaker of Chains. The one who didn't wait for us was you.”

She shook her head, "us?"

The Lyseni soldiers took Daario, Jornik, Mossoro and pointed daggers in their necks.

He smiled, "We don't want your freedom, Mother of Dragons."

"If you are going to free the slaves, then we have the same goal," she replied.

"My goal is not to give weapons to my people to fight your battles," he said this time with a serious, grave tone. "We do not free ourselves from these monsters to fall into the hands of another."

"You were cheating on them," she interrupted. "Your show on the balconies, it was a hoax; you made them believe that the poison was the perfume."

He did not answer.

“It is not difficult for you to deceive and exalt the senses. What have you promised the city to surrender to you? Freedom? It is the same thing that your Magister was promising a few moments ago to these people. "

The Poison King frowned, “Since when is Daenerys Targaryen worried about the fate of slaves? Your friend, the Magister de Pentos, is now fleeing to Westeros to sell the slaves you gave him so kindly. ”

Daenerys felt a stab of pain and stumbled until she crashed into Daario. She didn't know why she was surprised to have fallen into the same trap of despair.

"Westeros does not allow the sale of slaves," she answered nervously. "They will catch and execute him."

Gerael looked at her with incredulity. "What a short sight you hold of your homeland," he replied. "Westeros is no man's land since you destroyed the capital and abandoned them at the mercy of the cripple king."

"I didn't abandon them, I was killed."

"Oh yes, the story of the scar," he replied with disdain.

They fell back into a sepulchral silence, while the Poison King closed his eyes and meditated on his next move. Daenerys looked up at the sky, trying to find Drogon among the clouds.

"This is what is going to happen, Mother of Dragons," Gerael spoke again. “You will recognize me as King of Lys, and respect our freedom. Your dragon will liquidate a list of people I’ll give you, and then you will continue playing the conqueror on the mainland. ”

Daenerys snorted, "What do I get in return?"

Gerael made a gesture towards Daario, Jornik and the rest. "In addition to their lives," he said without much care, "the most valuable thing I can grant you: my knowledge."
Daenerys was close to Daario, making sure the dagger didn't touch his neck. After being betrayed by Jon, this felt the lowest of her victories.

She ducked her face and nodded. "I am not trying to govern over you," she said, walking towards him, his blue eyes seemed even more impressive from that distance. "All I want is to make sure that those I freed will never return to their chains."

Gerael gave her one of his carefree smiles again. "Then let everyone defend that freedom," and with this he extended his arm, offering his hand to close the deal.

Daenerys looked down and reluctantly held his hand.

After taking Lys, they had to solve the problem of the government of these cities and their conflict over the Disputed Lands and the Stepstones. Daenerys knew she would never win every single battle, and probably there were multiple little defeats she had to face in the future. Being betrayed by Illyrio Mopatis was prove enough of that.

Sometimes, in her lower points, she had wished for someone eloquent as Tyrion to speak sense into her, and not feeling overwhelmed for the myriads of persons who came to find answers in her.

In that sense, the new allegiance with the Poison King gave them a tactical advantage she had never expected.

Gerael Dagareon was a former bed slave, who conquered power in small quantities by deceiving his clients. One of them was the alchemist that taught him everything he knows about poison and perfumes. It was so good mentor that eventually Gerael overpassed him, and killed him.

Daenerys had always liked people who free themselves from their chains, but something in Gerael still kept haunting her.

He had insisted in accompanying her in some meetings with the new rulers of Tyrosh and Myr, and first, she believed it a power move, to show himself as the favored by the Mother of Dragons. At that time, she had come to know him better. Enough to notice his strange demeanour, who will pass from being ravished and playful, as the time he instructed her to make her own fragrances, to suddenly change to be distant and groomy, as someone she had known.

Indeed, Gerael was a strange merging of the striking features of Jon and Daario. Speaking of who had warned her not to get intimate with him, which she dismissed with a laugh, arguing that she had never been attracted to blond men.

Anyway, she kept her reservations and their cordial relationship. With the Poison King by their side, the subsequent battles became easier to win or at least, it spared them time.

As her power in Essos increased, it also did her enemies. She would just sigh after every new attempt of murdering her, realising that her body had become immune at the poisonous weapons of second-rated sorcerers, or the innocent struck of the blade of a sword. She would bleed a little and then the wound would close, letting her body forever marked.

However, with West Essosi in her power, Norvos and Qohor did not bother to raise arms against an inevitable enemy, just as they have negotiated peace with the Dothraki in the past. Daenerys had no intention of imposing her will or exercising the government in any of these cities. Her two main ultimatums consisted of no slavery, and half of their local armies.
Disagreements still existed, but few men were encouraged to face Drogon on the battlefield. Whoever did this became food for the beast, and every time someone resorted to scorpions, Drogon destroyed them with his fire or with the help of the mace the amour provided him.

Using the dragon in battle, as well as training her to defend herself even if it was deplorable, were two great ideas from Daario that could have been very useful in Westeros.

With Norvos and Qohor, she believed her campaign was over. In just three years, she had amassed an immense army with which she could advance further east and venture even beyond the Dothraki Sea. Every time her ambition would try to rule her senses, she had to remember her original goal: end slavery. Secure that freedom.

Avoiding feeling tempted to go beyond her power, and also being subject to the constant pressures and pretensions of the rulers of Free Cities, she united them in a single body called the Common Council, which would meet twice a year in the old building of the Iron Bank.

Her goal was fulfilled. Daario was unharmed to return to his family and she and Drogon were free to wander away until the hatch of Rhaegal and Viserion’s eggs.

V

309 A.C – Meereen

“Khaleesi,” Frigia softly called her, pulling Daenerys out of her thoughts. “They are warm!” she noted skimming the dragon eggs with caution as if they were the most delicate thing in her world.

Having returned to Meereen, Daario’s family got closer to her, but still, they treated her as the Khaleesi and the Queen of Meereen, tough she had insisted on abandoning such treatment.

Ornela was anew heavy with his child, and Daenerys couldn’t help but feeling herself an intruder tucked between them.

Their girl Frigia, would come and speak hours to her, assuring the eggs were safe and warm under her rigorous caring. Daenerys would reward her services telling her tales and songs of the Targaryen’s dragons, even alluding to the eggs’ parents.

Meereen was thriving once more, and for a while, she could enjoy the peace and calm that entails. However, nightmares and voices in her head started appearing again, as if tranquility would worsen her madness.

Kinvara wanted her to nurture the gifts that death has bestowed her, and because of the priestess’ pressing, she was learning to watch the flames in the Red Temple.

“So that’s why the red god brought me back,” she had said in one of those occasions, more like an affirmation than a question. “He wants me to be like the Raven.”

Kinvara neither confirmed nor denied her assumption. Her silence on the matter contradicted her constant attempts to push Daenerys closer to that blissful goal that the red god supposedly had for her.

“What you want to see in the flames, the flames will show. Seldom you’ll perceive what you need to see. My sister Melissandre of Asshai had focused too much on her own desires that the flames gave her nothing but a reflection.”
If that would’ve been the case, Daenerys wanted to see only one thing. One thing that the flames never showed her.

Instead, she enjoyed as an advantage to see pieces of the past and the present, something useful to keep an eye on every corner of her recent conquests.

There was a time she chose to visit repeatedly: her death. She watched it so many times, that the feelings became increasingly numb.

It always started with Jon walking to the throne room, meeting Drogon on the outside, who scrutinized him before letting it he pass, naive as herself when she took him so close, ignoring his weapons and his resounding aversion.

The pain in her chest broke the kiss, and in front of the realization of what happened, Daenerys examined in his face for an excuse, an apology, or a trace of remorse. But Jon kept his eyes closed as if he hadn't been sure of what he had done.

She remembered wanting to tell something, but words could not fight the blood flooding out of her mouth, and the weakness that invaded her entire body.

Her time was up. Next instant, she was looking to the destroyed roof receiving with open arms the death that had haunted her throughout all her life until it has finally had caught her.

She hated watching him cry over her body as if he were entitled to it. At least she had hoped for an iota of assuredness about what he had done, but Jon seemed reluctant, everything crumbling before his impassive gaze.

He didn't even face Drogon, who at the end of the day couldn't hurt him for his bond with her, even if it killed him not to.

She saw Drogon destroying the Iron Throne and it looked like a victorious, grandiose conclusion, and the end of all wars.

Jon was the hero of this story, the prince that was promised who meant to end the darkness of this world. She was part of that darkness, which she tried to outwit her whole life without success.

Her destiny was not to build a new world, and if she put it in perspective, her only goal was always to serve as a pawn for Jon's glory.

She believed it poetic in a certain way.

After seeing it so many times, she noticed that Jon was coming from the wing where she had Tyrion locked. With much effort, Daenerys managed to reach that particular moment, the conversation they had minutes before Jon killed her.

She was not stubborn enough to deny that Jon tried his best to defend her, to fight against his sense of honour that was telling him he had to stop her.

Daenerys should have killed Tyrion right when he resigned as her hand, but she couldn’t manage to do it because some part of her still appreciated him. It wouldn’t make any difference since Jon was always meant to kill her, but at least, he wouldn't have told Jon that she has always been a tyrant. That the people she had killed in Essos were victims and not perpetrators of violence themselves.

Jon was conflicted and Tyrion took advantage out of it. He was saving himself.
Tyrion admitted he had loved her, and a chill travelled her spine hearing calling her Dany.

In Meereen, she kept practicing even in the nights when Daario, Ornela, and Frigia would take supper in her solar.

One night, Daenerys was watching Sansa Stark holding court in the Great Hall of Winterfell, with Tyrion by her side. News from Westeros arrived when they returned, informing that the Ironborn took a vast part of the mainland, including King’s Landing. She felt glad for Queen Yara.

“So they just killed the King?” Daario asked, switching to the common tongue to keep Frigia unaware of the conversation.

“No,” she stated, focusing hard on reaching King’s Landing, but it was blurry and dark. “I can’t see him, but it can be killed.”

“I’m glad those fuckers are drowning in their own shit,” Daario ranted, gaining Ornela’s disapproval stare.

“it shet fuck’rs!” repeat his father’s daughter, mimicking the common tongue.

Daenerys smiled but felt, as most of the time, an alien from that family picture. She knew Daario believed her part of his family, but she had learned well from the past that at some moment, everything could escape from her grip. She did not want him to have to choose between his family and her, just like she couldn’t stand rejection again.

Without him knowing, she has been planning to move soon, probably to Volantis. Daenerys only was waiting for the hatching to happen, so Frigia could see the baby dragons. To her detriment, the waiting was taking too long.

“With our armies, we could invade him in less than a moon,” Daario insisted.

“I will never return,” she replied chewing the meal. “I keep an eye on them because I don’t want them to come after me.”

“Do you believe them that stupid?” he asked incredulously.

He is stupidly brave in that sense she wanted to answer.

Her attentive vigilance over Westeros had to do with a reason for security rather than for curiosity if she was honest. The news of the unification of the Free Cities under her pseudo mandate had reach west faster than she could foresight, and with an insurgent eruption there, it brought her some calm knowing that they would not attempt to rise against her.

It would have been easier to locate Jon and make sure he stayed away, but she didn’t need to disrupt drowsy places in her heart.

Jornik appeared and apologized for interrupting supper, informing that an emissary had arrived from YI TI with an urgent message for her. For reasons of comfort, they had kept the Great Pyramid as their residence but eventually, they would have to return it to the Meereen government and find a better place to establish their barrack.

Daenerys had not had the slightest intention of disturbing the tranquility of the lands beyond the Dothraki Sea. Much less than what lay on beyond the Red Waste and the Bone Mountains.

Throughout her life in Essos, she had heard little and nothing about YI TI but that was a splendid
civilization. She had seen people from there, and the odd extravagances in the street markets. Always so far away from her, that the idea of getting there never crossed her mind.

They received the emissaries in the throne room where she used to hold court and listened carefully to the sweetened words of the men and women who also filled the place with all the types of gifts and oddities.

Currently, their region had been devastated by the conflict between two suitors to be God-Emperor, Bu Gai, the Azure Emperor and Pol Qo, the Orange Emperor. It was the first of these two, who was sending a peace offering to Daenerys, in pursuit of an alliance that could fortify his claim before his people.

Daenerys assured them that they would evaluate their strange request.

Jornik was in favor of taking the gifts and throw the emissaries them out of the city, feeling wary and arguing that a mission to YI TI was impossible since it involved crossing Qarth, Warlocks’ territory, where Daenerys was not welcomed. Mossoro simply added that if there were slaves to free, the freedmen would follow her. The Stormcrows captain suggested that having YI TI in her possession would make her something like the Empress of Essos, but was vague in defining whether he would follow her or not.

Daario finally convinced her to try an approach, aiming at the trade benefits for Bay of Dragons.

Nonetheless, Jornik made a point mentioning that they could not cross Qarth to reach YI TI. Daenerys had unfinished business with the Undying Ones and wished to avoid any difficulty for his commanders. They would have to depart from New Ghis, pass by Vahar and Port Moraq, invade Isles of the Whip along the way, where it was known there was a way station for slavers, finally reaching Yin in at least six moons.

Such a mission required mobilizing an army of at least twenty thousand men. It was not her first great trip, but the ports would be limited unlike her journey to Westeros, years ago. With Drogon, she could get there in a matter of weeks, but she needed an army on her back for any eventuality.

The emissaries would depart days later since the road for them was shorter and overland.

Nights before leaving Meereen, she had a great discussion with Daario as she commanded him to stay for the birth of his second son.

"Last time I let you go without me they killed you," he said, holding her face in despair. "My son and Ornela are safe; don't get me away from your side."

Daenerys knew that his concern stemmed from a place of protection and loyalty, and no longer from the love, he once had for her. She wanted to yell at him how much he would hate her if something happens to her family because of her.

Daario and Ornela had what she denied to Missandei and Grey Worm, in some way. She avoided wander on those thoughts but every so often she would return to them. Missandei had told her that Torgo Nudho had promised her to take her back to Naath when the conquest was over, and she selfishly had lamented they were going to leave her, ignoring the fate her best friend would suffer only days later.

Missandei was gone. Torgo Nudho was gone too. Daenerys had prayed at any deity that would listen that they could reunite in the afterlife. Meanwhile, she couldn’t let the same fate happen to Daario and Ornela.
Although she felt safe with Mossoro and Jornik by her side, Daenerys had to resort to her secret weapon for that mission.

Gerael handled matters at Lys well enough not to mind accompanying her to YI TI for almost six months. To avoid any problem in his absence, Daenerys sent part of her armies to protect the island.

On the first moon, they crossed down Bay of Dragons to Old Ghis where the fleet that would take them to YI TI was. Gerael boarded them there, as ceremonial and cautious as ever, giving her a bottle of jasmine perfume acknowledging her gesture of trust. In her mind, she laughed and thought of telling him not to fall for misconceptions, but the Poison King was no stupid at all.

The first week at sea to New Ghis, she did not see him at any time and assumed he would be busy with his personal entertainment. The two moons to Faros were the most monotonous, and Gerael appeared once a week to show her his new aromas and test her skill to detect poison. She felt the need to ask him why he always was wearing shades of blue.

In their brief stop in Vahar, people were eager to meet the Mother of Dragons and it was one of the few times she set foot on land to visit Drogon, who was strangely uneasy and sending her confusing signals between worry and fear. Daenerys thought it would be the strangeness since neither had been this east before.

Gerael took her to the spice markets to show her the different ingredients he would use to alter the substances on his potions but she did not catch on any of his indications, still moved by Drogon's own nervousness.

Once they crossed Cinnamon Straits to enter the Jade Sea, Daenerys recalled Jorah's offer shortly after the death of Rhaego and Drogo. Placed on the bow of the boat, she shed silent tears for her northern bear.

In Port Moraq, the storms in the area caused them to lose one of the ships and the lives of several soldiers. Daenerys tried to save some mounted in Drogon, but the storm was relentless. They had to stop in the harbour's inns.

"You were crying" Gerael pointed out randomly. "I never saw a dragon cry."

If it wasn't for the intromission, she would've smile for that depiction he made.

"You were watching me?" she inquired.

He nodded. "Isn't that why I am here?"

Daenerys frowned in distrust. "I thought I was clear about the reason."

"Oh no," he rushed to dispel. "I know very well what my function in the Queen's inner circle is." He moved his hands in the air, trying to reformulate. "But among us, I am flattered that you trusted me enough to share the same floor."

Daenerys smiled dryly, still unsure of Gerael’s true intentions. "Don't presume to have won me yet," she said, passing him by, towards the balcony of the inn, overlooking the city's forests. Gerael walked with her and stood beside her. "It was the memory of an old friendship," she confessed, conceding just a little.

The Poison King was looking at the same distant point in the landscape, like her. "It was he who betrayed you?"
Daenerys startled. "What? No! Jorah was," she trailed off, realizing the abruptness of her response. "Jorah was my partner since I married my husband, and he stayed with me until his last breath."

His eyes opened with interest. "Your first husband was the Khal Dothraki?"

"Yes, my only husband."

"How old were you when he kidnapped you?"

Daenerys became uncomfortable with his out of bounds questioning. "He didn't kidnap me," she stated, firmly.

“Excuse me, your Grace,” he apologized but didn’t stop there or perceive the annoyance in her tone. “It was my understanding that Dothraki men don’t necessarily court their wives.”

She felt the sudden need to hit him for his boldness, but then remember that he used to be a bed slave, who knows from what age. Maybe he was looking for common ground with her. “My brother handed my hand in hopes of Khal Drogo giving him an army in return. I had sixteen.”

Gerael looked away and did not speak for a long time, as if he had forgotten the conversation at all. She did not mind sharing certain information with him, after all, he had confessed several things with her. Daenerys had learned that with him, it was better to take advantage of moments like these before he goes back to his isolation again.

The next two moons to Isles of Whips, she mostly spent time planning the invasion with Mossoro and Jornik than talking to Gerael, again in his strange taciturn moods.

The invasion took them a little less than a week, and with Gerael poisoning the slavers’ waters, it was easy to get rid of them silently. Drogon took care of the rest, and the newly freed slaves who could hold a weapon liquidated those who survived.

It was the first time in many years that she saw children again, enslaved children. She felt overwhelmed and unable to bring them the peace and care they needed, and it was when Gerael and Mossoro interceded in her place to try to find out from where they came, although most were too traumatized to remember. Missandei had told her how little she kept in her memory of Naath.

"Little children, burned!" repeated Jon's voice in her head.

Daenerys felt hypocritical when she was so sensitive about this matter. Dragons had no mercy for children, dragons were beasts and beasts hurt children. Sometimes she thought that was the reason why none of her pregnancies had concluded.

Incapable of continue postponing their course to Yin, they left half of the fleet and the men on the island to move the slaves to Bay of Dragons. Daenerys lamented not having a more efficient source of communication like the ravens in Westeros. The crazy idea of requesting some came to her mind, but that would only lead to more problems.

309 A.C

Yin

They had finally reached Yin, a majestic city like no other and only compared to Qarth, where the infamous God-Emperor, Bu Gai, received her with all the luxuries she could imagine.
The citizens piled up to observe Drogon, with an enthusiasm that contrasted with that cold and fearful reaction of the Northerners when her children flew over Winterfell that time.

She enjoyed the comforts offered but Drogon kept communicating his agitation through their bound, preventing her from continuing the long caravan rides that led her to tour the city and its inhabitants. Something was happening and the realization of it was consuming her inside.

His first thought went to Daario, Ornela, and Frigia. What if Ornela did not survive the birth? Was their baby fine? Had they attacked Meereen while she wasn't there to defend it? Every night her head would explode with millions of thoughts and she did her best to complete the diplomatic sojourn.

A tiny voice in her mind made her redirect her thoughts to Jon. Was it perhaps a sign that something had happened to him? After all, he was also her blood. She quickly dismissed that absurd idea.

Two weeks passed and the strange stopped feeling new. The caravans tired her and the little action was boring Gerael, Mossoro, and Jornik. Through the translators, Daenerys required Emperor Bu Gai for more information about his conflict with the other suitor to the crown. His response was as enriching as his personality.

She spent the next few days negotiating some trade agreements for Bay of Dragons, feeling increasingly paranoid at the uneasiness of Drogon in the skies.

The last night of their stay, in which they would be honoured with a ceremonial feast, she didn't see Drogon anywhere. She communicated her discomfort to his men and everyone remained alert for any type of disturbance.

Emperor Bu Gai was so tedious and self-centered that Daenerys thought that maybe this is what all monarchs are, at the end of the day. Quacks with intentions of getting themselves a place in history. She held her goblet close and pretended a cordial smile for Bu Gai, while the translator would communicate his compliments to her. The woman had a strange nervousness that she had not seen in the previous days.

“… I have promised you a miracle and I have fulfilled. The mother of Dragons has blessed me and declared for me as the rightful heir of the Lion of the Night, his incarnation in the kingdom of the earth.”

Daenerys was about to drop the content of the goblet on the man's face when the speech turned into something unexpected, and the woman began to stammer the words in High Valyrian.

“And as bounty to your constant faith, today is the last night of sacrifice for our people. The imposter that rises in the plains of the Joghos Nhai will fall at the beginning of my reign!”

The uneasiness of Daenerys caused his soldiers to move from their places but soon were surrounded by the Emperor's guards.

"The Lion of the Night has blessed us with the presence of the last dragon, who will double this gift as his will is to bring our empire to glory."

Daenerys called Drogon but nothing happened, as if the connection was trimmed.

"Here lay the last dragon and the beginning of my empire!"

Several arms dragged her to the center of a square, where stood up the immense statue of the Lion
of the Night. She could hear the clash of swords of her soldiers trying to reach her but was unable to move her head to see what was happening.

She had ten thousand soldiers, they could not take her as if nothing was happening. Where was Drogon?

When they threw her above the statue, she fell onto something so hard and sharp that it cut her forehead.

The eggs.

Her eggs.

*Daario!*

The people seemed so obfuscated in the disturbing affair that they ignored the battle between the soldiers on both sides, all focused on her and her eggs.

She felt stupid for not anticipating this course. Yi Ti was not one of the free cities. Again, her naivety would sentence all the people she cared about.

The Emperor continued speaking but there was no need for a translator since he was addressing exclusively to his people. Daenerys took the eggs in her arms, trying to make one last effort to call Drogon but nothing happened.

She shuddered at the horrible, grave sound that came from afar, making her lose consciousness for a moment. When she opened her eyes, she was lying on the stone ground with the reverential gaze held on her. No, something above her.

She felt a warm breeze rubbing her scalp.

Daenerys turned to find Drogon's sharp fangs and his eyes like two fireballs lighting the dark.

That awful noise sounded again and this time mother and son let out a cry of despair. The next thing she saw was Drogon opening his snout and she knew what it meant. Without having too much time to think, she threw herself onto the eggs and hugged them as his flames enveloped her.

The last time she was in the midst of fire was when she burned the Khals of Vaes Dothrak. However, this was dragon fire, and Daenerys had no idea if she could survive it.

She heard the ground beneath her hands breaking and realised that were the eggs hatching. Soon she remembered that this also happened when her children were born in the blazing fire of the funeral pyre, in a much mellow process.

Drogon waned his fire and groaned with regret, falling dazed in the ground. She was unscathed but felt something sharp plunging in the skin of her back. Her gown and the cape were gone, leaving her naked one more time.

Still aghast by outrage, she rose in front of the image of Bu Gai reappeared in front of her. Daenerys felt her hands clenching into fists and the weight of the moment fell on her shoulders.

The emperor cried something and his subjects cheered. He had used her as one of his oddities to impress his audience. Somehow, he had managed to involve Drogon in his show, *enslaving* him.

A weak whining came from her side.
Daenerys turned her face and met a pair of amber eyes looking at her curiously. A cat-sized dragon, of the most intense crimson color she had ever seen was perched in her right shoulder where Drogon had once stood. In both of her arms latched two more, a purple one and a golden one. In her hip, one in the color of the earth, and climbing her leg was another, gray-colored.

Five.

She had five dragons.

She was trembling, unable to react to the miraculous birth that testified the existence of her children. She had dreamed about this moment for almost three years, imagining little Frigia watching from a safe distance and Drogon there to heeding for their needs.

Daario, Ornela, and Phrygia were probably dead. Mossoro, Jornik, and Gerael too. Her soldiers, the slaves she had released, all condemned.

Were too many emotions in such a short time, her head was boiling and his eyes exploded with tears that she did not want to have shed in this way. This was supposed to be a beautiful moment, one the few she would have for the rest of this new life. But they had found the way to use her again.

She screamed helplessly as Drogon behind her raised his wings, freeing himself from the grip that enslaved him.

Daenerys step forwards and the place burnt with her own fire.

Daenerys had taken the Azure Emperor’s life, for good. She lamented the collateral damage caused by her fire, but she couldn’t dare to care when Drogon was enslaved for their amusement. Her soldiers find the source of the terrible noise that made her lose the sense, and it turned out to be a magic horn she had never seen.

She would have like to know from where it was, but had to set it on fire so no one would ever try such thing again. Kinvara should know better than her.

The surviving citizens of YIN had proclaimed her new goddess-Emperor but Daenerys was not interested in the title and evaluated the possibility of invoking the other suitor to take over the city.

Her thoughts kept going to Daario and his family. She was afraid to face the possibility that they were dead.

She decided to fly Meereen once Drogon regained his strength and the hatchling get used to her. She would have wanted to spend more time with them, or give them names, but it was an activity that would remind her of little Frigia, and how much she yearned for this moment.

Her life seemed a circle of suffering.

She heard the screech of the hatchlings, more intense and accelerated than normal. Daenerys, who kept the rest of her stay armed and ready to run away, took her sword and silently entered her solar.

A small figure almost just like herself was lying on the floor of her room, with the dragons watching with innocent intrigue. The red one was in front of them with open wings, a defensive posture.
No, she thought when the figure jumped up to face her. *Arya Stark.*

His greatest fear all those years materialized. The Starks returning to finish their devouring of what was left of her. It had not been enough to destroy her, use her and discard her; they had to return to torment her.

When she saw the dagger in the hand of Jon's younger sister, her gaze travelled to the dragons. It was all she needed to wake the monster inside again.

Arya took her aback but Daenerys turned and fell to the floor, her left arm bleeding from a deep cut. Daenerys kicked her so that they were both on the ground, and used the sword to cut her face, which caused the other woman to groan in pain and release the dagger. Daenerys kneeled and threw her across the room with a force she had never experienced before.

The Stark's head slammed into one of the walls and the next thing she knew was that the dragons were attacking her in a group.

The dragons were about to kill a wolf.

The uproar brought Mossoro and Jornik to the room, which surrounded her while they watched the hatchlings lash out at the little woman.

Daenerys was consumed by the heat of the moment, sincerely wanting to see her suffer and the dragons burn her alive for just thinking of hurting them. Nevertheless, the moment the red dragon raised its wings and opened its muzzle to let out what would be the last thing Arya Stark would see in her life, Daenerys stepped forward and shouted at command in Valyrian.

"*Stop!*"

The red dragon turned and watched her, frustrated and confused. The others obeyed her more kindly and turned away from Arya. When the hatchlings were away and calm, Jornik and Mossoro took her by both arms. Daenerys could see the bleeding was heavy, a cut through her face that will leave a nasty scar.

She bent down to take Arya's dagger from the ground, the same that has kill the Night King. It would have been a huge achievement for her to kill the fire monster too, she thought fleetingly.

When she turned to face her again, Arya was looking at her chest, where the neckline of the light dress she wore showed the scar that his brother had left her.

Neither of them said a single word. In the past, they hadn't shared too many. The only thing she remembered about Arya Stark was her furtive and suspicious looks inviting her to retire and never be close to Winterfell again.

Daenerys had a desire to inflict such damage on the Starks, but killing her would mean giving them a blunt reason to come for her.

She had suffered two attacks in less than a week, nothing could protect her but herself. Nor the armies she had assembled, nor Gerael's poison nor Drogon's fire.

She would have to face her enemies herself.

Jornik and Mossoro were anxiously awaiting her command. She looked at the girl with stealth and renewed tranquility, asking the men to move their weapons away for a better angle.
Daenerys recalled that one of her first lessons, Daario had mentioned that a hard and blunt blow to the side of the head was enough to leave her opponent numb. She raised the sword and with the pommel of it, directed all her forces in a blow such that Arya Stark would not wake up until later hours already at sea.

Her commanders protested at her decision to spare the life of her attacker, but Daenerys dismissed them, hoping that was the last time she saw the Stark girl.

Gerael met her later and offered her a tea that smelled of something too intense to be simply concoction.

"Don't ask what it has," he said sitting next to her, enough confidence settled between them.

She did as he indicated, and understood why the Poison King seemed so exalted on certain occasions. The liquid boosted her enough to finish matters at YI TI, ride Drogon with the hatchlings moored and close to her, and return to Meereen in matters of weeks.

All the way, Daenerys did not think about the misfortunes that could await her in the Great Pyramid. In her nights, the dreams were almost tangible, the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt. She wished for the effect to never be gone.

Eventually, she made it to the city and was grateful to see normality in the streets. When she landed on the balcony of her solar, she slowly lowered from Drogon and unhooked the cages from his spines, where were resting the children of Rhaegar and Viserion. Drogon climbed to the nest on top, watchful waiting for everything to be in order.

Daenerys entered the room, which was neat and unscathed. She dared not call the names of Daario or Ornela, still terrified to find their dismembered bodies like Missandei's once was.

"Khaleesi!" exclaimed a high voice coming from the entrance. "You have returned!"

Frigia was taller and her dark hair longer. Daenerys ran to find her halfway, hugging her and holding her against her, realising how much she had grown used to love her

"Where is you Papa?" she inquired, ready to hear the worst coming from her mouth.

The girl's face tensed and Daenerys trembled.

Frigia brought a finger to her mouth, her eyes weeping and her lips shaking in childish agony.

"Daenerys," Daario's strong voice rumbled in the empty room. He also threw himself at both women and hugged them tightly, as if he was afraid of losing them. "Daenerys, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry…" he lamented in a tortured voice that perturbed her.

She pulled away to stroke her face but there was a strange regret in his eyes that she didn't quite understand.

Before she could ask him what was going on, Daario began to babble. "They had Frigia and Ornela, I didn't know what else to do. I swear I followed them, but I lost their trail, they didn't take the road to Qarth. They were damn sorcerers!"

The eggs, she concluded without much effort. That was how they hijacked the eggs.

Sorcerers. That's how obtained the horn.
Daenerys wanted to laugh. Another of his fears had become true and Daario had to choose between his family and his loyalty to her. And he had chosen his family. As it should be.

She sighed as defeated as she had felt since she woke up in that cold grave in the cave where the priests found her.

She dismissed Daario's apologies and asked both, father and daughter, to accompany her to the balcony to show the hatchlings. Drogon appeased, resting after seeing the situation normalized.

She asked about Ornella and the new baby, who were healthy and safe, and then sat Frigia in her lap to introduce the little dragons, still meek enough for the girl and Daario to appreciate them closely.

VI

310 A.C

Lys

“Why are you always wearing blue?” Daenerys asked for a thousand time, walking Lys’ streets with Gerael by her side.

Part of the agreement with Lys consisted of having the brothels guarded and sanitized, similar to those in Meereen, and no more children working on them. She could easily have sent someone to check on the compliance, somehow, Daenerys found herself on the island again.

“Why are you always blue?” he replied with the same question he has been returning since she inquired about his wardrobe the first time. A simply questioning both of them decided to give more importance than it deserved.

Daario advised her to be careful towards their interactions; an insinuation that led her to think in that possibility itself before it could naturally appear.

She hasn’t been with a man since Jon and wasn’t looking for it. Her heart could never love the way it did when it was alive, and her skin wasn’t ready to be touched after the last hand that did it also plunged a dagger into her heart. Intimacy was out of her sight.

In that sense, Gerael seemed less or little inclined to pursuit more than her company.

“The thing you prepared for me in YI TI, what it was?” she changed the subject, walking out of the crowds.

His blue eyes narrowed when a ray of sunlight hit him, and he sighed. “I told you to not ask about that.”

“No, you told me to not ask what it has,” she recalled for him. “I’m asking what it is.”

He laughed shortly and stated, “Is poison.”

“How appropriate,” she mumbled, gaining an assent from his part.

“It’s a liquid that eases the inner pain, but it can’t erase it,” he continued explaining, trying to induce her out of it, although, in his words, there was a subtle invitation. A forewarning in the
entrance of hell.

“Can I have some more?” she went straight to the point.

Gerael’s countenance saddened as if he could notice how bad she need that form of relief.

“Will you tell why you always blue?” he teased anew.

“I died. It makes one sad,” she said, in her best attempt to summarize it all. “Why you always wearing blue?” Daenerys insisted.

“It reminds me of the sky,” he replied, far too plain from the truth.

Back in his place, Gerael prepared the drink for her but refused to address what it was or give the formula to her. Last time a cup was enough to maintain the nightmares and the voices out for weeks, but she spent that time flying on Drogon and speaking only with the hatchlings. This time she was in a diplomatic visit and could finally see why Gerael avoided them several times during the journey at sea. It made her trembled and nervous; too many people around her that she needed away from her. She even dismissed Gerael and spent the rest of the visit inside her bedchamber looking at the sky and daydreaming with the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt her.

When it was over once again, Gerael insisted that all she saw wasn’t real.

“It plays the mind and the heart. I told you is poison.”

She shook her head, denying. “My heart is dead.”

He looked at her with eyes that understood but regretted, before extending her the small vial with a blue liquid on it. How appropriate, she thought.

"No more than a drop," he signaled.

The Dothraki Sea

She named the red dragon Barristal, because he was who held the lead between his siblings, and his boldness remembered her of Ser Barristan’s dub. She suspected that someday that could cause problems of authority with Drogon, who was already annoyed with the little dragon tendency for defiance.

Gerael’s drink had given her an excuse to stay away from people and more time with the dragons. Although she wasn’t planning on ever chaining again these ones, she knew that was better keeping them out of trouble.

Vaes Diaf had a pit where Drogon made a lair in his years of roaming. Daenerys took the hatchlings there when they began to hunt their own food, lurking dangerously over the cattle in Meereen. Barristal had chase a sheep still when he was of the size of a cat, a task, not even Drogon had attained.

The Dothraki Sea had become an easy territory though some minor tribes had returned to settle in the abandoned villages her Khalasar left behind when she took them west to never coming back. Most of them feared her and had avoided eliciting a conflict with her. Daenerys couldn’t blame them, she truly was the stallion that mounted the world her Rhaego should have become.
At night, she would dream that she never appealed to Mirri Maz Duur blood magic and that she took her baby son alongside with Jorah to the Free Cities and lived there until they were very old. Other times she would wander on another reality where she stayed in Bay of Dragons and married off Daario, with Frigia and Gael being her offspring.

Her repentance to ever had stepped on Westeros didn’t allow her to delve much into alternatives scenarios where she wins there, but sometimes Daenerys would think in all the ways that things could have been different.

Inevitable, she thought of him.

Jon’s trace in her skin would never be erased, and her soul seemed averse to let him go away. Daenerys was uncertain if it was the sadness that embedded her, or the void he dug inside of her, or the absurd idea of still loving him, that made his memory hard to forget.

How silly of her to think like that, she scolded herself. While she was just a rotten body lying on the dirty ground of a ruined city, Jon must have already moved on and formed a new family in the true North where he always yearned to be. Ignorant of the daughter he killed. The blood he spurned.

He might have been disgusted with you, she imagined saying to her baby. But I would have loved you with all I am, she spoke to the stars.

How it was so easy to ablaze King’s Lading that day? She asked herself. Why was it so hard to mount Drogon to go and turn that peace of him into ashes? Why can’t she bring herself up to destroy those who wronged her so much? What was going on in her mind?

From all images that would come to her mind, Daenerys was certain that only one of them was true. Though, Gerael argued that the blue drink trick the heart, she knew the white moor was real. It had to be.

A long time ago, the Undying Ones tried to prevent her from her future but she chose to believe it was a trick. It turned out to be an authentic glance into her fate.

Moreover, she has been there one more time.

Daenerys closed her eyes and touched the space in front of her as if she could reach the most precious dream with her bare hands.

Naming her children was easy back then since all she would thought was the dragons were meant to be for the three last Targaryen children. Rhaegal for Rhaegar, Viserion for Viserys and Drogon for her. A recurring dream of her young, innocent version that didn’t know how dark the path ahead was.

With these hatchlings, the naming process extended for months, and Barristal kept being the only one besides Drogon.

Daenerys wanted to know them better, let them develop their personalities until she was completely sure who was who.

In contrast with Barristal’s boldness, the grey one was the most serene and obedient of them. She had picked his name long ago but had needed to be sure that would match with his demeanour, and he did. Greywing.
She knew very little of dragon’s nature, as the world did, but she was positive that they don’t have specific sex until they had to lay eggs. Nevertheless, with the purple one, she found herself referring to it as she, even before she came up with a name that graced her beauty and ease. Missanderys.

These latter smaller in comparison to Barristal and the other two, but she had no doubt that they would be relentless as any dragon is.

The browned one was not less fierce than Barristal was, but kept being more obedient than his brother were. Her earthy scales reminded her of the Second Sons armour, and when one day he let Daario pet it, she instantly chose to name it after him, Daarion.

“I always thought you name them after your dead,” Daario opined after celebrating that a dragon would carry his legacy. “He would be your best, remember that.” Daenerys laughed at that.

Finally, the golden one who reminisced Viserion, held the most curious personality. He would hunt and be ferocious as Barristal and Daarion; however, it never seemed quite vicious, as a dragon should be. Daenerys sensed him the most resilient, mindful one. A depiction that reminded her of Jorah’s last days by her side. She named him Jorion.

The five descendants of her children were growing in size and strength sooner than she expected and Daenerys reckoned it would take no time for her enemies to find her more dangerous than she ever was.

311 A.C

Volantis

Daenerys has been seeing the past more often. She had rounded through historic moments as Aegon’s landing, and some battles from the Dance of Dragons until eventually she reached the tragedy of Summerhall and followed up Rhaegar’s life.

It was so easy to relate him to Jon. He was a grooming, solitary boy too. Daenerys would watch him and their mother for hours, always hiding in the darkness.

How good could have been having this growing up, she thought. An image of the mother that never known, a tender woman that endured so much harshness from this world. Rhaella Targaryen was an older version of herself.

Rhaegar’s demeanour reminded her of Viserys when he still was a little boy that dreamed of going back home and be a family again. In some way, Daenerys couldn’t avoid but think how bad Rhaegar screwed their existences.

She saw it all, from the moment the last dragon, as Rhaegar was dubbed, got obsessed by that prophecy until it finally fulfilled with his so yearned son killing her in the throne room.

It pained her to admit that every man in her family had just inflicted damage upon her. Her father was the Mad King, who repeatedly violated her mother for his own amusement, Rhaegar condemned her fate, Viserys abused her, Drogo raped her and finally, Jon killed her.
What a family! she said to herself.

One day something strange happened. She was seeing her brother Rhaegar’s first meeting with the Stark girl who became Jon’s mother when he appeared in the same place out of nowhere.

Daenerys almost startled at first she thought that the blue drink was messing up her mind, as Kinvara had pointed it.

Jon couldn’t see her and she was glad, had he been real or not. He looked emaciated, with such fatigue on his face that it was hard to tell him apart from the last time she had seen him. This was what made her think it was only part of her memory meddling in her visions.

Nevertheless, the moment became chaotic when she was dragged along with him to a place she did not recognize, covered with branches and weeds. Daenerys felt the wooden limbs move above her, catching her, almost like trying to get inside her. She didn't have much time to think when her fist set on fire and the place started burn. Lately, that had become her main reaction to an attack.

She didn’t see Jon anymore, but a voice spoke strong and clear to her, “You there, I see. I’m glad you keep saving him.”

Daenerys hard recalled Bran Stark’s voice but had no doubt that it was him. A much-aged version at least.

“I will make this easy for you, this time,” he continued. “But you know we see each other again. We always do.”

The next moment, Kinvara was grabbing her by the arm, “did he touch you?”

“What?” she asked, still dizzy from the experience. “No, what was that?”

The red priestess inspected her with qualm but then caressed her cheek saying, “You must be ready, Daenerys Stormborn.”

The only way she could confirm if he was real was by looking for him in the flames. Once she did it, Daenerys knew that it’ll not stop.

Until she had to.

The first time she saw him sleeping on the ground of some dark, humid place. The second, he was back in Winterfell, playing with who she later found out was Sansa’s child. The third and last, was when she saw what had been guessing from the very moment she came back.

It baffled her that somehow was his type. A slim, blonde-haired woman with blue eyes, and porcelain skin. Her face was longer, sharper than hers, and incredibly beautiful.

They were kissing, naked, making love and she was intruding on his life as some kind of ghost. It was terrible timing, and she wished she had never look for him at all.

She returned to the past where he kills her, but instead of waiting for her own entrance in the throne room, she goes before their past versions and sits on the Iron Throne, as she should have done the first time.

A version of him also entered the room, and she looked at him confused before setting the place on
Ruins of Old Valyria

Drogon detoured from their normal route back to Meereen and took her to the ruins of the former freehold. Daenerys felt a sting of fear, remembering Viserys’ story about young Aerea Targaryen and the misfortune she suffered when Balerion took her to the same place.

She had survived fire, several attempts of poisoning, and a dagger in her heart, but Daenerys still dread blood magic.

The hatchlings were at the size of a horse and were not as frightened as she was for landing in the odd ruins. The Smoking Sea was blocking any clear view, hampering to perceive where they stood until Drogon guided them inside the remains of a palace up in a hill.

On the first day, she just wandered the stronghold’s ruined architecture, finding pieces of great value, here and there. Not that she would take them with her, all people knew how cursed this place was. Daenerys suspected that probably she would never get out of there, neither.

On the second day and third day, she dared to explore the surroundings and share the dragons’ strange game, because the other option was dying inside the castle from starvation. When she approached the Smoking Sea to clean herself, she cut her leg with a sharp rock beside the coastline, spilling blood on the stream.

By the fifth day, Daenerys met the Stone Men, who tried to get her but ended up in a firestorm by Drogon and Barristal. What was left of them, kneeled before her but Daenerys was growing tired of that meaningless response.

On the seventh day, she convinced Drogon to fly home but something stopped her from doing so. Daenerys was certain that voices spoke to her in various moments in her staying, but at that time was different, they weren’t inviting her to explore beyond the cursed ruins, this time she heard something like a song being chanted in her ears.

“Remember who you are, what you were made to be, Daenerys Stormborn. Remember your words.”

That night she sought what was left of the fourteen flames, and spread her fire and blood in them.

TBC

Chapter End Notes

A little outline of the second part:

VII:
- Gendry Baratheon, Dorne, and Yara Greyjoy.
VIII:
- A Song of Ice and Fire
IX:
- News from Westeros

X:
- Reunions

PD: Sorry if my Dany still doesn't feel completely remorse over what she did on KL. That's something she will digest throughout this story. I'm following her characterization (bullshit and retconned as it is) from S8, that was absolutely convinced what she did was right. The thing is that, while I am against torching innocent people, in the context of Westeros and the medieval era, what Dany did was "sacking". Something that other characters had already done in the past (Tywin in Robert's Rebellion, Aegon I and Visenya in Dorne, even Robb's soldiers during the WOT5K).
Thank you very much for your offers to be my beta reader! I insist that you can contact me through the email in my profile. Thank you very much.

So I fucked up a little the timeline, and I had to go back and change something from Jon's pov (when they learned of Dorne alliance with Dany.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 4: A Queen Who Wears No Crown (Second Part)

VII

312 A.C

Jorah’s Port – Realm of Valyria

Her hands were trembling and she believed that they had lost any sensibility after having them all day on clay. The builders were not so happy with her intervention in the process of construction of the Inns but Daenerys needed to feel that she could help with something. She got tired of just looking while everyone around was moving.

In her vision of things, this city would be the entrance to those who decided to reside in her new realm. It was necessary to create a feeling of warmth and welcoming, a shelter for those who had no home like her.

It took several moons for nature to accept the magic of her blood. Daenerys still wasn’t sure about what she actually did, but it worked well. Boats were crossing the Smoking Sea and people stepping in the land.

Daario was monitoring the restoration of the Fortress in the main island, while she would spend her days in Jorah’s Port trying to survey every single detail of the future city that would honour her loyal bear.

A small wail escaped from her mouth remembering Jorah. Time passed but her pain was not healing, it was getting even worse. Normally, the harshness of these activities, as well the strict training under her commanders’ guidance, were a form of replacing the hurting of her soul for something more carnal.

“Your grace,” Jornik called, ignoring her pleas to be addressed simply by her name.

She wiped out her tears, tarnishing her face with the waste in her hands. Daenerys turned around to see Jornik constricted face. Something was wrong, she concluded.

“He said he knows you from Westeros,” Jornik informed her, walking their way to the small residence where they were staying while the construction was taking place. “I told the lad he
should go, but he insisted that you would want to see him.”

Daenerys trembled at her initial suspicion of who could be but discarded the absurd idea of Jon throwing his new life to return and finish her.

“Why hasn't he given you his name?” she inquired, concerned. They had recently enabled access to the island. People from different parts of the world were coming, and Westeros were not the exception.

In fact, Westeros were moving in masses to east. The Ironborn were relentless in their conquest, while the North tried its best to avoid the invasion.

“He said that...,” he frowned, confused, “that you gave it to him.”

When she entered the meeting room conditioned to be the city hall, she stumbled upon the last person she would think would meet again.

Gendry Baratheon.

By his side stood a younger boy with blonde hair, dressed in armor with a turquoise cape that looked at her with awe. Her looks were not the most appropriate.

“Your Grace,” both said, kneeling in front of her, a gesture she grew tired to receive.

“Do not kneel, my Lords,” she instructed them, trying to act normal and not to conscious of this unexpected visit. “What had brought you this far?”

Gendry hands clenched in and out by his sides. “I believed you dead, my Queen,” he stuttered as if he was trying to excuse himself.

Daenerys understood his concern and dismissed it.

“I’m not you queen, Lord Baratheon,” she lifted up her chin, trying to maintain a little pride. “And yes, I have been dead.”

Both men looked at each other in confusion. She would not waste time explaining it.

“You swore fealty to another King,” she argued, intertwining her hands in front of her to hide the shaking. “Your presence here could be interpreted as treason.”

“King Bran is dead,” the boy replied, and because of her expression, he rushed to clarify, “My name is Monterys Velaryon, Your Grace.”

Daenerys almost fainted; she had been ignorant of a Velaryon existence until now. Valyria was also his ancestral home.

“King Bran can’t be dead. He is the Three Eyed Raven,” Daenerys explained though she did know they would not care.

“King’s Landing was attacked. The Ironborn took most of Westeros mainland. We had no idea who survived but our army couldn’t fight back,” Gendry started telling her.

“Are you abandoning the crown you swore allegiance to?”

Gendry shook his head, in a motion of open defiance. “No, Your Grace. I’m trying to save the people you put under my care!” his tone made her jolt.
Back then, when she legitimized this man, she wasn’t thinking clearly about his competence to be a Lord, much less a Warden. She knew he was a proven blacksmith and her reign would have started with people like him, former bastards, in positions of power. Besides the obvious fact, she lacked of allies and thought for a moment that the lad could have supported her. 

Her last days alive served the purpose to brought people to their purposes, while she was losing hers. 

However, as she saw it, he was not qualified. 

“Save?” she asked, astonished. “Haven’t you heard about what I did in King’s Landing.” 

She had tried her best to forget that decision, never repeating it. Every time she would feel Drogon’s wrath taking root in her, she would fly to the most remote place and stay away. 

“I did,” he answered sparing her a glance uncertain. “I’m not condoning you for killing hundreds with whom I grew up with. But I can’t blind myself from the truth, you are the one who gave me this burden and I want you to help me to keep it.” 

Daenerys sighed. “I won’t return to Westeros, Lord Baratheon,” she scratched her forehead, tired for the day. “If that’s what you are looking for, I’m afraid you travelled long in vain.” 

“We are not here to get you back there, that’s not in our power. We don’t know who holds the power there, the North is the only place where the Ironborn had not yet reach, and…” 

“And why aren’t you there, instead?” she harshly questioned. “Aren’t the Starks your allies, my Lord?” 

Gendry denied. “Arya Stark was my friend,” she could see a hint of pain in his tone. “I haven’t had contact with her or Ser Davos, neither with Jon,” he trailed off at his mentioned and Daenerys closed her eyes, gulping hard. 

“Why you are here and what do you want?” she asked, hitting a death point. 

“We want a home, Your Grace.” 

Home. She shivered at the mention of that word. They had a home. 

“Your home is west of the Narrow Sea, my Lords,” she opened her eyes to watch directly towards the young Velaryon, “though you have a claim to these lands too, I suppose.” 

Monterys was not more than twenty, she thought. Could he claim one of the hatchlings as Addam Velaryon did once too? 

He did not answer, still stunned by her presence. 

“Your Grace,” Gendry’s voice was also weary. “At least, let my people help you and prove themselves.” 

My people. She used to have her people too. 

Daenerys nodded and Jornik guided the men to their accommodation. 

Days passed, and the inhabitants of the Stormlands took place in the first houses finished. There was plenty of smallfolk, survivors of the War of the Five Kings. They were very predisposed to work in the harvest and in the continuous construction of the city.
For the first time, something that she did in Westeros was bringing some good fortune.

“There’s a condition,” she laid out to the bastard seed of the man that tormented her childhood. “You can’t contact them, any of them. Am I being clear?”

Gendry looked at her with concern but assented.

**Capital City - Realm of Valyria**

After the Qaathi army attempt to advance over Lhazosh, Daenerys helped Mossoro’s army until they retreat. Her reluctance to take Qarth for good, was costing the army of freedmen the maintenance of the lands of Lhazar. She did not understand it; Yi Ti was practically hers after killing Bu Gai and proclaiming General Pol Qo the new God Emperor. This was supposed to force a pacific surrender of the Warlocks but they were fighting her back.

Her commanders were expecting that soon the hatchlings would be used on the battlefield as Drogon was, but Daenerys was not ready to expose them in that way. They were so young.

*I had promised in the name of Viserion and Rhaegal that you would be free,* had she told them one day while they were sharing a game. *I am afraid that I would fail again.*

At her return to the still under restoration Valyria, Daario was waiting for her with a worrisome face.

“There’s a gif waiting for you in the Throne Room,” he said, helping her dismount Drogon, who had reached a size that made increasingly difficult to ride him.

Outside the fortress, painters were giving her castle the crimson colour of the red keep.

“What gif?” she asked, suddenly alarmed. Daario limited himself to sigh and guided her inside.

Daenerys recalled that day in Pentos when Viserys and Illyrio Mopatis were preparing her to receive Khal Drogo. She felt miserable, alone, fearful. It was that same image she was looking in front of her when she met Arianne Yronwood.

She was ignoring the Dorne emissary and staring at the young princess shaking at avoiding her gaze. Daenerys could swear she was shaking out fear.

“Stop,” she commanded to the man explaining her the situation with Dorne borders. They had come to amend their former alliance and asking her for aid. “I want to hear *her* speaking,” Daenerys lifted her chin towards Arianne.

The girl startled, rapidly advancing and bowing. “What do you wish me to tell you, Your Grace?”

“Call me Daenerys,” she requested. “Your father, the Prince, had he took you will in account when he sent you?”

The emissary folded his hands and gulped.

Arianne lower lip trembled. “I…Yes, your Grace,” her accent was strong; still her voice was innocent and soft. “I mean, Daenerys.”

Daenerys frowned. “Don’t lie to me.”
The whole situation felt more like an exchange. *I’ll give you my daughter, you give me your soldiers. I’ll give you my sister, you give me your soldiers.*

Arianne positioned herself forwards. “I have never been this far, Daenerys. I miss my home. But my duty is always to watch over the best interest for my people, and that’s what I told my father.”

Daenerys nodded.

With the restoration in course, she couldn’t deny that a bargain with Dorne would be magnificent for Valyria strategic position. On the other hand, she hadn’t desire to interfere with Yara Greyjoy expansion over the mainland.

“Excuse me, your Grace, I don’t know what information your council is furnishing you, but I’m afraid that she is not the one leading this invasion,” the emissary spoke, baffling her. “A man that goes by the name of Crow’s Eye had imprisoned her years ago, not long after your departure.”

Yara Greyjoy was imprisoned. What else she was ignoring?

Daenerys stood from the throne, a simple piece they had found long-forgotten between the rubble. She had restored herself with the help of a Lyseni artisan Gerael sent. At least this one she could call hers.

“I accept Prince Yronwood offer of a military alliance,” she announced. “Yet not, though I feel flattered, his marriage proposal.”

A marriage proposition that had come too late, she thought.

Prince Anders Yronwood had widowed when Arianne born and had planned no other marriage or other heirs since then. Being crowned as the Prince of Dorne was not his planning, neither.

Would have she accepted this proposal instead of begging for Jon’s love in the past? Oh her younger self, so in love that totally forgot Dorne would have never supported his claim.

“Princess Arianne presence here is not required,” she added and return to look at her. “Return home, your Grace.”

That evening Daario and she met Prince Yronwood brother and commander of Dorne forces, Lewyn Yronwood.

“T’s too late to block the Prince’s pass,” Lewyn Yronwood pointed out. “We’ve been securing our strongholds in Starfall, Skyreach, and Yronwood.”

“They are isolating you from the rest of the country,” Daario opined, eyeing at the map. “You said they hadn’t reached the lands of the west, why?”

“The Hightower are securing it but we haven’t succeeded in an alliance with them. Prince Anders is afraid that soon they will revolt there too.”

Daario shook his head. “Westeros is a disaster, my man. I mean, *my lord,*” he corrected himself. “I guess I’ll have to go and see it with my own eyes.”

Daenerys jolted. “No.”

The men gathered around the table looked at her.

“I have promised you fifty thousand men, plus artillery and my best battle strategists,” she said
firmly. “Daario is my friend.”

“I’m also your best fighter,” he argued, ignoring the people in the room. “I’m not a fucking builder Daenerys, this is my job.” He totally forgot the formality of the meeting.

“Give us privacy, please,” she asked and the men nodded and withdrawn.

Daario leaned on the table. “What the hell are you doing?”

“I’m protecting you. I’m thinking of Frigia, Gael, and Ornela, you should do the same.”

“They are living like damn royals,” he affirmed. “I told you I’m not a family man, I’m a warrior. If someday I should fall, I’ll fall in battle.”

Daenerys was doing her best effort for not burning him right there. At least in that way, he will die in her terms.

“I want to step in Westeros; you deprived me of that experience before.”

“It’s not,” she cut herself when the lump in her through became too heavy. “I can’t lose you too. People had died for me in that land, pointlessly.”

“I had survived worse,” he said approaching her and grabbing her face. It was a tender gesture between them, out of any intimacy after years of fellowship. “You are my queen, I must serve you.”

Daenerys pushed off his hands. “Do not say those words,” she walked to see the map in the table. “How is that the Ironborn had come this far?”

Daario joined her. “The same way we took Slaver’s bay back in the day. With tons of angry people by our side.”

Daenerys frowned and stared at him. “Westeros has no slavery.”

He let out a snort. “Thousands of people uniting against a couple of fuckers who sustain the power? It does not ring a bell for you?”

She hadn’t thought it that way. Westeros society had always presented itself more advanced than Essos but, at the end of the day, it was the same wheel always rolling. An unbroken wheel.

*I’m not going to stop the wheel, I’m going to break the wheel.*

But the wheel broke her. Westeros wheel was the Lords, and she would have to fight*them* to do what she did in Essos. And *they* were Jon’s family and friends.

“Okay, go,” she gave up, "but only to supervise the defense, then you come home," she commanded, staring at the Iron Islands on the map. "I'll give you a task."

**Bed chambers – The Great Keep**

Yara Greyjoy was rescued five moons later. Daario sent a message saying the situation in Westeros was critical, and its soldier "too weak" or “too afraid” to fight side by side with his men. Her response was urging him to return soon as it was possible.
The healer that was attending Yara said she was mostly malnourished but it hadn't be tortured as she supposed she would be.

"I thought you were dead," was the first thing she said when they met again.

"What is dead may never die," Daenerys replied, sitting at the edge of the bed where she was resting.

"Sorry for not helping you," she muttered, still weak. "I wanted Jon Snow dead, but the Starks always get away with it, I supposed."

In was true. Who would say something to the most honourable family in Westeros?

"Thank you for standing by me, even in death," Daenerys acknowledged; Gendry told her that only Yara asked for justice in Tyrion and Jon's trial. "Sorry that I couldn't get you back the Iron Islands, but this Crow's Eye..."

"Victarion," she cut her, almost spitting that name. "My father's bastard brother."

"Has he hurt you?"

Yara laughed, "What? No! He's not like Euron in that sense," she made a pause, remembering her vicious uncle. "Thanks for that, by the way."

Daenerys nodded but waited for her to continued revealing more about Victarion.

"He was always there, wandering here and there, under the shadow of my family trueborn. My father used to say that he prayed every night for the drowned god to exchange Euron for Victarion. I have never been too close to him, but it was a good warrior and a competent captain as Euron could only wish."

"I knew the terms of King Bran would not please my men but I believe they would accept him since Theon gave his life for him. The next thing I knew is that I was in that damn dungeon, and I haven't heard about Victarion since...well, now."

Daenerys still was surprised that only a single man could have done that damage to Westeros in a couple of years.

"Did you know that he wanted to conquer all Westeros?"

Yara frowned. "It was one of Euron's delusions; I never thought Victarion would preach for it," the Greyjoy sat to have a better look, "I believed him more intelligent."

"He is," Daenerys argued. "Not even King Bran had stopped him,"

"King Bran," Yara repeated, huffing. "What a crippled boy without an army can do? You are alive, Your Grace, it's time to return and show those fuckers what a real conqueror is."

A monster, Daenerys wanted to say but restrained of doing it.

"Do you know that you are in Valyria? Not the ruins but the realm."

"Aye," Yara responded, taking a sip of wine they had let in the bedside table.

"Well, this is my realm. My home. I'm no longer craving for a home."
Yara stared at her, incredulous. "Will you spare the life of the Starks? Will you spare the life of your murderer?"

The same interrogation disturbed Daario. How can someone so powerful free those who have done so much harm?

Daenerys let out a hard breath "If we are lucky, your uncle will finish that job for me."

VIII

313 A.C

Capital City - Realm of Valyria

“A single one, Khaleesi, please,” asked Ornela returning her serious gaze in the mirror. “Today is your day.”

Indeed, it was. It was again her name day. Nobody knew it since she never shared such information. It was also the anniversary of her mother’s death. Viserys used to tell her that it was not a day to celebrate anything, and Daenerys could not help but agree with him.

Yet here they were hours apart from the great feast of Valyria for those who had come to inhabit the restored land after centuries of being ruins and curses. It had happened because of her, because of her magic. This place was built with her blood, sweat, and tears.

Therefore, Daenerys granted and allowed Ornela to make one braid, a single one crowning her head. Since she had returned, it was the first time she felt something like a victory.

The city was far from being finished, and there was still left the restoration of the east island where the Stone Men would live. Thanks to her alliance with Dorne, Daenerys was able to request the transfer of Masters who agreed to work for her and stop the disease. Many of them were eager to investigate Valyria miraculous recovering.

Daario was back with some new scars. Daenerys had cried like a little girl seeing him return safely from Westeros, a place that had only stolen family and friends from her. She supposed that he, indeed, was the exception.

In those previous days, Ornela and Arianne had helped her to organize the final details of this event. Arianne asked her seamstress to design what she would wear and Daenerys recalled that the last time she had to wear something so delicate was the red gown she left behind in Dragonstone.

Gendry commented that people already had sacked Dragonstone and her belongings when they return to her former ancestral home. Hadn't Jon thought about saving something of her? The idea soured her mood, incapable of discerning if she would have wanted him to do that or no.

*He had moved on,* she scolded herself. *You need to move on too.*

Although the Valyria environment was warmer, she would have to use long sleeves to cover the scars in her arms. Red lace long sleeves. In her mind, an absurd attempt to resemble her former beauty.

Daenerys was incredibly jittery of facing for the first time some Westerosis. They had been arriving in masses all over the east after her agreement with Dorne, as if they had forgotten that not
less than ten years ago she brought terror to their homeland.

“That place has been devastated by war so long ago,” Yara Greyjoy told her once when she was discussing her decision. “War is war,” a light matter for an Ironborn.

That night, inevitably, members of the Common Council also would be there to congratulate her for the new conquest. She wanted to correct them, this was not a conquest, and it was her home. Something she built.

Lord Velaryon, who had abandoned his initial fear and suspicion towards her, made her stand for days for him to paint a portrait of her as a gift. And in that time, he had taught her to play cyvasse, and Daenerys was getting used to that kind of company.

Friends. She had friends.

Arianne, who had stayed in Valyrian for security reasons and willingly, had also given up any reservations and started helping her with the administration of the realm. Daenerys had to learn from zero since Valyria people were a mixture of various cultures, and in that regard, the dornish princess’ help was a bliss.

“My father told me that a ruler belongs to its people and not otherwise,” the young girl told her. “What kind of property I am if my people can’t make good use of me?”

In that sense, Daenerys had always been willing to sacrifice herself in order to keep her people safe. She had no feared to be on the battlefield, on Drogon’s back or with a sword in hand. However, the actual task of ruling over people had always been different labor for her. A most difficult one.

Daenerys knew that for most monarchs, people were mere objects under their grip that they can use and discard at will. She had born a princess but never had had the life of one. She had starved as a child, run from murders and even watched her brother being abused to gain some crumbs to survive. A life most people of this shit world was currently living.

In a certain moment of her life, she had climb so high that had forsaken her initial desire to change that reality, and had passed over those same people with her dragon’s wrath.

She was granted a new possibility to rectify that unforgivable sin, and she wanted to use that opportunity.

Daenerys was standing one of the ramparts, watching over the people entering the castle. The structure of the former Valyrian fortress was too immense for her alone to inhabit it, so she would open the two main common sections for people to come and go as they please. She was also working on a special garden in the back of the castle.

“Daenerys,” Daario called from the archway. “It’s time for the show.”

He was far from wearing formal or elegant clothes, but it this special occasion, he had let Ornela dress him with something different from his uniform. His suit as Ornela, the children’s garments, and her gown were coloured red and black.

It has been so long since Daenerys dressed in something related to House Targaryen; she had felt so wasted and defeated that the idea made her feel dwarfed.
She nodded and let him go first with his family while she looked at the sky one more time thinking in all those she failed.

*Wherever you are, please forgive me,* she pleaded.

Daenerys avoided drinking the blue sleep of Gerael, as she dubbed it, knowing how uncomfortable it made her feel around other people. Despite this, when she entered the Throne Room and people suddenly stopped their activities to bow, she felt that weird awkwardness again.

First, she greeted the tedious members of the common council, beginning for the Sealord of Braavos Tormo Fregar, who spent the night trying to win her favour with compliments. Daenerys had learned to find him harmless.

Prince Claudeo Mophis from Pentos approached her to bestow her an invaluable piece of jewellery, granted by the government.

The Archon of Tyrosh gave her exotic hair dye and Daenerys laughed sincerely for the first time that night.

Then came several Magisters of Myr, Qohor, Norvos, the princes of Lorath and Volantis, who surround her most part of the night and she accepted it as her diplomatic duty.

The King of Lys shone by his absence. She understood.

Lord Velaryon saved her from a moment to drag her to the Queen’s solar and see the finished portrait he made. He had put an armour in her, tough she still didn’t wear one properly.

“When we return to Westeros,” he simply answered at her questioning stare.

“It’s beautiful, thank you.”

Daenerys had played around the possibility of approach Monterys to the hatchlings to prove if he can be a dragonrider. In both cases, she was fearful because of their young ages.

Barristal had grown wary and untamed, so he was out of that prospect. Maybe Jorion would be a better option. Daenerys shook those ideas from her.

At some point, she found Gendry roaming the balconies.

“Isn’t parties your strong, Lord Baratheon?” she quipped, but he did not even turn around.

“I miss home,” he replied, watching the west.

Daenerys let out a deep sigh and just walked away. It was as if they were all pointing in that damn direction.

She found herself wandering the common halls, finally meeting with the smallfolk. Some recognized her, but others just continued drinking, eating and chatting. Daenerys felt at peace.

A hint of jealousy hit her when she caught Arianne encircled by them, but then recalled that she has been doing most of her work when blue sleep would take possession of her senses.

Beyond midnight, people gathered around actors and singers. She enjoyed every act and song, rewarding with a small fortune to those who lightened the mood that night.

It could have been perfect but as every good time in her life, it wasn’t meant to last.
A young singer was pressed by his partners to move forward. Daenerys noticed his tension but believed it shyness.

“What’s your name?” she asked him, muting the room.

“Carrigan, my Queen,” he replied, half of a smile on his face.

“Are you a singer?”

“I…,” he was muttering the words, “Yes, my queen. But only in the common tongue.”

“That’s good,” her response innocence as her next request. “Would you please us with something from the Seven Kingdoms?”

“Ye…yeah, my Queen,” he was trembling, and Daenerys started to feel unease herself. “But I’m not as good as the other ones.”

Carrigan settled himself in the center so everyone could hear him. His initial reluctance gone. He began softly playing the strings of his lute.

“When night shall fall,

And Star shall bleed.

Ice in the North,

Fire in the East.

The white wolf,

And his dragon queen,

His the song,

His is the love,

His is the crown.

Night has a King.

Fire has a Queen.

But his is the song.

The song of Ice,

The song of fire.

His is the song.”

Not everyone in that room understood the common tongue, but an eerie silence fell upon them.

“May I ask you how is the name of that song?” was everything she could utter.

He looked at her, defiantly. “A song of Ice and Fire, Dragon Queen.”

That was enough for Daario to stand and order the boy to be taken away. Later she found out he
came from King’s Landing.

*Imagine if every survivor had to take revenge on me,* she had told Daario years back. What right had she to deny them that little pleasure?

**Some Unknown Place**

She didn’t know where she was going but Daenerys needed to be away. She didn’t even get off her clothes, and Drogon scales were ripping the fabrics apart.

The hatchlings were following her, as they always did. Her crying disguised between their shrieks and the flapping of their wings crashing into the wind.

They landed in the clearing of a forest and she did not expect Drogon to lower his shoulder to descend, and directly jumped, falling full body against the ground and branches, alerting her son. Drogon let out a groan, scolding her for her foolishness.

Daenerys turned around, letting out sobs so intense that her body shook uncontrollably. Drogon enveloped her with his body, like when Jorah died in her arms, while the hatchling surrounded him.

How illusive she has been, believing that the past could forgive her. Her life has been doomed from the beginning. No matter how much she fought, she would always be the dragon queen that antagonized the existence of the world. A threat that had to be eradicated. Her dragons and she would never be accepted.

It was at that moment that Daenerys fully accepted Daario's words. "You weren't made to sit on a chair in a palace." Rather, Daenerys felt that she was not born to be part of anything.

Neither Essos, nor Westeros, nor Valyria.

Neither Khaleesi, nor Mhysa, nor the queen she thought she was.

Daenerys felt she was nothing.

**Small Council Meeting – The Great Keep.**

Daenerys felt blood staining her mouth. Last time she felt it, a dagger was slewing her heart. This time it was not a dagger but she was sure that was trying to kill her too.

She was hearing her small council chat about the organization of the villages in the west wing of Jorah’s Port, but her mind was still tuck in the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt.

After the incident, Daenerys delegated almost all the administration in the hands of Arianne while she went back to her routine of maintaining the order in the mainland. She had begun bringing the hatchlings with her since they reached a size similar to Drogon when she first rode him. Six dragons were enough for the foe to understand they had no chance, and almost never, she had to go down to the battlefield.

When they were about to finish, Gendry asked a word.
“Have you reconsidered your return to Westeros?”

Daenerys closed her eyes, feeling weak.

“There’s nothing to reconsider, Lord Baratheon,” she answered. “Your people do not want me there, nor I wish to be there.”

“Not all the people in Westeros are like the singer, Your Grace,” he insisted, his tone desperate. “People don’t care who wins the war, who sits on the throne, they want food, security, hope! Things you provided people here…”

“I did not such thing,” she rebutted, muttering.

“How can you say that Your Grace?” inquired Monterys this time. “If Essos is in order is because of you.”

“Because of fear,” her voice was too harsh but she was tired and just wanted to end the meeting.

“We’ll wait until Victarion army invades the North and kill that red-haired bitch,” Yara Greyjoy added. “It will be easier from there.”

Her head started pounding.

“The Queen has already stated she will not return,” Daario defended her, eyeing irritated at everyone gathered in the mid-finished map table. This one was even large than the one in Dragonstone, since it got Essos carved in it.

Daenerys stood when a wave of sickness invaded her but couldn’t reach the entrance when she fell on her knees and was looking at the ceiling, the throne room memory in her mind.

Hours later, after the Maester gave her milk of the poppy to slow down the effect of the blue sleep, Daario approached to her bed with a worrisome face.

“What are you doing, Dany?” he asked her, mystified. He made a pause, lamenting his mistake. “I’m sorry…”

She sobbed fragiley. “Not you, do not call me that way.”

“I’m sorry, Daenerys,” he caressed her face. “I tried, I tried my best but I feel that you are farther from being who you were. What are you doing? What do you want?”

“I can’t,” she cried, “I can’t do this anymore; I want the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt. That’s all I want.”

“What?” he was confused. “What are you saying?”

“He killed my baby,” she finally voiced aloud. “I was pregnant and he killed my baby.”

Daario widened his eyes. “Oh, gods, Daenerys.”

IX

314 A.C

Braavos
Voices and accents from different origins competed to be the most prominence in the conversation. Men and women, free and freed, shared the same status and in front of anyone’s eyes, but for Daenerys, they seemed just as childish and stoic as any other politician did.

Although the set was diverse and the contribution was enriching, Daenerys only wanted to be at home and dream about the moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt. Essos could deal with their problems on their own as Westeros vanished day by day.

It was the first time Prince Yronwood was present. Westeros’ disastrous state was their concern now too. The difficulty of reaching the city ports due to the rebel’s war, and the refusal of her loyalists to negotiate with Sansa Stark’s North, was affecting the Essosi economy.

Most than any other time before, Daenerys simply did not care. Her mind weakened by the blue sleep, only wanted to rest.

“I say we should take them now, my Queen,” said Romio Hukzak, another former slave that led the guild of species’ merchants, and another who refused not to call her a queen. “Your armies can defeat them within days!”

“While I support whatever wise choice our Queen made,” said the chanty tone of the Sealord, “We should wait until the Northern Kingdom is defeated, and their Queen assassinated.”

“No army has ever conquered the North,” Yara Greyjoy added, “they surrender once because of the Targaryen’s dragons.” Daenerys supposed they were looking at her.

“That’s because the North has never been in this critical situation,” the Sealord continued, “as we speak hundreds die per minute. My sources tell a disease is killing them while their borders are barely sustained with the White Wolf on command.”

Daenerys shivered and everyone noticed it.

“The Queen has been clear in her intentions of no returning, and that’s what you’ll respect,” Daario interfered.

Though the conversation was in the various form of bastard Valyrian, Gendry Baratheon, assisted by a translator, took some minutes to give his contribution.

“Hundreds are dying, you said,” he was speaking with despair in his voice. “And just in the North. Soon they’ll fall for famine too, as the rest of Westeros is. How many will perish until we do something?”

“We do not care for Westerosis,” replied in the common tongue Romio. “They laughed and celebrated our Queen’s demise while we were massacred by the slavers!”

“That’s not true!” Gendry defended, “Please, Your Grace. You don’t need to return, just please do something to alleviate the burden on the common folk shoulders. Ignoring the damage is the same that inflicting it!”

Daenerys had to praise Lord Baratheon in his insistence to save Westeros. The poor lad was so innocent, she believed.

“And let the Westerosis being rewarded for their incompetence?” shout Magister Claude, soon the conversation was all in the common tongue. “The dwarf that betrayed the queen is also with the
White Wolf and the Queen that despised the Essosis that save her land. Let them die and then we’ll take that land for Queen Daenerys Stormborn!”

“Why to wait? We could just send the faceless assassins or the Poison King to finish the job. We’ll be saving thousands if not millions,” this last piece, contributed by a magister of Myr, was enough for her to turn around and see all of them with her most cold stare.

“No one will claim my enemies as theirs,” she stated firmly, moistening her lips, “if someday I decided to claim for me justice, it will be my fire burning their flesh and my sword chopping off their heads. Am I being clear?”

Everyone nodded and the dialogue returned to the regular agenda.

Gerael was there, unconcerned with any other matter that did not concern to Lys. She caught his eyes fixated on her, aware of what uneased her mind.

After the meeting was over, Prince Yronwood stayed and approached her.

“Quite people,” he began to say, moving from his chair towards her, “They love you blindly.”

Daenerys took the note and eyed him leery. “A problem for them.”

He lifted his eyebrows, doubting. “And for everyone who depends on it.”

“Excuse me, Your Grace,” she was tired of political chatting. “I hadn’t seen how this affects you or your kingdom.”

She just noticed that he was holding some books.

“I want Westeros to be at peace as it was for a time with your father,” he rushed to explain. “Before Robert’s rebellion there was a little peace, then he used Tywin Lannister to spread fear and blood through the country.”

Daenerys kept staring at the objects in his grip. “No country can live in peace forever. Even here they’ll still fight…”

“Little children fighting in comparison. I appreciate your assistance in the protection of our borders but just like the North, it won’t be a tenable solution.”

That was something that had crossed her mind lately. She had refused to use the flames to see what is happening in the North and its borders, but the reports were not kind. It was true that no army has ever conquered the North, but Victarion’s army was closer to be the first.

Daenerys hated to admit that some part of her was waiting for their eventual defeat so she can return without any face of the past there.

“I’m not better than Tywin Lannister, you know?” she insisted.

“The fact you can acknowledge that already makes you better than him.”

“What do you want from me, Prince Yronwood?” she questioned with unnecessary harshness.

“From you? I had asked you enough, Queen Daenerys,” he was perfectly conscious of how outworn she felt. “This world had asked you enough from you. However, there’s still a path ahead.”
It was at that moment that she knew they will make her come back.

“I had brought these for you,” he placed the books in her hands, pointing up with his head out of the windows, where the dragons were dancing in the skies. “Those will need better training.”

Daenerys looked down and read "The Dance of the Dragons, A True Telling by Grand Maester Munkun”.

She found Gendry, Arianne, and Monterys waiting at for her outside the building.

“I’ll send a gift to the North,” she let them know.

Gendry tempered his delight over her decision while Arianne not so subtle questioned it. “May I ask why?”

Daenerys sucked in a breath. “Let Sansa Stark feed her people before Victarion obliterates her kingdom.”

Lys

The dragons circling the skies of Lys so often were raising rumours about the nature of their relationship. Formality and diplomacy as a smokescreen of the future marriage between the Poison King and the Dragon Queen. Daenerys found it harmless and funny.

The reality was, as always, far more disappointing. She would wait for him to come and do what he does best: poisoning her, before returning to her routine of appearing and disappearing.

“No,” had said Gerael after a couple of minutes of just staring at each other, after entering in his solar.

“What?” she asked confused. He was looking at her, serious and worrisome.

“It is poisoning you.”

She would have laughed. It was like if Daario had talked to him.

“Isn’t supposed to do that?”

“Whatever it is showing you, it’s not real,” he insisted, her tone going darker and raspy, it remembered her to Jon. “You have to live.”

She shook her head violently. “You don’t understand…,”

“I do,” he interrupted her, approaching slowly to her. “Believe me, I do know what it’s like to feel so dead inside that you can’t actually live anymore.”

“You haven’t been dead,” she was spitting every word with difficulty, going more and more nervous. “You haven’t,” she stopped trying not to reveal that much. “You haven’t lost what I have lost.”

He sighed. “You are not the only one who has suffered greatly, Daenerys.”
It was one of the few times he called her by her name. It sounded soft and warmer in his mouth.

“T’m not belittling yours,” she clarified. “But I have already been dead, for good. During days, my body was rotting inside a cave, waiting for nature to erase my existence forever. Then they brought me back, and something was missing. I lost something that only you had given me back, please Gerael,” she also resorted to using his name, however, she stopped at the sudden memory of begging Jon not to spread the truth of his identity. She would not lessen herself in that way, never more.

He denied. “I’m not giving you what you need,” he withdrawn his gaze from her and spared a glance at the night sky. “I’m killing you.”

Daenerys closed her eyes, tired. Tired of people believing they understand her but they couldn’t. They would never understand.

"I spread my blood," she began, placing by his side. "for all Valyria to wake up its nature and stop the curse. Magic blood against magic blood. I have been cut several times in my battles, and yet here I am, alive and safe," she confessed this like something terrible, "I know your poison is trying to killing, but it won't. Because nothing can do it." Nothing except love, she should have added.

Gerael frowned and scratched his forehead, processing everything she just said. It was at that moment that she saw it, a blue stain in his neck that was camouflaged with the blue color of the collar of his suit.

She didn't intend to scare him but when she lifted her hand and tried to touch it, he alarmed and stopped her holding her hand with a nervous grip.

"What are you doing?" he asked, bewildered. His sapphire eyes were full of anger.

Daenerys understood she was crossing a limit. "Are you blue?" was everything she could utter.

Gerael smothered his expression and slowly released the grip on her hand. Daenerys skimmed the skin beneath his jab, descending to the stain hidden underneath the fabrics. Her hands were trembling, anxious about what she would find if she removed all of it. She noticed he was equally uncomfortable.

"How?" she simply asked, putting some distance between them again.

He was baffled, "Not everyone could survive as you do."

So that it is, she thought.

She took out her garments, piece by piece until she was nothing but herself. She did not know if he saw her in the Yin incident, probably not since she found him hours later after the battle was over.

He let out a strange breathe and looked at her not lustful but neither indifferent. Her body was covered with the scars she had won, not only in battle but also in love and in pain. Several traces in her belly, Jon's scar under her left breast and the two big cuts in each arm.

"I survive," she confessed, "but not completely, never as a whole."

She approached him and asked for his permission to bottom down the suit, which he granted with a nod.
Daenerys had never seen anything like this. His arms and part of his upper torso were tainted with that blueish tone. Marked as her with her scars.

So then it happened.

Where they in love? No, she would answer. Nevertheless, they understood the other enough to allow themselves that little time together, even if they knew that would end in heartbreak.

Daenerys hated the fact that after it happened, she thought in him and how it had been very different from that experience. Jon has stolen everything from her, her claim, her life, her daughter and ultimately, the ability to love someone else.

X

The Great Keep – 315 A.C

“You stand in the presence of Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Queen of the Realm of Valyria and Protector of Essos,” Ornela chanted, her common tongue thickened by her Lhazareen accent.

The Westerosi party bowed except for Tormund, which did not surprise her since he was part of the Free Folk, and they do not kneel as Jon once told her, though they had crossed the Narrow Sea to seek for her help. She smiled at him, appreciating his boldness.

“You don’t need to kneel before me, my Lords and Ladies; I’m not your Queen,” she clarified, greeting her visitors with all the patience she could hold after all this time.

Daenerys knew for their expressions that they weren’t expecting being treated with this politeness, and probably by Tormund’s scattered face, they had endured some mistreat in their way here. But, why they were waiting for? A welcome celebration?

She couldn’t dwell on her ramblings when an aged Ser Davos stepped forward and securitized her.

“May I ask you how, your grace?” he questioned as if he could not bear the thought of her.

Daenerys held no hard feelings towards him. He was a sweet, educated man when she first knew him. His sudden disdain aroused her curiosity, but she deduced it has to be the memory of her deeds in King’s Landing hitting his mind.

On the other hand, it could have been disbelief. Who knows.

She turned to look at Kinvara, who was eyeing at them with that disturbing smile on her face. The red priestess waited for her permission, and Daenerys nodded as a sign of approval.

“As I told Lord Tyrion long ago, Daenerys Stormborn is the one who was promised. Her fire was reignited by our Lord, for a purpose only he knows.”

She didn’t need to watch her faces to know they would probably be thinking it a hoax. Westerosis mostly are skeptical people.

“I met another of you who chanted those exact words, my Lady” Davos refuted, “She also resurrected someone from the dead and told us he was a promised prince.”
He was, she thought. He was the prince that was promised. The prince her brother had sought so much that ended up causing the disaster Jon had to defeat in order to save the world.

“Melissandre of Asshai was human. She learned about her mistakes when she returned to Volantis and met with me.”

Prophecies were meant to deceive those foolish enough to believe in them, she wanted to add.

“So she resurrected the wrong person?” he seemed terrified.

Kinvara tilted her head and smiled acquiescently, “She didn’t resurrect anybody, at all.”

Daenerys grew weary of hearing him being referenced as if she had to prove something to them. She just wanted to deal with this matter and proceed to leave.

“But he died. And was brought back,” Davos protested against Kinvara’s absurd explanation. The other people in the room growing confused.

“I’m sure Kinvara will clarify all your doubts, Ser Davos,” she said in a warning tone. “But you haven’t come here to discuss matters of religion, have you?”

“Apolgies, your grace,” he replied with embarrassment, stepping back.

She did not want to add more oddity to the meeting, but when her stare fell on the man she used to call her Hand, the weight of the time passing fell upon her. He was old, and probably his habits were killing him.

“Everywhere she goes, evil men die…,” she remembered.

“I guess it was just a matter of time for us to meet again,” she spoke with tiredness in her voice.

Tyrion Lannister walked forward as the reckless man he was. Daario on her left side approach to her, indicating the Lannister to keep his distance.

“We are here to extend you the Crown of the Seven Kingdoms,” he rapidly excused, and it took her aback. His voice was shaking with fear. “Before you respond, we decided to do it by the same means King Bran was chosen. A modality inspired on the premise of breaking the wheel, just as you had once wanted. I know the Iron Throne is gone, but you know that you don’t need it to prove yourself a Queen. A queen who is chosen by her people. A queen who does not need to wear a crown.”

Daenerys could not presume to be the controlled person she wanted to be but is capable of maintaining her composure towards them who had wronged her so much, was something she will always consider her major strength.

“Westeros is a troubled land, as you must already know. Millions are suffering the consequences of the decisions I took without taking into consideration what the rest of the realm wanted,” Tyrion kept telling with a despair palpable through his tone. She directed her gazed to the Lords behind him, new faces for her, and she knew they were in the same state. Except maybe for Sansa Stark, who, until that moment, she was making the best effort not to look at.

“If you need to unleash all your wrath over me, I'm most than willing to accept that. But please, listen to the pleas of these people who had lost everything because of me.”

Well, not exactly, most of them have done that themselves, she wanted to answer, a truth no one will
dare to admit. Even if she hadn’t done what she did, those people would have found a way to depose her.

She felt the urgency to close her eyes and think for a moment. Tyrion’s word had always had the power to make people dizzy; reconsider what they want or what they don’t. It has been too long since she hasn’t think in Westeros that this lame attempt to appeal to her former desire to rule that land just sounded terrible intrusive for her.

Daenerys stopped avoiding looking at Sansa Stark and search for her reaction. She remembered a strong, self-centered woman, and it was not expecting many changes in this version of her. But what she found was just a shell. Impassive, expressionless, distantly cold and all the proud and stubbornness she grew to admire in their little time together were gone.

No one of them was the same.

“I thank you for coming,” she started. “If you consider that I can help you, I will do it. You can stay in whatever place of your choice in Valyria, and if you desire to reside in a specific part of Essos, we can work out that option with the Common Council's consent. But in regards to Westeros and its problems with the rebels, that's not my concern.”

She stood and they retroceded as if she was Drogon himself, ready to storm the hell on them.

“I don’t want your Crown,” she stated with the fierce of someone who had been defiled too many times to be caught in the same game again. And just because she liked the sound of the word, she repeated them to assure her position.

“Your Grace,” Tyrion began to insist but she glanced him coldly, inviting him to step down.

“What it’s happening in Westeros overpowers me,” she admitted. “People raise against you, as the slaves here raised against the slavers. I’m not returning to Westeros to enchain that people back to you.”

“It’s not like that, Your Grace,” the woman by Sansa Stark’s side claimed. “This man does not discern between highborn or lowborn, but these letter ones are the weakest-minded…”

Daario snorted behind her. “Let me guess, you all victims of these savages that can’t comprehend what’s better for them?”

“You have taken their freedom enough,” she added.

“What kind of freedom is that without order, Your Grace?” the smuggler insisted, those words strangely familiar to her. “Even here you had to hard your fist.”

"If might I'm granted to speak," interrupted one of the Lords, a tall, thin man with dark mahogany hair.

Daenerys was about to say no when she sensed Sansa’s bothered about the man's intrusion. This aroused some curiosity in her, and the childish need to provoke it a little more.

She took her seat on the throne, and with a simple gesture let the Lord know he was granted.

"My name is Edmure Tully, and I am Warden of the Riverlands, Your Grace," he introduced himself, "My Lady wife and children have travelled all this way in the hope of finding in you what we can no longer give to our people. I know that I cannot speak on behalf of the people, who accompany me, and I do not know her enough to understand what it happened on her last visit to
Westeros, but I do have to honor the truth, Your Majesty, I have never been asked about what was better for the seven kingdoms. Once I tried to speak when nobody else wanted to do it, but I was silenced and mocked as if I didn't know what it is to be dishonored and stripped enough."

Daenerys did not expect to be taken off guard by the man's words.

"I have done my best, Your Grace. I provided shelter to the thousands of people who are being victims of the invasion of this man. Not all of them united his ranks, they want the same that most of us. To live."

Lord Edmure Tully approached with a soft smile that Daenerys could not help returning. "When we passed through the Free Cities I saw people smiling. I saw children running and playing around the streets, indifferent to the cruelty of the world I come from. It may sound too naïve from my part, but I would like to understand why the same woman who has managed to bring freedom and prosperity on this side of the world has been so cruel to those of us on the other side."

The smile collapsed from her face. She was about to answer him when the man slightly shot a glance towards Sansa and continued. "Then I remember that our good intentions are not always looked up to. Sometimes cruelty wins and defeats us."

Daenerys' breathing accelerated, her eyes fixated on Lord Tully ones.

“You are probably the most powerful person in this world. I humbly ask you not to turn your back on us.”

Ignoring the damage is the same as inflicting it she recalled Gendry’s words.

Daenerys sighed as the man returned to his place among the other lords. The faces of Sansa and Tyrion between amazement and sorrow, feelings that Daenerys believed lost in them.

She turned to look at Daario, who raised his eyebrow with bewilderment and impatience, subtly encouraging her to resolve the conflict as soon as possible.

"I find your words sincere and your courage valuable, Lord Edmure. I will certainly not forget your name. I'll ensure that the conflict with the Common Council could be resolved as soon as possible, so you can keep providing food and security to your people."

The Warden of the Riverlands bowed thought she was sure he still was dissatisfied.

"Chambers were prepared, as well a common hall where you can meet up and meditate over my proposal. I apologize if it’s not the answer you wanted. Here in Essos, they can call me a protector, but in reality, I have only aligned in their struggle for freedom."

She went down the steps.

“I am afraid that those who you call the rebels, are those you have failed, not yesterday but for years in which you had postponed their needs while living isolated and protected in castles and fortresses.”

When she was on the same ground, Daenerys intertwined her hands in front of her and aggravated her tone to finish the meeting.

“I have been who you heard I am. The daughter of the Mad King, the Mad Queen. My power comes from dragons and blood magic, and by hundreds of years, my ancestors have used that
power to subjugate people, until it destroyed them. That is what had happened to me. One day I was at the top and hours later, I was bleeding to death on the cold ground of the Throne Room, meters away from the Iron Throne for which I fought years but could not even sit on it.”

“Sometimes I think it was the best. A little victorious death, but well deserved, that ended up giving me what I wanted most: the peace of mind of not having to answer for anyone else anymore.”

“Princess Arianne will accompany you to your accommodations. Ornella is the one who maintains the affairs of the Castle. Her husband and commander of all my forces, Daario Naharis, will take care of your safety all the time. And while Kinvara can be disturbing at times, you also will find help and advice by her side.”

“As far as I’m concerned, I can’t offer you anything else. Depending on your response, we will meet again. However, for now, I wish you good fortune in the wars to come.”

Daario walked by her side, and the guards surrounded them and they were walking past them when Tyrion spoke again.

“Dany,” he said ceasing her pace, almost making her stumble. “I need a moment with you.”

They walked along the corridor of marble floors until they reached her Queen’s solar, where the guards stood at the entrance, allowing them a decent but secured privacy.

Daenerys rushed to her desk, avoiding any formality and assuming that he would know where sitting, and when speaking. When she placed herself in, he still was surveying the room, stopping a long time with Lord Velaryon’s portrait.

“I used to portray you as Aegon the conqueror reborn, with the looks of Queen Rhaenys,” he broke the silence with his eyes still fixated on the picture “but Visenya’s suits you better now,” he concluded.

Daenerys restrained from turning her eyes. “You haven’t come to discuss my looks, nor my portraits.”

He wasted no more time and sat in front of her.

“You maintained your allure, I see,” he added, sarcastically.

“And you, your head above your shoulders,” she rebutted, catching his eyes going to the jug of wine in her right. “Your instincts amaze me,” she said approaching it to him.

“I won’t lie, Your Grace. Most part of this journey I thought this was the road straight to the seven hells,” he grabbed the goblet and cheered to her.

“What makes you sure isn’t?”

“Our current positions,” he replied before sipping. For his expression, he shouldn’t have had a proper wine in years. “You are the utmost conqueror of the Known World, and I am just an old, soon to die man who is nothing by your side.”

“Didn’t Varys tell you that a very small man can cast a very large shadow?”
He gazed down. “Indeed.”

“Indeed,” she repeated, picking the double sense. “But the end is inevitable.”

“For most of us, it is.”

“We’ve been dodging it well, but it’ll catch us any time.”

“I have come to the conclusion that might death is the reward.”

“If that’s the case, I’ve been well rewarded.”

“If that’s the case,” he made a pause, lifting his scarred eyebrow, “why don’t you go back home and claim your prize?”

*Home.* It was how they used to reference Westeros in the past. A connection no longer shared.

Daenerys rodded her eyes. “Everywhere she goes, evil men die and we cheer her for it. And she grows more powerful and more sure that she is good and right.”

He choked and wine poured through his vest. “How…?”

She threw him a rag.

“Didn’t you asked yourself the same question when you put Bran the Broken on the throne?”

He was cleaning his clothing and staring at her in disbelief. “I thought him the right option, I couldn’t have known…”

“Which of all options, Tyrion?” she interrupted him. “It does not matter because no one would dare to shout out the voice of reason. Everywhere you go, people fall under your incompetence, but you left unscathed and triumphant. The more you do so, the more you believe yourself good and right.”

His stare darkened. “I wouldn’t call myself triumphant.”

“Your major triumph is being alive,” she kept stirring.

“And what’s yours, Your Grace?” he inquired with his tone fooling the royal treatment. “The undisputed authority of an entire continent, to whom no one would dare to question but for some reason, Westeros is out of your sight, and your enemies alive, walking through the halls of your fortress.”

Daenerys knew it. He kept being the same spiteful man that only cared for himself and his interests.

“If you are so certain that I’m just shaping the situation on my favor why did you lug all those persons to my Realm? Or is that I’m getting myself into another complot of lions and wolves?”

“What complot?” he questioned as if he is been aggrieved. “You slaughtered thousands within a day, and were eager to go further!”

She laughed bitterly. “Do not play the hero with me, Tyrion. I can believe such idiocy from your partner in crime, but not from you. You freed your brother to save Cersei from her faith after she killed not only my allies but also my child and my friend. Lives that seemed to be less for you.”
“I…” he began, but she did not relent.

“Cersei killed hundreds, if not thousands but her family was there protecting her till the very last moment,” she moved forward, catching a better look of his tormented face. “I don’t care if I am monster Tyrion, I don’t care for the lives of the evil men I kill and I don’t care if Westeros is dying because you couldn’t stop your silly games for a moment. I choose what enemy is worth of my punishment and it turns out all of you are worthless of all.”

He was breathing hard, as if she had touched that nerve inside him that’s been throbbing the whole time. After a beat, he relaxed and took the jug of wine.

“Six dragons,” he began again, “who knows how many loyalists, from the east and from the west,” he reclined and shouting his eyes. “An obliterated land that begs you to conquer them but you want me to believe all this Cersei’s number of I don’t care if the world is burning beneath my nose?”

Tyrion scratched his forehead, staring at the paint again. “I was raised between Lions, Your Grace,” he turned to see her. “Do not underestimate my intelligence, please. My father killed thousands, my brother killed thousands, Cersei killed thousands, and I killed my father without any real remorse to this day, and you know what, Dany? Nothing will change the essential truth you are denying yourself. Guilty. You feel guilty,” he said, before sipping directly from the jug. “And for that kind of punishment, there’s no relief. You can find comfort for a time, not thinking it that much but eventually, it turns around and it bites you in the ass.”

Daenerys stared at him with contempt. This kind of words made her buy for his intelligence the first time, but he wasn’t. He was just a very good talker. A manipulator and a true believer of his own power.

“Since you brought Cersei into this conversation,” now that he was talking, would not shut up. “She had a saying: in the Game of Thrones you win or you die; there is no middle ground. However, you had won and you had died. What else you had to lose?”

“I’m not a sword you can sharp and use again, at will,” she scolded him. “There is no Iron Throne, and soon, there will be no more Targaryens in this world.”

“Speaking of…” he was about to say but she cut him off.

“It’s not my concern,” she hardened her tone. He was overpassing the limits.

“Don’t you wish to know about what your last living relative has been doing these years?” he asked with little innocence in his voice.

“Would Tywin Lannister do that if he returns from death?”

“No. We would not be having this conversation,” he smiled and it seemed sincere. “If it grants you any consolation, the Lords of Westeros were not interested in crowning him. No one seems to care he is Targaryen.”

“If he didn’t care, why would others do it?”

“He never…,” he stopped, closing his eyes almost painfully, “never thought it was right. When the Reach rebelled, and they massacred the only friend I had, I began to think the same.”

“Another one who fell,” she stated coldly.

He nodded and pursed his lips. “I guess that’s the worst punishment,” Daenerys could sense the
end of their conversation in his failing voice. “And the price of living,” he added, “carrying the consequences of our decisions.”

She agreed but wouldn’t tell him.

When Daenerys stood up to finish the dialogue, he put his hand in a hidden pocket of his vest, and let fall on her desk two small metallic objects that resound against the wood.

Rings.

“What is this?” she inquired, confused.

“Nothing would have stopped him,” he replied, eyeing at her with lament. “Nor you.”

Daenerys didn’t comprehend at first but then scoped one of them closely and recalled Varys hiding his arms in long sleeves. Those were Varys’ rings. But it wasn’t all, they had small containers still filled with a transparent, heavy liquid she couldn’t recognize.

Poison.

She was poisoned.

She almost never walked along the Great Keep’s ramparts, but what had just happened was simply too much to digest. Daario had accompanied her while the guards escorted Tyrion to the private chamber’s wing.

How stupid she had been. How could she trust a man who had not only betrayed all the kings he had served but had also threatened her life previously? Blunders kept raining down after all this time.

Her fortification had been built already on the solid foundation of the fact that Jon was responsible, whether he knew it or not, for the death of her daughter. Nothing would change that perhaps it was not, that the poison would have killed them anyway.

Daenerys looked at the rings again and felt even more helpless for failing to recognize the poison in her food when she had had so much experience escaping from it. Not even in his time with Gerael has she known such a potion.

He could evacuate that doubt for her but, what good would do? Varys poisoned her days before the battle, causing who knows what effect on her. In those years, she hadn’t questioned her decision to burn down the city. It was her will, Drogon’s wrath boiling inside her.

No, Daenerys thought. *It was my will. My decision. His poison couldn’t have affected me that way, he wanted to save the people.*

“Nothing would have stopped him,” Tyrion excused himself, but was, in reality, saying, “*both of you became too much to handle and I had to stop you.*”

Daenerys leaned against the wall and began to hyperventilate. Daario put a hand on her shoulder to ease her but he was just irking her even worse.

She turned around, “he said Varys poisoned me.”

“You told you were not eating those days.”
“I was pregnant, Daario, I believed I was hurting my baby so I took some bread and water,” Oh gods, she was poisoning her baby. “I had no chance, Daario. I never had any chance.”

He pulled her into his arms and she stifled a scream in his chest.

“Don’t let him get into you,” he said caressing her back.

She pushed him away and turned around to watch the city. She needed to be away.

“You know how men call me before they hurt me,” she explained hoping that he will understand. “Be alerted.”

He did not reply and walked away. Daario knew when a battle was lost.

She wiped out the tears from her cheeks and began her way to the pits. Daenerys knew she should be away and clean herself from that rage that was boiling inside her again, but she also urged to know what Varys put in her body. Only Gerael could give her that answer.

She was jogging and almost stumble with something, not, someone, who fell in front of her. In those years, she had been prepared for a surprise attack but in that moment, when the black form in front of her became the clear view of Jon Snow, Daenerys forgot everything Daario had taught her and froze in her place.

Drogon, drogon, drogon, drogon, drogon, she was calling him by instinct. He had returned, he had found me, and he will kill me.

Drogon cried from the pit.

As soon as their eyes met again, he lifted his arms like showing her that nothing was in them.

"Dany, I do not want to hurt you,” he yelled so fast that she didn’t recognize his voice.

Liar, she wanted to shout aloud.

Daenerys had said all those years that she would not kill him, that was incapable to do it but in that right moment she was not facing the man that she loved so hard that it killed her, she was in front of her murderer, the murderer of her child.

Her child.

That was all she needed to finally grab the sword in her belt and hit the pommel in his temple as one she did with his sister. When Jon’s inert body hit the ground, Drogon appeared at the top of the Great Keep and let out an anguished roar just like her.

Her hand was still shaken when the Maester gave her a tea to calm her nervousness. Daenerys felt the vein in her temple throbbing, so many things were happening in a short amount of time that she just wanted to go away and drink the blue sleep.

“Please, let me kill him, please,” Daario was begging her, knelt in the steps of the throne and with hand rested on her leg. “Daenerys he has tried it again, you can’t let him go away with it.”

Daenerys eyed at him, angered. She has not spoken a single word since they took Jon to the dungeons in the towers.
The gates of throne room opened and a congested Sansa Stark entered stumbling in the center. Behind her was Tormund Giantsbane, just as afflicted as her.

“Your Grace, please,” the red woman cried, her blue eyes so swollen that barely could be distinguished. “Please I begged you for the life of my brother; he is your blood, too. Please have mercy.”

*He is your blood, too.* Did she think that when she spread Jon’s parentage? leading to her destruction, the destruction of her entire life.

“Dragon Queen,” Tormund stepped forward to speak but Jornik put his arak in front of him. “Please, whatever he intended to do was because he’s hella remorseful. He wouldn’t have hurt you, never.”

Daenerys contemplated them with increasing aversion.

Daario stood and walked down the step. “I should kill the whole pack of you…”

“He waited for you,” Tormund insisted, ignoring Daario. “He was ready for you to kill him, might he still wants it but please do not believe that he was trying to hurt you.”

“Please, do not hurt him,” Sansa cried again. “He waited for almost two years in the woods for you. He regretted it. Please, Your Grace.”

It was the first time she noticed that Arya Stark was not with them. In the heat of the moment, she had forgotten that she sent her back to the North all those years ago.

“Where is your sister?” she asked, finally speaking. “The other girl, where she is?”

Sansa looked like a little girl sobbing. “She is dead, Your Grace.”

Daenerys gulped the lump in her throat. “How?”

The Queen in the North blinked nervously. “My brother,” she made a pause, “The Three-Eyed Raven, killed her.”

If she could have laughed, she would have done it. The situation became stupidly unclear for her, and she lamented having ignored their lives after that last time she looked for Jon in the flames. There was vital information she was missing.

“Daenerys please, do not listen to them,” Daario was pleading again. “He got his opportunity to stay away and he has overpassed the limits. Don’t be a fool.”

Sansa let out another whimper. “Please, not, have mercy…”

Daenerys just shook her head in disbelief.

Jornik and Daario stood on each side of the gate, and she was carrying the sword and the dagger to defend herself. Jon was in a cell, bare of any weapon to do the same.

Deep down, she knew he was not going to try something similar but still Daenerys felt uncertain about his intentions. *How a person can be this miserable?* She asked to herself. *Why couldn’t you stay away, for good?*
When she entered the dungeons there was just silence. He was seated on the stone bed, arms on his lap and hair covering his face. When he saw her again, he stood without uttering a single word for a couple of minutes in which she beheld his view, trying to remember what she saw in him.

"Dany ..." he called her, and she quelled the sickness coming from her guts.

"Do you remember what I told you the first time you called me that?" because she always goes back to that moment from time to time. The point where she started to lower her guard.

His face contorted with shame and realization. He closed his eyes and spoke without opening them. "There are no words that could express what I would like to tell you,"

What I would like to tell you, she repeated in her mind trying to make it have sense.

Daenerys perceived his affliction, but she could not oblige herself to care. The man in front of her was made to be her downfall. His mere existence brought disgrace to her own. No words could change that.

"Then say nothing," she instructed as if she was talking to herself.

Daenerys enhanced the distance between them, waiting for her mind to come up with something more to tell but she had put back some many times the thought of him that now he was before her, she simply had nothing to say.

"You can't kill me again," she stated, looking at the moon behind.

His dark eyes stared at her with disgust. "I...I didn't want to hurt you," his voice sounded hurt and gruff. "I came unarmed"

Daenerys quell a cackle. "There are many ways to attack someone, even unarmed."

Jon shook his head with despair, his raven curls falling down his forehead.

"I never want to hurt you again," he pleaded, his angst beyond his words. "I just wanted to reach you."

She felt disrupted. "To reach me?"

"I wanted to talk. They wouldn't let me get to you any other way"

He wanted to talk, as if they just had a minor quarrel in the past and not, what was supposed to be, their final farewell.

"Don't do it again," she stated firmly, trying to avoid the intimacy he was searching. "Reassuring the Common Council that you are not a threat is not getting easier."

Jon wanted to make this about them when it should be a major problem between two continents. West and east should never have clashed.

"Why?"

"Because you all continue giving them reasons to dislike you..."

“No, I want to know why I'm still alive. Why do you keep sparing my life?" he insisted.

Daenerys found it funny that Tyrion knew that answer, but Jon didn't. The Lannister always knew
them better and used that knowledge at will.

“When Jorah betrayed me,” recalling him wasn’t easy as she thought, but she continued, “I was unable to forgive him, so I exiled him with a warning to never come back to my city, alive or dead. However, he returned, multiple times, while I kept exiling him until one day I was the one asking him to come back.”

Just as she disdained Daario.

She perceived some type of light in his face. “Did you wanted me to come to you?”

“No,” she rushed to clarify, astonished at the idea of him believing her that stupid. “I think Jorah kept coming back because he believed in himself,” she shouldn’t abridge the space between them but she did it anyway. “Only people who believe in their value can return.”

“So you are aware of what happened in King’s Landing? Do you understand why I did it?”

And that’s honourable Jon, she wanted to shout. A question that confirmed what Tyrion told her hours before.

“He didn’t believe it was right.”

How couldn’t he? How is that he can’t see?

Daenerys would laugh at his innocence but she just smiled bitterly. “That’s what are you expecting from me, then? After all this time, you are still a naive man.”

Restoring the space between them, she looked in her mind for appropriate words to give him some kind of confirmation.

“King’s Landing was a mistake, yes,” and she did mean that, but it wouldn’t have changed a thing. “But so were Cersei, Tyrion, Varys, the North, Westeros…,” she thought in her visions, Rhaegar selling their fates, “and you.”

“I’d regretted it since the moment it happened…”

She shook her head vehemently; he was trying to draw his will from the matter. “It didn't just happen. You made it happen.”

“Because I was afraid of you,” and it seemed like a confession before a trial.


It was an unnecessary and undue questioning; she did not want to corner him for having felt what he felt. To have fallen so low to collect the crumbs of a one-sided love was enough.

“I was afraid of you,” was all he had to said, wordless, as he’s always been.

Daenerys was exhausted. “To be a scared man with no regard for his own life, you have come quite far. You are not a coward. You are anything but a coward. You are simply weak.”

Under other circumstances, in one where he still hasn’t killed her like a rabid dog, she would have told him that his burden was heavy and that she understand. Nevertheless, this low-key offense angered him and she noticed it.

“It does not matter, you were right and we were wrong. Your new world is better than our old one,
and the people I tried to save ended up dead in famine, disease or war. Nothing truly matters at the end."

In this regard, he had come to the same conclusion that Tyrion did. They believed her the champion of some competence she didn’t know she was part of.

“You sound extremely disappointed with it,” and because Daenerys didn’t know how else to point some sense in him, she added, “how is her name? The wildling girl that warms your bed now?

His face paled and she almost felt guilty in causing such misgiving.

“Don’t be afraid, madman, I have no intentions to hurt her nor your sister” she clarified both cases. “I almost did it some time ago, when I saw all of you in the flames,” she also stated, avoiding further questioning.

“I waited for you…” he excused as if she was accusing him of being disloyal, when in fact was far from being a problem now.

“Please, do not hurt him. He waited for almost two years in the woods for you. He regretted it. Please, Your Grace,” resounded Sansa’s pleading in her head.

“No, you were waiting for death and I will not give you that,” she said more to herself than for him.

“She’s good. She’s more than I deserved.”

Jon would never bed a woman he doesn’t love, she concluded. Daenerys would lie if she said it didn't hurt her, but it was as she thought it would be. He moved on, though his misery overtook that chance from him.

“And you tried to be happy with her but you couldn’t,” she helped him to complete the excuse. “I start to believe that you don’t want to be happy,” in the best case, he just had bad luck.

“I shouldn’t have brought her with me,” he said, correctly. “But I needed to come here and tell you face to face that I regret it. That I don’t deserve to live after what I've done.”

Under that lame apology of him, she knew that he was looking for atonement. Of all the things she had given him, that was not something she would grant him. “And why would I want your apology? How is that useful to me?”

Daenerys had to hit some point because the dialogue was getting dull.

“In all these years, haven’t you realized why I haven’t returned?” but he had no way to know it, either. Sometimes she forgot that normal people don’t hold the knowledge she holds now.

"You are small men, living and fighting in your stupid little games. Incapable to see that there’s a world outside your castles and fortresses. You all stand in a position of power but you don’t understand that power. You only understand chaos and that’s the reason you couldn't contemplate life after defeating the dead, neither see beyond the darkness.” This last piece came unwittingly, so she rushed to redirect her conclusion. “Tyrion, Sansa and you are incapable to see what I can see clearly: power is power. You do something with it, or others will use it against you.”

“I hope she doesn't end up like Ygritte and I, dying in the arms of a weak man,” she didn’t mean to sound so childish but what else, he had killed her and her baby, or at least she would believe that until Gerael could reveal what effect had Varys’ poison in her. A fact that would only serve to her
because she was certain that he would never know about it.

“Go home or find a new one out there,” as she had allowed him previously, “but do never stand before me, nor your sister or any of your people.”

This seemed to annoy him and she couldn’t understand why. Not that she ever really know him completely.

“Westeros needs you,” he concluded, ironic as it was. “The seven kingdoms are yours to take.”

In perspective, anyone could take it now.

“Westeros is lost, no one can defeat the power of the Raven and as long as he stands it also will chaos,” she answered, as Kinvara would argue in the opposite sense.

“You have that power.”

And because of it, you killed me.

“Your wildling girl is coming,” she didn’t know why she said that but the words just came out of her mouth, as if bringing her to the conversation will endorse the fact that she, indeed, existed. “I have no wish to face her arrows so you better get up.”

It was over, everything that should have been said has been said. Until he screamed her name and voice out something that teared down her weakened composure.

“Daenerys, if not for yourself at least do it for the people you slaughtered!”

Her scalp was beating and her fist burned. Daenerys turned around to meet that face of his, insolent and conceited as she remembered him in Dragonstone.

“Viserion died for your incompetence,” she started, “my people died for your North, and for the rest of that ungrateful land.” Thousands that died because I loved you and I trusted you, she wanted to add. “Rhaegal died,” and you didn’t care, “Missandei died back in chains,” and no one besides Grey Worm and I, did care, “because that monstrous woman gained strength by deceiving us, while Tyrion and you would speak about heroism and honor,” the only thing that matters to you.

Daenerys knew that that was an undue load for him, but was the only harm she could cast upon him.

"I, myself died in the last place that I would think dangerous but I'm not going to lie to you, I was waiting for your betrayal, and I was just in...,” she trailed off, noticing how personal had become, “a fool.”

She had let them be, knowing that no punishment will ever relief her from her misery but he still believed himself entitled to subdued her over his sense of honour, after he already finished her. What else did he want?

“Nor you or anyone will tell me how to pay for my sins.”

“I don’t want to leave,” he pleaded with a soft whine.

Daenerys hardened at it. She cannot burden herself with his pain again.

“Tyrion told me that there’s no worse punishment than the weight of the consequences of our decisions,” at least if this was going to be another farewell, she wanted his presence weighing in
between as it did in the last one. “Who are we to defy it?”

“Jorah believed he deserved a second opportunity, that’s why he kept coming back,” she shook her head, defeated. “Neither of us can say the same, not even Westeros.”

The desperation in his eyes hurt her, but she did not yield to the remorse of leaving him desperate. She grew weary of being the one that loved the most.

“Stop being a prey of the past. Walk forward and never look back, Jon Snow.”

Daenerys turned around and walked so fast towards the entrance that she almost stumbled against the gate. Daario followed her to the pit, and when he tried to reach her, she just dismissed him and mounted Drogon.

Barristan, Jorion, Daarion, Greywing, and Missanderys followed her almost impatiently.

In the embrace of the night sky, within the air so cold that stole her breath, Daenerys let out a cry so loud that the six dragons did the same to dulling her.

She cried because the past had found her again. She cried because it didn't matter how much distance she had put in the middle. She cried because the years had passed too quickly.

She cried because besides the hatred, the resentment and the loss that he caused, she still loved him.

**Interlude: The Threshold**

*If I look back, I'm lost. And she had no intention of looking back anymore.*

*She walked and walked until the heavy gate began to rise, revealing the other side of the Wall. She advanced blindly through the white landscape without being disturbed by the extremely low temperature that surrounded her. She had to find the little hut set up there, she had to find Rhaego and Drogo.*

*A part of her also hoped to find Jorah, Missandei, Ser Barristan, even the family she barely knew. Nonetheless, she knew that they would have left for their respective places of eternal rest.*

*No, this was hers.*

*When did she forget that? Even when her goal was to spend the rest of her life in that fortress that once belonged to her family, for Daenerys the end of the path would always lead to this place, unfailingly.*

*He made you believe - want - something else, she thought. And that was her fatal mistake.*

*When she finally glimpsed the form of the hut contrasted with the white moor, Daenerys could not help but smiling and feeling hope, finally, after so much pain. It was strange not to be prey of her most extreme emotions, but she supposed that this place should feel this way.*

*Like the last time she entered, she suddenly felt the temperature return to her body and the atmosphere becoming warm. Although she hoped to meet the same image of Khal Drogo holding*
his little son, Daenerys was not surprised when instead she only find a child under ten, with dark hair, pale skin and greenish eyes like a lake; he was playing on the huddled fur mattress with small-carved figures of horses.

Drogo was gone. Its sun and stars, now riding in the night lands.

Before she could be carried away by the impulse of returning to her son's arms, she felt a slight sadness that was immediately overshadowed by the same sound she had heard so long ago.

Viserion and Rhaegal were there, and they were no longer those impressive beasts that - like her - could not find a home in Westeros. Their shapes were again of the size of an adult cat and fiddled around Rhaego, who smiled at them and caressed their little necks. The image filled her with a joy she longed for so long ago.

She wanted to throw herself into it completely, but something else keeping her still.

She heard the soft gurgling coming from where her children were, and Daenerys immediately knew what it was. She approached slowly fearing to be surprised by another disappointment or bad perception. However, doubts were decimated when a lump no larger than Viserion and Rhaegal, was removed near Rhaego and she could see a tiny arm claiming for her attention.

The circumstances of their encounter were the worst. Despite that, Daenerys had no place in his heart for grief. She accommodated herself among all her children and watched her daughter's face for the first time. It would be the second time she met her offspring after death. In life that chance was forbidden for her.

Her eyes were warm-brown, whitish fluffs like the moon hung above her tiny crown, and the same pale skin as her older brother.

Daenerys thought she never saw such a beautiful creature.

On that other occasion, she felt helpless and barely took Rhaego's small hands, tempted to never leave the House of the Undying, but this time she knew it was permanent, so she kissed the top of her human son's hair and attracted him to her as she settled between the furs, ecstatic and complete.

Rhaego laughed and played with her hair, putting small kisses on her cheek. Viserion claimed her attention, rolling up between her feet. He sang a song about his days on the road to Meereen while Rhaegal went more ambitious, and positioned himself on her shoulder, bringing her a little discomfort that she did not understand very well but welcomed him.

Finally, she extended her arms to reach the baby, drawing her to her chest. Her other children watched with curious stares at her younger sister while she was being settled in between them.

“Look at her,” she indicated them in her mother tongue, the only language they all shared, “...so tiny.”

Rhaego burst out laughing when the baby took a small finger in her fist and didn't let it go. Rhaegal purred in her ear, lost in her daughter's eyes as a sudden thought slipped into her mind, but in the same way it arrived, it vanished and turned her attention to that circle of love she never wanted to leave.

For the first time, Daenerys Targaryen felt she belonged. For the first time, she had a family.
She never wanted to leave.

The reverie cracked into a thousand pieces and tears sprouted in her eyes at the sudden realization of why Rhaegal's grip on her shoulder felt so strange. The damage was irreversible once it was done. A thought that would never go away, and now her little paradise was falling apart and the circle was destroyed.

Drogon.

How could she spend eternity there while her son's sobs were heard outside the hut? How does a mother leave one of her children for the others? She preferred to surrender her soul to whoever was behind all that, to give up her existence if it was required, as long as her circle was complete.

Her heart was shattered again; the dagger plunging deep into her.

She stifled a sob as she kissed his daughter's forehead and prayed for forgiveness. Her four miracles only watched her walk away, with some indifference but at the same time without leaving the tranquility that characterized the moment.

If I look back, I'm lost, she told herself again as she moved outside the hut.

The wall gate was still open. It never closed behind her.

She heard Drogon's cry grow louder and louder until it was her own exclamation that she heard.

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Chapter End Notes

I KNOW it is needlessly intense, but this is the reason I am writing this fic. Mostly because of Dany mistreatment in S8. I found interest to explore a little bit more through her feelings. And please do not hate me for make her relationship with Gerael more intensive than Jon/Val, the thing it's that, as he is an original character, I wanted to explore him a little bit more.

Keep in mind this a Jon/Dany story, I am a slow writer but the point is writing about them.

Sorry for that cringy version of "A Song of Ice and Fire", I'm not a poet lol.

Also, I wanted to point out some aspects of the stories that would require a POV character to make clearer:

* Kinvara knows exactly what will happen from the beginning. She's like a more diligent version of Melissandre.
* Yas, Dany is something like immortal.
* The Sealdor of Braavos is the one that made a different version of the song of ice and fire being spread through Essos, to glorify Dany and antagonize Jon.
*Yara understands Valyrian here

Next chapter - Chapter 5: Planting Trees (Various POVs)
Chapter 5: Planting Trees

I

Arianne

West Village - Jorah’s Port

A man carrying a wooden chest almost drowned in the mud causing some soldiers to try to help him, but he disdains them moving forward to stumble, scattering his belongings in the dirty post-fluvial ground. Arianne watches the scene with annoyance and identifies the man as a northerner.

The arrival of the Westerosis to Valyria had changed her whole itinerary, and she spent weeks trying to accommodate their needs in the West Village.

Since she was a little girl, Arianne dreamed about being a queen. Not a princess, but a queen. Tales of a young queen liberating slaves in the east enforced that illusion in her. She would be like Daenerys Targaryen, a queen that serves her people and is loved by them.

It was so easy to dream like that when she was a child.

Arianne beholds the view from the balcony of the town hall. Behind her, Gendry and Monterys were speaking of the register they had made of the newcomers and their state.

“Five hundred men. Mayhap just the half of them soldiers,” Monterys says.

“We don’t need soldiers,” Gendry replied, thoughtful and weary with his chin resting on his hand. “Queen Daenerys just wanted to be sure they weren’t invading the island.”

Arianne looked at him; after the arrival of his people, he hasn’t been the same.

“How many children?” she asks, approaching the table.

“Only one hundred twenty-five,” the young Velaryon indicates with a saddened tone. “The North was racked by an epidemic disease and children had been its first target,” he sighed with lament.
“Queen Sansa lost her child and husband, too.”

“And her sister,” Gendry adds, his eyes fixated on the sky. “We need to find a way to convince Daenerys to help them.”

Arianne clenches her jaw, feeling a sting of rage. “How much mercy do they want from her?”

“It’s not mercy letting them die a slow death,” he protests, folding hands in front of him.

She understands his concerns but does not hold the same devotion for the Northerners. Just savages and treacherous.

“He has attacked her again,” she reminds him of the incident with Jon Snow. She still cannot believe he was so close to hurt Daenerys again.

“Jon did not intend to hurt her,” he claims with the assurance only a friend could hold. “He is the most honourable man of Westeros.”

Arianne gets serious, “He killed her.”

“And she killed thousands of innocent people,” he rebuts.

*Targaryens and their dragons. Why they act so surprised?* Arianne asks in her mind, remembering her father’s stories about the Dragon’s wroth. ‘*The Valyrians become one with their dragons; you can’t have one without the other*.‘

“And I’m not justifying that,” she clarifies, sensing that Lord Baratheon could be misunderstanding her. “But he sworn to serve her, and then betrayed her,” Arianne had live enough with Daenerys to know that Jon called her his queen before plunging his dagger in her heart. In fact, that was the reason her father also wanted him executed. His reasons were good but not his method. “Because of him, Elia Martell and the rightful heirs of the crown were massacred,” she repeats her father’s words.

“Because of Rhaegar Targaryen,” he replies frowning and looking at her with incredulity. "My father was the King that endorsed their murderer; do you wish me dead, too?"

*Of course, I do not,* she wants to answer. But his reasoning makes her aware of how childish she was being. She was not blaming Jon Snow for the crimes of Rhaegar Targaryen, but his actions only reasserted the northerners’ ill reputation.

“The North wanted independence, and they got it,” she changes her point. “Sansa Stark was a negligent, arrogant Queen. They cannot just run back crying, because they now regret it.”

“We are not talking just about the North, Princess,” Gendry returns argues. “West, East, South… they are suffering while we stand here doing nothing!”

During the almost four years they had met, Gendry had never given up his desire to return to Westeros. First, he didn't even dare to raise the matter on the queen's table. However, when they became more involved in the administration of her realm, they slowly began trying to persuade Daenerys to do something about it.

“They can come here,” or can search for her father’s help in Dorne, she would've added.

“Have you seen a common folk besides our people and the wildlings?”
She stays in silence, contemplating him. Another reason she hated the people that arrived in Jorah’s Port was that they were all highborn. They had abandoned their people.

“I respect her, and I’ll always being thankful for what she gave to me.” Gendry continues. “But she has directed her anger towards innocent people while Jon is unscathed.”

“Do you suggest that she should kill him?” she inquires him with disbelief. “If that’s the case, we think the same. Jon Snow should be dead.”

“Jon saved Westeros from the army of the dead.”

She hates that story. An army of dead people that no one actually saw.

“He used Daenerys for that,” or that’s what Daario had told her. “Because of him and Tyrion Lannister, she lost the dragon that breached the Wall.”

Gendry sighs in disbelief.

Arianne is not pleased about not being taken seriously. He hadn't been with her and Ornela in the Great Keep, beholding Daenerys' suffering at first hand. He was too devoted to the Starks.

“World depends on them,” Monterys opines, speaking after a long silence, "and it’s a terrible burden.”

“How mulish,” she wants to scream. The entire situation was baffling for her. The Starks weren't supposed to survive beyond this year. She had sensed that Daenerys gift could provoke this mess and indeed, had suggested her father not to give her ideas that could force her hand.

With the Starks dead she would’ve had no reason to delay her returning and begin with her father's plan to retake Westeros.

Arianne pinches her eyes, lamenting such a scene with her future husband. Nevertheless, can she be blamed? After all, she was still just a girl dreaming about being a queen. Although, in Valyria such a dream had become less exciting, now that she knows what true defiance was to rule.

He does not know yet, she eases herself. If he realises about father's and Daenerys' agreement, he will never accept you for what you are. Moreover, she wanted him to see the woman she already was.

Gendry was going to be her King, and she was going to be his Queen.

And she was going to be a good queen.

II

JON

West Village - Jorah’s Port

“Your sister is useless,” Val complains, seeing Sansa failing at skinning the game hunted previously that day. The Free Folk were trying their best in educating the Queen in the North to be
self-sufficient, but Sansa was miserable on it.

Jon represses his amusement. “She’s a queen,” he replied, tough Val keeps watching the scene with contempt. It was her regular face in those days. Well, since that day.

“Queens are not useless,” she rebuts, contemplating the surroundings of the village where they are currently living. “They say your Dragon Queen helped with the construction.”

*Your Dragon Queen.*

Val hasn’t been subtle with her annoyance on the matter. Long ago, little after they started to share a bed, they had a conversation where she asked if he still loved Daenerys. He did not give her a proper answer. What sense had if they were not supposed to see each other ever again? Besides, he was her murderer, it didn’t matter how he felt anymore.

He had to focus on protecting the North.

“Don’t call her that way,” he asks softly. “People here hate us enough.”

Val upsets and suppresses whatever was going on in her mind. Jon tries to intertwine his hand with hers, but she is already walking away.

*Better in that way,* he thinks.

“I cannot blame you for wanting the two of them, little crow,” had said Tormund in their return to Jorah’s Port. “But do not break Val’s heart or I’ll break your little pecker.”

Jon had received enough scolding that day to reply to his suggestion. He hadn’t gone to Daenerys in search of love. He wanted his punishment.

He sighs moving back to the inn’s porch, two guards following him constantly to never lose his track again. It wasn't like if he could do much with his injured leg.

Although his behaviour should have cost them their heads, Daenerys had simply stated that she would not return or help them to overthrow Crow’s Eye. *Victarion,* he corrects.

After offering back the crown that should have always remained hers, Daenerys simply rejected it and send them to decide if they would choose to stay in Essos or going back to Westeros.

She ignored Sansa and dismissed Tyrion’s insistence.

What in hells was happening to her? How that same woman pass her dragon fire over a city full of innocent people-children!-, and now was allowing them to live in her lands. Jon certainly did not saw regret in those cold eyes of hers.

That memory felt like a punch in his guts. Not even the stabs of his brothers of the Night Watch had hurt that much as it did when he saw how much emptiness there was in those eyes. Eyes that felt like snow touching his skin, far away from the hopeful stare she gave him before he thrust the dagger in her. Not even the pain in his leg was mortifying him so much.

It was like if she doesn’t see any value in him.

“Jorah believed he deserved a second opportunity, that’s why he kept coming back. Neither of us can say the same, not even Westeros.”

How could he be so wrong? How could he hit the dagger so fast?
"The moment the gates fell the battle was over. She burned families alive in their homes," resounded Tyrion’s voice in his head. “She believes her destiny is to build a better world, for everyone. To fix what is broken for every man, woman, and child. If you believed that, if you truly believed it...wouldn’t you kill whoever stands between you and paradise?

Tyrion’s words made sense back then when she seemed so convinced that what she did was right.

“You won’t be able to hold her in check. You won’t be able to guide her. I thought I could. I thought she’d listen to me. I was wrong.”

However, Dany had heard every council of Tyrion until that day. She did listen to him when he told her not to burn the Red Keep on the Dragonstone beach, and in that time, they weren’t even that intimate.

It was because of them that she lost so much to the point all she had was fear.

He swallows the lump in his throat.

In Essos, she had not burned any city but had no grant mercy to those who opposed her will, either. The slaves were all gone, and she had killed hundreds in Yin as Arya related it.

“You’re the last hope.”

Apparently that was bullshit since nothing he did save the realm. He did his best effort to prevent the Army of the Dead to obliterate Westeros but couldn’t stop the game of thrones that ultimately caused the same disaster.

Jon scratched his brow sensing the headache returning. He had no idea how to play the game of thrones. Otherwise, he would have found a way to stop her without killing her.

That, if Bran -, or the Raven would have not played his part.

All of them pieces of this absurd game.

Jon sighed, watching Sansa failing again with her tasks and the spearwives laughing at her.

"Thank you, Gilly," he tells his friend's woman, while she puts a tray of teacups above the table. Jon and Sam were sitting in the common hall after everyone went to sleep.

She had recently settled in there with little Jon and little Sam after Daario Naharis announced that they can reunite again with the women and children.

Val was also back with him.

There was a small library in the city where Sam had been meeting with the Maesters. Jon hadn’t read a proper book in years but after being crippled by his injury in the left leg, he had to find a way to kill some time.

Most of the tomes were in valyrian. Sam was passing him the translated version but Jon’s reading was faster than his writing.

“Maester Holton still doesn’t believe that she had restored its nature with her blood,” he said when they were reading about the restoration. “He says that it had to do with nature itself.”
Jon was perplexed the first time he heard of Daenerys, back in the day, when she hatched her children from stones. He had never doubt of the magical aspects of her.

“I believed she was working with the Red God servants,” he confessed, skimming an illustration of Dany and the three dragons in the book’s page. “Why has the Maesters came this far?”

“Well,” Sam made a pause, thinking, “She needed ravens to accelerate the communication with the mainland.”

“Ravens,” he repeated. “Isn’t that a problem with Bran?”

“Not here apparently,” Sam had been working hard on collecting information about Bran’s power. He still was afraid of approaching the Red Woman that resurrected Dany, who seemed to know a lot but share too little. “What I can conclude is that the Three-Eyed Raven holds the power of Westeros while R’hollor reigns here.”

“Are you saying that Bran and Dany are receptacles of these entities?” Jon asks, thinking that It seemed too illogical to be true.

“Perhaps Bran since he is not Bran anymore,” he assures, still not believing that he could have killed Arya. “But Daenerys is the same person, and R’hollor servants follow her, not her to R’hollor.”

"Targaryens answer to neither gods nor men,” she used to say.

“You know what I still find incredible,” he voices after a beat. “You have those two types of blood, dragon, and wolf, fire and ice, west and east.”

Jon rolled his eyes. “The Targaryens has lived enough in the West for Dany to have some mixed blood, too,” he rebutted.

“Nah,” Sam disdained. “She’s all east. In a good sense.”

There was a bad sense? He thought.

Jon keeps observing Sam’s translation, trying to grab some words in Valyrian.

“Can I ask you something?” Sam required again, stopping his writing, “Slightly intimate?”

Gods, Sam, do not ask about Val, and me, he thought. Bed conversations kept making Jon blushed as a green boy.

“Do you still love her?” he does not wait for his permission.

Jon froze, caught off guard.

“What?”

“I’m sorry but,” he gulps. “Your small escape puts us in a difficult situation and I’m trying to make it make sense since you know, you killed her because she went mad…” Jon countenance irks and Sam slows down, stammering. “I mean, sh-she did what she did, and now we are here but she does not kill you, nor your sister nor Tyrion, nor is committing mass murder. And she’s even giving us food and property.”

“She feels guilty,” Jon concludes, trying to placate his prattle. “Or might she is just happy here.”
“That’s a good thing, but it’s odd…”

“Sorry Sam, I don’t understand how this had to do something with my feelings,” he closes the book and puts it on the table harshly. “I respect Val.”

*Though I never make promises to her,* he should add.

“Excuse me, Jon. I didn’t mean upsetting you,” and there is real regret in his tone.

Jon calms himself down and laments being so emotional. “She is also my family. The little sister of my father. And I couldn’t save her because I had to save all of you,” he began, feeling the pain in his chest coming again. “I wanted her to do something with me. Kill me, torture me, something!”

“Forgive you?” Sam suggests with a tiny voice.

“I know what I cannot have,” he admits, kneading his harmed leg and avoiding to show how dejected he feels.

After a couple of seconds where both kept in silence, drinking Gilly’s tea, Sam mentions something that later Jon would wish not having known.

“She will marry,” then tilted his head like doubting. “Well, not exactly…”

Jon looks at him confused.

“Daario Naharis,” he assumes, recalling the menacing stares her commander has been throwing at him.

“No,” Sam frowns, “the Poison King,” and because of Jon’s muddled expression, he rushed to add. “King of Lys.”

“She can’t have children,” he uttered as if was trying to make up a reason why that was senseless. As if a marriage alliance is the only reason why she would marry. “I mean-”

“Well, I’m just saying what everyone else is saying. Mayhap is just a silly rumour. Queens and Kings are always in the peasants’ mouth.”

Jon swallowed hard staring at the quill and parchment. “It does not concern me,” *but she questioned me about Val,* he wanted to beef aloud. *With what right she judge me for that when she is about to marry?* It wasn’t like she needed it for an alliance. She refused Prince Yronwood according to Tyrion. “Who is this Poison King?” he could not avoid but ask.

And, as if he was waiting for someone to keep questioning, Sam continues explaining.

“Her favoured from the common council,” he responded without any subtleness. “She takes him with her in some battles; I guess because he makes poison, you know. She had suffered several attempts of murder during these years.”

That little bit of information made him forget about the marriage thing. “What?”

“Yeah, conquering an entire continent is no simple task,” Sam stood to bring other books above the table. “One would believe that dragons are enough yet that didn’t save her the last time, right?”

Jon closed his eyes, cursing Sam for his tactless.

“And what are about those?” he rapidly changes the subject, ignoring the information that will not
leave him alone now.

“The conquest of Slaver’s Bay,” he recites the title. “It is in the common tongue.”

III
Sansa

West Village - Jorah’s Port

Her body had only hurt this much after losing her first babe. A different pain, still awful.

It was outrageous to see the wildling women laughing on her nil experience in doing something she never did before when most of them can’t even read or write.

Sansa decided she wasn’t going to be humiliated in that way again. She was a Queen.

At least, she was not the only one forced to do degrading work. Daenerys Targaryen's punishment for Jon’s idiocy fell upon the southron too. All the diplomacy trashed because her brother could not get over his infatuation with her. She had thought that the wildling girl had made him forget her, but Jon hadn’t. He repeats and repeats that is guilt what he feels but she can see his disillusion. The broken heart in his eyes.

A part of her makes the best effort to understand him. She also missed Will and his sweet, tender smile waking by her side every morning, but life must go on. Hundreds were dying per day in her Kingdom and she was being subdued by Jon incapability to stay away from his aunt.

Only Jon could do something so reckless, she thinks. It could have got him killed and she would be completely alone in this world. The mere thought makes her tremble. The Old Gods were relentless in their punishment but all she asks for was not being the last Stark. Not being left alone.

You had stripped me from my family, my children, my crown and my pride, what do I else I have to give you? she asked the Old Gods of her Father. If you have to take my life, take it before Jon does something stupid and gets himself killed.

An absurd idea since Jon was her Master of War and had spent those years bleeding for her on the battlefield.

The day Jon die, I’ll be completely alone, she concluded one day when he departed to defend the borders. That day I’ll die too.

If she could make Daenerys forgive Jon, she would have done it. If Sansa could have done things differently, she would.

However, like Sansa, Daenerys had learned that love is dangerous and could be the death of a woman.

Despite her breakdown when she faced the Dragon Queen in the throne room, begging for Jon’s life, Sansa could clearly notice the disgust and helplessness in Daenerys' expression. Daenerys Targaryen had finally realised that this world tramples on women who dare to love or believe in stupid little girl dreams.

She sighs and settles in her solar while her maidservants prepare her for bed. Out of sudden, a
knock on her door pulls her out of her ramblings and a frantic Lord Manderly enters.

"Your Grace," he bows, breathing hard because of his state and advanced age. "We received terrible news."

IV

Gendry

“I’ve never had a family.”

“I can be your family.”

“You wouldn’t be my family. You’d be my lady.”

Gendry repeats the conversation in his mind believing that eventually it will fade and hurt less but it wasn’t working at all. When Arya left Westeros and he settled in Storm’s End he had been sure that they will never meet again. Damn, he has believed her dead long ago but not a thought can be compared with the certain knowledge that she was gone.

What it haunts him worst is that thought in his mind of everything that could have been. What if he had rejected the Lordship and go with her West of Westeros? What if she had accepted his proposal? What if? What if? What if?

Now there was nothing. The future was empty of significance and every day was a battle in his mind to understand if something could improve this shitty situation.

Ser Davos approaches the gallery where Gendry is standing, and in front of their view, the nocturnal animals started to emerge from the darkness.

“I have reached an age where things aren’t supposed to surprise me,” he says, watching as a rare type of fluorescent butterflies dance within the smoke, “but this is madness,” and makes a pause to think it better. “And greatness.”

Gendry manages a smile, not too enthusiastic but sincere. “She’s pretty much both of them,” and he would not deny this.

Ser Davos keeps a reluctant expression. “A just woman, I used to think.”

He looks at the old sailor with understanding, “She’s still just, in some extension of the word.”

“Some extension of the word?” he asked amazed and amused. “When did you learn about the extension of words?”

Gendry remembered that when he first arrived a Storm’s end, without any knowledge on writing or reading, Ser Davos was the one who helps him until he devoured every book that delved into his family lineage.

“I work with Monterys and Princess Arianne,” he explains. “Highborn, well-educated children. I could not be left behind.”

“Princess Arianne,” Ser Davos repeats, “All of a dornish beauty.”

“An unbearable child, sometimes,” he admits, overlooking his suggestion. “What Kinvara has told you?”
With all of the newcomers’ accommodation in Jorah’s Port, they haven’t had time to speak about that matter.

“Pretty much the same ol’ crap,” Davos complains. “Lord of Light’s will. The chosen one. And that Melissandre was what we always thought she was. A liar.”

Gendry stares at him and notices that he was in some way disappointed.

“I would say that,” he makes a pause, “tough Melissandre almost kill me,” and *fucked me in the process*, “Kinvara seems more terrible.”

“Melissandre knew everything that was going to happen,” Davos argues, shaking his head in denial. “She knew about Bran’s plan.”

Gendry trembles at the mention of the murderer of Arya, her brother.

“And the Night King,” he changes the subject, “Do we know what that guy wanted?”

Davos tilts his head, thoughtfully. “She said that the answer does not belong to us.”

Gendry finds himself baffled. He was not interested in delving into the magic of this world, but it seemed that it was always linked to their only chance of getting out of that mess: Daenerys and Jon.

“And Jon? Why he was relived?”

“The shield that guards the realm of men,” Davos pronounces solemnly as if he was Kinvara herself, “The son of ice and fire,” he sighs. “I have no fucking idea what she’s talking about.”

Gendry remembers images of the ceremony of R’hollor followers in Daenerys’ name. Some stormalanders also belonged to the cult thanks to his uncle Stannis and Melissandre’s labour.

“She calls Daenerys warrior of fire,” or that’s what his little valyrian lets him understand.

“Something tells me that she knows much more than we believe but won’t tell us,” Davos guesses, correctly.

Gendry nods but is already thinking about something else. “Do you think there’s any chance of a way out?”

Davos makes a balance the current situation in his mind “If that way out depends on them finding common ground,” he swallows hard and after a beat, he says with plenty assurance, “only time will give us answer.”

V

Daenerys

Lys

His guards only nodded when she passes through the great archway, after landing on the palace balconies. It had been more than a year since they became intimate, and her presence was regular and normal for them.

Daenerys finds Gerael sitting amongst his tools and toys, absorbed with his work and barely
paying attention to her apparition.

“How was the meeting?” he asks, a true concern in his voice. He had also offered his potions to end her enemies’ lives. “Are they still alive?”

“I’ve got something for you,” she says without answering. “Tyrion Lannister gave me this,” she shows the rings and puts them in front of him. “I cannot recognize its smell.”

Gerael pulls away from what he’s doing and watches with curiosity the objects she is handling him.

“What?” she cannot understand him.

He takes the rings to his nostrils and opens up the containers to sense the smell of Varys’ poison. “Potions of tansy and pennyroyal,” he responds shortly after, without any doubt. “I could recognize it instantaneously. It’s the first thing I knew in the brothels.”

“Do you know what it is?”

Daenerys asks again, confused.

“Don’t you know what moon tea is?” he sees her astonished.

She denies with a head movement. “A man put that poison in me, long ago,” she states. “Two days before I burnt King’s Landing.”

Gerael stares at the rings again. “Moon tea is what women drink to prevent unwanted children,” he extends the rings to her. “Tansy mixed only with pennyroyal ends them.”

Daenerys feels her world crumbling again.

Varys knew it. He had his little birds everywhere and found out.

“You told me you can’t have children,” he says putting the rings aside when she doesn’t grab them. It was one of their first conversations after they started sharing a bed.

Daenerys swallows hard eyeing at the rings. She had hope that Varys was who induced her to madness. How naïve.

It would have been stupid from Varys to try to kill her. He wanted her gone and Jon on the Iron Throne, but for that, they still needed her to overthrow Cersei.

Just like her, Varys knew that Jon would force himself to marry her if he had known about her babe.

Gerael connected the dots himself. “It was from the White Wolf.”

Everyone in Essos knew about the song.

“It does not matter, anymore,” she mutters, bitterness boiling inside her.

He decides to not insist, and she contemplates how he’s arming a small dagger with a thin blade and a gold handle.
“What is that?” she questions, finding the object particular.

“I’m still working on it,” he answers touching the knife with his fine hands, “a silencer.”

“A silencer?”

“Look,” he indicates, pointing at the blade, “is hollow, for poison.”

Daenerys watches while a tiny drop of strangler pours out.

**Dragon pits, The Great Keep. - Realm of Valyria.**

After knowing that Jon did not kill her daughter, at least not completely, she started to feel a different type of rage towards him.

*I told him that people would have tried to put us against each other if the truth was revealed,* she screams in her mind. *I told him that Sansa would spread his identity and my life would be in danger. His stupidity cost me my daughter’s life.*

The worst part was remembering his disapproval when she ended Varys’ life.

Having kill the spider was her consolation in all that misery. Still, Daenerys would have wanted to make Varys suffer more, to have made Drogon feast with him.

How could she have recognized that potion? She has never tried to avoid pregnancy. Even now, if she could get a baby from Gerael, she would have it.

She let out another sigh.

*“Barristal!”* she scolds the red dragon again when he dangerously stares at the blacksmith that was taking its measures. *“Friend, not food!”* she indicates him, in High Valyrian. *“Not fire!”*

Drogon snarls at him in a warning.

Jorion, Daarion, and Barristal had reached a larger size than Drogon when he let her mount him the first time. In the last couple of months, she has been trying to prepare them for battle.

Prince Yronwood’s tomes of the Dance of the Dragons and the studies of the citadel of the Targaryen’s dragons were a fundamental aid she had wished to have in her previous life. Daenerys had just learned that a Dragon would share his game with the human they want as their mount. She recalled when Drogon took her to his nest in the Dothraki Sea and shared a scorched stallion with her.

Daario laughs by her side, again turned in her shadow after the incident with Jon. “Not even Drogon has been this vicious,” he reckons, sparing a glance at his favourite dragon, “How your best one behaves?”

Daenerys rolls her eyes, “He will carbonize you if you dare to approach him.” Though at his young age, the brown dragon let Daario pet him, now as an adult that action could erase his existence. “But only Barristal would make you suffer first to later kill you.”

She had noticed how untamed the red dragon was. On certain occasions, she had let them feast with prisoners that showed no remorse over their crimes, as children's rapists. While the other hatchlings went directly to torch them down, Barristal took his time to play with his poor victims and only
when he was satisfied, devoured them. It was fucking disconcerting.

Missanderys and Greywing were the tamest ones, and still too small to stand in the battlefield. If it was for her, she only wished to use Drogon.

“Perhaps, I will bringing Lord Velaryon one of these days,” she voices.

“Good guy,” Daario replies, and after a pause, “I’m gonna miss him,” he laments.

“He has Valyrian blood!”

“Daenerys,” he starts to argue again, “half of the population of Lys has some Valyrian blood.”

That’s why the dragons had let Gerael being close to them sometimes.

“I need another rider,” and Gerael is not a fighter, she wants to add. “The Night King killed Viserion because I was distracted! Euron massacred Rhaegal because of the same reason!”

“No, you don’t,” Daario pushes himself forwards, forearms above his knees. “You had handled well your first three in the past, and with these five you have problems only with one. They don’t follow you for your valyrian blood; they follow you because you are a fucking goddess of fire.”

“Goddess of fire?” she mocks, “Did you just came up with that?”

“Isn’t how the crazy red witch calls you?” he references Kinvara.

“Warrior of Fire,” she corrects him, remembering the priestess words.

“How many people can walk fire, being resurrected and set fire with their own hands? They certainly only follow you.”

“Jon Snow is also special if that’s the case.”

Daario’s face deforms. “Do not mention him, please,” he clenches his fist in and out. “At least, let me kill the imp. I’ve been gilded since you love me.”

Daenerys laughs hard at that last comment.

It was true that she loves him and had told him so several times after he returned in one piece from Westeros. She wished to have said those words more often to Jorah, Missandei, even Torgo Nudho.

“They all are already dead,” she opines. "Let time put things in its place."

“Your Grace!” Jornik calls from the entrance of the pits. “We need you inside.”

**Healer’s Chamber, The Great Keep.**

“They all came with the same symptoms,” the Maester explains her, while a moribund Mossoro is shaking on the table inside the healer’s room. “I’m afraid that nothing can be done.”

Kinvara stares at her with knowing eyes.

“Leave us,” she indicates to everyone in the hall, entering the room alongside the red priestess. She walks towards Mossoro, her eyes suddenly overgrowing in tears. Daenerys can see how much pain he is suffering.
“Blood magic,” Kinvara says caressing his bald head.

He is looking at her, his lips moving to say something neither of them can distinguish. Daenerys holds his hand while promises him to stay by his side until the very end.

“sss-sohorioz,” Mossoro stutter as his skin turns paler, “fff-ind ss-sohorioz,” he repeats.

“What?” she whispers but he’s already gone.

The Warlocks had defeated the army of freedmen. When they had hurried her up to use the dragons and take Qarth she refused for the sake of a pacific surrender.

And they had mocked of her, again.

*Mercy,* she thinks while crossing the halls to the War Room, *mercy has cost me the life of a friend.*

Kinvara is following her, close behind. When they reach the War Room, Daario, Jornik and the rest of her War council are there.

“I have six dragons and the biggest army of the Known World,” she states with harshness. “I’ll take Qarth now.”

They look at her with concern but no one dares to contradict her. Most of them had been insisting on taking the city before, but after seeing the condition in which the former slaves had arrived, sure they weren’t that exciting anymore.

“May I tell you something, Daenerys,” Kinvara voices, still honouring her request of not being called a queen. “You’ll be fighting a pointless war if they already resort to the use of blood magic.”

Daenerys stares at her, leery. “So what do I do? I let them get away and take over the cities I freed?”

Kinvara keeps an indifferent countenance. “They are using the powers of the Undying,” she approaches, “You need to rip them all out, *root and steam.*”

“Fine,” she agrees, “I’ll reduce the House of the Undying to ashes.”

"If it were that simple," Kinvara questions surrounding her and placing herself at the point of the painted table where the Qarth map is carved. "I would have advised you so, a long time ago."

“What do you mean?” Daario asks.

“Eastern blood is susceptible to blood magic,” she caresses the ridges, south of the Bone Mountains. Kinvara stares at Daenerys with serious eyes. "You'll need the blood of the West."

Daenerys catches what she is saying and close her eyes, regretfully.

VI

Jon

West Village – Jorah’s Port

‘...Although Queen Daenerys tried to establish peace in Meereen by marrying the noble Hizdahr zo Loraq, the Sons of the Harpy did not give in their fury for overthrowing her and on that day of
the intended reopening of the fighting pits, they tried to end the life of the Queen of Meereen, once and for all.

No one expected the black beast to land from heaven and come to rescue his mother. It was the first time in hundreds of years that the world had a dragon rider.’

A ray of light coming from the window makes him realise of the sun is already out. He had spent the entire night reading Samwell’s book. He had spent the entire night realising how stupid he has been.

“I have been sold like a broodmare,” she told him the first time they met. “I’ve been chained and betrayed, raped and defiled. Do you know what kept me standing through all those years in exile? Faith. Not in any gods, not in myths and legends, in myself. In Daenerys Targaryen.”

She walked the Red Waste after she gave birth to a dead child. She was betrayed in Qarth and their children stole from her, her first Khalasar dead. She walked through Slaver’s Bay liberating slaves and watching how the Meereenese noblemen crucified one hundred sixty-three children in retaliation. She was willing to marry an Essosi man to bring peace to her city. She was the first dragon rider in centuries.

And then she went to Westeros. She did pretty much what any conqueror has done before her, with the exception of helping the North that brought nothing but loss for her.

And then Jon killed her when she was the most vulnerable.

Jon closes the book and scratches his brow.

“Everywhere she goes, evil men die and we cheered her for it.”

Evil men. She killed, still kills, evil men. How is that she could erase the existence of thousands of innocents in a matter of minutes and then be determined to go on. He tried to believed it rage and grief, a person overwhelmed by the situation with a weapon of mass murder in hands, but as Tyrion pointed out, she was willing to go further. She still is not showing any remorse.

The heavy gate of the inn opens up loudly and he sees Sansa entering accelerated. “Jon,” she calls him with her eyes swollen and her voice broken. “He has taken Winterfell.”

VII

Arianne

“Let me help you with that,” she offers to a little kid, a girl of blonde hair and blue eyes that it’s taking wood from the ground. They are from the North too, and according to Monterys, early risers.

Arianne is surprised to see a small child doing this type of work.

The girl accepts and they walk towards the recently awake community of the West Village.

“Why is your skin of that colour?” the child asks, innocently.

Arianne lifts an eyebrow. “People have different colours.”

“I’ve never seen someone like you.”
She smiles. “It’s a pleasure to be the first one, my Lady.”

“I’m not a southron lady,” the girl corrects her. “I’m from the free folk.”

“Oh,” that explains a lot, she thinks. “Have you come with your family?”

They were approaching to their inn, where she saw the particular red-haired wildling that seems to be the leader.

“My mama got sick and died with my brother in her belly,” she confesses, and Arianne feels her pain. “My papa is there,” she points to a man that was that was cleaning the mess they made in the bonfire last night. “Are you a queen?”

The question takes her off guard. “I am a princess in a land far, far away from here,” she responds. “Here, I am a servant.”

“A servant? What is that?”

Arianne wants to give her a proper answer but the girl must have been too little to understand. “I help people.”

“We help people, too. Are we servants?”

She was about to respond when a man approaches both girls, taking the wood from the girl's arms.

“Lanka, do not go that away from the camp.”

Lanka. She totally forgot to ask for her name.

The man had gray eyes and brown hair, the harshness of the northern climate carved in his face. He stands and looks Arianne with wide-opened eyes. Might he never saw someone with my colour, either, she thinks. She doesn’t know why she does not say a thing for a moment and lets an eerie silence fall upon them.

“She is a princess,” Lanka informs, staring at both. “And he is, Dewyn.”

She expects a bow as the majority of the people used to do when they learn she is a princess. Instead, the man just nods at her and gives her a smile, approaching carefully to also grab the woods in her arms.

Lanka and Dewyn part from her presence and Arianne are left with a strange feeling.

She pulls away from the peculiar meeting and goes to stand beside Monterys, who was coming from the vigilance tower. Both were in charge of monitoring everything those days.

“Daenerys sent a message,” he announces, having spent too much time together to practice the royal treatment. “She is coming to help with the west tower building.”

Arianne rapidly understands. “I’ll warn the Westerosis.”

“A raven arrived last night with news from the North,” he adds; a cup of tea in his hand. She is surprised how calm he seems all the time. “The Queen in the North lost her queendom.”

VIII

Daenerys
In Meereen, she hadn’t needed to warn the citizen of her arrivals; they never were too scared of the dragons. But after Gendry and his people, plus people from other places, came to inhabit Jorah’s Port, she had to make a previous announcement every time she will visit the city with Drogon or the hatchlings.

Though this was a long-planned visit, she spent the entire journey from the Great Keep thinking about how to treat the matter with the Northerners. Obviously, she was standing in the upmost higher ground. Still, everything was messed up and too complicated in her opinion.

When she lands, the guards Daario prepared are already there waiting to escort her. She doesn’t need them, but it makes sense to portray the Queen in front of these people, especially since Jon dared to approach her and she did nothing in return.

This time, she brought Greywing and Missanderys with her. They fly not too away from the ground and land near the unfinished West Tower. The builders, knowing they should wait for her commands, stay behind at a safe distance.

Daenerys stands there, watching the West Village down the hill. Monterys and Arianne are already climbing the steps towards her.

She breathes and touches her stomach, feeling the same sickness she felt when she was in front of Jon just some weeks ago.

When Arianne and Monterys come to her, Greywing and Missanderys are already obeying her orders and helping the workers to bring the heavy charges of rocks to the cliff.

“My queen,” Monterys greets.

“Lord Velaryon,” she assents, returning a soft smile. “Have you good news?”

They look at each other.

“That depends on you,” Arianne answers, “The North is already taken,” she feels a sting of annoyance in her voice.

Daenerys turns from seeing the hatchlings with wide-opened eyes. “Victarion?”

Lord Velaryon extends the scroll to her. “An uprising against the Starks. His name is Robett Glover.”

Daenerys takes the parchment and reads it. It was stupidly convenient.

“He was Sansa Stark’s regent,” Arianne adds, rolling her eyes. “Another smart decision from our visitor.”

She would have laughed at Sansa’s negligence but Daenerys has taken bad decisions as a queen, as well. Arianne would commit those same mistakes someday if her father’s plan works.

Daenerys sighs remembering Prince Yronwood plan. They hadn’t thought about this eventuality. When she goes down the hill, with the guards surrounding her, Daenerys perceives the wary stares of the people on her. She wasn’t informed which is Jon, Sansa or Tyrion’s inn, and she is grateful for it. She laments that the town hall is beyond passing all the inns.

In the way, she is thinking about what could be her next move. She needs the blood of the
Northerner to infiltrate Qarth without the Warlocks to notice them. But the northerners are not in debt with her, quite the opposite; they fulfilled their duty when King’s Landing was taken. If she exposes how fundamental is her need of them, Sansa will use it to force her return to save her kingdom.

_I could play them_, she thinks. _I could pretend to help them, go there and set that malicious place to ashes. But if I dare to do that, he will kill me again. He would find the way._

Daenerys was certain she can’t stand Sansa Stark. Tyrion has no influence on the Northern army and the only person she knows that has it, well, she wasn’t necessarily looking after a new meeting with him.

The current panorama was damaging Prince Anders’ desires. Sansa and Jon's survival was going against his meticulous plan.

She catches Tormund in her way and stops, making the entire caravan that was following to stop too.

“Dragon queen!” he salutes, ignoring the worried face of her.

“Tormund Giantsbane,” she replies with a mild smile. “May have a word with you?”

“May yes,” he responds, but keeps in his place instead of joining her. Daenerys dismisses the guards, who leave with leery faces. “Your dragons are also builders, now?” he asks, sitting in the edge of the inn’s porch and subtly inviting her to sit by his side.

“Some of them are,” Daenerys answers, watching the hatchling still helping the workers. Greywing and Missanderys were not troubled ones; they barely had enjoyed human flesh or disobeying her. “Are you happy with the facilities?”

“We have lived on Castle Black the latest years, but this is awesome too. How did you make the water go through that little thing?”

“These lands have water tubes buried.”

“It’s amazing,” he repeats. “What are you doing here? Will you finally cook little crow’s pecker?”

She looks at him confused but instantly remembers that “little crow” was his dub for Jon.

“Did he really wait for me to hunt him in the forest for two years?”

“Aye,” he assures, and she can sense a sad smile beneath all that reddish beard. “The poor guy was destroyed, you know?”

_Well, I was rotting inside a cave_, she wanted to answer but that would lead to anywhere so she just swallows and restrains herself of responding.

“Will you come back to the lands beyond the wall?”

Tormund lifts an eyebrow. “Will you not help us?”

“Perhaps _I cannot_ help you.”

“Well, there’s nothing there for us,” he explains, watching over some of his people that start gathering around. “Nature is dead as hell, and Jon’s sister's people do not really want us so, I guess we have to start the new valyrian free folk,” he wrinkles his nose, “Though I’ll miss the cold.”
Valyria weather was not as warm as the rest of Essos’ mainland but neither was close the cold it was the North.

“There is a place north from here, called Ibben. It’s cold and there’s snow like in the North,” Daenerys tells him. “A long trip but I can make sure you make it through.”

Tormund smiles, “I would love to know that place,” but suddenly his grin disappears. “But Jon hasn’t come here for that.”

Daenerys frowns, “Jon shouldn’t have come here, at all.”

“And other people? The southerns? I don’t like them, either, but it seems like they pretty much want you to be their queen,” he insists. “Look, when my people choose a King Beyond the Wall, is because we need to unite to face a common enemy.”

“A common enemy,” she whispers, repeating his words. “I did that once, and I ended up being the common enemy.”

Tormund’s face constricts. “I was his enemy once too,” his saddened face seems to recall some bad memories. “I did things that I would never do again.”

Daenerys catches his suggestion.

She turns her face to watch the hatchlings again and sighs.

“Thank you, Tormund,” she says; standing and preparing to depart towards the town hall.

Out of sudden, she notices her coming from the same direction. She remembers her from that dream that was not a dream at all. Long, blonde hair and a porcelain face, too unscathed to be a wildling girl. More like a wildling princess or a queen.

Both recognize the other and stand still in their places with shocked faces. She’s holding a child in her arms and Daenerys supposed what seems obvious. That’s must be Jon’s child. A Targaryen child, the one he did not spurn, and another claimant.

Daenerys swallows the lump in her throat and walks away.

IX

Tyrion

He felt like an infant being punished. Five soldiers surround the inn, while the other three northern men plus Ser Brienne, are guarding Sansa.

Tyrion senses Jon’s stare from the other side of the room, where he stands watching his aunt and her dragons. He doesn’t understand why he’s looking at him with that anger in his face, when the situation in clearly in this state because of his stupidity.

“Uncle Tyrion,” calls little Jamie from his side, “look! Here is Casterly Rock!” he points out on the map that Sansa and Jon were using to organize the return to the Northern Kingdom.

Tyrion smiles at his nephew, seeing Jamie in those green eyes of his. Since Lord Westerling and his cousin had taken Casterly for themselves, it would be difficult to see little Jamie sitting there someday.
Sansa and his council are still discussing the dire situation in which her kingdom is. He had no heard many of this conversation, distracted with little Jamie’s harangue. When a lieutenant of Daario Naharis appears from the entrance, announcing the queen and her dragons are gone, they are finally released from their confinement.

“This is ridiculous,” Sansa complains, dismissing her council. “We can’t possibly hurt her.”

“Might she does not want to see us,” Jon argues, still watching outside. Tyrion is surprised how openly he does that when his companion is wandering out there. “We need to finish this affair once and for all and return to Westeros.”

“We finally agree on something,” Sansa says, sitting defeated. “Nonetheless, as much as I want to return and hang Lord Glover, we can’t return with our hands empty.”

Jon stares at his sister with notorious annoyance. “What else can we do? We have nothing to offer her.”

Sansa sighs and gazes at both men. “I’m going to speak with Princess Arianne, might she can help us to reach an agreement with Daenerys. A trade agreement, at least.”

Tyrion repressed the need to laugh. Sansa has been trying to find common ground with the dornish princess without any real progress.

The truth is that he has been rounding several options to solve that big problem in which they were submerged, but nothing seemed to be enough. Daenerys promised that the Common Council would re-trade with the ports of Westeros, but it would be a futile effort with the damned Victarion Pyke spreading across the continent.

Not to mention that Bran was still wandering the crownlands.

He was moving to the entrance alongside Sansa, Brienne, and little Jamie when Jon stops him. “We will talk,” he says like an order and the women just nod and part away.

Jon waits for them to go and then close the inn’s gate, the silence falling upon them.

Tyrion is not prepared when he turns around and sees Jon fist coming to his face. The pain remembers him to the punch Bronn gave him long ago, in Winterfell. He’s sure his nose has been broken again.

“What in hells are you doing?” Tyrion yells, trying to put his nose in its place.

“I should have killed you,” Jon growls, “the moment you suggested it, I should have killed you!”

Tyrion didn't understand anything that was happening. Both had reached a silent agreement that it was their fault. Why suddenly blame only him?

He can’t ask for an explanation when Jon throws a heavy book above the table, with the inscription of “The Conquest of Slaver’s Bay” in golden capital letters.

“What?” Tyrion asks, confused. “You just reed a history book and had an epiphany?”

“You lied to me!”

“I did not,” he complains but stops when he sees Jon preparing his fist again. “What did you think that was going to happen? She killed thousands! She was going to kill you and then your sister!”
“She was in love with me! She offered me to rule by her side! She was in pain because we make her lose everything. You freed your brother to save Cersei! You deserved to die as I did. I, myself, have kill people for less.”

Tyrion shakes his head. “Ten years and you just realised that? You really remember me to my brother.”

Jon hits his face again.

X

Jon

He leaves the inn with the guards still following him. No one of them cares if he hurts or kills Tyrion. He was sure they don't care if they all die at that right moment.

"Jon Snow," he hears a soft voice calling from behind. He turns around and sees the Princess of Dorne approaching him with a serious expression. "This is for you," she says, extending a small coin to him.

"What is this?" he questions, forgetting the formal treatment.

"Your passage to Eastgates," she replies, intertwining her hands in front of her. "The eastern island."

"Why do I need this?"

He could swear that she rolls her eyes. "Go there, you have nothing to lose."

Jon wanted to keep asking her about the coin but she is already walking away, his guards following her. Just like that he loses the vigilance upon him.

He prepares a satchel that night, while Val is observing him in silence while, sitting in an opposite bed. He finds himself constricted, incapable to bring reason to the situation in which they were, but he sensed her condemning stare on him.

“I have to find a solution,” he says after a long beat, “We’ll return, I promise you. But I have to find a solution, first.”

Val does not reply. Instead, she moves to the door and closes it. Jon watches as she walks towards him and starts to undress.

“Do not,” he halts her, keeping her away from him. “Not here,” he justifies, knowing that deep down he just can’t bear the thought of doing that in the same place where Daenerys has spent the last couple of years.

Val nods but in her face, there’s dissatisfaction and contempt. Is the only emotion he has given to all the women in his life.

He makes the same route as the last time but accompanied by the soldiers that were controlling at him the last couple of weeks. This time he has not to make stops to provide from nature, since his
companions have everything covered. When they cross the river towards the capital, someone informed him that they will be staying in the Great Keep for the night. Eastgate was five days from there.

Jon did not want to rest; he wanted to know what was awaiting him on the eastern island. Perhaps she finally had decided to end his life, or maybe she would give them a chance. If she was about to marry with her king, they would need more land to cement their empire. He knows that Sansa will not disagree with her terms, but she doesn’t get to choose. No one of them but Daenerys gets to choose.

When he is again in the Great Keep, he does not meet with Daario Naharis or any other known face. In fact, those days he does not speak with anyone but the soldiers when they inform him about the schedule.

He is granted with a room in one of the towers, with a common balcony where the view is even better and more amazing than the one he captured in the ramparts.

The time of solitude gives too much space to thoughts he does not desire to dive in.

“Do not be afraid of your deepest thoughts, Jon Snow,” he hears a voice telling him, and suddenly a woman dressed in red is there, standing feet away from him. “Sometimes they just want to tell us something.”

The red woman, he concludes.

“Are you the one that brought her back?”

She doesn’t turn to see him, but he sees her smiling. “I just said the words.”

“Where did you find her? Where Drogon took her?”


Jon wants to curse her, but her words hit that spot inside him, again.

“There’s a reason why you brought her back?”

“Oh, yes,” she assures, her tone going grave. “She is the one that was promised.”

He recalls Melissandre speaking about those damned prophecies.

“And me?”

“And you?”

“What about me?” he almost demands. “Why R’hollor brought me back?”

The red woman tilts her head and watches him curiously. After a long pause, she just says, “I don’t like your kind. So unpredictable.”

“My kind?”

“Magic of the mind,” she chants, slowly walking away. “Bodies that could die hundreds of deaths but minds that would never perish.”

He runs to catch her and keep his interrogation but she disappears in the dark.
The days pass and they reach the eastern island, which it’s less restored than Jorah’s Port and the capital. When they disembark, he is shocked at the view of various Stone Men working at the precarious port.

They just growl at him, indicating the way he must follow.

It seems hours but they finally arrive at a giant field of trees, where a large red gate stands. When he is crossing them, Drogon and the other dragons announced their presence by setting their shadows upon them. Jon sighs with concern at the view.

The stone men grumble at him, and he rushes to follow his lead. They cross the field and he distracts himself counting the infinite lines of trees. Lemon trees. There were hundreds, maybe thousands.

The end of the journey comes in the form of a vigilance tower with just Drogon resting at the end of the stairs that lead to the top.

This is the first time they meet face to face after what had happened. Surely, the dragon did not expect to see him again, either. He’s blocking the way to the stairs and Jon, for a moment, does not know what to do.

He inhales and exhales heavily, and advance.

Drogon stands and roared at him. Jon is paralyzed. Although the dragon can't pronounce a word, Jon understands the warning: there will be not a second a time.

Jon rounds him and climbs the steps, approaching two soldiers in the entrance of the gazebo. Inside the structure, there are various lemon trees in a small size, fourteen precisely. Daenerys is giving him the back, leaning on one of the columns of the monoptero and beholding her other dragons dancing in the sky.

He walks forward.

**XI**

**Daenerys**

**Garden of the Lemon Trees – Eastgates.**

Daenerys notices that her hand trembles and does not know if it is the blue sleep or the chills that run through her body every time Jon is behind her.

She doesn't need to turn around to know he's there, in the same way, she sensed him entering the throne room in the Red Keep, long ago. It has evolved into a survival instinct.

"Are they from Drogon?" he asks, without announcing his presence.

Daenerys leans on the column and replies, "From Rhaegal and Viserion."

"I didn't know they could be females," he adds.

She shakes her head just a little. "Dragons are what they need to be when times are hard."

"They are gorgeous," he observes, still reluctant as when they were on that cliff in Dragonstone, a lifetime ago.
"They are beasts," Daenerys opposes, finishing the matter.

A silence is installed between them that could make her more nervous if not for the calming effect of the blue sleep.

Finally, he is encouraged to break it.

"We're going to leave," he announces, "Winterfell was taken."

*It was taken from us, and we took it back*, had told her Sansa Stark in the past. Another story of a brother and sister in exile.

"I know," she answers, without much caring.

From her place, she can perceive he feels defeated, that he tries to find a bridge to consensus without success.

"I don't think I'm here for a farewell," his voice raspy. She feels his steps approaching. “But if that’s the case-”

"I'm going to take Qarth," she rushes to interrupt. He was doing it again. Trying to buy her with soft words and intimacy. "I need the northern men," she goes on to say.

"What?" He asks, taken aback.

She needs to hold on the rail to balance. The blue sleep was trying to kick her out again.

“One of my best commanders was killed for defending the lands of Lhazar,” she pauses to swallow the blood that tries to escape from her body again. Life always is draining off her body. "Warlocks are sorcerers who have tried to defeat me for years."

"Those of the House of the Undying?" He asks.

Daenerys startles, quickly leading her hand to her nostrils to hide the small trail of blood.

"How do you know that?" she questions, giving herself a second to turn and see him. He is still recovering from the fall and is wearing a thin linen tunic. All his hair caught in a knot.

She never told him about the Undying.


“Bay of Dragons," she corrects him, returning to see the horizon. "It's them, yes."

"Why our army?" He inquires with notorious confusion. “You have the largest army in the known world."

She sniffs, "I need the blood of the first men," she replies, languished. "I need men from the west to put an end to them."

"It's magic, right?"

Daenerys breathes heavily, nodding. She hears him walk a few steps, she doesn't know if backward or forwards but she instinctively places a hand on the handle of the sword.

"I told you I don't want to hurt you," he stops to defend himself. "I will not hurt you," repeats.
She would laugh if it wasn't because he already had killed her once. Feeling that the blood flow has begun to normalize, she turns to face him without separating from the rail.

"Tyrion deceived me," he confesses with a dismayed face. "He told me…"

“That I kill evil men wherever I go,” completes the idea for him.

Jon nods, swallowing hard and not questioning how she knows it. “He did not mention that one hundred and sixty-three children were crucified. Nor did he tell me about the Unsullied’s training nor about the slaves in Yunkai, nor about the sons of the harpy…”

“Why does it matter?” she asks, enraged. “Are you going to blame Tyrion for doing what you did?”

"I do not,” he growls. “I want to make you see how things seemed to me at that time.”

Daenerys gulps. "We are not here to find atonement."

"Then help me understand."

"Understand what?"

"Why you did that? Why did you attack innocent people?"

She wanted to laugh. "Because I could," she no longer wants to play the good queen for him, "and because I wanted to."

His face remains as emaciated and disturbed as if the years had not passed.

"But not here," he insists, walking on one side, near one of the lemon trees. "You planted trees here."

She let out an inaudible snort, still marvelled at such innocence. "The coin falls in the right place here, that's what you think."

He shook his head with annoyance. "People are not coins."

"People don't live to tell their death either," she rebuts. “I went to Westeros with a dream,” she began, sensing wrath boiling in her guts. “but with a general idea that I could fail and die trying to give my family’s name one last bit of glory. I hatched three dragons from stone, and in my mind that meant something. I was never afraid to die,” and it was true, from the moment she married Khal Drogo. “I never thought that my life was meant just to serve yours.”

"Destiny is what we want it to be, not something engraved in the stone."

“Fire and blood. In me, they are engraved.”

"Having known half of the things I now know now—"

"It would have not changed a thing. It was meant to happen."

"It would,”

How stupid you are, she wanted to shout at him. You still would have chosen your treacherous siblings, your beloved Starks. My daughter would have still been dead.
After a time of contemplating at him with slight, he pulls his stare away.

“Why am I here?” he asks, nervously.

“You are the commander of the Northern forces,” she states turning to behold the Smoking Sea.

“We go and take that city for you. And then what? Will you return?”

“I’ll give you the men you need to take back Winterfell.”

“And the rest of Westeros?” he dissent, "And the Three-Eyed Raven?"

“I don’t know what he wants,” she confesses.

“But you can face him, make him stop-,”

“He has already defeated me,” Daenerys has been giving that same excuse to Kinvara, only to receive a knowing smile from the red woman.

“What did you saw? After it happens, what did you saw?”

The total change of the subject makes her frown.

“Light,” she lies.

“Light?”

“I can do nothing for Westeros,” Daenerys cuts him off. "I already cause too much pain there."

“You can still do something. There are millions of people suffering.”

She recalls Gendry's words in his speech; trying to plea to the good queen.

"Why do you keep doing that?" she turns her face to ask him, "Do not appeal to the person you want me to be."

That had created an enormous misunderstanding between them in the past. Jon settles between two of the lemon trees, holding the handrail too.

"I have seen a dragon burn down a city to the ground," he starts to explain, "And now I saw two helping in building one."

"So is that? Do you think that I have changed? They said every time a Targaryen is born-"

“...the gods toss a coin and the world holds its breath," he completes the riddle, "I will never understand why you did what you did. But what you are doing here is better than what we have."

“And what if the coin flips again," she looks directly at his eyes, losing all fear. "Will you put me to sleep like a rabid dog again?"

Jon closes his eyes. She had hurt him with her words.

“I don’t know how else to tell you, it was a mistake.”

She cannot deny the remorse in his tone. Still, the idea just makes her sick.

“A mistake?” she repeats, shaking her head with disbelief. "A mistake that isn't supposed to be
rectified.”

He opens his eyes again, lifting his eyebrows.

“But it did.”

She swallows the stream of blood, tilting her head.

“That’s what you did with Allister Thorne?” she smiles in a malicious way. "What did you do with little Olly, Jon?" he escapes her stare and looks to the sky where the hatchlings are flying. "and the man who was pleading for his mother, did you send your condolences?”

After the conversation with Tormund, she understood that she needed to look in his past for information.

Jon nods, defeated. However, he raises his head and looks at her, defiant.

“So hang me. Hang Tyrion. End this sheer nonsense.”

Daenerys lifts one eyebrow with arrogance, “Shall I hang Sansa too? Because it is the three of you or no one.”

This time Jon is angered.

“Have you a sting of remorse? Do I fell for the ghost of the woman I believed you were?”

Do I fell? she repeats in her mind. Daenerys would have laughed. How dimwit do you believe I am, Jon Snow?

When she does not reply, he continues. “I just want to know where that person is now.”

“Dead.”

Jon beholds her through and through. “And who are you?”

“Not your saviour.”

He denies it with his head. “Stop pretending you can't do it. At least admit you simply don't want to do it.”

“Is that so wrong after everything I already did?”

“You can't change the past but you can save the future.”

“To build a new world?” she inquired ironically.

“A better, new world,” he replies, full of hope.

Daenerys grabs a branch of the lemon tree by her side. “Westeros had a debt with Essos,” she tightens her grip. She did not need the other soldiers from Westeros but he has enraged her. “The lives of my Unsullied and Dothraki saved your lands. Pay your debt and I'll give Westeros the last opportunity. All the commanders meet me in the Great Keep in one week.”

He walks backward, sighing. She has softened the charge in his shoulders again.

“Thank you, Dan-Daenerys.”
Before he could make his way out, she stops him.

“Jon,” she calls and he turns around, unprepared for the row of fire that burns every lemon tree, making him fall on his back. He lifts a little to watch her walk towards the entrance.

She looks down at him with disdain, “Do never underestimate me again.”

Chapter End Notes

Sometimes I'll use anachronic terms like "town hall" because I don't know about medieval institutions and I'm too busy with college homework to make a proper investigation.

Next Chapter: The Painted Table.
Chapter Summary

The world did not stop and waited for them.

Chapter Notes

I wrote Dany and Jon scenes listening Cinnamon Girl by Lana del Rey, if you wish to read them doing the same.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 6: The Painted Table

I

Somewhere in the Narrow Sea towards White Harbor – 305 A.C

A sudden breeze of fresh air crossed the corridor that led to the ship's dining room. Missandei who followed her commented that the cold, increasingly noticeable in the environment, would soon force them to change clothes for thicker furs. Both women agreed that they were not made for this climate.

When she makes her appearance, everyone is already there breaking fast. She has assured them that there was no need to wait for her; Daenerys had become accustomed to the familiarity of the small group of people who surrendered her.

Too familiar, indeed.

She had never felt more alive in her life.

She sat next to Jorah, who receives her with a broad smile and continues to update her on the Northern kingdom. She wanted to know everything about it, feeling that soon those people would also be her people. The years of continuous war had devastated its population, and what Daenerys most desired was to bring them hope.

"Don't get too excited, Khaleesi," he said with a soft laugh at her innocent illusion. "The northerners are distrustful." But he could not end his warning as Jon enters the room and Daenerys gets distracted. Jorah and everyone at that moment watched with curiosity the long and uncomfortable look between them. "Not all hearts melt so easy," he said but Daenerys never heard him.

Both were pretending formality and indifference, although it was a futile attempt of discretion since their traveling companions were aware of the nightly escapes of the recently named Warden of the North to the cabin of the future Queen of Westeros.
Despite the arduous masquerade, there were times when small details gave them away, such as Daenerys' continuing fatigue.

"Are you sleeping well, Khaleesi?" Jorah asked, discreet but aware of his intrusion.

“It's just the wobbling. It lulls me,” she excused, scratching her nose gently with the backs of her fingers while a wide smile seemed about to escape from her face. Another gesture that was evidencing her unveils.

Jorah, who had shared a boat journey with her in the past, detected the naive lie of his queen.

"Did you know that your touch your nose every time you lie?” He asked, amused.

"Jorah,” she warned him with her queenly tone.

"My heart only wishes you to be happy," her friend confessed with certainty, "wherever yours finds that happiness."

Daenerys took his hand and squeezed it, looking at him with watery eyes and thanking him silently for his loyal company. She knew that Jorah would always be the one who would love her as no one had.

Back between the gloom of the night and the gentle rocking of the waves, Daenerys was wrapped in his arms, allowing herself to fall victim to the charming of that feeling.

Daenerys used to be jealous of her feelings, but in those days she did not know herself at all.

Jon Snow had to be a very dumb guy to not realize that he had her eating from the palm of his hand. She wasn't sure if he felt the same; He was a man of few words, and she would have to spend more time with him to get to understand him without words in between.

The rational part of her was telling her to be more cautious, but she would just ignore her the moment he knocked on her door every night.

"Jorah Mormont realised," Jon pointed out, his fingers still dancing in the corner of her bare hip. "Is he upset?"

Daenerys smiles. "No," she replied, remembering their conversation that morning. "He must know it since I agreed to come with you."

She recalled when Jon insisted that they should return to the North together. At that moment she sensed his suggestion in his request but she had feared it was only her imagination.

"I wasn't being very discreet, right?" he asks with a strong giggle, "If Theon Greyjoy were the same idiot I grew up with, he would have thrown a filthy comment as 'take her now on Painted Table'."

"And would you have done it?” she teased him.

"What?” he asked with simulated innocence.

"Taking me at the Painted Table."

"In front of all those people?"

"In more private circumstances," she clarified, rolling her eyes.
He caresses her temple. “We’ll have to go back to Dragonstone for that.”

And we do not know if we are going to make it, she knew that he wanted to add. The war against the Night King and his army of the dead also terrified her. He was threatening to destroy any possibility of a future for her.

“So promise it,” she rapidly required, turning around to face him. Her hands in his chest. “Promise me.”

“What thing?”

“That we will return to Dragonstone.”

Jon sighed with great lament, ”I can't promise you that,” he muttered, “I can't even promise you to make it farther from Winterfell if we fall there.”

Daenerys accepted his response. At least he was being honest with her.

After a long moment of silence in which they kept staring at each other, his eyes enlighten. “You don't have a table here, right?”

She repressed a cackle and pretended to look around the room.

“Seven hells,” she cursed.

“And that insult?”

“I'd heard Ser Davos saying it a lot,” she explains, passing a leg across his, tentatively waking his arousal again. “And Tyrion, a couple of times. I want to get used to the Westerosi customs.”

Jon stared at her strangely, a question rising in his mind.

“Dany,” he murmured.

“Jon,” she loved calling him by his name.

“Why Westeros?”

She frowned, ”Because it's my home.”

“Weren't you happy in Essos?”

“I was for a time,” she responded, remembering the house with the red door in Braavos, when Viserys just would use his hands to caress her baby hair while telling her stories. “But it's not my home.”

“And if Red Keep doesn't make you happy either?” he kept questioning, upraising her own incertitude. Where else she could find it? What was he actually asking?

“Then I will have to settle with making my people happy.”

“Happiness,” he murmured the word, relishing it as if he hadn’t thought on that feeling for too long.

“I want to make my kingdom beautiful, to fill it with fat men and pretty maids and laughing children. I want my people to smile when they see me ride by, the way Viserys said they smiled for
my father,” she knew it was far from the truth, but who cares? It was her fantasy. A harmless fantasy.

In Jon’s expression she saw the doubt but it also there was something else, like hope. Or it was love? She couldn’t be certain.

He puts her back on her back, ready to take her again.

"You're going to be a great queen, Dany."

II

Jorah’s Port

Dewyn

Val keeps hard-hitting the ax on the logs even when they no longer needed wood for the day. The dampness making her golden hair stick to her forehead.

Dewyn was sure that if someone dares to interrupt her, the instrument would slip from her hands to end in the head of the unfortunate.

He also feels miserable in those days. Not only the feeling of newness began to disappear but he also started to feel more familiar with this place and that reminded him how far they were from the North. The true north.

“Is she mad?” asks Lanka, who those days would wake up earlier than any other child.

“I wouldn’t say that she’s mad,” Tormund explains, his left hand occupied with his horn of milk. He stops when Val hits again the ax so hard that she reduce the log to woodchips. “Well, mayhaps she is a little bit mad.”

The three were leaning against the railings of the porch, watching as the West Village woke up entirely. Out of the corner of his eye, he notices the presence of the other reason for his constant discomfort appearing along the same path she came by every day. Lanka slipped from his side and went to reach her, holding her hand until they were a few steps from the steps of the inn.

"Lord Giantsbane," she greets her soft, warm voice, ignoring that Val was only a few feet away from her in a dangerous mood. "Lord Dewyn," she nodded toward him, recognizing him after several days she has passed by there to join Lanka. “I am going to borrow Lady Lanka to help me with my day's agenda if you don’t mind.”

Tormund had explained that the Southron maintained an exorbitant amount of customs from which it was difficult to uproot them. Severely times they told her that they were not lords or ladies, but the kneeler princess kept calling them in that way.

"His papa is not going to get up until sunset," Tormund commented in a funny tone that the princess did not catch. "But yes, go, take her, be sure to bring her back in one piece."

"Of course," she said and giving the child a complicit smile. Dewyn could swear that the southern princess observed him one last time before ducking her head towards both of them and withdrawing.
"You can't steal a princess from the south," Tormund came forward to warn him. "We already have enough problems with a queen."

It is not the idea he had in mind, but he would make sure she wanted to be stolen before doing it one day. She had already stolen his heart since he saw her under the arch of the three dragons.

Of all the wonders he had observed until that day, nothing left him as impressed as Princess Arianne.

"She wants me," he said confidently. “She will be the one stealing me. I assure you."

Tormund put his free hand on his shoulder, squeezing it. “I also fell for a woman from the south once,” he began again with the story of the big woman. "But she preferred her southern man, so clean and with his angel face," he took a great sip of the liquid in the horn. "Even ours women prefer them," he added, pointing to Val that had finally put the ax aside, only to replace it with her knife which she began to sharpen with a stone.

Neither Tormund nor Dewyn understood very well how her relationship with Jon worked.

Since he was a small child, it seemed inevitable that they would end up together because until then he did not understand what had happened that made Jon being so discouraged and depressed.

Dewyn believed that Val was a woman as beautiful and strong as the dragon queen, who was not at all frightful as those from the south narrated.

"Do you think Jon is going to leave her for the dragon queen?" Asks Tormund, who wipes out the milk from his beard with his arm.

"Little Crow is a man of honour," says the red-haired man, looking at Val sadly. "But we don’t decide with whom we fell in love with, and she knew very well that his heart wasn't healed when they started fucking."

Dewyn is disgusted at the mental image but nods at Tormund's answer. Val and Jon never formed a family within the clan. If so, they would have had tons of children already.

"The real question would be," Tormund continues, drinking one last gulp, "Will Val leave Jon live when he returns to the dragon queen's arms?"

He looked back at Val who was now skinning the rabbits that were captured into the traps they left the night before.

III

Arianne

Arianne smiles at the view of Lanka imitating her handwriting while helping her transcribe some reports that were pending in that week. She still had to finish quantifying the reserves they were occupying since the Westerosi arrived, in addition to finishing responding to the missives they sent to Daenerys from the mainland and which the queen did not even bother to browse.

Daenerys's constant disregard for her Realm affairs put even more weight on her shoulders. But how could she complain? This would be the beginning of the rest of her life. When they return to Westeros, they would not be dealing with three small islands and its few inhabitants, but a whole continent.
The thought of Daenerys dealing with her realm by herself made her sad. Only Ornella, Daario and she had sighted her suffering firsthand on those long nights in which it seemed that the agony was going to finish her again.

A chill ran through her body when she remembered the scars that ran down her body and the deadliest one under her left breast.

Her father had sometimes told her that Daenerys would never be able to rule again in the conditions she was in. 'Her mind belonged to the land of the dead'. When they talked about the plan to retake Westeros and crown Gendry and her, she didn't even flinch to question it.

Arianne esteemed Daenerys as a friend, although the queen was distant most of the time. She wished more than ever to see the Starks disappear.

"What is a Magisto?" Lanka’s voice pulls her out of her thoughts.

"Magister," she corrects her, who was reading aloud as Arianne wrote. "It is who governs a city with another group of people."

"Governs?"

"Who rules," she explains, finishing writing about the requests that the Magisters of the Free Cities had requested for their stay in Valyria. "By the way, who is the ruler among the free folk?"

"My father says that Jon Snow is the king beyond the wall," she answers innocently, ignoring how her shoulders tense at the mention of that detestable man. "But we always do what Tormund tells us to do."

Arianne recalled the nice red-haired wildling.

"And which of the two do you like best?" she keeps inquiring.

"Jon is good, and he always helps us when the southerners want to mistreat us," Lanka takes some candy from the jar on her table and eats them, "Tormund is more fun."

Arianne drew an indulgent smile on her face.

"What is the common concil?"

"Common Council," she corrects her again, she was glad to know that wildling children could read. "They are friends of Queen Daenerys, who will come to visit her in a few days. Who taught you to read, Lanka?"

Arianne knew that the Masters hadn’t stepped on the North for years, much less to educate wildling children.

"Jon taught my papa and my mama when she was alive," she replied and Arianne regretted that they returned to the same topic although this time the comment aroused some curiosity in her. "His friend, Maester Tarly, taught me."

She remembered that Samwell Tarly had requested a space in the library to teach the children. She didn't think it would also include wildling children.

"I'm glad he did," and she meant it. Had she had a clearer idea of how long they would stay on the island, she would have invited them to join the daily study groups that Daenerys created in the
"Arianne," Lanka caught her attention. "Have you been stolen?"

"Excuse me?"

"If you have already been stolen," she repeats the strange question.

"Stolen from what?"

"You know when a man from another clan takes you as his wife."

Arianne was perplexed.

"Of course not," she replied harshly. Then she reassures her tone to continue, "It's not right to do that."

The girl shrugged. "My father stole my mother."

Arianne's chest shrunk. She had no idea how customs worked among the wildlings.

"Dewyn wants to steal you," she confessed with a smile too happy for what she was saying.

"That's not true," said Arianne, trying to calm down. "I mean, not Lanka, it is not right to steal people. We are not objects."

"So are you going to fight him?"

"Fight him?"

"When he steals you," she said as something obvious.

"Lanka, Lord Dewyn is not going to steal me," she insists. "And if he does, my soldiers will hurt him."

The smile disappeared from his childish face.

"You don't like Dewyn?"

Arianne blushes, asking herself where did she draw those conclusions?

"I don't know him," she argues instead of denying the accusation. "I am not a woman of the free folk, either."

"You're from another clan, aren't you? It's better that way."

Arianne was stunned. "I am not from another clan," she clarifies. "I am from another kingdom," that issue was getting out of hand, so she decided to give a more blunt response, "Lord Dewyn cannot steal me because I am a Princess and I have to take another monarch as a husband to help my people."

The illusion lighted in Lanka's eyes vanished. Arianne would have liked not to break the strange fantasy of the little girl but she had no choice.

Why did she think Lord Dewyn liked her? The man doesn't even speak to her. It was a question that would haunt her but she would be unable to answer without giving free rein to the imagination.
of Lanka. Besides that, it made no sense in any way, so why deepen the subject?

"Lanka," she began to say when an idea arose in her mind, "Have you ever been in a castle?"

"Aye, in Castle Black and also in the castle of the queen that is Jon's sister."

“But and a real castle? Like those of Master Tarly's stories?"

"My father says those in the south have castles but they put high walls so we don't get in."

Arianne lamented that she believed so.

“Would you like to know the Great Keep when I return to Valyria in a few days?” She offered, believing that she would understand more about her work as a monarch in that way. "You should ask your father, of course."

"Yes!" The girl proclaimed, excited.

Arianne smiled and pulled another piece of parchment from the desk drawer.

IV

Tyrion

For a couple of days, he depends on the healers to clean the wounds on his face. The Queen in the North divided her time between urgent meetings with her council and at the inn in a strange attempt to pertain with the wildlings. They were the ones who adapted best to Valyria environment.

“Be careful,” Sansa signalizes to the healer, with an opened book in her hands. “I can’t believe you kept provoking him.”

“I did not!” he complains, a wave of pain hit him again because of the sudden movement “This place must be waking the dragon in him, or might he’s going mad.”

Sansa withdraws her attention from the book, looking at him serious. “Jon is not like that,” she says on the defensive. “It was the pressure. We are all too stressed over this matter.”

“Do not be naïve, your grace,” he insists, “We both know what’s happening in his head.”

Tyrion has observed enough to reach a conclusion.

“If you mean that he still loves her, yes, I can see that,” Sansa responds with harshness.

“And she loves him too.”

“And what? He killed her and she’s his aunt. Unchangeable truths.”

“Death, treason, blood relation,” he recites, “None have ever stopped the Targaryens before.”

“Jon is a Stark,” she states firmly.

“He is a Targaryen, it doesn’t matter how much you want to refuse to accept that.”

Sansa sighs defeated, “I can understand how she feels,” she confesses, closing the book in her hands and pushing it away. “It is how I felt when Robb chose to leave me in King’s Landing to crown himself and marry a foreign woman.”
The healer that was also one of her handmaidens ends her work and bow herself out.

Tyrion grabs his goblet of wine. “You sound like Cersei, sometimes.”

“I know,” Sansa admits, her eyes focusing on the ground.

“So you must know what I’m talking about, do not fool yourself.”

“It can’t happen.”

“Faithless woman,” he quips.

“Jon can’t be with her. And even if it’s possible, what can we do? Close them in a room and wait for Targaryen babies to start to burst from her legs?

“She’s barren,” he recalls, "but we can pray that she can give him something else.”

“A marriage?” Sansa guesses but it’s far from the point he was making. "What will her people think of her if she not only spare the life of her murderer but also marries him and makes him a king?"

“Daenerys never cared about other’s opinions. You must know that better than anyone,” he remembers her about their continuous disagreements in the past. “I was thinking in other think, though.”

“She cannot have children, she won’t marry him and she doesn’t want to help us, so what else…. ” she starts saying until sense hit her and her face turns serious. “You must be insane.”

“He is a Targaryen. Targaryens always take what they want.”

“Jon was right in punching you,” she growls at him “He would never do something like that!”

“He already put his duty over love once,” but he was meaning he already put you over her once.

“And look where we are,” she groused.

“Living. That’s where we are, alive and breathing!” he speaks, hardening his tone. “Or do you think that you would have made it this far if he hasn’t done what he did?”

“Jon will not take one of her dragons,” Sansa ensures. “And I will never ask him to do such a thing.”

“Dragons choose their riders, not the other way around,” he points with the knowledge he had acquired from all of those books he had read in his childhood. “And once the bind is done, there’s nothing that can break it,” well, only death. “Is another person with Valyrian blood as strong as his around? Surely not that Velaryon boy.”

He has been observing him too. For the years he has spent there, surely the dragons had ignored him enough to confirm that he wasn’t worthy of their attention.

“And then what? He mounts one of those beasts, what’s next? Daenerys could kill him!”

“She will not!” he shouts, certain. “Look, your grace, if we are still breathing is because of her love for him. Daenerys never will put a single scar on his body.”

Sansa stands, preparing to leave.
“If you ever dare to bring this idea to him, Daenerys Targaryen won’t be the queen sentencing you to die.”

Tyrion stares at her disappointed. “Winterfell is all you have left,” he tries a last plea, appealing to her ancestral home as he missed his. 

“Jon is all I have left,” she rebuts with the assurance of someone who had already lost enough in the game of thrones. “Put his life in danger and I will end yours.”

V

The Great Keep

Daenerys

She tenses the bow and that is her first mistake. The arrow does not even approaches the target.  

"I know," she rushes to say when Ulysses Bloom opens up his mouth to scold her. "I'm sorry, I cannot do this today."

The commander nods and takes the arch from her grip. Her arms had ended too tired after speeding up her training with Daario earlier that day. People would be arriving at the Great Keep soon and she would be advocated to that.

Daario was sitting near there, watching her with that constant expression of worry and uncertainty.

"Do not say a thing," she warns him recalling his caveat before.

He throws his hands up in the air. “I wasn’t about to utter a word.”

She’s been on the defensive like every single day since the Westerosis arrived at Valyria. All her people have been the same.

“Are you looking to break something else in your body?” he asks, incredulous of her behavior and the harshness she demands of her already scathed body.

“I can’t be that lucky.” Her body was broken enough. “I have to be ready, I feel this won’t be easy.”

“We have done it before,” he argues. “Qarth is not that different from any other city we have taken before, or the Warlocks the worst of your enemies.”

“They almost deplete the freedmen,” she can’t erase Mossoro wounds from her mind, neither his last words, ‘find Sohoriaz’. “I wanted them all dead.”

“All of them?”

She senses a slight second intention in his question.

“They have to pay their debt,” she assures, knowing that she won’t care if a single one of them dies. Daario took the notion of working with the Westerosis like a charge put in his shoulders. He hated their sense of honour and lack of ability for just killing to win.

“All of them?” he insists, confirming her suspicions.

“If it’s necessary,” she shoots, exasperated. “What are you trying to prove?”
“I don’t know,” he responds with the same irritation. “I killed every single man that had tried to kill me before.”

“I can’t do that,” she recognizes. Daario, Queen Yara, even princess Arianne, were all eager to have Jon dead.

“Why not?” he persists pushing the matter.

“Because he is my family! and the father of my child she would add but if there was a thing she won’t give Jon to any extent it’s the acknowledgment of that that only belongs to her. Only to her. “I won’t be a kinslayer.”

“You Westerosis and your customs,” he spits, cursing beneath his breath.

“I’m not Westerosi, but I am a Targaryen. I won’t be the reason why my kin extinct,” thought Jon’s lineage would never be true Targaryens. “He also has a child.”

“What?”

“I saw his woman in West Village, and his child with her.”

“Does that man have a slight sense of demure?”

She lifts her eyebrows with disbelief, “Speaks the man that lives with her former lover.”

“You are more than that, you know that,” he stares directly at her eyes. She knows if there was someone who wouldn’t turn on her it was him. “And it’s totally different. I’ve never failed you.”

“I know.”

“And from all of them, I’m still the best,” he never gives up his hubris. “Even better than the poison king.”

He hasn’t hidden his annoyance towards her relationship with Gerael and the blue sleep.

“Have you notice that you have a teste for kings?” he continues with a more humorous tone.

She burst into laughter. “One worse than the other, right?” she wouldn’t dive into the matter but it was a rare coincide. “Leave Gerael alone, he is far better than I deserve.”

“No one will ever be enough for the dragon queen,” Daario chants. She just smiles.

“Daario,” she calls him after a long pause.

“Aham?”

“I don’t know what to do,” she confesses, burying her head between her hands. “I don’t know where I’m standing anymore.”

In those days she has lost any orientation. She provoked the situation by sending that gift to the North, damaging Prince Yronwood’s plan. Although she did not pretend to elicit their arrival, a part of her dammed self couldn’t stand the idea of those people dying from starvation. Or might it was just because of him.

‘There are millions still suffering in Westeros’, Jon had told her. But how someone so destructive as she can solve that? How can they believe her a saviour? Even in Essos, she had to impose her
order with fire and blood, but in Westeros, that idea just serves them to win wars.

All they want for her is to win wars.

“Are you in love with the poison king?” Daario inquires, going to the same direction of his initial supposition.

“I do love being around him,” and it was true, though the blue sleep was part of that, “I do love our time together,” and even more when she discovered that he could give her the opportunity to be closer to the hut again. Even if it was a blatant lie. “But it seems little, too little…” and pauper compared to the other feeling.

“…besides the White Wolf,” Daario suggests close from the truth. “You still love him,” he finally voices aloud, to his consternation.

“I am cursed,” Daenerys laments, remembering all those scenes of Rhaegar’s past. “I’m damned.”

Daario moves from his place and kneels before her, taking one of her hands.

“It’s not a curse to love someone who can’t love you back. Ask Jorah and me,” he opines lightly as someone who has cured his scars so long ago. “I promise you that while you are by my side that you’ll be fine,” he kisses her temple. “We are going to solve this problem and you won’t see them anymore.”

She thinks if might that’s her fear: seeing the past coming back just to walk away from her again.

VI

Jon

This time he is received by Daario Naharis and Gendry, the second more excited than the first. In Eastgates he sent a raven informing Sansa to gather up the commanders of the Riverlands, The Reach, the Westerlands and the Vale. They were already in the Great Keep when he arrives.

He rests a couple of hours in his same bedchamber before returning and joining the commanders to explain small details of the situation.

To his surprise, they weren't the only visitors.

She did not mention to him that the infamous Common Council would be there for their second annual meeting. He had heard Tyrion say that they reunite in the former Iron Bank in Braavos. What were they doing in Valyria?

"Four years," Gendry shouts in awe, guiding him and the other men to the war room where they would join her, "for four years I tried to bring some sense in her and you just come and make it in a matter of weeks!"

"It wasn't because of me, believe me," he clarifies remembering Dany's warning. He didn't soften her heart in any form."

“However it may have been, I hope it is the first step towards consensus,” he says with a true satisfaction in his voice.

Gendry’s comment makes him realise how little he had known Daenerys. Even Gendry had got to know her better in those years.
“How is she?” he dares to ask, knowing that Gendry wouldn’t delve in matters that do not concern him. “I mean, after all these years.”

Jon sees the face of the bastard son of Robert Baratheon gets serious as if he was remembering something Jon can only imagine.

“She is mostly close-mouthed,” he replies after a beat, “she believes she can’t be a good queen after what she did in King’s Landing.”

That is the first time Jon can confirm that Dany was indeed remorseful over what she did. A part of him feels glad, but deep down the idea saddened him in a way he wouldn’t know how to explain.

“How can she believe that?” he questions, might too eager to know more about her. “With all she did here.”

Gendry frowns, “I don’t know her that well, maybe if you ask Monterys he will explain to you better,” Jon feels disappointed with Gendry’s deviation in the matter. Then he notices that he was fighting with something in his mind.

“What?” Jon insists.

“I’m not the one…-” he trails off, gulping hard. “Imagine if you lose everything that truly matters for you. Imagine if you have nothing to live for.”

That last bit left a sour flavour in his mouth. He felt that way when she was gone, and not a single moment in his life to this moment has ever give him back not a small portion of what he got in that past.

“At least it is what Monterys says,” Gendry continues. “The boy is damn in love with her.”

Jon tried to remember who Monterys was, and Gendry catches his mistake. “Monterys Velaryon, a friend of mine from the Stormlands. His family was the only one that respected me as a liege lord when I arrived in Storm’s End.”

A good man, Jon thought. Another better match for her.

“Gendry,” Jon begins when they approach where Daario Naharis and the rest of Dany’s commanders were waiting. “Why the Common Council is here?”

“This was long-planned,” he replies. “After they found out you were coming they wanted an audience with Daenerys. They want you dead but do not worry, they are mostly charlatans.”

Well, they are not the only ones. Join the team, he wants to tell them.

They reach a hall where Daario was guarding the gates to the War Room. He does not utter a word but keeps throwing daggers with his stare towards Jon.

“Daario, where’s the queen?” Gendry asks with absolute reliance. “Is she already there?”

Daario keeps a dark stare on them. “You will know when she’s ready,” he points.

He hears steps coming from behind and turns around.

Suddenly, a man with blond hair appears at the entrance and advances through the hall without much regard, accompanied by guards that stop there and leave him to go on on his own.
He is wearing a fine blue suit, so elegant that Jon wonders if he ever saw anything like that before, but his ramblings are interrupted when the man slides his gaze towards him, finding his eyes and observing him for a few seconds before returning it to Daario, nodding in a gesture of recognition.

He disappears into the war room. Just like that.

Jon is not the only one who has been stunned by his appearance. The other commanders continue to look towards the gates in a deep state of trance.

"Gerael," says Gendry, with the peace of mind of someone who has already become accustomed to his presence. "Gerael Dagareon, King of Lys."

Jon feels a strange prick of anguish in his chest and he has to swallow hard. This was the Poison King that Sam talked about. The King that soon would take Daenerys as his wife and who would probably become her future co-ruler.

You found someone else to rule by your side, he thought bitterly.

He began to get impatient and wanted to ask Daario how much longer she would make them wait, but he knew he was not in the best position to ask questioning things.

The commander of Daenerys maintained a rigid position, but no longer leery towards the men of Westeros who were invading his castle. It was the sensation that the poison man had left floating in the air.

VII

The War Room - The Great Keep.

Daenerys

"I may have seen a wolf at your entrance," Gerael quips, entering the War Room while she and Ornela prepared the Painted Table to receive the Common Council and Westerosis commanders.

"What took you so long?" she asks, ignoring his comment regarding Jon. Daario had already told him that he had arrived. "The other members of the Council traveled longer distances than you, yet they have arrived before."

"I was dealing with some issues," he answers quietly, although Daenerys was aware of those issues.

Ornela quietly withdraws from the room when they finish arranging the pieces on the table.

"All those charlatans come running towards you because they need something from you," he argues, leaning on the edge of the table. "I have not come to ask you anything."

"Any?" she tempts him with her left eyebrow raised suggestively.

Gerael smiles funny and she simply rolls her eyes. He clears the throat. "So, you are taking Qarth."

"I will," she assures, "will you accompany me?"

"You need me?" he asks with a frown.

"I have to find someone named Sohorioz," she tells him, "Kinvara is trying to find out who he is. I
think it's who tortured Mossoro, because his name was the last thing he told me."

"I'm sorry for that," he expresses his condolences. He knew how important her soldiers are for her. "You know it's not your fault, right?"

"I swore to protect them," she explains, moving some pieces from side to side. "And I failed. Once again," she admits, savoring the sour taste of defeat.

"Do you remember what I told you when we met?"

"When you put a dagger in Daario's throat and threatened to kill my only son?" She reminds him.

"I keep wondering why he doesn't like me."

"He won't forget that soon," although she knew that Daario's anger had another reason.

"Don't change the subject," he scolds.

"Yes, I know that slaves must fight for their freedom," she says, sitting in her chair in front of the Valyria Islands. "But I had the power to finish this before and I delayed it. Now Mossoro and almost all the army of the freedmen are dead."

"Stop blaming yourself for things that escape your hands," he insists, taking the chair beside her and gently squeezing her thigh. "Why did you get them here?"

"I don't know," she mutters wearily. She was tired of having to explain all of her decisions. "I feel that if I leave this matter unresolved, it will always return to haunt me."

She turns to see him again and can see the same concern of Daario there on his face. Daenerys places her hand on his cheek and caresses it. Was she being too obvious with her feelings again?

The gates open and Daario apprises that the council members were getting impatient.

She sighs and invites them to pass.

**VIII**

**Jon**

Finally, they are allowed to enter the immense War Room, where Dany is already in the company of her king. It is disturbing to think that he used to sit next to her in the same way, back in the Great Hall of Winterfell. It was worse to remember that he once dreamed that both could have reigned from there, that somehow she would not find her happiness in the Red Keep and would choose to be with him in the North.

The fantasy of a green boy.

In the center, there was a table similar to the one in Dragonstone, but with Essos carved which made it much more extensive.

"I ask you to take a seat in your respective domains, my Lords," she points out, without looking at
him at all. She wore a simple brown gown with a belt that held a small dagger at the waist.

She first communicates in Valyrian with the members of the Common Council, of which he only recognises the Sealord of Braavos, and of course, the King of Lys.

Jon walks to the seat in front of the Northern Kingdom, far from where stands Valyria, far away from her.

The King of Lys was only two chairs away from her.

He hardly realises that Dorne's princess arrives and takes her place at the opposite end of the table, in Dorne's kingdom and directly in front of him. Was she also part of this Council?

"Maybe Lord Snow already told you about my offer," Dany begins to explain, standing with her hands clasped in front of her, her typical queen position. "And I have come to the conclusion that this matter can no longer be delayed. Time is a valuable thing, the more we let it pass, the less opportunities we have," she pauses as if a sudden memory had struck her. "I will take a city soon. I intended a peaceful surrender with its rulers, but they didn't listen and it cost me the life of a good friend ... "

Jon can't help thinking that they were living a situation similar to that time.

"Ten years ago I took two Essosi armies to Westeros and they saved your land from a threat that you, fortunately, never saw," she pauses and Jon notices that she was breathing hard. "It was not their war. However, they believed that there was a greater good to fight for and that is why they followed me," although she turns to them, she still avoids making eye contact with him, "Qarth is the largest city in the known world. We estimate that it has a population of two million people, and more than half of them are slaves."

"My soldiers had tried to infiltrate for years, but currently the city is ruled by a conclave of Warlocks," she moved her lips doubtfully, as she always does when she feels uncertain. "I killed their leader a long time ago and since then they have tried to reach me and annihilate me. But they have not succeeded, and their use of blood magic competes with mine, making this mission almost impossible for my soldiers and myself."

"Excuse me, your grace," interrupts the Riverlands commander, Lord Ryger. "But we are only ordinary men. If you, your dragons and your army couldn't beat them, how can we do it?"

"I don't want you to beat the Warlocks for me, my lord," she clarifies. "I want you to fight to free the city."

"It seems too easy to require our help," he refutes in disbelief.

"We don't need your help, that's true," Daenerys adds with a condescending smile.

The man frowns.

"You will save those slaves as my Unsullied and my Khalasar saved your lives and lands from the army of the dead," he continues.

The commanders burst into murmurs, and Jon wanted to slap them to silence them.
"Are you asking us to go on a suicide mission just because you want justice for your soldiers?"

"Didn't you fight for honor?" Asks Daario Naharis from his jealous position behind Dany. "Thousands of men died in your land so that you could destroy Westeros a little bit more."

"I will not be insulted by a simple sellsword," Lord Ryger began to question, standing to face Daario but Jon went faster and took his arm, forcing him to sit down.

"We are not here to negotiate, Lord Ryger," he scolds, "Queen Daenerys is right. There are northerners who will corroborate the events of the Great War."

"Lord Ryger?" Princess Arianne pronounces from her place, "Didn't your House defy House Tully during Robert's rebellion to stay loyal to King Aerlys II, Daenerys' father?"

All people, at least those who understand the common language, turn to see Arianne.

"And most importantly, haven't they come here to declare loyalty to Queen Daenerys?"

Lord Ryger maintains his composure. "I apologize, your grace," he turns to Dany, who only watches the scene indifferently. "But this situation seems more like a punishment than a deal."

Daenerys closes her eyes and sighs; It was like the fourth time she did it.

"I won't give anything to Westeros, not a single grain or a single man if you don't prove that you deserve my help," her tone hardened. “It is true that you, my lord, are impaired compared to my armies. It is also true that I want you on the battlefield fighting for more than honour or for yourselves."

Jon understands her point and it was totally valid that she will put an ultimatum. In the past, she had to constantly lose without receiving anything in return. However, he still had doubts about how they would infiltrate Qarth.

“You don't have to fear if you're good soldiers, my lord,” Daenerys continued explaining, “I also promise that there will be a reward,” and then she looks directly at him for the first time, “your children and wives will receive gold and property, wherever they want to reside.”

Jon didn't need anything like that but he made sure to give her a silent thanks with his eyes. In Eastgates, she had promised him a 'last chance for Westeros' and it was the issue that mattered most to him.

“We have come here in search of a solution, your grace,” he began to speak at the unabashed looks of the council members and his own countrymen, “if taking Qarth is going to show you that we deserve a second chance, and thus settle our debt with Essos, we'll obey.”

"How can you guarantee that, Lord Snow?" Arianne Yronwood asks him harshly, "How can you assure us that Westerosis soldiers will obey?"

The truth is that Jon has no idea how he is going to drag all these men to Qarth. Like every endeavour in his life, he planned to deal with the matter when the time arose.

"I repeat, your grace," he tries to be formal but the truth is that he was tired of the girl's rough treatment. “We came in search of a solution. This is the solution.”
"And the wildlings?" she asks again. Her attitude reminded him of Sansa's stoicism when Daenerys arrived in Winterfell.

"The free folk owe nothing to anyone," Daenerys replies before he could say with regret that they would follow him wherever he went. Her answer takes him aback. "This issue is with those who want me to return to Westeros and win their wars for them."

"So what?" Arianne continues with her opposition, "What will happen to Westeros? Are you coming back?"

Jon notices the tension between the two women as if they were questioning each other.

IX

Daenerys

Arianne is exceeding the limits and she makes sure to let her know with a serious face. Daenerys understood that the princess was seeing her father's plan fall apart, but that didn't excuse her to try to overpass her authority.

Before she could utter something else the gates open up and Yara Greyjoy joins the meeting.

She makes no comments on the fact that the Queen of the Iron Islands was obviously unveiled and with a hangover. She walks towards her place where she met Lord Ryger and Jon.

Yara looks at Jon strangely, recognizing him and after doubting for a second, she pulls out her knife and points it towards him. Daario is already by her side.

"Let the drunk queen finish this man, queen Daenerys!" requires a Magister, switching to valyrian. "You don't need him to take Qarth. Our men are far better than these weak men."

"I must suggest the same, my Queen," the Sealord also prompts. "The presence of Jon Snow directly hurts our deal with Prince Yronwood of Dorne."

"I won't become a kinslayer," she responds in the common tongue which she knows they understand. Kinvara has alerted her to be cautious with the information she gives away with the council, so she won't mention how fundamental was the need of the northern men. "Queen Yara was just jesting, right?" she stares at the ironborn.

"Aye," she replies, sitting sloppy in her place. "Or mayhaps not."

"I will return to Westeros," she says and everyone is looking at her. "But not to rule it."

Her statement causes a ripple of shock.

"The Westerosis have the impression that I rule over the Free Cities but that's not true. Here you see these men and women who also take decisions and help to keep Essos standing. The problem with Westeros is that you seem incapable to stop fighting each other for a second."

"Victarion Pyke has found a common cause and made it his to fight against you: the clamor of the commoners. If I return to Westeros I won't be forcing those people to swear fealty to a liege lord again."

"It seems to me and for any other people who have a slight sense, that what you need is a strong authority. Not only the realm had suffered because of the multiples awry pretenders that sat on the
throne but it also has bled enough to justify a strong, sole coup that can help us to bring a new order."

"This is the conclusion we have reached with Prince Yronwood and the Common Council. At least it was until you came to me pleading for the old order to be restored."

Realisation enlightens Jon's countenance.

"Are you saying that you already have planned to return?" he inquires but it sounds too blunt as a grievance.

A stunned Gendry turns to see her too. Daenerys continues and looks at him.

"This Council has moot this matter," not always on your presence, she must've said. "We decided that eventually, I would have to come back there to put an order."

"Eventually? Were you waiting for Victarion to kill us?" Jon seems infuriated. With what right?

At the null response, he got his own answer.

"But now we are all here. And like it or not" she stares at Arianne, "we'll work together."

Yara Greyjoy let out a huff, "There's no way you can trust these people a second time, your Grace," in spite of her state she speaks very clear, "His sister breakaway the North, what would happen if we return to Westeros? save their lives and lands and let them be as the last time?"

"Sansa Stark must surrender her Crown," Arianne rushes to answer that. "And the North will come back to be part of the Seven Kingdoms."

Daenerys could perceive annoyance in Jon's face but he just nods. "My sister and I have not a saying in this matter. That's what she intended to do by coming here."

"Good, we agree with something then," Daenerys states "I leave the rest of you to choose who will be the Warden of every domain, except for Lord Tully and of course, Lord Snow's son who will become Warden of the North as the Starks has been for years before. But I'll name the next monarch."

His irked expression changes to a confused one.

"I have no children and I won't," he declares firmly.

Daenerys narrows her eyes, "I thought you..." she trails off, aware of her own confusion. Daenerys feels stupid for exposing her erroneous conclusion.

"I made a vow of father no children, and I intend to keep my word."

Yara starts to laugh, no one knows exactly why.

"If you won't have children, your sister will have to marry again," Arianne irrupts again.

"Sansa will not do such thing," he responds. "She lost her child and husband."

"If your sister and you will not have heirs," Arianne carries on her interrogation, "What will happen with Winterfell? What house will watch over the North?"

Jon stares at her and she feels the urge to avoid him but couldn't. "That's on Queen Daenerys," he
simply states.

X

Jon

How Daenerys came to the conclusion he could have a child? It wasn't just the Night's Watch vow, if she had really known him she would have known that after everything that has happened he wasn't capable. Not only because it was not his right after what he did to her but because the Targaryens must die with him. Or with her. Or with them. That, and the fact that how would he dare to bring a child to this miserable world?

Following other details of the siege of Qarth, Daenerys goes on with the Council agenda. In this latter activity, the commanders and he have nothing to contribute. Neither they understand the language.

"Ornela will take you to your chambers," she announces, finishing the meeting. He knows that this reunion takes various days.

They will depart back to Jorah's Port to extend her offer to the other Lords and Ladies. He doesn't know when he will see her again.

"If you accept my offer, Daario will meet you in South Harbour," and with this she just nods and dismisses everyone out of the War Room.

Everyone except Gerael Dagareon, who keeps in his place even when all of them are walking towards the hall.

Jon can't help turning around and capturing the image of both of them on their backs, leaning against the Painted Table, and Dany's head resting on his shoulder. Beyond them, the sky.

The gates close and he doesn't see anything anymore.

Chapter End Notes

I planned to update this Wednesday but two things happened: my laptop charger died, and there were several power outages in my city. (Yes, I live in a place where it is summer and everything is exploding.)

Thank you all for your comments and continued support, I hope you like this chapter. I know it seems confusing because the timeline is not exactly linear, but let's supposed it has passed three months between their arrival to Valyria and the Council meeting in the Great Keep.
Chapter Summary

Jon deals with the Lords.
Daenerys deals with magic.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 7: "White Wolf"

I

The Great Keep

Jon

One would think that he has seen enough things in his life to not being impressed by anything else. Yet he catches Dewyn in the center of the common corridor of the Great Keep.

“How in hells are you here?” he asks approaching him.

Dewyn is unmoved by the encounter and seems more attracted to the fortress grandeur.

“The southron princess brought me,” he replies standing near a paint of Valyrian people of yore. “She wanted little Lanka to see the castle and I was part of the deal.”

Jon remembers Lanka's father, who has barely made contact with reality since his wife died from the spring disease alongside with the baby she was carrying.

Dewyn is fond of Lanka as Val of various other children, especially the littlest ones. In fact, they had been taking care of lots of orphans. An additional incentive for not breed more children into this world.

“I know I must be the least indicated to say this,” he began to say, “But please do not do something stupid.”

Dewyn cackles.

“Says the man whose woman is waiting at for him with an ax,” he remarks and it feels to be drag down into the freezing lake beyond the wall again. “Did you convince the Dragon Queen to help us? I don’t want you to die by Val’s hand without at least having done a last good deed.”

Jon doubts if telling him about Qarth. In the past, Dewyn had wanted to go and fight for the North with the army, but Jon has forbidden him. Now he has reached an age where forbidding him things is just senseless.

“She will,” Jon responds staring at the image in front of them. The Valyrian couple in the portrait makes him recall of Dany and the poison king, Gerael Dagareon. Even his name sounds
appropriate for her. “On a condition.”

Dewyn turns his face to him, curious.

“She needs our help to take a city,” he explains carefully not to sound as jittery as he was.

“You will go to war, again,” the boy concludes with a serious countenance. “I will go with you,” then states.

“No, you won’t-” Jon is saying when Dewyn contradicts him.

“I will go. You won’t hold me back.”

Jon sighs and nods, accepting that he can’t do more than this.

Behind him, the commanders and some soldiers are preparing for the departure to Jorah’s Port. This part of the mission will consist of persuading the hostile lords to go forth war. They can’t ask more benevolence from Dany.

That brings the reminder on his mind that she was willing, and likely expecting him to die to finally return to Westeros. He couldn’t hide his annoyance but with a colder logic, it was perfectly fair.

*Everything would be easy with me away from your life. But all would be lost for me without you.*

‘I just want to know where that person is now.’

‘Dead.’

It was hard to let her go, he admits to himself. He wants to accept that time has passed for them but every time he sees her it all comes down to their shared past. The pain, longing, confusion, and regret. Does she feel the same or had the hatred consumed all regard for him? She has not cared in the past for their relation, while for him it drove a terrible wedge. However, he has put the most irreversible gap between them.

*She will marry; she has moved on*, he repeats in his mind constantly as he has to remind himself that she was the little sister of his father. The baby that had to run away from her own crib after her brother and his father put his family in danger because of love. His life conceived to the detriment of hers.

*This Dany is not your Dany*, he thinks. This Dany belongs to her people, belongs to Daario Naharis, belongs to Essos and most important, she belongs to another man.

*This Dany does not belong to you.*

II

**Daenerys**

Arianne sits in silence in front of her, both staring at the other without breaking eye contact. They have been in this position for almost one hour, neither of them willing to let the other win. Daenerys has to admit she loves this attribute of the young princess. It was one of the reasons she sees a natural ruler in her. A woman must have this kind of pride to survive in a world of men.

“Well,” Daario voices from his position against the window. “Who is hungry?”
There’s no response.

“I will tell the servants to bring some food,” and with this, he retires from her office.

The princess’s mouth trembles. A slight movement but enough for Daenerys to do the same. It’s all it takes for both to burst in laughter.

“You must stop this conduct,” Daenerys warn after taking a long breath. “Your crown is secured, no matter what happens with the Starks.”

Arianne wipes out the moisture in the corner of her eye. “It’s not just the Starks,” she justifies. “If I will be their queen, I must make them clear that my word will not be defied.”

Daenerys gets serious. “It does not work like that.”

Arianne watches her with incredulity. Daenerys knows she has delegated too much of her own realm in Arianne's hands and must be thinking that she doesn’t know anything of its affairs.

“How then?” she questions.

“My family reigned with fire and blood, but that did not make Dorne surrender that easy, right?” she remembers her, “I will help you to settle in Westeros but I can’t solve all your problems when you are crowned. You ought to be wise and patient; otherwise, they will take the best from you.”

Arianne nods with compression. "I ask your pardon, Daenerys," she apologises. "It won't happen again."

"I know your father and you have the best interest but things will be done as I think it convenient," she states. "Have you made some progress with Gendry?"

Daenerys keeps a finger on the pulse over their future marriage. Arianne was a young, idealist girl that desires a true understanding of who would be her future husband and co-ruler. She did not want to break her illusion and telling her that things could crumble within a second.

"He is a good man," Arianne describes, "He wants the best for our people," Daenerys is surprised she already considers there's an 'our', "but the Starks, I mean, these people arrival seems to undermine his perception."

Daenerys frowns puzzled "Undermine in what sense?"

"He believes they deserve a second opportunity."

"You don't?"

"Why they would? I know everything they have done to you."

"And what I did?"

"What you did ten years ago," she remarks holding her hand above the desk. "You died. Your children and your friends died. They committed crimes for which they never paid."

Daenerys laments having been so careless with her pain. The blue sleep makes her forget the demure and poor Arianne had witnessed the effects of the poison.

"Besides," Arianne withdraws her hand, "treason is treason. Power is power, as Kinvara says."
"Since when you hear Kinvara's chatter?"

"She's everywhere!"

Daenerys agrees on that. She would have preferred the red priestess away from her realm but she seems unrelenting and her knowledge necessary in times like these.

"Daario mentioned you brought a wildling child from Jorah's Port," she changes the subject. "And a boy," she indicates with a suggestive tone.

Ariane rolls her eyes. "A mean to an end," she replies, standing. "I almost forgot that I left him in the common halls, waiting," she walks towards the entrance. "I can't believe I just came for a meeting of two hours, I'd wish to have my own dragon to shorten distances."

III

Jorah's Port.

Sansa

A raven informing about Jon's return to Jorah's Port eases her inner turmoil. After arguing with Tyrion and making a threat to him, her only company has been Brienne and little Jamie.

She has made her best effort to play the queen amongst her people, the southerners and the wildlings but as the days went, they adapted to the new environment better than she could and little by little everyone was forgetting any sense of belonging and coping with the new reality.

Everyone except for her, who felt so damn alone.

She took the book Jon threw at Tyrion's face, and read it. It was true Daenerys' story was more complex than they were told in the first place. Sansa felt even more stupid for falling for Little Finger's version of the tyrant that was determined to erase any opposition to her will.

She was betrayed by her brother, raped by her husband, and gave birth to a dead child just like Sansa. It saddened enormously to have been so blindsided.

Sansa wanted the best for her people. It never crossed her mind that Daenerys could have been that, or that she would be the worst.

"Did you think about it?" she asks Brienne one day, "about what we did."

Brienne who was watching little Jamie playing with the other kids turns his face to see her, her expression always impassive and secure.

"I trust your good judgment, your grace," she replies but, for the first time in years, Sansa notes doubting on her face. "You were right after all."

For obvious reasons, she can't consider Brienne's opinion to be objective since her sense of honour and loyalty was too fierce to ever contradict her.

"It did not end up as I planned it," Sansa admits with the weight of the defeat on her shoulders.

"Many things haven't," her sworn knight adds looking at her offspring. A replicated image of his sire.
IV

The Great Keep.

Arianne

She finds the wildling boy rambling the common corridors, speaking with the people as if he was one more of the citizens. It annoys her how well he adapts to everything and everyone but does not utter a single word to her.

"Lord Dewyn," she calls him, interrupting his conversation with a group of young ladies. "It's time to find Lanka."

She turns and doesn't wait for him to follow her. It is a long way to the private chambers where she left Lanka with Frigia, who was released from her lessons of the day to show the castle to the wilding child.

Lord Dewyn keeps his cold treatment on the way and she feels the need to break the cumbersome situation.

"Have you been there when this army of dead people attacked Winterfell?"

She slows down her steps to wait for him.

"Aye," he replies finally but his response doesn't elicit the information she needs to hear.

"And how they were?" she goes on, expecting more words this time.

"Dead," he answers to her frustration, "dead people."

"Can you please be more descriptive, my lord?"

"I'm not a lord, princess," he corrects her and she is astonished by his sudden boldness. "You don't believe it, why waste my time?"

Arianne let out a snort.

"I'm asking you because I want to believe."

"Ya southrons are too skeptical," he insists with a grin. "You believed us monsters because you haven't seen real monsters."

"First, my Lord," she stops her peace to face him, and they almost stumble upon each other. "I have never underestimate you or your people. So I will ask you to be more respectful towards me. Secondly, how can I believe in something I've never get to see?"

Lord Dewyn nods and after a beat, he takes her demand, "How do you imagine a monster can be?"

"Heinous," Arianne retorts to him with only her imagination to supply some kind of information to her mind. "The closer I've been to a monster are the dragons, but they are magnificent."

Dewyn agrees.

"The dragons are fire, life; the wights were ice, death."

"Wights?"
"The Night King and his kind were White Walkers, blue and icy beings with the ability to revive
dead corpses," they continue their way to the private chambers, Arianne focused on his narration.
"The corpses, they were wights."

Arianne hadn't even thought about this matter before. Her father told her the northerners were liars
and used that story of the dead to take over Westeros.

"It does not impress you?" Dewyn inquires when she's too lost in her ramblings.

"I believe them true, if that's what you are asking, my lord," she replies returning to more formal
treatment. "The Queen lost almost all of her soldiers in that battle."

"Aye," Dewyn says, "I do remember them. Everyone lost someone that day."

She knows she shouldn't keep asking but she can't stop it. "Who you lost?"

"My mother."

"I'm so sorry," Arianne apologises, "She was a warrior?"

"No, we were hiding in Winterfell's crypts and the Night King woke up more dead people."

"In the crypts?"

"I know. A stupid idea."

V

Daario

He is disgusted.

It was one thing to imagine Jon Snow as this coward son of a bitch that used Daenerys in the most
deplorable ways until there was nothing left in her but the shadow of her former self. In some
extent, he still believes it that way.

But what Daario hadn't wait was to see the man bloodily in love.

More than a white wolf as he was dubbed, in the War Room, Jon Snow seemed more alike a beaten
puppy watching Daenerys and the poison king. A part of him rejoiced to see him so hurt and was
willing to shackle him outside Daenerys' bedchamber where she would spend the nights with the
poison king, just to see his sore expression.

As Jorah and himself in the past, Jon Snow is barely hiding his feelings. Or he's being bad at doing
it.

With what right he allows himself to feel that way? For all the gods' sake, he killed her! he used
and betrayed her! He's not even aware that she was with child at the moment he did it and that his
incompetence would have made her lose that baby.

Daario has been there. He has been in a situation where he has to choose between his family and
Daenerys' wellbeing, but he would have prefer to end his own life that having to kill her. Especially
after everything she went through. Because of him.

The worst part was seeing how affected by him she was. He is sure that if they are pushed a little
bit more, both will fall again in that trap. But Daario was certain that he will not permit Daenerys to
fall again. He will not allow the white wolf to eat her again.

Between her murderer and the poison king taking her away from reality, Daario feels every single day more unable to protect her from the past.

'Imagine if they take Frigia and Gael away from you, wouldn't you do anything to get them back? Even if it's a lie?'

That's what she told him when he begged her to stop consuming the blue drink. And it was true, he would have done anything to have his children safe.

No, there's no way those two would find the other again. Daario would not allow it.

At any cost.

VI

Jorah's Port

Jon

Jon could not describe how tired and wrecked he was feeling. They arrive some days later and the commanders and he agreed there was no use in delaying a confrontation with the lords. He decided he will rest enough in the ship towards Qarth.

"What did she offers?" Sansa asks him, he notices her languishing.

"War," he points, washing up his face with the water that drips out of the little artifact he doesn't know who it is named. "She needs our help to take Qarth."

"Qarth?" Sansa repeats with her expression constricted. "That's almost three months away from here."

Jon sighs. "I know," he holds her hands to ease her, "Her ships are fast, we'll-
"

"You are going to war," she deduces, breaking their contact and staring at the window.

"There's no other way," he declares watching the people outside gathering at the Town Hall, where he is sure Gendry is already with his soldiers. "When we take Winterfell back, there will be war too. When she returns-"

"She will?" Sansa interrupts again, "If she will, there's no need for war! She has six dragons!"

"You don't understand!" he scolds her, frightens her unwittingly. "We can't object to her demands!"

Sansa inhales and exhales, dubious.

"You can," she whispers. "She loves you, she will not risk your life-"

"Stop," he cuts her off this time. "Don't go that way."

"Why is it so hard for you to notice it?" she questions in disbelief. "Or to admit it to yourself."

Jon ignores her while collecting his things; his belt, the dagger, Longclaw...
"Jon," Sansa calls him but her voice is distant. "Jon!"

He pretends to look at something on the deposit.

"Jon, please, listen to me," Sansa pleads and this time she approaches him.

He pulls away.

"Listen to what?" he finally speaks, or screams. "I listened to you! I listened to Tyrion, I listened to everyone but myself and look where we are!" he sees her fear but does not care. "Daenerys does not love me, she barely can see me. She is throwing me to war because she does not dares to kill me herself, as I did! She was waiting for me to die to return to Westeros!

"I can feel all her hatred fall upon me when she's staring at me. I am the worst mistake she ever made and yet I can't keep myself away from her."

"So, please do not be a child and let's accept this help as it comes."

Jon leaves her behind and walks outside the inn, straight to the Town Hall. The free folk are around the campfire for their routine fete. Dany ordered to not involve them in this battle and he is most than happy to fulfil her command.

When he arrives, princess Arianne and Gendry are sitting side by side in the middle table, an image that again evokes a sour memory to him. Is also present the boy Jon supposes is Monterys Velaryon.

Gendry makes a move to get up but the princess stops him and forces him to sit down. A strange scene, Jon thinks.

Ser Davos welcomes him and after making some comments about his deplorable looks, he goes and sits in a corner and waits for Gendry to put some order in the room.

Sansa also arrives, in the company of Lord Manderly. Behind her, Lord Hornwood and the rest of the northern lords. Jon knows they will not oppose to this mission but if it happens he will have to set an example.

Lord Tully is sitting in the front row with Lord Ryger. What could he do if they protest against the proposition?

"Make silence, Lords, and Ladies!" Ser Davos asks.

After a moment everyone shuts.

"We bring news from the capital," Gendry starts. "Queen Daenerys has granted us an opportunity to prove ourselves worthy of her aid. As you know, ten years ago she provided Westeros an immeasurable help in the Great War against the Night King," the voices arouse and Gendry frowns, "please, my Lords in this same room you'll find hundreds of witnesses that will assure you this threat was true."

His head starts throbbing because of the fuss.

"Queen Daenerys' armies were fundamental for the defeating of the Night King-" Gendry goes on but he's interrupted.

"Didn't Arya Stark kill the Night King?" someone questions.
Jon, Sansa and Gendry's expressions turn off. The mention of Arya was a reminder of their worst mistakes.

"She did," Gendry answers, "She was the hero of Winterfell," he gulps hard and downs his gaze.

"She wouldn't have kill him without the armies of Daenerys Targaryen there, helping with the defense," Sansa voices. "She used to say that."

"So what's the Dragon Queen's condition?" Lord Westerling asks.

Gendry makes a pause, choosing his best words to explain it. "Our soldiers will render their service in her battle for the liberation of Qarth."

A disagreeable silence falls and Jon watches the faces of the people from his hiding place. Lord Manderly stares at Sansa confused, and she gives him a small smile in confirmation. Lord Tully and Lord Ryger are motionless, he knows it he guesses. Lady Rhea's countenance is in total horror with a hand covering her mouth. Lord Rowan is cursing beneath his breath and Lord Andar Royce is the only one with an openly annoyed expression.

"A war against the Qartheens?" he complains, "We are barely five hundred men!"

"This is madness!" Lord Westerling cries, "She is sending us to die!"

Lord Westerling holds the lead of the Westerlanders men. Lord Royce of the knights of the Vale.

"We can't ask more from her, my Lords," Ser Davos irrupts, "She's giving us food and home, in exchange for nothing. If we want her to return to Westeros to defeat Victarion Pyke and the Raven, we...we have to accept these terms."

"The Common Council had barely opposed," Gendry adds, which takes Jon off guard. He did not understand what the Common Council was talking about after Daenerys finished with them. "They have promised to retake the trading routes once the situation in Westeros is controlled and normalized."

"We came here to return her the fucking crown of the Seven Kingdoms!" Lord Westerling insists, "And she's sending us to die?"

"I remember you, Lord Westerling," Sansa stands to face him, "The Lannister army was sworn to that same battle, and you were between the men that witnessed the wight we took to Cersei."

"And what? I was supposed to disobey my queen?"

"Jamie Lannister did it," Ser Brianne speaks, "Her own brother defied her, my Lord."

Lord Westerling is about to respond when Lord Tully speaks.

"We came here finding a solution, if this is the way she will accept us as their subjects, I think we must accept there's no other way," he opines with a clear voice. "You can count on the men of the Riverlands," he declares. By his side, Lord Ryger nods, leaving behind his initial refusal.

Once more, Jon is grateful for Lord Tully's good nature.
"The Northern army is at your disposal, too," Sansa states, staring at him with comprehension.

Lord Andar sighs when Sansa gives her consent. "The Vale is in debt with the Northerners, and I promised my people back home I was going to do what was necessary to bring back peace," he turns to Gendry, "You can count with the Knights of the Vale, too."

Jon feels the weight on his shoulders relieve.

"As you know, our armies were slaughtered when Lady Olenna allied with Queen Daenerys. We were slaughtered by our own people," she remembers Samwell's father betrayal. "Queen Daenerys is being just. The men from The Reach will fulfil their oath."

The Riverlands, The North, The Vale, The Reach, Gendry's Stormlands and Arianne's Dorne. It took only one more army and Dany would have done what he couldn't in the past: unite the Seven Kingdoms.

Before Lord Westerling could keep on with his diatribe, Lord Royce steps forward and asks Gendry, "You are the son of Robert Baratheon, my Lord. And you are favoured by the Queen. Will you lead us?"

Gendry is taken aback. "I'm barely a soldier, Lord Royce," he excuses, "And it wasn't me who made the contact to gain a bargain with the Queen," Jon shakes when Gendry looks at him and points him. "That man there, Jon Snow, he got us this chance."

**Oh, no**, Jon wants to shout out. **No again.**

Lord Royce then walks towards him, "Then you must lead us, Lord Snow," he assumes.

"It didn't happen like that, my Lords," he corrects them, lamenting that he did not explain to Gendry how the deal was actually made, "I must reject your proposition."

"Why not?" Lord Hornwood protests, "Snow had led the defense of the North borders for years and he is the reason we have come to Valyria in the first place."

"He also united the armies to defeat the Night King," Ser Davos enthusiastically adds. "I know it's a suicidal mission but who's better for that than this man?"

"All of you seem to forget Jon Snow is the reason we are where we are," Lord Westerling expresses, ignoring the fact he is the only one who has yet not agree on this mission. "He is a Queenslayer."

"Excuse me, my lord, but if Queen Daenerys has not punished him for this supposed crime, why would we?" Lord Tully object to his surprise. "Besides, Lord Westerling you are taking an attribution it does not correspond to you." The Warden of the Riverlands stares at Lady Janei, Tyrion's cousin and who until now had been in complete silence. "Janei Lannister is the heir of Casterly Rock. She must voice her opinion on this matter."

Jon notices the woman nervousness when his husband turns to watch her.

"What my Lord husband decides, you will obey," she states directing at Lord Lydden, who Jon knew was more than willing to accept this mission.

"So will you be the only ones to decline the offer?" Princess Arianne inquires.

"We will return to Westeros," Lord Westerling decides. "The mad queen and his nephew can keep
on fucking themselves while you all turn to ashes."

*It was enough*, Jon thought. *We haven't come all this way to see our only chance to saved Westeros lost because of this dimwit.*

Jon catches sight of the room. There are enough northerners to double up the Westerlanders, but he knew they would not care.

It is right there that Jon decided he was going to do what was necessary to end the wars.

He wanted no more wars.

"Lord Hornwood," he calls walking forwards. "Lord Royce," he is moving his hand to Longclaw's hilt. "Take Lord Westerling."

Lord Westerling protests but no one of his soldiers does something when they see that the Northerners outnumber them. Lord Hornwood and Lord Royce do as he asks and a crying Lord Westerling is taken to the yard.

Jon does not turn around to see if someone is objecting besides Lady Jannei, who is being held back by Lord Lydden.

Even Dany's soldiers only contemplate the act with nonchalance.

Tormund and Dewyn have approached to see what's happening.

"Put Lord Westerling sword hand in front of me," he commands and they obey, while Jon tries to mute the sound of the crying man.

*I lost everything for these ungrateful arses. I lost Dany, I lost Arya, I lost friends on the battlefield, and all of them couldn't stop doing war. Now, they refuse?*

"The ones who are not willing to fight for Westeros do not deserve this," he signalises before grabbing Longclaw and swinging it to cut Lord Westerling's hand. "We are going to liberate Qarth as Queen Daenerys has commanded and then we will return to Westeros."

First, there's silence, but when Tormund cries out with excitement, everyone around celebrates.

Jon knows how hungry for war they are. It's all they know to do.

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**VII**

**The Great Keep**

**Daenerys**

*Your Grace, Queen Daenerys of House Targaryen:*

*It pleases me to inform you the Westerosis have accepted the terms of your proposition. I must also acquaint you they have chosen Jon Snow as their commander but he has subordinated his consent to your will.*

*We'll wait for your response to start the preparation for the long journey to Qarth.*
Your Grace, Princess Arianne:

It pleases even more to me to hear about this good new.

Whoever the Westerosis choose as their commander, while he does a diligent work, it has my approval.

Daario will wait for them in South Harbour, as we agreed on previously.

I wish all of you good fortune in the wars to come,

Daenerys.

"You have laid bare your gift in front of Jon Snow," Kinvara tells her when Daenerys enters the priestess chambers.

"People know I am a monster," she responds sitting in front of her, staring at the books the red woman was holding.

"You are a warrior, Daenerys Stormborn," she corrects her. "A chosen of our Lord."

Years have passed but Kinvara never fully revealed the so-called purpose of R'hollor. Daenerys has achieved enough in those ten years since she was brought back that she had stopped thinking about that.

"Stop the chatter and tell me what have you found," Daenerys demands, remembering her that she summoned the queen to her place.

"Sohorioz," she repeats Mossoro's last words, "The Heart of the Undying," she turns around the book so Daenerys can see it, "Not a person but a place."

"Is there where Mossoro and the freedmen were ambushed?" she asks before downing her eyes to the page Kinvara is showing her. It was the same location through which she gained access to the House of the Undying the first time. "I've been there."

"The Undying are hiding now they know the Mother of Dragons is coming for them," she announces. "You will not find their seat so easy this time. Your soldiers were not only ambushed and tortured, but they also walk to this trap willingly."

"What are you saying?"

"I do firmly believe that blood magic is more powerful than any other," she continues, "but sometimes it can be defied by another kind of magic equally dangerous."

"Which magic?"

"Magic of the mind."
Daenerys comprehend. "The same magic of the Raven."

Kinvara nods.

"The Warlock are pretenders. There are only two beings in this world that wield this type of power in its true form and you are one of those."

"We agreed that the Northerners will help us to infiltrate the city."

"You know you will need more than that. Only death can pay for life. Only a sacrifice can pay for a victory."

Daenerys swallows the lump in her throat.

"It will be enough bloodshed," she states. "Make sure there's no suffering."

Kinvara's eyes brighten. "I promise you."

VIII

South Harbour

Gendry

He notices Arianne has a pash for him. At first, he thought she was developing feelings for Monterys and even for Jon Snow with all that cold treatment towards him, but it happens to be him the object of her attraction.

He feels uncomfortable. She's a child to his eyes. Sure she was a beautiful woman but he has made a promise to himself long ago when Arya left for the West, to wait for her.

But she never came and she never will.

As he will not love another again.

Furthermore, he knew her father and Daenerys were planning to crown her Queen of the Seven Kingdoms and he was sure that, well deserved as it is, it also implies that she would have to marry an adequate person that could strengthen her rule. A highborn as Monterys.

Families and friends have come to say their goodbyes at South Harbour. He is one of the few that has no one who farewells him, and he doesn't know if it's a good thing.

Daario is jesting with his children and wife, a man accustomed to say goodbye to his family.

Monterys is with his mother. Jon with Sansa, Tormund and his wilding woman.

And he, well, he is standing there watching the scene and hoping this is not a goodbye for any of them.

"Lord Gendry," Arianne approaches him. She is wearing one of those coloured, long dresses from Dorne. All of a dornish beauty Ser Davos said and he was right. "I must come to tell you that you owe me a promise."

He frowns.
"Please, promise you will return," her eyes are shining with tears that could shed any moment. "Promise me you will come home safe and sound."

He doesn't know what to say. It hurts him that her words only reminds him of Arya saying her farewell to him.

'When I return you'll be a lord, married with a lady and father of highborn children," she told him, intending to sound humorous when he was dying inside. "You deserve this, Gendry," she said putting a hand on his cheek. "You always wanted a family.'

But he wanted her.

"I can't make you any promises, Princess," he replies with great lament. "Promises are like dreams, both born to die broken."

Arianne denies with a head movement.

"I have to confess something to you-" she is about to say when a sailor calls for them to take on board.

"I know it," Gendry simply states, holding her hand. They were soft, unlike the calloused hands of Arya. Hands he will never touch again. "My heart belongs to someone else and it will always do."

Arianne tears fall down her cheeks. He has broken the heart of a princess.

"I know I can't occupy her place," he must move but she's not releasing their grip. "I'm asking you to give me the chance of a future. We can make this together when the time comes."

Gendry can't understand her. He would have asked her if it wasn't because Daario passes by them and hit him in his scalp to hurry him.

"Go, win and come back to me to start our future together," and with this, she gives him a chaste kiss on his lips.

IX

Arianne

Gendry leaves confused and she feels stupid for having been too bold. She learnt from the old knight, Ser Davos, that Arya Stark was Gendry's former lover. She is competing against a ghost, and Arianne knows she will never win that battle.

She will never get his love. But if she can convince him that there was a small possibility of a future then perhaps they would spare a life of misery that his father and Cersei Lannister had.

A thought crosses her mind: what would happen if he does not return? Obviously she cares for him deeply, and she has grown to love them both, Gendry and Monterys as dear friends. But there was an essential truth about Gendry not coming back to her: she would lose her king.

The sudden appearance of Dewyn pulls her out of her ramblings, as he usually does. He was passing by her side, ignoring her rudely.

"Lord Dewyn," she calls him, with an inappropriate squeal. She clears her throat. "May I wish you good fortune."

The wildling boy smiles at her with confidence he does not deserves, in her opinion.
"I wish you good fortune, princess," he says before retaking his way aboard the ship.

X

Jon

"I made sure they will prepare the best food for you," Sansa is in a state of complete desperation as Jon has never seen before. It hurts him deeply to see her in that way. "And you will use your damn armour. Do not be stupid."

With this last bit he smiles, remembering all the times she gave him the same advice. Ser Brianne intends to keep calm her down but it only puts her more nervous, explaining again and again all the types of services she commissioned to the ship's crew.

"And please, Jon, for the new and the old gods," she begins but he rushes to complete for her.

"Do not be stupid?"

Her expression softened and finally, she goes a hug him, sobbing.

"Just come back home, Jon," Sansa cries and he closes his eyes, hugging her back.

It was terrible to think they were a pack of six once. Sansa grew up spurning him because of his condition but life has punished them to be the last of the Starks. Just as Dany and he were the last Targaryens.

"Jon," she murmurs on his ears, "I'm sorry for betraying you."

This takes him off guard.

Sansa's deeds had cost them both their futures. Or he believed this for many years when Daenerys' death would not leave him to breathe.

He had no way to prove that if she hadn't used his identity to undermine Dany, this latter wouldn't have done what she did. If he had had the certainty of this, he wouldn't be able to even stand her presence.

However, the present is the only thing left for them, and Dany is alive.

"We'll return home," he promises her, avoiding to answer her request.

Sansa walks away with Brianne and her child.

Tormund approaches and presses his shoulder.

"I told you, little crow," Tormund deepen his voice. "I warmed her heart and that's why she loves the free folk, now."

Jon cackles. At least, Tormund knows how to farewell without turning the situation into a fucking entombment.

"I know you are a survivor," he then gets serious. "Take care of the boy," he points watching Dewyn. "And please, do not break her heart."
Both men stare at Val, who was separated from the group to stand in the dock, beholding the view of the Gulf of Grief. An appropriated name.

Jon marches in her direction.

"I have lost the number of times you have left me," Val says without expecting him to speak first. "But all those times before, I had been certain of your return."

Jon is taken aback by her lack of confidence.

"I know you will survive," she responds as if she is reading his mind. "But I don't know if you will come back to me."

And then he understands.

He would like to assure her that her fears were senseless. He would like to promise her that everything was going to be as it used to. Most of all, he would like to love her as she love him. He would like to throw the past on that sea and to never look back, but he couldn't.

He knows now that he can't.

Val doesn't wait for his response and turns around, throwing herself at him and joining their lips for a kiss Jon returns out of habit.

He also laments that her kisses had never could erase Dany's trace.

Second Interlude: R'hollor retaliation .

Somewhere in the Gulf of Grief

Kinvara

"She has consented, my Lord," Kinvara says with rejoice. "It will be done as you commanded."

"Good, my child," the God answers taking its form to the balcony of the ship. It is the first night and no one is there to witness its presence. "It must end, everything must end."

"Will she survive it?"

"Do I ever made a mistake, daughter of mine?"

"Of course you not," Kinvara bows, feeling ashamed by her indiscretion "but she's human and free willing."

The God smiles beneath the mask that protects the face no one will see. That no one will stand.

"For what you will be by her side, whispering the words she wants to hear," the God walks again inside the cabin. "And the shield will protect her until it comes the time when it must be removed."

Kinvara assents.

"He knows we are preparing."

"Let him be prepared, too," R'hollor moves to the door, open it to get out. "Let him build the path."
The idea of making Quaithe the human form of R'hollor came to me when I remembered that my mom used to say that God's face can never be seen because literally we humans can't stand that kind of power. I'm an agnostic but that idea actually seems interesting for me.

This is the end of the marathonic updates guys, the next chapters will be longer and it will take me some more time to write them. Thank for your support and comments, I really appreciate them.

Names of the next chapters:
Chapter 8: Queen of Cities.
Chapter 9: The Undying.
Chapter Summary

Three months to Qarth.

Chapter Notes

I swear that I try to make this not so long (I put myself the limit of 10k) but sometimes I just keep writing until I am on a fucking corner lol.

Another thing, a sweet lady send me a beautiful edit of Dany! (Thank you, thank you, thank you!) I will post it on another work where maybe I'll post some of my own drawings, too. (I'm not professional, lol, just a regular hobbyist).

I bought another computer so let's hope it helps to end this first part as soon as possible. I really want to start the second one haha.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 8: “Queen of Cities.”

I

Somewhere in the Gulf of Grief - The First Week

Jon

The Northmen and the Southron make a stake on who will intercourse with the Red Priestess in the first week. Ser Davos observes in silence, keeping secret the true nature of her kind, and letting them find out.

Daario apprises they could visit the brothels in Ghaen in a couple of weeks, warning them to behave properly or they will be executed without a trial. Nor Jon nor his companions are interested.

They spend the daylight mostly training and preparing Dewyn for his first battle, and in the nights on the common dinner hall overhearing Davos' stories about all the battles he has survived and why he keeps fighting though does not considers himself a soldier.

"I've got just m' life, lads," he explains with a melancholic expression. "Matthos is gone, Marya is gone, little Shireen is gone, and I can't keep being the one cheatin' death."

Jon empathises with the old knight and wonders if his destiny would be the same.

"Aren't you afraid?" Davos asks to Monterys and Dewyn, the youngest of them. Both barely spoke a word on the whole trip.

"I've never been in a battlefield," Dewyn answers first, always nonchalant, "But I have face death already."
Monterys seems more thorough with his response. "I’d battled when Crow's Eye attacked Storm's End," he recalls staring at Gendry and then again to a lost point in the wooden floor. "A part of me will always be afraid, but duty comes first. And my duty is to serve Westeros and the Queen."

Jon thinks back about what Gendry mentioned some weeks ago in the Great Keep when he bantered up about the boy’s fixation on her.

"How Queen Daenerys agreed on taking you under her protection?" Davos goes on, interrupting his ramblings. "Wasn't she bothered about your oath with King Bran?"

Gendry denies it and starts to recount the events after settling in Valyria, four years ago. "At first she was reluctant. Scared of the people that could have arrived with us," Gendry’s expression saddened, "It was a well-founded fear since, in the day of the Great Feast to celebrate the restoration, a singer from King’s Landing sang the song of ice and fire in front of all her subjects."

Jon jaw clenched.

"A sham," Jon complains, "I didn't even hear it once."

Gendry tries to hum the song, "I only remember the Essosi version and it's not good with you." For which Jon felt thankful. "Both versions are shams; no one knows the true story but the two of you, right?"

Jon knows he was asking for permission, extending the lead of the conversation to him.

"I left her alone," Jon voices aloud, for the first time. "She needed me and I failed to deliver a small sense of security."

Davos let out a moan of disagreement.

"Does that justify killing innocent people?" he queries. "Hundreds of small, poor children charred by Drogon’s fire."

No one dares to question that until Monterys shakes his head in denial.

"I’m not justifying what she did, but no one of us knows about her pain, the power she holds and the terrible burden it is."

Jon liberates a short, bitter snarl. "I told Tyrion the same thing and his response was that she would never stop until there was nothing but ashes and dust in this world," Jon rapidly adds, stirred with the boy’s love for her. He has been in the same place, too.

"And you believed him?" Monterys questions with a stern expression.

"I went to talk sense to her and she proved Tyrion right. She wanted to go on."

"With one vulnerable dragon and a depleted army?" he mentions this as a forgotten truism.

"With one dragon she slaughtered half King's Landing, boy," Ser Davos insists.

"Let me get this right," Monterys clears his throat, "What Gendry's father did when he won the battle of the Trident against Jon's father? With the support of Lord Eddar Stark, by the way."

"He marched south," Jon responds, knowing where he was going.

"And who allied with him?"
"Tywin Lannister."

"Who did what?"

"He sacked the city and killed Rhaegar's wife and children," Ser Davos replies this time. "Stannis was supposed to go for Daenerys, her brother, and mother."

"With the endorsement of who?"

"Of King Robert," Gendry answers.

"And what happened in the subsequent years when Targaryen loyalists or anyone else tried to oppose Robert’s will? The Greyjoys, for example."

"They were crushed and subdued," Jon acknowledges, his explanation entering like daggers in his breastbone.

"It's hard to see a monster when all she did was the same thing other men have done before her," Monterys concludes, "King Aegon I and Queen Visenya almost erased the entire population of Dorne. And this is something you will hear Prince Yronwood say."

Jon understands. He has been dealing with that reasoning for years but the boy did not witness Drogon raining fire over scared, innocent people. He has not being crashed by the notion of letting someone so destructive go on with her plans. No one truly knows the dragon until is awakened.

"Daenerys was supposed to be different," Jon says aloud something that was crossing his mind. "I did believe her our only hope."

Monterys frowns, "I ask your pardon, Lord Snow, but it's a hard truth to believe in," he turns to watch Gendry and Ser Davos, "Did Lord Eddar Stark turn on Robert Baratheon because he did not like his methods? Did you betray Stannis when he burnt all those people with Lady Melissandre whispering lies in his ears?"

"He betrayed him by not telling him about my existence," Jon retorts.

“And Ser Davos help me run away from Melissandre against Stannis will,” Gendry contributes.

"That was protection," Monterys rebuts, gazing straight at Jon’s eyes, “Killing her when she wasn’t directly threatening you or your family, was just? You made clear that you weren’t punishing her.”

Jon gulps hard and sighs, "What have you done in my place?"

"I do love her," Monterys confesses what everyone already knows; "I would have done anything in my power to bring her back."

With this last bit Monterys withdraws upstairs, to the deck.

**Daenerys**

The waiting was long, and the training wasn't distracting her enough.

She spends her time either improving her aim with the bow, getting Barristal, Jorion and Daarion used to the armours or helping Arianne to deal with some of the Realm's affair. The Great Keep feels empty without Ornela and the children, who were still on the journey back home from South
Harbour. She truly feels boring at some moments.

It's because of this that she goes to the only source of entertainment she knows about, Tormund Giantsbane.

She arrives in the afternoon when most of the wildlings join around a bonfire to celebrate. Daenerys does not know exactly what.

Tormund and some other men are singing a song when she approaches, her small form hidden beneath the old red fabric she brought from Volantis.

Ooooooh, I am the last of the giants,
my people are gone from the earth.
The last of the great mountain giants,
who ruled all the world at my birth.
Oh the smallfolk have stolen my forests,
they've stolen my rivers and hills.
And the've built a great wall through my valleys,
and fished all the fish from my rills.
In stone halls they burn their great fires,
in stone halls they forge their sharp spears.
Whilst I walk alone in the mountains,
with no true companion but tears.
They hunt me with dogs in the daylight,
they hunt me with torches by night.
For these men who are small can never stand tall,
whilst giants still walk in the light.
Ooooooooh, I am the LAST of the giants,
so learn well the words of my song.
For when I am gone the singing will fade,
and the silence shall last long and long.

When he's over, everyone cheers and drink big sips of whatever beverage they had in those horns. For a moment, she manages to understand why Jon was eager to be released from his duty and be with these people. Their joy and disregard for the horrible situation they were in seemed more important than anything else.

All you wanted was to be free, she thinks, and I was an impediment to that freedom.

Daenerys doesn't even need to turn around to confirm that the tingling in her neck comes from an unexpected source.

"You're not going to be the first nor the last one to try," Daenerys warns, turning her face enough to catch Jon's wildling woman pointing an arrow towards her, about five feet away. No one can see them from whence they were. "If you succeed, we will both be lucky."

She turns completely and faces her. Daenerys may feel uncomfortable but the truth is that she was in a state of tiredness and resignation. Jon's wildling girl lowered the bow and looked at her seriously.

"You sent my man to die," she growls. “You want to steal him from me.”

Daenerys barely remembers that one custom of the Free Folk that consisted of stealing their couples. Stealing for not saying raping and forcing. Similar to the Dothraki lifestyle.
“I rather steal cities, not men,” she replies walking closer. The girl lifts her arrow a bit. She’s from her same size and both met the eyes of the other when Daenerys stands close enough for the pointy end to prick her chest. “Go ahead, no one is watching. Finish what he started.”

The blonde girl takes the bow down, her countenance still angered. “Will you take him from me?”

“No,” Daenerys assures.

“My name is Val. Remember.”

The wildling girl whose name is Val then bypasses her and reunites with her people. With Jon’s people.

II

Ghaen - The Third Week

Jon

The staying in Ghaen becomes longer than expected due to storms in the Ghiscari Strait. They make their camp on the outskirts of the city.

The first attack would take place in the coast of the Ghiscari lands, and Jon presumes they will move further east from there.

Daario Naharis never completely reveals his strategy, arguing that due to the Warlocks’ magic, it was very dangerous to act in an orthodox and predictable way. Sometimes Jon tried to contribute but Naharis insisted on ignoring and leaving him mostly out of the conversation.

After studying the maps and discussing an idea with Ser Davos, Jon decides to confront Daario.

"Jon Snow, the White Wolf," he shouts when Jon approaches him in a near tavern. "Or I must call you Aegon Targaryen? It's the name the imp sent me along with his condolences, ten years ago."

It did not surprise him that Tyrion would have tried to protect himself and him.

"And what kind of name is Daario Naharis?" he continues the line of the conversation, taking the seat on the front of him.

"A no one's name," he grunts, notoriously drunk.

"And Jon Snow is the name of a bastard."

He snorts.

"A bastard raised amongst kings and queens it's no true bastard," Naharis opposes, taking another sip of his brew. "What do you want? I have no patience as Daenerys, so speak now."

"Vaes Orvik, Vaes Shirosi, Vaes Qosar," Jon names the abandoned Dothraki cities, "Port Yhos, Qarkash, and Qarth."

"What?" he asks lifting his eyebrow, "Were you taking Geography lessons?"

"We shouldn't take the three cities from west to east" he begins, knowing that it could sound
insane, "we should go the other way around. From east to west. Start for Qarth."

Daario doesn't move a muscle and just stares at him.

"And make those ruined cities our garrisons," Jon goes on, "you said the rest of the Queen's armies will meet us for the sieges."

"So," Daario speaks after a long pause, "Am I receiving counsel from someone who sent the Dothrakies cavalry on the front lines against an army of reanimated bodies?"

Jon understands his concern. "It wasn't me," he clarifies. "But I accept that my mistake was to agree to that plan."

"Well, White Wolf," Daario says, "Your withdrawal cost her half of both armies. Plus the way you dealt with her in the past..." Daario narrows his eyes and draws a forced smile, "You should already know why I can't trust in your good judgment of things, less in my battles' strategies."

"I'm not getting into your strategies," though Jon has tried. "You mentioned the Warlocks defeated Daenerys' army when they attempted to infiltrated the city during a siege. We can't make a siege."

"Is this because you want to rush her return to Westeros?"

"No," Jon denies bluntly. "It is a suggestion from a commander to another."

"A commander of three hundred and twelve men," he reminds him. "I am the commander of the Queen's royal army, which consists of more than one hundred thousand men."

Jon asks himself if this was a competence.

"What I'm saying is that I can't go to my men and tell them that I will be following your suggestion, you have not a good reputation exactly."

"Then, you are not saying this is a bad idea."

"I should think a lot about it to say if it's bad or good," Daario rubs his eyes, "We have the numbers in our favour."

That last comment makes Jon think back in Dany's word in Eastgates. 'I need the blood of the First Men'.

"When we'll see Daenerys?"

With this question, Daario frowns. "You won't get near her."

"I represent my soldiers in front of her."

"That's why you," he bangs his hand against the table, "...answer to Jornik," he raises his hand a little in the air, "who answers to me," he lifts his hand in the air again, "and I answer to the queen, "and with this last comment, his hand is above the head of both.

Daario lowers his hand again, pointing "you," and raises it up, "the queen."

Jon swallows hard, exasperated.

"I have already been in her presence."
Daario leans against the back of the chair and observes him. "If I had been aware you still wet as a
dog for her, I would have never let you that close to her."

He's taken aback and starts to tremble. "That's not-"

"Do you know she's fucking the Poison King, right?" Daario teases, "My quarters are one floor
down and I can't perfectly hear what they do when he pays visit. Although, she is mostly the one
flying to see him in his palace."

Jon did not need that image in his head but how can it be otherwise? He has been with Val, and
Daenerys is with another man. They were both grown-ups.

"See," Daario points, "That's the same stare the old Jorah used to throw at me after I exited her
chamber in Meereen."

Jon knows his breathing is heavy and his heart is beating fast. He wants to be rational but Daario
seems more of a child provoking his rival.

"This is not what I came to discuss," he states, easing his nervousness. "If you don't want me close,
why you just don't kill me? I shall not oppose."

Daario let out a snort. "If I kill you, I'll be betraying her. And I will never betray my queen. Jorah
Mormont might was the one who had loved her the most but I am her most loyal companion since I
lay my sword in her feet."

"If she doesn't allow you to kill me," Jon begins, taking a more serious tone, "mayhaps she trusts
me enough to be in her presence."

"Her trust in you let her rotting inside a cave in Port Ibben."

Jon stops breathing. Until that moment he didn't know where her body had ended.

"Oh, she didn't tell you," Daario notes, "There are many things you don't know, false bastard," he
tells as if there's much more he still needs to know.

"I thought Drogon would have taken her to the ruins of Old Valyria," he confesses, a part of him
not wanting to hear the rest of his narration. The other was eager.

"The dragon wanted to die with his mother. He had nothing to live for, so he flew north where
dragons..."

"...don't grow anymore."

The words of the Red Priestess resounded in his mind.

'They don't like the North,' Dany said when Drogon and Rhaegal had refused to eat, staying at
Winterfell.

"The red people found them both in a cave. Her body barely had something to save, and Drogon
was starving himself to death," Jon starts to feel unwell, but was incapable of standing and retire.
Daario's gaze return to be dark as it is in Valyria. "When she returned to me her body was still grey
and stinking. The scar you put in her chest left at sight the flesh one could see from the distance-"

"Why are you telling me this?" Jon cuts him off.

"Because I get pleasure when your puppy face sorrows. I want you to have the image of your doing
in mind because I have to live with it for ten years. I promise you that if you ever dare to do the same, I will go not for you, but for every single person you care about."

"I would rather die than hurt her again."

"I know you won't. But what I mean is that you won't touch her in any form ever again. Am I being clear?"

---

**Daenerys**

The conversations with Tormund entertained her enough to stay for several days at Jorah's Port. Arianne took advantage of her sudden presence to move her from one place to another in the city and show her how she implemented the orders entrusted to her. Normally, she felt uncomfortable walking among the people who inhabited her realm but accepted the gifts and greetings with courtesy.

Daenerys observed that Arianne had a natural gift for these things and it reminded her of that young queen who dreamed of making a kingdom beautiful, full of fat men and pretty maids and laughing children. People who will smile when they see her ride by. Valyria had all that, but the queen was gone. Nothing is nor would it be as it was then because if something Daenerys had learned from that life, is that things cannot change.

That thought brought her back to Jon. Her soldiers had told her about the incident with one of the Lords who had refused to march forth Qarth, and how his countrymen had celebrated and encouraged him. The Jon she remembers and barely knew only fought monsters. The dead, the Walkers, the Night King and finally her. Daenerys had hardly seen him raise his sword against another living man. An ideal of honour.

Perhaps the wars were exhausting him. Daenerys doesn't think he is a new man, or that it has changed. He is tired, frustrated and fed up. His regret and pain come from the anger that elicits the collapse of his idyllic life with the wildlings.

_You killed me for nothing._

"Have you considered my proposal?" she asks Tormund while helping him prepare his famous giant milk, which was nothing more than a very intense beer mix.

Jon's loyal friend watches her hesitantly.

"You know there is nothing we want more than the north, mama of dragons," he replied, sliding his gaze to his people. In the distance was Val, who when Daenerys showed up, went away to the stables. "And my people would accept it," he adds, seeing her again, "but he will not."

"He came for a solution," she replies too harshly, "besides, he wants freedom."

She will not tell him that in the flames she has seen their farewell in Winterfell. Jon saying that he would wish to go North with him.

"What do you think he did when he crossed the Wall with us?" he questions like if he could read her mind, “That he sat down to drink and sing around a campfire because he was free?"

Daenerys does not answer.
"His wolf almost starved to death because he never left his tent, fearing that he would do something stupid in his absence."

The mention of Ghost, Jon's direwolf, brought her a painful memory. One of the things she wanted to do the most on her arrival at Winterfell was Jon to introduced her to Ghost, but he never did. Daenerys had to settle to see him from afar, feeling farther and farther from Jon. Improper of that environment.

"He is miserable, and he loves to be, but it doesn't mean that with a strong push you can't convince him to go with you."

Daenerys knows about another north than Jon's north. Drogon chose to take her to rest in Ibben, one of the few places she had not wandered in his childhood with Viserys. Her son took them both there to turn stone and ashes into that cave until R'hollor's followers came and could not leave them alone.

"I don't understand you, Tormund," Daenerys complains, his forehead aches from frowning so much. "Why don't you help her?"

"Val doesn't need anyone to help her," Tormund tells her for sure, ignoring that the queen was increasingly irritated by his suggestions. "Besides, if theirs were meant to be, we would already have a lot of little crows running around here and there."

Daenerys was curious about Jon's refusal to procreate children. It was rational to think that in his condition and the state of the North, but how did he make sure it didn't happen? Not even in their brief time together when they made love in the boat, Jon worried about that detail. Although, to be honest, he only approached her when he knew she couldn't have children. Or so they thought.

"I didn't know that the Free Folk also knew Moon Tea," she comments lightly remembering Varys' rings. "I must be the only idiot in the known world who didn't know it."

Tormund laughs hard.

"A man does not come into it, once the seed is planted, and believe me that if my girl Val could have had the little crow's child, she would have done it a long time ago, but Jon can't have them. Not with her."

Daenerys stopped dead. "What?"

"It's a shame, that pretty face of his is going to disappear when he finally finds the death he's looking for," he joked in a less cheerful tone. "You're not going to tell him that you were going to have his child, right?"

She dropped the container in which she was preparing the filthy concoction and Tormund held her before she did too. "Eh eh, Dragon Queen-,

"Who told you?" she interrupts him, grabbing his arm with a strong hold.

Daenerys thinks in all the possibilities. Perhaps Tyrion deduced it, although Daenerys believed it was impossible for him to recognize what was in Varys' rings. Or maybe the Maester in Winterfell told someone else.

If someone else had known besides her, Kinvara and Daario, Jon would already know.

Even Tormund.
"When a woman is with child I can see it from the top of the Wall," Tormund replies, helping her to sit down. "I still remember you in that gray dress; the one you wore when we said goodbye to the dead of the Great War. A small but obvious lump."

Tears began to sprout from her eyes, and she shook her head in denial.

"He never mentioned it and I never dared to tell him because that was going to be the end of him," Tormund laments.

"And you're not going to tell him. Never," she pleads for the first time in a long time.

Tormund sighs and nods.

"You're right about something, Tormund," Daenerys calms down and explains. "We are destined, but not to love each other but to destroy the other. The only way for us is the one ahead. If we look back, we are lost."

"And if you are moving in the wrong direction?" he questions, "You have to look back then."

Daenerys hates he has a point.

"I never beg, Tormund, but I beg you to help me get him away from me. For good."

"I can help you," he responds, "but it's not me who has the last word."

"Please," she repeats.

The wildling man nods. "I'm going to talk to my people tonight."

She thanks him by squeezing his hand.

"I promise you that when the wars in Westeros are over, the Free Folk will be free on any side of the Wall."

III

Guischari Straits - The Fifth Week

Jon

The stars are far more numerous in the East. And they shine brighter, too.

Jon has no much to do in those days but sit in the ship's deck and watch the night sky. He found the change of wheater from day to night horribly unpleasant and decided to cut his hair for the first time in years.

"The North is far," he justified when his fellow travellers had looked at him surprised.

He did not consider himself a superstitious type but in those lands, the magic seemed to slip everywhere. He remembered that Arya had mentioned sighting wonders of all kinds, and Jon fell short of words to explain some of the things they had witnessed. And the more to the East he ventured, the more exposed Targaryen felt in his midst. The one that in Valyria allowed him to hear the whispers from the ruins.
He has started to dream about two kids. A girl and a boy, running through elegant, endless halls. The girl with platinum, long hair and the boy dark, raven curls.

The life they couldn't have.

"What could have happened?" one night asks to Ser Davos, "If Rhaegar had won the Battle of the Trident."

Davos thinks it for a minute before replying, "First, Gendry would've never existed. Second, you would've been a bastard Targaryen, raised in the Red Keep, but still a bastard."

So instead of envy Robb, he would've had envy the other Aegon.

"Your name wouldn't be Aegon, neither," he adds.

"And Dany?" Jon goes on, "Would have she been betrothed to me?"

Davos denies with his head. "No, lad, she is a pure Targaryen, she would have been promised to your brother Aegon."

In that life, he still was a bastard, yearning for what he would never have.

"In any form, it's a pretty miserable existence," Jon quips.

"That doesn't mean you wouldn't love each other," the sailor says with a smile. "They say Rhaegar was a romantic type. If you have truly been in love..."

"Duty comes first," Jon cuts him. "I would have chosen duty," he states as a fact but he's not certain.

"You wouldn't be a honourable fool of the North, Jon," Davos points out. "You would've been raised as a Targaryen. And they do not precisely put duty first."

He knows that. His sire was the example.

"Daenerys was meant to be Queen," Jon assures firmly, "Not the Mad King, Rhaegar, Viserys, the other Aegon or me. It was always her."

"I wish it hadn't cost that much," Davos finalises.

Jon decides to rejoice in those dreams. There are no more things he could wait from this life. He has nothing to live for. He would fight until death finds him as he does not wish to experience life anymore. Anything he yearned for, had fallen meaningless and the one thing he desired and had had for a little time, it would never come back to him.

Daenerys

Daario and the army were going to arrive in a few days to their final destination, which meant that she had little time to spend at Jorah's Port. If they returned victoriously, they would depart to Westeros for who knows how long to end Victarion and Bran. And Daenerys wasn't sure what that will mean.

The purpose for which R'hollor allowed her to cross back that threshold between life and death, it was that? to kill Bran? And what will happen to her when it's done? She certainly had been eager to
return to the white moor, the hut and the snow that never hurt. But she has come back for a reason, and from that moment Daenerys built so many things that depend on her.

Drogon, my love, she whispers in her mind, sensing her son through their tether. I don't want to leave you. If I keep standing, it's only because of you.

Nothing could kill her but love.

Daenerys knows she has to put distance between Jon and her, again. It can't be that hard after all they went through. He spurned and felt disgusted for her, and she would never be capable of forgiving his treason. She loves him with despair and that hurts her. Once she let that love consumed her in a way that destroyed everything she cared for until there was nothing but her life to take. And he took it.

'Jon can't have them,' Tormund said. How was that even possible?

It is this reasoning that leads her into the stable where the wildling girl Val practices with the bow. Her precision makes her feel ashamed of even trying to hold the same weapon.

"Why?" Val asks, warned of her presence. "Why didn't you come back to finish him?"

Daenerys walks closer.

"Would you have done it?"

Val shoots again and hits the mark.

"Yes, without any doubt." The woman turns around and leaves her bow on one side. "Tormund told us about your proposal."

Daenerys advances to take her position.

"And what do you think?"

"I want to go home," she answers from behind.

She lifts the bow and aims for the target.

"Home is with your family," opines, shooting and failing miserably.

"The owner of half the world says so," Val stands nearer. "Lift your elbow. Squeeze the abdomen, and aim higher, not at your goal but higher."

Daenerys listen to her instructions and shoots. The arrow hits the middle of the board.

"I didn't know that a dragon queen needed a bow and arrows."

"I need to learn to defend myself better, don't you think?" "Thank you. I have a team of trainers who haven't help me to achieve it in years."

"None is a woman," the blonde girl says.

"No, they aren't."

After a moment the two of them stare at the other, one suspicious and the other helpless. Or might both.
"You have not come to take bow lessons," Val guesses.

"No," Daenerys turns around, lifting the bow and aiming, "I want you to help him realise what he has to do when the time comes."

The arrow sets on fire and hits the target.

IV

Ghiscari Coastlands - The Seventh Week

Jon

They invade a small city in the lands of Ghiscar with ease as the Warlocks knew they would start the campaign for those lands. Astapor's troops come down to help them and the battle that is released in less than a week ends in their first victory. No Westerosi has yet fallen.

Dewyn executes his first victim and for a few days, they leave him alone to process the sensation. Jon understands what kind of feelings he should be experiencing, even at that moment he would be feeling the same if it weren't for how tired he felt after so many years of it.

Once settled in the mainland, Daario reports that Daenerys will arrive at the camp in a few days. Jon really had the urgent need to talk to her about his idea. The Warlocks, like Victarion in Westeros, knew where and how they would start their strategy and left the weakest men at points of little importance. Hardly if there were inhabitants or value in the cities they took.

All those years the stories told about Daenerys and her imposing armies, conquering how much she got in her way. He was impressed that she did not show up with the dragons to help them, but a commander mentioned in one of the bonfires, that Daenerys uses the dragons to intimidate or just Drogon as a last resort. Until this moment the youngest ones, the children of Rhaegar and Viserion, had not participated in battles.

Stories prove themselves disappointing.

The morning she arrives mounted in Drogon, the procession of her king also arrives with her. It left Jon wondering how had they synchronised their times.

For obvious reasons, he maintains the distance and watches from afar. She's again wearing the armour in which he found her in the ramparts of the Great Keep, which consisted of a chain mail below a leather gilet. She has learnt to fight, they say. She is a warrior queen.

He feels ashamed for feeling ecstatic to see her using the sword.

Jon wanders the borders of the hills, patrolling the surroundings and monitoring the state of his men. Most of them have trouble to adapt to the high temperatures while others hate the food. They get used to Valyria's bonanzas.

He reaches a point where a Dothraki small tribe is settled down the hill and sees Daenerys and Daario walking through its people. She's carrying a little child perched in her waist as others follow her delivering flowers and toys. She ignores his presence, engrossed with her people.

He had no time in the past to see her doing this. In Dragostone there were barely inhabitants, and in
Winterfell people did not receive her well. Then King's Landing came and their time was over.

He never came to appreciate this side of her doings, the masses that follow and love her deeply. The Dany he did not know, and mayhaps the Dany she always was.

**Daenerys**

Gerael gets her two witnesses and she avoids to ask him how much it costs him. His methods were well known for her. The Warlocks were preparing for the offensive and she is afraid that soon they will be employing their magic again.

She sent Kinvara with Jon's convoy so she could make her research from the inside. At the moment she arrives at the camp, she's not there and Daenerys dreads to have had made a mistake in consenting the sacrifice of a northern man.

"Have you seen Kinvara?" she asks Daario while they advance through the Dothraki Village with the curious children following them. One of them, no far from the age of two, claims for her attention. He remembers her of Rhaego. Daenerys grabs the kid. "I need to speak with her before we move forward."

"I offered her an escort," Daario says, picking a flower from a girl. "She gave me one of those creepy smiles and went gone."

Daenerys sighs. She would look for her in the flames but she was smart enough to know Kinvara will never allow being found if she doesn't want it.

"and the Westerosis? How they behave?" before he could replicate she adds, "in both instances."

Daario let our a snort. "We don't really make use of them. And the journey? they were fascinated to find clean brothels."

"All of them?"

His faces get serious and he shakes his head. "Please, do not go that way."

"I met his woman in Jorah's Port and I offered his people to send them to Ibben," she rushes to explain. "I'm expecting that he will agree too."

Daario curses beneath his breath.

"Damn, Daenerys," he complains, his hair is longer and he keeps it tied up in a knock. "The more you get involved, the more he believes-"

"He won't," she cuts him off before he can suggest what others did. Daario is one of the few people that believe in her judgment. At least she thinks that. "He wants one thing and if I give it to him-"

Daario makes them stop abruptly, grabbing her softly by her lower back. "He wants you."

Daenerys stares at him with widespread anger. "Please, not you," she begs.

"Do not fool yourself, not twice. Be more intelligent this time and think with your head, not with your heart."

He leaves when Jornik calls for him and she's left there astonished. She doesn't know what to do
with this information.

A chill runs through her spine obliging her to turn around. She lifts her gaze and found his, who is looking at her stupefied. Daenerys knows that stare.

"Children, little children, burnt!"

Daenerys gently drops the baby in the ground and walks back to her tent. She needs to get some sleep.

V

Jon

That night he dreams again about the corridors of the Red Keep. But at the end of the hall, he does not found Dany, but the throne room destroyed and her blood staining the snow. He has returned to the same dream.

He hears a soft cooing from a place beyond the entrance. He left the throne room and founds himself in the tunnel of Castle Black, the heavy gate opening for him.

The last time he was there, the melting snow gave rise to budding green sprouts that never seemed to be enough to revitalize nature. In this dream, the wasteland is as whitish and inhospitable as the winter that he joined the Night's Watch.

A glimpse of the past.

He moves on until he found a tent. Most of a hut, similar to the ones in the Dothraki Village down the hill. The cooing is calling him and he feels the urgency of stepping inside.

Until that moment Jon did not notice that he wasn't feeling the cold nor the snow burning his skin. It didn't hurt.

He takes a deep breath and gets inside, the environment changing to a warm, colorful atmosphere. Daenerys is there, on her back, unaware he has entered.

"Dany," he calls her, ignoring what occupies her attention.

Jon has no time to notice anything else when Daenerys turns and with desperate eyes, kicking him out of the dream and he wakes up.

There's an uproar outside his tent.

Daenerys

"One drop," Gerael warns her, getting up from the bed they were sharing. His tainted torso getting even bluer since the day she saw him for the first time. He tried his best to distract her when she asked for the blue sleep, but eventually, she won.

"Watching you sleep makes me jealous," she quips, observing some of the vials with poison he brought. "You're so quiet that sometimes I think you're not going to wake up."
He giggles mildly, a sound she got used to. And that reminds her about things she should already forget.

"It makes you sleep," he says walking to the bed again with the cups of tea. "And it kills me."

Daenerys' chest hurts. One of the things she hates about this thing she has with him is that both know it will end. Soon or later. Naturally or tragically.

"You never talk about what will happen when you have gone," she questions, drinking the first sip.

"My people chose me. They will choose someone else."

"And how you make sure they will be safe?"

They lean against the heavy furs, her head resting on his bare chest, hearing beats that could stop anytime.

"I cannot," he replies lightly. "I only can give them the present, but the future belongs to them."

She starts to feel the heaviness of her eyelids, his words going farther and reality escaping from her grip.

Daenerys has no sleeping since she was brought back from death. Not, until the blue sleep. And that's the only way she can see them again. Not for real, because they are always the same, and she knows that in their true form, her Rhaego must be a young boy of seven and ten, while Viserion and Rhaegal must have reached adult size.

Her daughter must be a beautiful girl of ten, with her moon hair and warm brown eyes.

She doesn't fool herself, she knows what she sees in the hut it's not real but a dream. But there was a time for her when even dreams were deprived. If she has to spend an eternity this way, Daenerys would do it gladly. She would behold the view of her children from afar, their peaceful circle of love that someday will be completed with Drogon and her.

"Dany," she hears the grave voice of Jon calling her, and she startles. How?

She reacts fast as the day he presented after her in the Great Keep, thinking only in her children.

*No, you will not see them. You will not see her.*

She pushes him out of the hut and walks outside to face him but he's gone.

"Daenerys," she hears Gerael's distant voice. "Daenerys, wake up!" he rushes her but she can't. It's too soon and the nervousness pulls her out of the dream.

She can barely sight or listen to what's going on, but she senses the blood escaping for her nostrils and mouth.

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**VI**

**Jon**

Daario's men were ambushed midway to Port Yhos, just as Jon feared it would happen. He had never seen such damage inflicted upon a men's body, not even The Stone Men had frightened him
so much. They had to end their pain.

The commanders meet urgently and Daario arrives without Daenerys, which seems strange to him. Jon insists again to march towards the Dothraki cities, and for the first time, his companions listen to him.

"Where is the queen, Naharis?" Archer commander Ulysses Bloom asks. "We need the dragons to attack the cities in one fell swoop."

Daario watches the map in dismay and shakes his head. "She won't risk them until we can secure the infantry on the city walls."

"The White Wolf's suggestion is good," another commander points out. "It's going to distract the Warlocks."

"They are sorcerers, how are we sure they don't know about our movements anymore? And where is the red witch?"

Daario is thoughtful. After a long time, he nods, frustrated and given up.

"Snow, come with me," he tells him and Jon follows his lead.

They advance through the camp for several minutes until he sees a large tent appearing, that he supposes it belongs to Daenerys. Outside there are several guards stationed, a couple of them with a turquoise banner and a silver star in the middle. The insignia of Lys.

"A queen has her needs," Daario affirms, entering the tent easygoing, everyone already knows him. Jon has his weapons removed.

When they enter they can't find anyone, just an empty desk that he guesses it's hers. Daario seems confused when right there the king of Lys appears from the internal section where he was sleeping next to his queen.

Jon swallows hard.

"The queen is resting," he warns, standing in front of the desk. His face stunned as he blinks nervously. His accent is too soft for Jon's taste, not even in Valyria, he had heard such a thin voice. "What's the matter, Commander Naharis?"

Daario looks at him with the same scepticism that he threw at him some days ago in the Great Keep.

"Since when did Daenerys point you as her regent?" He questions, forgetting of Jon's existence for a moment.

"A few minutes ago," the platinum-haired man replies, his breathing agitated. "We will discuss it privately and calmly, later," he adds before sliding his gaze to Jon.

Jon had stood still and with his hands folded back. He did not understand what was happening and his expression testified it.

"Are you Jon Snow?" asks the poison king, frowning.

“I am,” Jon response is brief, “your grace,” he adds with a little pleasure that the other man notices.
"Call me only Gerael," he asks in false comity, "What is the matter you come to discuss? Why the fuss?"

"Excuse me for my boldness, but this matter requires the presence of the queen," he dares to inquire as suspicious as Daario.

Gerael lifts an eyebrow.

"I'm not a soldier, Jon Snow, but I know about battles and militia," he scolds him, obscuring his gaze. Jon hadn't pay attention to how blue his eyes were. "And the queen is unwell."

"And when is she going to be well?" Daario gets back into the conversation, even more plucky than before.

A sepulchral silence looms between the three of them when Gerael Dagareon does not calm their worries. Jon represses the need to jump where he came from and ensure that Daenerys was fine. An irony, he thought.

"The deployment that was going to Port Yhos was ambushed midway," Daario breaks the silence. "We are going to change our strategy and we need her," he emphasizes, "approval."

The poison king looks pale and Jon notices small drops of sweat on his forehead. His breakdown makes him uncomfortable.

"I suggested mobilizing our numbers towards Vaes Orvik, Vaes Shirosi and Vaes Qosar, quartering there to take them by surprise from above," Jon explains, lighten up the conversation.

Gerael looks at Daario, "What do you think?"

Daario, still suspicious and with a clenched jaw, replies, "It has a surprising element."

"And the Warlocks? Has the priestess already appeared?"

Both deny.

After meditating it for a few seconds, Gerael finally gazes at him, "My instincts tell me not to trust you, for obvious reasons," he then slips it to Daario, "But if Daenerys allowed him to get here, then we have to trust her good judgment, right?"

Gerael scratches his forehead, "Reaching Qarth is up to you and your men, Jon Snow. The risk is higher like this, you know?"

Jon nods, "I do."

"Well, because Daario is the queen's most trusted advisor and best friend. What he deems convenient will be done and the queen will approve it," he turns to Daario again. "The matter is in your hands."

Jon slightly bows.

Gerael moves slowly towards the private area but stops in his place as if he has forgotten something.

"You can leave."
The Tenth Week

Vaes Shirosi

Daenerys

His constant presence was affecting her performance, again. Daenerys should not have taken the blue sleep in the middle of a campaign, she never does it but the urgency to dream again, to see something when she closes her eyes, overpowered her. Everything she saw while awake and close to Jon were reminiscences of their past.

After a few days and a lot of milk of the poppy, she reached the soldiers in the ruins of Vaes Shirosi. Daario does not talk about the incident but she can see his countenance powerless and weary.

She faces Jon in meetings; he got his hair cut and looked younger without the northern looks. He barely sees at her and she avoids his gaze, too.

Daenerys doesn't even bother to imagine what he thinks of Gerael. She exposed herself too much when she confronted him about the wildling girl, Val.

'Be more intelligent this time and think with your head, not with your heart' had Daario scolded her, and probably he should've added 'with your lady parts'.

Half of the armies will settle in each, Vaes Orvik and Vaes Shirosi. Jon and the convoy of Northmen will march to Vaes Qosar and find the tunnels the army of Freedman left.

She steps inside a ruined temple to write some of the missives for Arianne that Missanderys and Greywing will take to Jorah's Port when the familiar chill runs her nape. Daenerys jolts grabbing the handle of her knife.

"Please," he excuses, walking with his hands up in the air, without any weapons at view. "I've come to talk."

She is no longer surprised at the way he mocks all her defenses.

"This might be the last time I see you," he begins and Daenerys remains silence. "I can't leave without telling you something I'm wasn't bright enough to say before." He gulps hard as if the words in his mind were battling to get out. "I failed you. I neglected you as my queen, as my partner, as my family, and as a person. You don't have to take upon yourself the blame for everything that has happened. I would entreat you to forgive me but I know what I did, can't be undone."

"I've never regretted having have you in my life, though I know how much pain I caused in yours. I should've fought better for you and for us but I was and I am a weak man. I didn't deserve you."

Jon makes the attempt to approach but Daenerys can't avoid back up. He accepts it with a hurt face. "I wish you all the happiness you deserve. Wherever you find it."

Jon turns around and walks off the temple as Daenerys keeps wondering if she was still under the effect of the blue sleep.

VII
Jon

Ha started to think about what could happen if he fails in this mission. His first thought it's always Dany, and the life she will live with her king and her prosperous reign. Then there's Sansa and Val, the only two women back home that were waiting for him. He trusts Daenerys will ignore the first until it's time to take back Winterfell, for which mostly sure Sansa will have to stay behind and accept every order Daenerys gives her. And Val? he can only presume for the way Dany dealt with them in Jorah's port that they will be safe living in Valyria.

If he dies life will keep going on.

"Lord Snow," one of his soldiers calls him. "The red witch arrived and is waiting for you."

Jon sighs, letting aside the maps he was reading. Ser Davos usually is who reads them and then comes to him, but his traveler companion had stayed behind in Vaes Shirosi and Jon only brought Dewyn and the Northmen. As Dany requires.

She is standing in the middle of the ruined plaza where they made their camp. The bright of the fire only making the red of her gown and hair more intense.

Kinvara, is her name. Kinvara, High Priestess of the Red Temple of Volantis, the Flame of Truth, the Light of Wisdom, and First Servant of the Lord of Light.

Jon does not remember if Lady Melissandre got that many names.

"You must feel grateful," she begins with the chant, "for what each of you has been chosen by our Lord to carry out this mission. The chosen one of our Lord of the Light is and always has been Daenerys Targaryen, who was reborn from the flames and who burns alike. When the snow tried to extinguish her flame the Lord brought her back twice as intense and ardent, with a purpose renewed and a destiny that she has to fulfil."

The red woman moves from one point to another, some men more attracted to her exotic beauty than to her dangerous words.

"On the other side of this world, a common enemy sits, and the true, great, and last war awaits her. But you are only men, and men only fight small wars."

A twisted smile appears in her face.

"Your Queen's enemies are bloodthirsty but the blood of the first men, the blood of the magic of the false gods of old, disgusts them the most." She lifts an eyebrow, "Sorcerers love to lure this magic as if it belongs to them but it does not," she emphasises, "All pretenders must end. Your weakness will also be your strength and although the night is dark and full of terrors soon the light will guide the realm of men, and you will witness the beginning of the end of this age."

Jon avoids rolling his eyes in some parts of her speech, remembering that Melissandre's devinations ended up meaning nothing.

"How are you sure that the magic of the Warlocks will not affect us?" Lord Manderly interrogates, Jon had lamented to brought him but the old man insists he would fight for the North until the end.

"Oh, no," Kinvara advances towards him to explain. "their magic, false and weakened as it is, still can play with the mind."
Kinvara proceeds to look up to Jon, "Your blood and bodies will be intact as long as you know how to control what your mind is telling you."

After the red woman's palaver ended, the first scouts went to look for the tunnels. They found it in two nights, returning safe and sound but telling that terrible things hide in the darkness of the night.

"Do you have faith, Jon Snow?" Kinvara asks the day she's set to depart for Daenerys' camp. "Because our Queen needs faith."

Daenerys

The Warlocks' army ambushed their rangers. They couldn't even approach the cities to check if the scorpions were settled in the Walls. How they are going to take Qarth if they can't even take these two minor cities?

Barristal, Jorion, and Daarion were already lurking around, waiting for her command. Daenerys is terrified that something might happen to them; images of their parents falling from the sky massacred by these projectiles.

Gerael and his men captured a soldier from the Qartheen forces and were examining him, but he seemed just as airtight and stunned as the fallen of the army of freedmen. They were using their magic against their own men.

Jon and the Northmen had to end the Warlocks in Qarth. There was no other alternative.

A part of her couldn't help but feel frightened at the notion of the danger to which he is exposed. Her mind with the voice of Daario keeps warning her to not be a fool. To think with her head and not with her heart.

He killed you, it says, he kissed you goodbye and put an end to your life. You had given him everything until you were only a dead body lying at his feet.

His words of farewell some days ago do not come from love but from guilt and frustration. Love is having him alive when he had cost you everything. Love is wanting him safe though he is her murderer. Love is what she feels. People are misreading his mania for misery with a love that does not exist. It never has.

Please, be safe and come back so I can send you to live your life away from me. I don't wish you dead, Jon. I want you not here where my sore heart claims for you.

VII

Qarth

Jon

Five men didn't make it to the end.

Dewyn was tormented by having to kill a reanimated image of his mother. Lord Mandery saw his son being slaughtered in the Red Wedding and his corpse thrown to the hogs.

Jon did not see a single thing and was the first to reach the end after having loose almost every man behind him. He did not notice the absence. Neither the solitude. He just moved forward until
he was in what it seemed to be the catacombs of the city, and a man clothed with a grey coat and with just one hand receives him, a torch in his only hand is the sole light in the darkness.

"Welcome to the Queen of Cities," he greets with a slight nod and his face full of delight and relief.

Every Northmen that crossed the tunnel has a horrible story to tell as well. Some say that not even the dead had scared them that much.

Jon checks on everyone until the morning came and they have no time to spare.

The accent of the Qartheen is stronger than any other he had heard since stepping Essos for the first time, and the man of the one hand has a name too difficult for them to pronounce. They just dub him “One-handed” and he does not protest. His common tongue is not perfect but enough to indicate the path towards the place where the rebel slaves made their seat. When they reach these secret quarters, they have to change the dub, because all the slaves in Qarth had only one hand.

“A slave with one hand can hold no weapon and still serve its master,” explains the former One-handed, and Jon feels anger boiling inside him.

“Call me as you wish,” then he consents. “This one was born with no name. Until Mhysa gave us hope.”

How someone goes through life without a name? Jon asks himself. Dewyn mentioned to the slave that he also had no name until the age of three.

“Did this one a slave in Westeros, too?” he asked then.

“No,” Dewyn replied, “On the wrong side of the Wall.”

They rename the slave Torchlight.

The first couple of days all were scared and expecting the Warlocks or their army to arrive and kill them. It was the first time soldiers from the outside have reached this far. Torchlight and other rebels slaves had a hard time trying to communicate with them.

“King Zit Preen sits on Hall of a Thousand Thrones,” they explained. “Army will defend the man with Whip.”

“What is that?” Jon questioned, trying to find in the map a way to reach that palace.

“Power,” they respond, "The one that holds it, holds power, too."

"And how many of these Warlocks are we facing?"

Torchlight lifts his hand to show three fingers.

"Just three?" Jon inquires confused. "How three people took the power of an entire city?"

"Warlock Pyat Pree killed the Pureborn and crowned Xaro Xhoan Daxos, " he starts to tell and Jon remembers what the book of Samwell narrates about Dany's staying in Qarth.

"Mhysa killed them both and set the House of the Undying in flames. Warlocks decided power is them. And they took the Whip."

'Everywhere she goes evil men die.' But these men deserved to die. Jon just wishes she had kill them all.
"Masters not protest, they fear magic," he continues, "When Mhysa started freeing slaves in the west they took our hands away so we can never fight back."

Jon and the Northmen are overwhelmed by this information, but not surprised at all. Westeros has no slavery but such cruelty is not unknown for them. He just did something similar some weeks ago, in a different context of course.

"How many men the army has?" Lord Manderly asks.

Torchlight looks around inspecting them.

"More than you," he indicates with concern in his voice.

There's an army that outnumbers them, headed by magic creatures they know little about. Chances weren't in their favour.

"The thing in the tunnel? What is that?" then he makes the question. "All my men say they saw things..."

"Warlocks put magic in the lands around Qarth when Mhysa came back from death. To make sure she won't return."

Jon knew Daenerys soldiers can't cross these lands and return safely. They have made it through the tunnels unscathed but their minds were played.

He has no idea how to make it to the Warlocks. He wants to believe that killing them means ending the magic, as it happened with the Night King.

"I imagine you have an idea of how to get there?" Jon consults but does not wait to receive an affirmative response.

"We know passages," Torchfire answers, "but there's magic there, too."

The Northmen stare at Jon with pure distress. He hadn't seen what they did see, but their expressions tell enough. Jon clenched his hands in and out, doubtful.

"You will stay with these men and then wait for my lead," he demands to his soldiers. He turns around to face Torchlight. "And you will take me to these passages."

Torchlight lifts up his chin and nod.

**Vaes Shirosi**

**Daenerys**

They have a Warlock.

Hundreds have died to get him, but they finally did.

She ordered to enclose him in one of the ruined palaces of Vaes Shirosi, with just red priestess as guards. Daenerys also put some Westerosis around to see if their mixed blood was strong enough to keep him abide.

Gerael comes with her and does his thing. The Warlock mocks him and tries to deceive him but he
keeps his composure enough to put some poison in his mind and besot him.

“How is R’hollor, Kinvara?” he asks the red priestess when they are face to face. His voice is barely a whisper. “They say the Raven won.”

He was speaking in the common tongue, and Daenerys deduces he wants to be understood.

“Some have profaned his benignity, that's true,” she replies hooking his chin with her hand. "And they will pay the price for the usage."

"His?” he questions staring at Daenerys before returning to Kinvara. "You are still playing with the Dragon Queen, I see."

Daenerys observes at Kinvara with suspicion, but the woman is serious.

"She is a servant as we are," she states, "She's destined to end the darkness of this world. She's meant to end your kind."

"She's a Dragon, and they don't do good to this world."

Kinvara only smiles in return before walking backward, "Sohorioz," she speaks, "Tell us where they hide and your sins will be burned away."

The Warlock jumps towards her and hisses. His lips were blue and Daenerys recalls Pyat Pree also have them like this.

"It's enough," she scolds holding the neck of the Warlock. "I don't care about your business with R'hollor but you harm my people and because of that all of you will extinguish."

He let out a noisy guffaw and his eyes met with hers.

"The one that was promised," he recites as Kinvara will chant in front of her public, "born from the fire she was reborn to remake the world. Her dragons are fire made flesh, a gift from the Lord of Light," he smiles maliciously, "Sure they are not long-lasting gifts."

Gerael makes another cut in the Warlock chest, ripping out of him another scream of agony. A scream that turns into a burst of laughter.

"The Undying can't be destroyed, Dragon Queen," he states between accelerated breaths, "Not even the White Wolf you send to face them will ever beat them," Daenerys feels a sting of anxiety, "His minds is going weak, weak, weak and blood will win its battle soon."

After this, the Warlock dies and Daenerys is stunned by his words.

"One less," Kinvara points with indifference. "We need two more and then we go for the Undying."

Gerael cleans his knife and goes outside.

"What did he mean with Jon having his mind weakened?” she inquires facing the red woman. "He is from the North."

"He is," she agrees, "but he's also a son of fire. His kind is unpredictable, sadly."

"His kind?"
Kinvara stands serious. It reminds her of Sansa Stark and her cold treatment back in Winterfell. "Guards of the Realm of the Men."

Daenerys leaves the priestess behind and walks towards the outskirts of the city where she left Drogon and the hatchlings.

VIII

Qarth

Jon

Wandering through the alleyways of the city, he thinks back of Maester Luwin teaching them about the magnificent city Qarth was. "A queen of cities," he used to tell, "The wonder of wonders."

Jon does not see this supposed wonder in this place. It's true that he has been just in a few places in his whole life, but Qarth was not even close to being as beautiful as the capital of Valyria was. If Jon is being honest, he will say that there was any difference between this and King's Landing; abandoned buildings, dead nature, and poor people scattered through various spots.

And the smell of shit and rot.

He can't see the famous triple walls from whence they were but Jon is sure they would be full of ballistas and soldiers prepared for Dany's arrival.

Jon realises that the only thing that keeps Qarth out of Dany's reach is the sorcerers. The city is practically in ruins.

It is not until they reach a point with greater height than Jon is allowed to stretch a little and observe the city walls.

As he suspected, there are several ballistas settle in, between nine or ten feet apart from each other, according to his calculations.

Between each of them was something else, a kind of stake, but he couldn't tell what it was.

His expression alerted Torchlight, who explains it, "The Masters said that Mhysa was going to burn Qarth until left her in ashes," on his countenance, there is some concern as if that could be accomplished. Jon wanted to reassure him and tell him that they shouldn't get to that point. "We said no, so they took the children and crucified them as the Masters in Meereen. They cut off their heads so Mhysa could not see their faces."

Jon staggers and almost falls over the edge of the ramp they were crossing.

During that brief time, he spent on Qarth, he has tried to convince himself that things worked this way on this side of the world. However, a voice deep in his mind began to torment him, telling him they were not. That can't be normal.

He recalled that Lord Stark intended to execute Jorah Mormont for selling slaves, and until then for him, it was a matter of honour. His mind began to flood with memories of what had happened in Essos after Daenerys died. He himself had recriminated her for acting against the children of King's Landing.

The headache became stronger and more intense and he had to concentrate to continue touring the
halls of the city. Jon just wanted to end it all. Jon wanted no more wars.

They reached what looked like the entrance of a palace that stood several meters above them. It was uninhabited and Jon saw only darkness from the outside.

"I can't get in," Torchlight apologizes. "Men who enter never leave again."

Jon nods, not caring too much what could happen, and walks inside.

On this occasion, it’s different. He spends the first couple of minutes thinking back on what Torchlight said about Daenerys burning the city following the Master’s provocation. Jon knows she is the one that provides the slaves with weapons to decide their destiny when the city is taken. A decision Jon wouldn’t have approved if he hadn’t known about their deeds. However, Qarth needs her intervention just a Westeros do.

Jon sighs and keeps walking, feeling wearier than he has felt in a lot of time; the armour beneath the heavy cloak he is using to hide, relenting him.

_Burn._

Jon startles at the sound of a voice saying that word. He turns around to illuminate the empty space surrounding him.

_Beware the mummer’s dragon_, it says after letting out an evil giggle.

Jon takes the handle of Longclaw and prepares for the worst.

_The dragon will wake, the dragon will wake_, it keeps chanting.

Jon draws the sword.

_Snow will burn, snow will burn._

The voices are dissimilar but all of them make Jon go disquiet. At one moment, he can't discern between his unrelenting instinct for survival and his desire for just giving up.

'You are my queen, now and always', he hears his own voice followed by the sound of the dagger burying deep inside Dany's torso.

'Be with me', her voice says this time.

He has to stop and vomit. He's feeling sick and dizzy, his head throbbing in pain.

Finally, a crack of light appears and Jon knows what it's coming it's not easy but he has to get out of this place.

He walks in what it seems a long hall that reminds him of his dream of the Red Keep. He knows he has not much time before someone finds him so he advances until he goes through another corridor.

Jon does not know where to go from there but keeps moving. When he hears steps approaching, he hides behind a rare statue and sees from his hiding place a group of soldiers crossing the corridor. He observes that they carry long swords instead of falchions as any other army on Essos.

'A slave with one hand can hold no weapon and still serve its master,' he remembers Torchlight saying.
They move and Jon makes his way, following them to a yard. Little after, he realises his mistake.

“We waited for you too long, Jon Snow.”

Jon closes his eyes, lamenting his impatience. He doesn’t know where the voice comes from.

“Walk straight and you’ll find your destiny,” it insists, “that one you’ve looking for so long.”

He unsheathes Longclaw.

“The wolf is still a wolf,” warns the voice after a burst of sick laughter, “The wolf is still a wolf,” repeats.

Then Jon sees it. First, it’s not more than a shadow but the closer it gets, Jon notice that it’s one of them. A Warlock.

Soon the soldiers are coming from everywhere, and he knows that he has been ambushed.

“The mind of this one it’s precious,” Jon turns around and watches as another Warlock appears from behind. “His mind does not die,” his face emaciated, lips blue and long, white hair. “The undying will want this one.”

The Undying. They wanted Daenerys for her dragons in the past.

“She will come, and your city will be ashes,” Jon speaks finally, “if you care for your survival, surrender.”

“We do not care for the Mother of Dragons,” suddenly the Warlock is by his side, talking directly in his ear. Jon jumps and tries to use Longclaw to defend himself, but the creature is gone again. “If she wants this filthy city, she can take it. We wanted the white wolf.”

Jon is confused and the Warlocks smile widely at the realisation.

“Snow will burn, Snow will burn,” both are chanting walking towards him, and Jon returns to settle in the middle of the hall. He does not find an escape.

“Only death can pay for life,” one begins.

“Only sacrifice can pay for victory,” the other finishes.

They are about to reach Jon when the characteristic sound of the screaming northerners explodes.

The Warlock from the left turns around and goes where the fight has started. The other, smiles when Jon swings Longclaw and tries to end him. Is there that Jon notices that this Warlock has the whip stranded to his waist. This one must be the King Zit Preet.

Jon knows they have not much time before the rest of the army appears. He needs the whip.

That’s when they hear them.

The sound of salvation coming from the sky.

Daenerys
Her breathing it’s unstable and she fights the urge to vomit. She hadn’t been this nervous since the day she flies over King’s Landing, straight to the walls and to the Golden Company, the moment she passed over the terrified citizen and contemplated how frightened they were. Fear was the only thing she had.

This time she goes down from the sky straight to the center of the city, forcing the soldiers from the walls to turn around the scorpions. Drogon and her go south, Barristal north, Jorion west, and Daarion east. They are protected by the armour, and when a projectile tries to reach them they dodge them or simply shield themselves with the metallic protection. Her attention is divided in four directions at the same time. Daenerys notices that Barristal has no mercy towards his victims, and he ends the men on his side just moments after Drogon.

She’s bathed in smoke and blood when she finish but she does not understand, Drogon never approaches or let enough of his victims to spread blood. When her son settles on the wall she looks down at her hands, tarnished with a pestilent remnant of flesh. Her heir has something of it, too. Then she realises what it is.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty and she keeps counting until she can’t. Little bodies nailed on wooden beams. Bodies that have no faces.

Daenerys shakes uncontrollably and prepares Drogon to go where the main battle is happening.

Jon and the Northmen followed the plan and were sparring against several soldiers at the same time. She knows she can’t set fire over the surroundings without harming them, so Daenerys orders the hatchlings, minor in size than Drogon, to go down on the battlefield.

“Ilagon!” she shouts at them, “Daor drakaris!” she specifies.

Jorion and Daarion are in the battlefield hitting, knocking down and scaring everyone in their path. Barristal flies up and then lands thumping the ground with all his weight.

She shakes her head in disbelief and proud at the same time.

“Daenerys!” Jon’s voice screams.

She turns around at the time to notice a spear flying towards her, eluding it. She makes Drogon rotate to face multiple warriors coming to imitate the movement but she’s soon smashing them all under Drogon’s armoured chest.

When she’s in the air again, beholding the view of the city and looking at for Jon, she observes the Temple of the Memory and the people running to hide inside.

Then she catches Jon fighting against one of the Warlocks, not too different from the one they killed off in Vaes Shirosi.

The hatchlings are still entertained with their human meet, specially Barristal, who is standing above his prey, taking off his limbs one by one. Daenerys didn’t want the Northmen to see the dragons doing this, but she does not care anymore. *Let it be fear.*

“Daenerys,” Jon calls for her again, “The whip!” he points out, but she does not get it. “Take the whip!” and then captures the view of the object in one corner, near where their battle was taking place.

Daenerys jumps out of Drogon’s loin and meets her first opponent on the ground. She unsheathes
her sword and swings it easy to cut the man's leg, forcing him to bend over for her to sink the blade on his back. A move she remembers from Jorah. Then the second comes, the third, the fourth and the fifth and she keeps switching from one to another technic.

She’s about to take it when the most terrible sound it’s heard.

They hurt one of the hatchlings.

Daenerys turns around with despair, walking below Drogon’s belly and seeing Barristal being ramming with a spear. The red dragon rapidly rips off the head of his attacker but the spear relents him and is now crying with anguish and pain.

“Dany, the whip!” Jon pleas from behind, and for a moment she freezes.

Drogon moves to protect Barristal, while she runs to the other side, dodging another attacker. His blade cuts her leg, and she throws herself to the ground, grabbing the whip a tossing it towards Jon.

She knows the bleeding must be important but she does not care, she lifts up and goes to Barristal. Some Northmen surround her to help her get where Drogon and Barristal were.

Daenerys takes the spear but the hatchling shakes her off, still hurting. She sees blood flooding out from the exposed skin of his neck and she starts to dire along with him.

Drogon pushes Barristal down, keeping him still while Dany intends to extract the weapon, but it’s impossible and she realises that she needs help.

She jerks when she feels a hand seizing her arm. She turns and sees Jon, with his other hand occupied with the whip.

"You have to command them with this!" he indicates, showing the whip. "They are enchanted by the Warlocks!"

"What?" she asks, barely listening to him. "Who?"

"The soldiers!"

"You do it!" she protests, "my dragon needs me."

Jon pushes her away almost throwing her to the ground and takes the spear out of a single tug that ends up knocking him down. Barristal opens his muzzle in protest and for a second Daenerys is afraid he will rain fire on Jon. However, Barristal inspects Jon, realising that he is not an enemy and finally flies to get safe and recover.

"Daenerys," Jon speaks to her again, "it's over," he says, and she notices that she no longer hears swords clashing. "Daenerys, it's over."

Bells.

Bells are sounding.

Daenerys looks down where Jon holds her arm.

Drogon downs his head and snarls at him in warning, so he slowly releases his grip and backs up.

Then she moves back to her son and gently climbs his back.
This is not over.

IX

Jon

The bells of the city bang thunderously. It's like reliving that terrible day at King's Landing that changed everything. The day their lives were not the same again.

And like that time, he can't see her. She flew and is at a very distant point on the horizon, although Drogon's figure is notorious for its enormity. Jon has no way of knowing what she is thinking, what will happen next.

The soldiers are still in their places awaiting his command. Jon would like to yell at Daenerys to approach him, so he can extend the whip, but it would be impossible for her to hear him with that distance in between. Why she did not take the whip?

With what she had done, he was sure that she saw the bodies of the crucified children in the walls. Daenerys would know better than him that it was the task of the Masters and not of the Warlocks. Jon could not think clearly if he was afraid or if he was expectant, anticipating what might happen.

The men of the North remain on alert, in a position similar to the one they had in the streets of King's Landing and now more than ever, awaiting the actions of Daenerys. It was crazy to want to face an army like that with only two hundred men. But there was no need now that the whip was in his hands.

His only enemy was waiting in the Temple of Memory. The men and women who did that monstrosity to those children.

Children. They were just children.

*Burn them,* a voice in his head whispers. *Burn them, Dany,* it prays.

A chill runs through his spine, awakening his common sense. The battle was won, two Warlocks dead and the city was theirs. Daenerys just had to get off the wall and claim her own.

However, they crucified children alive and then decapitated their bodies. They took the hands-off thousands of slaves and intended to continue to sustain their lifestyle.

*Burn them, Dany, burn them,* the voice insists, and Jon has to close his eyes at the sudden dizziness.

"Jon," Dewyn calls him, "Jon, do something."

But Jon doesn't know what he has to do. Daenerys has the last word.

*Burn them.*

Jon only sees distance and ants. Ants running in rows, hiding.

Daenerys

A guttural sound escapes her throat watching the Qartheen nobles hiding in the Temple of Memory as if she couldn't see they are there. Why do they provoke it if they are so afraid of it? Why
complicate things when all they had to do was open the gates and release the slaves. Her body is stained with blood and body parts of children. Children who she arrived too late to save. Children who were victims of the most terrible harassment so that those unclean can continue to be what they are.

The Warlocks didn't even need to do it. These were the Masters's doings. It was the wheel that had to step on everyone to keep rolling.

Even on her.

Especially on her.

Daenerys growls and prepares to fulfill that promise he made so many years ago on the outskirts of this same city.

'When my dragons are grown, we will take back what was stolen from me and destroy those who have wronged me! We will lay waste to armies and burn cities to the ground! Turn us away, and we will burn you first.'

His dragons grew, but they died.

And she took her own and punished those who hurt her, and everything and so, she died. She was dead. Her family, friends, and children were dead but she was still suffering and seeing that nothing she does will heal her pain.

The world cannot be saved.

*Dracarys*, Missandei's voice sounds in her mind. *Burn them all.*

Drogon roared even angrier, but this time it wasn't him conveying his anger with her own, but the other way around.

She was enraging Drogon.

Daenerys lies down and breathes against the hard scales of her son, stretching an arm to caress and reassure him.

*No Drogon,* she says through the bound, *we have to go home.*

*The freed slaves are the ones that will claim justice,* she remembers. *The choice is for them.*

Another bellow from the center of the city startles her.

*Barristal.*

The red dragon flies above the city, surpassing Jon's men and the Qartheen army, straight for the Temple.

*No,* Daenerys pleas, *Barristal no.*

"*Keligon!*" she shouts at the enraged beast that travels to the temple, opening his muzzle and releasing a stream of fire directly over the building.

Drogon under her repeats the groan, calling off Barristal. The other hatchlings look closely but do not imitate their brother's movement.
Daenerys is about to tell Drogon to go there but she stops. She can't hurt Barristal, and she is sure Drogon will do it if they go there.

She doesn't know what else to do. Barristal does not stop until the temple is just fire. A large burning mass in the middle of the intact city.

X

Jon

After the red dragon burnt the Temple with those Master inside, the slaves raised weapons with their sole hands and massacred the rest of what was left of them.

Jon prohibited children under the age of fourteen from being hurt, and simply asked the hypnotized soldiers of the Warlocks to take down the bodies of the slave children from the walls so they could be buried.

Many of his men saw him suspiciously about this decision, but what else can be done? Daenerys with her red dragon had made clear what was the punishment for those actions. And the fact that she departed without saying a word about what happened, alone at the mercy of people they didn't even understand at all, left Jon with few options.

His grip on the whip is iron and constant as if releasing it implies dying at any moment.

Torchlight becomes his only link with the Qartheen, who he asks for peace of mind until the arrival of Daenerys. Or so Jon expects. On the contrary, he is the person the Qartheen has chosen to follow.

In fact, they named him something the first days he left pass until it became curious.

"what are they saying?" Dewyn asked, by his side in one of the patrols they were doing. "It sounds as if they were insulting Jon."

"Jon Snow is King Father," Torchlight replied with a proud expression, "they name Jon Snow King Father."

Before he could begin to explain why it was an erroneous term, Dewyn hit him in the ribs to silence him. They are not in time to make such clarifications when there could be uprisings at any moment.

The Northmen receive the order to keep the peace and do not take advantage of their position. Most of them are tired and just wanted to go home. They took Lord Manderly's body to another temple where he was entombed in a typical northern burial. The same happened with the rest of the fallen.

Although he would've preferred to find a better place to settle, they took the Hall of the Thousand Thrones and Jon took a bath after what it seemed a lifetime. He wasn't accustomed to this amount of self-indulgence.

On the nights he would observe the city from the balconies. One of those evening, a soft but grave sound he had heard so many times before, startled him.

The red dragon.
Jon first thought Daenerys had returned, however, only the crimson beast was there. He was minor in size than Drogon the first time Jon met him, and he was taken aback by his presence when no other of them was around, nor his mother.

He walked slowly until the dragon's form became clearer. He was perched on one of the high walls of the palace, slightly angled on the ground to see Jon. This latter was conscious that the red dragon could be alarmed by his Targaryen blood, as Drogon and Rhaegal in the past. Of might he just wants supper, Jon thought. He didn't care enough to be careful, and went on repeating his movement of stroking his snout.

That night the red dragon just leave but the next one, when he came back to the same place looking for him, he had between his pointy fauns, a scorched game he dropped on Jon's feet.

Jon knew Dany communicated with them through High Valyrian, a language he has not a minimal knowledge about. Except for the word 'Dracarys' that he was certain no one needed to hear, for now. Therefore, Jon chose to stay quiet and accept whatever the dragon wanted.

Minutes of just staring at each other passed until the beast started to push the meat towards Jon and he understood. And having no desire to oppose his will, he took what was offered and cut a piece of it to show the dragon his gratefulness. It surprised him that the red dragon just stared at him a couple of minutes more and then just fly away.

Jon could only hope that Dany will never know about this interaction.

### Daenerys

Port Yhos and Qarckash fall within a day each one. She had barely needed the help of the Westerosis when the army that it was supposed to defend the city consist of enchanted men that where obeying Jon's command from Qarth. She just uses Drogon to destroy the ballistas, avoiding another confusing episode like the one in Qarth.

Daenerys still can't believe Barristal disobey her bluntly. Sure has been hard to train, and untameable in some extension. Nonetheless, not even Drogon has ever unleashed his fire against a specific point without her lead.

"And what now?" she questions Daario when they secure the hold of Qarkash.

"You'll take what's yours," he replies with a proud grin.

She smiles mildly and shakes her head. None of both had mentioned that this was the end of their campaign of conquest. It was not planned to be this long, or this extensive but for her, it is the end. She has no need to go further east, on the contrary, she will go west and finish that pending.

Daenerys couldn't avoid but ask herself what will come after Westeros? She won't be staying there longer than it's necessary. She just has to secure Gendry and Arianne's crown in front of the people and deal with the Raven.

The Raven. She has to face the Raven.

What will happen if she fails? What will be of Essos, Valyria, and Westeros if that happens? And Drogon? And the Hatchlings? She does not want to think too much about it because it can drive her crazy. She has to remember that it can't be worse than the last time.
It can't.

Qarth

Jon

They gather up outside the Hall of a Thousand Thrones. Her emissaries came early that week to inform her arrival, and Jon believed that place the best to present her in front of her people. It is a long tour from the entrance to there but it will allow the slaves and other inhabitants to see and know her.

He orders the soldiers to form two parallel formations and asks Dewyn to stay inside his quarters until the reception ends.

Jon can't help but think this is how King's Landing should have been if everyone involved had played well. If destiny had favour them. However, they have another chance and this time they will do things right. That's what he tells himself every night. Sansa will get back Winterfell, Westeros will thrive again and Dany will do what she always should've done: reign.

And him? He is more certain than any other moment in his life that he will stand there until the very end. No matter what's the final destination is, this will be his last war. The war for Westeros. The war to avenge Arya and free Bran from whatever The Raven is. Might this is why R'holor brought him back, brought them back. Jon trembles at the thought. What if this was meant to be like this? Would Daenerys ever grant him a second opportunity? If it's not to love at least to redeem himself in front of her eyes before he returns to the darkness of death.

*There's have to be a reason,* he keeps repeating in his mind. *There's have to be a reason for all this suffering.*

He is pulled out of his ramblings at the view of Daenerys appearing on the horizon. She's wearing a simple dark red gown, and it's the first time Jon can see a glimpse of her former self. So regal, beautiful and serious. Even scared and expectant. He hadn't noticed how much he has missed her. Not that the warrior version of her does not fascinate him as much as this, just that he longs deeply for the small piece of time they had together before all the world turned on them. He's eager for something familiar, and this was it. He would wish she wouldn't have that ice in her eyes; the constant reminder of the treason between them.

When she's just feet apart, with some of her commanders behind her, including Daario, Jornik, and the Poison King, he slowly pulls the whip on the ground and bends the knee. His action motivates the Northmen behind him and the people on the streets to do the same.

The commanders and Poison King does not imitate the gesture, which he finds odd.

Daenerys bends over, grabbing the whip and lifting up to tourn around and face the masses. Some Westerosis had come with her, but not Gendry, Ser Davos or Monterys.

She does not need to prove anyone how much power she holds, but with what she does now Jon doubts anyone would ever underestimate her, again.

The whip sets on fire and turns to ashes in her hands. The very same thing she did with the lemon trees in Eastgates. The ensorcelled soldiers wake from the spell and look around, disorientated. The slaves, former slaves, cheer at Mhysa.

The one true queen of cities.
Chapter End Notes

Some clarifications:
* I think that actually it would have taken much more than three months to travel through these lands but I decided to create some coherence between why I previously established in regards to the timing in other chapters.
* Take into account, Qarth has been under severe isolation from the rest of the world and that eventually led to the decay of the city.
* I'm a mess writing battles scenes, sorry hahaha.
* I know I made Ser Davos too sceptical about Daenerys but it's because he was there when the destruction of KL happened. He does not hate her, only does not condone the death of so many children. Also, he ignores all the suffering she's been facing since that day.
* Next chapter there will be various meetings and explanation about this battle because I'm better writing dialogue than action scenes to be honest, haha
The Undying

Chapter Summary

Daenerys and the Westerosis celebrate the victory while placing eyes on their next destination: Westeros. Jon must face his feelings.

Chapter Notes

There was going to be Arianne/Sansa/Tyrion POV's in this chapter but I decided to move it to the next one, which will be a heaavy angst chapter. This week I'll be focused on my finals so probably the next update will be in two weeks. Thank you for your continuous support :D

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 9: "The Undying"

Qarth

I

Daenerys

The tingling in her nape makes her conscious he’s looking at her as if they were the only people in that room. However, they are not. The chamber is in its full capacity, and the attendants are not precisely quiet.

Daenerys tries to calm herself hearing the splashing of water coming from the fountain; her mind was having a hard time with this din all around.

“I was a child the last time I was here,” she begins, muting all the voices. “How many years since then? Fifteen maybe? I only can remember walking through the streets with my dying Khalasar, my three newly-born dragons and Ser Jorah Mormont by my side,” she let out a soundless giggle at the memory of her bloodriders trying to steal the ornaments from Xaro’s house. “It was easy to delude me, for those who wanted to do it.”

She turns around and meets their faces; her gaze inevitably falling upon him, who has settled in the middle of them.

“I had a dream back then,” she delicately glides to another end of the room; a trick to keep the attention on her that she has learned over the years. “To cross the Narrow Sea and take what I fiercely believed it was mine,” she leans on the casement, observing the city recovering bit by bit.
“A dream that cost me great losses and only brought me more woes.”

A dream that killed, she would add but Daenerys knows her digressions lack of importance for the topic to discuss.

“I suspect you stand here with that same dream, to cross the Narrow Sea and take back what’s yours. Acting on that desire, you have come here to fight for my cause as once Essos fought for your survival. And you have honoured your word.”

The men do not pronounce a single word and just stare at her silently.

Daenerys sighs.

“I wish you good fortune there, where my dream crashed down meaningless,” she hawks and continues, “Some years ago, Prince Anders Yronwood of Dorne approached me with a proposal. Bring order back to Westeros. Of course, for him and for me, bringing order implies different things,” she moves to the small table Daario brought for her, and where a map of Westeros lies, “to begin with, we had the North of Sansa Stark plagued with disease, famine, and devastation. The West of the Lannister and the Hightower in total insubordination, the bleak East, the headless Vale and the Riverlands overflowing with refugees. What order could I take to Westeros when I, myself, was the reason for why it is in that state?”

“I beg to differ on your take, your grace,” Lord Edmure speaks. He’s still was recovering from an injury on his shoulder. “You delivered order and prosperity in Essos.”

She gives him a mild smile.

“We joint efforts,” she clarifies. “But its peace and plenty do not belong to me,” she folds her hands. “Some will argue that I only know to make war. I believe it’s true.”

“There’s no peace without order.”

It’s Jon. His voice is raspy for being voiceless too long.

“But how we place that order?” she questions, walking closer, “With fear? with fire and blood? Those are things Westeros already experienced in the recent past and have delivered little time of peace. They said my father’s reign was peaceful for a time. They said the same of King Robert’s reign. Then Joffrey came, Stannis came, Cersei came, and finally, I came.”

“And then the Raven,” someone adds, and she lifts her head but does not find the source.

“And then the Raven came,” she repeats in a low voice, turning around to sit on the border of the table. She does not need to look regal anymore. “King Brandon Stark is the current inheritor of ancient magic we call the Mind. I don’t know where it came from, the priestesses know little about it and the Maesters are still dubious of the veracity of its power.”

“Can’t you just fly over the Red Keep with your dragons and end him?” a man of advanced age asks. “Or set it on fire yourself?”

She tilts her head, doubtful “I can but that won’t secure he will be gone.”

Although she had tried hard to see in the flames what’s the current state of the Raven, it has been unsuccessful. He can’t see her, and she can’t see him.

“If you can’t face the Raven-” someone starts but she cuts him off.
“I will face him, eventually, but first we have to deal with the matter of Victarion Pyke, who we can say it’s the real power in Westeros right now.”

“When people see dragons rounding the skies…” another Lord adds but trails off when Daenerys shakes her head.

“The dragons are always my last resort,” she states, “You should know why.”

“Your ancestor, Aegon the Conqueror, he united six kingdoms with three dragons. You got twice that power.”

She avoids mentioning that Aegon had two more riders by his side.

“You seem to forget I already disembark in Westeros with three dragons, once, my Lords,” she points out.

“You acted under the advice of that heinous Lannister dwarf,” a Lord by Jon’s side mentions. She thinks he’s the son of the late Yhon Royce. “If you allow us, your grace, we’ll give you better guidance this time.”

She wants to laugh and roll her eyes.

“If there’s something that unites the Westerosi, that’s their aversion for foreign invaders. Cersei Lannister told your people I was a foreign whore that was going to burn cities to the ground,” she smiles cynically, “which of course ended up being the truth. My point is that you’ll need more than my dragons and myself to win back your people.”

“I told Lord Edmure some time ago that I was not going to force the rebels back to the Lord’s grip. I did not liberate half of Essos to go west and put chains on the peasants’ necks.”

“You said you will choose the next monarch,” Jon speaks, again; his eyes narrowed. “Who you chose?”

Daenerys hates that he’s the only one who supposes the right thing. She already chose.

“In Westeros’ history, there’s a turning point where all the subsequent wars have started: Robert’s rebellion and the downfall of House Targaryen. I do believe there’s no point in returning to the past. That’s why I decided Gendry of House Baratheon will be the next King of the Seven Kingdoms and by his side Prince Yronwood’s first daughter, Arianne Yronwood. In doing so, we’ll be healing two of the greatest wound your country has: the enmity between houses and the terrible harm committed against Dorne when Elia Martell and her children were massacred.”

“Forgive my audacity, your grace,” a Lord irrupts, “but House Targaryen is not extinct, there’s you and of course Lord Snow. A male and a female, am I the only one who thinks it’s the ideal scenario?”

Daenerys swallows hard, avoiding looking at him. Jon has the habit of letting everyone speak for him.

“Jon Snow is a man of the North and has left himself clear, on multiple occasions, that he does not wish the crown,” or her, ”and that will be respected,” she uses her strongest tone to make sure no one will dare thinking otherwise. "And I am not a proper suitor."

Daenerys was not only speaking about the terrible atrocity that ultimately cost her life but the notion itself had grown ridiculous when there was nothing in Westeros for her, anymore. Nothing.
"So that's it," a Lord with a grave voice says, "You'll crown this man and he marries the princess of Dorne, and then you go."

"Exactly."

Some murmurs start to arouse but someone shushes it.

"I must correct you, anyway," she points passing her gaze over every single one of them. "I'm not the one crowning him. You will crown him."

"When we return to Valyria, before we sail to Westeros, with the presence of Prince Yronwood there and your chosen Warden of every domain, Gendry will be crowned before the eyes of every kingdom, every deity and some representatives of Essos. It will be the first step of a new and prosperous future. One where everyone will return to be where they belong. West, North, East and South."

She does not wait for them to applaud or cheer for her decision, but their dissatisfaction takes Daenerys aback. As if they truly were waiting for her to return and reign a land that had brought her nothing but fear and trauma.

"We'll win the wars," she adds to appease their minds, "But the future belongs to you."

II

Jon

Every word that leaves her mouth unsettles him to the point where he's sick. It feels wrong and it feels incomplete.

Jon finds himself wondering what he was expecting with this journey. He had believed that she will have him killed in their first meeting; he had longed for it. However, the more time she spares the more he can't get along with this reality in which she's forcing them.

You have no right, he screams in his mind, trying to calm down the nervousness that invades him. You have no right.

Jon has noticed what she's doing. It took him some time, but he finally got it when she spoke about putting everyone in their place; she is restoring the distance between them. She wants things to be as they were some months ago. He, in the North of Westeros and she in the South of Essos.

But, again, what was he waiting for?

Death. He waited for his death. But she didn't come and life faces him with an unchanging truth: he wants her.

He loves her still. He does not want her to throw herself to this other man, he does not want to live knowing she is in a distant point of the world, he does not want her to love someone else and be with him.

"Be with me," she asked him before he passed his sentence on her.

"Be with me, we'll break the wheel together."
She is with someone else. She breaks the wheel alone. And she left him dying on the North.

Jon is enraged and her breathing is accelerated. She continues speaking about other issues they have to deal with when returning home, something about the taxes that will be redirected to the Crown and then distributed to the Realm, but he does not listen anymore. All he is thinking is how she's slipping away from him. How their time will soon be over, again.

"Lord Snow," her voice calls and he is yanked off his musings.

She is staring directly into his eyes, like if she knows what effect that has on him.

"Your grace," he responds knowing all those people in the room have their eyes on them.

"May have a word with you and the Northmen?"

He hasn't paid attention but the other Lords have left the room.

"Of course, your grace," he moves closer to have a better appreciation of her face, though there are three guards in each side of her and a table is in between.

Those eyes. He can still see -feel-, the Northern cold in them. A reminder of his crime against her.

"I've been told the Warlocks ambushed you, but the Northmen came to support you at the last moment. Was this planned?"

He needs a moment to fully recover his composure and go back to what should matter the most.

"They did," he beings, gulping, "I ordered them to stay behind. The magic in the tunnels was unbearable, but it didn't affect me the first time."

"The first time?" she questions, arching her eyebrows.

"They have put magic in the Hall of a Thousand Thrones, too."

"And do you experienced it?"

"I did, your grace."

"Only in mind?"

Jon frowns, confused.

"Pardon me?"

"It only affected your mind?" she repeats, and he vaguely finds an answer.

"It d-did," he does not know if also speak about the sickness he felt-he's feeling still. "They decided to disobey me in order to save me."

He would not mention that Dewyn followed him, awaking the common sense of the other soldiers. Daenerys lowers her gaze.

"The Warlock you killed-"

"It was the self-proclaimed King, I think," he cuts her off, "He had the whip."
"And the other one? Is true the wildling boy killed him?"

"Yes, your grace," he senses where the conversation is going.

"And how is he?"

"He's fine." More than fine, he should add. Dewyn had a natural skill to get along with people, even if he does not speak the fucking language. Jon believes that years of growing torn apart from stability had made him a lightened man.

During their early days in Castle Black, Jon tried to explain to him how the kneeler's world worked. He learnt about monarchs, lordships, and reigns, but he had never been willing to kneel in front of them.

He can't blame him. Nor can't blame Daenerys for wanting some respect after all she had given them.

"Do I scare him?"

Jon scowls harder, incredulous.

"Of course not," he replies firmly. Dewyn had shown zero interest in Daenerys in any form. He does not care if she helps them, he does not care about the dragons, he does not care if he jumps to her and then Val kills him when they are back in Valyria. Dewyn was the last person in this world afraid of her.

"Because I haven't seen him," she explains with a soft blush in her face. He has been too harsh with his response.

"He-he does not have our same manners," he does not know how to put in words that he will not kneel.

But as soon as he gives his answers, Daenerys interrupts to clarify, "He does not need to kneel," as if she was reading his mind. "No one of you must kneel in front of me," she states, standing to be seen by everyone else. She's tiny but her posture imposing as her tone. "I'm not your queen, and the people that consider me so neither does it."

Jon now understands why her commanders didn't bend the knee.

"Bend the knee," he remembers her demanding in the cave.

"Bend the knee," she kept quipping in those days in the boat before he would get down on her.

Dany looks at him as if she could sense the thoughts he's having right at that moment, and for the first time in years, Jon does not give a fuck what everyone could be thinking.

"My soldiers celebrate their victories because one never knows if will be the last one," she announces, pulling them both out of that situation. She's again in her queenly pose, hands intertwined in front her. "This victory belongs to you more than anyone. Without you I would never have the hold of Qarth of the other cities," he knows she's thanking every man in that room, but he would wish that the words could be only to him.

She clears her throat in a silent request for her guards to surround her, and that action makes Jon been dragged back to this reality where she won't even cross in front of him without protection.
Because he killed her.

He betrayed her.

He was the only family she had left in the world, the man she loved enough to leave him close with all his weapons on, and he did what he did.

The ache in his chest came as the old friend it has become.

"Bring the wildling boy," she solicits before encircling the table and reuniting with her guards to leave.

III

Daenerys

"This isn't fine," she speaks aloud the thought that had been rounding her mind the last days. "It can't be this easy."

Might be her mind trying to come up with a reason to not return to Westeros, but Daenerys has the certainty that wars that end this fast can only mean the peace before the storm.

"Thousands died," Daario opposes, with a blithe disregard for her feeling. "It was not easy. We always knew we only needed access to the capital."

She decided to take the former Throne Room of the Thirteen as her temporary office. It was covered in dust and grime for the years of disuse, and Daenerys notice that the memory she held of Qarth was as unrealistic as the pretences of the girl that arrived here all those years ago.

"We can keep consulting with the citizens," Gerael advises, winning an ironic grimace from Daario.

"Consulting?"

Gerael ignores him as he always does it and she smiles lightly to decline his suggestion. The citizen didn’t need more suffering.

"You are extremely quiet, Kinvara," Daenerys turns around to walk in the direction where the Red Priestess was standing, "Was your request complied?"

The woman lifts her chin and her eyes turn dark as the day they met for the first time; a couple of days after her resurrection when she recovered her sight.

"Only time will tell us," she replies, always restful.

"I have no time to spare," Daenerys insists.

"Your city is safe," she assures, using a lowered tone, "But you haven't found Sohorioz."

Daenerys looked for the House of the Undying in the same place where she went the first time but only found ruins. She rounded the same statue repeatedly but she could not access that infernal place.

"The Undying Ones are hiding, you said," she recalls their conversation in the Great Keep, "How
do I find them?"

Daenerys started wondering why Kinvara was there at all.

"They are not just hiding. They are waiting."


Kinvara's expression seems boring when she responds, "Waiting for the right moment as any good player will do."

Daenerys closes her eyes in denial. She knows Kinvara can't be pressured to reveal more. It has been like this since the beginning.

IV

Jon

The deafening laughter of the men in his table is not making any good to his persistent headache. He is barely able to digest whatever strange meal that is put in front of him, whilst others are passing from one rarity to another.

The banquet is not that out of the ordinary as he believed it would be. The only thing he found odd is that Dany's entrance was hardly a monarch's reception and the people of Westeros were the sole ones in standing up to greet her. The rest of the room ignored her as she did with them.

Her table is in the center as it should be. Daario Naharis is on her left side while the Poison King is in her right, as it should be. And Jon is on the opposite end of his table, which was placed on a distant point with little view of her, as it also should be, though he hated it.

"Snow," someone calls. Andar Royce.

Jon just lifts his gaze to let him know he got his attention.

"Tell us about the time you mounted a dragon," he asks for, and Jon wants to think the best of him although some laughs at the question.

They are far enough from them to notice the conversation.

"Better than a horse," he answers, taking a small sip of wine. He starts to think it's not improving his state.

"Oh, don' be a humbla', White Wolf," Lord Hornwood scolds. "We all saw ya' up in that green beast."

Rhaegal.

He still remembers how soft and warm he felt after mounting him for the first time. He never told Dany how he fell from his horse and bled when he sensed his death. Nor he will tell her he has been feeling the same since the red dragon visited him.

"As if you are part of the skies. Like nothing can reach you up there."

"And the fire?" Andar continues, "How is commanding the beast to erase hundreds in seconds?"
Jon notices that he's being honestly curious and not aggressive with his interrogation.

"Rhaegal only ever killed wights," Jon assures, despite some casualties were caught on the fire. "Dracarys. That's the command."

The conversation follows up without him intervening. Dewyn speaks about having seen people practicing magic on the streets but Jon feels far off the festivity. It's not until he hears her laughter that he startles and looks for her.

He hasn't heard that sound in ten years. He does not remember when was the last time he heard it. The boat mayhaps? or in a campfire before arriving at Winterfell? Or in the Waterfalls?

Daario is highly drunk, seated on the table in front of Dany and speaking loudly about something Jon can't heed from whence he is. She's laughing and the Poison King by her side is smiling alike. They can't look more regal, he thinks.

Jon swallows hard again, trying to drag himself into reality. Dany is happy here as never has been by his side. He reappeared in her life and is about to harrow her back to the place where she suffered the most.

She will place him back in the North, where he belongs while she will return to conquer Gods' knows how much more. He has nothing to offer her.

And there's Val.

His chest hurts at her memory. How he wishes to love her the way she loves him, or the way he can't avoid but love Daenerys.

It was so simple to give up any hope when Dany was so far away, alive and moving on with her life as if he didn't exist anymore. As if she had forgiven and forgotten him.

_I spent ten years thinking constantly about you. Have I've been in your thoughts?_

Jon knows he has no right to expect something like that. In that decade, her last mental image of him must be his hand on the handle of the dagger that was killing her.

"Jon," Dewyn names him but he's still in his own mind; the sound of Dany's last breath. "Jon, the Dragon Queen is speaking."

He stands up as everyone has done it. Daenerys is speaking in Valyrian to her soldiers first and they cheer and celebrate, whilst the Westerosis just hear attentively.

After a couple of minutes, she turns to see at them, with her countenance less relaxed than before.

"Freedom," she begins but makes a pause, like is she was evaluating her next words, "Men had died fighting for freedom. Their own or for others'.

Her expression is nuanced, but her words seem true.

"Ten years ago, thousands of men from Essos gave their lives in our quest for survival. They meant to fight for freedom and ended up battling against a Master that did not discern of highborn, lowborn, Westerosi or Essosi."

"You have honoured their memory freeing one million slaves in this city, in Port Yhos and Qarkash. Your debt with Essos is settled."
"From this moment to the future, we'll look forward to seeing a new, better world. From this day until the end of the days."

She raises her cup and the rest does the same.

"Now and always," a Northern voice says, and Jon startles.

"Now and always," the other men repeat with proud and celebration.

Jon turns his gaze back to her, and captures her eyes on him, seeing him with dismay. She rushes it away, smiling at the impertinent Lords as she sits down to continue conversing with her people and ignore him.

He does the same and the tortuous evening carries on with him avoiding the following jesting about his mood.

In the background, he keeps hearing the sound of her laughter from time to time and does his best to distract himself with some mental exercise such as counting the time until their return to Westeros or thinking with what strategy Victarion's lines can be disassembled. He avoids the thought of Bran or the three-eyed raven.

Nothing works, really. His mind has become infatuated with her.

_It's your aunt_, a tiny voice inside warns. _Rhaegar's little sister._

_It's that important?_ Soon another one asks. Not when the wedge between them was lethal; the worst of betrayals.

Eventually, he yields at the impulse of watching again and it's worse this time because her hand and the Poison King's are interwoven while they attentively listen to Daario's chattering.

Does he do it on purpose? Jon wonders. He didn't seem as possessive of her as Daario is. However, Jon knew he has never been good at judging the character of other people.

Gerael Dagarion lugs her hand to his lips and gives it a kiss, a gesture Dany responds with a mild smile with closed eyes. He stands up and retires without alerting anyone.

She did not look back at his eyes.

"_Love comes in the eyes,_" she told him once when they lost the fear to show off their love, and as she continued doing when he failed in returning her affection.

She did not look back at his eyes.

A couple of minutes later, she discreetly withdraws from the feast and he knows she's not going to her bedchambers because the guards did not follow her beyond the entrance.

Jon turned to check on Daario still centered on the celebration before standing up and going outside.

**V**

**Daenerys**
Finally, a place that has not changed anything, she thinks as she walks inside the abandoned courtyard where Jorah, Kovarro and she hid from Pyat Preet years ago. She wanted to visit this place once more before leaving; To breathe its scent of weeds and be shifted to the past, near Jorah and his protection.

“You should sail to Astapor. I’m sure you’ll be safe there,” had she told him back then, annoyed at the suggestion of leaving her children behind.

He looked at her hurt.

“You know I would die for you. I will never abandon you. I’m sworn to protect you, to serve,” he assured, and the little girl she was in that time was so scared of his fierce love and devotion.

How old would he have been now? About sixty maybe? Would have he lived so long? He complied with his oath but she would never forgive herself for the circumstances in which that happened.

She takes a deep breath settling on the edge of a long-forgotten fountain. She took the small jar with ointment from a hiding pocket on the front of her gown and lifted the skirt to see the wound in her leg.

It didn't do any good to be so covered up, but here with the presence of the Westerosis, she can't be around in light clothes. They already consider her a monster for her deeds and skills, she does not need enforcing that idea by showing her disgusting malformations.

She counted the scars on her left leg again. One, two, three, four, five, six and seven. They were less than those on the right one, but always as frightening as those that rested on her belly, chest, arms, and back. She only remembers the pain of one.

Jorah, you would be so mad at me, she thinks. Her loyal bear would have died a thousand deaths before letting her go on a battlefield.

The cracking of his steps announces his presence long before the tingling in the back of her neck. She almost throws the jar on the ground, panicking.

"Please don't fret," he asks, entering decelerated and cautious, leaving his sword at the entrance next to his knife. She did not bother to assign some guards to keep an eye on him, believing it a waste of time.

She realises that she did not bring any weapons to defend herself. If he tries something, she would have to resort to fire.

"Do not pass from this fountain," she warns in the clearest and calmest tone she could get. "What are you doing here?" then she asks slightly bothered for his meddling.

Jon arches his eyebrows as if her reluctant attitude had surprised him, but then he lets out a defeated sigh.

"I need you to believe me. I need you to know that I'm not going to hurt you."

How? She would like to yell at him, but she doesn't want to know the answer either.

"Your null concern for your survival and well-being makes me doubt anything you do."

She would like to add that one does not trust its murderer.
Jon nods.

"I do not know what else to tell you."

"You have never known," she replies, sliding the ointment back into her pocket. "I don't understand what else you want to discuss. I'm going back to Westeros, you have won."

"It does not feel like that," he confesses, shaking his arms, "It always feels like a setback."

Jon sits at the other end of the fountain, resting his forearms on his knees and rubbing his eyes as if he had a headache.

"Do you feel good?" she asks sincerely worried. "You should let a healer attend you."

He shakes his head. "It's old," he explains, "I received a hard blow in my head during a fight in the North and since then it's like a phantom pain. It comes and goes."

Her chest squeezes and she regrets feeling this way. If he knew of her pain, would he feel the same?

"You look tired, Jon. You shouldn't be here but resting."

"The same could be said of you," looks up to meet her eyes, though he lowers his gaze to see her leg. "How is your le-?" he stops dead in the middle of the question when he not only notices the scar of their joint battle but the rest of them.

She has forgotten the skirt lifted.

Daenerys covers herself hastily. "I will survive," she replies, ignoring that his shocked expression does not change when long seconds pass.

Yeah, it's not the body you remember, she thinks.

He moves his eyes to the lost, dark space of a corner and keeps voiceless. When he speaks again she's taken aback.

"I know about Ibben."

Daenerys frowns in awe.

"Who told you?"

"Daario."

It doesn't surprise her. Daario would set hunting traps in his bed in order to get him away from her.

"I hoped I could tell you, eventually," she admits with honesty; she does not want him thinking she will hurt his sister once he's gone.

"Can you show me?" he requests, "I know I have no right but for a long time, it weighed on my mind ..."

Daenerys tilts her head disorientated but realises almost instantly they are not speaking the same subject.

Panic seized her.
She looks away and closes her eyes. Of course, Daario would tell him about Port of Ibben.

"Daenerys, please," he implores, ignorant of what they were about to speak seconds before. His broken voice makes her aware of his sincere suffering.

*Guilty. It's only guilt*, she remembers.

She extends her hand to touch the verge of the first tier where the first flare light on, then the second, the third, the fourth and the cusp.

Daenerys sees him astonished, still unused to this part of her.

Not that he had ever get used to her.

VI

**Somewhere in Port of Ibben - 305 A.C, Two Weeks After Death.**

**Jon**

A wasteland as white as the one beyond the wall appears and he feels dragged into this image. Nonetheless, it's not just an image. There's movement. Snow falling over him as he advances without feeling the cold or the weight on his steps.

"Fire is life", a voice chants but Jon knows it is not in the common tongue. He understands though. "Ice is the death of life."

"Pray with me,

*We can bring her back,*

*Pray with me,*

*We can bring her back.*"

Light.

He catches a glimpse of light coming from inside a cave. He does not know if it's day or night. He does not comprehend this power. This magic.

Jon approaches to ingress and again is like that time in the hut with Dany. Cold is gone and a lukewarm sensation overwhelms him.

Voices are chanting. The Red Priestess. No, they are various. They are at least twenty.

*Pray with me,*

*We can bring her back.*

*We ask the Lord to shine his light*

*We beg the Lord to share his fire,*

*And light a candle that has gone out.*
From darkness, light.

From ashes, fire.

From death, life.

We can bring her back.

Pray with me.

Jon screams as he sees her.

He is horrified.

And when he cries, Dany-not it's not her, that thing can't be her, she jolts letting out a screams twice loud and monstrous. The sound of death being perturbed.

"Fire will purify," the red woman chants, "fire will purify her flesh."

That thing he can't be called Daenerys jumps over to one of the priests.

Suddenly he's in another place. Mayhaps is still the cave but instead of darkness, he sees some figures moving.

Red and pain.

Loss.

A child without a mother.

Jon watches an emaciated version of Drogon. Not the beast nor the enormous dread that reigns the skies but a dying creature wrapped around her fragile figure.

She's folded on something heavy as furs. Mother and son. But she only needs his warm as he needs hers.

Her only family left.

Her only son.

She lost everything.

Present

"Enough," she says, smothering the flames out.

They are back in the darkness with the moonlight as their only guide.

The burning of his hand stuck to the concrete of the ground makes him realise that he is lying on the floor. Holding himself up barely with one arm while having his right hand stroking the right side of his chest. The place where she would carry his mark forever.

A place where a heart was no longer beating and in its place, hatred, pain, and disappointment reside.
Loss.

Jon felt so much loss.

He touches his chest trying to squeeze the pain out but it won't leave. Something was lost.

He did that. He did that to her.

"It took some time. I do not stink, anymore," she comments in a jocular tone that bothers him because she intends to ease his pain and Jon doesn't want her to do it, he wants her to yell at him or hit him. Anything but comfort him. "My flesh and skin grew anew as the flowers of a field would. Not as beautiful as it, sadly-"

"Stop-" he shouts at her, "Stop!"

She holds in place, scared of his reaction.

"Dany..." he whines, almost sobbing. "Dany, forgive me."

They were the words he had avoided so much in all that time. Ten years ago when she fell inert in his arms and was too stunned to say so; eight years ago when he was waiting for her inside that cave; six months ago when he had her in front of him, again; and now that he knew he would never find atonement, the words had escaped from his fragile mind.

"No," is her answer, and it breaks his heart. "I can't give you that."

Jon strives for balance while he stands.

"When the sun rises in the west and sets in the east. When the seas go dry and mountains blow in the wind like leaves."

"When every soul I took that day returns to absolve me. When Jorah, Missandei, Ser Barristan, and Grey Worm come back to me."

"When my womb quickens again, and I bear a living child. Then I shall forgive you, Jon Snow. Not before."

Daenerys sighs with sorrow as if the latter is the determining factor in establishing that what he asks will never happen.

She can't and will never bear a living child.

"My forgiveness will change nothing," she adds when he cannot find the words to oppose. "You don't need it. You'll be in home, soon."

Jon wants to shout and say that he needs more than that.

"Was it right?" he then asks.

"Not for me, certainly," she quips, downing her gaze to her lap where her hands reunite, "I know your reasons. You always know what's right. You always do what's right."

I don't, he would scream. I don't know what's right, anymore.

"Let me get close, please," he begs, winning a shocked expression of her part. "I need to know that you are real and not a dream. Do you know how many times I've dreamed about you? Do you
know how much I've longed for you to be in front of me?" he must be sounding like a desperate beggar, but can no longer control his impulses. "If you don't want to see me die at least give me a reason to be alive."

Daenerys arches her eyebrows, contemplative and astounded. His request must be hard for her.

"If I die," she begins, "many people who depend on me will too." Then she moves her hands back to uphold herself. "Don't do it again," she demands with a queenly tone.

As if I could.

It hurts him that she has to appeal to his sense of honour to demand such a thing. Not their past affection or their relation but the people in between that always pay the cost.

"Never," he promises, in despite how futile it has been in the past.

Jon walks the five steps that separate them, and although at first, she retreats with a certain disdain, she ends up giving up and accepting his approach when he kneels in front of her, grabbing one of her hands and placing them both in her lap. Still, Dany does not look into his eyes and keeps staring at a lost point in the dark space.

Have they been this close already? He barely touched her but it was unplanned and raw some weeks ago. Almost six moons have passed since their encounter in the Great Keep. He does not want to wait longer.

"Why didn't you come back?"

"I had no reason to," she replies, her voice almost like a whisper, "I didn't want vengeance nor retract my defeat."

He swallows, "And why you don't hurt me?"

She slowly slides her gaze towards him.

"I'd never hurt people I cared about, even when they wronged me," she states; her words like stabs in his chest. "I put Tyrion in that cell that day because I was thinking about how punishing him without killing him, but I guess I should've thought with my head nor with my heart."

"Aye," he agrees, giving a small smile, despite he is even more enraged. "You should've killed him."

She snorts. "I do remember you came to plead for his life."

He remembers as well the frightened he felt, and Tyrion's words throbbing in his head.

"You should've let me died before I could tell my family the truth," he emphasises that she has never attempted to hurt him. She saved him numerous occasions, at a great cost.

"The truth," she acknowledges, taking her hand back and withdrawing her gaze.

Jon regrets making that comment; having reminded her of something that only enlarges the space between them. The truth that destroyed them.

"Dany," he whispers, longing to restore the previous moment they were sharing and unconscious of the liberties he was taking. All he had in mind was her smile of closed eyes. "Do you love him?"
She turns to see him with a shocked countenance.

"Wha-?" she's about to ask when something interferes between them, breaking their contact.

They both look in the direction where the object landed. A knife.

He has no time to react when a heavy burden charges against him, throwing him upon the opposite wall.

"I warned you, Jon Snow," Daario Naharis' voice says as he leads a fist that impacts in his face.

The pain is irrelevant to him after so many battles and he chooses to let Daario throw him back to the opposite side of the yard, where Jon with a quick movement takes Longclaw as Daario drawing his sword.

"Daario, stop!", Daenerys screams but they can't stop once they charge against each other. "Jon!"

Undescribable wrath boils in him as the day they conquered the city. Jon can't think clearly and just move, avoiding Daario's attempts of subduing him while also striking to defeat him.

He is surprised that they are not surrounded by guards.

"It seems that words are not enough for your northern asshole," Daario claims as he drives above and Jon has to push him to distress the tension in his arms. "Might when we'll return to Valyria I'll have to pay a visit to the Queen in the North and prove my word true."

Daenerys keeps shouting at both to stop but she's ignored.

Jon hits twice angered, not just by his threaten but antipathy both shared have been held back enough. He won't deny how much he longed to do this.

*He keeps her away from you*, a voice in his mind says. *He had threatened you.*

*He kept her away from you. He spent ten years keeping her away from you.*

At that moment, he concludes Daenerys did not return because she had Daario Naharis by her side. A man she loves and trusts in, as she will never love nor trust in him nevermore.

Tyrion's words come to him.

"He used to ignite our queen's worst impulses."

Daario Naharis continues as irate as him. None of them stop until a large shadow extends over them, and a stream of fire illuminates the space.

The fighting men throw to the ground as Drogon down his head, and Daenerys mounts his enormous neck.

"If you don't stop, now, you will be ashes," she announces, her expression turned into the fiery queen she was.

"I'd rather be ashes that seeing you commit the same mistake twice," Daario rebuts.

Jon does not know what to say; all his anger still throbbing inside him.

Daenerys watches Daario with menacing eyes.
"I'm not your child, Daario, you don't get to decide what I do or do not. Next time you disobey my orders, you'll be serving another queen." then she moves Drogon towards Jon, "You will return and be with your men until your departure. Next time you appear in front of me without being summoned to, I'll send every man, woman, and child that is in Valyria back to Westeros without a single copper. Am I being clear?"

They don't respond, eliciting a ferocious growl from Drogon.

Both men assent.

"Daario, climb now," she orders and the commander hesitantly complies, not before staring at him wrathfully.

Drogon folds its wings for heaven and takes them away, with Jon watching static as they disappear.

VII

Daenerys

When they land on the balconies of the Hall of a Thousand Thrones, Drogon shakes them off causing him to fall to the ground with a loud thud.

"Okay," he admits, "I deserve it, big guy."

Daenerys passes by without offering help to get up. The tower where she maintains her bedchamber is obscured and she assumes that Gerael is already under the effects of blue sleep. Or maybe he’s sleeping.

When she enters the hall, Daenerys takes a jug with orange juice and serves herself, knowing that she can only remember the taste.

"I had to-" Daario begins to say but Daenerys throws the juice in his face before he can finish explaining himself.

He gets irritated but accepts the punishment.

"The next time you overrule me in front of a stranger, I'm going to send you to build helmets in Tyrosh. Do you understand me?"

"Do not believe him, do not believe him," he pleaded, taking a rag from the table to wipe his face. "Please, Daenerys, whatever Jon Snow is telling you, don't believe him. I can see that he is an honest and an honourable man, and that is precisely why he will never live up to the circumstances."

"We weren't doing anything!"

"He was touching you!" he warns, "a little more and his dagger could be in your heart again."

She was going to argue that he left her dagger at the entrance next to Longclaw, but her point shakes her. For a moment, she ignored the terror that caused her to be so close to him. The paranoia that elicits in her.
Daenerys came to the realisation that it was a moment of weakness.

She swallows the lump in his throat.

"Why does he keeps mocking your guards?"

She questions, walking to the corridor and heading towards the tower.

"He is small, and sneaks away," he argues, but she knows he doesn't want to admit that he was too drunk to have noticed. "I'm going to assign him some guards."

"No," she denies, turning to face him. “If Jon Snow wants to kill me, he will find a way to do it, no matter how much we want to avoid it. I cannot depend on other people for my own safety. I will send him away. It is decided. Meanwhile, I want you far from my sight at least until it is necessary to see you."

She turns around and continues her way to the tower.

VIII

Jon

After the fight with Daario Naharis, Jon had been sent to patrol an area away from the Hall of the Thousand Thrones on the following nights.

Torchlight came back to tell him about how things were settling in the city, while from time to time some former slaves still greeted him as if he were 'the king father' before his astonished gaze. He didn't like receiving that kind of attention.

He did not see Daenerys again in the following days, although the red dragon intercepted him one night in an abandoned alleyway with another scorched prey between his fangs to share with him. Jon recalled from Master Luwin's lessons that dragons only do that with their riders. Although he was not sure that this was the case, the red dragon seemed to be quite clear with his intentions. He was terrified to think what Daenerys will say if she finds out.

Remembering her hurts him. The images of her lifeless body in that cave turned into something not very different from a wight, plus Daario's account of the long healing process and the wounds on her body that he suspected came from the long battles she was throwing herself without much prudence, enraged him.

Jon feels he was no better than her brother Viserys, or her first husband. She had no reason to forgive him.

He looked at his hand at the memory of their approach that night. The moment led him back to the first time she made the same gesture, when he was recovering from his expedition beyond the Wall, after the death of Viserion.

“The dragons are my children. They're the only children I'll ever have. Do you understand?” she had said to him in the past, and because of him and Tyrion, Viserion ended up in the hands of the Night King. If she discovers that the red dragon visits him to share his game, Jon is sure he will lose any progress they have built so far.
On his seventh night round, his ramblings took him to a strange part of the city. He couldn't even explain how he ended there.

If he is honest, he still was having a hard time understanding everything related to the magic of this world. Does he believe in it? Yes. And even more after everything that happened in the past. Does he want to be involved in it? No way. It is enough to have mocked death.

In spite of this, Jon keeps moving and circling around the ruins he found, feeling back in the tunnels the Warlocks' enchanted or the hallways of the palace.

Jon is not aware of what is going on around him until it is too late.

By the sound of his steps, he deduces that he is in a closed space. He can barely see more than darkness.

He hears a croaking sound and unsheathes Longclaw.

A raven.

Then comes the dying cry of an animal. Ghost? No. It was heard more like a puppy's groan.

The raven squawks again and Jon follows the sound, fearing what he might encounter.

Nymeria? Lady? Summer? Jon doesn't remember who was who. He knows that two of them are dead, as are his siblings-cousins.

And then he sees it. The animal is lying on the ground, dying. Jon downs his sword and runs to take care of the wolf, but before he could approach the raven hovers over the wolf's head and squawks almost threateningly.

He wants to kill him. It's not Bran, it's the raven. When he threatens to take the bird, the image fades and he falls against a cold, wet surface that hurts.

Snow.

He covers himself quickly, feeling the blizzard fall on him as if he were back in the North. Could it be? Crazy, but not impossible. He stands up hugging himself as he moves towards an orange light that contrasts with the gray image and he realises that the place is familiar.

King's Landing? Was he at King's Landing?

A dark shadow looms over a gray stone wall and Jon watches helplessly as the beast rises in flight like Drogon. Listen to his roar, but it was different, fiercer than he remembered.

In the dreams where he revives that day, he used to walk through the destroyed streets of the city, seeing the blackened bodies of children hugging their mothers while a wave of anger appears in his heart, unable to understand why she did it.

In Eastgates he asked her that question and she showed total indifference about it. A few days ago in the abandoned courtyard, he thought he saw a hint of remorse in her words but seemed to always be used against him. He didn't feel in the right place to question her about the subject.

Why did you do it Dany? His own voice asks, sounding so close that it is like a whisper in his ear. Why Dany?
Then she is there and the pressure in her chest disappears. It is replaced by something soft and warm, like her body against his in the boat, at the camp or in the cave behind the waterfalls.

It is enough to see her from behind. Her long silver hair falling into a single braid down her back. An invasive thought wanted to interrupt the moment, but he pushed it away.

"Dany," he calls her, knowing he can receive a similar reaction as when he found her in the hut. He didn't care, she always notices when he is close anyway.

Daenerys turns around and his heart skips a beat.

Only a small distance separates them, which allows him to see that her eyes once again have that small warm hue, a circle of gold in the midst of blue.

"Dany," he calls her again in a whisper, fearing to jump on her and be rejected.

No. In her eyes there is no coldness, there is no resentment.

They are eyes of love.

She sees him again with love.

Dany arches her eyebrows and smiles, extending a hand for him to take. When he is about to reciprocate, her monotonous and real voice tells him.

"Jon."

**Daenerys**

Jon is missing three nights ago.

Daario sent him to do night patrol to the southern streets of the city and the wildling boy came to alert them that one morning he simply did not return.

They searched for him everywhere in the first two days, until a single place came to her mind.

"I sent him to the South, the House of the Undying is in the North," Daario insists as they venture into the ruins of the ancestral headquarters of the Warlocks. "Can he be so dumb?"

"He didn't come here believing he was in the south," she growls at him, enraged at the lightness with which he treats the subject. "They made him come here. I was afraid something like this could happen."

"That he will be lost?" Gerael asks, following her closely.

"That the Undying Ones would look for his magic," she replies, without explaining that Jon also possesses dragon blood. Blood of her own. "The Undying Ones like to feed on other sources, they do not possess magic by themselves. That's why Kinvara wants them gone."

Speaking of who was already there waiting for them when they arrived.

"The white wolf must have aroused their curiosity," Kinvara mutters, watching the rectangular statue looming in front of them. "This is your opportunity. Your only chance," she emphasises,
looking at her severely.

"And now what?" Daario questions.

Daenerys does not answer and just walks forward, moving from Kinvara. Daario and Gerael follow her, while she turns the statue a couple of times until she hears them no more and is once again imprisoned in the Undying's lair.

One of the advantages of being practically dead is that they would no longer know how tempting her. The first time she entered, her mind was fragile and full of desires, however, not enough for them to imprison her for too long.

Daenerys ignores all their visions and continues to advance until she finds him standing in the middle of the chambers with various doors, lost and stunned by gods know what things.

"Jon," she calls him but he ignores her. "Jon!" she shouts, walking closer.

He startles and turns to watch her in horror. In his gaze, she can perceive the torment through which the Undying Ones were forcing in him. She can't help wondering what he has seen.

"Jon, we are in the House of the Undying," she explains, not knowing what else to tell him. "We have to go."

First, he doesn't answer, as if the words had left his mind.

"How did you know I was here?"

"Where else would you have gone?"

"It was only a few minutes," it almost sounds like an apology.

She wrinkles her forehead in disbelief.

"Three days, Jon," she corrects him, "You left for three days."

His face pales, as if he hadn't noticed until then.

"We have to go, Jon," she hurries, fearing she will have to take her hand to force him. She finds herself looking two or three times toward his weapons to make sure they will continue in his belt.

"I don't want to leave," he whispers and Daenerys closes his eyes with regret.

"Did they show you anything? What thing?"

He observes her with reluctance and something else that she cannot perceive or describe.

He does not respond, so Daenerys continues, "Whatever you have been shown, it is not real, nor is it true. They are playing with your mind so you want to stay. I was here and they did the same to me. I can swear that whatever they are showing you, you don't want it and it will bring you nothing but suffering."

She would like to tell him about her vision of the Iron Throne in this same place, but it was neither the place nor the moment.

"Come on, Jon," she points out the same exit she discovered all those years ago.
First door on the right.

Daario, Gerael and the guards watch them stunned when they appear behind the statue as if they had always been there. Kinvara maintains her composure, although her eyes widen in advance.

The guards soon put space between Jon and her.

"Your task it's not over, Daenerys Stormborn," Kinvara's voice announces, "Use your gift and end them."

Daenerys closes her eyes and laments having to do so with so many eyes on her. The last time she did it, it was just her and the dragons circling for days to find the remains of the fourteen flames.

"Take Lord Snow," she commands to the guards, but Jon stiffens instead.

"No," he declares, "I want to know what's going on."

All eyes fall on him because of the sudden disobedience. Daario, with a gesture between delight and fatigue, places his hand on his Arakh. Daenerys clears her throat so he understands he must back up.

"Fine," she agrees, seeing that it makes no sense to hide that part of her when she had already seen some of the things she could do. "Lend me your dagger," she asks Gerael, who at that time had placed himself near her.

Before taking it, she unwinds the fabric with which she covers her arms and exposes the long mark with which Valyria revived years ago. She takes the knife and cuts a parallel line ignoring Jon's choked sigh behind her.

Some of the guards also move uncomfortably.

Daenerys goes around the statue, a little slower than last time, letting the blood fall to the ground.

"Back up," she demands everyone present, while the priestess is already singing her prayers to R'hollor and Daenerys bends down to ignite the flames that surround the statue.

And then they appear.

Cadaverous shadows, so horrifying that the men behind her fall to the ground in horror. She is also aghast at their view but remains immovable watching her blood and fire consume them while they die in agony for what seems like hours until there is nothing where the statue lay but a piece of blackened stone full of tips.

Kinvara lifts the object and her hand bleeds at the contact but keeps ignorant of pain like Daenerys.

"Sohorioz," she says, extending the stone.

"Why didn't that burn with the rest?" Daenerys asks, worried. She knew they were weak, and without the Warlocks to defend them, it was easy to stop them.

Kinvara looks where the statue was and back to Daenerys.

"To go north, you must journey south. To reach the west, you must go east. To go forward you must go back, and to touch the light you must pass beneath the shadow."

Asshai, Dany thinks. She would have me go to Asshai.
IX

Jon

Jon walks behind the soldiers, distracted with the elaborate looms that hang on the walls every nine feet, whereby is woven a story of yore. He is not sure if the golden details that decorate them are made of pure gold but Qarth was so full of wonders that he would not be surprised if they are.

Daenerys had settled on the tallest tower in the Hall of a Thousand Thrones. Daario Naharis’ right-hand man is leaving the lot when he arrives.

"White Wolf," he calls Jon, who is not certain if it’s a greeting or an insult. "The queen is tied-up writing reports."

"Jornik, let him pass," her distant voice orders from inside.

Jornik hesitantly steps aside and allows him to enter, warning his soldiers something in that language that Jon doesn’t understand. Then he casts off with a simple nod.

In the chamber, there is a table with horseshoe’s form. Dany seats there, indifferent to his presence and focused on those reports she was writing with haste.

"May have a word with you, your grace," he solicits, standing in front of her with his hands folded behind him.

"That’s why you are here, Jon," she replies, still engrossed on her task. After some long seconds in which Jon stares at the guards surrounding them, Dany lifts her gaze from the papers and clarifies, “They can't understand the common tongue," to not say that they will not be left alone.

Jon assents.

"How are you?" he begins with something mundane.

"I'm fine,” she answers in a soft tone. It is the first time they are this gentle at the beginning of a conversation, “How is your head?" she returns.

“The pain it’s better,” he replies, with a small smile.

Some seconds pass and none of them speak. Even the guards start to move uncomfortably.

“You must be wondering why I summoned you,” she starts, “Within some days from now, we will return to Valyria and start the preparations for Westeros.”

"Stop," he cuts her. Might she wants to speak about the upcoming war but he cannot with all those images rounding his mind. "Let me speak, please," he requests with sudden agitation.

Daenerys scowl but then concedes.

"The first two years that I believed you dead, there was this moment repeating inside my head, over and over again. The moment you asked me if you were more than my queen; the moment I failed you the most."

She releases the quill and sighs, "You can't blame yourself for feeling what you feel."
"The problem is that I lied to you," he makes a pause trying to find the right words. "I did want you; I did want to tell you that I loved you and that everything was going to be alright," he makes a pause at the memory of her broken expression that day. "I chose to lie to you because I was afraid of what you were capable of doing. Of what I could become by your side."

Daenerys shakes her head, "Yes, you said that in the dungeons but you did not answer my follow question. Afraid of what? What did I represented for you?"

"Fire and blood," he finally lets out. "You killed Varys without flinching. And then, when the worst happened, you neither felt remorse. You were certain over what you did and I was afraid to someday I could become in someone like you, but-" she doesn’t let him finish.

"Did you know that Varys was poisoning me?"

Jon is taken off guard, incapable of utter another word.

"Yes, it's true that I killed him because he betrayed me by telling you to turn on me. It’s also true that if I have known what he was doing, may I have even have executed the little girl he was using too, just as you did with Olly. Because treason is treason."

She goes back to write the reports, unaffected on the contrary of him.

"However, seeing how things turned to be," she continues saying, "Varys, Tyrion, Sansa, all of you were right and may even the good Robert Baratheon was. I should have died in my crib."

Jon's chest clenches in agony. His jaw is hurting from the pressure he’s putting on it.

He has no words.

"My existence is the cause of your pain," he concludes with the last bit of her sentence. She had to run away since a baby because of what Rhaegar and Lyanna did. “I always needed you to win my battles,” it is another hard truth, “but I’ve just hindered yours."

Dany gives him the phantom of a smile, "Feel glad, you won me the city this time and I didn't burn it," then she’s serious again, "Not completely."

A part of him wants to be delighted by her soft jesting, but it can’t happen. All he feels is anger, anger towards Varys, Tyrion, Sansa, himself. Even against Rhaegar, Lyanna, Robert Baratheon and Ned Stark.

"I wanted you to know that I understand what you felt and I take my part of the fault," he says but it seems pauper and inadequate and by her face one can see that she is not relieved and will never absolve him from the fault.

"Stop, Jon," she asks for with exhaustion, "I know it's hard for you because it's easier to live in the past than face the future, but there's no use in going back and take note on every mistake we made. What is done is done and it won't change, no matter what. I slaughtered thousands of innocent people, and you betrayed me and used my love against me to stop me from going on. A terrible and unchanging truth. If you keep looking back, you'll always be lost."

"And you don't?" he questions with abrupt annoyance, “Don't you ever look back?” now he's crossing their bounds, “Have you stopped looking back, Dany?”
He knows that she understands perfectly what he means.

"You know that if I’d have stopped, you wouldn’t be alive, nor would anyone you care about."

Her icy eyes testify the verity of her statement.

She acts in a way that contradicts her past behaviour and only incenses him. What lies beyond her words? What’s in her mind? He detests the scenario she imposes where he is unpunished for his crime but never absolved from the fault. She speaks of not looking back but for them is like they will never walk beyond this mark.

"I congratulate you on your soon to be union with King Gerael Dagareon," he tells her with a sting of anguish, and resignation, "I wish you a lifetime of love and happiness. May the years ahead be filled with lasting joy."

Daenerys

It all feels coming down again. He has been breaking her heart long ago before he put the dagger in her chest, and he keeps doing it.

Jon knows nothing about the power he has over her. Still.

"Jon," she calls him, doubting. She is not going to take care of what he has assumed on his own.

"Thank you," is the only thing that leaves her mouth, and for a second she enjoys it. She promised herself to keep on believing that what it hurts him, is the pass of time coming into fruition in front of his eyes, and nothing else.

Nonetheless, she is not a child anymore. They are both grown-ups. This lack of sincerity is what drove them to confusion the last time.

"Despite I am not marrying anyone," she clarifies staring straight at his eyes, just for a moment before avoiding to catch something untrue on them. She has become expert in losing herself in those eyes. "Notify your people their families are currently waiting at for them in the Great Keep, there will be a celebration when they return," she changes the subject, "yours included," she restores the distance between them.

She must tell him about her plans now.

"It will be the final farewell for us. I decided to send the Free Folk to Port Ibben. Tormund consent it. It will be the best for them, and for you."

Daenerys knows that his stubbornness will jump.

"I'm not leaving," he complies, walking forward and alerting the guards.

"You are," she insists, with a formal tone; returning to be the frivolous queen.

"No, I will not. Wh-? What are you doing?" he’s wrathful as the night he fought with Daario.

"I'm giving you what you always wanted," she wants to make sense, "Freedom."

"I have to take back Winterfell."

"I'll take back Winterfell," she stresses, then adds rolling her eyes, "and I'll appoint your sister the Warden of the North, nor because I want it but because she is the last Stark. If she doesn't take a
husband to bear a child, she will have to name an heir. Unless you decide-

"Stop," he halts her, his discomfort distorting his expression. "What are you doing? What are you saying? What is this nonsense?"

"I will crown Gendry, King of the Seven Kingdoms," she gets down to brass tacks,

"Arianne Yronwood will marry him and they will start the new dynasty, or rather, they will continue what Robert and your father started. We can't have a better claimant wandering around, even if some don't recognise you as such."

"I don't want it."

Here we go again.

"Seven hells, don't say that!" she curses aloud, "Don't you learnt from the last time? People will not care if you want to be the King or not. They will push your claim, make wars for your claim, whether you want it or not."

"So you are throwing me to the other side of the Known World because I'm damaging your plan?" he must be loathing her, for what his eyes had darkened. "And what about you?"

"I have Valyria," she points the obvious.

"But you also have a claim. A much better claim than them."

She giggles cynically "If someone dares to try to bite my arse, I'll burn them. I've made clear that I have no trouble with that."

"Then I'll do the same," he argues but she finds it hard to believe. "If someone wants to put us against each other again, I'll kill them."

That last bit elicits her anger as the time they were speaking in Eastgates.

"Again?" she repeats, dumbfounded "Jon, you don't understand. This is not a second opportunity for us to amend the past. I told you that there's no atonement for us."

"I want to fight for Westeros," he carries on, "I want to kill the Raven."

Daenerys notices that he doesn't reference him as Bran, anymore.

"The Raven can't be just killed, it must be defeated and for that, I need to work with R'hollor servants which means that terrible things could happen and I can't have you on my back, willing to do your duty when it comes the time."

Her last statement harms something inside him.

"Daenerys, for the love we had held for each other, please believe me. Believe me when I say that I will never do what I did again," he pleads, coming back to the sour mood from minutes before, "I'd rather die, cut my hands or be eaten by Drogon, all at the same time!"

"It doesn't work like that. It's not something you just refuse and everything goes as you plan," this time she stands to stare at his eyes, "What if I put your sister's life in danger? What if your family is put in danger because of me?" her eyebrows hurt for the effort she puts in arching them, a form of a plea. "This is the best way out for both of us."
"I love you."

She stops breathing.

"I can't leave because I love you."

Daenerys finally allows herself to hook on his eyes, which were enlighten.

_Don not believe him, do not believe him_, Daario’s voice chants in her head.

"I know I have no right to feel this. I must sound like a madman but it doesn't matter what happens, anymore. I love you and I won't leave because I can't be away from you."

Silence takes all over the room. She’s breathing hard and fast, switching from oddity, ire, and sadness.

_It does not matter if his words are true_, her mind warns her, _it’s not enough. It will never be enough._

"_Leave us_," she orders the guards. Daario probably had forbidden them to move but they know she does not need them, so they leave the lot.

When they are alone, she inhales and exhales, trying to calm.

"Do you remember what Tyrion told you?" she asks, recalling the conversation between them that day. "The words he took from Maester Aemon?" Now is Jon who avoids looking at her "Say it Jon" she demands. "Say the words."

"Love is the death of duty," he begins but his voice is lost by the end of the sentence.

“No,” she shouts, “Tyrion’s words. Not Aemon’s.”

His face deforms with a grimace of lament.

"Duty is the end of love."

“My duty was with my people and myself. I chose love and I lost,” she clears her throat, "You also had a choice, Jon. I won't blame you for what you chose. But it's done and it can't be undone-" she trails off, a sudden urge of spoke about all invade her.

"Your love is intangible. Your love is insensible,” every word came out of her mouth as if the dagger was plunging inside her again. "I still hear you calling me your queen. I hear your despair, looking for a reason to not do what you were about to do. Notwithstanding, I can't remember any feeling from your part. And now it's no different, I hear your regret; I see your pain but your words are still just air.

"I wish I could touch you. I wish I could turn around this piece of furniture and hug you. But I cannot even look at you without trembling, thinking that at any moment you will shove a dagger from a hiding place beneath your clothes,” he’s shaking and his hands clenching in and out. "My love for you was Valyrian steel while yours was barely dust," she let out a small laugh, "Ice and Fire, they called us. Do you know what happens when they join? Ice melts and kills the fire."

“_It’s not love, Jon. You are infatuated in your own misery._”

“You won’t decide what my feelings are,” he states with tears threatening to shed. Still, Daenerys sees the anger in his eyes. "Neither will you force me to leave.”
She allows herself to smile softly and reply, “You don’t get to choose.”

X

Daenerys

They had said goodbye so many times that one would think they would be used to it. The truth is that it still hurts like the time he left Dragonstone to go on that futile expedition beyond the Wall.

It was a couple of days before embarking back to Valyria, but she had no time to spare. The more distance she put between them, the better it would be. Ten years she lived away from him, knowing that he was at the other point of the known world, building a new life. She knows it will be hard, as it is to breathe every day knowing half of his heart is lost with all her beloved one gone, but she has to move forward. She has to.

The hatchlings are devouring their morning feast when she arrives at the abandoned pit where they made their nest. Drogon is resting, uninterested and dejected. She had sensed his reluctance about returning to Westeros.

*It will be our last journey, my love,* she promises him. Drogon let out a disappointed groan.

“Daenerys,” she hears Daario’s cry coming from the entrance. *He shouldn’t appear like this,* she thinks, watching carefully that the hatchling recognise him as a friend.

“What you want, Daario?” she asks, exhausted and rushed, yearning to mount Drogon and finish this endeavour. “I’m hurried.”

“I know,” he says, lowering his gaze to the satchel she was holding.

“Just in case,” she justifies, knowing that he must be wondering why someone who does not need to eat could be worried for provisions. Daenerys won’t mention Gerael gave her the blue sleep. “What do you want?” she repeats her initial question, annoyed.

“I’ll go with you.” It was most of a statement than a question.

She notices he is unprepared.

“I have no time,” she mentions, climbing up Drogon’s neck.

Daenerys is still chafed at his latest behaviour. She knows he loves her and worries for her, but he has put her good judgment in doubt. She wasn’t wishing to share a long trip with him to Asshai.

"Daenerys,” he calls her again and it sounds like a plea. "Please, do not ignore me. I want the best for you. I wanted you happy and I wanted you alive. I haven't seen you happy in ten years, at least let me get you alive."

"I told you I am dead!" she claims.

He sighs with resignation and nods.

"Please, let me go with you."

Seeing him defeated makes her realize how hard she was being. It still bothers her that he had
defied her orders, but she couldn't leave things this way with the most loyal person she had by her side.

Daenerys leans down to extend her hand. Daario takes it.

**Jon**

He is hidden in the same alley where he meets the red dragon almost every night. Since their discussion and revelations, his headache had increased to the point that he only wanted to be alone. So he comes here.

The dragon lands and settles as he could, placing his long neck next to him.

Jon stroked him and the animal relaxed enough to lower himself further until he extended one of his wings — not, he's offering his shoulder, as he watched Jon with wide-opened, expectant eyes.

*Don't do it,* he thinks. *Don't do it.*

*A dragon is not a slave,* she told him years ago. A dragon cannot be chained at will.

If her dragon chooses him, what else could she do? kill him?

Jon shakes his head and recoils. He will not take her dragon. Not yet.

*A dragon is not a slave,* he repeats in his mind. And Jon decided he wasn't going to be the first one.

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**Chapter End Notes**

*LOL i totally forgot part VII but it's there now*
Chapter Summary

Daenerys goes to the shadows.
Sansa laments her sins.
Tyrion proves himself a true Lannister.
Jon takes a decision.

Chapter Notes

Well, guys, this chapter is definitely a breaking point for the story. If you wish the BIG SPOILER, go to the endnotes to know who dies in this chapter.

If you left this story after this, I totally understand. From the beginning, this was a twist I had planned. There was a little foreshadowing in early chapters and even it's part of the whole reason for this story. Please, do not throw hate on the comments. I always said this story follows the canonical kind of tragedy and pain. The only ones that had a happy ending guaranteed are the main couple. Thought that ending will come, well, at the end.

“Three times the threshold you’ll cross. One for saving, one for death and one for love.”

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 10: "Only Sacrifice Can Pay For Victory"

I

Daenerys

Qarth

"Naharis," Jornik's voice comes from the entrance. He never passes from there when the dragons are in the pit. "We have an emergency."

Daario was climbing Drogon's neck when Jornik appeared informing about an uprising on the eastern side of the city.

"They will solve it," Daario tries to excuse, but Daenerys shakes her head, having already made her mind.

"I have Drogon," she explains, loosening the grip of his hand, "nothing will hurt me while I am with him."
Daario gulps hard staring at the hatchlings, "And what about those?"

Daenerys frowns, turning to see them. Barristal wasn't there.

"Make sure they are well-feed and they will cause no trouble," she can't bring them with her to Asshai. "I'll come back in a week, if I don't return in that time, you can name yourself King of Valyria."

She is quipping about an untold truth but Daario's expression darkens and Daenerys realises she is making him even more nervous.

Drogon waits for Daario to climb down and takes flight.

He must make himself aware that someday I will not return, she thinks.

West Village - Jorah's Port

Arianne

Your Grace, Princess Arianne:

I am pleased to inform you our warfare is over, and as a result, the victory is ours. Port Yhos, Qarkash, and Qarth are free of slavery. Soon its people will choose befitting leaders that can join the Common Council.

I'm sending with this letter the names of the fallen soldiers you ought to communicate to the Westerosi families in Jorah’s Port. I urge to remind them that there will be a requital for each brave warrior that had fought for the freedom of millions of slaves.

In addition, I must report to you the state of our beloved Lord Gendry, who has suffered from severe injuries on the battlefield, which force him to ongoing rest and recover in Port Yhos, where I left him as my regent, accompanied by Lord Monterys and Ser Davos.

In this time, I felt the duty to make him conscious of his future and the future of Westeros. First, he was unsettled about it. We discussed a whole night about what he can achieve as King of the Seven Kingdoms, and the peace that will be brought to the people seeing House Baratheon and House Targaryen again as allies.

As well we speak about you, my princess.

Gendry is a good man. A man of honour and demure, that was raised to believe that life has nothing for him and he did not deserve anything beyond what it's given to him. He has talked to me about these last words you shared before his departure and now everything has a sense for him.

You must be patient and avoid overwhelm him, princess. He accepted to consider our plan and give us an answer when we are all in Valyria, again. I'm hoping he will accept.

Which brings me to the next issue: we must prepare for the long journey to Westeros. I made a deal and the other party already complied. I must do the same. Anon, your father will pay his annual visit and we will put the facts on the table.

In the meantime, I entrust you with the arrangements for this voyage, for what you have my permission to use all the funds you will need.
I'm eagerly anticipating Westeros to be my last campaign. I just want to rest, Arianne. Plant some more trees in Eastgates and let my dragons fly free in the skies. However, victory must always pay a price.

Looking forward to meeting you in Valyria.

Please, notify individually to Jon Snow's family he and the wildling boy are alive and well.

Daenerys.

Arianne breathes holding the letter so close to her chest that she can feel her heartbeat racing through the material. She moves it away to read again and repeats the movements until the minutes pass and she gets to stand to return to the Town Hall and ask the workers to gather up the Westerosi families for the announcement.

In her few years she had become accustomed to this type of waiting. The wars that seem never-ending. However, the queen's message brought the disclosure of something new, something longed for. Her life is about to change, and history is about to change.

"Reunite the villagers, please," she indicates to Xinea, her young assistant and a former slave Daenerys saved in the Isle of the Whip, years ago. Then, she clarifies, "The Westerosi families, only."

"Of course, my lady," Xinea replies, bowing.

"Xinea," Arianne stops her before she leaves. The girl turns around and she smiles at the parchment in her hand. "It's 'your grace', now."

It is not meant to sound superb nor presumptuous since they are friends and had known for years. Xinea smirks and bows again. "Your grace."

Arianne bits her lower lip and downs her gaze towards the letter, again. Her smile disappears when she reads the last line one more time.

'Notify Jon Snow's family he and the wildling boy are alive and well'.

Arianne allows herself to rejoice with the second part of that line.

II

Sansa

Sounds of whining fill the hall. Some women had cursed the name of Daenerys' and spit her ground when the names of the dead were announced. Jon wasn't named.

Sansa kept latent, observing the scene with wide eyes and staring carefully at the north women so they won't imitate the gesture. She failed and some of them actually did it. Playing with her fingers on her lap she realised she couldn't say much. Her authority had dissolved every day they spent in this land.

"Queen Daenerys wanted me to inform you personally about your brother state," Arianne approached to speak with her when the hall was being abandoned. Her heart stopped for a moment. "Jon Snow is alive and well, those were her words."
Sansa swallowed and breathe again, Brianne by her side prepared for her to faint.

"Lord Dewyn is fine, as well," Arianne adds. "They brought news. When the time of their return comes, we all will travel to the capital to receive them."

Arianne did not wait for her response and just leave.

The boy is important to Jon, so she was glad for that new. Tormund and the girl, Val, were also relieved.

“That’s motive for a celebration!” he shouted, disconnected from the prevailing mood.

Sansa smiled but the sour memory of Lord Manderly came to her mind. She will have to pray for the soul of her father-in-law in the Temple of the Old Gods.

"That's far away from here, my queen," Ser Brianne protests, suggesting they should travel on the morrow. The temple was ubicated in the city of Jorah’s Port, more than two hours on a horse.

Sansa knew that Brianne was a mother above all. Taking her child everywhere wasn't ideal for little Jaime.

"I'll be fine, Ser Brianne," she assured, ignoring her opposition. "Arianne provided me with a personal guard."

It was a lie. She has required a company to the city and Arianne had barely sent a carriage. Sansa has accepted the poor animosity of the princess of Dorne towards her.

On the way to the city, she went through some farms and villages where people watched her with suspicious eyes, a feeling she received with surprise since the people of Valyria were diverse and multicultural. She was not the only woman with dark red hair and pale skin.

They know who I am, she concluded, lifting the hood of her coat.

The temple of the Old Gods in Jorah’s Port was barely a barn well-painted. Here weirwood trees did not grow, and in its place, there was a large painting of it on one of the walls.

Sansa approaches slowly to touch the texture and imagine herself back home. When she closes her eyes, she remembers her wedding. Not the first nor the second one but the third and her last. Sweet Will was younger than her and an anxious disaster. That first night he did not push her to do anything, neither the next four moons until she gave in to the Lords’ pressure to bear an heir.

When she sits and starts to pray another memory comes to her mind. It was a fortnight after her firstborn didn’t make it, and she kneeled in front of the Heart Tree, crying and asking for forgiveness about her evil deeds. Not just the treason against her brother but her complot against Daenerys Targaryen.

Sansa had made sure that Brianne will write and deliver that message with prudence, so Cersei would never find out who was the issuer. A secret both had sworn to take to the grave.

She recalls the moment where Brianne brought the missive with the news, and how disappointed she felt Daenerys was not the casualty but her injured dragon and her handmaiden, Missandei of Naath.

“It worked,” Bran’s emotionless voice had told her, taking her aback. “It will work for you. At least for a time.”
Sansa’s reaction was simply a profound sigh, expecting that Jon would understand it was for everyone’s best interest. For many years she believed so, even he marched North of the Wall to be with the people he truly loves. It was a happy ending.

She should have known better it was a stupid dream from a stupid girl playing the game Cersei and Petyr had taught her. It didn’t work for them and ultimately didn’t work for Sansa.

Fat tears escape from her eyes and she begins to sob.

"I'm sorry it had to be you. Can you forgive me?" She asked Jon a question that he never replied. She knows he would never. At least not while Daenerys doesn’t do the same first.

By Jon’s lack of reaction, Sansa deduced Daenerys didn’t tell him about their late unborn child yet.

When Maester Wolkan came with that announcement all Sansa could think was Winterfell. It wouldn’t have mattered she was the only Stark that could have inherited her ancestral home, Jon’s children would’ve grown up to take what was hers with the Lords’ approval. And that was before Jon’s revelation of his true identity. Before pure fear and hatred started to boil inside her.

“Why her?” she asked Tyrion with true concern, wondering why Daenerys had to come and destroy the small security in her life. Sansa didn’t want the Iron Throne nor anything related to the south.

“May we see again when our queen is crowned,” Lord Varys said when they bided farewell that same day, “Or in the impending wedding,” he added and because of his tone, she could rapidly catch that same reluctance that Tyrion was having. Both of her advisors were having doubts about her, the same doubts she had when Little Finger talked about Daenerys’ desire to overthrow the order as she did in Essos with the Masters. All Sansa though she had to do was to push them a little.

“The sooner the latter happens the better. Before their child is born. Farewell, Lord Varys.”

She had not the certainty Daenerys would perish in Cersei’s attack and she had to secure the spider would act if that first plan failed. It never crossed her mind Jon himself would finishing them both. Mother and child.

She took two children from her and the gods did the same to Sansa.

If ever Jon finds out, her death is secured. Not that she is afraid of that anymore. However, Jon’s love is the only thing she has left.

The sound of steps coming inside the Temple force her to ease. An image of little Eddar skimming the Heart Tree’s bark comes to her mind, filling her heart with joy. She would never regret having him in her life, even if it was for a short time.

She doesn't notice the approach until it's late and a hand covers her cry of astonishment. A sudden move drives her off to the muddy ground, and soon her face is smashed into the floor, choking her.

Sansa tries to fight back but her attacker overweights her. She can't breathe and feels the person pushing her down with her knee. When the hand leaves her mouth she can't scream, barely let out a weakened whine. Soon her attacker's hand is on the skirt of her dress and she knows she'd rather be dead than let that happen again.

Sansa screams as she can only remember doing when her father was being beheaded. Something inside her is broken and the pain will kill her before that anything. She knows it.

"Little bitch," he curses and Sansa recognises Lord Westerling above her. When he is about to push
himself inside her, he murmurs in her ear. "Your bastard brother can't protect you, here."

She let out another shout of despair that is muted when the weight of Lord Manderly leaves her and she is released from his imprisonment.

Sansa hears a moan but it's more of an agonising sound of an animal than the voice of a man.

She turns and sees Lord Manderly imbedded where the weirwood's painting is. The red of the leaves coloured with the red of his blood.

"Wha-?" he says before another objective hits his head and explodes in hundreds of parts, staining her.

Her inner pain forbids her to scream again.

"Sansa," someone calls from the entrance.

*Tyrion.*

**III**

**City of Jorah's Port**

*Tyrion*

His father told him once that one man has few moments in his life where he can prove himself wise or stupid. Tyrion has several moments of those on his life and all he can conclude is that he is a survivor. Sometimes a stupid one, other times a wise one. By contrast, Tywin Lannister was a wise, dead man.

As Sansa sobs and covers herself with the scraps of her dress, Tyrion put down the crossbow he took from near armory storage of Daenerys' soldiers.

"My queen," he calls her in a soft tone. He hates seeing her like this. He is truly a monster, after all. "Can I help you?"

Sansa shakes her head and hides her soiled face between her hands.

Tyrion sighs with true sadness. A part of him regretting what he did.

It could have been worse, he says to himself. It could have happened and serve for nothing.

Lord Westerling's rage had increased every single day since Jon cut his hand away and took his soldiers with him. The big moron was always a man of gigantic idiocy and weak character. Janei was a woman of poor taste in men, she didn't even marry someone who could've to secure her hold of Casterly Rock but the stupid last member of a house that was not even capable of securing their own seat.

As his father said, it comes a time when one is in front of a situation where one is wise or one is stupid. And he knew that having Sansa unprotected in the city on the very same day he was there with a drunk and choleric Lord Westerling was that moment. He was wise by tempting him to do what he already had planned to do. Lord Westerling was stupid to follow that advice. And Tyrion was wiser to take advantage and end the man that was an impediment for his nephew to become
the rightful heir of Casterly Rock. Moreover, he needed to recover Sansa's trust and Jon's goodwill.

*The things we do for love*, Jaime used to say. *Indeed, the things we do for love, dear brother.*

**IV**

**West Village - Jorah's Port**

**Val**

The little monster's eyes were closing as she finished singing the lullaby that she had sung to other children many times on the same day. This little boy was particularly her favorite, with eyes and hair as dark as Jon's, Val was hoping someday to have her own like this one. A stupid dream that had already proved to be just a fantasy. As much as she tried, even at Jon's reluctance, her lover would never give her children. She would have to settle for being the mother of all those little ones who no longer had theirs.

As she finished laying the baby in his makeshift crib, she remembered parts of her conversation with the dragon queen.

"*I don't know him as well as you do,*" she had begun to explain after taking the fire-set arrow off the board with her bare hand, in front of her stunned gaze. "*But I know something about him that is easy to notice: he embraces his misery. Or he does not realises yet that he is in a constant state of suffering on his own. I never returned because in the flames of the red god I saw how happy he was by your side and I am an extremely proud woman to return where I've been rejected.*"

She would want to snort at her and ask what god was showing her those visions. In her four years with Jon, their routine was basically him going war, going back and share a bed with her where he rarely would talk and then returning to his sister's war. Their lives were far from being a southron fairy tale.

"*I want him to be happy,*" she continued, "*and I want him to be away from me.*"

"*He does not love you, anymore,*" she lied, knowing that Jon would let this woman kick him to death as long as she's around. "*Your children would be abominations.*"

They never spoke about this matter. Jon never spoke of her with anyone but his family. But she knew by external sources that the dragon queen was his kin, and that's why the southron calls him a kinslayer.

The dragon queen darkened her expression, and for a moment Val believed the next thing she would set on fire would be her.

"*I cannot have children,*" she responded, "*And he has never loved me.*"

Val narrowed her eyes at that statement, determining whether she was so sure of what she said or not. She realised that yes, the dragon queen believed in her own words.

She pained at the bitter memory of seeing them in Winterfell walking among the soldiers and riding the dragons. Val met Jon before the dragon queen but didn't even look at her once until she left and she was there like a mirroring image. She wasn't stupid, but she came to think it was because Jon liked blond-haired women.
"I am the most interested in sending him away. You don't have to see me as your enemy."

But it wasn't true. She was her greater enemy because she has something she will never: his heart. No matter if she has Jon in her bed, the dragon queen had his heart.

"I couldn't convince him to give up his sister's war nor of coming here. As you say, he likes suffering more than he likes-" she stopped in the middle of the sentence noticing she didn't know what other activity he enjoys. Training? Riding? Hunting? Drinking? Sleeping?

"Carving," the dragon queen completed for her, "He used to say he likes carving."

Val stood still. She had forgotten seeing him doing tons of those in his free time.

"I never saw him doing it, though," she added. "His father, my brother, used to sing. Both good at fighting with soft pastimes."

They kept in silence until the dragon queen started moving to the entrance.

"I will impose him to go. All I'm asking from you is to make him the happiest man alive because he deserves it."

Well, dragon queen, she thinks in her mind, to make that happen I have to force you to return to him.

Val lies in their bed watching the baby sleeps, and thinking mayhaps she will never find her own happiness with Jon's half love by her side.


V

Qarth

Gerael

He notices that the blueish line starts to come down from his wrist to the palm of his right hand, and soon he would have to resort to the leather gloves that bothered him so much.

Perhaps next time he would refuse to accompany her in these endless campaigns.

"Could you pass me that too, please?" he told one of the healers, an elderly lady. "Thank you."

Gerael was experimenting with willow bark to improve its relaxing effects and help with the pains of battle wounded. Good luck to him if he discovered something else in the process.

Jon Snow's thick voice alerted him, distracting him from his task.

The man did not realise he was there and continued to ask the old lady about something they called milk of the poppy in the common tongue. Gerael deduced that he was still going through a sore head.

"If the ache lasts more than a day then it is not just an ache, it is a symptom," he warns him, in the best common tongue he could get. Gerael didn't bother to see if Jon Snow paid attention.

"The important is that it stops hurting," he replies intoning louder and clearer as if he feared Gerael would not understand.
"To stop the pain, you have to know what is causing it, Jon Snow."

Like the blue sleep, he had needed to know the poison to create the cure that stops it from killing him that fast.

"An old blow," he reveals and Gerael frowns.

"When Daenerys hit you?"

He had no intention of bringing her to this exchange, but it seemed curious that something like that was going to cause him so much pain. Gerael saw how hurt and miserable he was all the time. It was not normal.

"Before that," he replies. "Phantom pain."

Gerael let out a slight laugh. "Then you have to get rid of those phantoms."

Again, he didn't mean to sound scornful. But by the other man's hardened expression Gerael deduces that he did. Gerael raised his hands as an apologetically moving and almost instantly lowered them down realising his mistake.

"If it's not milk of the poppy then what does the poison king suggests?"

Gerael regretted having prompt his anger.

He wasn't trying to sound menacing like Daario but as he has never enjoyed the confrontation. He does not desire to deal with this poor man's suffering. In his life, he had learned to detect pain, and Jon Snow is deeply troubled kind.

"Turmeric powder, powdered nails, acupuncture," he enumerated the infinite ways to deceive the pain, "they call them 'painkillers' but in reality, they are more like silencers."

Jon Snow points out what he was working on.

"And that?" he questions.

"It's not finished," he explains, "another pain silencer." Gerael stands to take a small jar from the cabinet behind him. When he turns around to extend it to him, Jon Snow looks at him leery. "If she does not want you hurt, I will not hurt you."

The man takes the potion offered with not great conviction.

"Thank you," he says and it sounds honest but cautious. When he attempts to leave something stops him. "Is she happy?"

His question takes him aback.

"Would you pardon me?"

"Is she happy?" he repeats, so certain of his words that he does not change them.

Gerael opens his eyes, thinking it. What was happiness for these people? He killed her in an unpleasant way, ignoring the existence of the child she was carrying. Though Daenerys mostly avoids speaking about him unless it's necessary, Gerael knew this man was the reason for most of her suffering. Is he this blind?
And then he grasps the hiding meaning in his words. The reason his head still hurts.

He loves her.

"Let Daenerys respond that question herself," he answers, returning to grind the bark. "And whatever response she gives you, accept it."

He does not consider himself a jealous man and part of his statement surprises him even more than it does to Jon Snow. He would be lying if he says he does not care for her enough to try to keep her away from her murderer.

The white wolf nods and retires.

VI

In the Shadows

Daenerys

There was something magical about seeing another sleeping. Right now, she was watching Drogon's gigantic nares widen and close while he rested. When she was alive, it wasn't something she would pay attention to.

Daenerys turned around and put an arm under her head, looking toward the starry night sky. The closer she was to the shadows, the darker it became. She tried to remember everything she knew about Asshai, even if it distressed her.

Kinvara was clear with her assignment; she had to burn the heart of the Undying at the end of Asshai. A requirement that she found inappropriate and exaggerated but she had stopped questioning the priestess for a long time.

She takes an apple from her satchel and began to cut it with Gerael's dagger. A smile draws on her face as she thought she is protected by the weapons that he and Daario had provided her.

She looks at her sword, remembering when Daario gave it to her. It was a simple short sword with a black pommel and two rubies on each side.

"You are clumsy still but you will learn," he jested, helping her to handle it.

It took her years to finally move properly. She still considers herself an apprentice.

I could have Jon's dagger with me, she thinks. The dagger that has my blood. But Daenerys never saw it again after Ibben. She ripped it from her rotten chest and threw it loudly to the ground.What a waste of a weapon, she allows herself quipping. It was a very good weapon to kill someone cleanly, no suffering, not screaming, not last words. Barely a stain of blood. You made my death nice to the eyes, Jon.

Sometimes she thought she could stop thinking about her death but the memory was stuck in her mind and was so hard to forget. She wanted, she longed to give Jon the atonement he was looking for so much. After all, he wouldn't have done it if it wasn't because she gave him enough motivation. Or would you have betrayed me anyway? What would have happened if I chose not to burn King's Landing and instead Sansa would have challenged my authority? Would you have killed me anyway?
Daenerys shakes her head exhausted. Probably yes. Jon is a Stark. As much as he said otherwise, he is a wolf and wolves protect their pack.

With Varys supplying her with a moon tea to harm her daughter, Daenerys would have eventually succumbed to madness. *I should have made it easier for you Jon and throw me off the top of Red Keep as Helaena Targaryen did.*

Finishing eating the apple, she thinks how useless is this activity. She feels nothing of the taste nor her inner being filled. Very few things could taste now; aged wines, peppers, and odd exotic species. And poison. At least, those ones with strong scents.

Daenerys really missed enjoying something sweet or salty melting in her tongue. At least this condition still allowed her to enjoy the pleasures of her body. Reminiscents of life.

"*Wanting is dangerous,*" Kinvara explained to her, "*Humans' desires led them to destruction. You must feel glad you were saved from that charge.*"

She wished for them to have stripped away the feelings too. To make her something like Bran Stark, or the Raven, a soulless body in the grip of an old god. For that, R'hollah should have had to occupy her body but whatever R'hollah is, didn't. For some reason, they want her to be Daenerys when the time comes. Or might they are just cruel.

You deserve it, a small voice in her head tells her. Some days is Varys' voice, others Tyrions', Sansa's or Viserys'. In the bad days is Jon's and in the very bad days is Missandei, Jorah or Ser Barristan.

Daenerys sighs and waits for the sun to set, looking East. One day more to Asshai and it's over. When she returns to Valyria he'll be gone from her life again.

*I love you,*" his words keep resounding in her mind. *"I can't leave because I love you.*"

What is he pretending that she would hold him in an embrace and seal forgiveness? Is he playing with her again, trying to make her fall? He does not need it. She loves him. However, that feeling is hers and only hers. It has been used against her and now can only belong to her.

When the first beam of lightning is starting to appear from the horizon, she takes the quill and parchment from her satchel and starts writing:

*To Jon:*

*A song of Ice and Fire.*

*Crowned under the bleeding start,*
It was a good omen for a time.
I have flown so high,
Until its fire bathed my heart.
Lions and wolves ripped my guts,
I was a fool for believing that I lied in my love’s arms.
Winter in my lips when I farewell my life,
And thousand swords burned.
I ask my love to not let the songs,
tell about our love.

Drogon’s snarl pulls her out of her thoughts. She picks up her things and prepares for their flight. After hunting some wild creatures and feeding, Drogon takes her beyond the lands of Yi Ti until
they reached the Ghost Grass, which they contemplate only from afar. She knows Stygai is near and light will be gone for good.

She senses Drogon’s nervousness through the bound and it surprises her.

When they are flying over the corpse city, she feels tempted to use her own fire to illuminate and see something. She’s totally blind.

Drogon keeps flying, though. Straight and high, as if he moves a little low or to the side, he would crash against a mountain’s peak. It’s not until what should be the night’s hour that they see something lighting guiding them. Something green like.

The Ash.

Daenerys knows they can’t approach the river and she will not risk Drogon to drink from it. She avoids the silly impulse to drink it herself and see what it does to her body.

They land when Drogon is exhausted and hungry. She does not want him to hunt here, so she needs to hurry and find the way to burn Sohorioz here. She walks through the vale until she’s in a hill with the view of the port city of Asshai. Tales said dragons live here still, but she does not find anyone in her path. Asshai is lonely, silent and she would dare to say even its nature is gone.

With Sohorioz protected in the golden chest she’s carrying, Daenerys ingress in the city and wanders for hours until what it seems to be the daytime. She has lost her sense of time.

“Burn Sohorioz, at the end of Asshai,” were Kinvara’s words.

At the end of Asshai, she repeats in her mind. Where is the end of Asshai?

The few inhabitants of the city stared at her as if they know her, despite the mask she’s using. Once again, Daenerys avoids wondering why.

When she reaches the ports, she guesses this is the end of Asshai. There’s no other place she could go.

She trudges until it is far from curious stares and kneels to open up the chest. The stone heart makes her hands bleed and she’s thankful she would not have to cut herself again to use the red god gift. Daenerys sets on fire the rock but and finally, it starts burning into a heavy orange liquid that slides off her hands.

Lava.

*I guess it’s true,* she thinks. *I am a warrior of fire after all.*

She kicks the chest to the river and sighs. When she turns around, she stops with a jolt, when hundreds –not, thousands of people with masks are in front of her. Shadowbinders.

Horns sound.

**VII**

**Qarth**

**Jon**
The Poison King’s drink works well for a couple of days and Jon rejoices in the minimal resting he gets until the nightmares begin. He sees a dark sky and a river of ashes. Many faces that are not faces. And he sees Dany.

The first night he wakes up and drowns his face underwater, feeling it burning. The second one he feels so overwhelmed that he goes to amble the city, trying to ease his mind.

It does not work.

The next couple of days are the same as they patrol and help with the maintenance of the city as some uprisings arose. The time for departure is due and Jon notices the anguish growing stronger in his chest at the inability to do something about his near destiny.

You have a choice, he remembers. You could purloin the red dragon and oppose her. He can't think in a more desperate, dishonourable act than this. Oh well, yes, kill her in an embrace of love.

Jon knows he has taken enough from her.

Doing the right thing didn't work out. Nor coming to her to face punishment for his crime. And telling her about his feelings neither. Nothing he does seems to turn out well.

"Whatever response she gives you, accept it."

Gerael Dagareon's words resound in his mind. On the contrary to Daario, the poison king appears to be a more tactful man. Jon did notice the slight caveat in his words, and it made him feel downhearted.

What if this man was good for her? He's certain she does not love him. Not yet.

Two weeks after her take-off, things start to go odd.

He is not aware of the situation since Daario removed him from the commanders' meetings, but by being a good observer, he knows that things were not going well.

"A hear something in the hall today," Dewyn tells him one night. "It seems the Dragon Queen is taking more time than it should."

His head started pounding again. His distress turned in fright. He knows Daario would not telling him anything and the little he knew about Daenerys' trip is that she went east.

Jon had only a source of information in mind.

"You shouldn't dread the dragon in you, Jon Snow," the red priestess greets him while painting the back of a man in a table with strange symbols. "Barristal has long waited for his own rider to come."

Barristal. The red dragon's named after Ser Barristan, the Bold. And the red woman knows about their meetings.

"Did you tell her?" he asks, fearing not to be himself the one doing it.

Lady Kinvara tilts her head and moves her lips slowly, almost like a smile. She's more wary of her words that Melissandre ever was.
"Knowing is always a responsibility, Jon Snow," she holds his gaze and he is mesmerised by those exotic eyes. "Knowledge is power. You have to know when to use it," she returns to paint the person. "She is not aware of Barristal's new interest. You should go and tell her yourself. Our Queen values honesty."

It does not surprise him that she knows what he came for.

"Where do I find her?"

"In the shadows," she replies, "You will find her in the shadows."

Asshai.

VIII

Asshai

Daenerys

She can't feel her skin anymore. She believes is the fifth day she is floating in the Ash, feeding the monstrosities that inhabit Asshai and the rest of the Shadow Lands.

The worst part is knowing she will. She will survive.

"Her blood is like a river," a raspy voice states, "it could endure until the end of the times."

"Until R'hollor decides, then," another one says. Daenerys knows he is a Warlock. "What he will do when he finds out we have his new toy with us?" then he laughs frenzy.

Daenerys keeps her eyes on Drogon fettered on the coastline. The horns have sounded every hour to make him standstill. She cannot feel their bound nor his mind, as if it were turned off. Their only contact was their eyes. His wellbeing is stopping her from burning her captors down.

If Daario or the hatchlings had come with her, the former would already be dead and the latter, slaves of these creatures. She wasn't sure what would happen to her but at least she had made a final good decision in not bringing them.

"Have you enjoyed taking that fetid city?" had asked the Warlock when they chained on the Ash River. "We waited for you for so long."

Daenerys took a deep breath and restrained herself as she watched as Drogon let out a helpless groan. A single horn had stunned him for days in Yi Ti; there were at least a dozen.

Your blood is a gift, they explained to her a couple of months later after the resurrection. And the fire runs through that blood. Yours is the fire. Daenerys has avoided thinking too much as she had believed in destiny once just to fail greatly at the hands of another magic being as Jon is.

Here she goes again.

Would she finally cross the threshold?

"Three times the threshold you'll cross. One for saving, one for death and one for love."
One for love.

She never thought that love was Drogon, but the truth is that she would gladly give up her life for her last son. She came back for him, she would leave this existence for him as well.

Daenerys can't feel any pain if she's honest. It's just the memory of what it used to be. However, her mind fades as she tries to hold on to sporadic thoughts and not give up on the darkness.

A sole wonder comes to her mind.

“Do I deserve it?”

IX

Qarth

Jon

He waits until night comes and waits for Barristal in the same alley there have been meeting for the past weeks. The dragon hadn’t stopped coming and inviting Jon to climb his loin.

Jon walks down the hall, stepping on and crushing the scattered bones of animals, in fear that a wrong step will end the beast's tolerance for him. Barristal lifts his neck and watches him approach with the same anxious eyes as always.

“I don’t know how to speak Valyrian,” Jon warns, before the astonished gaze of the dragon. “But your mother and Drogon could be in danger.”

Barristal holds his curious stare on Jon, stirring to lower his right shoulder again and repeat the invitation.

Jon has come prepared for a long journey, and he knows that Daario wouldn’t notice his absence until he was at least in the lands of Yi Ti. His major concern would come later when he and Dany learn of this silly movement.

If her fire does not kill him first, Daario would do it for sure.

Jon moves forwards, stroking his neck a little in a gesture of thanks before stepping above his wing, carefully not to weigh him down too much. He’s smaller than Rhaegal was that time he mounted him, and still large enough to perfectly fit between the spines in his back.

“What do I hold onto?”

“What ever you can.”

Jon shivers at the memory; the same pain in his chest.

Barristal prepares to fold his wings for heaven and Jon quickly catches the spines and gets set for the flight.

As soon as they fly over the city, Jon feels as something changes, like if he were entering the dragon’s mind and he as well. He felt the same with Rhaegal, who took them to the waterfalls just because Jon thought in that place.
What he was thinking this time? East, towards Asshai. And towards Dany.

X

Asshai

Mother

Drogon’s incessant whines break the last piece of her soul and she burns the Warlock hand and their magic grip over her body. She never stops bleeding unless she uses Kinvara’s ointment, which was in the satchel relegated on the dock where they seized her.

Her son cries harder when the horns sound in admonition and the other Shadowbinders try to imprison her again. Daenerys cannot explain how her body resists so much magic on her, but her inhuman strength had more to do with the fact that they were hurting her son. What kind of mother permits her son to be hurt?

Viserion falling down to the frozen land, Rhaegal being pierced multiple times; Rhaego assassinated and her daughter poisoned, both in her womb. She couldn’t protect her children even in her bowels.

All the rage she is feeling sends her off-limits. She burns everything that tries to reach her while she advances to the coastlines, to her son.

Drogon, my love, she cries trying to find the bound. Drogon, answer me.

There’s nothing.

Her blood keeps spreading out but she’s staring at his eyes.

The Warlocks and the rest of the Shadowbinders continue exerting their power while each unfortunate one who approaches too much ends up turning into ashes for the river. In all that time she does not realise that the flames begin to stand out from the water; the magic of her blood resurfacing and engulfing everything in its path.

Why Kinvara sent her here? Did she betray her? Was it on purpose?

"You know you will need more than that. Only death can pay for life. Only a sacrifice can pay for a victory."

"If I tell you what is true and what is not, your purpose will be corrupted."

What purpose was that? Had come the time already?

Please, let Drogon escape. Let Drogon be safe and take me, she prays to whoever is listening. Take your bloody sacrifice but let my son be safe!

Mother.

She falls on her knees feeling him returning.

"Drogon," she cries, watching him trying to stand as the horns sound louder and both are shaken. She needs to move to those damned weapons and end them.
But she doesn't know where they are.

"We have enough," one of the monsters, as she sees them, says, "finish her."

"She can't be finished," a shadowbinder with a red mask returns. "Warrior of R'hollor, as powerful as the one the Raven is sending to hunt our kind."

"We'll not succumb in the play of those two," other claims. Daenerys hear their voices but she can't look where they are. "Finish her!"

The Raven and R'hollor. Who are they? What do they want? She did not care enough to ask before.

"Make the beast chew her."

"R'hollor would have nothing to safe this time."

"What a waste," it replies.

Mother.

Love.

Mother.

Daenerys closes her eyes.

Her destiny was sealed.

A late memory of Viserys recounting the end of the Dance of the Dragons. She always had found Rhaenyra's death terribly unfair. The rightful heir to the Iron Throne.

Might this was all about. Completing what she did well when she was alive. Clean her stained hands.

The price of freedom.

If she could only have the certainty that Drogon, the hatchlings and Daario, and his family will all be fine, then Daenerys could leave in peace.

Drogon snout is in front of her. She lifts her stare and touches him, trying to give him one last comfort as she couldn't the last time she left.

She senses his pain and it burns her inside as if she was the one about to hurt him.

Drogon stands with his wings opened as the day of her death in the throne room, and let out a cry of lament that she wishes never have heard.

He looks at her from above with pain, and she only smiles so that is his last memory of her.

When her son crashes his wings against the ground, Daenerys crouches at the sudden fear of being chewed alive and waits for the darkness that comes before the light at the end of the tunnel when the gate opens and there's the threshold.

That darkness never comes.

She listens a monstrous sound, the detachment of stones followed by a howl of grief that is
silenced when Drogon digs his fangs onto his own chest and rips his heart out.

The same place where the spear of the Night King stuck in Viserion. The same place where Euron Greyjoy shot the first target at Rhaegal. And the same place where Jon thrust his dagger on her.

When his body falls off, she drowns in a giant wave. The horns are silenced.

Red. All Daenerys sees is red.

XI: When the sun rises in the west and sets in the east.

R'hollor

It was the first time in millennia that light reached the peaks of the highest mountains of Asshai, a land that had been relegated for so long that it became an abyss of perdition so vile that there was no other way to save it than to start over.

Seven days and seven nights the warrior's wrath fell on the infertile land of the shadows. He watched as the mountains fell like leaves and the rivers and lakes dried up. All while the warrior extended the magic of her blood to end the empire of the shadows, as she did bring to life to the cursed Valyria and ended with the Undying Ones.

There was something about humans that R'hollor fascinated greatly: their emotions. Unlike other beings, humans were able to destroy and create only motivated by their hearts. They hadn't been created for magic and yet they created something as dangerous as it: power.

"They are not all, but they are enough," her loyal daughter tells, "when the guardian of the realm of men comes to her there will be nothing but light."

"The light is good," R'hollor replies, looking east, where the darkness would move to find shelter. The sun would rise in the west in Asshai.

"I fear that the shadows will soon cry out in the west."

"And the light will come once more," Kinvara assures him, "when the shield is removed."

“There's no other way,“ the god says before seeing again in the flames, where the exhausted warrior lies on the body of the dragon that she named her son. "It must end, everything must end."

All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the shadowlands: and the warrior of fire only remained alive.

Chapter End Notes

R.I.P Drogon.
I'm so, so sorry.
I promise you the hatchlings will survive until the end. No more harm to the dragons.
In another take, I have heard Emilia Clarke's interview in Dex Shepard's podcast, where she explains Daenerys' decision on burning KL and it will obviously affect a little of my narrative here because, in part, I pick the actors' take on the characters to write them. What she says is that Daenerys did it, out of pain, and because she was an addict to violence. Obviously she ignores the difference between killing specific targets and random people in a city full of innocents and children. There's a lack of transition here. A BIG HOLE in the narrative. But we have to accept it, sadly.

The reason I wrote this little sub-plot with Sansa is that I am really angry that her conflict with Daenerys has been reduced to a girl fight like Mean Girl and not a true political plot. Her actions against Daenerys in season 8 are empty and meaningless as only the writing of Dan and David can be. And I am more angry at her fans who accepted that a character with tremendous potential as she was has been reduced to another plot-device so that Daenerys goes crazy. Sansa is constantly named as the Little Finger apprentice but we never see her actions as thorough and planned as Little Finger's. If she is victorious in the end, it is because the plot grants it. We never know what motivates her to do what she does. So please don't take this as bashing her.

The two last paragraphs are from the bible, genesis 7. (The end of Asshai is the parallel of the end of Earth when God's makes rain for forty days).
Author's Note: I know you hate me now

The last chapter had a plot twist that some of you really, really hated. It breaks my heart but I knew it could happen. I feel bad for those who liked the story at the beginning. I don't want to feel I made you waste your time. So in a separate work, I will leave you the outline for the complete story, even if it's not the final outline, I want you to know where this was going. If you decided to stay, I will be forever thankful. Otherwise, I really appreciate the time you put in my little story and I thank you for the kind words you gave me throughout the process.

I know I started this in August and 11 chapters it's just too slow for some people. The truth is that I can't dedicate myself completely to this because I'm a college student and that comes first. Always.

I have read some tweets praising the writing and I am flattered in ways that I cannot express. By not speaking your language, sometimes it happens to me that I try to convey something that in my head (in Spanish) makes sense but in your language does not. Anyway, I thank you very much for the appreciation and despite some misunderstandings in the middle, I like being part of your fandom and this was a beautiful experience that I hope to continue!

Thank you :) 

In a few hours, I'll upload the complete outline.

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El último capítulo tuvo un giro en la trama que algunos de ustedes realmente odian. Me rompe el corazón pero sabía que podría suceder. Me siento mal por los que les gustó la historia al principio. No quiero sentir que les hice perder su tiempo. Entonces, en un trabajo separado, les dejaré el bosquejo de la historia completa, incluso si no es el bosquejo final pues suelo cambiar de ideas conforme ustedes me dejan sus opiniones. Quiero dejarles saber a dónde va esta historia.

A los que deciden quedarse, les agradezco mucho. A los que no, realmente aprecio el tiempo que le dedicaron a mi pequeña historia y agradezco las amables palabras que me dejaron durante todo el proceso.

Sé que comencé esto en agosto y 11 capítulos es un ritmo demasiado lento para algunas personas. La verdad es que no puedo dedicarme completamente a esto porque soy un estudiante universitaria y eso viene primero. Siempre.

He leído algunos tweets alabando la escritura y me siento halagada de formas que no puedo expresar. Al no ser natural del idioma inglés, a veces me sucede que trato de transmitir algo que tiene sentido en mi cabeza (en español) pero que en inglés no. De todos modos, muchas gracias por el aprecio y, a pesar de algunos malentendidos que me llevé por delante, ¡me gusta ser parte de este fandom y esta fue una experiencia hermosa que espero continuar!

Gracias :) 

En unas pocas horas subo el esquema completo.
Hello? There's someone still there after the last chapter? hahaha

I created an unnecessary drama after reading some tough comments calling me a bitch. I mean dude, it's just a story at the end of the day, it does not affect the true universe where Dany and Drogon are alive and well living in Hawaii like Emilia said. Speaking of...I heard the audio comment where one of the Ds confirms Drogon took Daenerys to Volantis so it is like I thought back then, they will eventually resurrect her for a season 9 or a movie because this is business and that's all that matters, squeeze every penny.

I KNOW I said I was going to update the two parts of this chapter together but some of you really wanted to know what comes after the last twist so here you got.

Besides, I have passed two of my courses and I am super happy about it!

Thanks to the ones who left comments with your continuous support and also to the ones who didn't like the twist and expressed their disagreement with respect.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Chapter 11: "Tower of Laments"

- Part One -

I

Jon

He once believed the destruction of King’s Landing was the worst thing he’s ever seen. The images of the charred children on the streets, the man with his skin falling apart, and the buildings reduced to black rubbles. He couldn’t discern ashes from the snow.

Jon knows something is not right when they arrive at what it should be the Shadow Lands. It was from common knowledge that those lands were mired in darkness. Instead, he finds that daytime and nighttime befall the same way. It’s not until he approaches closer to the abandoned city called Stygai that he is sure that something went wrong.

First, there’s barely space to land. He senses Barristal tired of flying and looking for a place to rest but the swelling of the Ash River caused the flooding of the town below and there’s no place for
that. They choose to stay momentarily in the cave of a mountain, for which Jon feels grateful because it is the first time in months that a resemblance of the winter of the true north touches his skin. Now he regrets having cut his hair.

He and Barristal spend two days there, flying in search of Daenerys and Drogon unsuccessfully. Jon decides they have to move forward and keep going down southwest. He finds curious how the sun shines brighter in the west when it sets than in the east when it rises.

When they are in Asshai he confirms his worst fears all those previous days; something bad happened.

He wasn’t waiting to find a regular Port City, yet the view he beholds can’t be described with another word than disaster. An immeasurable disaster.

The river had overflood the city and there’s fire emerging from it. Some of the mountains collapsed over most parts of the main structure and everything seems covered by earth.

Has this been this way always?

It’s not until he reaches the river’s mouth that he almost falls from Barristal as the red dragon screeches with pain and Jon has to hold on tight to watch if he hasn’t been impacted.

Barristal lands and lets Jon fall on the water. He is unskilled in the art of riding a dragon but this movement was a gesture of despair as if he had found something that has alerted him. Jon senses his plight.

Jon stands, the level of the river almost reaching his knees. Barristal is desperately digging with his snout in a pile of land that looks like a medium-sized mountain. He doesn't understand what he is doing until the earthy color turns reddish-black, and he sees Drogon's horns emerge from that darkness.

No.

No, no, no.

He wades harshly almost stumbling and be hit by Barristal, who is screaming as once Drogon did when his mother was gone. Jon also starts to shed tears, the pain of Barristal compressing his chest.

Drogon is dead.

Barristal whining prevents him from thinking clearly. *If they did this to Drogon, what did they do to Daenerys? Where is she?*

Jon looks everywhere for some sign but everything seems lost. The notion of losing her again threatening to overturn him to madness. He imitates the urgent moves of the dragon and starts to grub out the soil from the body of Drogon. *She must be near.*

He feels that something falls on his head and hits him, something heavy but not enough to knock him out. He lifts his stare and his heart stops.

"Dany!"

Jon rushes and climbs to the top of Drogon's back, where Daenerys lies hugging his spines. She is not recognizable, her body is covered with dirt and what is left of her armour and breaches are torn to cover only part of her torso and legs.
It takes time to reach her and when he does, Daenerys pushes him and falls on the river once more.
The blow makes him conscious of the fact that she is alive. Daenerys is alive and her last child dead.

Hours go by but he can't get close enough. Barristal lies beside Drogon, mourning him as the latter once did for his siblings. Jon understands the feeling.

"Dany," he tries one more time but she's already throwing him away. "I'm so sorry," he cries with impotency. "If I could change his life for mine, I would do it."

He can't see her face but the form of her shaking.

How did this happen? He wants to know. How do you ask a mother how her son died?

When night falls, he is freezing. Drogon's body no longer produces heat to warm them and Barristal won't leave his side. Jon cries out of pain, in part because it hurts him and because Barristal's lament is unbearable, almost suffocating.

He can't imagine what she's feeling.

The three of them spend two days there, and Jon notices that he must be dehydrating and starving. Not that he can care enough to do more than drinking from the river. The though of Daenerys dying of inanition makes him jolt.

"We will die here," he says, the sound of his voice weakened and rasp. "Barristal will die here."

There's no response.

"Your people will die, your other children will die. Dany, please!"

He knows he has no right but the despair speaks for him. He is about to faint at any moment.

He hears the sound of her weeping and he cries again. When it becomes guttural, his head hurts making him fall.

That night he knows he would not resist more. Daenerys somehow does it.

This time he is crawling and finally touches her. She lets him and he lies there, incapable of doing more. Jon knows if she wants she could burn him and that's what he expects. Instead, there's nothing.

He survives until the sun rises and Daenerys forces him out again. He would have drowned if it wasn't because Barristal dives his head into the water and drags him to a near sandbar. Jon has no strength to do anything else.

Then he stands in his elbows and the light of her fire blinds him. She burns her last child's body while Jon cries at the view.
II

Qarth

Daario

Three weeks and five days. That's how long he waits for her return. She should have returned in one week. And he shouldn't have let her go.

He seizes the red witch in her chambers and summons the poison king for interrogation. They are all fooled by her, and the pain and fear they intend to cause upon her, she returns with indifference.

Daario orders to keep her on the dungeons.

On the twenty-sixth day of waiting, his men are alerted and do not understand why he continues to delay boarding to Valyria.

It is then that the red dragon, Barristal he remembers, flies over the city and lands on the balconies of the hall of a thousand thrones.

He leaves a stone on the ground and leaves again, this time in the direction of the graves where the other dragons have stood still and satiated the last days.

Daario waits for the creature to be far away to approach and review what it has brought.

A piece of parchment almost destroyed, falls.

*Daenerys and Drogon were ambushed in Asshai. Drogon passed away.*

*I will take her home when it's convenient.*

*She destroyed Asshai and the surroundings.*

*Jon Snow.*

Daario feels shifted to a time when he received a similar message from the West.

*Commander Daario Naharis,*

*I must inform you with a great lament that our queen and friend, Daenerys of House Targaryen passed away. She fought bravely and hard until her heart could resist no more. You and I, we were witnesses of the goodness that her heart sheltered and all the greatness she was destined to. Sadly, life faces us with realities we are not always prepared to face.*

*Some moons ago she found out about the existence of a lost relative. Her nephew Aegon Targaryen, son of Rhaegar and her dearest brother.*

*The distress of learning about another claimant to the Iron Throne plus the constraints of our quest pushed the limits of her good nature.*

*Indeed, she took back the throne of her family. The city fell and the bells rang. It was not enough*
for her and she committed a terrible mistake against our advice. King's Landing was her to take and she decided by herself to burn the city down.

Thousands of lives were lost unnecessarily. Men, women, and children equally killed by Drogon's fire.

We were all astonished by her actions. You will understand that I couldn't support the course she decided to follow. I relinquished my position as her hand, having failed miserably not only to her but to all the people that depended on her mercy.

Until the last moment, the unsullied and the Dothraki remained by her side and together they were disposed to follow her to the end of the world, as I am sure that you would have done it.

Her last relative had gave up his claim in favour of her because he truly believed in the just and compassionate queen we both known. He couldn't stand by her side and see the atrocities she was planning to do in his country. He took a decision that will regret the rest of his life and for which our new King, Brandon I, punished him with a life sentence that Grey Worm believed fair enough.

She died by his hand the following day of the fall of the city. Her remaining dragon took her body east, we don't know exactly where but I hope with all my heart that she can finally rest in peace after having fulfilled her greatest desire.

I'd be a naive man if I say to my people that the loyal commander of hers will remain impassive before this news. I know she let you in Bay of Dragon with an enormous responsibility and I ask you to keep that promise in her memory.

Westeros and Essos need peace.

Tyrion of House Lannister,
Hand of the King.

He does remember having destroyed the letter and whatever that was in his path that day.

This time he freezes in his place and closes his eyes, asking the deity that granted her with a new life to protect her.

Daario knows she won't survive this. And maybe none of them.

"Jornik," he calls to his comrade, entering back to the solar. "The Queen suffered an accident. And she lost Drogon."

Jornik's face pales. He avoids to mention the destruction of Asshai and make him more nervous.

"We need to evacuate the city, urgently," Daario maintains a neutral tone, trying to not transmit his own concern. "Everyone will leave but for me."

"If she lost the black dread, how is she returning?"

Daario stares at the parchment again.
"Jon Snow stole one of her dragons," he responds, feeling a stream of hot blood boiling inside him. "The moment he steps in Qarth, he's dead."

Daario notices him still in shock.

"Now, Jornik!" he demands and he complies.

The red priestess sent her there. His first thought is killing her, but when he goes down to the dungeons she's not there anymore.

III

City of Jorah's Port

Arianne

"It's beautiful," she praises Sansa's needlework sincerely as she looks at the tenth embroidery hoop in that week.

Arianne admits the Queen in the North has a talent for this, and in those days was everything she is allowed to do while recovering from the injuries that the horrible, and luckily, deceased Lord Westerling, gave her.

"Thank you, my lady," she replies in a monotonous voice as she finishes working on a direwolf on a dark cloth. "Any news from my brother?"

After the incident, Sansa had not let anyone touch her and only cried out for her brother.

It was not until Ser Brienne of Tarth arrived in the city that they could lift her from the barn and take her to the Maester. She insists on sending a message to Jon Snow and Arianne granted it.

Missanderys and Greywing carried the letter but did not return with the answer.

"I'm afraid not, my lady," she responds with sorrow, understanding how bewildered she must feel. "Sometimes it is like that. We cannot anticipate the times of war."

Sansa smiles weakly and frowns.

"My kingdom has been in a constant war for years, princess," she says while avoiding looking her in the eye as if she were remembering something painful. "It was too easy to be true."

"What do you mean?" Arianne asks, confused.

"Go and win. I understand that Queen Daenerys manages a powerful army and six dragons, but if it had been so easy she would have done it years ago."

Arianne swallows the lump in her throat.

"I have not been informed of any change of plans. I only say that sometimes setbacks arise."

The truth was that she was conflicted by the lack of answers and the delay. Daenerys and Arianne had worked side by side for years now, and thanks to the dragons they were in constant communication.
Sansa shakes her head.

"I just want my brother to come home safe and sound," she confesses, a lonely tear falling down her cheek. She takes a handkerchief and cleans it before it finishes falling on the embroidery. "Excuse me, I must look like a silly, little girl."

Arianne held her hand and squeezed it.

She never intended for something like this to happen. She has regretted having exposed her in this way.

Lord Westerling broke two of her ribs and the cheekbone. Thanks to the Lannister dwarf he did not go any further, but Arianne understood how difficult this situation was for her.

"He will return home soon," she reassures her with a sudden empathy not even her can explain. "The deal was that. And you have complied. Daenerys will keep her word."

Sansa breathes deeply, her blue eyes seem as cold as where she comes from.

"Your grace," Xinea interrupts from the entrance. "News has arrived from the capital."

"Stay rested, my lady."

"Thank you very much, your grace."

Arianne realises that she has been called 'your grace' with a curious tone.

Arianne walks off Gendry's mansion, where she relocated Sansa, Ser Brienne, and Lord Tyrion after the incident. Outside a rider waits for her with a parchment sealed in his grip.

"That is the seal of Commander Naharis," she indicates seeing the seal of the eagle and taking the letter in her hands. Daario never sent her the missives, much less during campaigns.

Arianne breaks the seal and reads its content.

IV

Daenerys

Void.

Cold.

Emptiness.

Soreness.

Despair.

Her eyes are set on the dark space like waiting for something to happen, maybe the light of the threshold to appear.
She wants to sleep. She wants to dream. She wants her children. She wants to die.

All the things she wants are forbidden for her.

Wanting is a sin for which she has been punished throughout her life.

The memory of stealing a piece of bread when she was seven comes to her mind. She was starving and the smell was irresistible. The salesman beat her unmercifully with a whip, breaking the tender bones of her fingers.

Wanting is a sin.

"I want to be a sailor someday," she confessed to Viserys before he knocked her out for daring to have such a fool's dream.

Wanting is a sin.

Dreaming of a future on the boat with Jon. Longing for the Iron Throne and a last bit of glory for her family's name.

Wanting is a sin.

And she wants her children.

"Kill me," she murmurs when he enters in the cottage where he brought them after Drogon's body was nothing but ashes. He was carrying the things he stole from some farmers.

A thief.

He has stolen Barristal from her.

"You said you love me," her voice is barely a whistle. "If your words are genuine, you must kill me."

His face is contorted and he remains speechless for long minutes.

"There are no words that I could say to ease your pain," it's his lame excuse. He never has tried to comfort her and give her what she wants. "He died to save you. He wanted you alive. Your other children need you. Barristal, he-," he trails off, "he is suffering."

The bond.

He has a bond with Barristal.

"How could you?" she reclaims with tears falling from her cheeks as the memory of all his damage returns. "How could you spoke all those words of love and honour and being the disgrace itself for me? You took everything from me. My claim, my love, my life, my dragons and I give, give, give until I am nothing but ruins. Don't you can see it, stupid coward?! You are my ruin!"

She wishes to hurt him as she has been doing the last days. If only she could erase his existence for once.

He nods. The damned man just nods. He can't even fight back and give her a reason to end him.

"My child died! My last son died!" her throat is almost broken. "I'm asking you the only thing you can provide me and you refuse? Something you have already done once? What kind of twisted
"I can't do it," he growls, "Please, do not ask me to do something like that. I beg you."

She attempts to stand but fails almost instantly. Jon hurries to help her.

"Don't you even dare," she warns, pulling him away. Her body covered only with old, odorous clothes she has no idea where he got them from.

Jon retreats.

"You spent weeks without eating," he points out while she returns to the safety of the furs. Giving him the back. "How is that possible?"

Because I am dead as my son, she wants to answer. Because you killed me once and the red god made me his toy. Because I'm damned to suffer to grant your glory.

The prince that was promised.

The guard of the realm of man.

The more honourable man of Westeros.

The embodiment of all that it's good and it's right.

"You came back to my life and I lost my son," she voices aloud. She won't hurt his body but she can hurt his mind. All she can allow herself. "Every single time you enter in my life something bad happens."

He does not respond.

"Jon, I am already dead. You only need to finish me. Please."

He does not respond.

"Fucking coward, you have already done it. It's just a moment and it's over!" she is desperate. "You will take the hatchlings. You will save Westeros. All you need to do is close your eyes and thrust the damn sword!"

"I won't!" he shouts and it's the first time he screams her in that way. Oh well, no. She remembers again.

"Children. Little children, burned!"

"I didn't want to take him from you! He came to me, what was I supposed to do? scare him like a dog?"

"You spurned me like a dog. You killed me like a dog. ."

"That's-" he makes a pause, breathing loudly. "I am not taking him from you. I only wanted to come for you because I knew something was wrong. If you ask me to never climb to his back again, I will do it. They are your children and nothing will change that. They need you."

"They are not my children," she silences him. "They are the children of the children I don't have anymore," she sobs, her chest burning with hatred. "Viserion and Rhaegal were gone when they born because my wars killed them. Drogon raised them as his own and again I took him to his
death. All my children are dead because of me. Mother of dragons, mother of nothing."

He's about to protest but she is already threatening.

"I swear this to you, Jon. If you do not kill me now I will reduce this world to ashes and all you
hold dear will be the first to burn."

V

Jon

Her words leave out her mouth so lightly as the day on the Throne Room, and the same chill runs
down his spine.

After she burnt Drogon's body, he convinced her to leave Asshai. Or so he believed until she tried
to jump from Barristal's back and he almost fall with her.

He couldn't risk her to do something like that again. They land on an abandoned farm where he
found clothes and some supplies to send Barristal to Qarth and let Daario know about what
happened. They have been there for three days and she continues unfed.

Surviving.

"Then do it," he replies, leaning against the wooden wall and sliding until he is on the floor.

She has only spoken words of threat and hatred all this time. And it's not as if he hadn't thought the
same before.

Burn them all.

Burn this world and end the wars.

"The power she holds and the terrible burden it is," Monterys' words come back to his mind. The
boy knew her better than he never could.

"If there's a form, some way of magic where I can erase my existence to return all those things
taken away from you, then tell me and I will do it."

Dany whimpers.

"You just need to kill me. That was all about. You are the shield that guards the realm of men.
You've always tried to do the right thing. Always, no matter the cost, you've tried to protect
people. Who is the greatest threat to the people now?"

She's using Tyrion's words.

"I don't understand anything, Dany. I can't understand who you are."

"I am a monster."

"You know you are not."

"I am," she assures. "You saw my body, you saw all the scars that tried the same after you, and
nothing happened. R'hollor or whatever that thing is, it just wants me as its toy. A weapon for mass
murder. Look at my eyes and tell me what kind of existence is that?"

"You said that they were torturing you and Drogon. Because of them, Drogon died. They deserved it."

"And what will happen when R'hollor demands the sacrifice of innocents? You can end it before it comes to happen!"

"Dany you are speaking as if you were a mere object in his hand. You said once Targaryens answer to neither gods nor men."

"The Targaryens are all dead."

"It's not true," he opposes, an unknown security flood in him. "We are alive."

Daenerys shakes her head. "You are the prince that was promised."

He responds with a snort. "I don't believe in prophecies."

"It's not a prophecy. It's a reality. One Rhaegar looked for so hard that he created it himself."

She sits again in the cot.

"Our mistake is believing that destiny it's a path towards glory, Jon. I was given three dragons after they were extinguished for a hundred years and I was sure it was meant to serve a great purpose."

"You did. You liberated half Essos. You fought against the Night King."

"He crossed the wall only because of one of my dragons. I became in the threat he couldn't be for King's Landing."

"I won't accept your twisted words and self-loathing."

"Hear me out, Jon! We cannot change who we are and what they make of us. You believed all your life you were a bastard because they make you believed you were one, and when you found out you were a Targaryen nothing changed for you! We are what this sick world makes out of us."

"I will not-," he has to stop and think clearly in what he wants to say, "They deceived me with long speeches of what it's right a wrong once and nothing worked its way. I don't care about Rhaegar, R'hollor or anyone else. If this world needs to end, then let it be ended."

"And mercy?" she whispers, "Where is the mercy for the ones who don't get to choose? Where's the mercy for the mother that lost all her children?"

Barristal returns with the other dragons and for a moment he is thankful that they are coming to burn him once and for all. Daenerys does not abandon the cottage and he grows weary of hearing her spiteful, misguided words.

The hatchlings, she called them. Hatchlings were no more.

The golden one, brighter than Viserion, and the brownish with green scales are the same size as Barristal. The other two, grey and purple, the smallest.

'They are not my children.'
Her enemies soon will delight in her disgrace. Her largest dragon defeated.

But he wasn't defeated. He chose to die instead of killing her. Something Jon had wished having done ten years ago.

The other dragons screech and he knows they are calling for her. He turns and expects to see it in the entrance but she does not grant.

He avoided bringing his dagger with him from the beginning, feeling it inappropriate. Longclaw is resting in a hiding place where she would not find it. He only has a knife for carving that she didn't see.

'Kill me.'

'What did you saw? After it happens, what did you saw?'

'Light.'

Her children. She saw her children.

Jon pondered that possibility. She wants to die and return to her children. And she can't die anymore, just like Beric Dondarrion died six deaths and relived.

The sound of the brownish dragon trying to go through the entrance of the cottage startles him and Jon stands. He just makes his neck pass.

Barristal and the golden one are in line like waiting for an indication but the other three are frantically attempting to reach Daenerys.

"Hey," he calms him but receives a warning snarl.

"Dany," he shouts at her, hoping she will listen. "Dany, I don't know what to do with them."

There's no response from her part and Jon dreads they will destroy the cottage any moment. Mayhaps this way she will understand, he thinks. These ones love her.

"If I die, many people who depend on me will too. Don't do it again."

VI

Daenerys

Sōvegon qrēdrughagon.

Sōvegon qrēdrughagon.

Sōvegon qrēdrughagon.

Daarion does not leave the doorstep. She recognises Missanderys and Greywing screeching in each side of the cottage, scratching their way up to her.

Sōvegon qrēdrughagon.

But nothing happens. It is like having been drained from the single thing that made her feel alive. The extensions of her own being. The whole ripped apart again.
The hatchlings do not hear her indicating them to fly away. She has no strength to move and scare them off herself. This pain, this inability to move resembles a time in the desert when she lost Rhaego and Khal Drogo.

Each time she believes having reached the peak of pain there's more height to climb to.

What comes after this? What horror will come next?

Eventually, the hatchlings retire and she's alone in the darkness again. She doesn't know where Jon sleeps but he does not come inside the cottage. Never.

Good for him.

VII

Jon

"We'll return," she announces in the morning when he enters the small room she made her shelter from the world. "And the first thing you will do to prove yourself useful is bringing me Kinvara’s head." She was resting her back against the wall, her eyes closed and her hands folded in her lap. "Would you at least do that for me?"

He keeps impassive. "How are you sure she has something to do with this? Wasn't she who brought you back?"

She let out a peal of perverse laughter.

"Naive, northern fool."

Jon notices that her anger at him grows as the days pass. He believes it better than seeing her emotionless and distant.

"She fooled me from that day," she continues; disgust and disdain in her tone. "Making me play those little games. Go there, be there. The flames, the tricks. All the things she knows and won't tell. Sohorioz and the sacrifice for victory."

Nothing has a sense for him. He had believed the red priests her allies.

"I did everything they told me to do, but nothing was enough."

That night she stands from the cot and walks to the cottage's front to speak with the dragons. All of them, including Barristal surround her and she stays all night with them; a soft weeping is the only sound in miles.

Jon beholds the moment and remembers that Arya almost killed them when they were true hatchlings.

He feels glad she failed.
The next morning they depart and it took them less than a day to reach Qarth. He feared she would take one of the dragons and try to hurt herself again but Daenerys made no such attempt. She does not fight when he asks her to mount Barristal together.

"I promise you it's the last time I ride him," he promises her.

He avoids staring at her, fearing to find contempt in her expression.

"You belong to him," she replies, with apathy, "He owns you. I hope you are worthy of the honour."

They don't speak any more until they see a glimpse of Qarth on the horizon.

She has required from him the head of the red woman and Jon concludes there's nothing else to do. It disgusts him but it was treason.

Jon thinks back in what she told him a moon ago when life was another. Varys was poisoning her. Had he know about this he himself would have behead the spider.

Treason is treason.

And you are her greatest traitor.

When they fly over the city, Jon notes it's been emptied.

They land on the bridge that leads to the tower where she was staying. Daario and some soldiers are already climbing the stairs, hurried.

He climbs off Barristal first and helps her to do the same, which she accepts with reluctance. In those days he had touched her several times in order to assist her, and each time he did, she flinched and resented his approaches.

Jon does not know how he ever will forget the image of the disgust on her face.

When she does not need him anymore and Daario is in the bridge, Daenerys run towards him and wrap her arms around him. They hug for what seems like an eternity and she cries in his hold as he caresses her back and head, whispering words of comfort to her ear.

Jon feels something catch on fire inside him.

"Seize him," Daario orders, seeing him with deep resentment; Jon has not realised that he has the same expression on his face.

He was expecting this to happen and didn't plan to oppose it. Somehow, the moment turns out different when Barristal bellows in warning to the soldiers.

They point their spears to him.

"Do not touch him!" Daenerys screams; it sounds desperate.

"He stole your dragon," Daario protests with a serious tone. "It's treason."

"Not Jon," she clarifies, "Barristal. You must never aim to my dragons."

"And him?" Daario persists in the punishment. "This bastard only brings you woes!"
Barristol resounds Jon's wrath at the mention of that word. He is nor bastard, nor thief.

He is her family. He is her blood. And he must be the one protecting her.

When the dragon loses his patience he let out a stream of fire that could have catch the people in front of him if it wasn't because they bend down.

The soldiers drop the spears as they cover themselves from the fire. Daario took Daenerys down.

Jon advances without finding opposition while Barristol takes flight and lands on the ceilings of the tower.

"You know what she wants to do," he is speaking to Daario. "You know that nothing can stop her when she wants something."

Daario first is enraged but rapidly gets what Jon is saying.

"I will not let her hurt herself," he assures and Daenerys watches him with wide-opened eyes, confirming him what she had in mind. "You forget I spent ten years living with her. I was in her life before she met you and I will be when you are gone."

Barristol snarls from the tower.

"I am your blood, your only family. I owe this to Rhaegar as I own it to Drogon."

A strong slap from her part interrupts him. Jon nods and agrees he is crossing the boundary.

Daenerys leaves both men behind and enters the tower. When Daario and Jon attempt to follow her she closes the gate in his faces.

Soon the other dragons reunite with Barristol and they hover over the building.

"Where is Kinvara?" Jon asks the commander after hours pass and neither of them leaves. They sit on each side of the doorway with their backs against the stone wall. "And where's the Poison King?" he then remembers the uninhabited city. "Where are the people?"

"Disappeared. I sent him to the inner quarters. Evacuated."

Jon frowns surprised at the last bit. "Evacuated?"

Daario rubs his forehead before explaining, "Years ago when the death of her other children was recent we make a deal if something like this ever happened. She knows what she can do. She knows how dangerous she is."

"And you let her believe so?"

"Excuse me, lord nephew of the Queen, didn't you kill her for the same reason?"

Jon freezes and he closes his eyes, leaning his head against the wall.

"She wants Kinvara’s head. I must give her Kinvara’s head."

The commander hits his head against the wall several times.

"I’m good reading people, white wolf. And I never thought that bitch could have betrayed us. They made cults of her, they venerate her like a fucking god. How in hell this happened?"
"Daenerys said she asked her for a sacrifice and she agreed."

"What else did she tell you?" he questions with confusion.

"Senseless words. Mostly insults and-" he trails off and dreads to reveals about Daenerys' belief he is meant to kill her.

Daario does not need of his words to understand.

"How he died?"

Jon takes a breath of air.

"Whatever creature was that captured them, it wanted him to hurt her so Drogon ripped his own heart out," he feels the urgency to cry again. "She burnt his body. His ashes disappeared in the river's mouth."

Daario sighs and swallows hard; his composure shaking.

"All those days she was there," Jon continues, "Doing whatever she does with her power, she lay above him waiting for the last miracle to happen."

They are shedding tears without feeling abashment for the other.

"This is too much for any person, Snow," Daario points, "We might need to consider that-"

"No," Jon states before he can say something terrible. "No, I will not let her."

"Then you have to leave. Now. What worst menace for her life than you?"

"I am her family."

"No, you are not!" Daario shouts, "I am! my wife and children are her family! the dragons are her family! Valyria and its people are her family! She is not alone. Who you believed yourself you are? Coming here and pretend to own her life." Barristal stirs and Jon tries to ease him though it's harder with every word Daario spits. "Burn me and all you would be doing is taking away another part of her life."

They hear steps and turn their gazes to see Gerael Dagareon approaching. The poison king watches with stealth the dragon on the roof of the tower.

He attempts to move forward, ignoring Daario and Jon but they stand and stop him.

"What?" he inquires, astonished.

"It's not the time, Dagareon," Daario warns.

"She's my partner, I want to see her," he claims.

"She is unwell," Jon remarks unintentionally repeating his words that day when he excused her.

"Pardon me, aren't you her murderer?"

Jon is about to respond when the door opens and Daenerys appears, staring at the three with profound disdain. Those dark moments back on Dragonstone comes to his mind.
"Look for her in each corner of this city," she commands to Daario, "Alive or dead. Much better the first so I can end her myself. You," she speaks to the poison king now, "Do you have what I need?"

Jon hears Daario cursing beneath his breath.

There's doubt in Gerael's face. "Can we talk first?"

"Answer me," she demands.

"No, Daenerys, it will not give you what you are looking for-"

Daenerys slaps the door again.

**VIII**

**Daenerys**

She knows what he tries by making the hatchlings constantly circling the tower. He can't feel it yet but they recognise him.

The following days pass the same, she wants to feel ashamed of the lame state in which she lets herself be but nothing it's a good reason to leave this place anymore.

If R'hollor wants the Raven destroyed he will have to do it himself. If the Westerosis want to be saved, they will have to go after Jon.

She does not care anymore about what happens to this world.

Dracarys.

This world can't be saved.

She can't be saved.

One morning he slips inside the tower, breaking the lock with a piece of iron that she doesn't know where he got it from. He thinks she is asleep.

From there they are the only ones in the building. His desire to play family conceded. Daario keeps on his witch-hunt fruitlessly, and Gerael does not grant her request.

The men in her life are of no use.

Every moment of misfortune that has happened in the last ten years seems dwarfed with the terrible present. Daenerys thinks maybe she will never pay off her debt to the lives she took in Westeros. If redemption is impossible then what is the point of punishment?

The idea of destroying everything dances in her mind. But the hint of hope, her desire to see the tunnel gates opening the way to the threshold light ... she needs answers.

"I never asked you why you did it because I assume it is very obvious. But why? Why did Jon Snow kill his queen in such dishonourable way?"

He brings her food and hopes that she will swallow something more than her pride. He begins to accept the strangeness of her body and tie loose ends on his own. In his dark eyes, always in
confusion, Daenerys sees several questions arise.

"Why did you burn King's Landing?" he returns with the same harshness, "You won. You could have gone for Cersei and destroy the Red Keep but chose to torch random people in the streets. You killed them like ants."

Ants.

Daenerys smiles in understanding.

"It was you," she concludes. "You sent Barristal to burn the Masters."

His puzzled expression deepens.

"Not!"

"Ants," she repeats, "What else does a dragon see when flying so high in the heavens?"

Then he thinks and sits on the couch. The memory of her nights with Gerael comes to her mind along with a perverse idea.

"It's awful seeing you there, sitting where a few weeks ago I rode my lover, you know?"

Jon stands hastily and looks at her in horror, almost like a child being educated in where babies come from.

"It's funny, my three lovers in the same city. Wasn't that how Tyrion's jokes started?"

He leaves banging the door thunderously.

*There it is,* she thinks crudely. A very small part of her former knowing that she has fallen into the lowest of the ordinary with her comments but what does it matter? Nothing makes sense.

He doesn't know that she saw him with Val. An image of two lovers that pales anything that she and Gerael pretended to be. She hated it. And she hates him so much that she is capable of burning the tower and see if it finally puts an end to the Targaryens.

"You should have taken my body, sit on the throne and let us die in the flames of Drogon," she says when he returns. In those days that is their routine. He comes in, checks that she is not completely dead, she insults him and he leaves. "It would have been more poetic."

"It was a second of certainty and ten years of regrets," he replies.

"There you got your answer, too," she adds.

**IX**

**Jon**

"Sansa was attacked," he announces with a trembling voice. Daenerys turns her face with sincere concern. "The man I punished for disrespect your name tried to assault her."

"Did he succeed?"

"No, but she's greatly harmed."
Communication with Valyria was interrupted by the constant transit between cities. The dragons were not helping and Jon didn't know how to tell them to do such a task.

"You should go," she says, "be with her."

The only family he had left; Two women who needed him at the same time. He looks at the letter they sent more than one moon ago and that came to his hands because Daario recalled by chance that there was a letter for him.

"Barristan is fast, you'll be there in two days if not before."

He thought about that possibility but didn't find enough desire to do it. It hurts him to know that he indirectly caused this disaster, but it had been a month since then and he supposed that Sansa would understand the seriousness of the situation that prevented him from returning.

Daenerys was genuine in her concern for Sansa, but she cared little that he left everything to be by her side.

Jon's mind was a whirlwind of emotions and there were things he wanted to communicate but could not find how.

"What do we do from here, Dany?"

He shouldn't call her that way but since she didn't protest when he started doing it again Jon decided he wouldn't stop doing it.

She let out another of her cynical laughs.

"Do you think I care about that? I'll be not the first oathbreaker."

Reasonable, he thinks.

"Then," he continues, "we will live here until the end of time."

"You are going to leave."

"No, I will not do it."

Daenerys opens her eyes and looks at him with the same contempt she once saw him in the ruins of the Red Keep. That is the look she gives when he shows opposition. Almost like believing that he cannot contradict her.

"What are you expecting, Jon? What are you waiting for?" She bends her knees, bringing them close to her chest and extending her arms to support them. "Would you please clear this for me? What do you want? Because all I know about you it's about what you don't want. You don't want the name you were born with. You didn't want to be a bastard. You didn't want to have been brought back from."

"You didn't want to keep on fucking your aunt and then you couldn't even speak about the matter. You don't want it, you don't want it, gods, what do you want Jon?"

"Time," he answers, returning some of her acerbity, "I wish have had more time. Time to process who I was, time for us to understand the other, time for the wars to...end. Properly."

"Wars never end properly, Jon," she corrects him with a raspy voice, "War is war."

"And then I wanted the wars to be over. I wanted to erase you from my mind. I wanted you to come
back and kill me. I wanted you to come back and kill us to end the wars. I wanted a reason to sail for Essos and find you. I wanted to ask you why here you made things right while in Westeros you believed yourself hated and destroyed us. Not that it happened exactly like that but it was all I could think at the moment. When I saw you again I wanted to die because your eyes-," he stops at the sudden pain squeezing his chest. They sense Barristal stirring on the roof. "Your eyes are frozen. They used to see me with love, and I used to find my warm there but now-"

"I was blind for a time," she reveals, staring at the ceiling with curiosity, "Not that what you said is not true. But if you want a precise response for that, there you got."

He sighs.

"The thing I want the most is never having killed you."

She arches her eyebrows with that mannerism of her to show incredulity.

"And now? what do you want now? Play the family with me?"

"We don't need to play because we are family and nothing will change that. Not for me," he moves to grab some candles from the drawer of her desk, "And you need a bath," he adds, forgetting all demure.

She chuckles and it takes him aback. She has laughed. Not cynically but an honest laugh.

"Now you know what Daario went through."

Jon is about to respond but she keeps on.

"Don't you want answers?" she questions, her arms protectively wrapped around herself. "I could give you that."

He would be lying if he says no. His silence is the response.

"Your father was exactly like you are. A brooding man that didn't like to be surrounded by people, and most of the time he was sad, thinking about how he born out of a tragic incident that killed almost all of his family. One day, he found in the library of the Red Keep a book with the legend of Azor Ahai. He first believed himself to be the prince that was promised, in other words, Azor Ahai reborn. He searched and searched until he shaped the prophecy to his favour. He used to engage in correspondence with Aemon, and soon he also believed the dead were about to return to end the realm of men.

"Like many of us, it came a time where Rhaegar found himself lost. He married a good-hearted woman he didn't love while living in the same roof with the monster my father was. People advised him he should dethrone my father but his-" she lifts a hand to point him, "his honour was in between. He was expecting to be the hero that faces a legendary enemy when the true enemy was his own blood. He did the same, shape the prophecy to make Aegon, not you, the other one, the prince that was promised.

"You know the rest of the story. The Tourney at Harrenhal happened, he knew your mother and they fell in love. They truly loved the other. Rhaegar left Elia and his children behind, and Lyanna was willing to become his paramour in order to be with him, she was disgusted by Robert Baratheon. It was a stupid idea of his to annul his marriage with Elia when they found out she was pregnant with you, delegitimizing your siblings. It was love against reason. In that sense, you were better than your parents, Jon."
"Prophecies, as you say, can be anything. You make good in no believing in them. That does not mean they can't be fulfilled. Rhaegar's action unleashed the following disasters that led us where we are. But again if you think it better, having Rhaegar not being a stupid fool in love, you would have never born. If you hadn't born, who would have united the greatest army of the known world that defeat the night king? how would I birth my dragons from the stone? Destiny needs to push things to happen, that's all about. We gave the dragon the night king needed to break the wall and come upon us to be defeated by Arya. And I can point all the things that happened next, but it's simply as you see it, Jon. Nothing less, nothing more. Not the story of a hero, but an event that happened and when we are gone, if we ever really go, they will sing songs about it and tell the stories as they please.

"And why did you saw the light after death, and I didn't see anything but darkness?"

She smiles sadly, "I told you once the Raven owns ancient magic, right?"

He nods.

"You can call it ice if you want, or magic of the mind as the red priests call it. I know very little about it, I never cared enough to believe it important. R'hollor and he are not necessarily friends. But as the pact between the first men and the children, as our pact to defeat the night king, well, they also made a pact. To defeat the darkness and its kind. But the Raven like to play games, it is what he does. What it pleases him. R'hollor is powerful and cruel, and I guess his pride is hurt. I don't know what they want or what they intend to do but I'm done with both of them.

"That's not the answer I'm looking for."

"Ice and Fire, Jon. You were born from both magics. Your mother is a descendant from the first men and your father from the Valyrians. R'hollor is the creator of every magic living creature that has existed. Some of them as the Raven had overpassed him. They came to an agreement, a middle point where their magic balance the other. Your body, you have the blood of the dragon but your mind, that belongs to your northern side."

"I don't understand you, Dany," he protests, "I died."

"Your body," she finally tells him, "your mind never died. And Melissandre was fool enough to believed that R'hollor gave you that life when it wasn't him."

"It was the Raven," Jon finishes.

X

Daenerys

They are interrupted by a knock in the unlocked door. Gerael.

"May I have a word with you," he asks, staring at her. She softly nods.

Jon stands, blocking her gaze off him. "I don't believe it's the right moment."

"Jon," she calls him off, "Leave."

She notices his fists stretching out and in by his side; might it's true he loves her still. How sad it's that she does not care anymore.
When Jon is gone, she hears Barristal moving on the roof. She needs to deal with that situation before it becomes possible worst.

"I'm sorry," he begins, walking to the bed and sitting by her side. He puts his hand over her thigh in a gesture that used to bring her peace of mind. Now it seems embarrassing and reminds her of a time when Daario's touch began to feel cold for her. "I'm so sorry."

She is numb and wants to believe that it is the absence of heat in her body that makes her feel so distant. Gerael was a safe place when his biggest refuge was Drogon. Without Drogon nothing makes sense. Neither Daario, nor Jon, nor Gerael, nor Valyria, nothing.

There is only one last hope to surrender.

"You know I need it," she whispers, looking at him in the eyes for understanding. His eyes used to be fascinating. "We need it."

She never dared to wonder if Gerael loves her. He never bothered to admit it. Daenerys hopes the pain is enough for him.

Gerael reaches one of her hands and entwines them in a last intimate gesture. She feels again the stab of stoicism hitting her but before she can withdraw her hand, he takes them to his left pocket and pulls out a vial with the blue sleep.

"I don't know what you see when you take it," he warns, "But you know it's not true. It's not real."

She takes the vial for herself, breaking their grip.

"The truth has never given me peace."

She drinks the vial completely.

"Dany!" he screams before everything goes black and noiseless.

It never happens as fast as this time. There were even times where she had to go through several stages of her dreams to get to the hut.

Everything happens fast now.

The doors rise and she runs desperately until she is in front of the hut. She doesn't understand why the snow hurts her this time.

She enters and Rhaego watches her, he is always the first one who turns to see her. He smiles and shows her his wooden horses before Viserion jumps off one side and Rhaegal lands on top of the furs. Then he hears the soft moan of her baby girl calling for her. She cannot move from there, it is not allowed.

"Drogon?" She calls but nothing happens. "Drogon!" she shouts.

Rhaego sees her again with a smile, unable to understand her in her suffering.

Then Daenerys understands that it is not real. The hut and her children there are not real. They never were. And without Drogon there, they never will be.

She burns everything down.
Chapter End Notes

At the beginning of this, I wrote long notes explaining some of the plot points I chose to write down but I ended up discarding them because I feel I was giving to my story an importance that does not have haha but still, I'll clarify some of them on the work where I posted the complete outline. There I will detail the meaning of some paragraphs and the little foreshadowing it contains.

The comments will be moderated now because of spoilers hahaha

Again, thank you for reading!
Chapter Summary

The only path left is the one ahead.

Chapter Notes

I have to diverge a little from the outline but it's basically the same.

In this chapter, there's a game of cyvasse and I had to read the chapter of Tyrion playing it with Young Griff to copy the movements, and while reading it I got depressed because, in the books, everything is set up for Dany to lose her shit in Westeros and this scene is the great foreshadowing of Tyrion causing it. Damn, George, I hate you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 11: "Tower of Laments"

- Part Two -

XI

Jon

When he is on the bridge, he thinks about leaving Barristal sitting there as a warning that although he is far away, he is still present. The thought disgusts him instantly.

_You will not achieve anything by harassing her_, he scolds himself as he tells Barristal to leave the tower. The dragon obeys.

All the information she provided a few moments ago is still rounding his mind.

If it was the Raven who brought him to life after he died, why not kill him now? why does he keep on giving him life? And what is the point of being the shield that protects the realm of men right now?

Apparently, every time he discovers something new, the questions multiply.

His head burns and it is the first time he feels like he wants to drink Tormund's milk of giant to forget everything.

When he enters the common lot, Daario is sitting with a jug of wine in his hands. It is amazing how much he drinks in times where he's supposed to be on alert, Jon thinks.
"For your face I can guess Dagareon is fuckin' her," he jests but Jon does not fall for his provocation this time. "The Khal brutalized her, you killed her and Dagareon poisons her. I think that I am the best contender still."

Jon frowns.

"Poisons her?"

Daario is about to respond when they hear the sound of Gerael's crying for help.

The two arise quickly and run to the tower. Jon takes Longclaw from the corner where he has her hidden.

When they go up and are on the bridge, several guards surround the entrance and they realise that it is not an attack.

They make their way to enter the tower and find the poison king with Dany in his arms, motionless looking towards the ceiling while blood comes out of her mouth and nostrils.

No, it is not blood, he notices while throwing Longclaw aside and with Daario they take her away from Gerael.

Is blue.

Is poison.

"Did you poison her?" Jon growls, ready to throw him from the bridge.

The poison king is frozen and does not answer.

"Did you give him that crap?" Daario questions, grabbing him by the neck. Lys' guards point him with their swords and the soldiers of the royal guard also respond to the offensive.

There are too many people inside the tower.

Barristal looms over the roof and they hear his roar shake the tower.

"Naharis, we are under attack," Jornik shouts from the bridge.

"What?" he asks but he's rapidly silenced when Daenerys mumbles something unintelligible. Jon can't help but remember her face when she died in his arms.

"I sent most of the soldiers to protect the citizens in Port Yhos," Daario explains with a low voice, by his side caressing Dany's face. "You need to use the dragons."

Jon watches him, baffled.

"She's dying!" he protests, lifting her from the ground to take her to the bed again. "What did you give her?" he demands from the poison king.

"She drank it all," he responds with notorious fear in his voice. "She will die."

Daario and Jon's angered faces turn to him.
"Snow, command the dragons to come!" Daario repeats, "She will not die. She can't die."

"She can."

Everyone in the room turns to see Kinvara in the doorstep of the door with two guards on each side.

"You witch," Daario curses as he unsheathed his falchion and walks towards her. He is stopped by the spear of one of her protectors which has the points shaped as writhing flames.

The Fiery Hand, the guards of the red temple.

Jon realises one of them has the marks Kinvara was painting the other day. She planned it all along.

"You killed her son!"

"Our Lord demanded a sacrifice and she agreed without asking what implied; though, she knew it. She knew the cost of victory," she states with assurance, a stark contrast with Melissandre's unsteadiness when Ser Davos confronted her. Now Jon starts to see glimpses of that insanity in this woman too. "The Lord of Light gave her those children and he demanded them back."

Jon is trembling out of fury and all he sees is red. Pure wrath red.

Kinvara smiles.

"Oh, the dragon has awakened in you, Aegon Targaryen," she celebrates with sparkles in her eyes. "Barristal would not respond to you, now. The beasts know to not interfere when our Lord needs to work," she points to Daenerys. "Get out because what will happen in this room shall not be seen by your unfaithful eyes."

"You will not touch her!" Daario again shouts.

Daenerys screams and everyone turns to see her. Blood escapes from her mouth now, and Jon desperately lifts her so she won't choke.

"Jornik," the commander calls, "What the hell is going on?"

"They are hundreds," he replies. "All over the city."

"A thousand, never more and never less," Kinvara adds.

He's distracted by Dany's body shaking.

"Her body is fighting the poison," the red woman says, "and it's fighting to keep living. You must move out now."

"I won't leave her with you," Jon states, trying to keep her still as the trembling becomes brutal.

"If she passes the threshold, she won't return," then she says.

The threshold?

Kinvara advances while the point of her guard's spears lightens in flames. The Lysenis and the royal guards back up.
"Daenerys Stormborn is the one who was promised. From the fire, she was reborn to remake the world. Terrible things happen for a reason but our Lord's is wise and only he can help her at this moment."

"You killed her only child," Jon cries, "He was her reason!"

"There's so much you don't know yet," she laments with a sorrowful voice. She casts her gaze to Daario and the poison king. "So many truths between you two yet to be unveiled."

He is convulsing with her now.

"You'll gain nothing with your stubbornness, White Wolf," she made a pause, "Red Dragon, now."

Jon stares at Dany who is worsen. Her eyes rolled back.

The apprehension in his chest overflows him and he searches Dany's face for an answer. He does not find it.

You have to choose now.

Jon kisses her brow at the stunned faces of Daario and Gerael.

"I love her," he claims but it sounds like the begging of a sentenced man. “I don’t want to lose her.”

Kinvara sits in front of him, her wide-opened grey eyes intend to render a sense of security but scare him most. They always were an omen for evilness.

“Do you have faith, Jon Snow?”

### Daenerys

The sweetness that permeated her tongue when she was transported like an animal from Ibben to Volantis, is what she feels for the first time in years. It's disgusting. It is treason. It is the taste with which she recalls Jon's deceptive kiss; the prelude to a betrayal foretold.

*Kinvara, you were always treason.*

At least this time she’s not blind nor deaf. There's a pain but imperceptible in comparison with the one she cannot name nor describe. Her arms are empty. Everything she held in them had escaped from her grip. Her mother’s warm, Viserys’ affection, Khal Drogo’s security, the swell of her belly with a living son inside. Jorah’s protection, Missandei’s curls in those endless mornings when they made each other hair. Her children. Her babies. Drogon’s heat beneath her hands when she was alive.

“I had a son,” her odious voice begins to sound, “He lived little and never met the sun arise. He born at night and died at the night. It was another time, great darkness loomed over our heads. The long night, some named it,” she made a pause and Daenerys sits on her bed, skimming the stained front of her dress. “I live but I’m no longer living, as you say,” the red woman wanders through the room lightening the aromatic candles and giving her the back. “Each day of this borrowed existence her flames fill my heart with peace because I knew this time will come. The day that was promised, the one that was promised.”
A glimpse of white and red in her vision. Daenerys jumps from the bed and wields Longclaw against Kinvara's center when she turns around.

A crimson colour more intense than the one in her clothes begins to escape from the hole she carves into her entrails, as well as from her mouth as she palpates the surroundings of the entrance of the sword. An indifferent, insubstantial gesture.

She removes Longclaw and waits for the woman to fade away. Nothing happens.

"I gave you everything," she claims with deep hatred, "I never did more than abide by your guide and you paid me with the death of my son."

Kinvara is holds herself from the furniture while blood keeps leaking from his chest.

"Why did they punish my faith with death?"

Dropping the sword, she kneels to grab her neck. She wants answers before turning her to ashes.

"Where is your bloody god, Kinvara? Where is he!?"

"Turn around, child of mine."

Daenerys feels a pair of hands looming over her shoulders. She retreats at the sudden warmth of its touch.

That voice, she thinks, I've already heard that voice.

She remembers then.

"Three times the threshold you'll cross. One for saving, one for death and one for love. Dragons plant no trees. Remember that. Remember who you are, what you were made to be, Daenerys Stormborn. Remember your words."

Fire and blood.

Quaithe hovered in front of her.

Daenerys stands up and feels the same rage boiling inside her.

"R'hllor," she murmurs.

XII

Jon

"While I want to do the same, he's a King, you idiot," Daario points out when Jon corners the poison king against the bridge's wall and again the guards have to intervene. Daario takes him from his gambeson and pushes him away.

"Daenerys has willingly put that thing in her body through the years," he explains, "The other times she would faint and bleed but she never has trembled in that way."

"She drank all the vial," Gerael adds, "I didn't want to-" he's still in shock. "I never wanted to be like this. I tried to make her stop before but she told me she can't...die."

A heatwave floods him with the realisation of how much information about her life he has lost in
those years. An obvious fact, but compared to the things she does know about him, Jon felt a clear
disadvantage.

"What is it?"

"A pain silencer," Gerael replies, "Better than any other but lethal as any other."

"What pain is she silencing? She does not feel pain."

Almost instantly he felt like a stupid for asking it.

"Not physically. She is using it to calm her pain of mind," Daario finishes the explanation.

Jon took a deep breath and dropped himself into a chair in the common lot. The poison king and
Daario did the same, while in his mind Dany's burning comment came to mind.

"My three lovers in the same city."

It was funny if he took away the part that hated the idea of seeing her with someone else.

He abhors himself. Not because of his feelings towards her but because of the absence of thought
he dedicated to Val. A good, beautiful and honest woman who was waiting for him at home in the
hope that they would finally become a real family. The only thing she asked for him.

Family, he thinks, as the image of Dany lying in his arms and escaping from his grip came to
torture him again.

"You must leave," he states, staring at Gerael. "You have a kingdom to reign."

The poison king frowns but keeps speechless as Jon continues.

"I'm not asking you to leave her. That's not my choice, regardless of my feelings," a matter of minor
importance when one looks in hindsight, "She needs to move on. She needs to heal. Not to silence
the pain or kill it, but face it. Drogon is gone. Nothing will bring him back."

"You killed her," Gerael accuses, astonished "Now you want to protect her?"

"We know she does not need our protection," Jon answers.

"What she needs no one of us can give her," Daario remarks and Jon wonders if there's a double
meaning in his sentence. "As long as you are here she would try to get the blue thing from you.
And because you love her you will yield. I hate this man as you do but he has a point: if Daenerys
keeps living in that fantasy you provide her, ignoring the truth, she will always be lost."

Compression reaches the face of the poison king. However, he does not abandon his reticence.

Jon doesn't blame him; he would do the same.

"I will talk with her, first," he says. "And whatever she answers, I'll accept."

**Daenerys**

The only reason she ever believed in the gods' existence is because Viserys insisted on the motto
'Targaryens answer to neither gods nor men'. The painful life she lived made her realise that only
she was her own livelihood and her own faith, as she once told Jon.

A part of her sometimes thought that there should be some deity that favored her and that is why her dragons woke up from the stones and came back to life.

Now everything makes more sense if she thinks it better.

"It was a game," she begins, distraught by her view, "Always was a game for you."

Quaithe remains impassive.

"Speak!" she screams, "What do you want from me?!"

Daenerys throws herself against the other woman, expecting the impact will push them both against the wall. Instead, Quaithe holds her in her place and grabs her arm, forcing them both to kneel as the tears in her eyes fall her cheeks freely.

She closes her eyes at the beginning of soft calmness invading her chest.

Daenerys hears a tender lullaby being hummed by a voice that brings her peace. The voice she has yearned and imagined hearing so long.

Her hair is long, curled and silver as hers used to be. Daenerys loves it and wants to touch it to feel if it's real. Something in her mind tells her she is. She is the one who she held in her arms in the hut.

_I love you_, she wants to proclaim, _I love you with all my heart_. But she can't. She can't reach or touch.

Then she hears him.

His head is resting on her shoulder, his amber eyes are drowsy. His purring is the most magnificent sound she hears.

Drogon is a baby again. The same baby she fed, sung to sleep and lay with her in the deserted nights. Her baby.

As the image fades away she does not feel apprehension in her chest but sole sadness. They are together. They are safe. They exist somewhere else.

"What do you want from me?" she repeats the question, this time defeated. "What have you done of me?"

"They never belonged to this world," Quaithe replies. "Your dragons were gifts I sent to serve your purpose, Daenerys Stormborn."

She let out a sob.

"You took them away from me."

"Their time was over."

"And mine? Why you do this to me?"

"Pain," she says, caressing Daenerys' humid cheek, "The human part of your self. I could've erased it but then you'd be a shell. My other child did that and he couldn't understand the damage he was
provoking. His king destroyed the realm of men. Mine built a new world with the ashes of the old one."

"You are the one I promised so long ago. Born of salt and smoke to bring new light to this world."

"Jon Snow is the prince."

"The shield is a promised prince. He became what the circumstances made of him. He believes destiny is what humans do of it, and he's right. If he chooses to believe so."

Daenerys shakes her head.

"What do you want from me?"

She extends her hands at the abrupt urgency of removing the mask. Daenerys feels for the burning of her skin for the first time and takes it off hastily.

Her eyes pain at the look of it. There's literally nothing. Void.

The salty taste of her tears are now metallic flavoured. Blood. She's shedding tears of blood.

Quaithe puts her mask again and her eyes return to her face.

"You won't see it," she explains, "And you won't understand."

"What do you want from me?" she redoes her question.

"Fire and blood," Quaithe responds, standing over. "Remember your words. What you were made to be."

"No," she states, "I did everything you wanted and you killed my child, my only reason to return to this world. I have no reason anymore."

"You always had a reason, Daenerys Stormborn. And when it's over, the gates of your threshold will be opened for you again."

"I promised you three crossings. One for saving, one for death and one for love. Your first dragon had to die to end the one who lived in the darkness of Ice, the second died after fighting death itself because it wouldn't matter he helped to save the human world, people would always see him as a weapon. His death was a reminder for you. Your third child died for love. He chose."

"You are a monster," Daenerys finally concludes, "You are not different from the Raven."

"Your words can't hurt me, Daenerys Stormborn. I don't know what that is or what that means. My raven child must return to me. His time in the realm of men corrupted him enough. He wasn't supposed to seat on the Iron Throne of the humans. But the Children of the Forest convinced him it was the only way to end the wars of the humans.

"Why me?" she is screaming now, "Why it has to be me?"

"Because you will be the last one."

Daenerys stops breathing.

"Three crossings I promised you. And three crossings you shall have."
"No, it's not enough."

Daenerys feels she has nothing to gain, nothing to lose. She needs to make sure that death will mean her return to the threshold.

"The children of my children. I want them safe, no matter what. Dragons are meant to live long lives but you took my children when they had barely lived. Promise me that. Promise me the children of my children will be safe, now and always."

She knows it has little sense to impose her will on a god. And Quaithe should have known who she's dealing with.

"I know it," Quaithe answers and it does not surprise her. "The night you were brought to this world, the realm of men opposed. Its skies broke and the worst storm in generations fell. Yet here you are; here you stand. Not even a knife in your heart could stop you."

I'd wish it did.

"I'll give you three promises: the children of your children and all who will come after them will be safe. Now and always."

"The land of Essos that gave you your powers, will known peace for a hundred years because I can't tame the humans forever."

"And finally, child of mine. Stand from your deathbed, go face your destiny and I promise you that when the time comes, the greatest hunger of your heart will be satisfied."

Daenerys breathes and after days of staring numbly at the walls of this tower, she cries with peace.

XIII

Jon

Kinvara leaves the tower as if nothing had happened, three days later. The fiery hand protects her and they can do little to comply with Daenerys' request. However, Dany seems unbothered because the red priestess keeps breathing.

"She will leave," Dany announces, "Next time we see her she will die."

And just like that, they are all gone.

Even the poison king.

His demand to speak with her was granted and is Daenerys who agrees he should depart.

"You should leave, too," Daario voices when they are watching from the balconies various carracks leave the port. The view reminds him of a time when he saw Dany's fleet abandoning King's Landing.

"I will not," he replies turning to see her tower.

"I know you love her. I loved her madly, too. But you hurt that woman to the point her fire became dust. Ask yourself this question, white wolf. Are you in love with her or with whom she was in that shared past?
Then Daario walks away and Jon is left thinking about it.

**Daenerys**

When Gerael enters the chamber where not so long ago they were in each other's arms, he already knows it's final. For a moment she thinks that maybe with more time she could have finally learnt to love him.

"I want you to have this," he whispered, unwrapping another type of dagger and extending it to her. "If he ever tries to hurt you again, this will be your justice."

Daenerys watched the object and realised it was the one he calls the silencer. The one he was working on some months ago.

She smiled, kissing him one last time.

"Please, keep living, Gerael," she begs, knowing they'll never see the other again.

He nodded without looking at her eyes. *I can't promise that either*, she thought.

"Why are you always wearing blue?" she quipped when he was walking towards the entrance.

"Why are you always blue?" he returned, before closing the door.

*There goes the last lover of Daenerys Targaryen*, she said to herself.

**XIV**

**Jon**

He has learnt to command the purple dragon and the grey one to deliver news to the capital of Valyria. The first time they tried to roast him, but now they respect him somehow. The brownish one still does not like him.

"That's my boy," Daario mentions. It could not be said that the commander of Daenerys has managed to accept him, but he also did not insist on arresting or killing him. He just wanted him to go. "Daarion. The purple is Missanderys, the greyscaled is Greywing and the golden one is Jorion."

Barristal, Daarion, Missanderys, Greywing, and Jorion. All of them named after the people she loved the most.

"You took the fiercest one. She used to have trouble keeping him in line," Daario continues, "Jorion is the one who does not care what's going on and most of the time is on his own. Daarion, he's loyal like his namesake. He will always prefer Daenerys over you, keep that in mind," Jon didn't think in taking any of them far away from her, not even Barristal. "And those two are too little to fight, yet. So they are more like kids."

That elicits a question in his mind. "When did she started to use the dragons on the battlefield? When she was in Westeros she used Drogon, once but always in the sky."

Daario let out a snort.

"Do not remember me that she went to Westeros with three large dragons and yet you held her
back to not use them," he makes a pause to reflect on the subject.

"I was young and naive, I wasn't fighting to gain a throne but for living. If you have seen the dead as I saw them."

"You belittled her fight!" he shouts, notoriously mad, "She was meant to be a good queen. The best queen that place would have had in years. She made plans for schools, hospices, shelters for children and many other things that make a kingdom, Jon Snow. All those things that matter if you are going to live. But what does a hborn like you know about those things when you don't even know what hunger is."

"I was raised like a bastard," he protests, knowing that Daario has a point. Wining against the dead didn't give Westeros the peace that was needed. You know nothing, Jon Snow, comes to his mind.

"Poor, Jon Snow, having to go through life living in a fucking castle, receiving education and food but with a bastard name. How sad. Do you want to know where I learnt to fight? In the fighting pits when I was a slave. If I wanted to eat I had to kill another kid of my age to entertain people like your kind on this side of the Narrow Sea. Yes, may Westeros do not have slavery but who else entertains the lords but the buffoon that humiliates himself to gain some food for the night? Who else goes to fight the lords' war but the farmer that it's conscripted? Had I been there I would have told Daenerys your treason was inevitable. You can a bastard, and her blood, but you are a Stark and a hborn."

"Daenerys is hborn."

"Everything she is, she is because of herself. Not because of her name. Her name has brought nothing but woes for her."

They kept walking on the field, the tower of Dany on the horizon.

"I lived ten years with that reality, Naharis," he replies, "I saw my people dying and the Northern Lords rewarding us with scorn. I fought for their survival yet they asked for my head when I deserted the Night's Watch."

"Your sister. She betrayed you."

Jon stops his pace. It's obvious that he knows everything about that matter.

"She did. She believed it was the best for the North."

"What a shitty way to prove your love for her. She gave you her armies and her dragon, and you couldn't put inline your own family."

"It was hard to prove her a good queen when she was torching people alive. The westerosis had in mind her father burning people for amusement."

"Oh yes, your grandad, the mad," Daario chuckles and Jon wonders what's he finds enjoyable. "I used to spend hours trying to convince her to cook the Masters but she wouldn't do it because her father used to do that with his enemies."

"She's never been her father. I know that."

"Yet, you killed her."

"Then my sister died, Westeros perished and I have to return crawling to beg her aid."
"That's your main problem. You believe you will mend the past by simply walking backward. It does not work like that."

That night he let Daario spent the night watching over her. It's not like he can do much about it, he does not intend to oppose her will on who approaches her or not.

When he returns the next morning to replace him she's asleep. He cleans her space and observes how little she possesses. One of the things he noticed it's that she does not use the symbolism of her house anymore. It used to torture him in the past not having taken something from her belongings to remember her. It tempted him to take her ring, the one who belonged to her mother before her but it felt wrong. Then Drogon came and there's was no more time.

He turns around and sees her. She took a bath the other day and change to a lighter dress. He recalls had a glimpse of her scars in Asshai but barely could see the one that he left her.

Jon walks slowly to not awake her. The urgency commanding his moves. He knows it's inappropriate and it makes him feel ruin man but he needs to see it. To make it true she is there and alive after what he did.

He moves the sheet and part of the front of her dress.

He regrets immediately. Not only because it is not the same wound that decorates his chest, but because he has seen the others that accompany it and only his is almost new as if it had never healed completely. The groove is redder, the flesh is still visible and it seems that at any moment it will bleed again.

The entrance is exaggerated to have been a clean blow, destined to finish everything quickly and painlessly as Ser Rodrick Cassel had taught him to give his adversaries the painless death. But Dany was the woman he loved, who he still loves. The movement was not totally clean because his hand was shaking and sweaty. He didn't even rip the dagger to let her bleed. He didn't want to touch it again.

A violent wave of disgust hits him and the things he held, on the other hand, falls with a thunderous blow.

Jon runs to the privy chamber and empties the little content of his stomach.

When he finishes and gets up to clean up the mess, Daenerys is at the foot of the door watching him.

"My eyes are closed and my mind elsewhere, Jon," she says, "but I'm never asleep. I haven't slept a single night in ten years."

She looks at him one last time with disdain and retires.

XV

Daenerys

"You win!" Monterys claims too excited for having lost.
"You have let me win, my Lord," she points rolling her eyes. He ubicated the esquires in the same place. "Enough cyvasse for today."

A few years ago when Monterys was just a boy, Daenerys liked to imagine that he was like the younger brother she never had. With bluish-green eyes like hers and golden hair, it would have been easy to pretend to be siblings.

Then the little Velaryon's eyes filled with a feeling she didn't find appropriate. In fact, she found it uncomfortable at times like when Jorah proclaimed his love openly.

Beyond that, she liked to spend time with someone so jovial and intelligent. A purer version of Tyrion.

More than two moons had passed from Ashhai. Arianne sent missives from Valyria begging her to return but she was not ready yet. He didn't want to accept that the world she had to face outside the walls of the tower was a world where Drogon was no more.

"How is your wound?" she asks looking at his shoulder, where he received the entrance of an arrow.

Monterys sighs with sorrow.

"They told me not to wield a sword again."

Daenerys raises an eyebrow. "That's a good thing, my lord. I don't want you to go to war anymore."

He frowns but does not mentions that a great confrontation still awaits them at Westeros. Daenerys wholeheartedly expects Monterys to simply accompany Gendry in his impending reign and not on the battlefield. His mind was valuable and his heart even more.

"You leave me the board?" she asks when he is retiring.

"Of course, my queen," he agrees as he leans in and walks off the tower.

Daenerys looks around. The room is kept clean only thanks to Jon's constant care. In those days they reach a stalemate and after the incident with the scar where he learnt she never sleeps, he has been more cautious with his presence.

She no longer insults him or seeks to hurt him with burning words. In fact, she gives her some instructions on how to deal with the Hatchlings to retake the communication with Valyria and defend the city borders now that its inhabitants begin to return.

The Qartheens have chosen a system of governors. One in Qarkash, another in Port Yhos and one here. Daenerys prays that R'hllor will keep his promises because if she is honest she no longer has the strength to fight her mortal enemies.

The future is theirs, she remembers to herself. I cannot give them more of me.

Tears escape from her eyes again. Now that the anger has been emptied of her being there is only a deep and latent sadness that prevents her from getting out of bed for other reason than to prove that she still has the ability to walk.

Weeping is the only thing she can do.

XVI
There is a change in the winds, he no longer feels terrified of leaving her alone for too long, but at the same time, the grief was more intense in that room. Everyone felt it, and they were aware she's no longer the same. Daario received reports of some uprisings in the western Essos that were quickly placated by the combined armies.

It was a dead point for everyone.

"I swear this if it wasn't because I want to return home I would be over of war," Gendry comments while they stroll around the gardens of the Hall of a Thousand Thrones. The boy, Monterys, is visiting Daenerys. "I don't know how to face her after what had happened."

"It wasn't your fault," he insists. Jon doesn't know if it's anybody's but Kinvara’s fault. "She trust you."

Gendry's sighs.

"I wish she haven't."

They have spoken of Prince Yronwood and Daenerys' plan to make him king. Jon does not discern if what horrifies him the most is whether the notion of being a monarch or of marrying Dorne's spoiled princess.

"Be honest with me. Doesn't this situation bother you? The crown is yours by right."

"No, the crown was lost by Rhaegar against your father. Your father against the Lannisters and the Lannisters against Daenerys."

Gendry wants to protest but he continues.

"Of all the kings and queens we have known, only Daenerys has ruled properly. If she believes you are the one, there must be a good reason for that."

Jon could understand Gendry's nervousness about it. Throughout his life, power had not been kind to him. Naive, northern fool.

"You'd be better King."

The idea was ridiculous but for a moment Jon thinks it would be different now if he did it again. He looked at the sky where Barristal and the other dragons were dancing.

"You'll make a good King, Gendry," he reassures him squeezing his shoulder.

**XVII**

That night he brings her a stew with spices as Daario had mentioned that she liked it. For his taste, it was too spicy but it was the only thing she ate for ten years.

He drowned the pain in his chest. Daenerys wasn't living.

She swallowed the stew halfway and then just looked at the plate and played with the food, staring at nothing.
He sat in a corner. That was their routine: silence and waiting.

"After death, there is another life," she speaks, breaking the stillness in which they were submerged.

Jon frowns.

"I only remember darkness."

Daenerys swallows hard.

"I already told you that only your body was dead. Not your mind or soul, whatever you want to call it. You are not allowed."

It is neither the first nor the last thing that is not allowed for him, he thinks. It wasn't that bad, he calms himself down. He doesn't remember that it bothered him and he even felt relieved that there was nothing.

"Kinvara spoke of a threshold. She said that if you crossed it you would not return."

"When the Undying caught me, my vision was of the iron throne. But not. She stopped, biting her lip, "It was the throne room that day. They knew that was my future and they warned me. I had a torch that fell in the exact place where you killed me, you know?"

That bloody moment was always between them. Before he can respond she continues.

"I wanted to touch it, but I wanted to save my children most. So when I heard their crying I looked back and I tried to return but I found myself in a tunnel with a large gate opening, giving way to the light that led to the white and snowy wasteland beyond the wall."

"The tunnel of Castle Black," he remembers.

"The shield that guards the realm of men. They also knew you would stop me. That you would send me there."

Jon would apologise again if it wasn't already a weary act for both of them.

"I advanced feeling a different kind of cold, more like a soft fresh wind, than I felt in the true north. I walked forward until I met with the hut where I lived with Khal Drogo."

"A hut?" he wonders, "I was there in a dream. You were there in that dream."

Her depressed expression becomes a real unease.

"And what did you see?"

Jon swallows the lump in his throat, "Only you."

She looks back at her half-eaten plate.

"In that hut are my children, Jon. Khal Drogo left me a long time ago. Maybe when I started loving you he understood that my heart belonged to another and went to the night lands."

His heart skips a beat. Not only because he mentions their love but because he realises that he has no way of asking her to continue living when something more important is waiting for her on the other side.
"Rhaego was seven years old. And Viserion and Rhaegal were hatchlings again. I stayed there for-" she sobs and thinks about it, "I don't know how much time I was dead. Longer than you, maybe weeks. I remember peace but at the same time, I remember void. The lack of something."

Jon let out a defeated breath.

"Drogon," he concludes.

Dany nods.

"He was calling me," she whispers, "I couldn't be there knowing he was calling for me. So I left my other children and I cross the threshold and I wake in the darkness of this world. My body was not my body anymore. I could not describe the foul pain I felt, but it was the last time I felt it, now I miss it."

Jon rises from the chair and walks to sit on the bed, setting aside the plate and taking her hands on his. He does not know what to say or what to do, this was it. The end of the mystery of who she is and what she wants.

"What do I have to do, Dany? Tell me where are we going from here."

She stares at him with lament. Laments are all they have now.

"Did you ever loved me?"

The question takes him aback. In her stare, there's a real concern and it's like a punch in the stomach.

"Of course, I did," he lifts one of his hand to caress her face, "I still love you, and you know that."

"I spent all this time believing you didn't," she replies withdrawing his hand from her face.

"I never did a good job showing you otherwise," he admits, still holding her near.

"No, you didn't," she agrees with a sour grin. "I love you, Jon."

His heart almost stops. Jon had forgotten the feeling in his interior at the sound of those words coming from her. But then keeps on, "I love you but I'm not the prisoner of this feeling anymore."

Dany loosens her hands in his, signaling that it's over. There is no more to say.

He had believed this moment would alleviate the soreness of his heart but only intensifies the heaviness of it.

XVIII

Daenerys

She still has a hard time believing in his words, but his expression is so hurt that she begins to put aside that initial distrust and gives in to the need to believe that at least that was not a hoax. It was real. Their affection was real.
"Play cyvasse," she replies to his previous question, "you asked what we are going to do, and that's play cyvasse."

She points to the board that rests on the round table where she used to sit down to write long reports for Arianne and the rest of the Common Council. She avoids to touch him when she gets up and sits at the table, indicating him to take the place in front of her.

Jon is surprised by the sudden change of mood but obeys.

"I was never good for games."

No, Jon, you are not, she wants to answer in an ironic way. Nonetheless, she concludes she's done being rude to him.

"Me neither. Monterys always let me win," she admits, remembering to have won rarely with honesty. The rest was pure maneuvers of Monterys to not leave her in ridicule. She does not mind admitting that she does not have much knowledge of military strategy and that she likes to go straight with the hard blows.

"He loves you," he tells as if were something she does not know.

"I know it," she responds lightly. "We are two losers. What else do we have to lose, Jon?"

He arches his eyebrows and arranges his pieces carefully. His hand trembles when he takes the wolf and dragon pieces.

"Let's make a bet," then she begins, "If you win, you stay and go to Westeros. If I win, you go with Tormund and the freefolk to Ibben."

"No," he declares hard in his voice. "No, I'm not going to Ibben. You're not going to force my hand on the matter."

She knew he would take this position.

"Fight for me, then. If you are sure you want to be by my side, fight for me and take a risk for once."

He scowls harder.

"I don't bet on luck, if I have to fight for you I will do it but not by betting against you."

"Would you please give something!" she shouts at him.

They remain silent for a long moment until he softens the hardness of his expression and nods.

"Thank you."

They start. The first thing she notices is that Jon prepares a great defense, a move that Monterys told her was reckless. Jon is good at inspiring and leading, but his strategies were never good.

"We can have a future," he says; a gesture of weakness.

"What future? I'm dead."
"You are not."

"Yes, I am," she insists, "Don't you see it in my eyes? Don't you see that my soul does not belong to this world anymore? I'm not asking you anything that you hadn't done before," she remembers seeing him leaving Castle Black with a beam of a smile, finally free from the world of the game of thrones. She also recalls when he told Tormund he wished to go North with them. "Life is hard with us, but sometimes there are little moments where we can find a way out, and this yours and..."

"I love you," he claims again. "If you feel the same for me, I entreat you to understand me."

She moves her elephants.

"Love. What does that mean for you? Loving me like what? like Dany? like your Queen? As your aunt?"

"I love you as the first day in that boat and the last day in the red keep."

It's meant to sound affectionate but the sting of anguish returns to her chest.

"That's exactly the love that destroyed me."

"You speak harshly in all your right," he shouts in the same tone he once disallowed her because he was a King, "but if you could be in my stead for once and see things as I see them-

"That there was not another choice?" she interrupts him, "I never wanted things to be about a choice. However, it would have been always about choosing between your loyalty to me or your love for your family. For the Starks. For Sansa and for Arya. And only because that choice didn't work well as you thought, is that you are back at my door. Trying to redeem that choice when is long gone. I do believe you are a good man, that you have the right reasons, and that what I did it is and will always be inexcusable-

"I have forgiven people who did the same. Tormund is one of them. I couldn't even kill Ygritte when I had the chance. I was willing to be by your side if you have-

"If I had shown remorse? Our family killed people in masses with their dragons for years, Jon. Were you expecting me to lose it, now and every now and then, and show remorse to compensate?"

"I wanted a reason!" he yells, moving the horses. "I wanted you to give me a reason to not do it!"

"Be with me. We'll break the wheel together," she tries not to sound exactly like that time. Jon's eyes are darker with fury.

"And what would that meant?"

"We'll never know," she pushes the red dragon to the other side of a mountain range.

"We can. Like family. We can be a family."

"You have a family."

"You are my family, too."

"No, Jon. It does not work like that. It will never. I have accepted that it's something I can't have. My only family were my children and they are all dead. What you call love is a duty. How many
men in this world could feel this way?"

"You still don't believe me," he's outraged.

"I do believe that whatever happened between us, love, lust, or relation. It's dangerous and it's meant to cause more harm than good."

"You love me."

"I do. I will always do it. But it's not enough anymore. It has never been," she takes the dragon and makes it fly from the board. "Your king is trapped. Death in four."

Jon lost.

His eyes are full of hatred and despair. It hurts her but what's the death of love compared to the death of her children?

"If we look back, we'll be lost. You deserve freedom from all these wars. I will go to Westeros and fight to give them a future so maybe I can get some form of atonement."

"It's not freedom when you are not giving me a choice."

"But you have. You have a choice."

She stands and walks off the tower.

XIV

Daenerys

I banished you twice.
You came back twice.

Daenerys knew it will be him, still, she enters the pit where the hatchlings are feasting with wariness.

Do not walk away from your queen, Jorah the Andal.
You have not been dismissed.
You pledged yourself to me.

The first one in her way it's Missanderys, who pours at her view but does not invite her to join the feast. Barristal is far from them, always paltry with his prey. She continues advancing to Daarion and Greywing, but as Missanderys, they don't look her in the eyes.

You swore to obey my commands for the rest of your life.
Well, I command you to find the cure wherever it is in this world.

Jorion is staring at the sky when she approaches, and slowly downs his gaze to her. He seems so thoughtful like lost in his own mind. She believes dragons are intelligent, and she wonders what got him so distracted all the time.

I command you to heal yourself and then return to me.

"Hey," she says moving carefully; Daenerys does not want him to feel she's there to force him.
With Drogon it was something that was meant to happen. Jorion deserves to know it's not meant to last.

The golden dragon accepts her. He pushes his scorched meat towards her.

*When I take the Seven Kingdoms, I need you by my side.*

She senses him. He understands.

Soon, she feels the hatchlings return to her too.

**XX**

**Outgrown a lover**

They embark towards Valyria three months and two weeks after Drogon's death. They are already on the second moon of the year 316 after the conquest. Daenerys should turn thirty-four years old that year. She should be the mother of a boy of seven and ten, and a girl of eleven summers; Mother of three dragons of seventeen-years-old.

But Daenerys Targaryen died in the Westerosi winter of the year 305 after the conquest. Daenerys Targaryen is the mother of children who no longer lived in the land of men.

This is what goes through her mind when she hears the knock on her cabin door on the first night at sea. And it is what she repeats for herself the following nights when the same thing happens.

On the other side, Jon knows it has no case but wants her to know that he fought until the end.

A meaningless struggle, which is late for both. He knows, he admits it but doesn't care enough to give up.

They arrive in Valyria in the fourth month of 316 after the conquest. The wind blows cool even on this side of the Narrow Sea.

The world knows it's time to let go of the endless summer afternoon.

Chapter End Notes

The "outgrown a lover" and the last sentence of this chapter comes from Lorde song "Hard feelings". The idea of this Jonerys journey is leave the past behind. Someone mentioned in a comment that it is almost impossible to imagine that in real life they can forgive each other. To build the road to love again, they have to learn to love who they are now and not who they were in the past.

In the scene where Daenerys bonds with Jorion, I was listening "I need you by my side" of Ramin Djawadi, which is Daenerys and Jorah's theme. It's beautiful.

I'll try my best to end this first part next week so we can finally get completely into the second one and the so anticipated reconciliation.
King of the Seven Kingdoms

Chapter Summary

A feast takes place, and people reveal their true intentions.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 12: "King of the Seven Kingdoms"

316 A.C

I

Jon

Sansa runs over him as every previous time he returned alive from the war. He hugged her tightly, apologising for not being there to protect her.

"Do never again apologise for anything," she urges, before holding him in her arms. Both merge into a hug that seems to last for hours. There was no more pack than them.

Tormund throws him and Dewyn on the ground in what he calls the giant's embrace. Unfortunately, neither Jon nor Dewyn were giants.

Val gave him a chaste kiss on the lips and told him that she's glad he's safe. The trembling of his face confirms what she feared would happen when several moons ago they farewell.

He had not planned how to deal with Barristal now that he was following him everywhere, and when the red dragon flies over the port of Valyria with his siblings, separating from them to get off and gloat a little, Jon has to reassure his family and explain the situation.

"She lost her biggest dragon," says Sansa in amazement. "And you took one of them. Are you insane, Jon?"

The warm encounter did not last long.

"He came to me," he clarifies again. "Once they choose you, there is nothing else you can do but accept. Now I am like his pet," the other dragons surrounded the city while Barristal hovered over his head. Jon was asking him to fly away, but the dragon insisted on staying. "Drogon died protecting her. He was not defeated. He died by his own fangs."

By their long delay, everyone already knew about the incident. It was important to be calm and confident, otherwise, Daenerys could be in a weakened state.

"She must be devastated," Sansa mutters, aware of the delicacy of the matter.
Jon sighs and looks at the Great Keep where Dany should already be.

"She is the strongest person I've ever met," and the cruelest at the moment. He will not mention yet that he will not return to Westeros with them. "And she is a queen. She must go on."

That's all they talk about.

When they join the Westerosis in the Great Keep, everyone already knows that Gendry is the future monarch. The indifference is transformed into interest and the poor bastard walks with the weight of the world on his shoulders.

Jon is greeted with cheers that he doesn't feel worthy of.

*If I had known how this war was going to end, I would have drowned at the bottom of an icy river in the true north and let Westeros die.*

His rooms are the same as the last time he was there. This time, Val accompanies him and explains that this was the place she was given when they arrived.

*She keeps pulling me away,* he concludes.

The first day they rest, and it is the second night of the day after the arrival that the feast will take place.

That night, Val tries to take him to their old ways, and at first, it seems it will happen; the image of Dany and the poison king in his mind and the memory of her constant rejection and the bet she forced him to make.

But then he remembers the courtyard in Qarth where he saw the state of her body in the flames after what he did. The emptiness in his chest. The pain in Asshai and the laments in the tower.

"I can't," he admits in pain, getting out of bed and getting his clothes. "I'm sorry-

"You love her-" she whispers a truth that has been silenced for a long time between them. "Did you bed her?"

"No!" but he tried to look for it. "Many things have happened. It's not just about love."

*Just for love,* a small voice scolds him for his mistake.

"She came to me," she confesses, grabbing the sheets to cover her bare chest. She looks ethereal. Only a deranged man could reject her. "She asked me to convince you to go north with us."

They have reached this point due to his cowardice and inability to explain his true feelings in words.

"I will not object if you keep your promise to kill me."

*I won't be insulted, Jon Snow. You can’t leave me because of your duty. If you do so, I will kill you,*" he recalls her threat. And she has every right to cut his guts and let the pigs delight with them.

"We could never have children," she adds, out of nowhere.

Jon doesn't understand the sudden change of subject.
"I always told you that I didn't want them."

"Your seed was in me. We could have had them."

Jon sighs.

He had avoided that scenario until he once failed. She did not get with his child. After five years of sharing a bed without consequences, he imagined that she didn't want them either. The obvious reason is that somehow they have to take care of all those orphans. Why risk having other children?

"I want the warmth of a baby of my own, Jon," she admits, "you don't?"

So she hasn't been drinking Moon Tea as Ygritte did, he deduces. Dany could not have children and their time was short to contemplate that possibility.

No children in almost fifteen years. Was he also barren?

"Maybe I can't have them. No matter what I want."

After this, he leaves the chamber and goes to sleep on the balconies. While looking at the misty skies, he thinks about how his child might have looked. He will never know. But he is glad that he and Dany are the last of the Targaryen.

This feast is warmer and more cheerful than that of Qarth, perhaps because there are fewer people and the hall is smaller. Or maybe the fact that he is really having a moment of euphoria around the Freefolk. Tormund really makes a difference when it comes to celebrations.

He does the same thing he did for the past ten years and ignores the questions in his head. He drowns in ale until Sansa has to take the cup from his hands.

And then she enters.

The entire salon is silent as Daenerys advances with a serious and fixed gaze on the window that overlooks the smoking sea. He doesn't take his eyes off her.

She wears an elegant dress, yes, but with the same gray and brown colors he has seen her wear since he stepped on Valyria. Jon realises how bad he misses the red dress she wore in Qarth.

When she sits down, Daario and her family at the main table with her, the festivity continues. He is not surprised when Tormund approaches and talks with her amicably.

When Daenerys retires, there are only a couple of people left, including him and Tormund. His head is spinning and he knows he can't go to bed with Val, so he chooses to wander around the huge castle again until he finds himself in the artificial garden where five large statues loom in the center.

Ser Barristan, the Bold.

Torgo Nudho.

Missandei of Naath.
Daario Naharis
Ser Jorah Mormont.

Jon sighs and lies down in the middle of the garden to contemplate the gigantic figures judging him.

“I told her not to do mine until I was dead,” Daario Naharis interrupts him from his rambling, entering on the opposite side from the one he has entered. "I was in Westeros when she built this garden."

Trying to hide how drunk he is, Jon nods to greet him. In Qarth they came to tolerate the other for Dany's well-being. There was no point in talking here.

“I was preparing my things for the long journey back to that crappy nest,” he says, taking out a big piece of parchment from his clothes. "And I found this," he extends it to Jon, who takes it carefully; They seem worn.

'Reign of Queen Daenerys I Targaryen.’

"What is this?" Jon asks, stunned. He knows how to recognise her handwriting, but he fears to be wrong.

“She used to write lots of those in her spare time when we lived in Meereen before she left for Westeros,” he explains, observing the statues that seem to look at them. Daario sighs with regret. “The day she finished things with me, I stole one of those as a token. I was pissed.”

Jon swallows the lump in his throat and laments that a guy like him hasn't been next to Dany in Westeros. It really would have awakened some sense in all of them.

"Ser Grandfather didn't like me," he recounts, strolling through Ser Barristan statue, passing through the statue of Grey Worm. "I liked this one," then Missandei; his smile fades as if he wanted to make a crude comment, but of all those people, Missandei's absence was the most unfair of them.

Then he stares at Ser Jorah, “We went to rescue her from the Dothraki. Gods, I never saw a man in love with Daenerys as Ser Jorah was. Well, until you. Now that you are leaving, it seems right to take a token of what you could have had.”

He admired the ability he had to hide his good intentions with childish malice.

When the commander left, Jon began reading the long scrolls where Daenerys detailed each of her plans for her impending reign.

She wanted to retake the ideas of King Aegon V, who sought to rekindle the dragons in order to impose himself before the nefarious Lords and improve the lives of the smallfolk.

Many other plans had to do with things he had seen her implemented here in Essos. She had also made long writing explaining why the soldiers should be paid by the Crown and not recruited by the Lords.

On the last scroll, he had to stop and take a deep breath. Abolition of the bastardy.
He knows that stare.

Thousands of thoughts running at once. Catastrophic images that converge in paranoia, and history repeating itself.

Tyrion had laughed for hours after knowing for Sansa that Jon had finally taken one of Dany's new dragons. If he had still been her hand, he would have advised her not to have him so close unless, unwittingly, she was waiting for it to happen.

Daenerys was a proud woman who knew what effect she had on men. Jon was the exception that transgressed that precaution in her that tells her not to trust them.

Tyrion was surprised that after so many years a man like Daario Naharis was still curled up under her cloak. Until the peculiar image of former sellsword and his new family cleared up the context for him.

So that's the mystery, Daario Naharis, he thinks while drinking the seventh goblet of aged wine that day. You are ensuring the future of your children.

Because it's logical, right? She can't have children. That little girl from Daario walks around the room as regal as little Myrcella used to do on Red Keep. There are already successors behind the queen, who will inherit these conquers of her. Well, at least for a time. Because those dragons will not obey sellsword seed.

Good move, he congratulates the man in his mind. The things we do for the love of our family.

He turns to see Jon with his eyes fixed on the woman he killed. The woman they both loved and conspired to kill. Tyrion wants not to feel the bitter sting in his chest as he remembers the times he was in her inner circle; Two friends who could have conquered this world. In that sense, Jon also broke his prudence. He shouldn't have let his feelings for her involve Jon.

It may be true that the Targaryen are inevitably attracted to each other.

A part of him that keeps the memories of their time together on their way to Westeros hurts seeing Dany's lost look, as he also felt sorry for Cersei when she lost all her children.

What a curious! Cersei lost three living children and one in her womb and Dany lost the Khal's son in his womb and her three children. The two mad queens. Both in love with their relatives.

And both women were killed because of him. Only one survived.

Cersei, you are not so lucky in that regard, he jests.

What was I thinking? he wonders while stealing a ninth cup. Oh yes, Dany's stare.

He was surprised when the soldiers told him that the red god had endowed her. It shouldn't surprise him, all that talk of the red priests was true. She is the chosen one.

It wasn't like if he had not proved qualified enough, but why a power like that? No one should be able to maintain that kind of power. None.
Humans were monsters by their own means, his father, his sister and his nephew had proved it. But when you give humans the power that Daenerys has, the power that Bran has, horrible things happen.

And if the rumors were true, if it was true that Daenerys destroyed Asshai by the agony for the death of her last son and mount, that should ring a bell for everyone.

That look is the look of a sleeping monster. And Jon's expression reveals that this time he wouldn't do the right thing.

When the indisputable almighty dragon queen gets up and leaves the feast, Tyrion approaches Daario Naharis who was sitting reluctantly watching his children and wife integrate with the people.

"Imp," he greets him informally. He didn't expect anything else. "They told us about your heroic act to save the Queen in the North."

He smiles slightly.

"Since Daenerys did not take us as her subjects, Sansa is the queen to whom I respond."

"Amazing that you arrived just in time, huh? My men told me that the nasty Lord was with a dwarf in a canteen a few hours earlier."

"Valyria has many dwarves."

Daario swallows a long sip of his wine and looks at it with a raised eyebrow. "You are a treacherous imp that lives up to the scum family you come from. Did you know?"

Tyrion lets out a laugh. Deep down, Daario was still a sellsword.

"How is the queen?"

"It's none of your business."

"She was my friend. And I know what those dragons mean to her. I was with her when she lost the first two."

Daario's face becomes tense.

"If this is an attempt to obtain information, you will lose your tongue."

It seems fair.

"You are good at reading people's intentions. I get it."

"Yours are an easy job."

They stagnate in a stalemate. Tyrion turns to contemplate his beautiful wife, a dothraki Khaleesi he heard.

"Of all the mad things I've faced in recent years, seeing you as a parent is the greatest of them."

His expression seems to harden until his gaze travels to his wife and offsprings, then something changes.
Yes, he says to himself, he also knows that look. The look of unconditional love.

“Cersei was pregnant when Daenerys stormed King's Landing. My brother went to look for her for that child that never got to see the light of the world. I found them under the piles of bricks under Red Keep,” Daario is not moved by his comment, “the next time the dragon awakes, keep that beautiful family of yours away and safe. Dragons do not discern neither innocent nor bystanders.”

And there it happens. Daario's eyes darken with doubt as he turns back to observe the reason of his life.

No one can guarantee your loyalty until your family is put in the line of fire.

Tyrion returns to integrate with Sansa and Jon, with whom he has again made contact since the triumphant return of the new dragon rider. When Jon reveals to them that Daenerys has forced him not to come back with them to Westeros he almost spits the wine on his face.

"Then she lost two dragons," he points out, looking where Daario was sitting; He was gone.

"I'm not going to take Barristal," he declares with enormous assurance.

Tyrion is about to tell him that he's an idiot but he's tired and the notion that Daenerys is still essential for Westeros has put him in a depressive state.

He just wants to rest.

III

Daenerys

The aged wine feels so good in her tongue that she asks the servant to bring some more. There is a little calm before the storm and she doesn't want to fight it. She has returned to numbness.

The feast was a promise she made and regretted the moment she stepped into that Hall filled with people she truly does not care about. The Westerosis are loud and know little about entertainment.

Only Tormund with his jokes and words of encouragement made the whole night worthwhile.

"His heart is broken," he told her in a more serious, confidential tone. "And it's breaking other hearts."

Well, I'm not the only one you disappointed, Jon.

"Your grace," a guard enters the War Room, pulling her off her ramblings. "Someone wants to see you."

"Who?"

"A lady named Val."

Oh

Oh no.
"Let her through," she orders as she stands up and places another goblet in front of her.

"Why is your table so big?" she questions when she's there examining the room.

"It's the map of our world."

"Do you own all this?"

"No," she replies firmly. "I don't really own anything."

Val tilts her head and looks at her with a frown. "His heart," she says.

"It has belonged to you for years," she opposes, taking another sip of her wine and taking a seat. Val does not follow her.

"No, it hasn't," she confirms for sure. "His love is damaged. I thought I could fix it, but I can't."

"Val," she insists in a softer tone; she really felt bad about being in the middle of this situation. Or that she did. Daenerys didn't know anymore. "I know it's a difficult situation. Believe me when I tell you that I never wanted things to be like this," she pauses to look at the night sky imagining that maybe Drogon is out there after all, "but he has to go because where I'm going is the last place I will go to. And I don't want him to see it."

A silence looms over them. Daenerys does not need to turn to know that her statement has been too revealing. Maybe it was the only way she could understand. She wasn't going to blame her if she didn't.

"A man who does not feel like living and a woman who desperately wants to die. They will be a great companion for the other until they both get what they are looking for."

She is surprised by her words. A bunch of strangers knows more about them than themselves.

"The ink is dry and the book has been closed," is the only thing she utters in her defense.

"The book can be opened and written if there are still blank pages," and with this, she withdraws and it is the last time Daenerys sees her.

Daenerys stays a little longer contemplating the darkness outside. In those days it seems that at times her mind will take off, fly to unknown and completely new places, but then the chain that ties her to reality sounds and she has to land.

*How are the chains that bind you, Jon?*

She recalls his mortified face, the trembling of his hand when he touched her in contrast with the conviction with which he spat out his belated declaration of love.

In fact, a part of her, a very obsessive and stubborn part, jumped in ecstasy at the sound of that statement. That tickle in her guts, something she tried to replicate with Gerael, but never could.

However, she was not the twenty-three-year-old girl who gave herself completely to the feeling, but this woman who has lost until the last bastion of her sanity.

*Let it be fear,* she had said back then. *Let fear consume me,* she meant.

*Let everything I have be fear because here I have not known more than that. And your love was just another way to it.*
And then there is the daughter who was in the middle of this tragedy. A daughter he will never see and will never know about.

Daenerys has thought about the possibility of telling him; In Qarth many times she went close to reveal it to him, just out of spite of seeing him bend in pain and understand why she needs to die.

Somehow, her heart did not allow it.

The child is dead, or rather never came to life. When she began to existed they had already plotted for her to never be born. When Daenerys knew she was pregnant Jon's love had vanished. What was the point in telling him something that would make him suffer even more? She can't guarantee if Varys was the one who poisoned her or if it was the dagger that sentenced her. In any case, her daughter is dead.

She closes her eyes and imagines dreaming.

The gates open again and someone who does not announce himself enters. It seems strange, but she doesn't have enough interest in seeing who it is. His steps approach until he is right behind her.

She recognises his scent anywhere.

"Dany," he calls her, and she knows something is wrong.

Daario.

IV

Sansa

While her maidens finished getting her ready for bed, she couldn't stop thinking about the conversation with Tyrion and Jon during the feast.

In itself, she got her nerves flayed with everything that happened in recent months. She still feels Lord Westerling's disgusting breath in her ear, and when she breathes her sternum still hurts. Jon announcing he will leave with the wildlings to the other point of the Known World by Daenerys' request, took the small sanity she had left.

It was the first time that Sansa contemplated Tyrion's suggestion about uniting Jon and Daenerys, although the latter was satisfied that Jon had taken one of the dragons as his own. As he had anticipated, Daenerys agreed without much caring.

She is still surprised by the attitudes of the dragon queen. Sansa cannot say that she would instead have the same tranquility in the face of such an urgent, miserable situation. In the cruelest way, they had that in common: everything they had built and loved dear washed away in their hands.

And both only had Jon.

She remembers Littlefinger once again. Yes, the man who had ruined much of her life. His words rumbled in her mind to the present, reminding Sansa again and again how crucial it is to wait for the right moment to play a movement. However, Sansa could not find that rightness.

Her cousin and his aunt are too damned for repairing. The imminent crowning of Gendry
Baratheon as king and Arianne Yronwood as his queen consort was convenient, right and comfortable for everyone.

She smiles at the thought that Arya could have been this close to becoming queen.

How incredible it is that everything she did to protect the North, Winterfell and her family, was exactly what took all those things away from her.

With Jon away, who would inherit Winterfell? Tyrion had mentioned that Daenerys was barren, which she knew was not true. Information that in the hands of Tyrion could be catastrophic. A child between those two could solve everything, how ironic.

Tears escaped her eyes at the memory of her terrible sin.

In ten years, she had not dared to think about how much her father should hate her wherever he is. A part of her wants to tell him that he cannot judge her when his honour left her with the Lannisters.

*You left me in the nest of monsters, and that is what I became to survive.*

In any case, what did honour and love matter at the end of the day if it had ended up just as badly for his father and brother as for her, who put safety and precaution before those things.

What was the point of everything?

*Maybe the game of thrones has no winner, Cersei,* she would like to answer her. *You died for not giving the stupid chair to Daenerys, Daenerys died for making a stupid decision and I am here with nothing or anyone for being stupid.*

They were all stupid. The game was designed for everyone to lose.

V

Arianne

Daenerys's scolding had taken her by surprise and she wasn't thinking clearly.

“Sansa Stark failed as a queen because she put her feelings above her duty. How do you intend to become a queen if you still haven't grown up?”

Arianne knew she was right. It was a great imprudence to neglect that way a queen, soon to become Warden of one of her kingdoms. Her pride was hurt and she had too many words trapped in her chest that she wishes she had told her at the time. However, she only stood there while Daenerys scolded like a mother would reprimand her child.

*With what right? She has left me all the affairs of her realm in my hands and has neglected her duty as queen to play the eternal conqueror.*

She herself put her feelings for Jon Snow above and because of that, they didn't come back to Westeros much sooner! She was furious as she had never been.

While in Great Keep they continued with their celebrations, Arianne is finishing the details of the coronation of Gendry. Her father would arrive in a few days and she could not allow anything
breaking free from the careful scheme she had designed.

And where was Daenerys? Neither at the party nor anywhere.

She sighs and reassures herself. *You have to understand her, she has lost her last child.*

Arianne didn't even get the idea of how painful that could be. How embarrassed she felt that in those months that delayed her return from Qarth, Arianne had been so worried that the plans would change.

The gates of the salon where she had been isolated to end her reports open and Gendry enters.

"Oh, excuse me, princess-" he apologises, "I didn't know you were here."

She forgets his internal rant and smiles at him. They have spoken very little since his return. She was giving him the time that Daenerys said he needed to adapt to the notion of what was to come. Arianne would lie if she said she wasn't exasperated at his nervousness.

Gendry was in her thirties and she was nine and ten. They weren't going to be the first couple with ages that far apart.

And her maidenhood is untouched. All the right attributes for a soon to be queen.

It was the damn ghost of Arya Stark hovering over his head.

"You are not interrupting anything, your grace," she rapidly rounds the table and faces him.

He stands still, anxious.

"I'm just Gendry, princess," he corrects, his eyes wrinkling to fast.

"Oh, do not be too modest. People know who you will be. Who you always should've been."

"Actually, I'm a scum from Flea Bottom. I wasn't meant to be anything else but the scum of Flea Bottom. My bastardization never happened."

Arianne rolls her eyes.

"You'll be a King, Gendry. Besides, you've proved yourself a good man who cares for his people and is meant to make the right choices in order to save them. Attributes of a leader."

His cheeks tainted in red.

"I hope to live up the expectations."

Arianne smiles widely and invites him a goblet of wine. He grants and they finally have a normal conversation in days.

He speaks about the injuries he suffered in the taking of Port Yhos and she listens attentively. She tries to examine his physical features, like the soft copper of his beard and the blue of his eyes. A sudden memory of dark gray eyes comes to her mind and she has to shift away from those invasive thoughts.

*What a child,* she rebukes herself.

That was it. They all see her as an eternal child. Daenerys, Gendry, even Monterys who is barely
some years above her.

She comes from Dorne, where women much younger than her are experts in the arts of seduction and lust. Not that she could pay much mind to that matter with the wars and the conflicts with succession in full swing.

Her heart beats fast when she intends to make the move, wine helping her to take courage.

She places her hand lightly and gracefully on Gendry's thigh, as she had learned from her ladies in waiting.

He observes this gesture but continues explaining something about the new government of Port Yhos, almost completely ignoring her.

It was not the effect she was looking for.

Then she bets the double and raises her grip a little more until inevitably their faces are so close that a single movement on his part could seal everything.

"Princess," he stands up abruptly, taking her by surprise and forcing her to do the same. "No, no-" he stops and stutters, "It's not appropriate."

She arches her eyebrows in a funny expression.

"You don't have to feel it that way."

In other words, he is complicating things. How many kings would like to bed their queens before the wedding?

"I respect you."

"You are not offending me,"

"It's not right."

"What?"

"I didn't mean-" he makes a pause, sighing, "What I try to say: you are still young. You are the most beautiful woman in this land and you have so much to live yet. Do not think we are forced to do this now. I accepted this honour because it will bring peace to our homeland and because I do believe you'll be a good queen."

"It has to happen, are you aware of that?"

"It has to wait until the peace is guaranteed."

"Until the ghost of Arya Stark is gone, you mean."

Arianne bit her tongue almost instantly when that burning comment left her mouth. The wine had only rekindled the anger she was feeling some minutes ago.

Gendry ducks her head sadly, maybe because of her maybe because of him, but without utter another word, he leaves the room.
The library of the Great Keep is her least favorite place in the palace. Daenerys told her it was the only section she found unscathed in her first expedition, and she believed there was something magical protecting it.

Arianne finds herself there searching for some tomes her father requests for; the high, dark walls of the library looming over her, she sometimes can hear voices whispering on her ears.

She stops abruptly when she stumbles with the image of Lord Dewyn sitting at one of the tables, with an open tome. Not even in her wildest dreams would she have imagined encountering this.

"Princess," he greets her with one of those nonchalant smiles.

"Lord Dewyn," she returns, standing firm, "I may ask you what are you doing here and not in the feast? I was told that you are who ended one of the Warlocks."

He shrugs.

"I'm looking for information about the place where my people and I are going," he replies, showing her the name of the book he was reading in the common tongue. "Ibben."

Oh, she recalled that Daenerys would send the wildlings to a safe location as long as the reconquest was waged in Westeros.

"It's a beautiful place, my lord," she says, placing her father's volumes on the table.

"Have you been there?"

"Not, unfortunately, but I know people from there who visited the queen. They have a representative of the Shadow Council in the Common Council."

He frowns and she understands how confusing that sounded.

"Its people do not like foreigners too much, but as guests of Queen Daenerys you will be received with all honors," she adds.

He nods and looks down again.

"Here it says that they do not reproduce with outsiders," he explains, "that only monstrosities born from those unions."

Arianne raises an eyebrow. Was he really only interested in that subject?

"I don't think your stay is permanent, my lord. I would advise you to be careful in such a case."

"There is only one way to survive the winter, princess," he teases her.

"By getting close to a fireplace?" she quips.

He laughs, "How innocent, princess."

The comment touches her throbbing nerve.

"Yes, I know that the best way to spend the winter is fucking. Where do I come from, we don't need to use winter as an excuse to do so. You should better read something about the art of seduction, or else it will be very cold years for you in Port of Ibben. By the way, there aren't even so many people there. You'll end up opting for a whale."
She had not had such a breakdown since he was a child and her father had forbidden her to play with the sand snakes, arguing they were dangerous. She also wanted to be dangerous like them, but she was never allowed. In a way, all the things in which Dorne was better than all the other kingdoms, for Arianne they were unattainable.

Dewyn laughs out loud and they finally have a light conversation. They continue talking about Ibben and she explains that most of the stories that the Masters tell about places too different from the reality of Westeros are usually treated as bestialities or with exaggeration.

"They also say things like that about my people," he rightly points.

"It'll be different when I ascend as Queen," she states, who returns a confused expression.

"I thought the new kneeler king would be Gendry."

Kneeler king, she repeats in her mind. So, I'll be the kneeler queen for them.

"And I'll be his wife and queen consort, which is when-"

"I know what it is," he cuts her, brow furrowing.

An awkward silence hangs over both of them and Arianne wonders if she has offended him with his comment.

"I should go," she stands from her seat. He follows her.

"I'll help you with those," he takes the tomes before she can protests.

When she accepts this favour instead of requesting the help of any of the one of the many guards at the disposal, Arianne knows that she has made a final decision. And it is not that she regrets too much that it happened, the next morning when she wakes up by his side, forcing him to leave her bed as soon as possible.

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VI

Tyrion

He arrives at his bedchambers to find a well-filled jug of wine. He first doubts it, having already overpassed his own limits. He yields at the impulse and is thankful it was worth it; it's even better than the one they serve at the feast.

He throws himself into bed without taking off his suit, letting sleep take him.

He was awakened by the crackling of the flames burning the wood in the fireplace, plus the incessant pressure of his head, welcoming him to his old manners. He also smells lemons, a scent he recalls from a lost time of infinite conversations around the hearth. A smile filled with hope, he came to love.

Dany.

“We found a secret warehouse in this keep. Valyrian wine never perishes, and its taste only gets better with time. The first thing I thought while tasting this one was, I think Tyrion will like it. I should send it to him.”
Tyrion can’t see clearly but her monotonous voice guides him and his face turns to her. He notices his limbs do not respond.

“I have this,” she trails off, “bad habit of expecting people to change. Might because I do expect to change myself, but I just keep stumbling on walls of concrete, Tyrion. I’m tired of this collide, Tyrion, I’m so tired,” it sounds painful, as she is been really hurt.

Daario, he thinks remembering the words they shared at the feast.

“Throughout these years I’ve only had one single foundation sustaining my sanity, and it’s gone,” she confesses with a broken voice. “It’s true. I’m blind. I only see red these days. Dark blood red. Just as the day I stood there, watching the Red Keep, Drogon’s wrath boiling inside me and the thought of all of those I loved, betraying me. Even you. It wasn’t Jon my last string, Tyrion. It was you,” she sobs, “I told you we had your brother because I believed with all my heart you would not betray me, but you did. I pardoned his life twice, and you still wanted the murderer of my child and best friend to run away alive.”

He cannot speak. He desperately moves his fingers but he can’t. The only thing he can do is crying, tears falling slowly as he focuses his view and Daenerys is there, sitting by his side with a goblet of wine in her hands.

She’s shedding tears, too.

“Daario is my last string now,” she admits with a sad smile, “but he does not belong to me. He belongs to his family, and I will never, listen to me, never, ask him to chose me over them,” her face stains with a grimace.

He mutters something but it’s indecipherable.

“You were right,” she passes an arm above him, and takes a pillow the back of his head, making him fall and only see the canopy. “Everywhere I go, evil men die,” he only sees darkness when the pillow is placed on his face. “And you have been the evilest of them.”

VII

Sansa

Little Jaime’s sobs should awake some sense of grief in her but nothing happens. Yes, she wept over his death when they announced it but sudden unrest has invaded her since then.

Jon says some words and they bury his rests on the small sept in the capital. There are no many people but them.

“He died as he said he would die,” Jon eases her, “it was better than any of his relatives can tell.”

“He didn’t have the mouth of a whore in his cock,” Sansa corrects him, “neither eighty years.”

“Tyrion abandoned his days of whoring, long ago,” he adds.

She rolls her eyes at his naivety and wonders if it was that or he really isn’t against of what just happened. Because they know something else happened.

“Jon,” she stops him by his arm, when Brienne and Little Jamie pass by them and leave them alone. They were returning to the Great Keep. “She’s not well. I know we came here to plea her aid, but things took an unexpected turn and we both know that anything can happen. And if they
hurt another of her dragons? And if the North does not accept her?”

Sansa is willing to make all the right efforts, but she would be lying if she says it will be easy to convince all the northern lords this was the only choice.

Jon frowns, astonished, “Then she’ll be in all her right to retaliate.”

His answer takes her off guard. Suddenly, she remembers Tyrion's words.

'This place must be waking the dragon on him.'

They keep moving forward while she thinks she runs out of options. Being desperate, he has nothing left to do.

"You love her," she says, interrupting their pace again, "and she loves you," his shoulders tense. "Why are you letting her go?"

Jon sighs.

“I killed her,” he grunts, “I. Killed. Her,” he emphasizes each word. “Would you accept a love like that?”

So, it’s not that he hasn’t tried.

“Besides, I do remember that you were one of the main objectors on this matter.”

She swallows hard, “I believed you were yielding at her will. But your work well together. I see that now.”

He shakes his head while looking at her in disbelief. “Unbelievable, Sansa. All these years and you can’t comprehend people are not pieces of a game.”

He walks backward, putting distance between them.

“I can’t protect you from yourself. Daenerys won’t hurt you unless you give her a reason to do so. In which case, I can’t do more. She pardoned your life when you openly disrespected her, and when you actively undermined her quest for the Iron Throne. She has no reason to keep you alive yet here you are, soon to be the warden of the North. What else do you want?”

“My family,” she’s blunt with her response. “She’s taking away from me the only thing that matters to me. My family.”

He closes his eyes and lets out a deep breath.

“She’s my family, too. And I gave my word.”

VIII

Daenerys

Prince Anders Yronwood arrives in Valyria shortly after, with a great procession behind him.

She allows herself to smile when the caravan of peculiarities floods Valyria and the streets are
filled with festivities. The alliance with Dorne had been fundamental to the economic progress of the realm.

Arianne hugs her father and sheds tears of emotion; It would be the most important week of her life.

"My queen," he says, bowing. Then he passes to greet her. Like any other person in those days, his expression is stained with concern. "My sincere condolences, your grace."

Daenerys nods. "Welcome, Prince Yronwood. It seems our plan is on track."

"We guard the way," he replies with the motto of the Yronwood House. She smiles and then accepts the arm he offers, and proceeds to take him to the Great Keep.

That evening, Gendry has the first teste on royal functions. He takes the tea with the representatives of the guilds and then has a visit to one of the best seamstresses of Dorne, who is designing is coronation mantle.

Daenerys observes quietly and notices how nervous he is.

The next day, she takes him to choose one of the twenty crowns Arianne prepared for him.

"I think she got them since the beginning of last year," she opines at the paraphernalia of the princess.

"They seem appropriate," he adds with the same doubt than her. He watches carefully one with long metallic pikes. "Won't this hurt?"

"I don't know. I've never used one."

"You should. You would look better than me."

"Thank you, Gendry. So which one?"

He ponders it for a moment until his eyes set on a piece of dragonglass with ruby stones.

"What about that?" he walks towards it.

"That is not-" she makes a pause, "your betrothed's work."

"It is simply. I like it."

"It is one of the pieces we found among the ruins. I sent it to be restored," she takes the crown and handles it to him.

"It is lighter," he confirms.

"Well, you can use the others on special occasions."

"Yeah," he puts the object in its place again, "I think so."

Daenerys frowns.

"Gendry, are you sure of your decision?"

His expression first freezes, but then Gendry stands firmly.
"It's duty," he replies.

"You must want it to do it correctly."

"It's just-," he swallows hard, "I wanted so many things in my life. When I was a child I wanted a family."

"You have one. You can still have one on your own."

He nods and they walk out of the room. In the halls, he speaks again.

"Can I ask you something personal?"

"Of course."

"In the years that you two spent apart," Daenerys rapidly regrets having given him permission, "Have you stopped to love the other? How do you forget the past?"

She opens his lips to say something but nothing comes.

"Excuse me, I shouldn't-" he apologises.

"It's okay," she interrupts him. "Talking about the matter is one of the things one should do. I'm just afraid I'm not qualified to answer that."

"He loves you madly. You two could be everything."

"One cannot be everything and be oneself. And now I know who I am," above all she's the mother of those children that wait for her at the threshold. "You have a good heart. That is open for love. I couldn't meet Arya Stark as I would have wished, and she tried to kill me the last time I saw her. But they said she was a special kind. Do not think that you are forgetting her, but celebrate she was part of it."

That's it, she can't advise any more.

"Thanks, Daenerys."

Before they could move on to join the guess in the Great Hall, a guard informs her about someone who has required a meeting.

"Samwell," she greets him. She should've call him Maester Tarly."

"Your grace," he replies, bowing nervously.

"What is your petition?" she tries to be impassive but her presence does not please her. When was the last time she saw him? Winterfell eleven years ago?

The Maester approaches a wooden box to Daario, who seeks her approval to take it.

"Actually, I'm here to offer you something," he reveals.

Daenerys frowns and authorizes Daario to open the box and see its contents. Her commander obeys and unveils the mystery.
A sword. A greatsword. Daario removes the scabbard to examine the blade.

"That's-" she mumbles before he interrupts her.

"Heartsbane. Valyrian Steel. 500 years have been in my family. Or so they said."

"Why did you bring this to me?" she protests when Daario returns the weapon to its place.

"I can't handle it, I never could. My children are not Tarlys and my sister's children are not Tarlys, so there are no Tarlys in this world anymore," he explains as sad as anxious.

Daenerys had ignored the fact that Samwell was an exceptional person who was blessed by the seven gods, if they exist. Thanks to King Bran, he was able to complete his studies at the Citadel and become Grand Master. He was the father of two children and yet a member of the Night Watch. And maybe a lord of something? She doesn't remember anymore.

"May King Gendry would legitimise your children," fortune is by your side, she wanted to add with a sting of bitterness.

"I hope my children don't have to fight more wars, your grace," he replies, squeezing his hands at his side. "If this helps you stop the wars, then you must be the one who wields it," he shakes his head a bit like meditating on her image with this sword that was almost her size. "You can melt it and make two longswords or a bastard sword and a dagger."

Her eyes widened in surprise.

"Are you implying that I should destroy your family's legacy?"

"My father, he was not a good man. He did not want me as his son. He was ashamed of me."

His breakdown in Winterfell comes to her mind. And the memories she saw in the flames.

"You hated me," she states, having reached the peak of her annoyance, "You went to Jon and told him the truth with resentment, filling his mind with doubts about me. 'You gave up your crown to save your people. Would she do the same?' It didn't happen that way and Jon didn't bother to correct you. The truth is that I pledged my armies to the Great War without asking for anything. He bent his knee, willingly after I agreed to fight for the North and Westeros. After losing my child to save him. I left my conquest for him."

His expression is embarrassed and he looks down at the floor. There is a long moment of silence before he answers again.

"You killed my brother. I loved him."

"Your brother chose to die," she growls, doesn't he count all the men his brother killed in Highharden's sack? "In war one wins or one dies. He could have chosen otherwise, I gave him a choice."

"That doesn't make it hurt less, your grace."

She stares at the greatsword. The image of Jorah falling defeated on the ground comes to her and she has to tear the tears away.

"I don't think it's appropriate to accept this gift, Samwell."
"I just wanted to make peace, your grace," he insists when Daario closed the wooden chest.

"What is done is done, Master Tarly."

It seems that the meeting will end there, but he continues.

"I know Ser Jorah Mormont died with her in his hands, protecting you. Please, take it is an extension of him protecting you," he softened his expression, "Again."

"It's a good sword," says Daario voices with his eyes fixed on the cage. "You will not find Valyrian Steel anywhere else."

Daenerys reflects on the matter for a moment. She lost her sword and other belongings in Asshai. He had not trained since then, so the idea of looking for another did not go through her mind until now.

In fact, it was a unique gift.

"Thank you," she yields and a smile appears on Samwell's face.

He bows and intends to retire while Daario orders the guard to take the chest to the blacksmith. They will have to redo it.

"Samwell," she shouts abruptly, surprising herself. Jon's friend turns around and returns to where he was standing a few moments ago. "Have you ever seen a crystal crown?"

IX

Jon

He farewells Sansa in Great Keep, wanting to save her the journey to the port and things to be as simple as possible. He tells her that it is not definitive and when things return to normality, he will return to Westeros with the Freefolk. She maintains her composure but in her eyes, he notices that she wants to say something she simply won't say. Both are accustomed to this bitterness.

Tormund and Dewyn help people carry their things to the carracks that will take them back to the port of Volantis, where they will cross the Royne River to Qohor and from there to the northern region of Essos, where another fleet will transfer them to Ibben. That is what Daario Naharis explained when he informed that they would leave before the coronation of Gendry.

It made sense. They do not kneel. If they came here it was to survive, and they have.

A soldier hands him a coin and he knows what it means. He looks for the private dock with similar stealth hanging on.

"The Valyrians had the habit of leaving coins to indicate where to find the other. Their empire was so prosperous that they did not mind spending gold on coins that are worth no more than an encounter."

That is what she says once he enters the tunnel where they are alone.

He leaves Longclaw out. Although she abandoned her initial paranoia and allowed them both to be unguarded, she still looks down to see that he has no weapons with him. Jon understands her but it
"I have the other one you gave me for Eastgates," he replies, looking carefully at every detail of this last image of her. A year ago, when they arrived in her realm desperate for her aid, and he slipped through the various obstacles to reach her, he did not imagine it would lead to this moment.

She's clad in brown and green this time. Her hair is loose in those short waves where her hand used to be trapped in their long nights.

"The number of those you have is the number of-" she stops, whatever comes to her mind seems difficult. "Special encounters you shared. If we could name it someway."

He should get a handful of them, then.

"Our first meeting here was not pleasant, right?" he jests, slowly approaching to stand by her side so that both can look at the smoking sea.

"That's why I gave you the coin when I invited you to Eastgates and why I give you another one now. A peace offering. Our reunions' keepsake."

Jon squeezes the coin in his fist. At least this time he would take something with him.

"I don't want to leave, Dany," he confesses just like in the dungeons where he ended up because of his imprudence. A man flooded with guilt, but also desperately in love with a woman who killed.

A woman who was his own blood and whose need of him, he had used against her.

Her eyes are lost in nothing.

"I want so many things, Jon. I want each of my children. I want my dead back. I want to undo my mistakes. But the past is the past and one can stop at what could have been or what is no longer. Jorah knew it and that's why he kept coming back to me."

"I should have come for you the moment I knew you were alive," he admits, embarrassed by the fear he experienced at the beginning; No joy, no emotion, but fear. "I thought I had no right to live after what I did."

Her face turns to him in pain. But a different kind this time, as if it hurt for him and not for her.

"You've carried that guilt too much, Jon, and although at first, I wanted you to do it now, I see it's not fair to any of us. Because nothing will change. That moment will always be between us."

"There is a peace of mind that comes from knowing that there is only one way and that is what we chose. You asked Tyrion if what you did was right, and he told you to ask in ten years. Here is your answer, Jon. It was right. Because you did it believing it was right and that's enough for me."

"In a world where people die meaningless deaths, at least mine meant something to you."

He can't keep fighting tears. She neither.

"It still doesn't feel good."

"I know," she whispers with a heavy-hearted smile. She extends her left hand to grab his right. "Farewell, Jon Snow," she finishes, but before she can part away he draws her to him and presses her against his chest.
He had never been so rough with a person, but this time it was as if the impulse was too painful he had to find the way to overcome it.

Dany puts her arms like a shield against his chest and her body stiffens like when he helped her take off the shattered armor in Asshai.

He did not expect another reaction. What surprises him is the second in which she gives in and softens. A feeling of security and affection that he had given up feeling again.

But only that lasts. One second.

Daenerys never looks up to give him one last sign that she doesn't want this, like him. Her eyes of love left with the last piece of her heart in Asshai.

Or perhaps it was in the Throne Room.

"Avy jorrāelan ēva se mōris hen tubissa," she softly speaks in his ear before detaching from their embrace and walking away without looking back.

He is left alone with the coin in his hand, cold reminding him this is the truth he lives in.

Dragons do not like the cold, he knows it. Barristal will not stand that many in Ibben, Jon believes. Nonetheless, the dragon flies over his head like announcing himself and Daenerys does not mention anything about the matter.

A dragon is not a slave.

Everyone is already boarding but him, who keeps reading Dany's notes about the reign that couldn't be.

He hadn't pay attention at that time when all he was fighting for was survival. But survive implies living at there's things that matter then.

Jon looks back at the Great Keep. She painted it red. Nor blue, her favourite colour or yellow as the lemons she loves so much. Red.

"If we look back, we'll be lost."

"You haven't stopped looking back."

"Fight for me, then. If you are sure you want to be by my side, fight for me and take a risk for once."

"She hasn't stopped looking back."

"Little Crow," Tormund's voice calls him. He is already on the ship. "Time to go."

He looks up. Tormund, Val and Dewyn are staring at him in suspense, waiting for him to say or do something.

He loves them. If he has had some life in the last ten years, it is thanks to them. All he wanted is for them to be safe and now they will be. There will be no more war for them.

Val goes down to the pier and walks towards him with a grimace. It hurts him to have believed that he could move on when he always kept looking back. It hurts not to be who can give her what she
wants.

"I never wanted things to end like this," in fact, he never thought about life beyond the present. "You deserve better."

They remain silent while the others approach the board to observe the scene.

"And you deserve what you want so much."

Jon thinks about it and realises that if he is not worthy of it, at least now he will try because he wants to. And because he can.

"Are you going to fulfil your threat?" he jokes but asks seriously at the same time.

Val frowns.

"I told you that you couldn't leave me for your duty. Not for love," she replies. "I'll be the only one you don't leave for your precious duty."

And the only one alive, he would add if the situation were not too uncomfortable and delicate already.

Jon knows that this is the reason he wanted her in the first place. Her brutal honesty and her desire to live even in the worst circumstances.

He really wants her to be happy.

X

Daenerys

"Good Queen Alysanne was the queen consort of King Jaehaerys I Targaryen. She was a dragonrider whose mount was Silverwing. She said once a ruler needs a good head and a true heart. A cock is not essential." Frigia lecture is cut by Daario who retires the big tome of Westerosi History from her grip.

"That's enough," he says as the little girl roll her eyes.

Daenerys is sitting on the steps while the little girl sits on her throne. "Queen Alysanne was a good queen, indeed," she acknowledges, "Is she your favourite?"

"No-oh," she replies instantly, "my favourite is Queen Khaleesi."

Daenerys knows she should think about who would inherit Valyria's crown once her borrowed time was required again. She cannot have children, and anyway, the small communities of Valyria learned to govern themselves as long as there were a monarch and an army that would support them and guarantee their freedom.

The red god promised her a hundred years of peace.

She bites her lips at the innocent commentary of Daario's child and prays for her future to be bright.

"Your grace," Jornik enters in the Throne Room to inform, "They are waiting for you."
Daenerys sighs and nods.

She didn't want it to happen in Great Keep, so they place the ceremony in the restored ruins of a pantheon. It reminds her of the dragon pit in King's Landing, when they hold the useless meeting with Cersei. D

Daenerys cordially greets everyone without stopping in small talks because she was exhausted of protocol and courtesy, and did not even feel part of these people. In the background, she was also pursued by that incessant anguish that reminded her that Drogon was dead and Jon leaving for Ibben to never see him again.

In a corner of her mind wandered the thought of the coronation she never had.

Master Tarly smiles at her and she returns the gesture. The crystal crown fits him well and she hopes that his role in the ceremony will set a precedent for what things would be like from now on in the faith of the seven.

She would have allowed a representative of the faith of the old gods but apparently that religion had no ritual or priest to appeal to. Daenerys wished for the red priests not be present, but it was the main religion of the people of Stormlands, so she granted it.

In one moment, she crosses Sansa Stark, who looks at her with notorious anxious and uneasiness. It would not surprise her if she knows about what happened to Tyrion. She was an intelligent woman.

"Your grace," she greets and bows.

Daenerys holds her gaze for a moment before rolling her eyes and moving forward to the center of the Pantheon where Gendry receives her with the same insecure smile as the previous days. Daenerys squeezes his arm to reaffirm her confidence in him.

She places on his right, Daario and Jornik in her back while on the left are Arianne, Monterys and Prince Yronwood.

Samwell begins with the ceremonial chattering while her gaze gets lost in the darkness of the night, always imagining that Drogon could come down from the sky and rescue her.

In fact, she narrows her eyes when she sees an actual shadow and her heart skips a beat.

Barristal's roar makes everyone present fret and squat, even Daario puts his arm around her.

The red dragon hovers over one of the unfinished columns and screams to mark his presence.

The first thing she thinks is that maybe he's upset about Jon's departure and comes to scold her for it. However, a dark figure is seen when he crouches his back and Jon climbs down.

Her eyes widen.

When he is on the ground, Barristal folds his wings behind him and takes off to the sky.

Her shock does not allow her to move from her place for a long moment. Jon looks straight into her eyes, his unreadable intentions at this point.

Through the corner of her eye, she sees Gendry passing by her side, taking off his royal mantle and moving on to Jon.
Before everyone's astonished gaze, he bends the knee to Jon.

Jon looks down the gesture with curiosity like pondering. Lifting up his stare again, he seeks her approval.

She swallows the lump in her throat unable to process more thought than the following: Gendry has knelt before another claimant. There was nothing else to do.

Daenerys nods at Samwell, whose eyes are full of pride.

'You are the true King. Aegon Targaryen, sixth of his name. Protector of the Realm, all of it;' she remembers.

Jon approaches with stealthy steps, removing his black cloak from the Night's Watch.

_Someday I'll have to ask him why he kept it all these years._

Gendry puts the crimson fabric over his shoulders.

When he passes in front of her, his eyes seem as dark as the sky from which he came.

Jon kneels with Longclaw thrust in the ground, as Samwell anoints him with the seven oils, and then places the dragonglass crown upon his head, proclaiming, "Aegon of House Targaryen, the Sixth of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, and Protector of the Realm."

"The King of the Seven Kingdoms!" A voice from the Northmen claims. Everyone turns to see them kneeling with their swords. Soon, the rest chant the same.

"The King of the Seven Kingdoms!"

"The King of the Seven Kingdoms!"

"The King of the Seven Kingdoms!"

Every person bends the knee to the new King of the Seven Kingdom.

Daenerys stares at her left and meets Arianne's shaken countenance.

**Chapter End Notes**

I wrote Tyrions POVs while being drunk lol hahaha I really, really wanted to portray the man having confusing thoughts all at the same time. Eventually, that led him to commit a stupid act that then got him killed.

_Avy jorrāelan ēva se mōris hen tubissa (I love you until the end of the days)_
Be With Me

Chapter Summary

The problem was not arriving at the destination but where to go from there.

Chapter Notes

Thank you very much for following the story!
This is the end of the first part.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 13: "Be With Me"

I

Daenerys

Four years ago, she sent Arianne back home after rejecting Prince Yronwood's marriage proposal. She was a fifteen-year-old girl, inexperienced and terrified of being left alone with the infamous dragon queen who burnt thousands of citizens after winning the war. Her coldness and rejection were perceived as a challenge for the ambitious princess, and when her father urged her to stay as her ward, she worked tirelessly to gain Daenerys' trust.

In addition to Ornella, who as Daenerys is a quiet woman, Daenerys had no more confidants after Missandei. Not until Arianne.

"He betrayed you," Arianne declares in a broken voice, "He killed you," she continues, moving his lips in a gesture that resembles her own, "He dishonored you and you rewarded him by making him a King!"

Prince Yronwood wanders carelessly her office, probably thinking of a new plan. Daenerys keeps her eyes on the young princess, which she knows deserves an explanation.

Daenerys must have anticipated that he would not leave, after all those declarations of love and pleas. But, again, she had been carried away by the bulk of emotions that insisted on her that it was what he wanted: freedom. No more war. All those things that he would not have at her side.

"I can't leave because I love you."

Has she been so wrong? Did he really love her? His words did not mean what they once could, and everything was confusing for her.

However, taking the crown was to exceed all limits. I should burn him alive for daring.
Daenerys sighs: "His crimes against me are not crimes against Westeros," she pauses and raises her eyebrows, "and I didn't make him king, Gendry decided to step away, kneeling to another claimant, in plain sight," she points out, "Even the members of the guilds kneeled to Jon."

"Dorne will never accept Rhaegar's bastard as King," she opposes, "He is the result of his betrayal against Elia and her children."

Her gaze slides to Prince Anders.

"Do not let this change of plans to tarnish an alliance that has been beneficial for both parties," she insists, with forced calm.

"So, are you going to recognise him as your nephew? Because they can anoint all the oil from the Citadel on him, but until you call him your nephew, Jon Snow has no right to be called Targaryen."

"He came riding a dragon, princess. I don't think he needs to give further explanations."

Arianne shakes her head with contempt. Her eyes full of disappointment hurt Daenerys in ways she cannot afford to express.

"I remember Elia," Anders suddenly interrupts. "We grew up together. All of us. Oberyn and Doran too. Her terrible death is something that all Dorne continue to remember with great lament," he takes a seat next to his daughter; At no time does he lose the serene temper that characterises him. "I heard that Jon Snow has fought bravely and honorably to recover your favor. He came here wanting to pay for his crime, as I am sure his uncle Eddar Stark would urge him to do but you have forgiven him for said offence."

Daenerys downs her gaze at her lap.

"We shared a link in the past," she explains, trying to be honest with someone she considers a great friend and a trustworthy person. "You will understand why it is not easy to force my hand in this matter."

Anders places an arm on the armrest of the chair and place a hand under his chin.

"If what they say about him is true, then I do believe that his betrayal was motivated by a complicated sense of honour," he looked slightly at his daughter before continuing. "I've always been honest with you on this matter. What you did in King's Landing is as repulsive to me as the sack of Tywin Lannister thirty years ago. I know your kin is complicated and I know that the years prove you a better person than Tywin, but Dorne has been trampled on more than one occasion throughout these last decades to settle for the rise of a Targaryen that is half Stark."

"Until a little over a year ago we had an agreement: as soon as Victarion Pyke arrived in the North, we would deploy our combined armies to Westeros to retake the usurped lands and reorganise the country. The news that you would receive a convoy from the North surprised me, but I thought they would find only a cordial rejection in these lands. How we explain to the people who depend on us that you have ingratiated your murderer by making him the King of not one but seven kingdoms."

She liked Anders very much. Not only because he was one of the few monarchs who, like her, had no desire to carry the load but understood that it was her responsibility to try.

"Some of the people sitting in the Common Council have opposed my authority trying to assassinate me," one even was in her bed, "I always arranged the political organization of the cities to their inhabitants, and Jon Snow was elected as monarch for those present at that ceremony. What
else could I do? Force Gendry?

The prince just blinks and sets his eyes on nothing to reflect. Arianne does not imitate his example.

"So what? Will you and he become Aegon and Visenya reborn and raze Dorne to subsume us?"

"It's not far from our plan to regain control of the rest of Westeros, right?"

Daenerys has no plans to do that. There had to be a way to reach a consensus.

"The rest of the plan can continue," she tries to reason, "the Dornian law will be converted into the law of all Westeros. The Citadel intervened and the faith of the seven separated."

"And the queen?" Anders cuts her in. "Who will be the queen of our new king?"

Neither Daenerys nor Arianne answer, both maintain an expression of surprise.

"Is right. The plan can continue," he casts his gaze to his daughter, "It doesn't have to change in that regard."

She was about to protest, but Arianne came forward.

"No," she makes herself clear in a blunt tone, "I'm not going to marry Jon Snow."

"He can't have them," Tormund's voice reminds her suddenly. Everything happened so fast that she lose that detail.

"Then don't do it. You'll inherit Dorne and become the Princess of a country without allies," he looks back at Daenerys, "That or we accept this situation and lose the support of our people. Because it's true, Dorne won't accept Rhaegar's bastard."

Daenerys blinks perplexed.

Her heartbeats resounds in her ears and in her mind too many thoughts are harmonized at once. It is the perfect way out for this conflict and a bittersweet ending for Dorne. Rhaegar's son marrying a Dornish woman.

On the other hand, a monarchy in Westeros needs heirs or the wars would continue. Daenerys is not completely sure of what Tormund said. After all, Jon got her pregnant once, maybe it was Val who couldn't have them.

Not to mention how much the prospect of seeing him getting married and having heirs affects her.

But Jon is not going to accept, a little voice says in her head. It is true that she does not know him as she wishes, but Daenerys was positive that they would run into Jon's stubbornness on this matter.

"I have no children and I won't," she remembers. "I made a vow of father no children, and I intend to keep my word."

Her chest constricts, and gods help her but she finds herself wanting to be true.

"I'll approach this offering to him," she yields. "If Arianne agrees."

The princess is frozen and her face loses colour. She dislikes Jon, she knows. Maybe we can reach an agreement, Daenerys thinks.
"I will do my duty with Dorne requires me to do," finally speaks and Daenerys can't help but feel a sour taste in her mouth.

By the look father and daughter are throwing at her, Daenerys knows they are expecting her to say something else.

"Fine," she shortly answers.

II

Arianne

First, she went to her quarters and vomited. Then she asked, not, screamed Xinea to gather up her things because they were returning home.

How deluded she's been, believing that the coming of the Starks to Valyria could've ended up in another way. Believing that Daenerys would respect their pact. Believing that Gendry would learn to love her.

And the worst of this: marrying Jon Snow. Having to spent her life by his side, a disgusting northerner. She felt sick again.

She let Xinea prepare everything and walked away from Great Keep, she would take her cabin on his father's ship in advance. She no longer wanted to be in Valyria, a place that had believed her second home in all these years.

She ignored the traces of the festivities she organized for months but enjoyed nothing. She passed by the children who wanted to hold her hand as it was usual in her morning walks through the streets of the city, but ignored them.

She even dismissed her guards' pleas for her to slow down her pace but she couldn't, she was suffocating with the heavy air and felt that her heart would explode out of her chest at any moment.

Arianne knelt on the edge of the pier and vomited once more. She no longer had any content in her stomach to expel.

"Princess," the fright would have made her fall over the edge but Dewyn held her arm in time and pulled her to his chest. "Hey, princess. What's goin' on?"

Arianne would blame the headache, hunger, pain, and disorientation later but at that moment she grabs him harder and begins to cry. The idea of never seeing him had tortured her those days. In all that time when she only received bad news, she always rescued that thinking about Dewyn was a way to calm down.

His embrace is so familiar to her, now that she knows every part of his body under those rusty clothes he always wears.

"What?" she says, releasing from his grip and coming back to her senses. "What are you doing here? You ...," she looks into his gray eyes, and it is as if he wasn't aware of what had just happened. "You and Jon Snow had to be away!"

She.gets up just as her guards walk on the pier and head towards Dewyn.
"No," she warns them when they try to seize him. "He's not doing anything wrong," she looks at him again, with narrowing eyes. "Not yet."

Dewyn blinks with confusion.

Arianne wants to bang her head against the wood of the dock when she realises what she had done.

"Did you tell Jon?" she asks, and the mention of his friend alerts Dewyn.

"Telling him that?"

"Leave us alone," she indicates his guards, and they leave the pier reluctantly. "Did you tell Jon what happened between us?"

Dewyn does not reply and keeps staring at her with disbelief. Arianne knows the answer but needs to be sure. Jon Snow will not want to marry her, and with this information, he will have a better reason to oppose it.

And her father will learn his daughter gave away her maidenhood to a wildling boy.

Oh no, she laments, the regret finally hits her.

"He knows," Dewyn reveals.

III

Sansa

"I did these when I was recovering at Gendry's mansion," she shows him the sigil of House Stark embroidered on several pieces of gray cloth. She used wool of five colors: black, daffodil yellow, sage-green, blue and gray. All colours from vegetable dyes that were widely used in Valyria. The embroidery is worked in laid and couched stitching with stem and outline stitches to create the contours of the figures, the thin lines, and many of the details. "I know you'll soon start using Targaryen's sigil," she would have to get terracotta red, "but I think you should keep a part of us."

"Take it easy, Sansa," Jon interrupts, "We still have to discuss this with Daenerys."

After the uproar a few hours ago, they decided to return to Great Keep and follow with the agreed schedule. He appeared before the people and managed to survive the banquet until Dorne's princess left the party with her father and Daenerys following after her.

Jon and Sansa were in a private room, talking about what happened. Her interior was brimming with mixed emotions, on the one hand, she is happy that he had stayed, on the other, what he had done was extraordinarily stupid. Typical of Jon.

"She approved you," she affirms with a half-smile. Gendry rejecting the position was a clear statement as well.

"She didn't know I was coming," he reveals, "I didn't know I was coming."

Sansa frowns. She is not at all surprised that Jon has made such an important decision without commensurate the risk as any normal person should, in his position.

"So what is the plan?" she asks, pulling her work away, back in a small chest.

Jon takes a deep breath and stares at the entrance.
"She's in an audience with the Prince of Dorne and his daughter. They don't like me. I wouldn't be surprised if they're discussing my execution right now."

Sansa swallows hard and prays that he is wrong.

"She won't let anyone hurt you," She says confidently. When the red dragon appeared in the pantheon, the first thing she thought was that Daenerys sent Jon away to be safe and set them up in a trap. "I mean, what is the plan after this? You have taken the crown of the seven kingdoms. You are a King," she tries to sound emphatic and clear so he can note the seriousness of the situation.

"I wanted to help," he replies with the simplicity that characterises him, "All I could think about was how bad it felt to be away."

His reasons were as honorable as reckless.

"You certainly made a good entrance," she jests, imagining again Jon climbing off the dragon. He certainly has his grace.

He smiles and shrugs. Sansa knows he wasn't looking to give that impression at all.

"I wanted to find Daenerys, and Barristal took me there."

His statement alerts his sister, whose eyes fill with fear.

"Oh no, Jon," she approaches to sit closer to him, "Please tell me you haven't done this for the sole purpose of being with her."

In the past, she has witnessed how willing he was to please Daenerys, to the point of giving up his crown. Now he has taken one, much more important, to be closer to her. A romantic gesture that turned her stomach of how naive and careless it was, although, at the same time, she is begging for it to have a better destiny.

Jon softens his permanent brooding face and she instantly recognises that look; she hadn't seen it in years. Illusion.

"Is it so bad?"

"It is," she states bluntly, and cannot help remembering herself using that tone with Arya when explaining why ladies' manners were important. "This is not something you can take and give up whenever you want. You have a duty now."

"I know," he reassures her, getting up from the couch and walking to the window.

Most likely, he was still stunned and refusing to accept that he did not foresee all the circumstances involved in this decision. Sansa didn't want to be the person who filled him with doubts again, but she needed to make him understand somehow.

"You took Gendry's place. Do you know what that means?" He turns and listens to her. "You have to take Arianne Yronwood as your wife and queen."

For both of them, it could've been a humorous declaration, since they have shared their discontent with the young princess, but Jon pales at the notion of what Sansa has just exposed.

"No," he claims, "No," he repeats in a hard and clear voice.

Sansa rounds the table that separates them and looms in front of him.
"Yes, you have to do it. Dorne is Daenerys' most important ally and the only kingdom that was smart enough to seek her help in time," she feels compassion for him, for she was sure he was waiting for something completely different, "I know that you love her and she loves you, but she will not throw overboard an alliance that has been so successful."

Jon takes his eyes off her, back to the night sky. Only now all the weight of what happened fell on his head. In his mind, he should think that there is no way he can accept that idea and is sure that Daenerys will not allow it.

How much she wants to be wrong in her assumptions, Sansa really wanted this poor fool to be happy.

"In any case, I'm glad you're here," she changes the subject to lighten the mood. "This solves almost all our problems," she returns to his seat.

"Which one?" Jon asks, without taking his eyes off the sky.

"Succession," she answers as if it were something simple, "you will have several heirs. The Crown Prince inherits the Seven Kingdoms, your second son will inherit Winterfell under the name of the Starks," she had no intention of sounding imposing but to explain something obvious.

"I can't-" he's about to protest when they are interrupted by some heavy steps entering the hall.

"White Wolf!" one of the men, who is always in Daenerys's guard, appears, "Or do you prefer to be called His Grace now?" he quips, sounding irritating but not aggressive.

"Jon is fine," Jon replies patiently.

"Queen Daenerys wants to see you."

IV

Daario

He finds her sitting on the steps of the throne, as always. She has that habit, since her days in Meereen; until it was not necessary to get up and stick his butt to the bench, she preferred to sit on the marble steps and lose herself in those sombre thoughts of her.

Daario approaches and Daenerys looks up and smiles; a tired gesture more than affectionate one.

"You found it?" she asks, standing up to be at his height. She still looks small.

"Yes," he replies, extending the object covered with a cloth napkin as she ordered. When he saw it first, he had a horrible feeling in his chest. He doesn't imagine how it should be for her. "There were scary things in that witch's chambers," he adds, recalling the horrors he and his men found in Kinvara's former quarters.

Daenerys nods. They had agreed to close that section forever.

"I knew she would keep it close," she confesses, looking at the object a little more before placing it on the throne, hidden from view.

Daario is not sure why she wants it, but he had the intuition that it is not precisely to make peace
with Jon Snow. If he was honest, that reassures him.

Daenerys sits back where she originally was.

"It is necessary," she begins to explain, "I don't think he'll understand otherwise."

Her eyes are down, as has her mood been since they returned from Qarth. She was a damn ghost, and he was enraged that he couldn't do anything to prevent her from being in that state.

When she returned from Westeros, it was the same situation; it was impossible to make her see that there was more life to live ahead. She was not dead.

Now he supposes it was hope that he kept all those years up to this point where he could not deceive himself more.

"Are you sure?" he inquires, sitting next to her. "Don't you think it's time to paint some black banners? Maybe add a red dragon with three heads in them?"

What he suggests is far from what he desires, but he wanted to try to offer her that other option; to follow her heart and be with Jon Snow.

It was terrible that the fucking murderer could still be in love with her, and she with him. But Daario will not ignore the fact that he is an honourable man and that the fatal outcome was not something that made him proud, rather it placated him and could not free himself from that weight.

And that you still don't know, Jon Snow, she was expecting a child of yours.

Daenerys does not answer and rather looks directly into his eyes, conveying without words that this latter idea was discarded.

However, there is something else, a small light or a glow that only he knew to recognise.

"I know that expression, I know it well," Daario admits sadly, dodging it, "Jon Snow was right," he hugs his knees and rests his chin in his arms, "He was right to fear I would yield to that look."

The truth that they could no longer hide is that she found no more reason to continue. In those days, he saw her struggling to find the most insignificant motivation and collapsing after coming to naught.

"I tried to be there and do my best, but Daenerys, the queen I loved and chose, never came back to me," he declares, knowing that it only broke her more.

Daario swallows the lump in his throat and suppresses the tears that threaten to fall. He is not a man who likes these gestures of weakness, but frustration was annihilating him inside.

"I failed?" He raises his face to ask. She does let tears fall freely down her cheeks.

"Your loyalty kept me standing during these years," she says in a weak voice and sobs before letting out a soft and confident laugh, "You were certainly the best of them."

Then Daario realises that it is a farewell. He has suspected it since she relegated him to ordinary duties instead of putting him to work on the strategies of Westeros.

During the time they lived together, he had learned to respect her space and therefore did not question her about what had made her change his attitude towards Kinvara in Qarth. Now he is sure that whatever they have agreed, Daenerys has chosen to follow that path.
He extends his arm and draws her to him. One of the things that always made clear that she was not
the same person he fell in love with was the cold of her body. She used to be so hot and warm, in
every way, but now her body, even with that strange ability, was just the container of that
tormented soul that refused to be in this world.

"Besides, I have a taste for kings," she quips, they both look towards the throne behind them, "And
I'm not going to stain my legacy."

The idea stifles the urge to laugh in him. In Meereen he had done nothing but feel miserable in that
task, but being with Ornella and Frigia had motivated him to continue until at least a new
government had settled.

"It's absurd," he protests, "I'm not a king."

Daenerys shrugs.

"Call yourself what you want. You know they will still need a strong figure to find inspiration in," he
knows that he refers to the cities of Valyria, which ruled practically themselves in those days.
"Frigia is a special girl. Her mother is a Khaleesi and her father, the most famous sellsword in the
known world."

A dynasty with his name? It sounds boring and ridiculous.

However, the image of Frigia came to his mind. She had been educated in the tumult of their lives
as rulers and conquerors, she was aware of the affairs of the realm thanks to the lessons that
Princess Arianne sought to pass on her and his little one is always imitating the example of her
mother and Daenerys.

It is the first time that he thinks that all this time, that was the untold truth that none of them
encouraged enough to voice aloud.

Daario closes his eyes again to avoid weakening. Daenerys hated weak men; he knows it better
than anyone.

V

Daenerys

After clearing the panorama with Daario, Jon walked in the Throne Room. Her commander leaves
her and behind him, the guards followed him.

It needs to be exactly like the last time. He needs to see things as they were for her, for him to
understand there's only one path ahead.

She stands and turns before he could approach enough to see her swollen eyes, and climbs the step
until she is in front of the throne, about to seat.

Just like that time.

"I was about to seat," she reveals and he does not reply. "When you entered in the Throne Room. I
was about to seat, so I turned around," while she speaks she imitates the action. She met his eyes,
"I looked back and I saw you."
Jon understand what she is talking about.

This time Daenerys does not speak about Aegon's enemy's thousand swords. This time, Daenerys seats on her throne and faces him.

"It suits you. I like it," he compliments, advancing until he is at the end of the steps, staring up to her.

"Gerael helped me to restore it," she cuts his warm tone. This conversation isn't going to be what he expects.

"I don't like it, anymore," then he backs up.

"Good you have time to jest," she states, each arm on the armrests. "You have ruined my alliance with Dorne and a dear friendship. You impeded my plan."

He nods.

"It is what I do."

She rolls her eyes, exasperated and tired of this whole situation. She would like to believe in his good intentions but she can't. Daenerys only knows two things about him: his sense of honour and duty, and his ability to get himself into trouble.

"You let Val go," you let your freedom go, she'd wanted to say. "And she loved you," and you yearn for that.

Jon stands firm.

"And I loved her," her heart skips a beat; it is harder to hear him admit it. Yet, he adds, "But not the way I love you."

Daenerys sighs defeated as the other times he claimed the same. Partly because it remembers her about the last time she believed him.

You are my queen now and always, she hears again. Words she cannot erase from her memory.

It was supposed to sound like a farewell and she was so stupid that she believed he was pledging to her.

He was saying goodbye.

It breaks her heart, even more, noticing just now he said goodbye with those words on purpose.

You are my queen now and always.

Not 'I love you' but 'my queen'. Because that's all that she was for him. But his queen was a danger he needed to stop.

You are my queen now and always.

She does not hate him for not choosing her, for being a naive fool and all the wrongs that came before that moment. Her resentment stemmed from the fact he lured her into believing there was an 'us' when in truth she was always alone.

And she has felt alone since then. The hole he made in her heart, she never could fill again. And
Drogon's death had only widened that abyss.

She is alone.

She will be alone as long as she stays in this ordinary world.

*You chose your family that day, Jon. And today, I choose my little family in the threshold, now and always.*

**VI**

**Jon**

The fact that they were left completely alone could make him joyous if it wasn't because she was no longer afraid of the notion of Jon hurting her again. It was not a gesture of trust, but a gesture of indifference towards life itself.

"You never appreciate what I offer you," she continues with her passive-aggressiveness.

"I want something else," he confesses without further ado.

Daenerys raises an eyebrow, indignant.

"Let me guess: a restoration."

"It wouldn't be."

Because they can't have children. Or maybe only they can. He has no idea or interest at this point. The gods know that it is not an easy road that awaits him.

They remain silent for a few minutes and he contemplates how well she manages this position: the cold queen who doesn't care about his reasons. A tyrant without convictions as he thought she was the first time he met her. Dany hides her heart under that armour, as if she knew how dangerous it is to leave herself weakened in front of the enemy. And Jon did nothing but show her how true that was.

"Prince Yronwood wants you to marry his daughter," she reveals what Sansa supposed correctly.

"The spoiled princess?"

"The young woman who has been preparing to be queen for years," she corrects him.

Before he can give an outright refusal, Jon explains the essentials of why that union would make no sense.

"I can't have children," as simple as when she unveiled the same thing in Dragon Pit, "I can't."

She tilts her head curiously, but not surprised, and then sighs.

"You could still marry her. Try a little."

He was bothered by the lack of intimacy that existed between them when they talked about these matters. A frivolity on her part that he wanted to throw out the nearest window. Not that he thought he didn't deserve it.
"She's a child," Jon tries his second argument. It is another of the things he could not digest that proposal.

"Gendry didn't like it for the same reason," she says almost exasperatedly, "As if kings hadn't bedded with younger girls. I was sixteen when I married Khal Drogo, he thirty-one," she exposes as if it were a good thing and he avoids opposing the arguments against it. "If you're willing, Arianne will be a good wife and a good queen."

That is the problem, he wanted to point it out, I am not willing to such madness.

"There is only one woman in this world that I will marry."

He doesn't want to sound rough, but of course, he does. They both have already made their feelings clear, but they have never discussed what to do with them.

"If she does not accept me, then I will be remembered as the unmarried King," he tries again to lighten up the atmosphere with witticism, but her stiffness is relentless.

"Listen to me, Jon," her tone becomes even harder, "It's a matter of great urgency. You took the crown. It's not a game, you can't treat this as a lighter version of the Night Watch."

"I don't," he interrupts her in the same tone, "Excuse me, Daenerys, but I've dealt with this issue almost the same time you were here fighting your battles. I have faced the armies of Victarion, led the defenses of the North and helped Sansa with the affairs of her kingdom."

"This is not just a war, this is reigning," she insists, turning her face so as not to look him in the eye. She does that every time they will step on familiar terrain. "When I first met you, I valued your courage to defend your crown, but you went to Dragonstone to demand my help without giving me anything in return, and I was irresponsible in following you to the point where we got into a war with the dead thanks to Viserion paying the price."

She faces him again.

"Westeros needs more than a soldier, it needs a king. A king cannot be a suicide fool who throws himself into the arms of the enemy, a king must not only fight but study, go to meetings, make deals, face people, impose himself before those who pretend to weaken us and, above all, pay a personal cost."

What she says makes sense, in a not-so-complicated world. He feels like an idiot for not having had this clarity with him in the past. Having gone to Dragonstone with a marriage proposal, uniting the seven kingdoms, dethroning Cersei and then facing the Night King. All those things that tortured him for ten years.

"Now I am before you and I tell you this," he walks forward, climbing the first step towards her, "I will be the King of Westeros and I will fight for its freedom, as I should have done from the beginning," he gets up one more step, "You are right, we can't change what we did, but we can choose now. And I did it."

Daenerys stands up, her gaze unbreakable.

"We cannot be together," she states, causing some disappointment in him, although it does not take him off guard. Rather it confirms what he knew; It wasn't going to be an easy road. "You ruined my plan, tell me you have another one or I'll send you to Ibben."

"Essos do not have a King," he affirms, "When Victarion is dead, I will release the seven kingdoms
again and create a Council like the one they have here."

"It will take years to obtain something like that."

He raises his arms indifferently, "I have nothing else to do."

"Aegon I joined the Seven Kingdoms and Aegon VI will divide them," she asserts with a cynical smile, "has its grace," then sits back on her throne and rubs her forehead, "Prince Yronwood is not going to withdraw the proposal, and in at best, you have time to think about it while the reconquest happens."

But Jon is sure he has nothing more to say about this matter. Or maybe, yes.

He skips the steps between them and kneels in front of her, taking her hands as when they were in that abandoned courtyard of Qarth and in her bed in the tower. Her touch is cold, always cold. Jon tries to warm her hands between his, but it is impossible.

"I saw you," she says, "I saw you in the flames. I saw you saying Tormund how you wished to go North with them and I gave you that."

He remembers that moment. He recalls how tired and hurt he felt because of the whole situation.

"Yes, I wanted time. Time to think who I was and peace to enjoy life without having to think in the dead or the war."

"There was no time."

"I know-,"

"For me," she cuts him, licking her lips "You tell the truth to your sister and you sentenced me to die. We have no time."

Daenerys observes the union of their hands with disinterest, and for a second Jon thinks that mortal hatred was better than this. But he doesn't allow it, he can't make the same mistake of staying to do nothing.

"Let me be with you, Dany," he pleads, "Let me be with you in any way you could receive me.

Their eyes meet again, and this time she doesn't avoid it. Then he decides to cup her face.

He would just kiss her, but he wants her to realise that she wants it too.

Jon probes his lips with hers; A chaste and childish touch. They have grown strangers after so many years.

He closes his eyes, he cannot bear to see the cold doubt in hers, although her body is rigid and that makes him aware of her reluctance.

But there is also something else, in the way her breathing is agitated and the time he gives her to move away, and she does not.

**Please, Dany, listen to your heart. Silence those thoughts for a second, please.**

Like a man sentenced to die and who has nothing to lose, Jon lowers his mouth over hers, and she responds by lightly pursing her lips to receive him.
Oh gods, he thinks. How I missed her. The soft and plump skin of her against him. One could even say it's shy and wary. Two lovers who barely meet.

It is a bittersweet experience to join again as strangers.

It is soft against hard in the cruelest way because he remembers that this is exactly what he did when they were in Dragonstone; she shattered and he stunned.

Again it was that dilemma between them. A crack that seemed unable to close.

In the past, his conflict was between desire and prudence; love and duty. While Dany had no doubts about her feelings, in the present, Jon made sure to placate her closeness and confidence in her. She lost her faith in his arms.

A tingling in his stomach arises when she opens her mouth gently and draws him towards her with one hand on the back of his neck, allowing him to deepen the kiss. It is a time when they can only be the two of them and the world and everything sick in it is relegated.

A dream that lasts little as Jon feels a cold and sharp caress against the pulse of his neck.

He separates his lips from hers abruptly by a few centimeters, and that is when Dany pushes him by the nape to join their foreheads while she points the tip of his dagger, the one that had taken her life, against him.

As he had suspected, her eyes were still cold and severe; despondency and heartbreak.

A wave of disgust invades him when he sees that the knife is still stained with dried blood. Daenerys' blood.

It even has impregnated the bad smell of death.

A tear slides down his cheek, ironically landing on the object without washing the blood.

She lifts the tip of the weapon until the cold steel is placed on his lips, which were dry, their kiss was not enough to moisten them.

She loosens the grip and the fatal weapon falls at his feet with a thunderous sound.

Daenerys shakes his head looking at him with disinterest, before getting up, circling and leaving him just sitting on the steps contemplating the dagger.

Just him and his dagger.

VII

Brienne

A cool breeze entered through the glass panels that adorned the ceiling. It was one of the few days that it did not rain in Valyria, but the sun hidden between the clouds was a prelude to the winter that stemmed from the west. It was not this, however, that captures her attention. She is absorbed in the empty eyes of Missandei of Naath looming in front of her. In all these years, she has not forgotten her name.

"Mother," a distant voice calls, "mother," it insists, but Brienne swallows and does not look away
while in her mind returns to that moment.

**Winterfell, 305 A.C**

Brienne checked the scroll in her hand several times and almost threw it into oblivion until she took all the courage he had left after the battle against the dead, and sent the raven that Lady Sansa had entrusted to her.

Daenerys Targaryen and a small convoy set sail for Dragonstone from White Harbor. She accompanies them from heaven with her two dragons.

The message was clear and blunt. Brienne knew little and more than she would like about Cersei Lannister, but she wasn't a dumb woman. She would know how to make the most of that information.

"What you suggest is treason," she replied to Lady Sansa when the Lady of Winterfell showed up at midnight, after the first meeting with Daenerys Targaryen and the other commanders to resolve the Iron Throne issue. ‘Your brother was the King and he swore allegiance to the dragon queen.’

‘My brother is a man in love, Ser Brienne,’ Sansa insisted. ‘Like Robb before him, he is putting his feelings above the welfare and interest of the North.’

Since the war of the five kings had been unleashed, Brienne had not sworn into any monarch but to the oath, she made to the late Lady Catelyn Stark. But she was certain that Jon Snow was a good and fair man, and that if he had decided to ally himself with the dragon queen there had to be a good reason.

‘Lady Stark, I have to advise her against it,’ Brienne pleaded, ‘We’re talking about betraying a woman who has two dragons.’

Sansa snorted in disbelief, "Fear," she said, "Everyone is afraid of her. She has not shown us that she will be a good queen, she only has two dragons and that will be the way she will deal with all the problems of the Realm. As she has done here.’

Brienne knew she was right. In fact, few people were happy to receive the dragon queen in the North.

‘You must swear to me that what I am going to tell you will never come out from your lips. Not even to Jaime Lannister.’

Jon Snow was the son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark. A Targaryen. Brienne would never have imagined that such madness could even occur to the gods. Two Targaryen alive and in love when they seemed to have become extinct.

"I insist, my lady, in this case, this will favour you," she tried to persuade her to give up her deviant plan. ‘Maybe in a few years when the Realm is at peace, you can again ask for independence from the North and with your brother as the consort’

‘Jon is not going to marry her,’ she interrupted her, ‘He told me that he will exile himself back to
the Night's Watch once she claims the Crown because she told him they would use him to overthrow her. She hasn't even thought about declaring him her heir, or in a marriage. All that matters for her is the Iron Throne. And the more power she has, the more subjugated to her will we'll be. If it were so simple, I wouldn't be begging you to do this, Ser Brienne. It's not just the North, it's Westeros in its entirety. She has no more support than our men and the Vale, and none does it for her but for Jon. Their army of foreigners do not belong here, they do not want to be here. What will happen when the nobles begin to rise against her? It will be a massacre!

'And how will helping Cersei to murder her will help us?'

Sansa shook at the mention of the word murder. Because what they were about to do was that. Murder.

She sighed before answering, 'My brother is a good man and will be a good king, who will hear everyone's voices. He does not want power, nor rule nor any glory. He only wants the same as all of us: peace. And with Daenerys Targaryen the wars will never end,' she paused to extend the ink, parchment, and cage with the silent raven towards Brienne. 'Without Daenerys, Westeros united under Jon's command will go against Cersei Lannister, and it will be a fair battle. For all. Even for Jaime.'

She should not have allowed Lady Sansa to inquire like that in her intimacy but Brienne had not been cautious enough with it either. It was true what she said, the dragon queen had enough power to bend all Westeros to her liking. Even more than the Lannisters had ever done.

It was this last thought that motivated her to finally release the raven that would reach King’s Landing.

"Beautiful, eh?" Maester Samwell Tarly's voice pulls her out of her thoughts. "Her dragons melted the iron with which she has made them."

"What?" she does not understand what he's telling.

"Daenerys," he responds with a wide smile, "with the swords of the fallen soldiers, she built these statues-"

"What are we doing here, Maester?" she cuts him. She does not want to hear it anymore.

They were summoned by King Jon here and were waiting for him.

"I apologise for the delay," the King enters saying. She rapidly kneels and her son does the same. "Ser Brienne, it's not necessary."

She has never had much communication with Jon, but she admits that it was strange to kneel before him now. It wasn't something they did when he was King in the North.

"It is appropriate, my king," she replies, before getting up and observing that now two guards constantly followed him. The King's Guard. An absurd thought crossed her mind.

"Where is the crown?" asked Master Tarly, forgetting the formality.

"Saved and I hope for a long time," Jon replies, shaking the hair from the head of Samwell's son who bore his name. "I've gathered you here because I think you were promised something a long time ago and it's time to keep that promise," first he turns to his friend. "You've been by my side from the beginning. And you've always served me loyally no matter what I asked of you. Daenerys and Prince Dorne will intervene in the Citadel to change the rules and allow you to marry Gilly one
day. But until that happens, and until we repair the situation in Westeros, the best thing is I can
give you is this, "from one side of his jerkin he pulls out a document, "I, Aegon VI Targaryen, in
my power as sovereign of the seven kingdoms, and all those things that say here, I leave it
established that from this moment the men of Westeros will decide for themselves who to pass
their surname, whether they are children born in marriage or not."

Samwell can't stand the emotion and throws himself in a hug to his friend. Brienne looks with
surprise at the unwise gesture.

They say a few more words before Jon turns to her. "You have taken care of my sister when I could
not, on several occasions, Ser Brienne. I regret that you have unknown your work for the simple
fact of," Jon looks at her side, where little Jaime is staring at him with curious eyes, unable to
understand the situation completely, "This is for you."

Brienne takes another document that he delivers and reads it silently. It starts just like the one who
just read Samwell, but this one is personalised. It was more than a decree of the king.

"... It is my will to give legitimacy to Jaime of House Lannister, son of Jaime Lannister and Brienne
of Tarth."

Tears blur her view when she finishes reading the scroll. At no time in those years has she
imagined wanting to read those words, until she did.

"It's an honor, my king," she acknowledges trying to maintain his composure. "But I have to refuse
it."

Jon's face contorts in an expression of confusion.

"Why?"

Because I ruined your life and many others. Because I hide a secret that could destroy your family
and everything you believe in.

"My son is heir to my father," she excuses with truth not so true. "he will inherit Evenfall."

Her father had exiled her when she returned with a bastard son in her arms. Evenfall like many
other lands in Westeros, had been taken by the rebels in the attack on Storm's End.

Jon looks at Jaime.

"Anyway, you should let him decide when he is older," he insists, placing the document in her
hand. "Lady Janei will relocate in the Crag and the Lords of Westerlands have agreed that they
prefer a Lannister sitting in Casterly Rock. It is his right as the last Lannister."

Brienne hated that her son was placed in that position. He was so small and innocent, oblivious to
the greedy world of the lords. She wanted to go back to that little cottage where she raised him until
she fled back North to take refuge from the rebels.

She would have never wanted to face these people who she failed so flatly.

Brienne nods and bows again.

VIII
Ser Davos

An honorable man and a just woman. It was the ideal image in his mind so many years ago. It lasted so little but the memory remained in his memory as his greatest failure. Almost every night since then, Davos had dreamed of the words he did not say, the actions he did not direct in time before things could end at this point.

In the giant sister table of the one that lays in Dragonstone, sit down all those who a year ago were discussing their terrible fate arriving at the shores of Valyria, with the absence of some poor unfortunates, and of course, Dorne and the Iron Islands; The fearsome dragon queen at one end seeing them all with that cruel indifference of hers.

Ser Davos eyed at them both, Jon desperately looking for a sign of affection, and the queen, with the characteristic lost gaze that reminded him of his Marya; a mother who expected to see her son return. He knew that pain himself.

A hopeful man and a hopeless woman they were. Again the fate of the world in their hands.

"Long ago, Tyrion Lannister told me that if we want to create a new and better world, deceit and mass murder wasn't the best way to start," she breaks the awkward silence. "Funnily it pretty much started like that here. The Masters slaughtered the millions of slaves I liberated as a celebration of my death so I ended the most of them.

"I realised my enemies didn't care about the lives of the innocents, nor mine nor theirs and they were using my mercy as a weapon against me. So I decided to protect my innocents."

Daenerys looks up for the first time.

"I know that's not the Westerosi style and that's why Tyrion was mad at me for executing Lord Tarly and his son after they sacked Highgarden and killed hundreds of my allies. It was the beginning of my downfall for him.

"You know what else Lord Lannister told me days before the meeting with his sister for the first time? 'We go to the capital, we'll go with two armies, we'll go with three dragons. If anyone touches you, King's Landing burns down to the foundation stone'

"We went to King's Landing and Cersei did what she wanted to do. And I leave her because," she makes a pause like questioning herself why she did it. She shrugs, "I wished to be different, I guess."

No one utters a single word, but Davos can feel Jon's agitated breath from whence he is.

"Tyrion Lannister was a coward. And intelligent coward," she continues, her gaze set on the sky outside. "You served as Hand of Stannis Baratheon before Jon. How he was?"

Ser Davos did not notice she turned to him and takes a moment to process the question.

"A complicated man," he answers, clearing his throat.

"Did you lose faith in him?"

Her sudden curiosity towards him takes him off guard and elicits old laments.

"He killed princess Shireen."
"And before that?"

Davos does not have the stones to bear false statement in front of her.

"No, your grace."

The queen frowns, casting her gaze on Gendry and Monterys who were near her.

"Not even when...he burnt the nonbelievers and took Gendry and his prisoner?"

Every person turns to see him and wait for his response.

"I didn't agree on those actions," Davos defends himself.

"I didn't ask that," she insists.

"No, your grace. I did not stop believing in him."

She nods.

"Then you went North. Stannis died and you pledge fealty to Jon Snow."

"I did."

"And you believed in him? Until the very end? Even when he pledged to me and then forsook those vows?"

Those present look at him, waiting for the answer he would give.

"I did."

She smiles, but as any gesture she gives now, it's sullen.

"I wished having had that kind of faith with me until the end of my days," she taps the table before slipping a pin from the pocket of her dress, that pin, and throws it to him who catches it with surprise. "I wish you good fortune on the wars to come, Ser Davos, Hand of the King."

His first instinct is to look at Jon to confirm it and indeed, he does it when he returns a slight smile in response.

"I swear with my life to honour you," he promises, squeezing the pin in his hand.

"When we stepped in Westeros," the Queen talks again, "you return to be subjects of the Crown. Hence, my presence while cordial -I hope-, will only matter to my soldiers. You owe respect and obedience to your King, Aegon VI. I'll be there supporting his claim and protecting the Essosi armies while dealing with some other matters."

She stands up from her place and crosses the room to lean on a column and watch from afar. Her detachment is clear.

The newly ascended King of Westeros, something Davos is thankful for being able to see, starts to explain, "We'll start for the North."

No wonder he has chosen to start there, Davos thinks, after all, it is to the North that Jon has always favored more in his heart, to the point of sacrificing his love for Daenerys. Nor is he surprised to find reluctance in the reactions of his countrymen.
"What?" Lord Tully protests, "I mean, your grace," he puts himself in place, "I must advice you otherwise. The North is a hard land and Victarion forces haven't taken over there yet."

Davos agrees that Riverlands would be a more strategic place to start since it is the most populated area at the time by those fleeing Victarion and not supporting him.

"Except for Dorne, all Westeros belongs to Victarion. I led the defense that prevented him from advancing to our land and when we walked away in pursuit of aid, we were betrayed for our own people," Jon exposes his arguments. Well done, lad, defend your position. "Queen Daenerys mentioned that her mercy was her weakness. I do believe that it should be our strength. But I am a fool if I let a man take over the ancestral home of my mother's family while I was intending to save his life."

Jon had spoken of his distrust of Lord Glover, as soon as they set sail from White Harbor. His betrayal was only confirmation of Jon's suspicion.

"We'll take Winterfell with the army we have," Jon keeps on detailing. Even Daenerys flinches with curiosity.

"We have just three hundred men!" Lady Rhea exclaims.

With the wars on the rise in Westeros, their numbers had been disadvantaged before the Army of the Ironborn, which provided itself with peasants and hungry citizens with a thirst for noble blood.

"The Essosi armies will be settled above the neck in strategic points with the respective warden of every domain," he describes using the painted table and its recently forged copper pieces. "You'll siege every city and wait for my arrival to negotiate with the rebels or whoever is in charge," Davos says to himself is a good sign he is taking the lead instead of expecting the approval of the people that in more than one occasion have disrespected and underestimated him. Something changes in his expression when he stands up. "You won't touch the inhabitants of those cities or villages, and the man who disobeys will be executed."

Those present look at each other confused. Davos understands that it is Jon's peaceful and negotiating nature in command.

"By fire?" Queen-not, Lady Sansa Stark questions, always on the verge of imprudence.

In fact, it is a good question, whose answer would determine what kind of monarch Jon would be established once in Westeros. From experience of serving Stannis Baratheon, Davos knew that an imposing posture was better, arousing prudence in men, than the simplicity of a commoner who would only serve him in peacetime. However, if he is honest, the method of execution with fire was seen with leery eyes on Westeros after more than a hundred years of the Targaryen's rule.

But Jon is a Targaryen. And it is a Stark. He should find a balance between those two reputations.

"By my sword," he finally indicates. "And yours in my name."

The King's peace. Davos approves it. There will be enough fire on the battlefield, sadly.

Jon sits again and handles them several documents.

"Lord Royce you'll be Warden of the East. Lady Stark, Warden of the North. Lady Rhea, Warden of the South and Ser Brienne, you'll be the Warden of the West until your son is old enough to take the position."
All of them hold their honours with satisfaction, except for Ser Brienne, who grabs the parchment with reluctance. Davos is sure she was waiting to serve on the battlefield.

"The future is uncertain but something I learnt in a hard way is that you can't take the choice away from people. One must stand for the people or they will stand against you. We are returning to bring them order, not more chains. No more Lannister's, Stark's, Targaryen's soldiers but a single army that will represent Westeros. The Common Council will provide us credit with the banks of the Free Cities to sustain our new army. The common folk will no longer be circumscribed. The Crown will pay them. And it will be their choice."

Davos smiles with satisfaction.

"And if they refuse?" Daenerys breaks her self imposed silence. She does not stare at Jon when she asks it.

The King scowls, "As long they do not attempt against our interests they can go home."

"And how you'll describe 'attempt against our interests'?" she persists, and everyone knows that her concern is a priority, having conquered half Essos in ten years.

"By attacking our armies," Jon replies.

She accepts that answer just like everyone else.

The meeting continues several more hours in which they finish analysing and detailing each part of the new reconquest scheme. The idea was to regain control of port cities as a priority so that the authorities in Essos could resume the trade routes. It was a fundamental requirement of the Common Council to enable the loan by parties, in addition to the creation of a Trade Council to moderate the taxes.

Daenerys sits at the table and listens passively but attentively. One would think that it is madness that the most powerful person in the known world would remain so static.

"We sailed for White Harbor. Barristal will follow me and will protect us from the sky at any emergency. The Queen and me-" he can't continue when Daenerys interrupts him.

"I'm not sailing with you," she states, taking a sip of her goblet of wine. Supper was served some moments ago but the Queen did not joint them. Before Jon can protest, that Davos knew he will, Daenerys clarifies, "Last time you told me we should be seen as allies. Well, I'm not your ally. I'm your aunt. All it takes is one angry man with a crossbow. He'll see my silver hair on the docks of White Harbor and know that one well-placed bolt will make him a hero," she lifts her palms and shakes them, "The man who killed the Mad Queen."

Davos hated to admit that she had a point.

"I need to get used to Jorion. I will fly."

"We are not going to conquer the North," Jon opposes, watching her with a mixed expression. Might something only them can communicate without words. "We are going to save the North."

"I'm not going to do any of those things," Daenerys discounts both possibilities, "That's my final decision."

"My ask you how will you stand that many days on the back of a dragon?" he can't avoid but make the question. Davos knows it's less time than three months on a boat but still, it's a lot to be in the
"I have my secrets," is her jealous response.

Jon returns to his position and stops diving into the matter, knowing that the Lords would be fussy before such an exhibition. Davos reminds himself to advise them both to discuss their affairs in advancement so as not to be exposed in this way.

"You are welcome to play cyvasse at any time if you get bored," Lord Monterys Velaryion, a boy who is always behind Gendry, offers to the Queen, with the complicity of old friends. Daenerys beams at him and nods, gently. Probably already used to the boy fascination towards her.

"Well, Aunt," Jon calls her in a harsh tone that shocks everyone in the War Room. It's the first time he ever addresses her like that. "Where do we find you?"

IX

Dewyn

In those days before returning home, he strolls for the last time in Valyria and tries to make some more memories of the place that he would surely never return.

He does not lament any of his decisions. Not to have come here, or to have gotten off the boat to follow Jon. The final path was the same: dying. At least he wanted to do it fighting for something big, like him. And this was something big, more now that the real action would come.

No, Dewyn was used to being sure of the decisions he made. Even if it was hard don't start missing his people.

However, there was something that was stinging in his head. Dark eyes seeing him with disappointment and fear, tears falling down that beautiful face and all because he let her believe a lie.

The princess had gotten under his skin and it wasn't what he planned. He achieved his goal when she opened the doors to her princess' bedchambers and let him pass. It was the only thing that he has proposed and yet it was not enough.

He was not a child of high birth but Jon had taught him enough about kings and things to know that the princess had to become Jon's queen now that he was the king of the kneelers. He knows that Jon would never accept her, he is totally in love with his dragon queen. But when Arianne questioned him about his time together, confirming his suspicion, something animal arose inside him. Something so idiotic that he should laugh at himself and not be thinking if he did the right thing or not.

"He knows," he replied and watched her expression deforms.

The truth is that he only told Tormund, who instead of joking about it, a normal reaction from him, hit him in the neck as if scolding him. He was an idiot. If Jon found out, maybe he would use Longclaw to slice his limb.

None of them knew that he liked the princess. Seriously. A lot. But what else he could do? Jon's people didn't see him as more than an animal; he was nothing next to a princess.
Although Jon had joined them all those years, he was still a nobleman who was now king. Dewyn could aspire for a lordship but not even that would be enough to be by her side, much less now that Jon is his opponent.

Dewyn shakes that thought from her mind. There was no way to convince Jon to take Arianne as his wife. And Dewyn thinks he is capable of killing him if he ever agrees.

"Lord Dewyn," her sweet, sharp voice calls him and he turns to face her. He didn't realise that he reached the harbour, where she was staying until her people left for Dorne.

"Princess," he greets her, hands fisted at his side. His hands were perspiring.

They stay like that for a few minutes, just staring at the other in silence, until she continues, "Lord Dewyn, do you know the sand?"

In Valyria there was hardly a bit if one looked through the thick vegetation. In the other parts of Essos where they were there was more than he would have liked to know and be in contact with.

"There was a lot in Qarth. It's disgusting," he offers his sincere response.

"I don't know the snow, you know? They say it's the same annoying."

"I was born in the snow. It doesn't bother me."

"I was born in the sand, I don't find it annoying either."

Why are they discussing that? Dewyn wonders.

"Are you better, princess? Won't you throw yourself off a pier?"

He knows that was not her intention but he wants a reaction. A real reaction.

"Enough," she responds before turning around and saying, "We're going to leave tonight. I'd like to chat with you before we leave."

It's the only thing he wants, so he follows her without any doubt.

He gets on the ship with her and she invites him of the sweet Dornian wine that impales him but that he accepts anyway. She apologise for her abrupt behavior the other day. He wants to tell her the truth but his words but soon he feels dizzy, and in a moment he just wants to see her face, stays lost in her big dark eyes. In fact, he feels quite lost as if the brown of her eyes turn black and invade him. Everything is black and quiet.

When he wakes his head in hurting him and Dewyn feels that it will explode at any moment. He does not have his sword, nor his knife nor his coat, although he does not feel cold because a large fur covers him. A gentle rocking invites him to continue sleeping.

He is lying in a bed.

In a moving ship.

The princess stole him.

Dewyn just starts to cackle out loud.
To Westeros

The sails blew proud with the wind in full-greed, fanning the advance of the largest fleet that the
world knew. In several ports people came to see them pass, trying to capture the symbols that
decorated the great fabrics.

However, what they really wanted to see were the dragons. And there was no sail with dragons, but
a single red dragon that flew over the fleet at ease and did not depart from it at any time.

They travel all the west coast of Essos with tranquility, while more ships were joining them in each
port. Jon Snow, now, King Aegon VI Targaryen was received like any other monarch, followed by
all the paraphernalia that included. And each one of them, Jon hated it. Although he disliked more
being alone.

He had traveled this route accompanied by people whom he considered his family, but now he
spent his days locked in his new prison, a duty he took with certainty that it was what he wanted.
What he had to do. But he would be a liar if he did not admit that he was not enjoying it.

Every day and every night he perched on the bow of the ship hoping to see the other dragons in the
sky. When Daenerys resumed the bond with them, they did not turn away from her again. He knew
she took the golden dragon as her new mount, the one she named in memory of her loyal guardian
and friend. But every day they spent the same, with no trace of her.

In Valyria, Daenerys just disappeared. Daario entered her quarters one day but did not find her.
Although it wasn't the first time she just went gone, that time he knew it was permanent; she would
never come back. Of her things, there was only one pin with three interwoven dragons forming a
circle, above her desk. It was the one who could never give him in that other life, and which Grey
Worm and Missandei proudly wore.

Used to be more a dragon than a person or a queen, Daenerys hid in different parts of the known
world while waiting for the fleet to arrive at the different points of Westeros to begin a campaign
that, if she was honest, she no longer wanted to face. She went to the Dothraki Sea, seeing from
heaven all those places she traveled in her other life. Somewhere over there, she buried the
deformed remains of Rhaego. Then she visited in Ibben, the poorly-built grave of a daughter who
never was. An on an impulsive start, she flew over Naath.

There were so many places to go she thought she would travel once she settled her debt to Westeros
and left the past behind forever. But in none of those places, her heart was filled.

Everything was a big void.

The day she finally flew over and reached the Westerosi fleet, they were a little more than a week
afar from their destiny. She would arrive earlier.

Jon never stopped approaching the bow to be able to spot her, and so it happened.

It was only a few seconds; the golden dragon was smaller than Drogon, and he could see her
peeking out and watering a smile, before moving away completely and getting lost on the horizon.

Jon wished it was the last time he saw Daenerys going away.
**Epilogue: The Raven’s Crow**

He was not going to deny that there was beauty in humans and their passions, as his father once said. Such a fragile nature but capable of great perversity, only R'hllor could be a staunch believer that they deserved a chance.

"This world belongs to them, my son," he had once told him, who knows how many millennia ago. He was still young and liked to listen to his sermons. "They will never find peace but the idea of finding it motivates them to look for it. Don't you see how wonderful it is? Know themselves losers and still playing it?"

No, he did not understand but yes, he saw and enjoyed it. He liked their chaos. Chaos is a ladder, the little man once told him, the same one who gave him a dagger that killed him later. Yes, chaos. He liked that. He liked it too much.

The wolf man killing the dragon queen, ignorant of the child she was carrying, already dead in her guts. Dead because of the poison of the spider, who knew of it because the treacherous red wolf told him. And the poison was not only from the spider but also it came to the mind of the white wolf when the lion spoke wise words in his ears. Only love could've killed the dragon.

_It was passion, R'hllor. Can't you see it?_

_You always put the girl in the place of prey and wanted to see her evolve in the dragon. You wanted her for your sacrifices so I gave you something much better. I gave you chaos._

But before there were others too. A raven. A silent dragon. A sorceress.

"Look at me," she begged the Raven, "We can do this together. Be with me."

The crow accepted and sealed the pact with a kiss. But then the dagger stuck in her chest. He could not stand it. He could not.


It is always a repeated history. Once it is tragic and twice it is laughter.

The Ironborn enters and throws the last men with no face that were loose. _I can also be a nightmare for your children, R'hllor._

"So many faces but they don't have any at the end of the day," says his new warrior. He still doesn't know how to name it. "They fall like flies these days."

"The kingdom of men grows stronger," he replies, returning to the moment when the silent dragon finds the sorceress asleep forever. _Why are you crying? Love is the death of duty, you said. And in your duty, you died._ "You have to remove the shield."

The Ironborn smiles.

"Your adversary is coming."

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**THE END OF THE FIRST PART.**
Chapter End Notes

I left Jon's reaction to Dewyn's "friendly" kidnapping for the second part because he is honestly just going to laugh.

Although I have outlined the second part almost entirely, I hear suggestions about something you would like to read in the future.

Thanks again!
PART TWO: A SONG OF FIRE - Prologue: Winter is returning.

Chapter Summary

Fire does not belong in the North.

Chapter Notes

I'm finally free from college so probably the updates will be more frequent now, enjoy it :)

This is a short prologue that I feel the need to put aside from the first chapter of the second part because there will be a lot of things happening soon (also, this second part will require a double effort on my part in regards of investigation and research lol)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Prologue: "Winter is Returning"

The Northern Kingdom and Beyond, 316 A.C

Daenerys

The cold wind is a caress on her skin, and the touch of snow does not hurt her like the last time she was here. The vast majority of the things she feels now are memories of this other life. One where she was a queen, a mother, a lover, and a living human being.

Jorion, Daarion, Missanderys, and Greywing are as reticent to the cold as Drogon and Rhaegal were once. They let her know their discontent with screeches and snorts.

I know, she reassures them, I don't like it either.

The truth is that she did not enjoy remembering how unpleasant the last days of her life were here, around the coldness. Here she spent the worst moments of her life, and only a few memories still tug at her heart; in a cave under a waterfall and on the way from White Harbor to Winterfell, before the storm had raged her whole.

Westeros is the land of her defeating and the place she used to consider her home once, now is only the reminder of what she couldn’t have.

Daenerys knows that stepping on Westeros means being exposed to the Raven's vigil. When she sits in the Haunted Forest, on her first day, to assess the damage of nature, several ravens perch in the branches of the trees with imperious eyes to gloat before her.

Daenerys burns each one and feeds the dragons with them.
I know you see me, she wants to tell him, I'm not afraid.

She knows he won’t infuriate R’hllor so soon. He is a player and will wait to make the right move, as Kinvara used to warn her. If you precipitate, you risk exposing your play.

Daenerys scolds herself for trusting in a woman that sent her to a trap and let her son die. Rage boiled in her guts at the sudden need of trusting Longclaw again in her chest.

She sighs and keeps moving forward, trying to stumble onto something more than just trees and snow. Winter has returned to the North and she suspects that no living creature would be able to step on these lands in these conditions.

On the second day, she travels to the Bridge of Skulls, above the Gorge and where she drops the first drops of her blood. She had already done the same on the slopes of the Gorge in the Haunted Forest without success, so she came to the source.

Nothing happens.

Westeros is not your place. Fire does not belong to this place.

On the third day, she wanders the abandoned castles where Tormund told her they lived for little time and that they are partially restored it. She has not brought too many things with her, but what she did need to venture north on her own until Jornik and the soldiers arrive in Westeros with the rest of her few belongings.

From her satchel, Daenerys takes out two glass jars with Kinvara's ointment, essential at least until the time came, and Tyroshi dark dye she never thought she was going to give using.

On the fifth day, she walks in the first village she stumbles upon, near Winterfell. People do not question her presence and much less recognise her. She hasn’t brought much gold with her, but what she has, she gives to some children and the rest she spent in the broken-down inn, where she tries to find some information about the current state of the land. Daenerys only hears about death, disease, famine and war.

“I swear it! I saw one of thos' beasts flyin' near here!,” a young man tells to his partner.

She shivers at the thought of one imprudent man trying to harm the hatchlings.

“Dragon queen is comin'. An' we al' gonna die, finally. For tha’ dragon queen!” one of them replies.

“For tha’ dragon queen,” they toast.

At least this time they are not spitting at my face, she thinks.

On the sixth day, she wanders around the camp for the sick people, where some soldiers warn her about the danger. She deludes them easily and gets in, trying to prove her use one more time before giving up.

Daenerys knows she should try with the children first, but for some reason she can’t get close to them, she simply can’t. So instead, she goes to a pregnant woman, who is barely conscious a muttering nonsense.

“Bandy,” she greets her, “Bandy, where were ye?”
Daenerys returns a soft shush and takes her hand to when the woman extends it to her.

The pestilence is so intense that even she could smell it, very slightly. She cleans the woman's body imitating the movements of the other people who help their moribund families, looking for the right time to make a small cut of her wrist, always in a different place to prevent the scars from juxtaposing.

"Thank ye' very much, ma'am," says a voice that comes from behind her, but quickly places on the other side of the cot. Daenerys hides her wrist. "I'll continue."

She is a young woman, perhaps she has barely turned twenty. Like the other northerners, she has a pale face, cold eyes and dark hair. She’s not surprised that the sick woman has confused them, now that she is wearing the dark dye.

Daenerys retires, concealing the wound that has been left open and bleeding, and sitting beside another sick man. There is a pot with some kind of spoiled food where she finishes throwing drops of her blood, before getting up and walking away.

On the seventh day, she returns to try to help the pregnant woman and check the condition of the spoiled-food man, but she doesn't find any of them.

When she returns to the inn, she hears the loud voices of another group of people discussing the situation in the North and laughing at inappropriate jokes. She is grateful that her camouflage does not urge them to harass her in any way.

She sits on the common table and hears more about their chattering, expecting to find out more about this plague ravaging the North.

"Glover is deat man," one claims aloud enough for her to listen properly. "They say Snow is returnin' wi' foive dragons!"

"So, tha' man is a dragon now?" another retorts, before snorting and spitting. "Glover did naw wrong! we will never bend our knee to a dragon again!"

"Then you'll burn," his friend warns.

"We all will burn when tha' dragon queen returns."

Daenerys rolls her eyes under her hood, as if something worse can happen to this people. They are harsh heads.

Suddenly a young boy opens the inn door with a thundering sound and hurries up to whisper something in the ear of the owner. The man, a small size, chubby, old man, stands up and claims, "Jon Snow an' queen Sansa hae retaken White Harbor! they ar comin'! they ar comin'!"

Half of the people there celebrate and the other half runs out the inn. Daenerys sips the disgusting ale she never liked but now can't taste and smiles.

Winter is coming for you, Lord Robett Glover.

Chapter End Notes
I actually used a Scottish accent translator to recreate the accent of the Northerners lol.
Chapter Summary

Winterfell is retaken and the North returns to be part of the Seven Kingdoms. Daenerys awaits for a sign of R'hllor but is about to find something more valuable. Jon and Dany slowly try to move on.

Chapter Notes

I was hearing Love Ridden by Fiona Apple for these jonerys scenes and it describes perfectly Daenerys current feelings, specially this part:

"Nobody sees when you are lyin' in your bed
And I wanna crawl in with you but I cry instead
I want your warm but it will only make me colder when it's over
So I can't tonight, baby."

This chapter is all about Winterfell, the next one we'll slowly moving south.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 1: "A Frozen Waterfall"

I

Valar Dohaeris

It is colder than he remembers, but stinks worse than it was before. The raw glances on him dissolve in the haste to board the boat which he has just come down, in desperate search of fleeing from this barren land that he wished never to step on.

Last time the docks were guarded by men with long capes and elegant uniforms that demanded gold coins to enter the city. Now there are only bums and beggars.

He doesn't know what to expect from this horrible place. Rumours from Essos talked about plagues and famine, nothing new to him or anything he hasn't experienced already. The reason he wanted to conclude his mission as soon as possible is that Westeros enrages him. It was the last place where he imagined returning.

*Valar Dohaeris* he says to himself, *you are sworn to serve and you will die serving.*

He takes a horse and moves North.

II
Sansa

Winterfell Castle was far from the most beautiful thing Westeros had, but seeing it in the state it is it's breaking her heart. It would take several moons to rebuild the walls that Lord Glover had deformed to reinforce the use of scorpions. He had mounted a spectacular defense, appropriate to defend the fortress of the dragons attack, and at the same time, obsolete.

She wondered if Lord Glover ever read about Harren, the black. Not that she wishes to happen again.

It takes them ten days to finish organising White Harbor and twenty more days to take the army to Winterfell. The scouts returned with no good news: Lord Glover had wide support of the Lords and the peasants. Sansa had anticipated this and asked Jon to let her deal with the matter as her last term as Queen. If they couldn't win over their own people, the rest of the Seven Kingdoms would never accept Jon's rule.

The army is outnumbered, that is certain. Although they were accompanied by the bannermen of the rest of the Great Houses that went with them to Essos, and a select number of Essosi soldiers, who in truth, came in search of Daenerys rather than to retake the castle, they still could not battle with the army entrenched within the walls of Winterfell.

"He beheaded any man who dared to support you, my Queen," Lord Hornwood explains. They are watching the castle from the same hill she stood once with Petyr Baelish by her side. "He gave their castles to the peasants, avoiding any uprising from their part."

She sighs with distaste and admits it was a good move. It was not a time to deal with the fury of commoners.

"You shall no call me your queen, my Lord," she replies, commanding the rails of the horse to rejoin the armies. "What do you think about our plan?"

"About taking back the castle or," he doubts, "kneeling to a Targaryen?"

Sansa frowns at that argument.

"I thought we left clear Jon is also a Stark."

"Aye, he is," Lord Hornwood affirms, "and I'll beseech you to keep reminding him that. We can't battle here like the dragon queen and her soldiers did it in Essos, it would be seen as a massacre, not a fair encounter."

"When is it a fair encounter, Lord Hornwood?"

"When there are no dragons in between, my Lady," he jests, staring at the blank sky.

Sansa knows he's right. Starting this campaign by slaughtering opponents is not going to make things easier for Jon unless he really wants to restore the Targaryen dynasty and resolve all issues with the dragons. Which is not a bad alternative either, given the current situation in Westeros. However, both Jon and Daenerys had agreed not to stir a carnage with the commoners.

"We'll parlay," Sansa states, "Once," she remembers the indications of Jon, "and then it's over."

To retake White Harbor all they had to do was smuggle food and supplies in the city, and in less than five days they opened The Seal Gate and the citizens themselves handed over the head of the current Lord of New Castle.
Jon appeared before them but did not require them to bend the knee, as she suggested.

"Let's start with the important thing," he had excused, "Let them bend the knee when they have a full stomach."

She advances between the rows of soldiers stationed in front of the South Gate and dismounts the Horse. Lord Hornwood is always by her side, the only great lord that still supports them.

"I need to do this alone," she warns him to back up, and he obliges.

Lord Glover is already in the battlement of the gatehouse, overlooking at her. He's too old for this nonsense, she thinks.

"Look at you, little girl," he grunts, spitting at one side. "I believed you the clever Stark."

In the past, he had complained that the Starks being fooled, and he wasn't that wrong. Perhaps in the south, offending the name of the Liege Lord could cost the heads of some, but Sansa couldn't afford that pleasure since his men and support were vital to her weakened kingdom.

"I believed the same," she responds, folding her hands in front of her. "Lord Glover you are committing treason and sedition. Surrender the castle, and face the fate of all traitors with dignity. Otherwise, you'll die bringing shame to your legacy."

He laughs with that jocular tone pf him while his men follow him but are nervous, looking at the sky from time to time.

"Child!" he claims, "you knelt give your crown to a dragon!" he spits again, "I'd rather die a true Northman than subdued to the dragons."

"Jon is a Stark, too, do not fool yourself and your men."

"Aye," he acknowledges, "They say your cousin took a dragon from the Mad Queen," he turns to speak with his men, "I told you, the Targaryen seed is mischievous and they proved them right."

"He is Rhaegar Targaryen's son and has decided to claim his birthright," she's losing her composure, "The North is suffering, we went to Essos to solve the problems with the trade routes and we came back with solutions and a good trait. What else do you have to offer to your people?"

"Freedom," he harshly responds, "Our people will die dignified deaths, free from the grip of those Southron."

Sansa gives a glance to the bannermen behind her. Probably they haven't understood a word from their conversation. They have siege for one night and that was enough for them to decide there is no more time to waste with a simple man like Lord Glover.

"Fine," she swallows the lump in her throat. They will deal with the disagreement of the methods later. "I wish you good fortune in the wars to come."

Sansa returns to her horse with the help of Lord Hornwood, and both move to the rear while the flags of the Bannermen are raised and the Lieutenant of Daenerys' men blows a horn that gives the signal to Jon that the parley has ended.
It is the first time he is at this height and he came to think that it would be impossible to hear from there the sound of the horn. In fact, for him, it sounded almost imperceptible, but Barristal captured it immediately and started descending while waiting for him to indicate how to begin.

"If you feel danger, he will too. You have to be calm, indicate him a target and above all, hold on tight and bend over at the right time."

Those were the only guidelines that Daenerys gave him some time before leaving Valyria, before disappearing without saying goodbye or giving him more clues about where they would find her once in Westeros.

Through the bond, as Dany calls it, Jon felt Barristal ecstatic to finally return to the battlefield. A feeling that produced him a deep conflict, since it was contrary to what he was feeling. It had been months since he last used Longclaw for more than just training, and it was the first time he'll use Barristal against a human enemy. A wicked part of him rejoiced that Lord Glover was going to become Barristal's training tummy.

When he glimpses the first projectile of a scorpion directed towards them, it moves to the left and avoids it even if it passes by the side, too close for his liking. The next one hits the steel armor on Barristal's chest, which stops them shortly. The red dragon only enrages and continues its descent until it encounters the first unfortunate on the walls of Winterfell, who jumps to avoid contact with the dragon. Jon is sure it was a deadly fall.

The rest is similar to King's Landing and Qarth's attack. Barristal assaults each scorpion but without using his fire, hitting the artifacts so hard that Jon has to bend down to prevent the splinters from impacting him. When they finish with the walls, he notes that, as Dany asked him, a couple of the lethal weapons remain intact on the ground.

He raises Barristal and they fly over the Godswood, checking that there are no more scorpions hidden among the trees. The dragon looms over the broken tower, from where they see the army in its attempt to siege the castle. In front of him, in the gatehouse of the South Gate, he eyes at Lord Glover watching him quietly as the sentenced man he was.

Jon can't avoid but smile.

Sansa's countenance tells him she's annoyed he hasn't told her about how he would use Barristal. The only ones not surprised are Daenerys' soldiers.

They are still outnumbered, but Barristal demonstration is enough for them to throw their weapons to the ground and surrender.

He ignores the slight discomfort that invades him when they drag Lord Glover into the center of the courtyard and extend Longclaw. From the corner of his eye, he knows that they look at him suspiciously.

"Lord Glover, your last words," he concedes as he takes the sword's handle toward his chin.

The man laughs like a condemned and curses the name of the Starks. Jon hopes to find hatred or terror in his eyes but only finds relief and even fun as if the outcome was sought and intended.

"I, Aegon of House Targaryen, the sixth with the name, King of the Andals and the First Men,
Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and protector of the realm," he has practiced the damn speech with Sam several times on that boat back home. "Sentence you to die."

Jon lifts Longclaw and lowers the blade without too much reserve as this same action used to stir in him. Glover's head rolls and his blood dyes the white of the snow highlighting the deep crimson color that reminds him of Barristan's scales beneath his grip. Suddenly he is again seeing Eddar Stark executing the deserter of the Night Watch, the poor lad who wanted to warn them about the white walkers.

"Don't look away. Father will know if you do so."

He only takes Lord Glover's head. The rest of his men are put in the dungeons at the wait of a trial. Davos suggests the Night's Watch but Jon knows it's a pointless punishment right now. And they need men here.

That day he and Sansa tour Winterfell to explain the situation to the new and old servants. There are several absences and he doesn't have to inquire too much on the matter to know what had happened. Many of them insist on swearing fealty although he does not require it, and others cast suspicious glances at him.

Not being so many soldiers, Jon urges them to take refuge inside the Winterfell facilities in which they rest until it comes the time to proceed with the next stage of the conquest, which he postpones giving too much attention to.

Unlike him, Sansa begins to write the missives that announce that Winterfell returned to his power, that the North is part of the Seven Kingdoms again, and that the lords of the North must attend to swear allegiance to him. He would like it not to be necessary, but everyone around him, including Daenerys, had agreed that it was necessary.

Speaking of Dany, they wait several days for her to appear but she doesn't. Not until the day of the meeting on the Great Hall.

The great hall is not filled like other times and there are absences that will require investigation, he knows. He recognises some faces and others are the new lords that Lord Glover appointed after executing the loyalists. Before starting, Jornik appears in the room with a dark-haired woman who Jon does not first identify her until she removes the hood and Daenerys appears beneath it.

Dany with dark hair that only highlights her big, blue eyes.

She doesn't seem less attractive but Jon is impressed enough to stare at her with a questioning face until Sansa has to get him out of his reverie to start his speech.

"Those who have known me since I was the bastard of Ned Stark know that I have never longed to hold more than I had, that as a bastard, it's nothing," he begins, his eyes wandering the room. "As the heir of House Targaryen, I have not only a birthright but a duty to serve the realm that my father and mother helped to destroy."

"I have not come to impose you to kneel before me but to offer you a solution that benefits us in unity. We are aware of the state of Westeros and that is why we went to Essos in search of an answer that luckily was favourable for all parties. You see it in the provisions we have brought and in the speedy recovery of the trade route with White Harbor.

"Also, you'll see it in my reluctance to execute the traitors who accompanied Lord Glover. I do not come to impose more than order. For that we need to agree on something that is true: things cannot
continue as they are. Independence, although desired and ideal for all Northerners, it has cost us all famine and disease. Pride over well-being, "he wants to look at Sansa when he says this but avoids carrying her with more guilt.

"Where is the dragon queen?" Someone asks, interrupting him.

"Aye," another person secondes, "We were told you will bend the knee to her."

They all ignore Daenerys is just behind them and none recognise her.

"Queen Daenerys rejected our proposition and gave us an ultimatum we complied," he stares at her for approval but only finds her indifference. "Her aid is essential. She has accepted us with good faith and is, in her way, helping us from the distance."

"So she's not here?" one concludes, letting out a snort of surprise.

"She's behind you, Lord Norrey," Sansa precipitates an answer before he can warn her to not reveal Daenerys' presence.

Everyone in the hall turns around and expects to see the long, silver-haired woman they remember from the Great War. Instead, they find a commoner.

Dany does not flinch when all eyes are turned on her and keeps the countenance serious and indecipherable, and the chin raised.

"Queen Daenerys, as you may guess, is also my aunt."

"May you excuse me, Lord-" a robust woman with a thick voice bursts, "I mean, King Jon," he stares at Dany, "Didn't you killed Daenerys Targaryen?"

The murmurs rise at the woman's legitimate concern and Ser Davos urges them to remain silent. He looks down at Sansa who returns a dismayed expression as if the matter had escaped her hands.

"He tried," Daenerys breaks her silence to explain. "He stuck his dagger in my stomach and I fled with my dragon to a safe place to recover. He thought I was dead because I didn't come back."

"And have you pardon him? His actions are considered treason and kinslaying. He was sentenced to a life sentence and he deserted."

Daenerys lifts an eyebrow as if she isn't surprised. Jon's chest clenches at the sense of a new setback between them.

"Let's assume he had a good reason," she replies. "We did not agree on our perspectives and I decided that it was better not to return to where I was unwanted."

The robust woman conforms and nods. The answer is enough not to have to explain more painful details.

"So, just like that, now you are...family?" someone different questions. He has to familiarise with their names.

Jon sighs. He didn't want this to be transformed into a trial.

"It's true we have a terrible past but we decided to let it behind and move forward," he cuts them all off and stares directly at Dany. "To the future."
Her eyes avoid his.

They will have to settle for those answers or Barristal will answer them, he thinks before being astonished to even have such an idea.

After clarifying that issue, they discuss whether or not to execute Glover's men, once found guilty. Sansa insists on allowing the families of those affected to decide and Davos secondes the idea. He still believes they need men but decides not to push the matter. They leave it on suspense and move on to the part where they kneel and swear loyalty, at which point Dany and Jornik stand and leave the Great Hall to surely meet their soldiers.

When she is gone, Jon clarifies to his people that any aggression against Daenerys or her men will be seen as treason.

IV

Bandy

Her sister's blue eyes are the first wonder they see in years and she has illuminated her home in the few days that she has been in their lives.

Bandy rocks the tiny baby back and forth as she finishes accommodating the hot water wells near her mother so she doesn't need to get up the rest of the day.

"I'll be back as soon as Queen Sansa thinks it's convenient," she explains, returning the baby to her arms, but not before placing a kiss on her tender little head.

Her mother smiles and nods still weakened by the hard labor. Bandy had not expected either of them to be alive at this point, and yet both have survived. Spring disease did not beat them.

It was a miracle of the Old Gods. It happened in the same week that Queen Sansa and Jon Snow returned to Westeros. The other patients in the adjacent cots had died and she had lost all hope. All she was grateful for was having another bowl of porridge to give her before the time came, and she was left alone to face the winter.

Now she even had one more person. She thanked the Old Gods again on the road to Winterfell, promising to go to the Starks Heart Tree to present her prayers.

When she arrives to the castle's kitchen, she knows that odd air of tranquility and normality is breathed. Lady Jayne is already awake giving each handmaiden her instruction for her day's tasks.

"Bandy," she greets her in a sweet voice; She is always glad to see Lady Jayne in the mornings. "How are your mother and the baby?"

"Very good, m'lady," she replies happiness overflowing in her voice. "I would like to start early so finish as soon as possible to return home and attend to them."

"Of course," she concedes, leading her to the great keep, where they will clean and condition the bedchambers that had not been used in more than a decade. "Today you will only do this, but from tomorrow you will attend Queen Daenerys."

Bandy released the candlestick she was polishing.

"Bandy!" Lady Jayne reprimands her, lifting the object.
"The dragon queen is back? Wasn't she dead?"

Lady Jayne looks at her with the same confusion.

"I fear that this is a matter for the family, Bandy," she replies, "Lady Sansa has reported that."

"Lady Sansa?"

"Oh, my dear," she laments, approaching to caress her cheek in a motherly way. "A lot of things have happened these days. I will explain it to you but you have to promise me that you will compose yourself and live up to the circumstances."

Bandy hadn't thought that something worse than serving the disgusting Lord Glover could have happened to her. Until that day.

V

Jon

He finds her on the armoury tower with Jornik, both engrossed inspecting her new forged sword which he knows Daario sent to Volantis. There's also a dagger and another small piece of weapon he does not recognise.

"May I?" he asks for her permission to hold the sword while Jornik retires and leaves them both alone. Just as Daario, he abandoned his initial distrust.

It's a long sword made from Heartsbane. He knows her previous one was a short one, and he wonders if she indeed thinks she can use this one, or if she has acquired the proper training.

"Stop brooding," she says, "It's more of an accessory."

He returns the sword to its chest next to the dagger, and smiles, "Where have you been?"

"In the North," she answers walking towards the exit. "On the Wall, in the Haunted Forest, the bridge of skulls and in some villas nearby. No, I didn't burn anything."

He wasn't going to ask her that, but he was glad to know.

He wants to probe into her days here more but as they move forward, the usual nosy people also come to ask him to read reports or some document, for which they have their first discussion.

"Read it," she scolds him after he signed a document without seeing it. "Don't sign anything you don't read first."

So many indications return him to a time where Master Luwin haunted him with his lessons.

The same thing happens to her, and soon their daily affairs separate them. He doesn't even have time to mention the mischief of the princess she consents dearly.

"You need to wear a crown," Sansa voices at supper. He was seeing Daenerys playing with her food.
"No," is his short answer.

"Every king has a crown," she insists, "Specially a crowned King."

Jon tries to remember all the kings he knew and no one wore a crown.

"I didn't when I was King in the North," he argues. In fact, she mocked him about it.

"Because you were named, not crowned," she explains as if it could make it make sense.

"I won't wear a crown. As far as I m concerned Yara Greyjoy, Dany and you are all queens, but you are not wearing crowns," though he knows she should be missing hers. The accessory he believes.

The conversation seemed over but Sansa speaks again.

"I think her grace should use one too."

Everyone leaves what they were doing to wait for Daenerys' opinion.

"Dany what do you think?" he invites her to voice out.

"I will use no crown," she states bluntly. In the past, she told him she didn't like them.

"See?" he points out to Sansa before Dany's voice continues.

"But I agree with your sister, you should wear your crown," and then she keeps playing with her food.

They remain stunned by their first open agreement with Sansa. His cousin has no better idea than shatter the moment by asking the following question.

"May I ask why you tainted your hair? Jon's claim depends in part on you there proving him a Targaryen."

Daenerys rolls her eyes almost imperceptibly.

"I think that he mounting a dragon is enough statement of his condition."

"They will obey him because of fear, then," Sansa protests. "He also needs to be loved and for that, we need to show him a good Targaryen."

The comment is malicious but it is more a mistake of Sansa than his folly speaking. Jon kicks her lightly under the table, and she realises her mistake.

"Good that I'll be there making the contrast," Daenerys replies.

"It's not what I meant-," she wants to rectify but he's already intervening.

"Sansa, it's enough," he shouts her. He lifts his gaze to Dany and finds her eyes. "But I also want to know why your hair is brown," he can't avoid questioning anymore.

She pauses to chew the first piece of cooked meat, taking her time to inquire into the correct answer.

"The northerners treat people better if they are like them," then she sips from her cup of wine. "I'll
clean it for the campaign."

They remain silent once again but this time Jon is who breaks with tranquility.

"Arianne took Dewyn hostage," he announces as if he had just communicated he was going to hunt.

"What?" Daenerys reacts first, "That is not possible"

She can't accept the child is a spoiled one.

"First I thought he had slipped away," he recounts, "But she left me a slight warning days before boarding."

"It can't be. She doesn't earn anything from doing that," Daenerys tries to make sense.

"Dewyn is important to me," he acknowledges, before turning to Ser Davos and asking, "How safe are the hostages in Dorne?"

"I'll go find him," Daenerys informs before Davos can respond.

"I don't think it's a good idea, your grace," his hand forewarns.

"What?"

"They are children."

"They are married," Jon says, easily and avoiding to laugh out loud. "Under the law of the Freefolk, if a woman or a man steals another from a different clan, they are married. I guess it's all we can do. A shame right?"

"Arianne can't marry a wildling boy," Dany stops his conclusion.

"No one forced her," he asserts.

"I'm going to send Anders a letter. You have to fix this."

"My suggestion is that we wait for Jon to have more presence and support to deal with Dorne," Davos wants to lighten the mood.

"Deal with Dorne?" Dany asks, "There is nothing to deal with Dorne. A plan was made and Jon must stick to comply with it, whether he likes it or not."

"Or else what? You're going to take me tied to the Septon to get us married?"

"If it's required," she stands her ground. She stares at Sansa and Davos, "No one of you will support me?"

It actually surprised him how silent Sansa is.

"May I just wonder why don't you both marry?" she voices, "It's lame obvious you still have a thing happening. You can have an heir and marry him or her with a Dorne's son or daughter-"

"No one of us can have children," he cuts her, trying to avoid having Dany to explain the same.

"What?" Sansa is astonished. Jon is sure she will be mad now her plan for an heir for Winterfell has crashed down. "That's imp-" she trails off, "Improbable."
As unlikely as dying and being alive, he wants to answer but saves it for himself.

The atmosphere has reached a point of no return. Daenerys stands up and leaves.

"We should let this matter wait," Davos finishes.

VI

Daenerys

The chamber isn't as cold as she remembers but neither feels better or wrong being here once again as she expected to feel it.

Daenerys wanders the space, tracing a trail over the dust layer on the fine furniture, reaching the bed and remembering the cold, long nights she lied there waiting for someone who never came to warm her and thinking each one of her actions that could have elicited his scorn.

She ignores the pain agglutinated in her chest and remembers that in that same bed, she told Missandei that there was a life growing inside her. They were happy without knowing that the three did not have many ways to go.

She removes her heavy cloak and turns to deposit it on the chair of her desk, as she had done in the past with the heavy fur coats that she left abandoned in a chest in Dragonstone.

She stops midway when she notices something that takes her breath away. Above the desk is a blue rose that contrasts with the cold darkness of the place.

Daenerys extends her hand to grab it, careful to not touch the thorns. The bud is not completely flowered and the inner petals peep up timidly. The green of the stem and leaves is old and molten as if it still needs time to finish its ripening.

Her heart, if there are one, revolts and she has to swallow hard to not shed the tears she's been avoiding too well until this point.

*Your rose won't make this place less awful, Jon.*

This time she receives with ease the tingling in the back of her neck.

"It was the first blossom I found in the glass garden," he tells her, announcing his presence. "I tried the same the last time you were here, but they weren't full-grown at that time."

She turns around and instinctively her eyes set on the belt around his gambeson, a bad habit she created and it's trying to suppress for his well being, for what she knows he notices and pains.

"Thank you, it's beautiful," she answers, beaming as best as she can allow herself to be and gently putting aside his rose. She's glad in the past he didn't give her the same present; it would have made further events even more harmful. "We need to speak about the North," she interrupts the moment, knowing how attenuated is her aversion against him.

"We are in the North," he retorts, scowling and entering the chamber completely, closing the door behind him. If she's not wrong, his guards are outside.

"Your people is dying," she explains, appealing to her sense of duty. Not that he hadn't already seen
the state of his lame land.

"Spring disease," he asserts, walking closer. Daenerys wishes not being that aware of any move he makes, but she can't help herself.

"Famine," she adds, lowering her gaze to avoid making eye contact.

"And War," he is now stepping away. She knows he does not want to be invasive and is waiting for a reaction on her part. "You were hurting yourself again," he mutters, pulling her off from her ramblings.

Daenerys looks down at her wrist, where the dry cloth with bloodstain is. Underneath the scar is healed, but she has forgotten to remove the drape.

"I had to," she dismiss his overreaction, what she needed to finally recoil. You have sustain my bleeding body before. Your hands have been stained with my blood. "And it won't be the last time. If it's uncomfortable for you-,

She sighs and trembles in confusion and pain. It's like swaying back and forth. She makes her best effort to walk away from that wound just to stumble upon the realisation she can't.

"I don't want you to hurt yourself," he opposes, forgetting his silence pact to not force his approaches and closing the space between them.

"It didn't work," she reveals, undoing the knot that sustains the cloth and unveiling her healed the scar. "The Raven knows I am here."

Jon breathes hardens and she just realises they have never deepened in that matter. She knows he has killed Arya.

"We should hit King's Landing," he concludes.

"I'm not sure he is there," she calms him down. "He wants to enrage you. Do not allow him."

Jon moves away and sits on the border of the bed, rubbing his eyes in a gesture of tiredness. It was harder for him to know that he was resurrected by the Raven than for her to be R'hllor's toy. At least she was clear about the intentions of this latter.

When she approaches to squeeze his shoulder, Jon takes her hand and repeats the gesture of trying to warm them between his.

They remain mired in a silence that is oddly comfortable as if the part of them that is accustomed to the other has emerged. Then Jon stands up and looks down at her, his eyes darkening with desire as she has seen several years ago.

"Tell me you don't want me and I won't touch you, ever in my life," he requests with a heavy voice as if the sole thought is hurting him.

It was easier when his touch made her nervous but since the kiss, they shared in the throne room in Valyria, her body had awakened as if it had been in a painful lethargy and now yearns for that closeness and adrenaline that he causes in her by just looking at her lips with the voracity that a hungry wolf stalks the prey.

"We shouldn't do this," she prevents him, her gaze falling on his throat, noticing he is swallowing and breathing with difficulty. "You are a king," she argues, with weakness.
"Kings do what they want," he says as her hand travels to her lower back and pushes her softly against him. She does not resist, though there's still a minimal amount of space between them.

"No," she shakes her head, still under the effect, he provokes in her. She tries to find the voice of Daario in her head, but she doesn't. No since the day he suggested they should be together. "That's, not true," and she means it.

Jon ignores her short-lived reluctance and lowers his face to hers until her defenses crash completely and she yields and lifts her hand to caress his stubble beard.

"I'll be the first one, then," he whispers before attacking her mouth in one a clean movement that gives her no time to render opposition.

And here she goes again, holding tight on the rush that lifts her so high she can only compare it with flying free in the sky. She knows it won't last long; the ice will return to her heart at any moment and freeze their warmth but she does not care.

Damned gods, she does not care.

He parts his lips from her, a soft 'Dany' escaping from them as if he has just found her again. The Dany he fell in love with.

Daenerys slides her hand to the back of his neck and forces their collision again, so this time she will not blame him for this bad decision. It's the first time she encounters his tongue and teeth after eleven years, and she silences the thought in her mind reminding her of their farewell and trying to steal her from the enrapture of the moment.

It's not enough for any of them and she can sense how he is battling for not hurting her in his attempt to bring her closer. She will harm him if he stops trying. And Jon complies when he throws her in the bed harshly, almost brutish and she wants to laugh at his face. Neither of them are young people.

She won't let him go further than this, that's certain. However, she does not protest when he sinks his mouth on the exposed skin of her neck, or when he unties her gilet in search of more bareness, neither when he squeezes parts of her body she shouldn't let him touch ever again.

Meanwhile, she only wants to keep him close so her hands never leave the grip of his neck, face or hair. Hair that is longer again so she can enjoy seizing him from there.

It's ridiculous how rookie she feels at this moment, afraid of touching something that will awake his discontent; something that will push him away. Because she will die if she ever faces his cold gaze again. His rejection. That very same thing that destroyed her in the past.

It's all Daenerys needs to recall for the cold to invade her heart.

She lets him continue for another moment but loosens her grip until he realises that it's over and she is no longer there with him; her mind away in pernicious thoughts.

He abandons the trace of kisses he was putting on her bare shoulder and looks at her, caressing her cheek and searching for the answer in her frozen eyes. Melancholy crushes his expression again.

"Dany, no," he pleads, "Come back," but she's already lifting and fixing the gilet, withdrawing from their intimacy.

Daenerys gets up from the bed and towards the cloak, she left on the chair's backrest. She stares the
last time at his unripe rose lying on the desk.

VII

Ser Davos

The dragons land in the North field waiting for the last Targaryen to collect their promised feast of sheep and lambs. Davos, who tends to get along with everyone, approaches Daenerys's soldiers to ask them about the training the beasts receive when using them on the battlefield.

Jornik, who assumed as commander of the Essosi forces in Westeros, explains that Daenerys prefers to use them as her last resort and if the battle warrants it, although throughout her campaign in Essos she has always been up in heaven with Drogon.

"Westerosis are weak, Ser Davos," he says confidently, "but if the Queen wants a clean fight, then we will beat them with clean fights."

He does not know well what he means by that, but he laughs and plays along. In Port Yhos Daenerys didn't need the dragons once the city gates opened and the soldiers surrendered it. It was before the taking of Qarth that he had been surprised that the queen did not want to recourse to her greatest weapon until Jon and the Northerners had taken the mother city.

Davos only cared that an event like King's Landing never takes place again. That's why he was proud that Jon used the red dragon the way he did. But he was not deceived, that training had not been given by the poor northern man who barely held himself up on the back of the dragon. That training had been given by Daenerys.

The morning after their discussion, they both meet with the dragons for training. Davos insists that he allow the inhabitants of Winterfell to observe from the towers so that they get used to the presence of the beasts, in that way King's Landing remains only as a story. Jon agrees.

From there, next to Lady Sansa, they watch as the last Targaryen fly over the sky with the five dragons while Daenerys soldiers in the field, throw the projectiles at the smaller dragons with the undamaged scorpion, setting them for battle.

"They are mad!" Sansa screams, seeing Daenerys and the golden dragon give pirouettes as if they were leaves dragged by the wind.

Davos who has seen enough of the beasts, laughs, and comments:

"They are Targaryens."

There is not much inconvenience in the first training, except when one of the projectiles hits the gray dragon and it lets out a thunderous groan, but quickly recovers and falls to the ground to destroy the scorpion, which by luck and wisdom of the one who manipulated it, it was clean.

The surprise comes when Jon lands the red dragon and people on the walls applaud them as if it were a tournament. Jon, being the shy lad he always was, smiles and greets them as the red dragon gloats, letting out a soft growl. Daenerys instead, takes flight and leaves the field while the other dragons follow her.

When they get off the battlements, Sansa shares her doubts about the conversation of the last night.
"Do you think what they believe is possible?"

"What thing?"

"That they can't have children."

"Well, your brother wasn't exactly celibate all these years and unless some of those wildling children are his bastards, a thing I don't think Jon would ever have allowed it, then-"

"And Daenerys?" she interrupts him.

He sighs, "It has always been rumored, I think I heard Lord Tyrion mention it."

"And if they can only have children with each other?" She keeps digging it.

"Child!" he scolds her, "don't make any more plans in that little head of yours. They were already together once if you had been in that ship to White Harbor, eleven years ago-"

"I know they were together, Ser Davos," she cuts him, "But it was a short time, what if-" she does not end her idea and he's already guessing what she means.

No, he thought, that would be impossible and an unbearable tragedy for Jon.

"If what you are supposing is true then Daenerys would've never forgiven your brother."

"I don't think she has forgiven him," she laments, "what if she's punishing him? That story she made up in the Great Hall, it can't be true."

Davos is certain it's not true. He was there when a complete broken Jon confessed the crime.

"It would be unfortunate, and that's why I think we shouldn't intervene in this matter anymore," now the thought won't leave him alone. How dangerous could be for Jon's mind! "The past is in the past, Lady Sansa. Let it rest. Do not force that idea on Jon, we need him well for the wars to come."

"So, if Jon can't have children, what will happen to the Seven Kingdoms? What will happen to Winterfell after we are gone?" she questions, annoyed.

"One step at a time, child."

**VIII**

**Jon**

Barristal finds his siblings and therefore Jon finds Daenerys.

Something inside him is shaken when he returns to the last place where they had a drop of happiness in their past.

The waterfall.

"It froze," Daenerys points, her eyes fixed on the body of water that had become ice.

"Winter returned," is the only thing he can say, looking at her troubled face.
"Last time the White Walkers were coming," she turns to face him while indicates, "And it wasn't frozen."

Jon hasn't thought about it but she's right.

"It's very south, the White Walkers didn't reach here."

Daenerys shakes her head, looking back.

"It comes from the South. Winter never comes from the South in Westeros."

She advances to face the waterfall, removing the glove that covers her hand and gently touching the ice. He wants to warn her not to do that, that she can lose the skin of her hand, but at that moment the ice begins to melt under the heat that emanates from her and the ice becomes water again, splashing them.

The moment Daenerys withdraws her hand, the water freezes.

They look at each other in mutual understanding. The Raven.

Daenerys slides down the side where is the entrance to the cave where they once hid from the curious stares of Drogon and Rhaegal, and where they had their last intimate encounter. He follows her, adrenaline running through his body.

When they are inside, she illuminates the space with a small flame that emerges from the dagger she holds. She bends down to inspect something on the ground.

"Can you lend me your dagger?" she asks him, and he feels uncomfortable holding the weapon near her as if the simple image of him holding it will cause her to move away from him.

He takes it by the blade and extends the handle, and she receives it with a half-smile.

"Thank you."

For a few minutes, she digs and he just watches curiously, in silence.

When she stops, she halts as if she had found something that had impacted her. Dany puts his dagger aside and with her free hand takes a silver pin of a dragon. He remembers it; he had desperately thrown it away in the throes of the passion that consumed them in that other life.

"How did it end there?" he inquires, swallowing the lump in his throat at the memory.

"You were asleep," she replies, "I had told you we could be here a thousand years here and nobody would find us. I wanted it to be true somehow."

Neither of them avoids the tears that begin to fall free on their faces.

"Don't say you're sorry, I know," she warns, getting up without taking her eyes off the forgotten object. "Missandei had a similar one but it was a butterfly. She never used it but she liked to hold it," she is sobbing now. "There are many places like this in my heart you know? Places where I buried things that I lost, things that I have to return from time to time to prove they were real," she looks up and their eyes meet, "Places I want to leave rest but always end up evoking again."

She's is talking about their slip the day before, when she kissed him back and allowed him to touch her again before she had frozen.
"Let me go with you," he implores, stepping further closer. "Let me go to these places with you."

"Do you remember what we were discussing yesterday? Before," she pauses, laughing, but it sounds sad. "There are always people in the middle of whatever we are, Jon. And when we fail, they pay it."

"You were telling me about the North. About the people who are suffering. This morning I sent a letter to Samwell, ordering the best Masters to come and attend the sick."

Daenerys throws herself at him and silences him with her mouth. It's a dry kiss, more like a foolish desire than what they had last night.

"Nothing lasts forever," she states, before escaping outward.

He takes his dagger from the ground and follows her.

"I'd rather spend a lifetime trying to win you back, even if it will never happen," he confesses, as she stops halfway.

The dragons watch the scene just as curious as their predecessors used to. *Maybe they enjoy conflict*, he thinks.

"I don't have that time, Jon," she says then gets on Jorion's back.

When he returns to Winterfell, another mountain of reports and documents await him. The majority are emissive of the rest, notifying him that they have settled in their respective positions waiting for Jon and Daenerys to start the campaign. There are a couple of threats and another couple of invitations from people he has never heard of.

"What is the guild of the commonwealth?" he asks Davos, who had internalised on the subject before he arrived.

"Important people, lad," he points out, "accept their invitation but warn them that you will say when and where."

Daenerys had indicated that they would have to negotiate with the merchants of the port cities. He tried to catch up with these things, but he was tired of reading reports.

At night, he was still on the same task. Sansa and Daenerys sat on each side of the common table and helped him in whatever they could, the latter also had to answer her own.

"Can I just sign this?" he pleads aloud.

"No, you need to read them," Sansa states; she is working on the bookkeeping.

"All of them say the same!" he complains. It was really enraging to him.

Daenerys at his left begins to tell a story, "The young Lazzarious, King of Sarion, was notoriously lazy when it came to signing official papers and he often did so without reading the documents. So one good day, his Royal Jester wrote a decree that abdicated the rule of all of Sarion to himself for fifteen days. The boy signed it. After this, Lazzarious never again signed a document without first reading it carefully."
He is sure she just came up with that anecdote, but he enjoys this normal chattering with her.

"Can I give away the realm away for fifteen days? Done," he jests.

"It is supposed to coerce you to end those documents. To be a highborn educated man you complain too much about homework."

That last bit arises his curiosity.

"You never told me how was your education."

He knows it was precarious due to the exile she was conditioned to. He hates to remember that she had suffered hungry and slept in the streets of the free cities.

"Viserys," she replies, "Our first five years in exile we lived in Braavos, and Ser Willem tried his best to have him educated as a King should."

"Just Viserys?" Sansa joins the conversation. It surprises him.

"I was little," she answers, "eventually Viserys made his best to pass the knowledge to me. I wasn't that good until Jorah," she sighs, touched at his memory, "He gifted me a couple of tomes of the Westerosi history and gave me some lessons."

"And your lady education?"

Jon doesn't know if Sansa makes such inconsiderate questions because she is inattentive or because she is impressed that someone who has had a life like Dany's has managed to become queen.

"I never had those," she responds, finishing her work. "I'll take some air," she stands up and announces.

"It's freezing outside!" Sansa tries to warn. He knows Dany does not feel the climate as they do.

"Just like my guts," is her response.

IX

Valar Dohaeris

It was easy to outwit the castle guard and infiltrate without producing any casualties. He still remembers the thoroughness of his training.

He saw the queen a couple of times but was always escorted by a man, he thinks he remembers him as a companion of Daario Naharis, but he has already forgotten his name.

He is surprised that it was not as he suspected at first; she wasn't kidnapped by Jon Snow and his family. she was free

He had many questions in his mind, but he chooses to ignore everything at the moment the queen leaves the great keep in the direction of the forest. It is his time to follow her.

He doesn't know what he will do when he sees her, but the time has come.

Valar Dohaeris.
Daenerys

Everything in the North seems to reject her, even its nature. Daenerys does not know exactly what to expect when she walks through the Godswood with no apparent orientation. She has not received any signal from R'hllor and it begins to exasperate her as if there were too much tranquility and a storm was preparing to take them off guard.

She no longer trusted in peace.

She didn't want to admit that she missed the war, feeling Drogon's fury under her grip. Not that she did not enjoy her time with Jorion, who on the contrary was more docile in that regard.

If Jon is dying out of despair reading so many documents, for her, it is the stillness in which they were mired.

She positions herself in front of the horrible Stark tree and looks into his carved eyes, knowing that the other is behind seeing her. She wants to shout at him to do something.

She listens to a creak behind her and first Daenerys assumes that Jon has followed her. But the absence of the tickle on the back of her neck alerts her and turns, to find only darkness. Could it be that there are animals in the forest? she hadn't asked Jon.

Maybe it was some soldier, who should be outside of himself to try something against her, knowing what she could do without the need for a sword or the dragons.

She turns to look at the Heart Tree one last time before returning where she came from.

In the middle of the road she hears steps behind her again and this time she hurries to put her hand on the handle of the Valyrian steel dagger, though it is that same moment that a pair of arms surround her and push her against the trunk of a tree.

It's dark, too dark to notice what's under the man's hood. When he completely immobilizes her, he brings both his hands to her throat and begins to suffocate her, although without achieving the desired effect. Daenerys knows that the action should cause her great pain.

Seeing himself useless, the man takes Daenerys' dagger and is about to cut her. She knows she has no alternative but to burn him.

Before doing so, his hood falls off and his face is exposed. Deformed face, abrasive wounds that have been sealed over the years.

King's Landing

"This is for my family," he claims, before thrusting the dagger in her bowels in a gross but exact movement.

At that very moment, an object comes from behind, a knife, and it sticks into the man's neck. His blood splashes her face, while he coughs and falls kneeling at her feet.

She, however, stands with the dagger still embedded in her lower abdomen.
"ñuha dāria."

That voice.

Daenerys would recognise that voice even if a thousand years passed.

She turns around and in front of her is Torgo Nudho.

Chapter End Notes

-Grey Worm thoughts are too specific but obviously the man barely speaks the common tongue, especially since he lived ten years on Naath.

- I have to create some new members for the current houses in the North because literally that people went almost extinct after the red wedding.

- so yes here is the fluff that was promised.
Rekindle The Flame

Chapter Summary

The reappearance of Grey Worm puts Jon and Dany relationship on hold, while they realise there's still a wedge between them.

Chapter Notes

I'm watching The Witcher while writing this and guuuys how I missed those old days when GOT was all about good storytelling and good production I mean I know season 8 has somehow good visuals but there's no the perception we are in the medieval age. All feel too clean to be medieval. Actually, season 7 and 8 feel out of time and space for me.

I decided to leave Dorne's plot for the next chapter because this one was getting too long and you know I always want to stay in the 10k.

advance warning: the conversations between Dany and GW are in Valyrian.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 2: "Rekindle the Flame"

I

Bandy

The dragon queen is strange, Bandy concluded after two days attending to her. If so could be said of what she did. In fact, Daenerys Targaryen was the woman who was at the camp the day her mother's health improved. She was holding her and touching her just before Bandy arrived. A Queen.

The last time Bandy saw her, she was ten years old and her father had warned her that she was a witch from the east, that she had given birth to those beasts and that she would force them to venerate her after having seduced Jon Snow.

His father's stories turned out not very true when the news came to the North that Jon Snow had killed her after she went mad, like her King father before her.

"The black beast took her to eat her because that's what beasts do," he had indicated.

Since she settled in Winterfell, Daenerys Targaryen has not permitted any maid to enter her chamber to serve her. Only once did she request a bath, but then denied any help, which left Lady Jayne baffled and allowed Bandy to return home early.

The third night she is about to knock the door to offer her supper but she does not find her. Three
days and she has barely eaten! Is she afraid of been poisoned? She heard the Targaryens are paranoid people.

Bandy decides she wants to know more. For that, she sneaks in the King chamber, which luckily was unguarded and goes through the secret passage that leads to the queen's wardrobe room, which is empty. The dragon queen has not much clothing with her.

She leaves the door half-open and remains patient there to see what she does when no one is watching her. Well, no one she knows about.

It does not pass much time when the entrance is overflowed with people and a man, one of the brown-skinned soldiers she brought with her, appears charging her and she's bleeding.

She is bleeding!

Bandy covers her mouth with her hand and stifles the sound of her own stupefaction. She should go and attend whatever they need her for, but something stops her; curiosity or amazement, she doesn't know.

She hears them speaking in an unknown Essosi language and then one of those men put her heated sword on her lower belly, where the bleeding comes from.

The Dragon Queen does not scream or produce any sound at the horrible moment. Bandy looks them horrified.

What kind of people are they?

II

Daenerys

At the moment when Torgo Nudho charges her to the great keep, her soldiers make a vigil around the building and remove all intruders out, knowing in advance the procedure on these occasions. Already in her campaign in Essos Daenerys had been seriously injured, and the solution was to wait for the blood diluted enough until Kinvara eventually did her thing and healed it.

It would be harder now having to do it alone.

When they arrive in her bedchamber, she knows she has a short time before Jon comes and a scandal begins. Although he is fully aware of her strange state, he does not understand how things should be done.

Jornik pales when he sees Grey Worm; he must remember him from his days in Meereen.

She does not have time to update them when she is already screaming at them to cauterize the wound, because there is no time to wait for the blood to stop. Jornik is the one who rushes, alerting Grey Worm when he raises his sword.

"Torgo," she reassures him in the language they share, "I'll explain to you later, but he's my friend."

Then it is Grey Worm who pulls a Westerosi sword from his back, something that Daenerys had not noticed, and it is he who ends up cauterizing the wound.
Another horrible scar forms in her lower abdomen.

She’s recovering her senses when she catches a glimpse of the sword Torgo Nudho is holding; it was Jaime Lannister's sword.

**Dragonstone, 305 A.C**

She couldn’t hide the trembling anymore. Torgo noticed this when he stepped before her with the announcement they seized Jaime Lannister trying to return to Cersei. Trying to save her.

She’s been a monster but her family is trying to save her. Dany-Not, Daenerys, has tried only the best and the gods have punished her. In her lower moments, she’s completely alone. Even when it turned out she has family still, she’s alone.

She touched her belly and promised to herself she will burn the world to protect the life inside her.

The only person she has left is Torgo Nudho, and she told him about Jon’s identity and the danger they are under in.

"Kill him," he advised. "And anyone who tries to take your throne from you."

If only could be that easy, she thought.

"What do you think it meant?" she asked him in return, ignoring his suggestion. "When she said her last word."

*Dracarys, she screamed and the earth trembled.*

His expression hardened. Daenerys knows he blamed her for it. He won’t tell her to her face and won’t turn on her either, but the pain and hatred are there. She only got fear, desolation, and hate in Westeros.

"My queen knows it," he answered, his countenance firm. The wrath is boiling in him just as it is in Drogon, as it is in her.

Yes, she does. She knows what Missandei meant.

Her only consolation is that Tyrion betrayed Varys to save her. Might she still has his support or might she’s just desperate.

His loyalty had served you for nothing, she remembered.

But she needs it. Needs some form of support right now. She needs a friend to lean on. His heart is broken and dead already. Until her child comes she needs some form of love, friendship there to hold her hand.

Grey Worm won’t hold her hand. He despises her.

And Jon is disgusted by their relation. He won’t even hold the babe.

Yes, she will tell Tyrion about his brother and if he can pass this simple test she can trust in his loyalty.

*Please, do not fail me,* she prays as he enters the Throne Room.

She slowly returns to the present and watches the flames in the hearth.
"My queen," Torgo salutes her, kneeling by the side of her bed. Jornik is guarding the entrance. "You were hurt," he points, holding her hand.

Daenerys smiles, he held her hand after all.

"I know," she whispers, caressing his face. She needs to verify he's real. "I thought you dead."

"I thought the same," he says with an aching expression. "I saw blood in the ground and in his hand. And you were not there."

Daenerys nods, weakly. She has returned to that moment too.

"You survived," then he tells her, watching above her other scars.

"I didn't," she corrects him. "I am here but I didn't survive. I was dead."

Her words enrage him. She has avoided mention Jon's implication because it's the last thing she needs now. Although inevitably Grey Worm will demand that.

"I'm so sorry, my queen," he responds with conflicted eyes, "I failed you."

Tears fall down her cheeks as she sobs and old wounds open up in her mind.

"Never say that," she forbids him, "I failed all of you. I couldn't protect you. I sent all of you to die, meaningless."

"You gave us freedom, my queen. We chose you as I chose you. Please let me spent the rest of my days serving and protecting you."

Daenerys pains at the notion of having him by her side to die, as she has dreaded all those years with Daario. He is back when she thought him dead. She won't let another piece of her past life die for her, ever again.

"We need to talk," she speaks softly. Torgo nods and squeezes her hand.

At that moment the door opens and Jon enters with a mortified face, which throws himself where she is without noticing her company.

Everything that happens is sudden. Jon doesn't get close when Torgo puts Jaime Lannister's sword on his neck as a warning.

Jon has his hand on Longclaw's handle but upon seeing Torgo's face, his expression changes and he gets shocked, unable muttering a single word.

So they stay a long time until Jornik intervenes.

"Both of you drop your weapons or I'll take you out of this room, alive or dead."

Gray Worm ignores Jornik's warning, and Daenerys forces her body forward to reach his arm and stop him.

"Lower it," she orders, a habit she has not lost. "He doesn't come to hurt me."

"Did you think that when you received him in the throne room?" he questions, and it is the first time he ignores her authority. "This traitor who stole you from your crown and from your life-"
"He won't hurt me!" she insists, this time in the common tongue, with a certainty she shouldn't have. He has killed her already and that's what Grey Worm knows.

"I tried to get him executed the moment I found him in the throne room, but the sailor stopped me and the unsullied were too tired to fight another battle. The Dothraki went uncontrolled. I wanted him dead. I still want him dead."

Jon refrains from saying a single word and walks backward to reassure the environment. It is obvious that he understands that the situation is complicated, and has not yet come out of his astonishment after seeing Grey Worm alive and there.

"I do want him dead, sometimes," she confesses, searching common ground with her former Master of War.

"Have you forgive him?" he asks with a disappointed expression.

Daenerys stares at Jon and then again at Torgo.

"I haven't," she replies, touching her belly. "I can't."

"So why are you by his side?"

In another life and other circumstances, she would not allow him to make such questioning about her decisions. However, they are in a messed up position.

"I'm not by his side. I'm trying to pay my debt with this land," she gives as an explanation, though it is a half-truth. There's so much she needs to explain and so many people in that space. Her mind is going blank when she says, "I'm still thinking of her. Everyday."

That's when Torgo slacken off his aggressive composure and downs his sword. His eyes shine but he does not cry like her.

III

Jon

Red.

It's all he perceives in his field of vision when he is notified that someone attacked Dany. Red.

He was not going to fight her soldiers but their imposition forced him to hit one of them when he was denied entry to the great keep. The uproar distracted the rest until he reached her bedchamber and found an image that left him frozen.

Grey Worm.

Instantaneously, he went back in time and recalled Daario's words.

"Two of her dragons dead, her khalasar lost in the sea, the Unsullied dead in Naath. Without the Seven Kingdoms you had promised her."

Nonetheless, Unsullied's commander is there in front of his eyes, pointing jealously with a sword if he remembers well is Jaime Lannister's. Again, he goes back and remembers that he was a prisoner of Dany before Tyrion had liberated him.
Something inside him crashes when Dany's scream tries to convince Grey Worm he is not a threat for her, the very same thing he has worked to prove for a year and still stirs doubts in her.

He can't utter a single word. The last time Grey Worm saw him, he still had Dany's dried blood in his hand. The commander wanted him in that state, suffering trying to clean his hand with his own tears and mire.

"Live with it, Jon Snow," he had told him. Because that pain was for both shared. The women they loved were gone.

Except, she's not. And that should be seen as the unfair reality for him, his expression tells it. The man who killed the woman who he loved, got her back while the man who lost her unjustly will never see her again.

That's what his mind murmurs him about the current situation and Jon is aware nothing will be the same. Grey Worm is the past and Dany wants her past back.

"When every soul I took that day returns to absolve me. When Jorah, Missandei, Ser Barristan, and Grey Worm come back to me."

Jon backs up cause he knows he can't do anything against it. Just observe.

IV

Daenerys

She is still stained in blood, hers and her attacker's, when Torgo begins to tell her about the events that followed her disappearance. She knows that she is not prepared for more information, to reconfirm that Kinvara cruelly cheated on her all this time.

They do not waste time with details; Daenerys recounts dry and plain that the followers of the red god resurrected her. She thinks he won't believe her at first, but Grey Worm never questions her word, at any time. He listens carefully until it's his turn.

"Some Unsullied suggested following Drogon's trail and looking for your body, but most of them were exhausted and wanted to return to Meereen. I told them that everyone was free to decide where to go. I-"

"I don't want you to apologize again," she warns him for the thousandth time. "You were and are free men who decide your destinies."

He returns a forced smile full of discomfort as if the thought of not having searched for her it hurts. That terrible mindset that they have instilled in him since childhood.

"Then a small fleet and I set off for Naath," he breathes with difficulty just like her. The thought of Missandei flooding them with anguish. "The others didn't know what to do and they followed us. Even the Dothraki."

"The Dothraki in Naath?" she asks, with a joyful grin at the image of her bloodriders on the island, but soon Daenerys frowns at the recalling of the butterfly disease that Missandei once warned about. "The butterflies-"

"That's a story for when your grace accepts my proposal," he replies and she swallows the lump in her throat. Torgo had proposed to go with him to Naath, for what he has come to Westeros with the intention of rescuing her, believing her a prisoner of the Starks. If there is a secret way to enter the
island, then she is blithe he keeps it a secret.

"How did you find out I was alive?" the question arises amid the fog of doubt. "Naath is impenetrable."

At some time during her campaign in Essos, she thought of taking the conquest to Naath, but she was content to prevent the Masters from continuing to trade with its slaves in Essos. For the same reason, she knows that news of her apparition alive should not have reached Naath.

"We saw you," he replies, "First we thought it was an illusion. But then we learned that there could be no other person above that golden dragon."

At the mention of Jorion, Daenerys knows what will come after it's the question about Drogon and everything that concerns who and what she is now. And she obliges and tells him everything from Ibben, through the union of free cities, her relocation in Valyria, Daario, and his family, the matter of Westerosi, Qarth and finally, Asshai.

"Daario Naharis is a good warrior and a man I trusted," he says firmly. "He must have been with us," he mentions something that for her was already an obvious regret.

It is also that moment that she chooses to reveal what she did with Tyrion. His answer is to smile and squeeze her hand with twisted pride. However, it is transformed into doubt when Jon's existence reaches them again.

"Do you trust him?" he questions, almost sore of the notion of hearing an affirmative response.

"I trust he will be a good king," she avoids giving him a blunt answer.

"Do you trust him?" he repeats to leave ambiguities behind and be honest.

Then Daenerys does not answer and Grey Worm's face again suppresses all emotion.

It is something that concerns her every day when Jon approaches her and Daenerys has to make sure that he is without any of his weapons. She knows he wouldn't hurt her unless she gave her a very important reason like burning another city with innocent people. Although in Essos he did not care about her threats, something inside Daenerys told her that if it's his people put back on the front line, Jon would choose them again.

It's not that she does want to turn the situation into an election, but those thoughts were always in her mind.

Daenerys decides to cut the matter by showing him her skills, which leaves him spasmodic and scared but then he says it is a gift. A gift for terror, she thinks.

Then, Torgo brings a finger to his lips, asking her to be silent. He slowly rises from the bed and stealthily walks toward the wardrobe room, opening it with a swift movement and exposing a woman there.

A handmaiden.

Daenerys looks at her more closely and recognises her as the girl who was in the camp the other day, next to the pregnant woman. Torgo seeks approval to proceed, but Daenerys tells him not to hurt her. How did she end there?

"What are you doing here?" She demands to know, resuming her queenly tone, and covering the
wound exposed in its lower belly. The scar was not as bad as she thought it would be but the burn left it very pronounced.

"I ask your pardon, your majesty," she pleads, kneeling.

Daenerys does not know the recklessness is so important as to put herself in that state. She doesn't even care that she heard their conversation with Torgo Nudho; Northerners do not understand Valyrian.

From the dread on the girl's face, she knows that she has seen the fire in her hands when she showed Torgo what she could do.

"Quiet," Daenerys requires, "Do you work on the castle?"

The girl nods.

"Well," she says, "now you understand why I prefer to be left alone. Right? Tell me your name."

"Bandy, your majesty."

"Call me Daenerys; I'm not your queen," she urges as she keeps checking under the furs if her wound is healing. "Tell me, Bandy, what happened that day at the camp? The pregnant woman-"

"It's my mother, your-" she stops and stutters, "D-Daenerys."

"It is?"

"Yes," she reaaffirms, "That day a miracle happened. My mother recovered and later gave birth to my little sister."

Daenerys stifles a groan of surprise. She had not finished helping the woman with her blood that day, barely placed two droplets in a shabby food jar.

"And what do you think that happened, Bandy?" She inquires into her thoughts with a serious tone.

The girl's watery blue eyes widen at that question as if they had asked something forbidden.

"Y-you," she's again prevented from speaking properly because of her nervousness. "Did you do something?"

"I placed something special in a food jar," she explains, "of the man next to her."

Bandy now has an expression of guilt.

"Bandy, what else happened that day?" Daenerys demands a prompt response. It shouldn't be so hard but if what she thinks that happened, indeed happened, then she would have found a way to use her power in the North.

The girl breaks and confesses that she had stolen the plate of food because she knew that this man was going to die and that her mother was not far from following him. She just wanted to give her one last meal. Daenerys understands hunger and asks her not to apologise.

"The man died then?"

"Yes," she replies with terrible regret. "And many others, but not my mother and my little sister."
Only death can pay for life, she remembers as she leans against the back of the bed and thinks how strange is that a woman of her age still has a mother who gives birth, although she herself was born when Rhaegar was already twenty-four.

She stares at the window; The day dawned sunny after the turbulent night.

She makes a gesture to get up although she still finds it uncomfortable, as if something inside her was broken. Torgo Nudho appears by her side to help her, but she realises she needs more time to recover. Perhaps a few more hours.

"I'm going to rest," she warns both of them, specially to the young woman, "but when I'm ready, I want you to take me to see them.

V

Jon

He hides the tremor in his hands as Lord Harold, Winterfell's master of arms, finishes aligning the men who were guarding the gates in the recent weeks. He gathers all of them in the Guards Hall.

The man who attacked Daenerys was not from the North, he was part of the numerous refugees from the South. Jon saw the disfigured man's face with anger, helplessness, and confusion, knowing that he himself had done what he did: stick a dagger in Daenerys. Punishing her for the atrocity she committed in King's Landing.

No, he tells himself, I didn't punish Dany. I didn't do that.

But then, Grey Worm's expression returns to his mind. For the commander, yes, he did. He punished Dany with a death sentence. And for Daenerys, that conclusion was not very different. Her eyes continued to condemn him, Grey Worm had reminded her that Jon was her murderer.

When all the guards are in position, Jon notices the nervousness of the men and wonders if they are afraid of him or Barristal, who is not really even present. Yes, his roars are heard from whence they are, just like Jorion who has landed on top of the great hall when Daenerys was injured, alerting everyone.

He will not use Barristal, he wants to shout at them as something obvious. I am doing everything to not have to use him.

But then Jon's vision turns red and he sees what Barristal sees; ants. All below him are ants. It used to happen with Ghost, but it was less intense, more like an escape or a distraction. With Barristal it was as if not only his vision was connected to him but his heart, his feelings too.

"Two men have infiltrated Winterfell," he begins, silencing the room. Jon stares where Sansa is, who returns a look as distrustful as the rest; So many years and she still does not trust him. "I don't know at what time, nor under what guard they came in, but one of them has just attacked Queen Daenerys, under my own nose."

Jon advances in front of the men, several taller and more imposing than him that he questions again, why do they fear him? It's a question that really fills him with curiosity. He will not use Barristal.

Then he realises that it is not the soldiers who he addresses those words but to himself. You are not
"His soldiers have dark skin, there was no way of knowing, your grace," one of them excuses, his voice is shaking. Maybe because of the cold. "The man who carried her, I remember him from the Great War. But he wasn't here the first day."

Jon nodded.

"Did you notice him?"

"Yes," he admits, fearful, "But I didn't know how to report it. I just thought he came a few days later."

"Every strange detail, every bloody change that comes along, you must notify me," he reminds them, "What kind of king am I if I let my people be hurt in my own home?"

Someone else let out a sound of discomfort, making Jon turn and walk towards a tall, squalid young man. Jon remembers that he was one of the guards assigned by Lord Glover, but they believed he was too young to send him to the dungeons with the rest.

"Do you have anything to contribute?" Jon asks him.

"I just think your majesty doesn't understand what protection we are looking for," he replies in a polite but forceful tone. "The dragon queen turned King's Landing into a cemetery in one day. Our people are afraid, your majesty."

Jon takes a deep breath to calm down.

"She saved our lives, twice," he really wanted to tell him that the Northmen also pillage King's Landing that day, but he needed him to fall on the trap alone. "The northerners are indebted to her."

The child should not be more than fourteen or fifteen years old. Jon didn't care more about that detail.

"As you say, your majesty, the Northerners. But those of the South hate her and it was to be expected that something like this would happen. Especially if she ventures through Winterfell without escorts."

Daenerys's soldiers had been smarter and faster than his soldiers and taken the attacker's body to a warehouse, where only he and Lord Harold had inspected him.

No Winterfell soldier, not even the guards, had seen the body of the Southerner.

The room joins in a strange silence, only the sound of the wind accompanies them. At that moment, Jon turns around to confirm to Lord Harold what he is about to do. The Master of arms nods but there's doubt in his face, while Sansa pleads with her eyes a silent warning.

With the same movement as always, he draws Longclaw with a slip and sticks the sword in the center of the boy's chest. He doesn't even have time to remember that he was supposed to give the sentencing speech.

The boy looks down in horror, the other guards now trembling like dogs about to be put to sleep.

And Jon sees the red stain the ground. Red.

He removes Longclaw and the boy falls on top of his own blood.
"The omission that causes a misfortune will be seen as treason from today," he announces, throwing Longclaw aside. Someone else will have to clean it.

He ignores Sansa's aghast reaction when he passes her by straight to the gates until he is in the North Field where Barristal lands and roars as if he is scolding him.

His anger is not so that Jon can't get on his back and leave Winterfell. They fly north until it's dawn and the Wall appears on the horizon.

There are no ants here, he thinks. There are no ants here.

Then when he's about to clash it, the word comes out of his mouth.

"Dracarys," he orders, and Barristal, content under his grip, opens his snout and he begins to breathe fire on the Wall.

VI

Bandy

She feels some form of discomfort in walking through the mud with a queen, but Daenerys Targaryen moves along the path to her home as if she had already lived in places like this, which seems insane. Every so often Bandy turns to look at her and check that her image is real. She still has dark hair and can pass as a commoner, but the inhabitants are alerted to see the procession of guards, both her own and those of King Jon, making the people realise that she is someone special.

In the case of King Jon, people already know him and know he never received special treatment when he was Lord Eddar Stark's bastard nor when he was King in the North. In any case, his presence also causes her distress.

"It's here," she warns them as she goes forward to open the rickety door and enter where her mother and sister wait for her.

Queen Daenerys and her guard, the dark-skinned man, follow her inside first. Then King Jon who, now that Bandy sees him more closely, shows that he has not slept all night. Bandy doesn't remember how old these people are but they all seemed exhausted and aged.

She turns to look at her mother and explains the situation. She does not recognise any of the people present and is scared when they are introduced. As if she was afraid of what they could do to her.

At the request of Daenerys, she does not announce her as such since she is aware of the reaction she causes in people at first impression. "She is friends with King Jon," Bandy reassures her when tears begin to flow from her mother's eyes. She is not in the mood to detail to the Lords that her mother is like a little girl in comparison to Bandy; She has not received an education, cannot read, or communicate properly as the highborn. Bandy was one of the lucky girl Lady Jayne helped educate.

"How's the name?" It is the first thing the queen pronounces while sitting on the wooden bench on the side of the bed. "Yours and the girl's," she clarifies with a smile. Bandy notes that she is an extremely beautiful woman.

"Jez and Shyra," her mother responds with the babe still stuck to her chest, breastfeeding. Her mother doesn't have any kind of demure, nor should Bandy thinks, this is their home.

Bandy looks again at the corner of the room where King Jon has self recluded, who should be
received as, as one receives a king. But with him, it was always different as if he disliked the simple idea of receiving such treatment.

"I can," the queen is about to ask, but her tongue gets tied. "Can I hold her?" she finally asks for.

Her mother looks for her gaze for a sign of help, unable to process what is happening. Bandy nods with a reassuring smile, taking the semi-sleeping baby from her chest and accommodating her in the arms of Daenerys Targaryen.

Little baby, a queen held you, she thinks she will tell her someday.

She is surprised by the awkwardness with which the queen first holds her, forgetting that babies cannot move their heads by themselves.

"Sorry," she apologises as if she were in the place to do it. "I never held such a small baby."

Only then does Bandy realise how strange it is that a queen of her age has not produced any heirs. Could the stories be true? Could it be that she can only give birth to beasts?

For a long time, Daenerys Targaryen rocks Shyra in her arms, whispering nice words while the baby is strangely calm in her hold. Bandy remembers the baby is there thanks to that woman and her heart rejoices.

The dark-skinned man remains expressionless, but King Jon looks at his aunt's image with something that could be said devotion, or are they eyes of love? Could be? After all these years?

Be that as it may, the moment is fascinating and odd at the same time, as if the gods had decided to play with destiny that day.

"I promise you that this little girl will never miss anything," the queen promises, placing a kiss on her sister's forehead. "No one of you. Never."

A tear slips down her cheek before returning the baby to her mother's arms, saying goodbye and walking back through the village towards Winterfell.

King Jon asks her to stay at home, soon the supplies will arrive at the village and a queen's trustee to talk with them about their amenities. He is about to leave when he turns around asks her to protect the baby from the cold.

Bandy had never felt so strange.

VII

Sansa


Sansa sighs, "The Flints served the Boltons. Their titles and lands were stripped off."

Lord Hornwood frowns, "They had five hundred men, and our king has just killed the bastard brother of their commander."

While Lady Jayne next to her lifts the platter and utensils, she gives Lord Hornwood a sour look.

Sansa rubs her neck again before the stress stacking she still receives. True, Jon's reaction was
excessive and not appropriate for a king. Especially one that carries a kingdom as volatile and unhappy as the North.

"They were warned that Queen Daenerys enjoys protection," Sansa reminds him, "Jon is merciful but not a dimwit."

"It was the queen who chose to venture through the woods without escorts," he replies, throwing some maps on the table. "I have not come to discuss this matter with you, my Lady. But it is wise for you to remain being the voice of reason in your brother's ears. Even his ancestor, the first dragon, needed wise advice when his impulses wanted to reign his good senses."

Lord Hornwood had been promoted to commander of the Northern forces when Jon forgo the position to leave with the wildlings. They did not have much support from the oldest and greatest houses in the North, so its contribution was important and Sansa was responsible for always making him feel he's heard.

"We have to talk about the south," he begins to say as he stretches the map in front of them. "More specifically about Moat Cailin."

"Moat Cailin? What do those ruins matter for?"

"Very much, my Lady," he says, stunned. "The Ironborn took it during the war of the five kings, and Ramsey Bolton," he stops when he sees Sansa's troubled expression at the mention of her second husband. The worst of them. "He had to regain control so that Roose's troops could advance to the North, otherwise they would be trapped in the South."

"Jon knows about this?"

"He went to make a brief recognition of the area with the red beast and said that it remains uninhabited," in the past when she was queen, she had been advised to send a guardian to the ruins but she had refused at the needing to occupy other castles more important. The invasions had not begun. "We will pass by when we go down to Vale and Riverlands to help with the reconquest."

"So what's the point, Lord Hornwood?" she questions her, exasperated. She still had to finish organising the numbers for Winter and the stocking of the vaults. Jon and Daenerys had gone to one of the nearby villages, new and old gods know for what. "You will pass through that area and inhabit Moat Cailin to avoid usurpations."

"We can't, we don't have the numbers and placing Daenerys Targaryen's men will be seen as an invasion," and there Sansa understands why he didn't go straight to Jon with this matter. "We need more men, and those who were left, we are lucky if they help us protect the west."

Sansa sighs again. The Flint still had influence in the West.

"We have no more men, Lord Hornwood."

"It is not so," then he indicates on the map an area even further south than Moat Cailin.

Oh no, she curses in her mind. Greywater Watch. The seat of House Reed and the crannogmen.

VIII

Jon
In the following days, it is like returning to days in Qarth, where they would only see in meetings for war planning. Grey Worm does not leave her side and she neither does something to provide the space for him to reach her, so Jon accepts it and walks away.

He does not want to admit that he can't see at Grey Worm's eyes, and that's another reason to stay back. Though it's killing him slowly and he thanked the Gods that no one can see him when he flies to the Wall and let Barristal breathe fire on it.

Sansa and Lord Hornwood comes to him with the plan of summoning Lord Reed and the Crannogmen, which explanation and details Jon hears with a distant mind. He knew that it was hard to communicate with them, their seat is a floating island constantly changing its ubication because of the swamp where it is. Ravens can't reach them, and they didn't have the time to waste with emissaries. Not regular ones.

At first, he doesn't want to take Daenerys with him. However, Sansa insists so much that he ends up giving in and sending one of the maids to ask if she wants to accompany him. She accepts and for a moment is jubilant for it, until she appears in the southern countryside with Grey Worm at her side.

Jon avoids eye contact again, climbs on the back of Barristal and advances in front of them. They only carry Barristal and Jorion, two dragons are enough to alert the swamp's population.

It takes them a whole day to find the exact place, but they find it and the dragons land in a clearing not far away to advance on foot until Lord Howland's guard allows them to pass.

Along the way, they go mostly silent, with them talking occasionally in Valyrian. Jon recognises some words like lōz, iēdar, bāne, and obviously, zokla.

Dragons around the sky are enough of a signal for Lord Howland to send Meera to receive them. Jon and she look at each other with mutual understanding when they meet; Both have been used by the Raven for its own purposes and lost their loved ones in the process.

"Hasn't he tried to contact you?" This is the first thing he asks as they advance in a canoe to the floating fortress of Lord Howland.

Meera maintains a neutral expression when she replies, "The day he does it, I will go for it and kill it."

Jon nods. Bran was not Bran, and the Raven...what does the Raven wants?

Daenerys continues to go quite unnoticed with her dark hair, although some strands of silver hair begin to show.

The Reed never ceased to be loyal to the Starks, so there are no accounts to settle with them as with the other houses in the North. However, it was even strange to have to ask for their aid, even almost incorrect considering that the successive wars had not disturbed their existence too much. Well, it corrects himself, it cost them Jojen Reed.

"I've waited all my life for you to come and introduce yourself to me as the legitimate king," Howland says aloud, kneeling as Jon advances along the dock.

Jon knows that, like Eddar Stark, Howland always knew of his true identity. He was sworn not to reveal it, so he doesn't judge him forever breaking that oath.

"Your grace," he also greets Daenerys. He recognises her without having to introduce them. At
their confused looks, he clarifies, "I would recognise the face of Rhaella Targaryen's daughter anywhere," he approaches with an impish expression. "I never met her but they said she was the most beautiful woman on the known world."

Daenerys's face trembles and her eyes sink, but she smiles and nods. "Thank you, my lord."

It takes them several hours to explain the whole situation, including the crossing to Essos, but then they go straight to the matter in question: go to Moat Cailin as the battles in the South take place.

Meera Reed opposes, does not want to leave their home unprotected. Howland Reed and his generals agree that his domain has always been impenetrable, and not too important for invaders.

"It's done, your grace," he shouts and Jon concludes the man is getting deaf, "To the King of the Seven Kingdoms, we pledge the faith of Greywater. Hearth and heart and harvest we yield up to you, my King. Our swords and spears and arrows are yours to command. Grant mercy to our weak, help to our helpless, and justice to all, and we shall never fail you."

"I swear it by earth and water," another of his men prays.

"I swear it by bronze and iron," Meera adds almost in a distant whispering.

"We swear it by ice and fire," all of them cry.

Two days later, between one negotiation and another, Jon has a moment to talk alone with Lord Howland, who gives him all the details of the story that unites them.

"So many things could have been prevented if she has just tell us what was happening," he laments, "Lyanna was a woman extraordinary beyond words. But she was bold and did not like to talk about her feelings. Much less with her brothers. That is the reason she never told Ned how disgusted she felt about Robert."

Jon's chest burns at the notion of his mother being forced to spend her life with that man.

"I never liked it, especially when," he cast his gaze where Grey Worm, Daenerys, and Meera are chatting. Apparently Meera has always wanted to know about training with spears of the Unsullied. "She was not to blame for anything and they chased her like an animal. She and her family. Every time Ned thought about telling Robert about his betrayal, he thought of that little girl and her brother running like beggars of Robert's murderers."

Jon does not realise that his fist are clenching out and in at his sides.

"You don't know how sad it made me know about-" he pauses to search for the right words. Jon knows what he means. "But life has given you another chance from what I see."

He looks up, confused.

"I'm not naive, boy," he laughs, "even my crocodiles realise what you feel for her."

"It's my aunt," he tries to excuse himself; Not because he wants to invoke some kind of demure, but because Howland has just mentioned his father-uncle, plus the memory of what happened in King's Landing, and what he has done. It was too much.

“Tell me, Jon, what you tell yourself at night? That you were protecting your family when you
shaved your knife in Daenerys Targaryen’s heart?” The voice of Ned Stark repeats in his mind, over and over again.

"Your grandfather and grandmother were siblings, and your other grandparents were cousins, so do not come to me with that nonsense, lad," Howland scolds him. "Besides, one has to be extremely lucky in this life to get a woman like that. And doubly blessed that she's in love with you as well and not forced into an unlovely marriage as your sire were, and all your ancestors before them. You are both alive and above all, you are the last of your kin. Go and make more dragons, boy. You are not that young and you don't have much time."

IX

Daenerys

After the journey to Lord Howland Reed's seat and the mentioning of her mother, Daenerys decides that it is time to return to her silver hair and wear Rhaella's ring. It felt good hearing someone calling her her mother's daughter. How funny it is that everyone since she was born, has always reminded her about her father the madman, but never of her mother, the kind and caring Rhaella Targaryen. Nobody. Until now.

She allows Bandy to prepare her bath but then invites her to retire. She is almost removing all the dark dye and she calculates that by next week when they will leave forth south, she will return to her natural colour.

Then she lies on the bed she only uses to finish her reports when stare goes to the wardrobe room as a bitter thought comes to her mind.

How many miserable Ladies of Winterfell have feared that this door will open, she thinks as she enters the hidden corridor inside her wardrobe room. Daenerys has discovered it thanks to Bandy, and she knows that it leads to Jon's bedchamber, which is the Lord of Winterfell's chamber.

Her hands are perspiring which seems ridiculous, as if she could allow herself behaving like a timid maid at this point.

Daenerys crosses the passage to Jon's bedchamber trying to be as stealthy as possible. The last thing he needs is to end up killing her by mistake. She can't help laughing at the idea.

When she is in front of the door that leads to his closet, she has the impulse to turn around and abandon that bad idea. But she does not find the forces, rather everything inside asks her to do so, to move forward.

When she enters, she finds him sitting at his desk, dozing with mixed reports on the table.

"Jon," she wakes him up shaking him gently.

He shivers and his eyes blink open.

"Dany," he whispers, surprised to see her. "What are you doing here? Did something happen?"

He's already going for Longclaw when she stops him.

"There is a passage from my room to yours," she alerts him, indicating the way from where she came.

"Aye," he answers, holding the armrests.
He says nothing more and she concludes that her assumption is true. He knows and knew. Obviously he has to, he lived here all his life.

In her gaze, the disappointment is so obvious that Jon does not need words to realise that something is not going well.

Daenerys turns to leave and he rounds the desk to stop her, which she resists pushing him abruptly and leaving him stunned.

"All this time you were a passage from me!" she claims with anger boiling in her chest, "but you chose to ignore me, damn son of a bitch!"

She knows he has gone too far when Jon's eyes darken and his grip on her arms becomes more intense.

"What do you want me to do? Kill Grey Worm so he doesn't get between you and me?"

She tries to let go of his grip once more.

"Eleven years ago, Jon!" she corrects him, her voice breaking at the memory. "You had to cross that damn passage, it was the only thing you had to do."

Understanding invades his expression.

"Dany," he laments with that wounded tone she has learned to hate. It was difficult to have empathy when the one who lost everything was her. "Dany," he does it again and this time she pushes him harder. It's the first time she wants to hurt him, seriously. Physically.

Daenerys keeps pushing him while hitting Jon's chest until he knocks his legs against the desk and has to lean on not to fall.

"It disgusted you, I disgusted you," she says, while he looks up in pain. "You kissed me and touched me with desire when I asked you to be honest but you couldn't even say it, right? You fucked your damn aunt!"

"Enough," he demands, now enraged. "You speak as if we were animals. I loved you, I love you, I," he trails off, "I thought we had clarified this matter?"

"Wanting to fuck me again is not to clarifying anything," she contradicts him, the words come out of her mouth without demure although it costs her; she really carries an unbearable weight on her chest.

"I was disgusted with myself, not with you. I never felt disgusted by you. How could I? I regretted that you were disappointed, that you had not even proposed to marry us but that you saw me as your competition at the moment I told you who I was. And I know I did not understand how dangerous it was, but my life was a lie and you only thought of the Iron Throne-"

"You were not the only one whose life fell apart with that truth," she interrupts him, knowing he is right about her wrong reaction. There is no day that she does not regret it.

"But you never had to question who you were. You have always been Daenerys Targaryen."

"I apologise for that," she concedes, however, she cannot appease how livid she still feels. "But before you kept ignoring me. You left me loving alone, Jon. And ten years went by in which I continued to love alone," loving that daughter who couldn't be, alone. Mourning her alone. "And
now you have the daring to do it again?"

He intends to get close but she resents him too much at that moment to allow it. Upon her rejection, he sighs weakly and rubs his eyes wearily.

"I'm not worthy," he finally speaks and explains, "That's what my mind tells me. I'm not worthy. I saw Grey Worm looking at us with a single question in his expression: why him? The day I left King's Landing to return to the Wall on the dock, I saw him and in his gaze, I felt the disgust he felt for me, a disgust that I felt myself, did you know that he did not allow me to wash your blood from my hands for days? And it is fair. He lost the woman he loved at the same time as me, but he didn't kill her and I did. That day in your bedchamber he was asking himself that question. Why? Why him?

"Seeing him again is returning to that past. And then your eyes, gods, Dany, your eyes never cease to see me suspiciously and I've tried to ignore it but sometimes it hurts immensely and I don't know what to do with what I'm feeling. That's the same thing I felt ten years ago. Others take me for what I am going to tell you, I saw Catelyn Stark telling me that I was not worthy. Although she never said it to my face, I learned to read it.

"I will not allow you to blame me," she protests. "I begged you for love. I lowered myself and left all my pride-"

This time he is faster than her and when he approaches to hug her and put a kiss on her head, she no longer has the strength to resist.

"I know," Jon admits, speaking against her forehead, "But I couldn't think nothing more but that you saw me as something inferior to you. Inferior to the Iron Throne."

She grimaces in pain while holding his arms. The tunic he wears is so thin that she realises that it is the first time she has had so much contact with the rest of his body beside his face.

"You are my queen. Nothing will change that. And they are my family," she repeats his words as pain and anguish intensifies in her chest. Daenerys takes him away so she can look at his face. "You could have been there for me as a family and even in that sense you failed me."

He loosens the grip that holds them and maintains a defeated expression as he walks a few steps back.

"I wish you'd never told me. If I didn't know, I'd be happy right now," he retorts, repeating her words. "What that woman said in the Great Hall 'Jon Snow was sentenced for life and

"Because I didn't want it to interfere between us! Because it happened exactly as I told you it would happen! I fell in love with you knowing you a bastard, I loved you and protected you knowing you my worst enemy and then you killed me and I still love you!"

Now she's screaming with tears staining her face and Jon about to shed his own.

"Fine, Dany. You win," he surrenders, going to his bed and sitting on the edge. "Nothing I can tell you will make you forgive me for anything that happened before I killed you. And this last sin, I couldn't even forgive those who did the same to me. I will spend the rest of my life regretting what I lost for not-," he swallows before continuing, "for not saying or doing enough, but-"

"Did you tell yourself that in the past?" she asks with a cynical smile on her face. Daenerys is still giving him her back. "What that woman said in the Great Hall 'Jon Snow was sentenced for life and
deserted.’ She was making fun of me. She and I know that you mocked your punishment," now she turns around and walks towards him, "You saved everyone, protector of the realm. And instead of celebrating you, they punished you."

Again he looks at her with hate and anger. Almost resisting the need to hurt her for encouraging herself to say what she says. *You've already done me worst, what else can you do to me.*

"I saw you," she allows herself to confess, already exhausted from having those thoughts trapped in her mind. "I saw you leaving the Wall, Tormund, and Ghost by your side. That smile of freedom. And you know what? I also saw you when you made love to Val. So don't talk about mourning your whole life for something that it had finally given you what you wanted so much."

"The fire," he mutters with a horrified look. "You almost killed us for that."

She feels embarrassed but doesn't want him to notice it so she starts leaving again.

"Do you dare to judge me when you received the king of Lys in your bed?" he shouts, "You were far away. Alive. I told you a thousand times that I waited for you and you didn't come back. It had been six years and you didn't come back. But I knew you were alive."

She lets out a snort. "Are you saying that if I had been truly dead, you would have fucked her with less pleasure?"

Her excessiveness alters him so much that he is again walking towards her and shouting at her face.

"I would never have touched another woman in my life," he swears, but she doesn't believe him. She doesn't want to believe him.

"I didn't bed Gerael until years after that," she says. How had they ended up talking about their former lovers? "If for you it was six years for me it was nine. Nine years to let another man see the body you ruined."

Both are hurting the other, she knows. She is not going to push him anymore nor he drive his dagger into her heart, but the words were their weapons now. Everything was destroyed between them, however, nothing was powerful enough to push her to unveil her daughter's unsuccess existence.

The truth that could be the very end of this.

His agitated breathing to the beat of hers indicates that, again, they are in a stalemate. These were their unfortunate and pathetic existences. Take each other to the extreme of passion and pain until they were nothing.

Because it was like that. There was no solution for something so malicious, so broken.

She prepares to continue her retreat but Jon holds her by the wrist, preventing her although she insists until they eventually fall to the ground in the struggle, and he wraps her in his arms, and they stay there watching everything crumble.

"But I can't let you go," he says after a while. She swears that he wants to sleep but won't do it for fear of her leaving. "As long as you love me I can't let you go."

And that's when she starts sobbing and drowning her cry of despair in his chest. Because besides that their love is corrupted, she doesn't have the time he believes they have. Jon will have to let her
go when the Threshold calls her again. And thinking about what that is going to do with him, destroys her more.

His tears wet the crown of her head, she feels them. He gets up and loads her to his bed, removing her boots while she snuggles at one end, clutching her legs protectively.

"I love you in every way, Dany," he says without touching her, just staring at her eyes. "Like my family, like my queen and like the love of my life."

Without saying anything else, he covers them both with the furs and falls asleep. In the morning, she is still by his side when he awakens.

"You were never inferior to me or to the Iron Throne, Jon" she whispers to him, "I would've given up the Iron Throne if you had asked of me. I only wanted it because I lost you."

Jon shakes his head.

"You have me, Dany. You will always have me."

And then, they kiss; volatility and short kisses.

This time she rolls him off his back and she's above of him, consumed by the jubilation and happiness it produces in her. The young and primitive desire he makes her feel.

This time is not her heart that frozen but the knock on the door that invites her to return to her senses and her bedchamber before they can do something undue.

That same morning, Daenerys approaches Grey Worm, takes his hand and squeezes it, and responds, "Yes, I trust him."

That night is Jon who appears through her wardrobe room.

X

Victarion

Blind is the eye that sees the truth but chooses not to believe it and absurd the mind that believes to possess it. Silence is the master among the masters and the long wait will bear fruit in the advent.

He knows about waiting, advent and greatness. He knows truths and knows which they are and which are imitators.

Time is coming and the eye of the crow sees everything. Everything even from the chaos that surrounds it.

*The wisest player is the one who waits*, the raven told him when he first saw him. *You have waited too long in the shade of the Greyjoys. Your brother was an imitator of truths, but you Victarion, you are a bearer of truths. Slayer of lies. Warrior of Chaos.*

Then the Raven gave him his crown and he went in search of the wayward disciple of the red god. He hunted his sheep like a hungry wolf until the shepherd burned them all and left his favorite.

His adversary, the warrior of the fire.

Then there is only one shield that keeps her safe. The shield will soon fall. The shield must be removed.
He smiles while leaving his hiding place in this castle where Winter fell first and where this Winter will fall last.

No one recognises you when you have no face.

Chapter End Notes

- To be clear: the bedchambers are in a different keep than the great hall in Winterfell. This is the map I'm following: http://suptg.thisisnotatrueending.com/qstarchive/3024341/thumbs/1541339353377.png
- löz, iēdar, bāne, zokla: wet, water, hot, wolf.

- I KNOW the last Jonerys scene is extremely intense and it has an unresolved connotation but it is how their relationship would be, with highs and lows (Real-life couples fight and argue most of their shared life). The important is that they are voicing their feelings, that's why I almost copy paste Jon's thoughts because now he's lettings his minds out. And well, you know there's still complicated things happening in the future. In the next four/five chapters they will be unofficially together until the big revelation comes. Initially, I planned to make that scene less about conflict and more about sexual desire but Nah, they need to speak first.

- This Victarion is free form but still, I took inspiration from both characters of the book, Victarion, and Euron. How sad it is what D&D made of Euron in the show, I'm glad they never included Victarion.
Chapter Summary

The conquest begins which means war is coming. Jon and Daenerys keep exploring their relationship as they deal with the royal duty.

In Dorne, Anders finds out about Arianne's actions.

Chapter Notes

This story was supposed to be a Jonerys journey but for some reason, I have a map Westeros open on another tab and also several historical websites while writing this lol, what I'm trying to say it's that the secondary plots never were meant to be that important but I guess there's still have to something logical there and there.

Happy Christmas!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 3: "South of the Neck"

I

Arianne

Your grace, Prince Anders of House Yronwood:

It's a great regret for me that our first official communication occurs in this burdensome circumstance. I invite your grace to resolve our differences peacefully and maintain the peace that has been so helpful to all parties. We ask with the utmost respect that the diplomatic hostilities between his kingdom and my soon mandate cease.

For the time being, I send my most pleasant greeting to you and your daughter, the future princess of Dorne, for her recent union with Lord Dewyn of the Free Folk, whom I appoint Lord of the Seven Kingdoms after such communication is notified.

Aegon VI of House Targaryen, King of the Seven Kingdoms.
Her father finishes reading Jon Snow's letter and looks at her with droopy and disappointed eyes. The ironic tone of the northern seems not to have affected him, but the very content of the letter that informed him that his perfect daughter had acted in the wrong way.

Beside him, his new wife walks with her huge belly and pretends not to have heard the words "the future princess of Dorne". She is satisfied with enjoying the ridiculousness of Arianne.

"I'm not married to him," she states firmly, just as she told Dewyn over and over again in recent months.

"The King has blessed you," her father replies, reluctantly throwing Jon Snow's letter on his desk.

"He is not a king and we are not married," Arianne insists again with certainty, although they can no longer deny the reality of the second part of that sentence. "The law of free folk does not reach Dorne," she adds as an obviousness.

His father shakes his head and breathes heavily, putting his chin above his fist; his thinking posture. His eyes turn to his wife.

"Jynessa, my love, could you leave us alone?"

Jynessa obeys with a pleased smile and leaves. Arianne hardly knows her but that look of animosity would recognize anybody, even a stranger. In fact, Xinea was the first to mention it.

"I can explain it," she is prepared to give the explanation she had been preparing for months.

"I always told myself that I raised you away from these land's uses and practices to inspire you with the gift of wisdom, but I never thought I was actually denying you common sense."

"He came as a friendly hostage," she hurries to clarify as if it were going to make this conversation more enjoyable. The term had been invented by Daenerys to name those people who lived in the court of Valyria until the conflicts with the kingdoms on the continent ceased.

"There is no such thing as a friendly hostage in Dorne, Arianne," he protests and she would want to say that Myrcella Baratheon would think differently, but it's no the moment, "Either he is your husband or he is our hostage."

"He is our hostage. Until the king," she pauses to emphasize her disagreement with the term, "Aegon complies with the plan we agreed upon."

"Is that the reason you brought that man to Dorne? Or are you in love with him?"

Arianne contracted her fingers at the swirl of emotions that this question causes her. She has always been honest with her father, a cornerstone of their relationship. But in this, she could not deliver such a feeling and be more exposed than she already was.

"We are friends."

"And I have to assume that the sounds that the maids heard in the boat back home and in the tower where he is residing, are you two playing cyvasse?"

She wants to smile at the comment but also feels the heat rise through her spine at the mention of her encounters with Dewyn in his father's mouth. It is not something any daughter should discuss with her father.
"I am not judging you. I admit that I am disappointed because I believed you another person; a prickle girl," he now says this in a mocking tone that only makes Arianne feel worse. He notices it but does not retract.

"I did everything right and things didn't work out in their own way," she finally says in a broken voice, tears stinging her eyes and clouding her gaze. "I got tired of doing everything to please you, please Daenerys and please this burden that wasn't even mine in the first place, " a dream of being queen that has cost her so much time to live that now she doesn't even know if it was worth it. "Yes, I slept with the wildling. Our last two queens slept with their relatives, so it won't be a big change for the seven kingdoms."

Her tirade awakens the demure of her father who is stunned, looking at her with eyes wide open. Arianne cleans her tears and decides that she no longer has the courage to face this situation.

"Bring the board," indicates her father a moment later, when she is determined to retire.

"What?"

"We will play and talk."

They play several times in silence in which she calms down and breathes the fresh air that is blowing in the water gardens. She listens in the background to the children laughing as they splash, and the thought of what Dewyn might be doing at this moment walks through her mind from time to time.

"I am not angry because you decided to do what we all do at your age," he admits in his appeased tone, "I am angry because you did it in retaliation."

Arianne sighs because she knows it's like that.

"She crowned her killer."

"A man she loves."

"The man who only used her," she points out while kicking his king off the board. He begins to prepare the pieces again, "I was her family. I was holding her hand all these years. I loved her," her voice trembles again when the mixed feelings attack her. "I loved her like the mother I didn't know, like the sister I didn't have," she thinks of her nice pregnant stepmother, and corrects herself, "I don't have yet. However, I wasn't enough for her"

"Every time I visited Valyria, she took me to see all the wonderful work you did in the cities. She is proud of you. I am proud of you."

Again she loses her composure when she thinks in the life that is no longer. She hadn't allowed herself to think how much she misses Valyria, Daenerys, Monterys, Ornela, Daario and the children, even Gendry.

"Most of all, I don't want more wars and conflicts, our plan was a great solution for everything."

"Ruling is like playing cyvasse," he says as he examines the pieces he hasn't moved yet, "Although it is destined to perfect the art of war, it also teaches us that sometimes one has to wait for the right movement to appear. in front of us."

"Your wife doesn't just care about the heir of the House Yronwood, you know. She thinks she is the Prince or the Princess of Dorne."
Since house Martell disappeared and the power was in fact taken by Ellaria Sand, things in Dorne have not been easy at all. How things continue when the dynasty that ruled for centuries disappears so suddenly?

"She has to be prepared for anything to happen, like the rest of Dorne."

"I don't want you to get hurt," she confesses her fear for the first time. She has dreaded for years another uprising of the unhappy houses against his rule. They held the majority support of the army and, she supposes, of Daenerys and the Common Council. But no one was untouchable. The Martells were proof of that.

"Everything will be fine, my love. Time will put things in their place."

His father wins the last game.

II

Jon

The accelerated beating of his heart rumbles in his ear as he seeks to keep the pace with his breathing while still drowning in Dany's skin, which is getting terribly difficult with each sound of rapture that comes from her lips inviting him to continue his attack.

Despair will end up killing him. And it will be the most dignified and purifying death.

Gods, he curses as he tangles his hand in her again silver hair and pulls her head back while still kissing and biting the skin of her neck, I'm going to make a fool of myself if she keeps sighing my name that way.

No wonder they ended up this way because if it depended on Jon, they would have done it a long time ago and even they would've gone further.

However, he enjoys the confidence that she is slowly giving him, starting with the work they share when night comes and he shows up in her place to talk. She guides him with some questions of the realm he does not quite understand, and he gives her some advice on the training she is receiving from Jornik and now, from Grey Worm.

He would like to be the one to teach her but he knows that it is not possible for the moment to be allowed to be so close to her with a weapon.

And then this, the best part.

It all starts when one of the two gives up and kisses the other. The kiss is sometimes short, sometimes it is long, but they always continue until their hands are everywhere and their skin is exposed so that he delights with it.

He has lost any demure on the matter and lost several hours of his night sleep just with the thought of her. Dany, instead, seemed clumsy or shy about it, which she was not even in the past when they first share a bed. She was always confident and liked to sweep freely her hands through his arms, chest, and back; almost in agony to feel him. Now it is he who needs to have everything she allows him to have while he prays that whatever is stopping her, to leave her mind and permit herself to touch everything she wants from him.
Because that's what Jon is clear about among all the confusing things between them: he is completely her. Forever.

"Jon," she calls him with a struggling voice, drawing his attention.

He gives a last small lick to that stroke that he drew on the skin above her breast and looks at her. His eyes are dilated and although there is still coldness in them, there is light and excitement, and that is enough for now.

"Let me relieve you," she offers again and he drops his head into space between her neck and shoulder. Although he wants her to do whatever she wants with him, he doesn't want it to happen this way.

Jon had decided that he wants and needs that when things happened between them again, he'll be inside her and she will receive him completely, without reservations.

_You are not a green boy, remember. You are old for these games._

He departs and tries his best to regain his composure, with heavy steps to the nearby window, opening it to let the cold wind placate the consequences of their passion.

He listens to her giggling behind him and his heart skips a beat when he turns around and sees her like this, relaxed and happy.

"I wish it could be that simple for me," she says as she lifts on her elbows and looks at him with a smirk. Her hair is disordered and her chemise all shifted. Jon puts his head out the window again.

Finally, exhausted without return, he comes back to her bed and covers them, having caught too cold. She follows him in the movement but does not need it, nor will she sleep.

"Dany," he whispers, as she turns her face to look at him. "Can I ask you about-," he doesn't know how to proceed and stays a minute thinking.

"About my body," she concludes for him, bringing a hand to his face and stroking his beard. She does it all the time now. "Go ahead."

He doesn't know where to start. But since they've been on the subject he chooses to start with, "Why don't you feel pain but you-, you get that way. I mean-,

Dany laughs mockingly at his inability to say the words.

"Imagine if they had taken that off me too, Jon Snow. It would be really regrettable."

He smiles back but there was a gloomy connotation in her comment, and his chest hurt again at the weight of all memories. He rubbed his eyes to forget the image he wanted to return to his mind.

"I thought I lost it too for many years, until-" this time she's the one who trails off. Jon knows what she was about to mention.

"The Poison King," he finishes for her while reaching for her hand and bringing her closer to his chest, to his heart.

"Can I ask you about Val and you? about what you had?"

The question does not surprise him, for he is more easy for some reason than for him remembering that not so long ago, she was with another man, and almost became his.
"Yes, you can," he concedes.

Dany's expression colored, he can't unravel what she's thinking.

"You said you loved her."

He will not deny that there was a past where he thought Val was her present and that was it. She was there for him, they were together fighting every day for survival, their own and their people's.

"And that I couldn't love her the way I love you," he remembers her because he never stopped aching for her, who was alive and away, living her life on the other side of the narrow sea. "It seemed correct to love her after we," he makes a pause but she doesn't flinch as he does when she mentions her past lover. "I take her to my bed because I have feelings for her but in truth when I have you in front of me again, those feelings became dust."

Daenerys' eyebrows arches as she is conflicted about his statement.

"She was good, you know," yes, he knows and if there's a hell, he should go there for having done what he did. "In another life, I would have liked her," she smiles after saying it, maybe thinking in that encounter they shared.

"I know," he agrees, "Val never told me what I did what's right and she-" and again the recalling of his crime against her make him stutter, "She despised me for it, for a time."

Not long ago, she would shield when they came to a moment of intimacy like this as if she was afraid of the effects that can cause in her. Now, she openly smiles and stares at his eyes, tightening their grip. The kind of stares she didn't give to the Poison King.

"How did you know him?" it comes out of his mouth without warning. There are so many things he wants to know about those ten years.

"In Lys, when we conquered," she stops and rolls her eyes, "or better said when we tried to conquer it. Gerael set us a trap and then used us to end his enemies and settle as King."

A sour thought came to his mind in that regard.

"So he didn't want to bend the knee?" he asks, half jesting half-seriously worried their story repeated with him.

"He did it," she responds, frowning. "It was shortly after we became partners and he proposed to me."

The response worsened his suspicion.

"What? So it was true? You were set to marry?"

Daenerys let out a lazy cackle.

"I never gave him an answer, Jon," he reassures him, noticing his uneasiness. He was truly a green boy.

"Why?"

"Because he didn't mean it, he was jesting about it," she assures, "And because days after that, we have a hindrance and I totally forgot it."
He breathes hardens and he starts surrendering to the heaviness of his eyelids.

"Dany," he voices before finally losing in the darkness of his sleep. "The Poison King wasn't jesting."

Sansa looks at him with knowing eyes and Jon is aware that she will do everything possible to detect what has changed in his mood to be able to put her hands on the matter at all costs. He was not yet willing to share that part of his life with her, in any way. As much as she's already suspecting.

They were finishing reading the missives they received that day when he yawned and she took the opportunity to begin the interrogation.

"Your guards said you have heavy sleep, but it seems you are not sleeping that well."

"I learned to sleep with one eye open and the other closed in the Night's Watch," he replies, with his eyes fixed on the scrolls. "Stop harassing my guards."

Sansa had a maternal instinct that diluted in him, she controlled his routine, if he ate well, if his clothes were appropriate or if his hours of sleep were regular. In the past it hadn't bothered him; he was inert to that kind of thing. But now, when his life began to take this unexpected turn, it was time to draw a line between them.

"The older you get the grouchy you get," she protests, "Do you remember when we used to hide in the passage between father and my mother's chamber?"

He swallows nervously.

"You told your lady mother I was the one who trapped you there, and then she left me without supper for a week."

That memory sours her attempt to scratch beneath the surface.

"You always took the blame for Robb's mischief," she remembers with melancholy. He didn't intend to make her sad.

"Even with Robb, I have always felt that he was my younger brother and should protect him," his brother's memory always grieved him. "I wanted to do it you know? Go for you to King's Landing, join Robb's war."

"You did the right thing, Jon," she reassures him holding his hand. "You have always done the right thing. We cannot put our wanting before our duty. I love Robb but he did it and many people paid the price. Sometimes, we have to put the greater good first."

Her comment bothers him, Jon doesn't know why.

"And sometimes, on very rare occasions, duty and wanting meet. As father and my mother," she trembles but represses her breakdown. "Like Will and me," then she stares directly at his eyes, "And like Daenerys and you now."

"It's not that easy,"

"It is less complicated than you both believe," "Ser Davos arrived safe and well to his destination,
your grace. Are you and the queen prepared for attending to your first official appearance as King of the Seven Kingdoms?"

Ser Davos had left a week ago for Oldcastle to organize the first meeting of the common council with the so-called Guild of the Commonwealth, which were the most relevant merchants of Westeros since the beginning of the Victorion invasion. He never enjoyed the festivities of the highborn and was not particularly excited to attend this one.

Especially since the Common Council members were set to attend.

"I already have your garments made," Sansa announces and he can't avoid but rolling his eyes.

III

Sansa

Winterfell, 304 A.C

"Sometimes when I try to understand a person's motives, I play a little game. I assume the worst. What's the worst reason they could possibly have for saying what they say and doing what they do? Then I ask myself, "How well does that reason explain what they say and what they do?" So, tell me what's the worst thing she could want?"

Sansa was tired of enduring these endless pretensions with Littlefinger. Her desire to stick a knife in his neck increased. Each day she was trying a little more to gain the trust of Lord Yhon Royce, and once and for all, get Baelish off. Now they finally got him right where they need him to.

"And after she murders you, what does she become?"

"Lady of Winterfell."

He swallows her response as the fool he is. Arya has never wanted something like that. Might she is slow but not stupid.

"And Daenerys?" he keeps his talking up. "And your brother?"

"If Jon marries her, he loses the North. As you said, he can be unnamed."

"Yes, but they did name him, already" he asserted, You brought the Knights of the Vale to the battle but they chose Jon, who almost got them all killed, over you. Jon. A deserter of the Night's Watch and a bastard son. Imagine what those Lords will do when he comes back with the dragons and the promised hand of the, let's say, for now, future Queen of Six Kingdoms. Their children will also be Starks. His sons will be more than you. And the only use you'll have when Daenerys Targaryen arrives is to be the Lady of Winterfell until your nephew comes and takes that place. A male grandchild of Ned Stark. Except, of course, my lady, you wed now and start to make your own."

"Daenerys Targaryen will never be received as anything but her father's daughter," she stated, "If Jon marries her."

"What? Will you arise against him?"

As if it wasn't what you want, Lord Baelish.
"I will never bend the knee to her," she promised, "We, the North, will never bend the knee to a Southern king again."

"Baelish chuckles, "You are not in the position to decide that. They said the black beast she mounts is Balerion reborn."

"Jon will not allow it," she tried to keep her composure but he always found the way to mess up her nerves.

"Jon is a stubborn kind, I take it, but not even the white wolf could resist the allure of the most beautiful woman in the known world. I'm sure your brother Robb didn't think of you when he wedded that foreigner that condemned his warfare. We already know Arya won't choose you. Tell me, will Jon choose you?"

"Jon will do what it's right," she closes her fist on the scroll Jon sent.

"And what it's right?" Petyr asked for the last time.

Lady Jayne comes and settles by her side while both observe Daenerys and her men training the dragons in the North Field. Sansa knows she and Jon are slowly getting together again, and couldn't be more relieved for that.

"Could you do it?" she questions her.

"Her guards are strong-willed but they are still just men," she jests and Sansa smiles slightly.

"And what?"

"I will not say it's that heinous but," she makes a pause a takes a deep breath, "Far from what it used to be. She has not a single corset!"

Sansa had realised that Daenerys no longer wore the elegant clothes that characterized her in the past. Lady Jayne had indicated that they should do something about her appearance.

"And the colours?" at least, she should wear her House colours.

"Mostly brown, tones of brown and green."

Sansa sigh, walking towards the step stones.

"We have no time. They will fly forth Oldcastle tomorrow morning."

"We both can work a miracle in one night, my Lady."

"Let's hope so."

They went to the warehouse to withdraw what was necessary to work with the seamstress that night. In a dusty corner, there was a piece of furniture where she had kept the clothes of her little Eddar. Sansa ignored the sudden pain in her chest.

"Is she our future queen?" Lady Jayne asks when they walk through the halls, "I heard rumours that in Dorne they called Arianne Yronwood the next queen consort."

She suppresses the desire to roll her eyes at the memory of the princess of Dorne and her bad
attitude. *It's just a girl*, she remembers herself, *you did worse things at her age.*

"She was shortly promised to Gendry Baratheon," she explains, "And he was set up to be King."

"An alliance between the North and the South, do you imagine?" Jayne comments with awe in her tone.

"It has sense," she agrees.

"But our King loves his aunt," she adds with a small giggle.

"Please do not use that term," Sansa nags her, though she finds it humorous too.

"I'm sorry, my lady."

"Make sure we have that gown done for tomorrow."

IV

**Daenerys**

"Dead," Torgo declares once more, disarming her. Daenerys is not an idiot and knows that it is impossible to beat him; she is content to not let herself be disarmed, but even in that she failed.

"I know," she acknowledges, walking to raise the Valyrian steel sword that still had no name like Longclaw or Widow's wail. They would return it to Jaime Lannister's son as soon as they traveled to Casterly Rock to meet Brienne.

"You should work on the wielding," Torgo points out, massaging her wrist, and Daenerys feels him tense and abrupt in a way he had never behaved with her. "You must remain on the back of your dragon and let me protect you," he finally insists, as he has done since she told him that she usually joins the battlefield.

"No," Daenerys forbids, "I am not the useless queen you used to serve, Torgo," she repeats, "I know I will never be good enough, but I try. And no one will receive death for me."

She had discussed this issue with him but of all the people of her past, Daario, Jon and him, Torgo was the one who handled the situation the worst. However, it was understandable considering the time elapsed for both.

"Let's stop for today, Jornik," she announces to her commander, who nods and apprises the men who are working with the scorpions. "The dragons are getting tired and hungry," if they don't eat right away they won't see soldiers on the ground, but prey. "Let's go hunting," he invites Torgo, climbing on Jorion's back.

She and Jon agreed to leave sheep and lambs released in a clearing near Winterfell, as a gesture of enormous confidence the dragons appreciated. Until now there had been no incidents involving the cattle of the impoverished commoners of the North.

"Torgo, they won't hurt you," Daenerys warns him not to startle him when Greywing approaches to inspect him. Torgo was in fact immobile, with his usual rigid posture. Normally dragons do not approach people who do not have Valyrian blood, but Greywing detected through the small bond they shared that Grey Worm was special. Missanderys soon also comes to satisfy her curiosity.
"These two never move away from each other. Greywing for you and Missanderys "at that moment she swallows the lump in her throat again at her memory, "for her."

Torgo's expression softens and he allows himself to caress Missanderys' snout, who receives it with tranquility, almost playful. "You are beautiful as Missandei of Naath was," he gives her a compliment, then looks at Greywing "and you must serve with loyalty," he urges to his namesake.

A heatwave invades Daenerys's chest at the recognition of the dragons towards Grey Worm.

"They understand you," she comments happily. But Torgo's face soon returns to that dry and uniform expression of always. "Is there something wrong, my friend?" She inquires.

He doubts a minute before answering.

"It doesn't feel good. Fight for these people."

Daenerys knows that it is not fair to ask him to do so, Torgo owes nothing, absolutely nothing to this land.

"You want to go back?" she offers that option again. With Jorion it would take only a few days to return him to Naath.

"Only if you come back with us," he replies, looking at her with hopeful eyes. He had told her that in Naath the Unsullied and the Dothraki wanted her to come back and stay to reign there.

"I can't," she admits with a mixture of sadness and exasperation. She was tired of returning to the past and to the wounds that remained open.

"You have forgiven him," he affirms again as a lament.

"I told you before-"

"He killed you," he reminds her, and oh, it's so painful to hear it from someone else as if she didn't hear it all the time in a little voice in her mind. "His hands were stained with your blood. His child's blood"

That last comment is too much and Torgo Nudho realises because he retracts and bites his lips, recognising his daring. He did not question her about the loss of her daughter, he gets it because there was no little girl with silver hair circling anywhere.

Telling Torgo Nudho about her pregnancy was logical once they took King's Landing. She had begun to feel dizzy from Varys' poison, who without her knowing, it was slaughtering her daughter, and she had asked him to seek help as soon as possible. That kept him distracted while Jon came to kill her.

Gods, she laments again in her mind, I should have accepted the escorts he offered me before he left. Grey Worm returned with the curator when he found Jon soaked with her blood in the throne room; she understood the helplessness and stress that Jon still caused him.

"I made you swear-"

"I didn't tell him," he ends for her before she can claim his oath. "This one doesn't break promises. This one keeps them."

And for that Daenerys is grateful. She didn't even assume in all those years that Grey Worm could
miss his oath.

"A lot of things happened," is the only thing that can explain, "Please, don't come back to that place," she urges, but it's really a plea. Now she understands Jon's words.

Seeing him again is returning to that past.

"He doesn't deserve you and this place doesn't either," he insists again.

Daenerys can no longer avoid it and lets out tears.

"Come with me," she orders him as they walk away from the dragons and to the village of Bandy.

She had planned to visit her today, so when she knocks on her door the young woman is not so surprised to see her. They have started with the construction of the houses in this and another village in the southern countryside. Her mother now had a real bed to rest.

This time Jez does not fear her and gives her the baby delightedly. She asks for permission and moves to a corner of the room where Torgo has withdrawn.

"This child is the only life I could give," she begins to explain as little Shyra babbles in her arms. She has learned that babies are held from the head; She had never touched such a small child before, not even to Gael who already had several moons when she met him, "I killed hundreds, or perhaps thousands of these," she admits with desolation and bitterness, she should not even be able to see in the eyes of this girl. "And I was willing to continue. We were willing to continue," she adds, but Torgo maintains an impassive expression; Innocence slaughtered. "Missandei didn't want us to burn children. You only killed adult men but I killed small children. I ruined thousands of lives," she kisses the girl's tender crown. "The man who attacked me came to avenge his family. I let him hurt me because I deserve it, Torgo. If revenge and resentment are all I have, then destruction is all I have," she swallows with difficulty and thanks to that she can have these conversations with him in another language. She was tired of the common tongue. "I can give life, I choose to give life. And when the time comes, I will have what my heart desires the most," she recalls Quaithe's words.

She would like to go deeper into the subject with him but that would imply convincing him of Jon's good intentions and everything that is happening between them. And explaining it over and over again exhausted her, makes her wonder again questions she thought answered, why did you kill me? why did you kill me in that cruel way? why did you smile when you crossed the Wall? why did you ignore me? why did you stop loving me?

Daenerys understands that there are things that simply cannot be reconciled.

"Red and gray, I like it," she says as she smooths the jerkin he was wearing for the feast with the guild of the commonwealth.

That night Jon came to display the suit that Sansa prepared for him and to seek her approval, for he felt like a ridicule exaggeration.

"You started using Targaryen's colors again," he replies, with his hand on her back, pushing her against him. He was wearing the gown that Sansa and Lady Jayne had kindly made for her that same night. And by kindly she meant to force her with delicate words of highborn ladies. "I like it," he adds, kissing her softly.
She rolls her eyes and pushes him back.

"I have no seamstress and your sister is controlling my wardrobe," she comments as she tries to accommodate the corset she had put in alone. Therefore, it is misplaced.

"All queens have a seamstress," he points out, approaching behind her and helping her finish untying the garment. Daenerys takes him away at the sudden awkwardness his presence causes her. It's strange.

"Ornela was the one who got me my clothes," she tells him. That is why she almost always wear the dark and sober colors that her fellow Khaleesi liked so much.

"I'll get you one," he promises, although, in the situation in which the North is, it's the least concern.

"It is not necessary," she thanks, smiling at him to decorate her rejection, "this is a rare occasion and I think the dress is very beautiful," and it was no lie, it was the most beautiful thing she had worn in years.

"You are a queen," he declares persistently.

"It doesn't mean I need a seamstress," it really meant that she had to start looking for better clothes, yes, but not a seamstress. The Dothraki woman who used to designed for her and Missandei, what happened to her? will she be in Naath?

Jon realises something is wrong and Daenerys can read the confusion in his eyes.

"Will you ever let me give you something?"

"I do not need anything."

He draws her against his chest again and lowers his lips to hers, his hands cups her face while holding her still as if she was about to escape his grip.

"Marry me, Dany."

That whisper against her lips is the limit of her patience.

"What?"

Jon struggles to understand what is happening to her, and Daenerys knows she is acting unfairly, but she feels a strange itch all over her body again, upset at his touch.

"I don't want to lose this when we go south."

If it was not enough for all her insecurities to emerge at that time, now the memory of the limited time they had, exploded the prudence she was struggling to maintain.

"I warned you that we don't have time," this time her tone is bitter and dry.

"I don't know what that means," he rightly defends, "We have many years ahead of us for this. I love you, you love me," this does not sound like a declaration of love but as a fact. As something static that will not change and that condemns them. "It's the first uncomplicated thing we have in our hands.

Uncomplicated? Daenerys wants to laugh out loud.
"Those are not your words, those are Sansa's words."

"It means the same; I love you and I want you."

She froze as she went to the wardrobe room to take off her dress. She didn't let Jon see her naked yet, they had barely shared a bit of that when they returned from Asshai with her ripped armor falling. He had not seen the worst part.

"I got rid of Tyrion, a constant presence among us just for you to bring Sansa to this," she says sharply.

"I don't-" is about to deny but her confession leaves him speechless, "She was right, you killed him"

Daenerys huffs and laughs.

"Your sister and I both know each other. And we know each other's motivation," now she slips the garment out of her body and is totally naked in front of him. This is what she wanted to happen; take away all intimacy of the moment. At least that would save the part where he sees her scars and becomes the walking misery that he has always been. "If she has any complaints, tell her that Tyrion sent Lord Westerling to attack her. He was always good at sending others to do his job."

When she passes by his side, she looks at him straight in the eyes in search of the usual torment, but Jon doesn't even shudder. That makes her even more furious as if the lack of reaction was his way of despising her. You're nothing, Daenerys, just another with war wounds like all those people who survived King's Landing.

"You are seen as my murderer," she declares, "and I am an unfailing murderer of hundreds of thousands of innocent people, women, men, and children. Children, little children! All their blood on my hands."

Jon has clenched fists at his side and is now shaking. By Gods, Jon Snow, react, do something, put a damn knife back into my heart.

"So this was it," he says in a broken voice, "We were just playing," this time there is something in his expression: contempt. "You gave me hope when you never planned to move on."

And again, Daenerys's heart is broken. How do you tell the love of your life that you are going to die in a short time and that you will never see him again? Never. Because the Threshold is only hers and her children, and he is not allowed any threshold, no eternal rest. You are as damned as me.

"It's not-" she tries to correct herself but it's too late, "That will always be between us," the murdering or the threshold, she doesn't know which one she means. "I can't change how it still hurts, or how I still love you madly. But the moment we put the welfare of the people in the middle, we are destined to fail and they to pay the price."

Jon leaves without saying anything else.

V

Dewyn
A boy talks to him as he splashes in the water fountain and Dewyn nods and follows the flow even though he doesn't understand anything he is saying. Meanwhile, he only wets his feet on it, as it has become something he constantly needs to do otherwise the dryness makes him feel uncomfortable as if he were walking on fire.

Arianne appears by one of the passages of the castle. Well, he doesn't know exactly what this place is but he assumes it is her castle.

"I didn't understand a word," he admits as he continues to draw with the charcoal they lent him; a present from the ladies of the court. They treated him like a real toy here but he didn't care. They looked like nice people. Too nice to be honest.

"I barely understand you, sometimes," Arianne responds, smiling and watching him drawing. It is her but with her back against the window of the tower where the days go by.

"I have this for you," he announces, handing her the material. He wasn't done with it but he didn't care. "Call it a peacemaker," he liked that word.

"I thought we had already made peace many times," and that was exactly why I loved that word.

"It's all I can give you, princess," he says without much more, "My imprisonment has been better than my entire staying in the North."

Although Dewyn did not get used to the weather and it cost him horrors to simply walk with such heat and wind, he never really thought that he would have a southern princess in his bed every night, after she had stolen it.

"So you like the sand now?" she asks, keeping the drawing in the pocket of her dress. In Valyria he was obsessed with the exotic colors she used to wear. Here the amount of skin he sees is just absurdly normal.

"No," he frowns, he wasn't so unhinged to enjoy that filth in every part of his body. "It's horrible. But I like the heat of the sun on my skin and having fresh water to clean my face when the wind lifts the sand," I never felt more alive, it was what he wanted to say. And he had never been in contact with so much living nature in years.

"I talked to my father," she interrupts the thread of the conversation they were having, "it's time for you to go home."

It was like throwing him to the water fountain.

"Jon-?"

"Agreed to marry me? No, he did not and little by little I am understanding that he never will."

Dewyn knows that she does not want Jon but it is a complicated thing about the kneelers and their government.

"He loves the dragon queen," he lets her know.

"Daenerys, call her Daenerys," she corrects him, "This garden was built for Princess Daenerys Targaryen. Her husband was Prince Maron Martell and their union brought peace to the Seven Kingdoms. For a time."

"Laika told me that, the princess has to marry someone who will help bring peace to her people," it
hurts to remember that but he has to say it out loud for her to confirm it, "and I can't bring you anything."

"Laika was repeating words that I uttered in horror when she told me you would steal me and at the end of the day, I stole you, right?" she tries to amend but Dewyn is already enraged.

"You did it," he affirms, drawing her close to him, "I belong to you."

"And I belong to my people," she replies, removing his grip, "You should have gone with your people, increase the population of Port of Ibba,", is cold when she says that but Dewyn notices the sadness in her eyes. "If you stayed to be next to your friend, you should go back and be by his side"

"It was not the only reason."

"I'm so sorry, Dewyn."

VI

Jon

They leave for Oldcastle the next morning without addressing a single word. However, this time he looks at her for confrontation, he cannot believe that after all that happened they stagnate again.

He knows what the problem is: she does not forgive him. She will never do it. The cold will never leaver those eyes of hers.

_I warned you that we don't have time._

Jon tried to decipher those words all night. He let her do her tantrum in peace and gave himself time to process what he was feeling. Pain? sure, he never stops feeling it. But there is something else, something that is missing in this scheme of things that they conform that seems to obscure Dany's mind every time they seem to be about to reach an agreement.

_What things are you not telling me, Dany?_

Most of the Northmen had already depart from Winterfell, and after this stop in Oldcastle, he and Dany would fly South of The Neck to settle in the camps near The Twins and begin to distribute the raking of the area. They agreed that he should be present to negotiate with the cities taken by the rebels. However, the areas where armed conflicts accentuated, dragons and the presence of Daenerys would help to temper wills.

Sansa bids her farewell happier than other times, one could even be said that she was urging him to leave. Jon assumes it will be easier to deal with the trials of Lord Glover's men now that neither he nor Daenerys will be there.

When they arrive at Oldcastle, the paraphernalia of always receives them. They are not times for celebration however, these people always find some reason to feast and squander the few resources they have left. If they'd known that all his life he spent this kind of festivities sitting at the table of the servants.

The only good thing about all this is that dragons begin to generate a feeling of normalcy, especially Barristal who loves to gloat and Jorion who is the most gentle. It happens even that he doesn't want to get off Barristal's loin. There is a sickly pleasure in being so high that nothing below can reach you.
Ser Davos accommodates them in an inn specially prepared to receive them, where Dany's room is at the opposite end of his. Before saying goodbye to dedicate each one to their particular tasks, he takes her hand and squeezes it. *I will not give up on us.*

Later the same day they were escorted to the Great Salon where the feast was taking place. She was even more radiant than the night before.

"It won't kill you to smile a little," she remarks, advancing without much care between the strangers.

"It's not important," he grunts, saluting their audience but still keeping a neutral semblance. The closer they get the sooner they met with the Common Council members.

"Of course it is," she murmurs, "I had to laugh at their jokes for years, you have to do the same."

"If I do so they will continue believing they are funny."

Dany slows her pace and approaches him to speak at his right ear.

"A Volantene I was acquainted with was under the necessity of buying a horse in Valyria, and bargained with the dealer, who asked him twenty-five golden coins, too high a price; he offered to pay fifteen silver coins, and to owe the rest; to which the dealer agreed. On the following day, when asked for the balance, the buyer refused, saying, “We must keep our agreement: it was settled between us that I was to be your debtor; I should be so no longer if I were to pay you.”"

He thinks for a while before realising what the joke is and laughs, not because it's good but because it's so bad.

"It's awful!"

"See? Laugh of the bad jokes without letting them know they are bad," she passes him by and goes to greet the people she already knows.

He is smiling.

Within the Guild there are people who did not expect to find, that is, shoemakers, apothecaries, artisans and other workers who would never have been invited to the feasts of the lords in Winterfell or anywhere else in Westeros. Their main concern was, ironically, the lords and the excessive taxes they requested for the exercise of the commerce. Jon listened to each of his complaints and discomforts, with Ser Davos at his side whispering the names of those he had just met.

He did his best not to be distracted from looking for Dany with his eyes or thinking if her former lover was present. He saw her a couple of times talking with the Sealord de Braavos, the only member of the common council he recognised.

"Easy, Jon," Ser Davos tells him by squeezing his shoulder. "The king of Lys sent a representative."

It was like taking a weight off. A relief to continue the talk with ease.

**VII**

*Daenerys*
Jasper Windor is one of Gerael’s trusted men who attended events that the latter does not, either because the blue sleep had taken away all his tranquility or because he found it unnecessary to present himself.

"You broke his heart," he salutes her when she's in the balconies, having had enough of the Sealord.

"It is not true," she replies with certainty.

"Maybe not, who knows with him."

"How is he?" then she wonders, and it seems more of a question to herself.

"How is Gerael?" is his response; both know what it means.

"I just want him to be fine," Daenerys admits. "I want him alive."

"I'm sure he wants the same," he says taking a sip of his goblet. "Apropos, I'm going to take care of the Westeros brothels' organisation. I've investigated that the new brothel guild chief is a nasty guy, so you'll have to help us remove him."

Daenerys enjoyed this part of reigning; serious negotiations. However, she had given her word that she would not do things her own way but the way Jon decided.

"It's not my realm, Jasper," she explains to him. "Westerosi don't like our methods."

"Bullocks!" he protests, making her laugh. "They are as murderous as ours."

In that, she can agree. Nonetheless, their perception for some reason is surrounded by that notion of honour and decency. For her, killing is killing.

"I don't want conflicts. Send me a scroll, I'll go, and see what I can do."

He nods, taking something from his pocket, "By the way. He sends this to you."

Jasper hands her a velvet bag and she takes it, opens it and appreciates the content. Daenerys remains motionless when she sees that it is a vial. An almost empty vial with a small note attached to the neck.

"A drop."

Later, when she walks away from the festivities to walk along Oldcastle's pier, Jon finds her and she is surprised that he has gotten rid of the flirtatious ladies who have spent the rest of the night following him. The scene was fun for her because Jon was a prude man who blushed with that kind of attention, but somehow she didn't enjoy seeing him smile for someone else either. Especially when they were not on good terms.

"You won't be able to escape forever," she warns him. "You chose to be king,"

He nods but does not change that melancholic countenance that characterizes him. He has caught a glimpse of the small vial in her hands.

"Why-" he begins but trails off, "You didn't give him an answer but you went on with him. Why?"
She can't believe how a simple anecdote became that much for him.

"He was my partner," she replies.

"I couldn't touch Val again after I saw you," he reveals, making her heart skip a beat. "What did you feel for me when you were still with him?"

"It's not correct what you're asking. Stop-,", this time she is the one without words. Jon stares at her with annoyance.

"Where are we then?"

"I don't want any more questions, Jon. I don't have the answers. And if I have them, I don't want them. That's what happens," then she sighs and swallows to ease the stress that fills her. "I continued with him because it was a safe place. This was a safe place," she points the vial before throwing it into the icy water, without even flinching, "When it stopped being safe, I had no more reason to stay. But with you, even when it's not safe, I end up coming back to the same place over and over again."

"And with me? What unites us, Dany?" he seems truly hurt. They have never asked that question before.

"More than you can imagine," she affirms with the weight of the truth in her chest, "The same thing that separates us, sometimes. He didn't love me as you think but he understood me, and we wanted the other because it was a safe place. This was a safe place," she points the vial before throwing it into the icy water, without even flinching, "When it stopped being safe, I had no more reason to stay. But with you, even when it's not safe, I end up coming back to the same place over and over again."

**VIII**

**Jon**

They land at the camp in The Twins a week later after finishing the arrangements with the Common Council and the Guild. They establish a pact; Places in the Crown Court and elections to preside over the different levels of the new parliament.

The moment they took him to meet some of the people who made up the guilds was fascinating for Jon; the first time as king he felt truly useful. As if creating something and not destroying it.

Ser Davos warned him that this was honey and that he would soon have to taste the vinegar, that is, begin negotiations with the rebels. *It's nice to have someone who will throw you to the ground when you're so high in the air,* he thought.

They arrive at the camp and Lord Ryger and Andar Royce are already waiting for them to start the invasion scheme. Yes, 'invasion' is the word they used.

In the Riverlands, the problem was not so serious but in the Vale are the weakest armies of Victarion that are both, most volatile and most difficult to penetrate. Andar wants to recover the Eyrie, and the only way to do it, at the moment, was to fly there with the dragons and negotiate with the usurpers.

It is the first moment where there is a disagreement with Daenerys.
"I said from the outset that I am not going to force peasants to bend the knee so you can return to your castles while they are still living in shit. Offer something in return or start practicing how to climb to the fortress."

If Dany's reticence is supposed to cause him stress, it fails. Although he detests that the rebels have appropriated the rightful claim of commoners, he does not deny that they have a big problem on their hands when it comes to lords.

"Did your grace think that when she rained fire over King's Landing?"

He is not the only one who looks angered at Lord Royce's general who makes that comment.

"That's what I thought when I finished with the Masters in Bay of the Dragon," she retorts, "At the end of the day it's not very different, you know, my Lord. Breaking the wheel. I can tear it apart and burn it but I chose to sit down and see if I can stop it just a moment, wondering who will be down this time."

Her response is uncomfortable, but Jon is not interested in caring about her methods because she's most afraid of herself than the men in that tent.

At the end of the day, Daenerys amassed something like an empire in Essos, and was the only one present who could take pride in having ruled properly.

"We do not want to offend you, your majesty," Lord Andar apologises, "But the rebels are not so different. They have slaughtered entire families. Children. Mothers. Elders."

"In any case, we can only choose the lesser evil," and with that Daenerys retires.

"Queen Daenerys is the reason we are here today. The next one who disrespects her loses his tongue, understood?" He never thought he would speak with that tone but he was tired of dealing with the arrogant lords. If five dragons didn't make them understand, nothing would.

Her guards and his guards look at each other curiously. They do not speak the same language but even they know what he has come to do. Jon thanks the gods nor Jornik nor Grey Worm are there.

Once she told him that she pretends sleeping to not elicit curious questions, so when he enters her tent Jon is not surprised to find her with her eyes closed, lying on the cot.

"What are you doing here?" she questions, suddenly stirring up.

He swallows the lump in his throat; hands clenching in and out at his side.

"I don't know," he admits what it's true. He has no idea what he's doing there. As always he just improvising.

Dany tilts her head with a grimace between curiosity and fun. Then she narrows her eyes.

"You should go," she suggests but her tone is soft, more like she's evaluating his reaction.

If he keeps thinking it too much, it would kill him. For good. So he advances until the small distance is no more, and his forehead stands up centimeters apart from hers. Her eyes brighten in compression, and he takes this as his signal.

He kisses her, and as the last time, it grows desperately because of the lost time.
His hand settles in her waist, sliding up and down softly with the contact of the fabric of her loosened tunic. When they separate to take air their eyes never disconnect. He straightens his grip and pushes her to her back lifting up her knees while continuing putting short kisses in her mouth and throat.

Jon bends over and moves both hands to sustain her face, giving her time to pull away.

She doesn't.

So Jon presses her stomach until she falls plain, never stopping from seeing him. He tore her legs apart to shelter himself between them, sliding her breeches down her legs until she herself is helping him to remove them.

Her bare legs are decorated with the scars of her wars, the memory of the ten years that have passed between them. Jon and Dany look at each other for a moment, understanding in the eyes of the other. Then he accommodates himself as best he can on the cot and starts kissing each one from the bottom until he reaches a smaller one inside her inner tight. *How this end here?*

Someday he wants to ask her all about them, when, how and why. But now he is engrossed and fascinated to think about that, in addition to, of course, enthralled by the sensation.

Before going for his goal, he swallows hard and looks at her, and it is the first time Jon sees it, not only the light that illuminates her eyes but there is warmth. The golden halo seems to be there again. Love. Love comes in the eyes.

With a tangled hand in her hair, he pushes her against him and forces her to kiss him, which she grants with the same ecstasy. This time she takes him by her back and rips him off his tunic in a rapid movement. Now she has her bottom naked and Jon his upper part. It seems fair to him.

They collapse in a tangle of arms and kisses and she touches his torso, pushing him desperately against her center. He wants to tear off any clothes between them too but he won't, he has to remind himself he won't.

"Dany," he whispers in her ear, "I love you," he declares again. Since he has been told her in that distant palace in Qarth he has never stopped repeating it. "We are in the south of the neck."

He gets up to check her confused expression and she lets out a soft gasp from her lips that only drives him crazier.

He smiles and goes down. Go down where he had wanted to be for so many years. Where he should never stop being.

When he is in contact with her heat she let out a gentle whimper, quiet as if the guards hadn't already guessed what they are doing.

Her moans of pleasure were a song he had yearned for eleven years to hear again. Her sweet taste the flavour he was hungry for.

He decides that he will have her at any cost. He knows he has no right but does not care for anything anymore. Once he has put his mouth in her again, she is completely his. Just his. As he will always be just hers.

He grew weary of the buts, of the impediments. He does not care about duty, honour or pain. He wants her, with despair. And he knows she wants him too. So why pretend anymore?
She uses one of her cushions to mutter herself. He can't but smile still with his mouth occupied in her. He does not stop kissing, licking and touching until his name is in one single scream that Jon is sure everyone in the camp has already guess what it meant.

When he's done he lifts up a bit and kisses her leg one more time, so deep and needy as the previous ones. Searching for the confirmation of the authenticity of the moment.

Then he gets to her mouth and stays there, breathing against her lips until he can recuperate himself by just thinking how he loves her. How thankful he is that she is alive and she loves him.

Dany's gaze travels down but he shakes his head, "Next time, I'll take you in Winterfell and you will be my wife."

Jon doesn't know if it's her languor that elicits a cackle from her part, "That's certainly much more confidence than you deserve," she assures, lugging him to her and wiping out the dampness from his beard. "Clean yourself, what they would think if they see you walking out like this?"

He chuckles.

"With respect, your grace, they can fucking think whatever they want. I am a King."

Daenerys doesn't stop smiling and caressing him when she frowns, as she has remembered something.

"Anyone who says I am King is no true king, that's what Tywin Lannister used to say."

"Did you watch it in the flames?" it is fascinating what she can do now. What she could know.

"No," she states, "Tyrion told me."

That makes him laugh. Not because it's good but because it's too bad.

Jon brings her closer to kiss her again, "Tywin and Tyrion Lannister are dead and we are alive," the two persons that favoured their extinction and failed in doing so. "And we are going to live, Dany."

IX

Daenerys

They stay in that state of lethargy for a while longer until the voices of the camp are extinguished and she tells him that it is a convenient time to retire and not have to give explanations. Jon, who was lying on her chest, just laughs, kisses her and gets up but not before fetching the forgotten breeches on the ground and extending it to her.

What has happened goes beyond words.

Jon leaves and she cleans the mess he made in her inner thighs, with her consent. She hasn't had this kind of satisfaction since when? with Gerael? But this exceeded physical pleasure. Her belly was dancing with emotion, that very same feeling she couldn't replicate with Gerael.

It is love, you fool, she scolds herself. You allowed him to climb your walls again.

Yes, it is love. At least from her part, there's nothing new. Her body, as dead as it was, still
responds entirely only to him.

And him? well, that was definitely anew. In the past, she would have two Jons, the fierce warrior that would take her with demure and respect, and the wolf that would just turn her around to enter her from behind. She loved them both, she wanted them both.

However, he is also a dragon. And this version of him; she was not sure how to feel about it. It was as if he just wanted it so he took it.

Targaryens take what they want. Targaryens answers to neither gods nor men.

And she has just allowed him to believe so.

X

Jon

In the morrow, Ser Davos enters his tent when he's breaking his fast with a mischievous smile on his face.

"That's what I call making things clear for everyone," he simply jests as he takes a seat in front of him.

In their past life, in this same situation, Davos had learned not to question him about his intimacy as a regular Hand would. A gesture that Jon appreciated.

In the next few days, he would tour the settlements in Riverlands with Edmure Tully and Daenerys would accompany Lord Andar to retake The Eyrie. All agreed to follow the same procedure as with Winterfell; siege the fortress, parlay once and then resort to the dragons. At the request of Daenerys, it was agreed that there should be no executions for those rebel peasants and commoners.

When they are finishing discussing the tasks for the day, Lord Hornwood appears in his tent with urgency on his face. Jon stands up, knowing something is wrong.

"We are trapped in the south, your grace," he announces his worst fear.

Chapter End Notes

- I don't know if this counts as 'smut' but yeah I wanted to focus the scene more in the feelings and intimate details than the action itself. I don't know, I'm blushing lol

- I feel the need to explain that this chapter its all about insecurities: In the first scene where we have Jon and Dany in an intimate moment, we see that Daenerys's fear of chapter one of this second part is still there; she fears that Jon will abandon her and the effects that can have on her. It is a fear that is still there and later also explains that her body is no longer the same, nor does she feel the same person. In the same scene, Jon feels the remoteness of Daenerys. He knows she didn't love Gerael but he still feels insecure because he witnessed their short relationship firsthand. It seems important to me that the internal conflicts of each one are exposed.
A Just Woman & An Honourable Man (Part One)

Chapter Summary

The confrontation against the rebels comes sooner and different from what they anticipated.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 4: "A Just Woman and An Honourable Man" (Part one)

Camp At The Twins

I

Daenerys

“What you want to see in the flames, the flames will show. Seldom you’ll perceive what you need to see. My sister Melisandre of Asshai had focused too much on her own desires that the flames gave her nothing but a reflection.”

Seeing in the flames was one of the first things she learnt in the Red Temple in those latent periods of tranquility between one campaign and another. At first, she was clumsy, the only thing that focused on them were memories of her childhood with Viserys before he had become in her nightmare.

When she began to improve, she explored the corners of Essos where the order was still weak, making sure no one would mock her word again. When she became really good, she learnt to manipulate the images to get where she wanted to be.

As Kinvara said, we rarely see what we need to see, and now, sitting in front of the flame in the center of Jon's tent, she felt like an inexperienced being unable to discern what is the situation in Moat Cailin.

"I see horses, people," she explains but is actually speaking to herself, trying to make sense to the array of sounds she's hearing instead of seeing. "Voices of," she stops, swallowing, "children."

Children? why children?

Someone behind her lets out a snort of disbelief, she doesn't bother to verify who he was. She was aware of how skeptical the Westerosi were, even knowing the things she could do. Most likely, that was the reason they distrusted her. Daenerys understands; the red priests were people to whom one should not trust. She knew better than anyone.

"Dany," Jon whispers, standing close to her. "It is not necessary."

When they arrived with the news that Lord Howland's men were attacked by the rebels on the road
to Moat Cailin, Jon got altered and had only one thing in mind: Sansa.

Winterfell was now only protected by Jornik's men, no more than five hundred soldiers of the royal army of Essos who had accompanied Jon's procession in Winterfell so that the lack of northerners wouldn't be so obvious.

Daenerys sighs and resigns, putting out the flames with a movement that disturbs the men behind her.

"Go," she tells Jon, knowing what has him uneasy. "Go and make sure she's okay."

Nor has she been able to see if Sansa and Winterfell are doing well. But that did have more to do with the displeasure that her sister causes in her and that even in the past prevented her from observing her for a long time. Seeing the flames requires a great concentration, and she is not in the right place.

"Move the Northmen back to the North," he orders Lord Hornwood. "I'll meet you there."

"I should advise you the opposite, your grace," the commander objects. "The scout said there are more than a thousand people!"

Daenerys frowns at that statement.

"Did he say exactly that? People?"

"Yes, your majesty."

Then she enlightens the flames again and now the images and sounds make sense.

"It's not just an offensive," she declares, narrowing her eyes when the images become clear, "it's a human shield. Victarion filled Moat Cailin with peasants. Women, children, and elders."

II

Jon

"BRING THE DRAGONS."
He reads the parchment over and over again.

It wasn't supposed to be like this. He has experienced this kind of hurdle before but this feels different, and Jon can't figure out why; he has faced the rebels, the angry peasants who came with what they had to end their lives out of rage, out of resentment. In the past, defending the borders implied learning to separate this latter from the refugees. He won't think in the amount of them that died escaping from the war of their own people.

"Your grace," Andar Royce steps forward, "You may consider to let this matter aside until we have more support in the south."

Jon averts his gaze to Davos, who returns a doubting expression. This has taken him off guard too.

"I'll send a raven to Gendry-, I mean Lord Baratheon," he announces.

"We are surrounded by enemies my lord, North, South, East, and West," Andar insists. "We at least should gain one of those."

"He's right," Daenerys stands up, eyes still fixated on the fire where only she can see whatever is showing. It makes him wonder how she does it when she shares the view. "The North was our safeguard and with this, we lost it," she moves to stand beside him.

"We have Riverrun," Jon murmurs.

"We can't risk a place full of refugees and people who still hasn't rebel," Daenerys points, studying the map. "Daario used to say that it's better to have an army in front of us than thousands of annoyed people in our backs."

He doesn't know what that last comment hits him on a personal level. She has spent ten years with Daario conquering in Essos. It's obvious she is a reliable source of information.

"They have never been this close," Jon admits, sudden fear and nervousness invading him. "I don't understand, they could've taken Winterfell while we were afar. Lord Glover barely changed our ploy in the defenses and," he stares in the map at the wall. "Stannis Baratheon went North easily by the East Coasts. What are they doing if not invading-"

Might they already have taken Winterfell?

"Jon," Dany touches his arm, awaken him from his disquieting state. "Go see her and be sure she's fine. Jornik and his men won't be able to cross the neck. I'll send them back to protect her."

Jon wants to hug her but restrains and nods. He will never deserve her.

"But your grace," Andar intends for his suggestion to be reconsidered but Jon is already moving to the entrance.

"If," he hears that Daenerys interrupts, "The parley with the peasants in Moat Cailin fails, we'll have to take the Eyrie as our seat. As you proposed in the beginning."

Jon scowls at her change of mind but seeing Andar contentedly agreeing, he accepts it too.

Dany escorts him to where the dragons are resting, dismissing her guards. Barristal lifts his snout
when he sees him, like ecstatic for some movement after weeks of just flying around.

"Jon," Dany calls him from behind before he can climb the dragon. He hasn't even put in his armour but can't think in other things that Sansa's wellbeing by the moment. "Take care."

He doesn't know if she's speaking of him, of Barristal, or as a general warning that war is coming.

Jon pushes her against him and kisses her, almost like a survival instinct. It is then that he realises that he is afraid. Afraid of losing everything he has.

He wanted no more wars.

Winterfell

III

Sansa

She has been surprised at how unsuccessful it resulted to judge the men of Lord Glover when no family of the affected ones appeared in Winterfell to demand justice. Sansa faced the quandary of hanging them for treason or granting them forgiveness and sending him with Jon's armies, as he suggested in the first place. The first option tented her but it was not a time to waste any soldiers, so she decided to send them to Jon.

Daenerys's soldiers left a few days after, turning Winterfell into a crypt cold, dark and empty. She received it calmly, enjoying that war did not bring her bad news yet. Her daily chores were limited to finishing organising the numbers they handled for the winter, supervising the construction of the nearby villages and receiving the reports they sent from the south. This last task secluded her several hours at her desk, so she decides that it is time to work with a scribe.

In the state that was the North, it was difficult to find trained personnel and much more, a Master, with the Citadel intervened. In White Harbor, Sansa had asked Lady Jayne to find among those refugees from the South someone with that kind of formation who was willing to work with them. That was how Gillberg came to Winterfell.

He was a strange man, with pale skin and black hair and large structure he could pass perfectly as a soldier.

For a while, she relegated him to irrelevant tasks such as finishing transcribing accounting books and passing them over to the seneschal. He had very nice handwriting and talent for the words of someone who spent most of his life between books and not with a sword in hand. Sansa accepted that it was time to extend him tasks of greater commitment.

"You will bring me all the sealed scrolls every morning," she orders on his first day, "I will read them and indicate you what you should answer to each of them. If you have something to contribute, I will not mind hearing them."

"Of course, m'lady," he replies, affable and quiet; she cannot distinguish the accent in his tone, but she is sure he's not from the North. She doesn't worry too much about questioning him, being satisfied with his work.

It is this state of tranquility and normality that she had not enjoyed in years that lead her to be astonished when the red dragon looms over the walls of Winterfell. Jon has told her the name a
couple of times but she keeps forgetting it.

"Your grace," she salutes him, formally, and knows by his countenance, that, indeed, war again is bringing bad news.

After Jon gives the explanation of the recent incident, Sansa closes her eyes and sustains her forehead with her closed fist. With the volatility in the west, the north devoid of protection and now, their armies trapped in the South behind a human shield, they only had the East.

"Dany promised me that her soldiers will return to Winterfell and protect you."

However, Sansa knows that it was not a permanent solution either. There was something both he was ignoring.

"I sent the men of Lord Glover with your army," she announces with regret and anger. "It wasn't an attack from the rebels, Jon."

The realisation hits Jon's face like a slap. "Didn't you bother to warn me about it?"

"I did send a raven," she states, remembering sealing the scroll and extending it to Gillberg. "They must've intercepted it."

At that moment, Gillberg asks for permission and enters with a tray of sealed scrolls. Sansa is certain the man is doing diligent work since the Seneschal has given no single complaint.

"so, what can we do now?" she asks with a slight tremor in her voice. "It's not just Winterfell, the villagers are too weak to fight."

"I will return to Moat Cailin and try to talk to whoever is there," he replies.

Sansa nods and they both watch each other for a while. Jon draws her into his arms and hugs her.

**Moat Cailin**

**IV**

**Daenerys**

It took them over a week to reach the hills surrounding Moat Cailin.

The first thing that she notices is that Victarion's men don't wear a uniform of any kind, and nothing more than a sword in hand, bows, and arrows, or knives, separated them from the commoners that watched the Northmen from the battlements ruins. She could hardly distinguish any faces, but they looked like people emaciated by war. And very angry. She can't avoid but think back at the slaves she saw all those years ago on Astapor.

Daenerys looks back; this time she is on the side of the Masters. Above the wheel, almost holding it in place.

Jon lands with Barristal on the north side, the crimson colour of the dragon a stark contrast with the blueish moor. Jornik's men were marching on his back.

*What a strange image,* she thinks to herself, *me with the Northerners and he with the Essosi.*
She didn't think she would be in this position, she imagined working from behind as a silent confirmation that Jon had the support of the last reminiscence of House Targaryen. Being in front of these people made her realise how ridiculous that sounded. In the past, it made sense to claim what was hers: the iron throne and King's Landing, the legacy of her family. But what about these people? What were they in front of these people? She a monster mounted on another monster and Jon another of the lords that the rebels have massacred for years with fair motivation.

Daenerys feels helpless and frustrated. It has no sense.

She knows that it is not her decision to give orders to any men, she does not even command her own, nonetheless, she tells Lord Hornwood and Lord Howland not to make any move until the parley is finished. The first looks at her seriously and hesitantly, while Howland and Meera nod with understanding.

She flies over Moat Cailin with Jorion, and land on Jon's side, who has an exhausted, serious and worried countenance. Behind them, Jornik realigns to his infantry.

"She is fine?" he asks, assuming it would be worse if he brought bad news.

Jon just shakes his head in a silent affirmation. He seems to be as stunned as she is as if the situation were too quick for both of them. It was one thing to present himself as the King of the Seven Kingdoms in a place where people accepted him and, at most, questioned him. He had not yet faced people willing to die in opposition to that reality. Not soldiers, but ordinary people.

Jon was never involved in these matters, and although in recent weeks he had enjoyed the most rewarding part, that is, serving and building something better, on the battlefield it was a matter of pure destruction. She knows it better than him.

They wait in awkward silence, only the sound of the horses whining, some weapons colliding by chance, and even she could say that the nervous breaths were heard. Several times she looked for Jon's gaze but he kept losing in some tumultuous thought.

Other times she looked for Torgo Nudho, who was impassively stationed on Jornik's side, arms back in the severe position of the Unsullied formation, serious and straightforward. Daenerys wondered if he had fought in those last ten years. That only made her bitter, thinking about taking him back into it.

The problem of not having Moat Cailin was the road needed to cross back to the North. It was a thin road, with the capacity for a single column of mounted soldiers. It was the reason why the Northern army anticipated the Essosi, which outnumbered them. And it was the reason why Winterfell would be left unprotected. If it is not already unprotected.

Daenerys realises that Jon and she were in the worst of positions, mounted on dragons and away from their people.

"Jon," he calls and he shivers a little, "We have to go down."

He observes her with a frown as if questioning her but agrees when he realises how stagnant they were and that the terrain was gradually darkening.

Barristal and Jorion lower their shoulders for the descent, but instead of opening their wings to fly, they remain behind them suspiciously, feeling the hostility. She remembers the words that Tyrion said to Daario to convince him to betray her.

"Dragons do not discern neither innocent nor bystanders."
If they touched a single hair of their heads, the dragons would unleash hell on the castle and the people inside. Gods, if they touched a single Jon's hair she would set the place on fire until there are only ashes in its place. And that does not make her happy; Being volatile does not make her happy.

They advance the road, and it is then that the portcullis rises, finally revealing the famous Crow's Eye, Victarion.

V

Jon

You will find little joy in your command, but with luck, you will the strength to do what needs to be done. Kill the boy Jon Snow. Winter is almost upon us. Kill the boy, and let the man be born.

Those words rumbled in his mind several times when his was above Barristal, seeing at the faces of those people. There was pure hatred, a feeling of rejection he knows pretty well. He couldn't even afford to see Dany at this moment, her always knowing mind would realise how uncertain he was, he's still is.

When she suggested they should climb down the dragons, it surprised him, almost it annoyed him because it was the thought of him when they were at King's Landing.

"Get off the dragon, Dany," he prayed, pretending she could hear him. "Show these people what I saw in you, prove all of them wrong. They come to see you for what you are."

But Dany never went down. She flew and burnt them all. The faith he had, shattered as he saw the awfulness of her egoistic desire.

Now she wanted them to get off the dragons? Why?

Jon shook those thoughts, horrified with himself at the sudden sting of distrust and disappointment that filled his heart. He had chosen this path. He accepted what Gendry extended to him, the crown they put on his head. He reminded Daenerys telling Tyrion that what kind of queen she was if she wasn't willing to fight beside her people. But it was not these people his people too? But they don't want you, he answered himself. Who are you to tell them to accept you?

Dead. He could end dead. Why does that thought bother him now? He looks at his right and there is the answer. Dany. All he wants is to return to her tent, be in her embrace and forgetting about this war. But he cannot. He assumed this burden willingly because of her because of the faith he eschews to let go. It will be hard, but they have to do it.

But at what cost?

The moment he sees Victarion, he expects to face something similar to what Euron Greyjoy was. That's saying, a big drunk pirate. He's definitely big but younger and wears the same dark cloak above and armour that the latter one didn't bother to use. Jon rapidly understands that's the garment of someone who is not planning to board a ship any sooner. That's what someone willing to fight would wear.

"I heard several stories of both of you," he begins speaking, his words perfectly reaching them despite the enormous distance in between. "The song of ice and fire," he laughs, and it sounds strangely affable. "Why it does not surprise me seeing you without little Yara by your side?," he's addressing Dany this time.
Yara Greyjoy and Daenerys maintained the pact they made years ago, even before they met. He had to respect that covenant; that is, the Iron Islands, like Dorne, would maintain their own king or queen.

That's what they said out loud; only he and Dany knew that eventually, the kingdoms would have to be divided. Or so he thinks.

"Victarion Pyke you deserted your Queen and took the Iron Islands from its true ruler," Daenerys' voice trembles, which is uncommon for her. "And you now are in open revolt against King Aegon-"

"Dragon Queen," he cuts her off. "Let the man speak by himself. If he wants these people to bend the knee to him, let him demand it by himself-" he smiles huskily, "Oh, I just forgot this man by your side is nothing but a child holding her mamma's hand. The dragon, the armies, the support, all comes from you," he turns around and points at the people watching from the battlements. "They know who the true power here is."

Daenerys is about to respond when Jon steps forward and talks.

"I don't care who you are, what you want. You are another petty liar who has days counted. You took these people's needs and grievances a turn them into a reason for war. You turned them not just against the Lords but against their own people," he raises his eyes to the persons above, "I haven't come to conquer any of you. I'm not a conqueror. I am a fighter. I have no right to ask anything from you, I don't want your pledges of fealty or your knees bent to me, I want you secure and the rest of the people likewise. Power fell upon me, and I can give you that this man is offering you at a great cost. Freedom and order."

Victarion stands still as if he is waiting for him to finish with his speech. A very calm man in opposition with his late brother or Yara.

At the null response, Jon insists.

"We have-," for some reason he stops when he sees and little child, face barely reaching the battlement.

"She used their innocence against me," he recalls.

This is a human shield. There is nothing to negotiate.

Jon breathes and stares at Victarion, who slightly gestures a mocking expression. That's it the most Greyjoy's feature he can remember.

"The man who needs a dragon to bring order to Westeros is the man who does not know anything about dragons," he voices, "The man who knows nothing about Westeros, the man who allowed a dragon destroy Westeros once. People in here," he points with his forefinger to them, "are people with ideals, Jon Snow. With a mind who remembers and a heart that aches. They know sometimes we have to make sacrifices for a greater good, something that, If I understand well, you have done before."

Jon grunts in return, stirring up Barristal in his back who approaches and snarls at Victarion.

"The white wolf has become in the red dragon, I see," he points out. "I have no problem with you, Aegon Targaryen. It is by chance we are on opposite sides of this battlefield."

"We want the Crowned King!" someone shouts, making him startles.
"Our king is the Crowned King!" another voice chants.

"Out the dragons!

"Out the stags, the wolves and the lions!"

The individual cries turned into noise and rose until the message was clear in unison: they didn't want him there. And not only did they not want him, but they also threatened him.

Barristal let out a strong roar that shut them all out. Jon accepts the parley is over.

VI

Daenerys

Back in the camp, she turns down the figure of the Eyrie when they around the map table.

"We'll take it," she states, ignoring the awkwardness that produces in her being the one taking the decision. "One parley and it's over."

Since they had returned, Jon did not stop showing himself in conflict with the different proposals that were presented on the table. Ser Davos wanted the plan to continue, gain support in the south. Andar Royce wanted the Eyrie as the new settlement. The northerners asked Jon to use Barristal to free the road to the North, although both knew that was beyond inconvenient, and the loss of innocent lives could be fatal.

"They are not innocent! In the Vale, they beheaded Lord Robin, raped his wife and killed his child," a man of the Vale man claims, "They joined your enemies, my King."

"Jon doesn't want to be seen as the enemy, we have come to help," Ser Davos protested.

"If we use the dragon at the beginning of our campaign, that will inevitably set a precedent," Lord Hornwood reminded them.

"Excuse me for the audacity, my lords, but that is exactly the way the first dragon conquered the Seven Kingdoms," someone else added.

"But we haven't come to conquer, right?" she interrupts, "we have discussed different strategies but no one has proposed how to bring defectors to our side."

Another lord snorts mockingly, "Your majesty, the only thing that prevented the King's head and your head from hanging in a pit at Moat Cailin were the dragons behind you."

"It won't be different further south," Ser Davos adds, "we can't afford a couple of words to make us lose our mercy!"

"And how did that work for her last time?" someone asks, causing Daenerys to look up for the sender. "In Essos, the watchword was simple, 'open the doors of your city, surrender your armies or die'."

Ser Symond Templeton, of the Knights of Ninestars. She barely remembers his presence during the Great War and the Battle of King's Landing.

"Live in my new world or die in your old one," he repeats what she has said multiple times in the various negotiations with the leaders of the Free Cities. "Why are you afraid, your grace?" this time
he speaks directly at her. "Hasn't shown you your last campaign in Westeros that mercy does not work when the other side fiercely oppose us? There's no peace to make, they want our heads!"

Our. It sounded awful for Daenerys. Last time she was not part of that "our". She's still nor part of any of this, neither lords nor peasants.

Jon stands by her side, "Mercy is what makes us different for what Victarion has shown them. Mercy is what will show them that I am different from any other king they had known and it's the way we should start building the new world."

She knows by the way he speaks that he's trying to avoid falling into chaos here, but it stirs something in her. Something like resentment.

The world we need is a world of mercy. It has to be.

"A king who offers mercy once is wise, a king who offers mercy twice is insecure and a king who offers it a third time is dead," she recites catching everyone's attention. "In Essos, I offered my enemies mercy once and when they refused, I used my power to secure my goal. Yes, people died, inevitably. But today Essos, it's a better place. Better than Westeros. I told you I will not force them back into your hold, so we are going to offer them something better, something new. And, if they refuse," she stares at Jon's countenance, sensing the disagreement and the consternation she is causing in him. "Then your grace will decide if he wants to waste his time fighting a losing war."

Until recently they'd agreed that they did not want to force the peasants to bend the knee, but this conversation, to elucidate how they will face the opposition of these people, had met them with the reality that it will come the time to resort to more coercive methods.

But mercy. That word bothered her. Daenerys doesn't want to be merciful, she wants to be smart and honest with her intentions.

"We'll stick with our plan, as long as they do not attack Winterfell," Jon states, "Queen Daenerys and Lord Royce will take the Eyrie, as she believes it convenient."

**Riverrun**

**VII**

**Jon**

Edmure Tully is a likeable man, he concludes. If Jon could only erase from his memory all the contempt he had him in the past for being the bastard who slashed his sister's name.

He thanked that the air of war was not breathed in Riverrun, but at the end of the day, it was not as pleasant to see all those refugees who, as in the North, were desperate for a solution.

Daenerys passes by a couple of times, to supervise the arrival of the other Essosi soldiers and the provisions. She's always distant with the people and fearful of meeting King's Landing survivors. It was an irreconcilable issue for everyone, both for Daenerys and for those people. Jon for the first time doesn't feel like reaching her hand and telling her that everything will be fine.

At night he expects her to come as he has done it before, but it makes sense that she leaves him abandoned now that he needs her most as he has done before. It makes sense that she would be so jealous of her affections. What makes no sense to him is to leave him in this fight alone, when he
had believed they had a common goal: the welfare of the weakest.

"Don't make the same mistake as him," Edmure Tully comments once while helping with the settlement of the refugees inside the castle. Jon recognises the man's effort to give up his family's stronghold to shelter them. "Your brother. I mean, your cousin. King Robb," Jon was grateful that he was still speaking of his for what he was. "That head of his was working and devising all the time, but he rarely would mention what exactly he was thinking."

*How strange,* he thought ironically, *that a Stark was too quiet for his own good.*

A blond-haired girl, stained by the mud and the dampness of the castle, approaches and pulls him out of his ramblings, shaking the fabric of his breeches.

She hands him a small rag doll and watches him expectantly. Although Jon had helped raise the children of the Free Folk, he never took care of the girls, much less so small. He smiles at her and extends her the toy again, but she pulls away, leaving him with the object in hand.

**VIII**

**Winterfell**

**Daenerys**

"Queen Daenerys. I was hoping we could speak alone."

Sansa's word take her aback.

Daenerys had returned to Winterfell to speak with Jornik and Grey Worm about the defenses of the castle and the surrounding area in case there was an attack from both the North and the South. She was not pleased to ask Grey Worm to take care of Sansa's security, but it was better than taking him directly to the war in the South. He also did not like the notion of serving who he considered a traitor, but he did not flinch or question her order.

Daenerys also went with Bandy back to the camp of the sick. She was finishing writing a letter for Daario when Jon's sister-cousin entered her bedchamber.

*"It's okay, Torgo,"* Daenerys indicates him in their shared language.

Torgo leaves, closing the door behind him.

"First, I wanted to thank you for helping us. Now and before. And much earlier, too."

Her words are proper and correct as if she is being evaluated by her tutor.

"Taken," she cuts with the false cordiality, her gaze still fixated on the parchment.

She silently waits for that to be all but Sansa does not move from her place, instead, she advances to take the seat in front of her.

"And secondly, I want to ask you for your forgiveness. For everything."

Daenerys drops the quill, splashing ink over the edges of the letter. She looks up to face Sansa's calculating gaze, preventing herself from what she intended.
"For what exactly? For treating me and my people like dogshit? For using Jon's identity to get me off the board?"

"For every single thing, your grace."

"Do not call me that," she warns her, feeling suddenly disgusted. "If you are afraid because of what happened with Tyrion-"

"He looked for his fate," she rapidly adds, "as I did."

Daenerys looks her in the eye for a long moment in searching for the slightest sign that she is trying to manipulate her. She has already underestimated her once. However, it seems honest and that's worse.

"We could have been allies," she voices aloud a thought she has had multiples times. "Or you could have just asked as Yara did and we would have come to an agreement," she wouldn't have been happy about losing half of her realm but after witnessing how wretch and ungrateful was that land, eventually would have yielded and given Sansa his crown to rule this wasteland. "Instead, you, like Jon, like Tyrion, like Cersei, used my mercy against me."

It was incredible. She didn't want to have this conversation but once she started he couldn't stop.

"When I see you with Jon I see what I couldn't have: family. He protected you as Viserys never did with me. He loved you and protected you to the point he put a knife in my heart because he believed I would have hurt you."

"And would have you? would have you hurt me or Arya?"

Would have she? She always did what Jon asked her to do in that life. Contrary to what Tyrion told him and Jon believed, she always did listen to Jon and would continue to do. Or so she wants to believe. Perhaps with the loss of her daughter and the heartbreak, she would have burnt the world.

"We'll never know," she admits, ending the subject.

Daenerys continues with her task hoping that this was the end of the confrontation but Sansa does not oblige.

"Arya is gone," she says in a whisper, "My family is gone except for him."

"And you are afraid I will take him away from you?"

Daenerys wants to laugh at the thought of it. He has already chosen this side of his family and she is not forcing him to make that choice anyway.

"I am not," she states firmly, "I want you two together."

Daenerys frowns.

"Why?"

"Because it has sense."

"And it didn't before?"

"It has always had sense but your grace didn't see it right before you found out the truth either," she excuses.
They should not have this discussion when things with her brother were not going well.

"He has always been and will always be the man I love, but he also is my murderer."

Sansa swallows nervously.

"It didn't see a problem some days ago," she comments but rushes to rectify, "I didn't mean-" she trails off. "I will step aside and let Jon and you have the space you'll need as a couple. And when you marry, it shall be better for you to place wherever you take the capital and start your family. I will take whatever task you honour me with until it is demand from me. And I will not interfere anymore in any of his."

And that's when Sansa forsakes her discretion, baring her true intentions.

"You know it," Daenerys utters, staring astonished, "You are truly Cersei's child. That's why you want us together. That's why all this act of the good sister with me. You want something from this: the heir of Winterfell."

How could she miss this detail so long, it had been after all, in these four hellish walls that her Maester informed Daenerys, after the feast, precipitating her wanting to leave this place before someone else could discover it.

"I don't know what you are talking about," Sansa defends, stirring up.

"Do not treat me like a fool," Daenerys warns, hardening her tone. "Say it," she demands, also standing up.

First Sansa remains silent and still, her unwavering will. But then her lower lip trembles and her eyes wet, so Daenerys hardens her face and knows that they are aware of the same subject.

"You made him believe he can't have children when in truth he almost got one with you. If he finds out, it will kill him."

"Varys killed it," Daenerys unveils. She will not let her believe Jon was the direct person in taking her daughter's life. "Your little mouth and Tyrion and him contribute. I know it could kill him if he knows but it also could kill you," and that's she doesn't know nor will inquire when she learnt about her pregnancy. "Well, Lady Sansa. No one of us got what we wanted at the end of the day; because I can't have his children anymore. My body is dead. The man who attacked me the other day? A normal person would have died for that wound, but I survived because one can't kill what's already dead. And life can't come from something dead."

Sansa sighs disappointed, or frustrated, she can't discern. Nor can tell if what annoys her it's the failed approach or the discovery that, indeed, the matter of heirs is out of the discussion.

"Will you tell Jon?"

Daenerys wheezes with a laugh caught up in her throat. They had had the same interests at the end of the day.

"I have no desire to see him carrying this guilty as well."

Then the strangest sound comes out of his mouth: a sob. And it gets worse, it's really a dour sound.

"I regret it," she confesses, "I truly regret it."
Daenerys cannot help understanding the feeling, after long years of carrying worse on her back. She assumes that both have paid their penance, even if she still had her reservations and was not willing to play any family portrait with her.

"My hands are stained with the blood of innocents, thousands of them," she says, downplaying her suffering, "Any action against my person was justified then, right?" it is what she tells to herself so as not to go crazy with despair.

"Not of your family."

In other circumstances, Daenerys would say that it is not so, but she admits that it does not bother her to see Sansa feeling guilty. It was better to know that Varys poisoned her baby than Jon killed her without knowing it with the dagger. Would the spider have betrayed her if she had known Jon's true identity? Would she had burnt King's Landing if Sansa hadn't revealed it? Would have Jon kill her eventually?

They'll never know. If they look back, they are all lost.

**Acorn Hall, Riverlands.**

**IX**

**Jon**

"My father was a good person, your grace," the woman explained as she covered herself with one of the wool blankets they brought from the East; Westeros had long since stopped trading them. "He had a good deal with our Lord, we didn't want to hurt him."

A wave of boldness encouraged the rebels after their arrival in Riverlands, and they had burned the castle of Acorn Hall and slaughtered Theomar Smallwood and his wife Ravella Swann. A similar fate befell for those who opposed to revolt, including this child in front of them.

The young woman was raped by her own common villagers, she couldn't identify all the attackers but they could apprehend some of the agitators. Jon was horrified and could barely watch her.

"Send her to Riverrun and provide all the care she will need," he orders to the soldiers. He observes that she's afraid and does not completely trust anyone. He feels helpless.

"House Smallwood was one of the most benevolent ones," Edmure Tully, and Jon can't know until what point that is true. Why would these people cause this disaster if so?. "His son and heir are serving under your banner, your grace."

"What does that mean?"

Edmure doubts nervously before returning the answer.

"They trust in you, your grace," he points at the people they rescue, "all of them. Each one. The soldiers and the peasants who chose our side. But if you can't protect them against the enemy, all they will have is fear. Exactly what the other side makes them believe you brought to Westeros."

The other side, Jon repeats in his mind, clenching his jaw and his hands in fists by his side.

"Do you have the person who killed Lord Smallwood?"
"They are several people."

"Everyone we capture?"

"No, everyone," he pauses, seeing where they had placed the men and women who revolted.

Jon nods.

"Set them aside to present them to Lord Smallwood and let him do justice," he declares, "I want the rest to stay where they are."

Jon stands on a hill in front of the circle of soldiers surrounding those people, knowing that Barristal was releasing hot draught behind him. His hand was shaking and he didn't know if it was what he was about to do or if it was the story of the girl whose life these people destroyed.

"Your last words," he concedes, noticing that the Northmen don't flinch when are peasants are under his judgement. Under the dragon.

"You'll never be our king, bastard," a woman spits.

"Our king is the Crowned King!"

"Dead to the Dragons and its kin!"

"Kill them all!"

"Kill them all!"

"Kill them all!"

They start to chant in unison and Jon remembers that day in Moat Cailin.

"I, Aegon of House Targaryen, the sixth with the name, King of the Andals and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and protector of the realm, sentence you to die," he stops contemplating it for a moment. The ants were clearly visible. "Dracarys."

Barristal's head appeared at his side, opening his muzzle and breathing the fire that was his sentence.

Oldstones

X

Daenerys

As Lord Royce and his men move southeast, Daenerys finds the time to look for him.

She finds him in the ruins of a castle northeast of Seagard. If she remembers the maps well, it is Oldstones, sit on a hill above the Blue Fork of the Trident.

It was not a great fortress and the ruins were too deteriorated, covered with weeds, moss and the passage of time. Ruins that resisted nature that told him it was time to be dust again.

Barristal and Jorion settle between the ruined walls, sheltering from the blizzard that blows from
the south. It is as if the further south they were, the more its presence was accentuated.

Jon is on top of some rocks, and when Daenerys approaches, he extends a hand to help her climb and sit beside him.

"Have you heard about Jenny from Oldstones?" she asks him.

"Of course," he replies, eyes hooked on the nothingness.

She would never tell him that it was the song she remembers the most; a beautiful tune in the voice of that squire who sang it the night of the Great War. The last thing she heard while the darkness numbed her. "It had to be a very special person if Duncan gave up everything for being with her."

"Life separated them anyway," Jon comments with a sting of bitterness. She senses where his thoughts are.

"They say Robb and Lady Catelyn were here," he says and Daenerys is taken aback. She hasn't even thought about how this place would remember him about his late brother-cousin. In the Twins, where Robb Stark found death, Jon didn't even reach the entrance and would seclude in his tent.

"You miss him," she concludes as a matter of fact and not a question.

"Every day," he confesses, "I wonder all the things that crossed his mind while leading his war," and this last bit is wreathed with sorrow because ultimately Robb Stark failed, betrayed by his own people. In another life, they could've chatted about that experience.

"Do you wonder if he thought of you?"

"I hope he did."

"I'm sure he did," even Daenerys had thought in Viserys and Rhaegar throughout her life, the old one and this false one.

"It's the first time I was afraid-I'm afraid. I had avoided thinking about what you told me about what is after death and what I can't have."

Daenerys regrets to have told him in her moment of pain, having only desired to wield grief on him to understand her. They had not imagined a few months ago that she would give in and they would be in this position, seeking to run against the draught, knowing that eventually, time will charge them what is owed.

That is the reason why she has no courage to confess to him about the frustrated existence of the daughter they could have shared. Even though her pain was unbearable, at least she had her in her arms in the Threshold and could see her once more like the little girl who is still waiting for her there. She blinks the tears away at the memory of her children.

"What did you think when you did it?" His question shakes her out of her mind. "When you were on the walls of King's Landing when you gave that speech in front of your soldiers."

It should not surprise her to bring up the subject, she herself has reverted to the situation, after what happened in Moat Caitlin. Anyway, there is an annoying feeling of being judged, which would not be wrong, although if they get to the point of the matter, he has already judged her; Already sentenced her to die.
"The greatest of the pains I thought I experienced," she concedes, "heartbreak, betrayal, hatred, anger, put it in the words you want, everything was there," she almost instinctively takes her right hand in her belly. "It was the same as I felt when I saw Drogon fall lifeless in that river and the waves swallow me into oblivion. I just have no forgetting now, not even the silence of death. Everything I have," she downs her gaze at their hands that are together, side by side. His is marked by the passage of time, and hers is frozen. "Stillness."

She wonders if he notices the difference in their bodies. If that wasn't enough, then she doesn't know how else to make him see it.

"You think I'm going to do it again, right?" she asks bitterly, "And you don't know how to deal with it."

"You were not the only one slaughtering people in King's Landing that day," he answers abruptly, "my soldiers were not very different from the Dothraki that day."

Yes, that is a detail that she does not think too much. She has become accustomed to carrying the weight of everything that happened that day alone. In fact, she was the only one to pay for it.

"If the time comes, then do the right thing, Jon," she lets him know, putting that cold distance between them again. "Maybe that was the purpose of coming here, again."

"It bothers me that you don't believe in me," he growls, looking at her with darkened eyes. "There is no good in this world that is worthwhile. No, I am not implying that you would do it again. It's just that," he pauses and looks away again. "I thought your perspective on mercy had changed."

"It changed," she points, equally infuriated. "If the enemy in front of me chooses to use it against me, then I have to choose to protect those who trust me."

"Enemies," Jon repeats, "do we only see them as enemies? Weren't you the one who said he wouldn't force the peasants to return to the chains of the lords?"

"Isn't it you who killed me to protect the system that led them to where they are?" this time she gets off the stone where they were sitting, "There is always an enemy. It doesn't matter which side we settle on. It's always about choosing the lesser evil."

Jon follows her and gets off too, so he can speak to her head-on.

"Do you regret what happened in King's Landing?" Suddenly, it feels like they are in Valyria's dungeons again.

"Regret it? Of course, I regret it! But I also regret having listened to all of you who then at my worst could not be by my side! You left me lying like a dog after using me until I had no more use. Do you want to know what I learned from mercy, Jon? That is what ultimately left me lying and bleeding on the cold ground of the Red Keep, rotting in a cave next to my son. The only one who protected me until the last moment and that he is no longer with me."

She doesn't want to keep arguing with him. Remembering Drogon is remembering his reticence of returning to Westeros in the last days of his life because he knew that on this side of the sea they do not belong, they never would.

She passes by him with the intention of going to Jorion but he grabs her arm and stops her. In the next instant, he imprisons her in his arms and her face is buried in his neck.

"I trust you, Dany," he whispers against her forehead, planting small kisses there. "Don't push me
away every time we have a disagreement."

"It's not just a disagreement," she opposes, placing her arms again as a shield against him. "We
know it is a losing fight, and yet, here we continue to fight as if it makes sense."

It was the same thing she had said a few days ago. And if their disagreements ended again in a
King's Landing?

"Dany, please," he insists again, pushing her even closer. She notes a real fright in his voice. "Do
not leave me here."

The discomfort does not go away with his words, she needs to be separated from him, far from him.
She loves him and knows that he loves her but the pain is still there, for both of them. And
although he refuses to see it, he is also there, the knowledge that they have nothing in their favour.

"I will go to the East," she says, pulling away, "you go to the West as we planned in the beginning.
Let's respect the plan. I promise you that Jornik will protect Sansa and Winterfell. With Barristal
by your side, you will be able to return and control that everything is in order. You're right, let's
give time to the rebels in Moat Cailin."

"How long?"

"Whichever is necessary."

"How long until I can see you?"

She keeps moving forward without looking back, "whichever is necessary."

However, she does it again. She is halfway to Jorion when she turns and bumps into him who was
following her.

They find themselves in a kiss that only feeds more and more on the heat of the discussion as if all
the reasons she put on the table for not being together were thrown into the void when the moment
of truth arrives, the hour of letting him go.

She doesn't want to let him go. She has never wanted to let him go.

"Don't leave me alone in this," he pleads, pulling away just to look her in the eye. "I trust you're
good, don't hide under the dragon queen. You're good."

His devotion has become real to her when for ten years she was sure that everything was a ruse to
get from her what he needed: to win his war and be free. Both feelings were in her mind and fought
to stay right.

In her heart she wants to be with him, she wants to surrender to that feeling totally. But the last time
that killed her, and that he would never understand.

Is she a monster for giving him hope when there's no one?

"Go," she whispers in his ear, "Give me ninety days of peace and I am yours."

Chapter End Notes
- This chapter divided in two explores both: Jon's feelings about the war for power and order, and Daenerys' perspective on mercy.

Jon has fought for life, for survival and in Qarth against the magic of Warlocks. In all cases, his enemies were always soldiers or people we could consider "the enemy." He knows this is war. But in this situation, the rebels that form part of Victarion's side are in open opposition to him. They are holders of a freedom that is dawned by Jon. This what I wanted to achieve with his character in this story: the understanding that survival implies building the environment that sustains it. I am one of the people who believe that politics covers all aspects of life, from walking free on the street to defining oneself as believers of a certain ideology and defending that.

In that sense, show! Jon is a wimp who believes that politic is bullshit and never ends up understanding Daenerys's motivations, nor understanding the complicated political scenario that Westeros handles. That's why his character loses his way after the White Walker plot is over.

In Daenerys' case, this is something I should've explored better in the A Queen Who Wears No Crown. If I'm honest, I'm not against Daenerys becoming a person who decides some lives are discardable, because that's what made great conquerors and monarchs from that age. Obviously is not something ideal for a leader of the 21st century but my problem with the argument of SHE COMMITTED GENOCIDE, is that she did not, she SACKED King's Landing and then Jon killed her after she saved his life and pardoned her sister's life (killing Varys just for treason when Sansa also committed treason) so for her, mercy was something used against her, and she resents it. Which is very different from acting in favour of the Lords, something that also causes her conflict.

- I wrote that scene between Sansa and Daenerys for the last chapter of the first part but then I discarded it because I feel there was not enough ground for it. Obviously, Daenerys yet does not know what Sansa did, in addition to revealing Jon's identity, so her reaction it's just being indifferent to her suffering. Like when someone hurts you and you just can't evolve the pain into a normal relationship.
A Just Woman & An Honourable Man (Part Two)

Chapter Summary

Six months of the campaign.

Chapter Notes

In this chapter I changed the initial plot of the outline that said:

Everything seems to work well, until a discussion with Daenerys led Jon to do something stupid.

So no, nothing of that happens here because I erased a plot where Jon wasn't supposed to tell Sansa about his barrenness.

Major characters death, if you want to spoil go the endnotes :/
"Duty, not joy."

She gives up and returns to her tabs, trying her best to ignore his presence. She would be daft if she denies that his closeness leads her to wander through the darkest alleys of her memory. Twelve years ago they had had a heated discussion when she demanded Jon's release; the only words they had shared. However, Sansa was trembling at the thought of the thread that united them.

*If I had enough confidence and courage I would ask if in all those years I had managed to move on,* she thinks. *I beg that yes.*

Gillberg enters with his dowry of every-day missives and passes by the side of Grey Worm without much ado, although the first one does observe him carefully. A thorough man.

"Nine this day, m'lady," he announces while Sansa receives him with a wide smile. She had learnt to enjoy his company.

"Thank you, Gillberg. Please sit, we shall begin."

---

*Dear sister, Lady Sansa Stark:*

*I wish I could send you better news but things here in the south are difficult. Your generous uncle, Edmure, does his best to help the refugees in Riverlands but not even the magnanimous effort does not seem to be enough. Every day I feel a little bit more helpless for not having the necessary solutions to assist them all.*

*Here one breathes an air of desolation and I fear that soon when we go further south, we will exhale again the smell of blood and misery.*

*We have been warned that the most powerful lords of Westerland and The Reach have take garrison in Casterly Rock and will not recognise any of my orders unless we have a face-to-face encounter without dragons or weapons in between to negotiate the liberation of the castle and their armies.*

*I have made the mistake of doubting too much in decision making and now I am seen as an undecided king. I still want to make the wisest decision, although every day it becomes more difficult.*

*I hope this message finds you safe and sound.*

*Jon.*

Sansa sighs and the two men who accompany her look at her strangely but don't ask if she has read bad news. Their silence informs them that it is nothing urgent, more than the feeling of a sister who feels equally helpless before the feeling of her brother.

*At least he has Daenerys,* she thinks and feels grateful for it.

II
Daenerys

Taking The Eyrie is easier than imagined when they reject the first offer they make and decapitate their messenger. Jon and Barristal go up to the nest to negotiate a surrender but it fails. He, with just one glance, leaves her the problem to her to solve.

In a week and with the intervention of Jorion and Daarion, the stronghold that belonged to House Arryn, falls in the hold of Lord Andar Royce, who can finally bury his father's remains in peace. He is in charge of moving the army to Longbow Hall, Old Anchor, Runestone, Gulltown, Bloody Gate and Redfort where they had already besieged with the help of the Essosi armada. Jon visits each of those places as he promised and gets the support he needs, although with time and not total unanimity. What ends up convincing them is knowing that from now on they will no longer be subject to lords but to the Crown and the Guild of the Commonwealth. Daenerys preys for the promises to be fulfilled.

The grants offered are accepted quickly this time in those places and Daenerys saves having to go back to receiving insults and being called the mad queen because they do it and do it a lot.

A fortnight she awaits the reunification of the army of Yara, and the Stormlands, who would leave to take Dragonstone.

At that time Victarion remains inactive in Moat Cailin, knowing that he should protect that area as a guarantee against Jon. It was the only human shield that they have not yet managed to overcome, because in the other territories nobody is so brave. Or so stupid.

"Why do they call him Crow's Eye?" she asks Yara on one of their daytime walks. It was amazing not to see her drunk at that time.

"Euron had a crow," she explains, "once he hit Victarion in the eye, so hard that he began to bleed and the crow tore his eye."

Daenerys was horrified by the story but was not surprised. What astonished her was the detail of the eye. The man they met, although they saw him from afar, clearly had two eyes.

"He uses a glass eye. You have to be very close to notice it. A gift from my father."

In three months, Riverlands and The Vale are secured, not as they would like but enough to advance to more difficult terrariums: Storm's End, The Westerlands and The Reach, this last place where the first uprisings began, was the most susceptible.

She limits herself to continuing in the East, a little more nervous every time she gets closer and closer to King's Landing, where they agree not to step on because, incredibly, the Westerosi consider a cursed land.

Without notifying Jon, she chooses to venture there in an impulse to corrode that her theory is true: the raven is trapped.

Of King's Landing only ruins remained, and no inhabitant, not even the most hungry, wanted to approach. In the port, there were only reminiscences and Red Keep, ruins of the ruins.

Under them was he, she felt it and confirmed it when the dragons could not cross over.

He was trapped.

But how and why?
His crows have tried to harass her a couple of times and all of them Daenerys has burnt. She was getting tired of not receiving signals from Quaithe or Kinvara.

"If I tell you what is true and what is not, your purpose will be corrupted."

However, she would lie if she said she wanted to shorten the time rendered, because she felt comfortable, strangely at ease again in the role of the heartless conqueror.

She hated herself for admitting it but she also enjoyed Jon's company when he looked for her. They had a sickly routine of running around like juveniles, and then fighting like a marriage of years, only to run again like juveniles. But it wasn't just that, she liked to talk with him. They had a lot to tell and it was fascinating, they fell into a strange situation where everyone knew what they were doing but nobody knew what they were. Well, in addition to kinship.

The take of Dragonstone occurs in peaceful circumstances for which she is grateful for not having to return there, not being ready yet.

In the fifth month, they set sail to the Stormlands where the matter becomes more difficult and bloody since the rebels had prepared the scorpions.

Daenerys descends from the sky with Jorion and for the first time since they stepped on Westeros, she takes the dragons down to the battlefield to enjoy their feast.

They fall on less than a fortnight and with that, any desire of the other rebels agglutinated in the castles of having to face the dragons on the very battlefield.

She founds again with Jasper Windor when they visited Gulltown.

"Your ancestor, Good Queen Alysanne, held a women's court here, right?" he wondered, staring at her curiously.

"Yes, I understand that."

"And you won't do it?"

"I am neither good nor their queen."

Jasper laughed and left the subject. It happened often that they hinted at that kind of thing, her relationship with Jon in everyone's mouth. He couldn't help wondering if Robert Baratheon was questioned so much about it. Although Robert never slept with his aunt. Not that Jon was doing it, because they didn't. They were doing many things but they had promised not to make love yet.

"Gods, Jon," she claims between restless breaths one day after he finishes kissing her down there. "You're going to hurt yourself," she points out knowing that it seems that the balance is always on her side.

"I already told you that-"

"I know what you said," she interrupts rolling her eyes.

That night they left the subject there but Daenerys concludes that she wants to do something for him too, really.
They flew to Gulltown to other of the annoying meetings of the Common Council with the Guild of the Commonwealth, where the usual excesses are presented.

Being the prudent northerner that he is, he rejects all kinds of misguided or immoral invitation and asks her for help with his eyes when he does not know how to get rid of any situation. Jasper, who was still in Westeros to complete his task of reorganising the brothels of the main cities based on the model of Lys, offers him to try the services of the House of Pleasure that they had established in the city.

"The best of the best for your majesty," comments to Jon, winking at Daenerys.

Of course, Jon blushing and rejects the offer.

"I think you should accept, your grace," Daenerys voice her opinion, contemplative and distant as always at those meetings. She had to put on the queen's mask. "It's normal for a king to visit another woman's bed before the wedding, but not to be infatuated with just one."

"Are you inviting me to sleep with a prostitute?"

Daenerys gave him a deadly look.

"Be kind," she corrected, "You reject everything as if you were not having a little fun, never, brooding King."

"Have you ever accepted an offer like this?" he asked in horror knowing that the service was not limited to pleasing men.

*I had the king of the brothels in my bed*, she would have answered him but she knew that the mention of Gerael affected him just as much as the mention of Val does to her. Anyway, he was not understanding his point.

"Play the game, Jon," she says with a provocative but suspicious laugh. "The best way to keep them in your control is to make them believe that you are like them. Otherwise, they will see you as a snob," he was actually a snob but she was going to comment that later. "Look at me, drinking wine as if I really could taste it."

Jon is baffled and even a little upset with her.

When Jasper approaches the offer again, a woman takes Jon to one of the bedrooms and Daenerys watches the scene serenely from a distance.

"After this favour, my queen and I are going to visit this friend of mine who is causing me problems, okay?" Jasper whispers in her ear. Daenerys takes a deep breath and nods.

Daenerys finished his glass of tasteless wine and followed Jasper's instructions to reach the room where the young woman who dragged Jon was already withdrawing with a nod.

"Wh-?" She cuts the question by attacking his mouth as fiercely as those nights in the tent.

"It even seems like you were willing to accept that woman do what she wanted with you, right?" she jokingly tells him, his eyes were dilated and she began to feel his hardness against her belly. "I should cut your throat, Jon Snow," she pretended to be offended.

"I told her to lie on the couch and that nothing would happen! You sent me here!" he replies between the offense and the fun; He began to understand what the jest was. "Daenerys you are
going to kill me."

He never called her by her long name if it wasn't when he was being serious or at her request, of course.

She lowers herself until her lips are in his ears, "Now you're going to make all the noise that is necessary, without saying my name, and you're going to make those idiots believe you're not obsessed with your aunt."

Daenerys lamented a second in using that word; She did it totally unconscious. But that regret is erased when he turns her against her back and assaults her lips as excitedly as she does it.

This time she pushes him to his back so she can sit astride him and as soon as she has him as she wants, she pulls apart to see him in the eye and silently ask him to trust her. He hadn't done more than that in the past few months and for that she was grateful.

She puts his index finger on her lips to warn him not to protest when her hand goes down to untie the ties of his breeches and take him with her hand.

"Da-" he intended to push her away, very weakly. He had told her before that he wanted to wait for the right time, but both knew they couldn't feed on fantasies in the middle of the war.

"Sh," she scolds him before lowering his lap and falling to her knees on the floor, next to his garment.

"Shit," he curses knowing what she is about to do.

Then several more curses follows while, after many years, she had him again in her mouth.

She pinches his hip every time he wants to release her name, reminding him that in that room he was with another lady and not with her.

She never stops looking him in the eye as she goes up and down over his length, because although the act could feel dirty and forbidden, for them it meant meeting again in a certain way. Returning to what they lost little by little, knowing that at any moment they could crash into a rock formation and sink into oblivion.

*Gods, how I love him*, she thinks as she watches him agonising with pleasure and knowing that he also feels the same for her. Or is what she wants - she longs to believe. Her hopes are dangerously high again.

When he is about to reach the peak of his delight, he warns her that she must move away but she hits his hand and drives him further until she has his taste in her mouth and lips again. She could definitely taste that.

She helped him clean up the mess they had made and climbs back into bed to lie beside him while his breathing returned to normal. He was tired of the continuous commitments he had that week and she understood, and even, for the first time, she missed feeling tired that way.

"I love you," he declares, caressing her face and drawing her to join their lips in a kiss that was more relaxed and intimate than the rest. "I didn't want it to happen like that but gods, I don't regret it."

She lets out a laugh.
"None of us is that kind of person, and you know it."

He nods and slowly fades away in his sleep. She watches him for hours while stroking his beard, wondering how many people in the world go to bed with their murderer.

Later that same evening, she and Jasper hide in hoods and walk to the residence of this friend they were about to take care of. She did not like this executioner role that she sometimes had to portray to maintain alliances. In her years at Essos, she learnt that it was better to do a favour to an ally than to a stranger.

"The man belongs to the kind of your friends the slavers," Jasper tells her. "He got children up to twelve years, in that mansion."

Gerael was strict on that issue just like her, having experienced that kind of torture.

They enter through the back and Daenerys felt strangely familiar in that place, perhaps because the decoration was Essosi. The man's guards had fallen in a second when she finally used Gerael's dagger to sleep them with his deadly poison.

Jasper assured her that the man had no family, so Daenerys had planned to end the matter quickly, setting the place on fire; an unfortunate incident.

But the horror that caused her to see a little girl lying next to the disgusting man, her reddened gaze lost on the roof, was enough to send a stream of adrenaline through her body and feel the need to punish him.

Jasper and his men had already emptied the place by the time they came to pick up the girl. In all that time, the fat old man was still snoring and lost in some repulsive dream. His last dream.

When they lift him up to face her, Daenerys looks in horror at the face of Illyrio Mopatis.

Then he remembers Gerael's words that distant day in Lys.

"Your friend, the Magister of Pentos, is now fleeing to Westeros to sell the slaves you gave him so kindly."

"Daenerys, mercy!" he cries but she is already placing a hand on his neck.

"I told you that if you betrayed me you would run the same fate as your friend Varys," she replies with a wicked smile as her hands begin to burn against his skin. They choke their screams with a rag and by the end of the night, Illyrio is no more.

Sunspear

III

Arianne

Meals with her father used to be her favourite part of the day once, but the complete stranger that accompanies them now, in addition to the little baby who cannot believe is her brother, upset Arianne to the point she can barely eat something.

After asking Dewyn to return with Jon Snow, he took a map, a couple of provisions and a horse,
and left without giving much explanation. She hasn't heard of him since then and every day she tortured herself thinking she wouldn't see him again.

On several occasions, she was tempted to write a letter asking about him, but her father said that until Jon did not ask about him, they should remain silent. Losing the friendly hostage was worse than capturing him.

In Dorne, they breathed airs of celebration since the birth of the future prince, a situation that stressed her to demented levels, not because she did not want her brother to be the heir, that if she depended on it, it would be so. But because she realised that interests were sharpening again to go out to fight, especially after the failure of the talks to marry Jon Snow, or the Dragon King as they already dubbed him.

And the Dragon King had his Dragon Queen. Their apparent reconciliation and the imminent union had rumbled to Sunspear, something that caused her a little unease in Arianne not only because of all the political implications that entailed but because he was her murderer. She feared for Daenerys in a way she never thought she feared for the most powerful person in the world. And if he killed her again and appropriated all her achievements? And if that was the plan of the Starks? Take everything from Daenerys once again? Westeros had already fallen into the hands of two Stark once and that only brought hardships and wars. She also couldn't stand the idea of Daenerys being hurt.

_Sometimes I would like to be Dewyn_ , she thinks while playing with the bitter fruits on her plate, winter was not good for the production of that year. _Take my things and be able to leave without giving further explanations. Without carrying any duty._

She was interrupted from her wanderings when her father began to cough excessively, one of the servants hurrying to help him out of what appeared to be choking.

"Father," she shouted approaching but he wanted to push her away desperately. He had the napkin pressed against his mouth.

He hadn't choked, Arianne concluded by seeing the red stain on the white cloth of the napkin.

It was blood.

**IV**

**Jon**

Controlling the riots in Riverlands takes them about a month until Barristal finally makes them understand that they should stop even if they didn't want to kneel. In the East, he shows up once to negotiate the surrender of the rebels in the Eyrie, but given the refusal he let Daenerys solve the problem with Jorion and the hatchlings. Currently, Lord Royce had prepared the castle to serve as their main headquarters where he returned every so often to make sure the plan was on course.

Yara Greyjoy and the few Ironborn who serve her cause await the seizure of the Iron Islands and surroundings knowing that it was the most dangerous territory in terms of maintenance, as the most loyal farmers to Victarion, who refused to receive him as king, much less her as Queen. Jon decided that as long as they didn't cause problems, he would deal with it later. It is for this reason that Daenerys sends her to retake The Fingers with Gendry until eventually reach Dragonstone, and then Storm's End.
They receive significant casualties in that period and their commanders urge him to use the dragons more often, before sending the armies to the confrontation. The Essosi soldiers are lethal compared to Westerosi and Jon orders that they shall keep control. He knows that they were former sellsword and that they currently serve to Essos’ government, that its to say, the Common Council, through contracts and salaries, so seeing this as a job, they are little interested in honourable fights. That is why he believes that Westerosi are the ones who face their own countrymen.

The myriad executions overwhelm him at first, and every night he falls asleep praying for forgiveness to any divinity that would hear him. He is horrified with himself when he begins to wish he could use fire executions more often and not longclaw.

How he wishes to have Lord Eddard there. Asking if he had felt this way during the rebellion, fighting harshly and terribly for a lie.

And then there's Dany.

He knows that the ninety days of peace she demanded is more of a challenge than a promise, he loves her but he is not an idiot. More than thirty days have passed and none of them have brought peace.

She still receives him when he looks for her, but they stay in line as best as they can. Even kicking him off her cot when they are exceeding. He reminds himself that he made a promise: take her when she agrees to be his wife, although sometimes it costs him too much.

The time they keep their hands away from the other gives them the opportunity to discuss relevant issues as irrelevant ones as well. Sometimes it is about the campaign, her knowledge in a conquest that clearly surpasses his, and other times things as banal as the one they had about her relationship with Daario in those years.

"Didn't you ever-? All these years-?" He didn't know how to ask that question.

"Oh no," she completed the idea for him, "He truly loves Ornela. Which it still surprises me, because he's not the man I knew."

He wanted to answer her that it was obvious that she marked a before and after in his life. Daario was a loyal man but first he loved her, and he loved her truly.

"He seemed pissed off about having been left behind," he said recalling the moment he received them on the docks of Jorah’s Port.

"I will not deny that I could not stand him anymore when I left him. I know, a lousy company. But the excuse was that I was getting married in Westeros," Daenerys argues. "And I returned to him with nothing but-" she trails off at the memory of Drogon and Jon brought her closer to his chest to comfort her. "I mean the thought of us crossed my mind but no one of my advisers mentioned it and you were a pain in my arse, so I leave the thought off," she lifted up her eyes to his. "Until the boat came and it was all I could think about," she looked away again, "But you never mentioned it, and I assume-"

"That I didn't have a plan behind?" he didn't let her finish.

"Did you?"

No, he didn't have it but he didn't want to confess it and look like the green boy who saw his opportunity and took advantage. That first night on the boat, it wasn't supposed to happen but he couldn't sleep in his cabin to think about it and desiring it.
"To be honest, no, I didn't. I was playing with my luck. I never thought we were going to outlive the dead."

"I should have close the door on your face," she stated, pulling off from his embrace but he rapidly catches her back.

"And when it the truth came? Did you think it?"

Because although he had the initial shock, he knew that it was the right way to avoid any conflicts. That or the night's watch, which was the option he took when he thought she wouldn't share the throne in any way.

"You were distant and I thought it was over," Dany insists, the regret of that time coming back to haunt him. "I try to reach to you, you know I tried."

"I know and there's no a single moment that I lived without regretting it."

They settle in Deep Den when they arrive in the Westerlands, and Lord Lydden prepares the ground to begin negotiations with Houses Serret, Brax, and Lefford. After the revolt that removed Tyrion any chance of claiming Casterly Rock, in Westerland the uprisings occurred among the same lords who wanted to usurp the fortress. Jon was clear that this was the ancestral seat of House Lannister and belonged to the last legacy of that family: Little Jaime. He could feel Ser Brienne's disagreement about it, but like him, sometimes the right thing to do comes before the ideal.

That's why they leave Little Jaime safe in Dragonstone, his presence near the game of thrones could be dangerous.

Although the monetary proposal they offer is generous for everyone involved in the meeting, the lords reject all kinds of negotiation on the issue of freeing the subjection of the peasants to their service and military unification.

"First is an offer to avoid the inevitable," he warns in a severe tone. He has not liked how they describe the peasants as 'simple animals to those who wanted to give a voice that belonged to us'. "We have five dragons and the support of the Essosi Common Council. Don't be foolish."

"Look bastard, we know that you believe the big deal because you are the wasted seed of Rhaegar Targaryen, but for us, you will continue being a bastard," one of them mocks. "And now you want to put another bastard and this beast in the seat of our land? If you want to come with your dragons, come. We have scorpions and we have a much more beneficial offer from King Victarion."

Jon saved himself from arguing and left the meeting. It was the first time he heard Victarion being explicitly called king.

They remained there a little more time seeking the support of the peasants, always with the occasional setback along the way. His need to end everything quickly with Barristal increases, especially when dealing with the lords. He recovered the habit of hitting the tummy training with Longclaw to release the stress that the situation had caused.

"the wasted seed of Rhaegar Targaryen"

At the entrance of the sixth moon since the beginning of the conquest, the hold the Riverlands, The
Vale, Storm's End and a part of Westerlands, with the subtle threat of Victarion in Moat Cailin and the Iron Islands west of Winterfell, the wall unprotected in the North, the volatile Reach, although Old Town was secured by the Hightower army, loyal to Lady Rhea, and Casterly Rock held by rebel lords.

Far away from the peace still.

After Gulltown, he and Dany accepted a fact that until then they did not want to assume: they are together. Even more together than they have been in the past. However, the aloofness that characterises her now is still there, as if she is waiting all the time for him to change his mind about their relationship and go.

One detail he had not paid attention to before is that she did not tell him that she loves him as a feeling but as a fact. He couldn't blame her, the weight of their story is still subduing them. He should feel content with the fact that after he killed her, she could even look at him.

Somewhere in Stormlands.

V

Gendry

A habit he acquired since childhood was to carefully observe the ceiling of the room where he was to fall asleep. From the thatched roof of the hut where his mother raised him, or whom he remembered as his mother, passing the high and cold stone roofs of Storm's End, the clay roof of the house in Valyria that he built on his own to the waving fabrics of the tent where he spent the last months during the campaign for the liberation of Westeros.

The concentration served him to gradually lose himself in sleep but that night the company of the northerners was particularly annoying.

After arranging things at Storm's End, it came the time to return to Dragonstone to celebrate Jon's coronation anniversary. Gendry couldn't believe that it had been so long since then. He smiled thinking how satisfied he was to have made the decision he made.

When the noise of an object being wielded in the air becomes annoying, he decides that it is time to leave the tent and face that there would be no conciliation for his thoughts that night.

He washes his face a little and walks outside to meet with the northerners and see what the hell had them so active. Although he has shared months of camping with them, he did not get used to the lifestyle so alerted and uneasy they had, as if they could not hit the eye at any time.

However, Gendry was more interested in knowing where the whining and the sound of the hilt of a weapon comes. He walked a few meters behind his tent and met a woman on her back practicing with a spear.

She seemed focused on achieving a movement that, at first glance for him, would never come out since the weapon's flawless balance had to be leveled. He realised that in reality the point of the spear was not correctly placed, she should melt the tip and join it with the rest of the body.

"No, I will not accept your advise," the woman stated without turning around, noticing his
presence. Her voice was thick, definitely a northern one.

He doesn't know how she realised he was thinking on an advice.

He settled with his arms crossed behind his back and cleared his throat.

"It's the least you could do if you're going to make that noise behind where I sleep," he replies just as seriously. He had no talent for talking with women, or with people in general. Only if the subject was interesting for him to create a pleasant dialogue.

The woman turns and looks at him with a frown. Her hair was ruffled and he couldn't help wondering if that also didn't make her training difficult. Her face was long and thin and his dark-eyed look seemed to carry a long sorrow in silence. Gendry's heart stopped for a second when he saw himself reflected in them.

"My apologies, Lord Baratheon," she concedes. She was not arrogant, but seemed truly exhausted. "In my camps I have had enough of receiving the same advice from soldiers and answering questions."

The woman was retiring but Gendry felt the urge to stop her.

"The tip of the spear," he shouts too abruptly, tried to moderate himself to continue. "You have to melt the dagger and join it with the spear, trim the tip a little-" Although now that he said it out loud it made little sense, he could offer her a better spear. Or design one.

The intrusive memory of the weapon that Arya asked him to build came to his mind and he tried to repress it.

"You're a blacksmith, right?" She attended his advice and remained still.

"Yes," he answers, still watching the spear. It was very old, maybe it was better to look for a new one. "I've seen you before but I don't remember your name..."

"Meera," she introduced herself extending her hand. A strange greeting for a woman but not for a northern warrior. "Meera Reed."

Howland Reed's daughter. Gendry swallowed the lump in his throat, remembering what he knows about her.

"That look," Meera said, pursing her lips in a tired grimace. "I will not answer questions about the Raven."

Although yes, he had many questions, he didn't want to ask them. Rather he was trying to make sense of her saddened look.

"I'm just going to ask you one thing: will you let me fix the spear?"

Meera frowns at the object. "What's wrong with it?"

"Everything," he uttered very honestly and laughing, but she just looked at him confused. "Sorry, I mean, your movements are correct but the weapon did not contribute. An ideal balance will cost you twice to execute, or whatever you are trying to do."

"Branches," she gave her response, "I want to cut off all that appears on my way."

It seemed strange what she explained but he did not want to inquire more about it.
"Will you allow me to fix it?" He insisted again.

Meera looked at him suspiciously but then softened her eyes.

"I forbid you to touch the knife, the knife stays."

"Of course, I'm just going to join them."

She approaches to extend her spear and walks away back to where her people are without further attention.

Gendry watches her go and then again at the weapon.

**Dragonstone**

**VI**

**Jon**

The anniversary of the day of his coronation represented for the soldiers an opportunity to get drunk and eat to forget that there was still a war ahead. That is what Daenerys and Sansa explain to him when he refuses to celebrate it, and they force him to do it anyway.

Jon would have preferred it to happen in Winterfell, or in White Harbor so that Sansa could attend, however, she herself chose to turn down arguing that she still had many pending tasks in the North. His new royal council agreed that it made sense to carry it out in Dragonstone.

The day they returned was difficult for both of them, and she avoided speaking to him for a few days as they settled and helped the purple in the villages. Although Dany didn't want to be seen, some people recognised her and even knelt to receive her.

"Martha," she calls one of the women in the kitchen the moment she saw her. They stared at each other very tense, and Jon thought it must be a girl the moment they were here. He doesn't even remember her.

The day they find the empty chest where she left her lost belongings, she uses the fire from her hands to erase the evidence of that past existence.

Jon just watched from a distance fearing that at some point it would be his turn.

On the other hand, the dragons could not be happier to loom over the surroundings of the volcano, hunting calmly and even normally without altering the lives of the inhabitants.

A gloomy thought invades him when he walks through the ramparts and remembers images of his first visit in this place.

One night they walked together along the shore, after the initial distancing they constantly needed to keep from losing their heads. Behind them the guards marched following them.

"I wonder if one day they will find him," she said, kneeling to touch the cold water. She was barefoot and Jon knew she didn't feel it. "To Rhaegal. I wonder if someday someone will find his bones."

It seemed impossible, he wanted to answer her. Although impossible was just a word for them.
"I hope so," was his response.

The festivity lasts longer than his coronation lasted and Jon can't help feeling uncomfortable. At some point, he and his closest circle lock themselves in the war room and end the celebration there. It is really there when he allows himself to enjoy it.

"Do you remember when we went to that place?"

"What place?"

"In Valyria! I can't remember exactly the name, where the walls were red! where we saw that person appearing and disappearing through a mill!"

"Oh, yes. The Prūmia."

"Yes! It was our best expedition."

It is the conversation Lord Monterys Velaryon and Daenerys were having. Jon is almost done with the day but that dialogue piqued his interest.

They kept talking about that trip they shared, laughing at some anecdotes that even made Jon smile. However, Monterys' innocent fixation on Daenerys had become a real nuisance to Jon, especially given the realisation that they had more moments together than he did with her.

He ignored those insane thoughts and began to take the ale until he felt really dizzy.

The next thing he remembers is that Daenerys was holding him on one side and Gendry behind them was talking about something to look for supplies on the ships. She tells him what to look for, advises him to do it tomorrow but Gendry tells her that he wants to talk to Ser Davos.

All the words are mixed in his mind. They talk too quickly and his head hurts.

"Thank you, Gendry. I'll take care of him," her soft voice says when they approach the hallway that leads to their chamber. Yes, it is theirs.

Inevitably he ends up throwing up the contents of his stomach while Daenerys mutters words to reassure him and hits his back. She has urged him to do it, saying something about that was the best.

She giggles softly, not the loud laughter that she lets out with Daario or Monterys. His antics make her laugh as a mother would laugh at her child.

He is ashamed that she is cleaning up the mess while he just watches her little figure walk around the place, preparing a jug with water and an empty pot.

"It was easy before right?" he questions. His voice sounds husky.

"When?" she returns still distracted.

"When you were there," he makes a move with his head and it's a bad idea because now his pain comes back. "Just with them."

Dany looks at him with arched eyebrows, contemplatively.

"It was a different way of living."
Different. Not better or worse, but different.

"You love them," he affirms. "Gendry and Monterys."

"They are my friends, Jon," she mutters while running the rag over his face. "Take your head back, I'll clean your neck."

Now he's looking at the ceiling.

"Does the boy know his dragon queen won't reciprocate him?"

She lets out another one of those giggles of hers and takes him from the chin so that he sees her in the eyes. She has a funny and relaxed expression, although her blue, cold eyes don't want to give in.

"He never intended so."

"But does he knows?" he insists, bringing her closer to him and resting his head on her breast. "Does he knows he's courting the woman of his King? The woman I love?"

This time when she speaks her voice rumbles against Jon's ear.

"He's not courting me," she clarifies, touching his back, "I'm not your woman," and pulls away to cup his face "and you are drunk."

Then she escapes his grip and walks to the side of the room where the recipients and water are and brings them near him, sitting in a chair in front of him.

"You never laugh like that when you are with me," he points out when Dany starts pouring the water over his bare feet on the pot.

"You never make me laugh, Jon," she replies and it could've hurt him but he knows she's pointing the obvious. He's not a funny person. He's not half the kind of company she always surrenders with. Yet here they are, she's attending him while he makes the ridiculous of himself.

She separates the pot when his feet are clean and forces him to lie on the bed while rearranging the items she occupied.

"I do remember it," he tells her while watching the ceiling again.

"What thing?" her voice sounds aloof from the privy.

"How you like to wash your feet before bed, and you are still forcing me to do it myself."

"It's a simple cleansing routine, you northern fool."

He smiles.

"That was the moment I knew I was in love with you."

"When I taught you to clean your feet?"

"Aye," he turns around to see her appearing in the threshold of the privy. "The way you wanted to share your life with me."

He also remembers the baths they took together and the life that was created in that ship's cabin. He would like to return to that boat.
This time the laugh that came out of her mouth was a little more thunderous but there was something else, he wouldn't know how to describe it.

"Now you made me laugh," she congratulates him while tossing his hair behind his ear.

"I love you, Dany," he can't avoid but saying again. He knows she will not tell that back but all that he cares is about her eyes, and how warm they feel at the light of the candles.

"You need to sleep," she puts a soft kiss on his forehead.

"Thirty-eight," he murmurs.

"What?"

"Thirty-eight days. Dany, stay with me."

"I'm right here, Jon."

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**VII**

**Brienne**

"Ser Brienne, can we talk for a moment?"

It was the first time that the dragon queen had addressed her directly. Looking at her face so closely gave Brienne a nervous feeling and she had to join her hands behind her back so it wouldn't be noticed.

"Of course, your grace."

Daenerys Targaryen led her to the throne room that morning before the feast, where at the steps of the throne rested a sword. For a moment, Brienne's heart stopped and all she could think about was Little Jaime in the chambers upstairs.

*Take my life but not my son's, please,* she silently pleaded to know that it was a fair sentence. She was not going to deny anything.

"I know that it is not indicated that I be the one who has to give you this, given the circumstances," she begins, walking towards the throne and lifting the object. "I was who ordered that he be removed of it when we arrest him trying to pass our files, eleven or twelve years ago, I no longer remember it."

Brienne lets out a small moan when she realises it's Widow's Wail. Jaime's sword.

"My friend Grey Worm, commander of the Unsullied at the time, took her with him and protected her in Naath all these years. He knows that such a valuable weapon must not run the same fate as the one who sheats it as children shouldn't inherit their parent's crimes," she extends it to pass it on and Brienne, still silent, grabs it. "I'm sorry I give it to you this far but there was no opportunity before to have a private conversation. I hope it will serve to your son as well as it served his father and to whoever belonged before him."

Without saying anything else, Daenerys Targaryen retires without even waiting for Brienne to thank her or express any reaction. The truth is that she could not. She couldn't even see her straight
in the eyes.

A bear there was, a bear, a bear!
All black and brown, and covered with hair.
The bear! The bear!

Oh come they said, oh come to the fair!
The fair? Said he, but I'm a bear!
All black and brown, and covered with hair!

And down the road from here to there.
From here! To there!
Three boys, a goat and a dancing bear!
They danced and spun, all the way to the fair!
The fair! The fair!

Oh, sweet she was, and pure and fair!
The maid with honey in her hair!
Her hair! Her hair!
The maid with honey in her hair!

The bear smelled the scent on the summer air.
The bear! The bear!
All black and brown and covered with hair!

He smelled the scent on the summer air!
He sniffed and roared and smelled it there!
Honey on the summer air!

Oh, I'm a maid, and I'm pure and fair!
I'll never dance with a hairy bear!
A bear! A bear!
I'll never dance with a hairy bear!

The bear, the bear!
Lifted her high into the air!
The bear! The bear!

I called for a knight, but you're a bear!
A bear, a bear!
All black and brown and covered with hair

She kicked and wailed, the maid so fair,
But he licked the honey from her hair.
Her hair! Her hair!
He licked the honey from her hair!

Then she sighed and squealed and kicked the air!
My bear! She sang. My bear so fair!
And off they went, from here to there,
The bear, the bear, and the maiden fair.
Brienne finishes singing the song but Little Jaime is still awake and smiling at her, rolling his eyes and reminding her that he was already too older for his mother to come to sing songs at night.

"So you want me to stop doing it?" She asks with a smile.

"No, mother, I'm just saying it's like that," he corrects in a relaxed tone. "When can I use Father's sword and go with you to fight?"

That same morning she had introduced Widow's Wail accordingly. She never had anything from Jaime to give him and he was ecstatic, causing even more regret in her heart.

Since his childhood years, she had instructed him in the use of the sword, not so much because it was essential in his education and she gave him what he could, but because she was not sure what the future held for them. She wanted to be sure that she could defend himself.

"I never want that to happen, my heart," she replies, sitting on the edge of the bed and touching his face. "It is still too heavy for your grip but we will soon get you used to it."

The idea of returning to Casterly Rock excites him just like it terrifies Brienne. In the months he spent being supervised to become a proper Lord, he has grown ecstatic to assume the responsibilities that King Jon will delegate to him.

"Mother," he calls again with eyes that are tired. "Talk to me about him."

Brienne never talked about Jaime with him, and what he learnt about the Lannisters, he did by Tyrion's words more than anything.

A lump in her throat almost makes her cry and she stills nods.

"He was a person like the others," she began to say, "good and sometimes not so good," it made no sense to hide Jaime's flaws when it will be the first thing he will hear from him later. "He was loyal, he liked to hide it because he thought he would look weak but, but he was the most loyal person I met. Loyal to his feelings until the last moment."

Little Jaime already had his eyes closed.

"I love you," she whispered kissing him on the forehead; Despite the damage, it was worth it just to have him.

She sat in the castle library with the quill, the ink, and parchment in front and began writing.
Dear Lady Sansa Stark.

I don't know how to start this letter. The more I think about it, the harder it is for me to write it. You will have to apologise my trembling but my hand does not stop shaking, as it has not done in the last twelve years.

You asked me at Jorah's Port if what we did was right and I told you that it didn't matter, because, to be honest, I always looked at that past as meaningless, where everything that happened lacked the foundation to understand what it left us in this present. But it's a lie, my answer was a lie. Of course it makes sense that the evil we did has returned to us in the cruelest ways that the gods, if they exist, have found.

I have believed in the past, that sometimes there are negative actions that one justify necessary to safeguard a superior good. That's what I believed when you extended to me the task of writing that letter to Cersei informing that the Daenerys Targaryen was heading to Dragonstone. As a result, it was not your greatest threat eliminated that day but an innocent victim of our ruthless actions. Her name was Missandei of Naath, an intelligent woman with a good heart that I could never forget, on any of the days of these twelve years.

I do not know to what extent our damage came, but every day I find it more difficult to contain this ruse inside me and it is killing me little by little with its poison.

I will always be loyal to you, and your lady mother. But I must also be loyal to myself, and not deceive myself by telling me that it makes no sense.

It will make sense when the truth is unleashed from the grip of our silence.

Brienne of Tarth.

The night is calm so she knows that the raven will arrive at its destination sooner rather than later. She lets it go quietly as the weight becomes lighter and lighter.

Inhaling and exhaling the moist air, Brienne opens her eyes to face the darkness.

Then she frowns and notices it.

Something is approaching on the horizon.

VIII

Daenerys

It's not the first time she watches him sleep but he seems quieter than she remembers as if in his dreams it was the only time he found peace.

She sighs and turns to face the ceiling.

What was she doing? she asks herself. Now when you have to go the pain it will be worse for him. And why worry about his pain? He didn't care about yours.
"You have never laughed like that with me," he said and she returned to that cold table at Winterfell's feast, watching him laugh with Tormund and Sansa as the same thought crossed her mind. 'He never smiles like that with me.'

She got up and decided that she needs to be away again and cool her head.

When she is changing from the gown to the breeches, Daenerys notices Jon's little notebook ajar in the desk. She knows she shouldn't but curiosity overcomes her and she takes it and leafs through.

There is nothing interesting at the beginning, calculations, ideas, strategies, the date they kissed in Winterfell noted, making her heart speed up. A few pages later, he has the days marked almost in succession as if he were counting each one. Battle of Acorn Hill. An interception on High Road. The number of executions, etc. Jon was definitely a thorough kind.

She was about to return the notebook to the desk when she noticed some words that caught her attention.

"Dany smiled at that girl at Riverrun's camp. She's the same one who gave me her toy as if telling me she trusted me enough to give me her most precious object. They have that in common and that's why I think it's the first day of our peace."

A sob drowns in her throat and Jon stirs a little in bed, forcing her out into the hall to continue reading.

"Dany and I went to a glade only with the dragons. We could have stayed there forever but peace has to be sought. The fifth day of peace."

"I'm sure Jorion is a she-dragon. I told Dany and she made a dirty jest about it. Sixteen days of peace."

And so on until there were thirty-seven entries of what he considered days of peace. The one that breaks her the most is the one that says:

"Today I executed five soldiers from the North for raping a rebel who had attacked them. They told me they had defended themselves but that is not true, how can it be? I got scared and went back to that day. But Dany entered my tent, helped me to wipe my hands and then I knew I was not there. That I would never return there. Twenty and four days of peace."

Her face was completely dampened by tears when she finished reading it, her soul shattered for knowing herself responsible for his happiness but also for his sorrow. As much as he for hers.

No, no, no, she screams in her mind. I have to go back to the Threshold, I can't leave it for Jon. And he can't depend on me to reach his peace.

She loves it so much it hurts and she doesn't know if that's a good thing. Again their feelings have been positioned in the middle of a war, and among them all those people.

He carries the booklet to his heart wishing he had time to engrave the words in his mind but, again, he has to remember that there is no time. When they least expect it, it will be over.

Daenerys realised that she didn't want it to end.

She got up as she had slipped to the floor, back against the wall. Listen to some soldiers on the move and realise that something is not going well, it is too much fuss for how late the night is.
"We are under attack!" someone screams before it comes the sound of a horn.

She hides the notebook in the place between the tunic and the leather armor that Jon has forced her to start using in addition to some metal shields like the pauldrons and the couters.

Jon behind her dresses even faster and leaves the room before her, taking the hallway that leads to the dragon's pit.

Daenerys chooses the opposite side, thinking they have only one thing of value in that castle and she had to be sure he would be safe.

She climbs the stone steps while listening to the walls being attack with what could only be trenches. They come from the eastside. she ignores the dust and dirt that falls on her head when she crosses the corridors to the chambers of Ser Brienne and Little Jaime. When she enters, the boy was already awake and dressed, with his father's sword in his hand although as clumsy as Daenerys with her own.

"Your majesty," he greets her kneeling, but Daenerys already avalanches upon him as another projectile shakes the heavy stone walls. How is it possible?

"Listen to me," she says seeing the same look between confusion and security of his father. A shiver ran through her body as she remembered Jaime Lannister riding towards her determined to kill her. She shakes the thought from her head, children are not heirs of their parents' crimes. "I'm going to take you with me to a safe flirt and for that you'll have to fly with me on my dragon."

"My mother!" he exclaims, forgetting about the knight he was a few seconds ago and returning to be the child he is. "Where is my mother?"

Another tremor makes them fall to the ground.

"There's no time, we have to go," and this time he doesn't protest. Daenerys would swear that he is holding back tears.

They reach the courtyard where only Jorion is waiting for her. In the sky, she sees a strange and greenish luminescence and at that moment she remembers it.

Wildfire. They are attacking them with wildfire.

"Your grace," the child's voice calls her. Daenerys pushes him behind Jorion when a pack of unknown men enter the balconies and stand there.

They are archers.

"Get down!" she orders the boy while she is about to shout at Jorion the order to burn them all. At that moment, he realises the terrible mistake she is about to make.

They are not going to shoot arrows.

They are about to throw wildfire and if Jorion breathes his fire he will kill them all except her.

Daenerys doesn't know what to do, she bends down and brings a shaky Little Jaime to her chest.

"Quiet, quiet, we'll be fine, we'll be fine," she reassures him but not even she believes it.
A shadow looms over them, Jorion wants to cover them with his scales but she knows that not even dragons are resistant to that thing. They will hurt him too.

*It can't be*, she thinks. *Quaithe promised me. They wouldn't hurt my hatchlings.*

At that moment another shadow hovers over them and Barristal lands on the opposite walls, hitting with his tail the soldiers who hold the wildfire tanks. It is a fundamental second in which she pushes Little Jaime by the tail of Jorion and together they climb the dragon until they manage to rise in time when the fire bursts and below them there is only a large green flare.

Dragonstone Castle burns with wildfire.

IX

**Ser Davos**

Matthos

That was what he thought at the moment he saw the green flames rising from the darkness. He sped up and ordered ships to be taken along the north coast, as the attack was coming from the south. They were taken by surprise and there was no time for a defense.

And their only weapon were dragons. Fire against fire.

They were barely seen in such darkness, Barristal's reddish scales appeared flying behind the castle. Ser Davos prayed that Jon to be wise and walk away.

Gendry places himself on the bow of the ship that he visited by chance that night to unload supplies, and looked back at him with wise eyes that there was no escape.

Matthos, he thought again, helpless.

"Jon! No!" he shouts loudly when he watches in horror as he heading for the trap.

The red dragon breathes his orange, red fire, and the disaster could not be avoided anymore.

Matthos.

Ser Davos ran to Gendry and pushed him against the rocks, begging that he hadn't hit his head.

He had run on time this time.

Matthos, he thought one last time before looking back and seeing how the green flames enveloped him.

X

**Brienne**

She could not unite any coherent thoughts other than fear and pain, physical and mental, seeing the crushed bodies under the rocks, accepting that anyone could be him.

Rocks.
Under rocks like his father.

She dawned there because it was impossible to escape death, her body consumed by that product that imitated the flames of a true fire, and her only thought was to be as close as possible to her son.

"Ser Brienne?"

She sees only the dragon queen's platinum hair in front of her.

"Oh no, Ser Brienne," her broken voice said as she recognises the burnt body of Brienne. Was there anything to recognise?

She didn't feel her limbs but she was sure she moves an arm to squeeze hers.

Between sobs, the dragon queen said something incoherent. Or is she that could not hear anymore?

"He is safe, Ser Brienne."

Then her heartbeats accelerates and the pain becomes even more awful, as the small light that was growing stronger in her field of vision becomes larger.

Her son is safe.

She has little time, she has to say it. She has to say it.

"He is safe, Jon took him to a safest place," she assures again.

"F-f-o-r-gi-ve-me," Brienne hears herself but it is no longer her voice.

"Wh-what?"

But then the light grew stronger and she only saw that. Light.

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Chapter End Notes

R.I.P Ser Davos and Ser Brienne :(

I had a big problem with the POVs in this chapter. I wanted to add one more of Gendry, one more of Jon and one more of Daenerys but I couldn't. Anyway, it will be for the next chapter and I hope to be able to finish next one for the last day of this year (the part you are looking forward to is already written lol, I'm nervous)

I feel that I have to apologize for not having delved deeper into the characters of Ser Brienne and Ser Davos. In my story, they are almost only plot devices, mostly Brienne. I am not a professional writer or pretend to be, so I allowed myself to create that arc in this story, although if I give my honest opinion, I hated what they did with her in the eighth season. In general, what they did with each and every one of the characters. This story is Jonerys centric, obviously, with a fill plot.
Truth

Chapter Summary

The truth finds its way to light.

Chapter Notes

~ The chapter with the revelation that was promised ~

Happy New Year!

I'm sorry for the delay but I have to rewrite the first part of this chapter. Here I changed the outline too. I'll explain to you later why. Enjoy it.

Adult content I guess(?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 6: "Truth"

317 A.C

I

Daenerys

On the feast for the anniversary of the coronation of King Aegon VI, more than a thousand people attended among nobles, soldiers and peasants, filling the Castle of Dragonstone to its peak. The next day, after the surprise attack with Wildfire, of Dragonstone only rocks and ashes were left, and of the thousand guests only a little more than four hundred survivors.

That is what Daenerys believes that history will narrate. She does not know if they will mention that Jon was intoxicated, something obvious by being a celebration in his honour, and he could not distinguish the wildfire tanks that the enemy army had spilled on the Blackwater River when he unleashed Barristal and the hatchlings on it.

Ser Brienne and Ser Davos perished. Gendry was unconscious, with an opening in his head after falling on the rocks, and all the members of the Guild of Commonwealth had died.

Representatives of the Common Council, including Jasper, had received serious injuries and several Essosi soldiers fell.

The attack occurred at a key hour, the majority were supposed to be gathered in the common courtyard of Dragonstone. The idea was to catch everyone, including the dragons. What the attackers did not know is that Daenerys would've survived and gone for them to the end of the world, had that plan succeeded.
Upon discovering the mistake he had made, Jon flew to the castle again, looking for her when he didn't see Jorion following him. It was that instinct that saved Jorion and Little Jaime from the same fate. The latter was taken by Jon to Driftmark Castle, where Monterys will guard him until they return to tell him about his mother's death.

Monterys saved from miracle because Daenerys sent him to take part of the soldiers back to the ancestral island of his family. He did see the enemy approaching Dragonstone and tried to return though he couldn't arrive on time.

Jon and she toured the ruins and Daenerys couldn't help wondering if this is what Jon saw in King's Landing.

"Children, little children, burnt!"

It was not an alien image after the cruelties she had seen and participated in Essos. But she did feel the desolation of having met some of these people. The moment that left her most moved was to see the almost unrecognizable body of Ser Brienne, who luckily she came to see in time to tell her that her son was safe.

_Forgive me_, were her last words and Daenerys concluded that she had confused her. Or maybe she was addressing her little and now orphaned son?

He has an uncomfortable feeling in her stomach since she heard those words.

There is guilt on Jon's face, and she tries to make him understand that he was drawn into a trap.

"You had no way of knowing it, it was dark," she tried to approach to reassure him, but he scared her out.

"You said it," he replied bluntly, "I was drunk."

They spend all that first day helping the survivors since there is no council to resort to asking what the next step will be. When she brings up the subject to Jon, he observes her severely; She, of all the people, should know the answer to that.

The truth is that Daenerys was as angry as she was confused; where did the attack come from? The army had black sails. I was camouflaged. Where did they get the wildfire? She was sure that twelve years ago at King's Landing she had finished with that crap.

What enemy did they underestimate?

"Ser Davos was there when I lost Arya," he mutters looking through the window of his chamber in Driftmark. "But before he stood there with me when-," he makes a pause to swallow and contemplate his words, "When I came back from the darkness, when Rickon died, and when I did what I did to you."

Ser Davos is the peak of his suffering.

Daenerys is there, standing still after returning from The Eyrie to inform Lord Royce of the disaster.

"He loved you," is all she can respond. She's not used to comforting the people suffering; she's usually the one in that state, picking up the pieces all by herself. She's conflicted by this sudden
"It was my fault," he states again, "He screamed something at me. If I had stopped I would have known what was happening I-

"They did this," she assures, interrupting his lament.

"They?" he turns around to face her. "Who are they?"

"Lord Lydden sent a message. In Casterly Rock there are celebrations."

In his expression, there's a darkness she has not seen before.

She understands the feeling, the helplessness of carrying the full weight of the misfortunes. What happened should give them a reason to be more united but on the contrary, he does not leave her to reach to him and she does not insist.

*Fire cannot kill a dragon*

*cause a dragon ignites the fire.*

*Crow's Eye.*

"Do you recognise it?" she asks Yara Greyjoy, extending the last missive Victarion sent to the Eyrie some weeks ago and that they dismissed as the other unsettling and unclear message he expedited.

Yara arrived at Driftmark that same morning, as fast as it was possible. They were discussing the possible identity of the attackers, who remained mysterious as they have various enemies at the moment.

"I am not a fucking scribe," Yara replies, harshly, "I don't know where Victarion could've got wildfire. I don't know how he does the things he does."

Jon let out a snort and Yara grunts in return.

"They've called him King Victarion," he explains, walking to the point on the map where Casterly Rock is. "I guess they accepted his offer."

"That will be a direct threat to our campaign," Lord Hornwood indicates as if they were not already that. In fact, she has tried to make Jon understand they should force a surrender, but as always, his royal council has protested against it. Their willingness staggers when it comes to their kind.

"Might you should start using those damn dragons and burn them all," Yara points out, "Let's take what we need!"

Yara remains confused about her uncle and his actions. Daenerys feels guilty of not being able to take the Iron Islands and hand them over at once. Victarion's volatility, his symbolic presence, "the crowned king" for villagers and peasants was terribly difficult to combat. They have sent him letters to continue negotiating but he returns short and mysterious phrases.

They plunged into a daunting silence. Nobody wanted to know anything about fire and that
Daenerys understands.

"I will take Casterly Rock," Jon declares, toppling the figure of a castle from the map, ubicated on the Lannister's seat. "They murdered my hand and my Warden of the West, I have the rightful heir in my guard. What kind of King I am if I overlook this crime?"

"To take the castle we would have to move there and that would take us at least two weeks-" Lord Hornwood begins to protest but Jon stops him.

"I said that I will be the one to take it, Lord Hornwood. Not, we."

Daenerys looks up at him with surprise and confusion, while Yara Greyjoy lets out a wheeze of disbelief.

"Your grace-," his Northern commander intends to insist but Jon is already turning around.

"I'm not asking anybody's advice," he remarks, sitting on his chair at the end of the table and giving them his back, "If Lord Jaime Lannister gives me his permission, I'm going to force the surrender of the castle."

Daenerys can't help feeling dragged into the past, in the chamber of the table painted with Varys and Tyrion belittling her suffer and anger and she growing paranoid. Of that time she learnt that fear, theirs and hers, had only led to disaster.

"We have not the certainty they are the attackers and our only hint is that Victarion provided the of wildfire," she tries her best to make it sound like she's following the flow and not objecting it. "If we respond with fire-"

"I never said I was going to burn the castle," Jon growls, "I said I was going to force a surrender just as I did in Winterfell."

"Winterfell it's a small castle in comparison, your grace, and does not have the highest levels that the Rock has. If they hurt your dragon or you, our campaign it's over."

Jon turns to look at her and awaits a reaction from her side.

"I would be there with the other ones," she guarantees with a wary tone. Daarion was impacted in his left-wing and was still recovering; the idea of taking them to battle does not please her.

"That's worse!" Lord Hornwood exclaims but instantly realises his mistake when both Jon and Daenerys shoot exasperated stares. "I mean, they can hurt one of the riderless ones!"

"They won't," Daenerys promises it, knowing that it's not possible. That she will not allow that to happen and the promise of Quaithe.

"I beg you to reconsider, we can move all our numbers there in a fortnight-" he intended to make Jon's will flounder but he fails when he replies;

"You are all dismissed," he commands and all those present there oblige, except for her. Without looking back he adds, "You too."

Daenerys let out a sarcastic, short laugh.

"If you believe you are going to start to dismiss me now, you haven't been paying attention," she sentences, walking to sit on the chair by his side.
"What does it bothers you now?" Jon inquires, "You are the one who wanted this from the beginning."

For practical reasons, she would like to shout at his stubborn face. However, they had come to secure a certain order, and an attack out of sending a message was not going to give them that. They still hadn't used the dragons without the support of the armies behind them.

"What advantage does it give us?" She asks the question that could spark his common sense. He was always a reasonable, measured and responsible man, however, she understood that such a situation could urge anyone to resort to their basic instincts; Grieving while battling.

"The entire Westerlands," he replies, his gaze still away from hers, "And an advanced warning for the Reach."

Dragons were an advantage but did not ensure the success of the negotiations, which were the purpose of the campaign. Negotiating, having the best position, offering supplies and Essos support is what had helped them. Dragons were always their last resort.

"Jon we came to Westeros with five large dragons and they destroyed Dragonstone with fire," sometimes there is no warning that can assure anything, she knows it better than anyone. "You right about forcing them to surrender but they are little children provoking us now, and I tell you, it's the same thing it happened to me once."

"And what do you propose, Daenerys?"

The dark semicircles underneath his eyes tell her he wasn't sleeping well.

"We are ignoring a different threat," then she focuses her eyes on King's Landing and Jon follows her.

"Are you implying The Raven sent those ships?"

"Someone is working with information that they shouldn't have," she asserts, "With weapons, they shouldn't have."

"And why aren't we attacking King's Landing then?"

She did not want to delve into the details of her approach to Quaithe. There are answers that she still can give him.

"I went there. The dragons cannot pass over the bore of Red Keep, neither I-," she begins to explain without realising the mistake she made.

His expression transformed into an iron mask.

"You went to King's Landing," he snaps out, "By your own."

At her null response, Jon gets up from the chair and leaves the room.

Duskendale

II

Gendry
What he feels when he begins to regain consciousness is a terrible pain in the center of his head that tortures him.

"Easy," a familiar voice tells him when he is startled and wants to get out of where he is lying.

"What had happened?" he asks, still stunned by the throbbing pain in his head.

"There was an attack on Dragonstone, do you remember it?"

"I was with-," And there he remembers everything. The dragons in the sky, the cry of Ser Davos to Jon and the push that threw him against the rocks. "Ser Davos!"

When his vision clears, Meera Reed's dark eyes face him. Her gaze is always sore.

"I'm sorry, I heard the hand of the King passed away," she informs him, placing something on his head that he can't see what it is. When she removes it he sees blood stains. "It is more superficial than it seems. You should be grateful that those rocks opened the skin and not the bone."

*You ever been in a boat before?*

*No.*

*You know how to swim?*

*No.*

*Don't fall out.*

*Go on.*

*Why are you doing this?*

*Because it's right.*

*And because I'm a slow learner. When you get to Flea Bottom, have a bowl of brown for me.*

He would like to be stronger but he can't help but start crying when he remembers the only man who considered his family, putting his life at risk so that he lives. Not for the first time.

"He pushed me," Gendry says, "He pushed me to save me."

"He did," Meera repeats with a sympathetic tone. Before she can turn around and leave, he stops her by grabbing her arm.

"Where are we?"

"Duskendale," she gently pulls herself off. Her presence arouses his curiosity, he doesn't remember that she was a curator.

"What are you doing here?"

She shrugs, cleaning her hands on the pot by his side. The movement makes his head hurt again.

"Queen Daenerys sent for us, they'll need to unify the armies soon," she stands so he can keep his stare focused on the ceiling, "And, with respect, my lord you have something of mine I need you to return to me."
The spear, he recalls. The spear on which he worked those days off so that it could get the right balance. He had finished it a few days ago but left it with his men on the continent for some reason. He was grateful now.

"It's safe. I left it with my soldiers."

"Well, thank you," Meera acknowledges before smiling gingerly and walking away.

**Driftmark**

**III**

**Jon**

He does not understand what is happening in his head, it is not the first time he loses someone important in his life but an imperative need to do something, to burn something. That thought shakes him out of place as soon as the image of Brienne's son sitting on the windowsill that decorates the main hall of Driftmark Castle appears in front of him.

Monterys Velaryon is by his side trying to cheer him up but it is useless. How an eleven-year-old boy is encouraged in the reality that his life was ruined? The memory of Bran and Rickon comes to his mind.

Daenerys enters the hall behind him. He had known the boy for longer than Daenerys but he had more confidence in her for being his saviour.

"Lord Velaryon," he announces walking towards them, "We would like a few words with Lord Lannister," but Monterys does not flinch, "Alone," Jon makes himself clear, categorically.

The boy who is entranced by Daenerys to the point he's ignoring his king nods with eyes still set on her, and not at him.

Jon wonders how bad he will do to Daenerys if he decapitates the boy for disobedience.

"Your majesties," Little Jaime steps out of the windowsill and kneels like a good example of her mother he is.

Jon notices Jaime's sword there by his side and can't avoid but saying, "We have your mother's one, too."

He doesn't understand at what point he became so dry and with so tactless with children. Perhaps it was the fact that the children of the free folk were accustomed to receiving the news that they would not see their parents again as if they were told that the sun would rise in the morning.

Daenerys looks at him angrily when Little Jaime lets out a sob at the memory of his mother.

"Come here," she says taking him in her arms and placing themselves again against the windowsill, "She loved you, and you were the luckiest child to have such an honourable person as her your mother. Someday history will tell about Ser Brienne of Tarth, the first and only knighted woman of the Seven Kingdoms and you and your descendants will be proud of her."

"I am alone, I have no one."
"You have yourself and that's enough," Daenerys encourages him, "I was a little baby when both my parents died. And a little older than you when my brother and husband did also die. I also felt alone but then I turned around and there were people who wanted to be my family. Along the way, you'll meet more people, little one. And you will care for others and guards them as your mother did," she makes a pause to stare at the ground beyond, "As your father did."

"They say my father killed yours," Little Jaime points while Dany cleans his tears away.

"But you are you, and I am who I am. You are the last of your family as the King and I are," Dany eyes at Jon, "Our past shouldn't define us but our decisions, that's why we need to speak with you about something."

"We need Casterly Rock, and our people seated there," Jon explains, "Our people mean you."

"What my king orders I shall obey," he concedes but without understanding what they were implying.

"I'm not ordering you, I am asking your permission," he breathes before continuing, "to fly over Casterly Rock and take your home from the people that stole you." They actually stole it from Tyrion, something Jon would've have agreed with, but now that place belonged to him and it enrages him they will not acknowledge the fucking image of Jaime Lannister.

"It's not my home, it has never been," he states so firmly that it surprises them both. "You will burn it?"

"We'll have to resort to an extreme solution for this matter," Dany comes forward to explain.

"Were they who killed my mother?"

It is a complex question, he thinks. He doesn't know who killed Brienne, Davos, and all those people, but they are celebrating his grief and there is no way Jon will let it pass after giving them the opportunity to surrender many times over, even better chances than he was advised to give to the peasants.

"We suspect it."

Little Jaime looks away from them and focuses on the bay where there is still a great ruin where the castle of Dragonstone was.

"My grandfather ruled in Tarth and I was raised there," he concludes, "I would like to be there until your grace demands me to return and assume my duty on Casterly Rock or whatever is in its place."

*Or whatever is in its place,* is all Jon needs to hear.

**Casterly Rock**

**IV**

**Daenerys**

This will be severe, she thinks as she lands with Jorion on a cliff after having created the first distraction for the soldiers to point the ballistas towards her. Although the golden dragon was
smaller than Drogon when he died, in the present he had already reached the same size as him when King's Landing happened. Casterly Rock seemed even more immense than what Red Keep once was, although it could be just an illusion created by its stepped structure, which improved the use of scorpions to the point that one of them almost took out her shoulder.

Daenerys feels strangely empty as she had not been on other occasions. She keeps thinking about Jon and his remoteness, feeling dragged back and forth to the past that didn't work.

*And it won't work now*, the persistent little voice in her head reminds him, *did you want him to realise? there you have it. I realised.*

She brought her hand to her chest, not to her heart or the scar but the small journal she still kept there. Jon must think that the object was lost in the ruins of Dragonstone, and she has not yet told him that she has it. His days of peace. Their days of peace.

Daenerys finds herself letting out a little weeping that has nothing to do with the stress or adrenaline of the battlefield. For her this is not something new, attacking with all the force of dragons. It is the weight of what happened, how much she loves him and how much separates them that hurts her at a level that no weapon can or could from now on.

Letting a tear of her slide down her cheek, she sees Barristol taking Casterly Rock's shooters by surprise and falls from the sky with a fire flare over the castle of the Lannisters.

The flames this time do not destroy the castle instantly, as if Red Keep did under the Drogon's power, but the fire destroys the ballistas, the soldiers stationed on them, and whoever they were trapped inside the towers.

Behind her Greywing makes a sound of impatience, as if urging her to move there and end it all at once. Hurting Daarion aroused the anger of his siblings.

*How ironic* she thinks while looking sideways, in an image similar to when she burnt the slave fleet in Meereen. *You stopped me in every possible way, Tyrion, and at the end of the day, here I am with three dragons flying to destroy your ancestral home, with Jon on the other side more impatient than me for ending this.*

She takes care of the low walls, although it takes more time between dodging the occasional projectiles, ensuring the safety of Missanderys and Greywing, and not becoming the target of the intense crimson flares of Barristol above her.

Jon takes Barristol to the other side, a movement too sudden that Daenerys doesn't like, it distracted her. She swallows hard and decides to allow the other dragons to take care of this area on their own while following Jon's lead.

On the other side, he is ending the army of rebel lords, an action that disconnects her from reality. Far from forcing a surrender, he is taking away the option, almost an act of pure resentment.

Something she has done. Because being honest, if Cersei represented a greater threat that day they would not be calling her the mad queen. It is the moment and the decisions that one makes that determines for the people who we are, and although Daenerys is sure that Jon will not run the same fate as her, the sudden change of plans, facing an army only with the dragons, would definitely settle a new precedent.

When there is nothing left to do, just observe, she retires south on the walls of Lannisport. It is certain that crossing the city with the three dragons has not been the best thing to announce to the
citizens of the arrival of the new king. When Jon does the same but on the North walls, Barristal is still as ecstatic as a few moments ago, unlike his sibling, who bet on alert but without uttering a single growl.

_Is Jon controlling what Barristal does?_ she wonders with a hand on his belly. _Oh no_, she thinks when she realises that Barristal wants to continue. _Barristal or Jon?_

Daenerys rushes Jorion to find them about to take flight.

"Jon!" she calls him, trying to make him hear it in spite of the screams under them and the fire behind. "Jon, look at me!"

But Jon is watching the city, rows of little people running for their lives. An image she remembers herself; ants, long rows of ants.

"Jon!" she tries again, "Jon is over! Let's go!"

Greywing and Missanderys fly over the city to the east, while they continue there.

"Jon, look at me, please," Daenerys prays, making Jorion move a few steps closer to a wrathful Barristal, who turns in a warning. _Yes, it's Barristal, she thanks in her mind. It's not Jon, it's Barristal. He is confusing him._

"Jon, they're not ants!"

And with that, he regains control of his own thoughts. Jon looks at her dumbfounded and at that moment, it's just them, the dragons and the destruction of Casterly Rock behind them.

V

_Jon_

What he was experiencing went beyond what he had ever felt in a stressful situation like this. There was no training tummy to help him distress, and the Wall was too far away to throw Barristal's flames on it. How many people have died today? It is a question that he does not want to answer because he knows that the response will only hit him harder.

_But more have died in Dragonstone, under your command. And those people were celebrating it._

"AAAH," he emits a cry of despair toward the nothingness where he landed a few moments ago. He doesn't know where he is, he has lost all sense of direction. Behind him, Barristal continues to let smoke escape through his nostrils, and inside him, Jon still feels his blood boiling.

It doesn't help that Daenerys lands in the same place, and gets off Jorion peacefully. Seeing her so calm, so indifferent they take him to the limit, it is as if she were making him pay for having abandoned her in the past when she was going through her own grief.

"You are going to leave me," he shouts when she approaches, a sudden feeling of despair flooding him. He wants her close but does not want her like that near him. That indifferent.

"I'm here," she dares to reply, subtly offended.

But she does not understand what torments him, or if she does, it is very good to leave the subject out of the conversation to make him believe that he can sleep peacefully at night in her arms and that this will be their lives forever. It's a lie, she tells him they don't have time but it's a lie. She is
making him suffer, on purpose.

"If what happened between us," he starts but stops at the wave of pain that hits him every time he remembers that event, "would you go anyway? If I were able to give you what you want so much-" his words trail off, "would you stay with me?"

Dany's face contorted in a gesture of pain.

"It doesn't work like that, Jon," she says, "I'm so sorry."

Why do you regret it? She is the one who is deciding to get away, leaving him to go to a place he will never have access to.

"After death, there is another life," she revealed to him.

"I already told you that only your body was dead. Not your mind or soul, whatever you want to call it. You are not allowed."

"You are not allowed."

Why didn't they allow him? What did he do more than fight for the good of the realm, for the protection of men? The notion of death had not bothered him in a long time, in fact, it had become a wanting of his every day since she stuck that dagger in her chest. Now, every time he was about to do it, the question came to his head, why didn't they let him?

"So what does all this mean? Why did you come back? Why did you let me back in your arms if you didn't want to hold me for a long time?"

"Because I'm weak," she responds, her voice wavering.

"You're everything but that," he opposes, "You could never love me again. You can't even say it if it's not to tell me how much it troubles you."

He doesn't realise how blunt he is being with her, the strength in his voice when he speaks.

"I love you," she whispers. Almost trying to convince herself.

"It doesn't sound honest, it doesn't sound like-"

"Like before?" she finishes forming the idea for him. She walks closer and cups his face like the night she cleaned his face, "Like before when I begged you to love me and you couldn't?"

And there is the truth. Jon takes her hands off him and puts as much distance as possible between them, which she doesn't respect and follows him behind.

"So you were getting revenge?"

"No, Jon, no," Dany protests, barely reaching his pace. She has to grab him from his arm to make him stop. "I was playing with my luck."

"We are not lucky," he replies eyeing at her grip and pulling away. "Neither in this life nor in the other."

In times of hopelessness, when the dead seemed unbeatable, he found his hope in her, and yet, hope turned to dust in his mouth when he walked in the destroyed streets of King's Landing. Jon now understands that neither of them wants or is willing to make peace with the past.
And yet he doesn't want her to leave. If he were not so aggrieved by the thoughts that crossed his mind at the moment, he would fall on his knee to beg her not to. To not go to that threshold of which the red woman spoke of, not to leave him behind. The helplessness of knowing that he was unable to give her a reason to stay, was destroying him inside. Soon he would have nothing to live for, again.

"Will you ever let me give you something?"

"I do not need anything."

He sits on a downed log, elbows on his knees while throwing his head in his hands, trying to avoid breaking in front of her. Daenerys stands in front of him, one hand hooked in the space between his arms and the other at the back of his neck, where he has knotted his hair.

"I asked you ninety days of peace in the midst of war because I believed you will understand how impossible is to borrow us more than what we have," she sounds sad, "And you found the way to make it work."

The hand on his neck is removed, forcing him to look up to ask her not to do so, that he needs her touch, but he forgets that at the moment she removes from her armor the journey he thought was buried and forgotten in Dragonstone. "Might that's the answer. To grab what we have before it's all lost."

Jon bows his head again, feeling defeated.

"How much time?"

"I don't know. It could be tonight as it can be in ten years from here but it will come."

"It's your choice?"

That question is blunt and necessary, and therefore, when her expression trembles in doubt, a hope he should not hold on to, arises in his chest.

"You are not sure," he concludes, falling to his knees to be closer to her.

"It wasn't my choice to go there the first two times," she explains, accepting he taking her from her face so that she will not look away. "All I know my purpose is defeating him."

Jon looks straight at her cold blue eyes when he says, "Then promise me that if it's your choice if it's up to you to decide, you will stay with me. I know I am a selfish bastard for asking this but I can't avoid it, I love you and I can't live without you."

"You can."

"I can't."

"Yes, you can," she breathes heavily before continuing, "Promise that if I can't choose, you will be fine and live your life happily."

Not only does the idea seem ridiculous, but nothing beyond her seems to make sense for him. He is tired of fighting wars that only took away and took away. He is tired of sacrificing himself to get anything in return.

"Will you choose me when it comes the time?"
Sounds more like a plea than a question.

Dany puts a hand back on his cheek, stroking his eyebrow while watching him sadly. He hopes to hear a negative response, but her words take him by surprise.

"I will," she replies, "As long as you promise me that no matter what happens you'll be the protector you are."

"Aye," he responds before yielding at the impulse to kiss her lips softly and lying his head on her neck. It is not enough, but he does not want to lose control anymore.

It is then that he allows himself to break into her arms and cry Ser Davos, while she whispers words of comfort over his head and holds him close, always close.

He does not know how much time passes but it is getting dark when they finally speak again.

"Now what?" she asks, she still stroking his back.

He sighs at the memory of the war that still haunted them. He did not think that he had gone further than Robb could ever: destroy the Lannister's fortress. The bitter memory that Lannisters and Starks once came together to destroy a Targaryen came to his mind, making his grip on her stronger.

"We move north and end Victarion once and for all," he declares, "The Reach can wait," it was a very valuable territory to set it on fire, and in his mind it was better to have the North again secured, to move here again with all the force of Westeros on them.

"and Dorne?"

At first, it was an issue that gave him many hours of thought. The idea of marrying the capricious princess seemed horrifying, especially since it was the girl Dewyn had a crush on to the point of him being stolen for her.

"I'll marry Dewyn with his princess to unite the Free Folk with the Seven Kingdoms, and your original plan with Anders Yronwood can continue," that it's in other words, to keep the Seven Kingdoms united.

"And your plan? What about splitting the Seven Kingdoms?"

After contemplating how difficult it was to maintain order even with five dragons, Jon understood that they couldn't indulge in experiencing another abrupt change in such a short time. He wanted to make sure things were normal again at some extension.

But that meant cementing the ground for lasting authority. Something that seemed unattainable for both.

"If we don't have an heir," he begins to explain knowing she will interrupt him.

"We can't," she obliges.

"If we don't have one then I'll name the spoiled princess my heir," it is the ideal solution to honour their former pact and keep in good terms. "She is the only one who actually wanted to be a queen, right?"

"She deserves it," Dany agrees with a smile; he can see how much she loves the princess "I'm sure
"We are not that old," he complains before keeping with detailing the outline of his plan, "We'll move the armies North and take out all Victarion forces because I can't tolerate this anymore. I just want no more war. Even if it means a great, single war."

The term great war is not intentional, but it leaves his lips without him noticing. He is really ready for one last great war, just to not further wars.

"Jon," Dany calls after a couple of minutes in silence.

"Ahah?"

"What else we'll do in Winterfell?"

He frowns without understanding first but when he meets her eyes then he understands. It is the same look she gave each night they spent together in recent months, trying to avoid falling completely into the abyss.

The memory of the first night that he crossed their boundaries to have some little of her comes to his mind.

"Next time, I'll take you in Winterfell and you will be my wife."

They haven't been together in Winterfell since then. And she certainly wasn't proposing marriage. However, Jon decides he is tired to wait too.

"We have to go, now."

Winterfell

VI

Daenerys

She gives space to the Stark siblings to grieve for their loved ones lost in the morning they arrive at Winterfell while discussing with Gray Worm and Jornik about the emerging situation in which they were in. She watched them both suggest new strategies for the siege of Moat Cailin and the Iron Islands while thinking how grateful she is in not having taken them with her to the south. She no longer wants to lose more people and begged for the campaign to end once and for all.

Bandy has been in charge of receiving the Yi Ti dresses presented by the Common Council on their last reunion in Gulltown. She abandons her armour and breeches and places herself in the delicate gown of ties that she decorates with a fur collar to simulate that she's warming against the cold.

Grey Worm says nothing to her but she feels that he has realised about what happened between Jon and her in those months. She couldn't help thinking that she had to find a way to get him away before the time comes and he had to see her go.

Despite maintaining the distance for that reason, she and Jon exchange glances with each other throughout the day. That night was going to happen what they had prevented so much from happening in the south, almost without success.
"I need you to deliver this letter in White Harbor to Yara Greyjoy and this one to Gendry, we cannot send them by crows at this moment, and I did not bring my seal," she tells Grey Worm, "You are the person here I trust the more."

As always, he accepts her command without protest, but in his face, Daenerys sees the confusion and anger. He is not an idiot and has realised what was happening.

It was not a hoax. The messenger with crows in Westeros was always a silent danger; The raven was not the only warg inhabiting these lands, and she was increasingly convinced that Victarion owned one.

Nor is it a lie that she left her newly forged seal in Driftmark.

Daenerys supposed there should be a copy of each seal in Winterfell, even if her seal was not as common as those of other houses. Daenerys rather assumed that a meticulous person like Sansa would have a spare one.

The scribe's office is dark like the rest of Winterfell and when she enters, he stands from his desk to greet her.

"Your grace."

"Are you Gillberg?" she asks him.

"Yes, your grace, what can I do for you?"

Daenerys stops dead at the sound of his accent, which she has heard elsewhere but does not remember exactly where.

"I have lost my seal," she informs, "with the sigil of House Targaryen," she doesn't know why she clarifies it, but she does, "Would you have a copy here?"

The man watches her for a moment with a mock smile, and Daenerys would swear to see a beam of light in his eye. Another southerner with a bad memory of her or another northern with a bad temper?

"I apologise to you but no, we don't have it."

Daenerys accepts that the letters will have a common seal.

VII

Jon

He was about to head down the passage when a knock on the door of his bedchamber takes him by surprise after supper time. It could only mean bad news.

He opens and meets Dany, which leaves him stunned.

"Your grace," she greets him by protocol, almost comically at that point. The guards smile at theirs, and he wants to cut off their heads.

"Leave," he orders and they nod without scolding, moving through the long, dark halls of Winterfell. "I was about to cross the passage to you," he says as she crosses the threshold of the
door without asking permission; not that he wanted to require it. She is still wearing the gray gown.

When she turns around he stops dead when he notices it in her expression. He fully intended to reach her chamber with that same expression and beg to be received. They have done this so many times and yet it was different because now there were no reservations in between. She is his and the world knows it and will know it. And the knowledge of that seems not to bother her anymore.

"Dany," he whispers from the tense distance between them. He can't stop seeing her lips, his goal as soon as she allows him. "What do we do, Dany?"

Then she takes the ties of the dress, those he imagined tearing off all night, and little by little she unleashed them alone.

"Listen, it's not the same body of ten years ago," she clarifies and Jon can't help but frown annoyed. "Yes, I know you've seen me a few months ago but it was different, we hadn't even-"

She does not finish explaining it when he attacks her, taking her from the back and squeezing the loose fabric of the dress while with his other hand he pushes her from the neck against his lips in an aggressive and thirsty kiss that soon puts him as hard as her stubbornness.

"Gods Dany if that doesn't make you see how much I want you then I don't know what else will do."

She does not notice it? has she forgotten all those nights during the campaign that she had to throw him out of the cot so he wouldn't give in?

"I know you want me," she admits, separating a little from him. "As I know you'll see the one under my chest and that will take you away from me."

Then Jon captures the meaning of her words. He returns to that night in the tower of Qarth when he saw it and could not help feeling disgusted with himself.

"See," she points out, forgetting about the ties she was unleashing. "If we're going to do this I need you not to see me as the withered body that I am. I can't stand that look. I don't want to be the image of your mistakes. If it hurts us then maybe it's not right."

Then he approaches her again to place a kiss on her forehead.

"If you can look at me and still receive me, with that you make me happier than seven kingdoms could make to the most greedy man in the world," he is firm in his response and will make sure all night that she understands. However, the thought still revolves in his head. *You should not feel worthy of this opportunity in life.* How many people die without having a chance to redeem their sins? He not only had the chance to face her justice but she also opened her arms to a second chance that no other person had given him. That scar will remind him of his mistake all the existence that he has left. Her face and eyes will also be there to remind him that this is the present and the other in the past. And as long as she wants it, he can't be away. He cannot. He does not want to.

The breathing of both becomes heavier in anticipation. They stay a few moments like that, hugging each other and feeling the contact of the other, or so Jon expects her to feel, knowing that only the fabrics between them prevent them from becoming a single person as they always should have been.

Fate or any wicked being who handled it had decided that they were the last of their kind and kin, and perhaps there is the meaning of everything. What he hasn't wanted to see at first: how right it
was to be together. The thought only made him feel even more miserable when he remembered what he did against her person; I shouldn't be able to have this opportunity. I should not.

"When the knife stuck in my heart I thought you did it, not because it was right but because it was fair. Because I deserved it. Because let's be honest, I deserved it. That would have been enough to not be able to tolerate the idea of us anymore. However, Jon, I don't resent you for that but because you hugged me, you put me against your chest and gave me what I asked in silent screams for several days and you turned me down again in the crudest and cruelest way. But I suppose I deserved it? If you ask a survivor of King's Landing, he will tell you that you should have been even crueler."

"I love you," he states.

"And I loved you."

_I loved you_, she said without correcting it. That moment was always going to be between them. He had to accept it if he wanted this new opportunity. Asking her to put it aside so as not to harm him was double cruelty.

"I was scared, I was impulsive, I swear for-" he didn't know how to continue that prayer, Dany and Sansa were the only thing left and he knows that bringing her up at this moment is not prudent, "for Barristal, that I didn't plan on it. Tyrion didn't convince me; it was your words. And it was my fear. I was very afraid of Dany."

"And it's the only thing I had at the end," she finishes telling him as she hugs him tightly and begins to sob in his neck.

His legs are loosened but he does not allow her to throw herself on the ground, but he holds her until they are both so close to each other that their sobs go in unison. He doesn't know how long they stay like this, maybe a few hours, a few minutes, a few seconds or maybe they've disappeared and they didn't realise because they didn't perceive those things when they are in each other's arms.

There Jon understood, how safe she felt and how betrayed she saw herself when she realised she was wrong. And it kills him to know that she threw herself back into his arms with that feeling intact: knowing that it was a dangerous place but assuming it because she no longer felt anything, no desire to survive.

The hand that rests on her lower back slides to her belly. Up to that point, he had not thought about how much he wants to be able to give her that, to be able to give them that. He ignores the sting of despair that produced the immutability of that truth, that they could not create life but only help or destroy others, and prepares to end the ties that united the front of the dress.

Dany held his arms to see how he dealt with the garment, with a smile still sad about the previous dialogue.

"It's from Yi Ti," she says and he narrows his eyes impatiently, seeing how complicated it was to finish untieing the ties. Then the wonderful sound of a laugh comes out of her mouth "This is nothing romantic, Jon," she confesses, taking them to the chest at the tip of his bed, sitting there and explaining how they unleash. "Look, it is all of a knot system, it has a tendency to loosen up so you have to check that it is always well adjusted, and that there are ends of at least five centimeters at the ends of the lace. One end of the lace is passed through this loop; another line passes through the same loop, following the path of the first but in the opposite direction; you've to pass enough lace to exceed five to seven centimeters of each end and then the knot is tensioned, see?"
No, he isn't looking at the damn lace but at her. Dany had a habit of getting lost in explanations of something that seemed interesting to her and he loved seeing her so focused.

Jon is still kneeling in front of her, with one arm extended against the chest, locking her in that way so she wouldn't escape. He just smiled at her, a little frustrated to see that she knotted the dress again.

"I feel like you want to kill me," he said warmly and comically, but Dany becomes serious, and raises an eyebrow.

"I told you it can be loosened," and with a simple movement, she stretched one end of the ribbon and the knots untied, completely loosening her dress and exposing her breast and belly.

Jon swallowed hard. He didn't think there would be no small clothes underneath. Quickly both arms fell at his sides in thoughtful contemplation. His clenched hands opened and closed.

Dany leaned with both hands on the chest, having achieved her goal of leaving him with his mouth open. She was seductive even when she assumed she had insecurities.

"May I?" stutters to ask but Dany finishes the idea for him.

"I didn't come to talk about strategies here, Jon."

With that, it is enough to bring his hand to the union of the lapels of the dress and separate them further to expose all her skin, which until now had not been exposed in that way.

And there it is the damn scar next to the others and the most recent down there above the left hip bone. Before he starts to blame himself, she slips the dress off her shoulders and arms and pulls it completely away from her legs until the fabric is loose beneath her, and Dany is completely naked in front of him.

It is inevitable that he will bring his hand towards it, that he will run his fingers over its texture to make sure it is not just a dream.

"I want you to tell me all about them," he asks, "All."

Dany frowns but nods as she lifts one leg and pushes herself towards the bed behind her without disconnecting her eyes from his at any time. The image of her lying in that way in his bed is enough sign for him to stop roundup and remove his tunic and breeches and join her.

When they lies down together he wonders how long they will resist until the inevitable happens. He is visibly prepared and she has dilated eyes every time she watches him.

"We're going to have to do this fast, Jon," she prompts, letting out a small sigh at the end that accelerates his heart. He assumes he should feel cold right now but he feels his whole body burn.

Then Jon sits on her and lifts one of her legs to start kissing one of the small scars up there on the ankle.

"That was pretty dumb, I dropped my first knife while I learned to sharpen it," she reveals followed by a chuckle.

He goes for her inner leg.

"Battle," she replies simply, "Many come from there. I didn't feel the pain and ended the battles
full of wounds that I didn't know where they came from."

Anguish is born from his chest at that comment but continues to receive the stories as if they were precious gifts she was giving. With each one he feels closer to her, less distanced by those ten years.

It reaches the one that is a few centimeters from its center, inside her inner thigh. Jon really wants to kiss her down there but he controls himself.

"It was the first one I made when my body-" she pauses, swallowing hard, "was recovering. I couldn't believe that nothing hurt after the pain I had felt the moment I returned."

He kiss that one for a longer time, needing the contact to try to heal her, make her see how much he loves her, and loves her well.

"Skip the one in the hip, you already know the story," she indicates, lying on her side a little so that he goes to a couple of scars on her rib. "When the hatchlings were born they clench themselves on my skin for long hours."

Those were not bad memories, he thinks as he kisses them and takes the opportunity to venture and tighten her arse. He had wanted to do that for years.

She replies with a laugh, "Jon, hurry up."

He lies her on her back again and his head is at the height of her breasts. He could leave the subject there, take one of them in his mouth and forget everything, however, the crimson coloured scar makes him stop.

He feels miserable for doing it but also goes down there and kisses her, feeling still it bloody taste.

"He broke my heart," Dany says, her broken voice prompting the same reaction in him. His tears soak the wound and he can do nothing but hug her and hold her close so that she doesn't pull him away. At any moment she could realise her mistake and leave him, and that terrifies him, it despairs him.

"Jon," she says after a few moments, still shaken by the breakdown. "Let's do it now. I want to do it now."

He nods and rises to be on top of her, with their bodies in position to join. He takes one of her legs and hooks it at his waist, while with his other hand, whose arm is held on the elbow to support himself, he caresses the right side of her face. Her eyes have that warm haze again and he understands that even if she doesn't want to say it, she loves him and needs him as much as he does need her.

He goes down and gives her a kiss, while her hands explore his upper torso as many other times until one of them goes down to grab his member and brings it closer to her heat, rubbing it top to bottom.

"Fuck," he curses, overwhelmed, "Dany, wait a moment," he warns her with all the regret in the world. She looks at him with confusion and anxiety. "Once this happens, you are mine. No more playing with our luck, Dany. Tomorrow you'll be my wife."

Actually, the idea was to take her as his wife. In his head the design of things was more or less the following: seduce her to the altar. However, as always, she took over the strategy and did what she wanted. Jon had no complaints as long as he could have her like this every night of what was left of
his existence.

Her answer is to push him down and bite his lower lip until he almost bleeds. "Don't tempt me," she returns the warning. "I'd rather have an idea of your performance in the bed before making a hasty decision."

His eyes narrow and represses the desire to laugh, which could ruin the moment.

"Dany," he growls at her with the same tone. "Dany."

"Yes," She gives in desperately, lifting her hip even though Jon pulls away to tempt her. "Yes, Jon, yes."

Then he also gives up and thrust inside her as he lows his mouth to capture her lips, drowning their groans. It is a matter of a second in which he feels that everything finally makes sense; At last, he is where he feels he belongs, to whom he belongs.

When they pull away, even with their eyes closed, the sound of their groans only urges them to keep pushing until oblivion. Her hands go back and forth on his back while her nails leave their trace. The moans become drowned cries and he calms down when he realises how of a brute he was being.

"Sorry, sorry," he apologises between rushed breaths. He loves how good it feels and hates how hard it is to stop. "Am I hurting you?"

Her chest rises and falls just as irregularly as him, she licks her lips propelling his arousal even further.

"I don't feel any pain," she says but then a smile draws in her face. "And I like what I do feel."

Jon grins and lowers to catch her mouth again, continuing to sway in and out of her until he feels that pressure around him that indicates she is close. Both are close. He pushes her toward the pillows so that she rises a little more and he can kiss her at a better angle, and Dany follows his lead, grabbing him from the neck and fiddling with his hair.

He does not want others to hear her rapture but at the same time, if they do, at least he already makes it clear that Westeros has a queen.

He slides his hand to that place above where they are joining and Dany drowns her own exclamation by biting the union between his neck and shoulder, causing him to lose the little control kept to not tighten his grip on her hip.

She reaches the peak of her pleasure and he follows her not far away, with her name on his lips.

Jon could not feel more ecstatic and full of tranquility as he reviewed the last hours of that day in his head. Her head is resting on his chest, while the furs covered them of the fresh air and her leg is hooked over his body. He would like to stay there for a thousand years.

"Sleep" she demands, without lifting her gaze up.

"No," he replies, smiling. Of course he wants to sleep but is afraid to wake up to find everything was a dream, and that he was back in the North beyond the wall, in a tent dying in life. "I love you," he tells her again what he won't stop saying until his last breath. "Thank you for this and for
staying with me."

She places on top of him and puts her chin on her arms to watch him more closely. He sees her fighting the incessant thoughts and Jon begs that it will end someday and she can love him as much as he does.

As she loved him before.

"Are you sure you want to do this? Wedding your aunt?"

"I'm not wedding my aunt, I'm marrying the woman I love."

"Who happens to be your aunt."

"Do you think that after all we went through that will be an impediment for me?"

"All our problems are on the table," she points out while her fingers dance on his chest, "Our relation, our past, our timing, I'm just wondering if we are ready."

He would like her not to be so hard but it was hard to ask that from her.

"There's something else I should know?" he wonders.

"Might it is," Dany voice sounds sombre.

"Can we change it, or turn it in our favour?" Jon tries to avoid another reason to fight for now.

"We can't."

"Then let it rest with the rest," he asks, closing his eyes and giving in to sleep.

VIII

Sansa

"Does it have to be tonight?" she protests as they walk hurriedly through the outer halls of Winterfell like they have done so many other times. "We don't even have a representative of the faith to validate the union."

Jon and Daenerys were getting married. At last. And although the news had made her happy and relieved, announcing that he wanted to do it that same night caused her some distress. How were they going to organise that kind of ceremony in just a few hours? Where did he get an appropriate bride gown? And his garments? This is supposed to be an important event for Westeros as a whole and they wanted to do it in secret?

"Daenerys does not believe in gods," Jon says following her and Sansa couldn't believe such a statement. "And I don't believe in the Faith of the Seven. So they can validate it when I believe their opinion relevant."

She smiles in his direction with her eyebrows raised in disbelief. Their time despairs Sansa, coming to Winterfell without warning, engaging without warning and getting married without warning. The two are too used to doing whatever they wanted and when they wanted.

Westeros will face years of neutral chaos.

"I waited for this day for many months and for her ten years," Jon explains, in his face, there is
absolute sincerity. "I only need her and preferably a witness."

In the warehouse, she searches for one of her mother's old dresses, who was small in body structure like Daenerys. It is the closest they'll to a wedding gown.

"Doesn't it bother you she wearing a gown from my mother?" she consults Jon, without showing the clothing. He will have to wait until night.

"The right question would be if your lady mother hadn't bothered it," he teases.

"Well, she's not here to give her opinion, but I think that if she'd known you weren't her husband's bastard child but her nephew, she would be the one making your clothes for the wedding now," she tries to follow the jest but it is actually a delicate subject for both. Noticing him relaxed and indifferent to the matter, Sansa assumes he has no problems with the choice. "Send Daenerys to my chamber, please. Lady Jayne and I will try to adjust it for her and make some modifications."

Jon nods and turns around, however, he stops and looks at her again.

"Sansa," he calls her as she takes scraps of fur and embroidery that she had left behind years ago, "thank you."

When she is about to answer him, he has already gone, surely to finish the preparations for that great day. Finally, that man would have some happiness, she thinks as she walks out. However, again the impulse to look where Little Eddard's clothes lay stopped her. Usually, she avoids them, knowing it useless and invasive of her emotions. This time she takes a little jerkin with her.

It takes almost two hours until Daenerys shows up in Sansa's chamber to start with the work. Sansa doesn't have to be too thorough to realise that the delay had to do surely, with Jon convincing her to come.

There is a slight pink tone on her cheeks when they help her put on the corset and several scars are exposed on her arms. It shouldn't surprise them considering that after all, she spent eleven years in Essos from one war to another and has not stopped even now. Sansa would like to tell her that she has many of those from her marriage to Ramsey and that she would have preferred to get them in a war, but it wouldn't have any case, they weren't there fraternising.

It doesn't take them too long to fix the details, almond-colored gown with subtle embroideries of a reddish hue. They asked Daenerys if they should add the design of the dragons that used to have her clothes before, but she told them not to bother.

Lady Jayne leaves them alone in a moment to end the mantle. Meanwhile, Sansa would be in charge of finishing small adjustments in the grip of the waist, for which Daenerys had to stand in front of her while Sansa sat in a chair in front of her and finished joining the loose fabric.

It was a terribly awkward moment.

"How old was he?"

Her question ends the silence and Sansa shakes a little, looking up and checking that she was eyeing at the small jerkin she brought from the warehouse.

"Not enough," she replies with a sudden lump in her throat.

"Children are supposed to survive parents, right?" she asks in the same grim tone. "And my children were supposed to live more than a hundred years."
Sansa would've preferred not to delve into that subject with her, not because she thinks she would not understand her, but because it was inevitable to feel that oppression in her chest at the memory of her greatest sin.

A knock on the door saves them the awkward moment, and Gillberg carrying his tray enters the room.

"Your grace," he bows to Daenerys, "M'lady," then addresses her, placing the missives on her desk. Sansa notices that Daenerys long stares at him just as Grey Worm used to do it.

She takes advantage of the distraction to end the awkward encounter, telling Daenerys that she can undress. However, as soon as she turns to place some pins on her desk, she sees the seal of House Targaryen on one of the scrolls. Sansa frowns and wonders if Gillberg brought it by mistake instead of sending it off.

"Daenerys," she calls her before her brother's bride can start pulling off the gown, "This one is yours."

Daenerys collects the scroll with a confusing expression, "I didn't write this."

*She should open it to know*, Sansa wants to reply but just stares at her with awakening curiosity. Daenerys unrolls the parchment right there and she waits for her to announce what information has arrived.

She begins to read it while Sansa continues to accommodate the things that have been scattered in the room. Then he hears an animal sound, agonizing escape from Daenerys's lips, which alerted all his senses. Bad news?

"What happened?" she asks with concern and her heart beating hard in her chest. "Did something bad happen?"

Daenerys's face has transformed into a river of tears, only tears, and red eyes. She is shattered and Sansa is desperate to understand what is happening; it is supposed to be the happiest day of her life.

"You're a monster," she mutters but Sansa still doesn't catch her sudden breakdown. She looks down at the parchment that has fallen on the floor and bends down to take it, and without getting up, reads it.

This is how her life ends because she knows that what awaits her is imminent and unpleasant, a chase of time that has now finally caught her.

*It will make sense when the truth is unleashed from the grip of our silence.*

Those were Brienne's last words for her. And it becomes all of that Sansa waits at the end.

The northern guards enter the chamber at the sound of the uproar.

"Take Lady Sansa to the Great Hall," Daenerys says with shaky and difficult voice while leaving the room still in her bridal gown. "Summon Jon Snow."

She doesn't know if she deliberately called her brother by that name, or if it was a reminder to Sansa of what was about to happen to her. What Jon was going to discover. Not King Aegon VI, but her brother, Jon. That's what she thought as she let the soldiers escort her to Great Hall, tears stinging her eyes but maintaining her composure.
The turmoil alters several of the castle's inhabitants, who follow the procession to the same place where she and Arya once judged Littlefinger. And where many people had found their justice as well.

Sansa decides that as Brienne, it was pointless to continue hiding the truth, and preferred to face justice than continuing living with guilt over her.

In the Great Hall, Daenerys takes a seat in the place that corresponds to the monarch, or the lord of Winterfell, a place where she had never before placed before. It was where Sansa had sat down to make justice many times. Jon enters the hall with his face transmuted in horror, it seems that he has not yet been told of what's going on.

"What does this mean?" he asks sternly towards the soldiers, Daenerys, and her.

Sansa trembles and breathes rapidly when Jon advances to the center table and Daenerys extends the scroll with Brienne's letter. Due to the plight of the situation, she has not noticed how the missive arrived. It didn't have Brienne's seal, but Daenerys'.

Jon has a confused look before taking the letter in his hands and starting to read it.

Sansa resists no more and lets tears fall freely down her cheeks, exposing to everyone what she had no desire to deny anymore.

"Sansa," Jon's voice calls her, but it sounds distant, perplexed, more like the sound of someone that has been scared. "How could you? Please tell me this is a lie."

However, on her face is the truth.

"You stand accused of murder. You stand accused of treason. How do you answer these charges, Lady Stark?" Daenerys questions her, as the bewildered assistants began to fuss out loud.

Jon waits once again for her to confirm that his worst nightmare is not true, but Sansa will not depart from the punishment.

"Guilty, your majesty," she states, folding her hands in front of her.

"Of which crimes? Treason to the crown to which the North was sworn, when you provided information to Cersei Lannister about our movements, leading to the deaths of my dragon, more than a hundred of my soldiers, and the capture and subsequent death of my friend and counselor Missandei of Naath. How do you respond to all these crimes?"

"Guilty, of all," she reprises, but it's not enough for Daenerys. In her countenance, there is too much resurrected pain.

"Of all I've mentioned to you or are there any more you wish to confess?"

Sansa knows what she's trying to imply, trying to carve for. *Do you know about my state when you did it?*

"Please, your grace," she begs to avoid Jon's stare.

"Speak," Daenerys demands.

There's no alternative.

"I broke a sacred oath," then she admits, "When my brother asked me not to reveal his true identity,
O was I who told Tyrion Lannister."

Sansa is aware that with that truth she has annihilated any sympathy on the part of the Northerners who are present there. So many years of suffering because she couldn't shut her mouth.

"How lenient of you, be grateful that we are protecting the same person," Daenerys sentences, "You have turn family against family, Sansa Stark. Jon Snow put a dagger on my chest to protect you from my fury, now I will return you the favour," with this she stands and faces Jon, who kept moving his eyes from Sansa to her. "I know that what I ask of you is terrible, but it is necessary. It is justice. For Rhaegal, for my Unsullied and for Missandei. Do not make Tyrion's mistake of protecting your family from my anger because I swear it will be the last time you fail me."

Jon looks at her helplessly and uneasily, his hands at his sides are open as a sign of defeat. This is the point where he can no longer protect her. And Sansa prefers it to be so.

"Jon," Daenerys calls him again. There is no warmth or supplication in her voice, there is no intention to convince him but to demand it. "Jon, now."

"I-" he starts but his words trail off, "Aegon," he closes his eyes reluctantly as if something hurts deep inside him. Sansa wants this to be simple for him, so she throws herself on the ground without haste, knees on the floor and her head slightly tilted so that the blow is clean and light. She begins to pray in her mind, as she remembers her father doing in his final moments, while the voices in the hall become a powerful noise. She can't discern anything but Jon's voice. "King of the Seven-" continues with the sentence while listening to Longclaw. There is a groan drowned in his throat.

A sob escapes her throat when she feels Longclaw over her neck, although Jon has not finished his sentence. She just prays that in wherever place she ends after this, she can see the smile of Little Eddard, Will, Rickon, Bran, Arya, Robb, and her parents again.

The sound of steel clashing on the ground takes her out of her last ramblings. The blade never pierced her neck.

She gently looks up to find the expressionless face of Daenerys and then, the reddened and distressed look of Jon, who has thrown Longclaw away.

"Sorry, Dany," he says choppy and broken, "I can't. My hands are shaking, I can't do it."

A deafening silence absorbs the recent energy that flooded the hall, turning the place into a quiet, cold grave of which everyone is about to be part.

Daenerys stare darkens.

IX

Daenerys

Her throat burns when she lets out another growl as if she could feel the fire rising inside her, ready to be expelled. Under her, Jorion has lost all serenity and the beast that he is - who they are, have woken up.

_You were always a monster_, Viserys' voice reminds her, _you just have to wake up the dragon._

Suddenly, all voices are there again, crying she never had a chance in this life, and that she still doesn't have it because she is dead.
Died. She died with his kiss on her lips at the sound of a deceitful promise. Alone, banished, exhausted, unprotected and with her last hope slaughtered without her being able to do anything.

You gave everything up, stupid idiot, Viserys keeps voicing, you gave everything to our nephew who never loved you. He used you, Dany. And you gave it all like the stupid little girl you are.

He will never choose her. She never asked for it but he discarded her like seeds of a fruit, seeds from which disasters were grown, because that is what she is, disaster, chaos, and destruction.

Not only did you lose your dragon to save him, but your other dragon was slaughtered thanks to that little sister of him who will always be before you. And to your friend. To sweet Missandei. They all died because they were your shield, Dany. And when there were no more shields, his dagger found your heart.

He made you believe you were safe in his arms.

He left you lying on the floor.

He forgot you to go where he wanted to be.

Damn stupid.

Burn them all, the scream of her father, she listens. Burn them all, burn them all.

She tightens the grip on Jorion's horns, so hard that Daenerys is sure she is hurting him with the fire that radiates from her own hands.

Mercy. He wanted a world of mercy.

I'm going to give him a world of ashes, starting with that tomb they have as a castle. Of Sansa, there would only be ashes, just like Missandei after they brought her slaughtered body to cream on the shores of the Dragonstone beaches.

Her soldiers remained in position, aiming the spears against the useless northern people that saw with horror that there was no escape. Daenerys is sure that she could say the words, offer the option and they would change sides. They would leave Jon and Sansa on their own, as they are. Two losing dogs that she should have sunk to the bottom of the Narrow Sea as soon as she learned they sailed for Essos.

She should never have looked back. She should not have allowed him to touch her again, she should not have allowed his disgusting hands to touch her again when they were the same hands that held her still while they stabbed a dagger in her heart. Daenerys wants to throw up in disgust, she felt disgusted by him.

It was a thought she had repressed because it seemed obsolete, but it was always there. Disgust.

Barristal hovers over a tower, Jon barely holds up, he never fit to ride a dragon.

He does not belong to you. He didn't mourn Rhaegal, Barristal's sire, he didn't care that he was forgotten at the bottom of the blackwater river.

Just like he didn't care for what was of her, the embrace of love she needed at the time, nothing.

He is deceiving you, Dany, Viserys warns her. She can feel him behind her. He wants you meek to kill you again like the dirty beast that you are.
"Dany!"

His scream is overshadowed by Barristal's growl of despair. He's not infuriated but forlorn.

*I raised that dragon*, she thinks, *and now he uses it against me.*

"Dany, please! Please listen to me," he is crying. *Damn weak, he's crying.* "Dany," she can't see his face but at the same time, the same image is in front of her. Jon crying, begging for her mercy when he's the one coming to end her.

He wanted her to forgive everyone. Let them see that they made a mistake. He was imploring her to give him a reason not to do what he was about to do. Because love was never enough.

It was never going to be enough.

Never.

And at that moment, Daenerys realised that, for the first time, neither is it for her.

*Duty is the death of love*, and Jon has killed that love. Because one thing that is certain is that this was all she needed for the fight to end in her head.

Their love no longer existed.

Love has died.

**King’s Landing**
**Red Keep, 305 AC**

"*My child.*"

*It was all she wanted to say but he didn’t allow it.*

*First, it was pain, then surprise and disappointment. At last, it was terrible despair to find something coherent in her mind while absorbed by a white light, although she thought it was the open roof of Red Keep.*

*Was it the pain of the knife, the pain that afflicted her a few moments earlier in her belly or was it the pain that had been there for a long time, hurting in her chest?*

*Why?*

*She knew why. It was not necessary to inquire too much.*

*She closed her eyes knowing that it was inevitable. She didn't want to see him in the eye because she concluded that it wasn't worth it. He wasn't worth it. The journey wasn't worth it.*

*She preferred to see the sky and pray that she or he will be there too.*

*May all of them be there.*

**Present**
**317, A.C.**
She bends down and lies on Jorion's scales, closing her eyes in a mental exercise she had practiced before in the ruins of Vaes Diaf. She closes her eyes and imagines another life. Like when she envisaged whether she had agreed to go with Jorah further east or to share a life with Daario. Now she imagined Gerael and his appealing, blue smile; she could never look him in the eye.

She recalled that day mounted on Dragon. She imagined that she did not take the poisoned food of Varys and that her daughter was well, protected in her belly. She imagined flying over King's Landing and abandoning them all. She would fly into the unknown until she found the house with the red door and the lemon tree. Her daughter would grow up there with Drogon. Safe. And Daenerys knew she would never need to look back again.

Then she heard her again. And she also listened to him. The soft lullaby and the purr of Drogon, still small.

*You have the threshold, remember, when you have nothing, you will still have the threshold.*

*And there you will always belong.*

As she gets up and opens her eyes, Jorion stop trembling beneath her but remains alert, as Barristal is still volatile in front of them.

Daenerys breathes profoundly before abandoning the walls of Winterfell, flying north towards the Wolfswood.

She lands in the snowy field, throwing herself from Jorion's neck, falling down against the snow that does not hurt her, although her body does.

Blood. Her cheekbone has been injured and drops of blood fall into the snow when she rises and watches the ground.

"Dany!" Jon yells at her from behind and this time she doesn't hold back when steers a flare from her own fire and drives him away. He is a deranged man if he thinks his hands will ever touch her again.

Listening to his groans, she has hurt him.

Barristal screams in despair and tries to attack Jorion, who pushes him with equal vigour, waking Daenerys from her stillness.

Her fire has left a big wound on Jon's arm, she can see his burned skin from the distance that separates them.

He gets up and begs again.

"Dany," between sobs. "Please, Dany. Kill me but don't do this to me, please."

Do what? She wants to ask him while she observes that Barristal shots a warning snarl to Jorion, that he responds equally severe.

Greywing, Missanderys, and Daarion descend and land on the sides of Jorion. Just as accelerated they warn Barristal that they have chosen this side. They have chosen her.

She can't blame Barristal for feeling what he feels. For being loyal to his rider.

Time is running out and she has to move away, thus preventing siblings from getting against...
siblings. The hatchlings are her limit. She was not going to allow them to hurt themselves.

"Dany," Jon gets on his knees.

'Do you remember what I told you the first time you called me that?'

"I love you," he whines. "I love you, Dany, please don't leave me. I need time."

Time. All she wanted to make him understand is that they don't have time.

He is afraid to look into her eyes. Once she told him that love comes from there and since then she has always looked into his eyes as if pleading to see how much love there it was. Now, Daenerys wants him to see how much she despises him and how much he disgusts her.

He notices it, Daenerys can see through him.

"Your eyes are frozen. They used to see me with love, and I used to find my warm there but now-"

"It's like seeing in the eyes of a dead man, right?" she shouts with a cold tone.

Because she's dead and he couldn't understand it. He wanted to hold on to the image of who she was when Dany was no longer there. He pursued that fantasy because guilt killed him and she let him believe it was true because the unconditional love she felt came before her pain.

I wanted to protect him from pain. Of all the pains.

And now she has made a wound on his arm that should be causing deafening suffering; it's the first time ever that she inflicts that kind of damage in him.

But it's not enough. He deserves to carry more, right? Viserys whispers. Tell him, Dany.

Daenerys no longer wanted to shield him from it. The shield of their love is broken.

Without moving from where she is, she sinks to her knee so that their eyes align in the distance. For what she has always has let them be on the same ground.

X

Jon

The memory of Theon Greyjoy comes to his mind after many years, he sees himself in that pitiful image of a man who could not see the eyes of those who hurt and betrayed. He cannot see in the eyes of the love of his life, the person he murdered to protect a sister who caused the death of her best friend and her son. And he still can't answer accordingly. He needs more time to erase the emotional link that binds him with his little sister, the only family he has left from the Starks.

Love and duty

Love is the death of duty.

Duty is the death of love.

Who is it due to? Both are his family.

Who does he love? Both. But he loves Dany.
Deep down, Jon is aware he has and must do it because Dany has already received that sentence, without any assurance that she would come back to life and fall in love with him again.

He ignores the burning pain in his left arm, a pulsating and bloody wound, in that place where she woke up that morning.

"Fine," she says but can barely hear her.

"Dany," he pleads her once again.

"You never appreciated what I gave you," she repeats her previous statement. Another of her misconceptions of him she proves right.

"Dany, please," he wants to argue with her; he's always been grateful, he loves her, he knows he needs to execute Sansa but he cannot. Not now. "But it's okay. Because you don't want it. You are not able to see beyond the darkness," she continues, eliciting another crack in his already destroyed soul. "When your unfortunate existence is over, you will only have that. Darkness. And I will be on the threshold with my children. With Rhaego, with Viserion, with Rhaegal, with Drogon," she speaks about that place Kinvara pointed, the place she will choose over him. This time when she speaks her tone is severe and aggressive, like an insult but it's not that what leaves her mouth, but something that hurts him like any other words have done in his thirty-five years of existence," and with my daughter."

His heart stops and he can't even call her by her name. Barristal behind him delivers a terrible outcry as if a projectile had been stuck in his heart; In their hearts.

"With the child who fell into pieces off my body when I was brought back," then in his mind, the images of the last two years are repeated but with another meaning. Her eyes that first time they met again on the ramparts of Great Keep, the fear and the weight of the truth she hid from him. "The daughter that the spider's venom slaughtered in my guts," 'Did you know that Varys was poisoning me? ' she never said he tried but he did. "The daughter who had no future because if the spider hadn't succeeded, her own father would've killed her. The child whose existence Sansa knew about."

At that moment the pain in his arm does not matter, and the emotional damage he felt in the face of her rejection and disappointment seems tiny beside the truth she is confessing to him. He was dragged into the past, the blood on his hands that Grey Worm did not let him clean for days. Blood from her and blood from her child. Of his child.

Has it occurred to you that it might not have been a reliable source of information?

"In fact," she keeps on, her voice growing darker, "your damn tongue condemned her. Your damn Starks condemned us. You are my misfortune, you always have been. And you know what? This was what I needed to finally accept it. With this, you have thrust the last dagger in my heart, Jon Snow. Duty is the death of love. Love is dead. I can't love you anymore."

Chapter End Notes

- My intention with this chapter was to build a feeling of hope that is shattered. In other words, what canon Daenerys felt in her last moments of life.
- I have no idea if Casterly Rock is larger than Winterfell but by the depiction of it in
the show, it seems that yes.
- "My child" would have been good last words for Dany. It would have left Jon wondering if she was calling for Drogon or if she was pregnant.
- My intention was not to "bash Sansa" but create a scenario of cause and effect, in a tragicomic context because it faces the characters with their past actions. It's hard in my place to write her character either bitchy or redeemed. For me, it's just tragedy after tragedy at this point. The only ones who kinda find or will find atonement with their past are Jon and Dany in terms of their relationship. You can take it as you want and I hope you don't hate me (after what I did with Drogon I don't think it possible but who knows lol).
- I removed Grey Worm from the moment of Sansa's trial because let be honest, he would've killed her in the place.

As always thank you for your continuous support. I'll take a break from the story because these latest chapters have dried out some of my energy. Also, the next chapters will contain some fantasy which it's not my strength and I just included in this story to tie up loose ends.
Chapter Summary

Chaos is a ladder

Chapter Notes

Thank you so much for all the sweet comments in the last chapter! This has been a wonderful experience. Thank you, thank you :)

This chapter will not contain Jon and Dany's POVs because chapter 8 (Jon) and 9 (Dany) are exclusively their POVs.

Here we got another major character death u.u

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 7: "The Wolf is of the North."

I

Sansa

It will make sense when the truth is unleashed from the grip of our silence.

Brienne's last words resound in her mind, now appeased after all the scandal a few hours ago. At least, Brienne, you had a chance to reveal the truth, Sansa thinks. Yours, because mine still remains chained to my silence.

She throws her head against the cold stone wall of her dungeon, where the guards had moved her after Jon and Daenerys mounted their dragons. The dance of dragons, she says in her mind, ironically. It could all be over there but, for some reason unknown to her, Daenerys did not yield at her very reasonable impulse to burn everything to the ground, not even Sansa.

She hears the gates open and steps approaching, she knows that it is not Jon but it could be another executioner who came to finish the work for him, although knowing him as Sansa does, it was impossible, the man who passes the sentence should swing the sword.

"Lady Sansa," Jayne Poole whispers to draw her attention, and Sansa turns her head to find her and Gillberg behind grilles.

"What are you doing here?" she asks them without moving from her place or showing any encouragement to see them. "Where is the King?"

"He has locked himself in his bedchamber and has not left there at any time since the dragon queen departed," Jayne explains, her hands tied like knots of the nervousness she was experiencing. "Her soldiers marched for White Harbor, and the people are outside Winterfell for-" her words trail off
making her choke, "they know about your broken oath."

Sansa sighs and closes her eyes again, leaning her head against the wall. It was an expected outcome for her.

"The King will do the right thing, he only needs time," she replies to calm their stress, "what are you doing here?" she questions again, staring with special attention to Gillberg, "What are you doing here?"

Her scribe step forward with his expression moved, "Would you believe me, m'lady? I didn't know the content of that missive. If I had known, I wouldn't have given the message to her."

Sansa dismisses his worrisome. There's no case now everything is lost. She does not have a true regret that the truth was unveiled but that it did her brother's best day of his life. Had she saw the content herself, as the missive was intended, she would've let them have their day before revealing the truth to honour to Brienne's last wish.

"It's done," she states. "Whoever did this-" she can't complete the sentence when the gates open up again and this time she stands recognising the sound of his steps.

Lady Jayne and Gillberg bow their heads and withdrawn.

In the last hour, she had imagined this moment a lot but did not think it would hurt so much, now that Jon is facing her with his troubled face transformed into pure destruction.

"Jon..." is all she can utter, as the tears flood her vision, "I'm so sorry."

He is mute, just staring at her with pain and something else, like distraught. Sansa has to swallow the lump in her throat at the realisation of what it is. Of what he already knows.

"She told you?"

He makes several attempts to speak but it is just like the words couldn't convey in what's trying to understand.

"Have you ever see me as your brother?"

A lugubrious silence looms over them; his small eyes are swollen and his face tainted with a reddish tone.

"Have you ever see me as your family? Do you-" he stops at the sudden moan that erupts from his chest, "hated me?"

At this point, Sansa has given up to the weight of her body and falling off to her knees.

"When I survived the battle against Ramsey, were you disappointed because I didn't die like Rickon? Did you plan this all along? Why Sansa? Why?"

"I love you, you are my brother, Jon," she whines, her tears staining the cold stone ground.

"There was a child," he growls with despair at the sound of those words that uncovers from its silence that truth. A painful understanding now; knowing yourself father of a dead child. "My child," he repeats with a thin voice, "And you knew it," he adds, "Please, tell me you found out after sending that message to Cersei. Please, tell me you did not attempt to kill the woman I love who was carrying my child. Please."
"I found out the same night she did," she confesses about the moment Maester Wolkan walked into her bedchamber to communicate Daenerys' state; how vexed she felt. "After the feast."

His palms fall flat against his thighs as he let out another agonising sound of his throat.

"You knew it when I told you the truth about my parents, and yet you didn't tell me," he concludes.

"Because I believed you stopped loving her," she remembers how uncertain and doubtful he was, it isn't an excuse for her evil deeds but what she thought at that moment. "I saw you going South without any enthusiasm, I-"

"Did you believe that if I had stopped loving her it would've had meant I would have left her with my child in her womb?" he shouts, eliciting a reaction from her part, who step backward until her back hits the wall. "She begged me not to tell you and that doomed us! I kill her with my child inside her, I put a knife in her! in my child!"

He is screaming now against the grills and Sansa falls against the floor, unable to see him in the eye.

"I'm so sorry, Jon," she sobs, "if I could've changed my life for him-" but he stops her again.

"Her," he grunts, "She was a girl," he mirrors her desperate weeping, "I am the father of a deceased little girl that should've been little Jon's age, little Jaime's age. And because of you, because of me, because of Tyrion and Varys, she couldn't even be born."

"Jon," she tries but he does not allow her.

"If there's something else you need to tell me, tell me now because I can't see you anymore," he asks for, "I have lost everything, the woman I love, the child I'll never meet, and my sister-;"

"I-" she swallows hard, Brienne's words coming to her mind. There is no point in guarding the secret in little parts; the whole truth is enough to seal her fate. Might someday, he'll come to see as last gesture of the love she holds for him. She will always love him. "I did tell Varys about the pregnancy."

"No," Jon says with utter revulsion in his tone, "No."

"I regret it," she whimpers, "I regret it."

"I loved your child like mine! I cried his death like if it was my own! And you helped gotten mine killed!" he keeps crying while leaning against the grills, "Sometimes, we have to put the greater good first," he quotes what she said some moons ago, "What greater good was above my daughter's life?"

There was none. She had to become a mother to understand it.

"Your mother hated me because I was a bastard, something out of my control and you did exactly like her! you killed my child because-" he has to pause to breathe, she would have represented a threat for everything Sansa wanted to achieve, that's the discovering he makes, and that stills him frozen in its place.

She wanted to tell him how naive and selfish her motivations were but it would not change how destroyed their relationship was. What she has done is unforgivable. Sansa has no strength to provide these explanations.
"Winterfell," she mutters, unable to find the right words and just uttering what first comes to her mind, "It was all I've left. All of you were leaving, I-" she stops at the realisation that it sounds worse; she has sacrificed his life, his family to gain her paradise. A paradise that didn't even last long. "There's nothing that I can say that could explain what I did, Jon."

"No, there's nothing both of us can say on this matter anymore," Jon says with a heavy heart, "No," he shakes his head staring directly at her eyes, "I can't forgive you," she can see it hurts him as it hurts her, but there's conflict in him. Not just pain but hate. "I will never forgive myself for this."

He takes some steps backward. His chin lifted his shoulders firm and resolute expression on his face. Only his eyes speak of the deep sadness that would never leave his soul.

"I, Aegon of House Targaryen, the sixth with the name, King of the Andals and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and protector of the realm, sentence you to die."

She didn't expect anything different. It is the next gesture that surprises her; Jon turns around and leaves without looking back again. She hopes the guards will take her to her final destination, however, it doesn't happen.

It is the last conversation she has with him.

II

Gendry

With deep regret and for reasons that I will explain in time, I have decided to withdraw my soldiers from Winterfell. My alliance with Jon Snow, or King Aegon VI, has dissolved and I fear it is a final decision. I urge you to honour your covenant and continue serving the Crown. They are waiting for you at Castle Cerwyn.

Gendry Targaryen.

From the other side of the table where they were reunited with the commanders, Yara Greyjoy lifts an eyebrow like saying 'what else did you expect?' but Gendry would argue he couldn't forewarn this drawback. But again, given their previous story, it was a possibility that they would suddenly terminate their union again.

"So Daenerys is out?" Yara speaks before anyone else. "I only respond to her, so if she's out, I'm out as well."

"Doesn't it say what happened?" Howland Reed asks, visibly shocked.

"It's just this," Gendry replies.

They are at a critical point in the campaign and it is not time to allow their emotions to cloud their judgment. But, again, Jon and Daenerys didn't have the best of stories when it came to wars. The real battle was always between them two and in the middle, the rest.

He takes a deep breath and pinches the bridge of his nose. It still hurts where his head is harmed, and the healers had advised not to walk so soon. The boat trip didn't help to reduce the pain either. He ignored the suggestion at the moment they arrived at White Harbor.
After the attack on Casterly Rock, there was no room for doubt that Jon was impatient to end the warfare. It was logical, Gendry thought, bearing in mind that with five dragons all they should've done was asking them to bend the knee and win the mainland back. If this had extended more than normal, it was because Jon wanted it that way. Now that Gendry came to see that tiredness his friend went through half his life, he understood why it pushed him to find faster solutions.

The missives from the West reported the cessation of hostilities towards the Crown. Lady Rhea Hightower expected similar actions on the land taken by the peasants in The Reach. While Arianne in Dorne requested an urgent meeting with Daenerys. Gendry sighs and throws the scroll on the table; the pain in his head was not internal according to the healers, but every day he woke up facing this reality, he inevitably suffered waves of pain where the wound was. A reminder that he was alive because someone else decided that his life was worth more.

"Lord Eyrie," Yara Greyjoy's voice pulls him out of the tumults of his thinking, "said he will send two thousand men to Moat Cailin, waiting for orders to be given," she was reading another pair of letters.

Before he can delve into that, the guards enter the cabin with a person who would never have expected to see again.

"Grey Worm," Gendry greets him with a big smile. He knows that the former commander of the Unsullied is not one with an affinity for physical contact. "What are you doing here?" He was aware of his sudden appearance in Winterfell, but Gendry did not expect to see him in White Harbor, less without Daenerys.

He doles out a curt nod, while his stance remains inflexible and firm. The man has changed little over the years, unlike them.

"I bring queen's message," he announces, pulling out from his garments two pieces of rolled parchment. "To Yara Greyjoy and Gendry Baratheon."

Gendry and Yara stare at the other with confusion. He advances to take the missives in his hand and the first thing he observes is the common seal.

III

Grey Worm

He did not understand much of what Gendry Baratheon and Queen Yara Greyjoy talked about when they received him, but he decides to wait at the docks. He knew an alternative, faster road to the city that took him there in just three sunrises. It hadn't even occurred to him what the letters the queen had sent them could say but their receivers seemed uncomfortable with the contents.

Grey Worm began to feel useless in the scheme of things that happened in the Westerosi campaign. Last time, he had committed enough to spend long nights beside Missandei learning the language and reading the maps to be of the best possible help to his queen. He was not the best strategist, like Daario Naharis, but he wanted to live up to the circumstances. Now he felt unusable even as a simple messenger.

While the queen's allies continued to argue in terms that he had erased from his mind after so many years, he remembered Missandei of Naath again. Walking on this bridge, ignoring the angry looks of the people who inhabit these lands. Sacrificing their lives for them to receive treason as a
reward. He looked at the horizon where there was just sea and asked himself again what he was still doing there. He came here in search of Daenerys Targaryen, but Daenerys Targaryen had forgiven his murderer and the people who betrayed them and who despised them.

A part of him cannot ignore that Mhysa gave him the opportunity to be more than an Unsullied; more than a slave. To him and Missandei. But on the other part of him tells him that her actions had also taken a future from them. It was an old pain, but it was still burning in his chest like that day when he beheld her execution.

The queen's allies approached him.

"Some days ago before our arrival, a raven arrived from Winterfell with the queen's seal," the woman says, "She asks us to march North and that her alliance with Jon Snow had ended."

"It is not possible," he replies firmly, for he saw how Mhysa and her murderer were in love. But that was not what he wanted to question. "She has no seal."

"The ones you brought have no seal," she insists.

The idea that he had pretensions to adulterate his queen's letters or fail her in some way bothered him.

"The queen gave them to me, herself," he states with a grunt voice.

"Do you know what the letters you brought say?" Gendry asks this time.

"It's none of my business," he has never meddled in the affairs of the queen. It's not his place.

"They say we must go to Moat Cailin and start the siege there, to move to the Iron Islands. I have no problem with that plan, but this is totally opposite to what this other letter says, which has her royal seal," Yara points handling the scrolls to him, but Grey Worm does not need to take them. He is sure Daenerys Targaryen wrote the missives she confided him.

"We have two letters contradicting each other, one sent by a raven and the other by a trusted man from Daenerys," the captain of the Iron Fleet indicates, "I don't know about you, but this sounds like a trap for me."

"Grey Worm serves the queen before we even had known her," Gendry says, staring at him, "If I have to choose, I choose to believe in him."

"Why the other missive says we should go to Winterfell? What if something happened?" the woman returns, awakening a primal instinct in Grey Worm.

He does not wait for the man and the woman to give him an answer about what they are going to do, and he begins to advance along the pier towards the stable where he left his horse. However, they follow him.

"Where are you going?" the man asks.

"Returning to the queen."

"And if it's a trap?"

He turns around and warns,

"Then I will kill who threatens her life," and just to make himself clear, "whoever is."
IV

Arianne

She sighs again as she knots her hands in her lap and ignores the heat rising from her back to her neck. It was the third week that she met with the Royal Council in the place of her father, who remained prostrated in his chamber.

"I insist, your Grace, we should send the men provided by Daenerys Targaryen to deal with this matter before it becomes a true problem," Lord Franklyn Fowler stands firm in his position to subdue the few, still benign, uprising that had begun near their territory and the protected borders where the combined forces of Dorne and Valyria reside. "I know you are young and idealist, but those people soon will be demanding your head in a pike!"

It seems ironic coming from someone who would be more than happy to have her missing. There was a known rivalry between his house and House Yronwood.

His advice did not appeal to Arianne, however, listening to the Royal Council and sincerely contemplating the suggestions were part of the work of any monarch. She remembered Daenerys, as she sat for hours listening to the incessant chattering of the members of the Common Council, while maintaining an attentive face and unwaivering patience.

With the news of what happened in the west, the Council's distrust of the still diplomatic relationship between Dorne and the Crown of the Seven Kingdoms in the hands of Jon Snow had grown, elucidating exaggerated reactions when it came to local setbacks, such as peasant revolts that instigated guilds to seek better living conditions. That day they would receive the main representatives of these guilds, being the first time that Arianne would preside over the Council in the place of her father.

"Dorne always has pride itself because of its prudence, my Lord, a simple protest is not the dawn of a rebellion. It is to my mind that our population has not been given reasons to want our heads hung on peaks. We always guarantee them security, and normality, even though the rest of the continent cannot say the same," Arianne assured in a calm but firm voice.

The Council's volatilities stole her sleep during the nights that had passed since she discovered that her father was ill. He had hidden it very well, not even his lady wife knew it. Symptoms were beginning to be impossible to hide, just like the true intentions of the members of that Council, representatives of all Dorne's houses that had been unified before the lack of leadership that left the Martells' extinction, that not very subtly proclaimed that Arianne might not be the one to preside at Anders Yronwood's place when he's gone.

The just thought of her father's decease makes Arianne shivers.

She should've swallowed her pride and answered all Daenerys' letters she had sent Arianne since they returned to Westeros, and relied on her advise. In Valyria, she had become accustomed to doing things on her own but always counted on Daenerys' view on the matter. Arianne came to the realisation that even when she was sure she had done a good job, she needed Daenerys's approval to finish believing it. She misses those days immeasurably.

And seven hells if she doesn't miss Dewyn too. His lightness and joy, the ease with which he walked among strangers as if he were not a complete outsider, the deftness with which he dealt with the problems of life in general. She missed him in her bed at night when she locked herself in
the tower they shared for months. All her life she exhorted herself not to want or crave that kind of affection because she was and is owed to the people's wellbeing, she's owed to her duty. And now both desires, the good of her people and the love she cannot deny that she feels for him, had become into two great pains for her.

She hardens her fist when the guards announce that the representatives have arrived. She has to be strong and face what the future holds, otherwise she will be a candle in the wind.

The guests enter the meeting room and she almost crumbles on her seat when, leading the group of the guilders, is Dewyn.

V

Dewyn

Dewyn has never been afraid of abrupt changes in his life. When he was nine, he saw his people massacred by the White Walkers and his army of dead in Hardhome. At ten, he did not understand why his father had to fight to rescue a southern castle. Two years later, he came too late to Winterfell's crypts to save his mother with a miserable dragonglass dagger.

His story was not the only one, nor would it be the last in this world of shit. Dewyn learned to accept that he couldn't stop to think too much about it, even when spring disease almost kicked him off the board. He is not like Jon in that sense, although he appreciates and admires the man like no other, he did not like to sit and contemplate the past for hours.

Change is the only thing that perpetuates with time.

For this reason, when Arianne kicked him out of her life, he did not wait for her to send him in a boat to Jon as something she used at pleasure until she got tired. For the first time, he felt what some call his hurt pride, rather massacred.

It is not that he believed that whatever they had could last too long, but he did not want to stay there to see how the princess did the impossible so that Jon, the man who raised him as his brother, would take her as his wife. An animal shout inside her screamed that it was not possible, that she was his. Thoughts that prompted him to move as far away as possible from the political struggles of the South. He didn't know where to go or where he would end, but he was sure not in that nest of snakes, which in Dorne were numerous.

He never imagined that he would meet ordinary and friendly people on the road who would receive him with open arms to work in the fields where he has seen something that the North lacked: nature. Living nature. Fruits of many colours as he could think of, which he had already seen in Arianne's palace but in the flesh, from its source, was even more incredible.

He still disliked the heat. He doesn't think he'll ever like it. But Dewyn enjoyed feeling useful, and before going to fight the southern wars, he preferred to stay there.

However, all the good they had in Dorne did not change that they were still southern and kneelers.

It all started with Dewyn questioning why he should give part of his profit to the elegant lords of the castles who hadn't even helped with the harvest. He simply did not understand that, and what began as an innocent dispute ended with him in that room with Arianne in front of him, seeing him with horror and confusion his presence among the representatives of what the southerners called
Dewyn assumes he couldn't run away so far after all.

VI

Sansa

The days go by slower than one would have expected, she counting each of her last seconds, however, nothing happens. Sansa hears the incessant noise coming from outside, but ignore it thinking that everything has to end eventually.

Lady Jayne is in charge of bringing her meals, but Sansa barely drinks water. She is exhausted, she is tired, she just wants everything to end. And when more time seems to pass, the more lost she feels.

"I need you to do me one last favor," she asks Jayne on one of the few occasions that the guards grant them privacy. "Go to my chamber and bring me what is necessary to write a letter, including my seal," and before her faithful friend can leave the cell, she adds, "Don't tell Gillberg. Don't let him even see you."

Sansa didn't trust him anymore. She played Baelish's little game again, trying to understand the motives of her scribe, but everything seemed to make no sense. Why should he have sought to have Sansa executed for treason? What he gains with this chaos? Who was he?

VII

Bandy

None of the majesties return to Winterfell in days, and while the seneschal and Lady Jayne try to maintain the castle in order, the uproar is taking such intensity that even leaving the fortress to return home becomes impossible. Bandy and the other maids receive from Lady Jayne daggers she stole from the armory, and this is how they learn that the conflict could escalate from what happened between Queen Daenerys and Lady Sansa.

When Bandy finally manages to leave the castle, it is a day before something serious happens inside it. Lady Jayne warned her not to return, that there was nothing else for them to do in there anyway, and when they had a chance they should march to White Harbor.

How to reach White Harbor? she asked herself. They should rent a horse, but given the tense situation of Wintertown, it was impossible to get one.

When the news that the rebels have taken Winterfell using the same citizens of the North, Bandy knows that they have to run to White Harbor before the true chaos unfolds.

Her mother, Shyra and she run away but they are not the best conditions for three women alone and on foot. At all times he holds the knife very close to his body, clinging to that one defense as if it were the only thing that guaranteed them to arrive alive at White Harbor.

Keeping the baby quiet is the hardest part, the cold begins to congest her and Bandy fears that the worst will happen along the way. She knows that her mother will not survive losing her.
One of the nights that pass quite far from the riots, they hear a rider passing near the road. Before trying their luck, they decide to hide but as soon as she recognises the man who accompanied Queen Daenerys on her visits to her home, and who for a time served as guard of Lady Sansa, Bandy does not hesitate a second to stop him and ask for help.

His name is Grey Worm, and they tell him what happened in Winterfell with the rebels. He seems determined to abandon them and look for the queen, however, Bandy acknowledges part of what had occurred days before.

"The Queen does not leave her people," he responds as if she were speaking ill words of her.

"But we are not her people, please my Lord, please, I begged you!"

Grey Worm seems in conflict with himself and Bandy wonders if he dislikes them so much that he doesn't even have mercy for the baby the queen held so fondly in her arms.

After a couple of moments of contemplation, he yields at starts arranging his horse to help her mother to climb up. He doesn't seem compassionate but dutiful to his function.

It is a second in which Bandy realises that she has a unique opportunity at her disposal, although later such an action may bear a high cost for her.

"They have them trapped."

He turns his head toward her abruptly, then she hurries to clear up.

"Lady Sansa and my friend, Lady Jayne, they, they are trapped!"

In the man's expression, Bandy sees a glimpse of compression. It is still a stoic reaction but it was better than nothing.

Using a man's loyalty to save Lady Jayne and Lady Sansa, even if this put him in danger by not having the full truth of what happened, it was not something that the gods of the forest were going to condone her any soon but she was desperate, and would be ungrateful if at least she didn't try.

"Who that man?"

"He calls himself Victarion. I haven't seen him," Grey Worm follows her explanation attentively, "They are his people, his soldiers, and they will kill anybody who does not want to unite him."

He swallows hard, uncertain of what she's proposing.

"Where is the lady?"

"In the cells inside Winterfell."

Then Grey Worm frowns and takes a deep breath.

"Do you know how to get there?"

She stared at her mother who can't understand what's going on, and Bandy puts her best face of reassurance.

"I'll take you there."
VIII

Grey Worm

After sending the girl's mother along with the baby on the way to White Harbor, Grey Worm agreed to return to Winterfell in search of Lady Sansa and Lady Jayne just because she knows it is something Daenerys would order.

Grey Worm does not get any joy in doing so, and at the same time wants to get more information about what has happened inside the castle. Why did Mhysa and her soldiers leave?

He came to hope to find them on the road but like him, the girl had taken a shortcut.

Two sunrises later, they approach the perimeter of Winterfell, from where Grey Worm contemplates that in fact, something extreme has happened. The castle is almost destroyed, as well the city on the east side. The girl covers her mouth with her hand to drown out a groan of pain when she sees her home undermined, while he wonders if it's really worth continuing.

"We have to climb the walls through the forest," he informs her, to appease her discontent.

She nods still stunned by the sight.

It takes them almost all day but thanks to some elements that he kept in his satchel, they manage to climb the stone wall to land on one of the wooden platforms where he kept watch some nights ago. They are immediately intercepted by a man, who is not northerner accordingly to the girl, and before he could alert others, Grey Worm takes care of him with simple efficiency. He knows that in his condition, they would recognise him instantly, so he hastens the girl to tell him how to get to the cells, where he had never been.

Thanks to the darkness that characterises the North, they have no problem hiding and slipping away to the tower where Lady Sansa is locked. The girl tells him that she will be in charge of looking for the other woman, while he makes his way among the drunk men surrounding the tower. Grey Worm is surprised at how altered the order is in the place as if there had been real looting.

Where was Jon Snow?

Although his knife could be effective, Grey Worm prefers to use his hands to break the neck of men trying to stop him, as it is quieter. He is lucky not to find any other person incarcerated, so he wonders how Lady Sansa ended up there.

When her eyes see him, she is first horrified, which he understands, may those men have come to harm her.

"We have to run away," is the only thing he tells her, as he opens the door to free her and extend his hand for her to take. Lady Sansa stands still, doubtful of her intentions, but for Grey Worm there is no time to lose, so hurries her up, "now!"

Jon Snow's sister accepts and accompanies him to the place where they agreed to meet the girl again. When they get there, two women covered with heavy hoods are waiting for them. He makes sure that Lady Sansa is covered because even though he was not well protected from the cold, for a woman like her could be fatal.

"I've already been here," is what she answers, but Grey Worm just nods.
The four come down the wall when the barking of the dogs announces that the escape has been informed and men will soon be behind them. At that time, it's not about fleeing anymore but about running and surviving.

Snow makes it a difficult job, and luckily the two women who are not Lady Sansa are prepared for the occasion. He has to stay behind helping her.

They don't have much chance of escaping alive, but Grey Worm doesn't stop to think too much, he just thinks about reaching the road along the river that would take them to White Harbor, or hopefully bumping into the queen's troops.

The sound of dogs chasing them becomes more thunderous by the time they reach the shore, where they find a small abandoned wooden raft of some careless fisherman. His only opportunity and the most dangerous given the strong current of the river.

"Go up," Grey Worm tells them, but when they comply and he tries to do the same, he realises that it will be impossible for the four of them to fit. He sighs tiredly and accepts that he will have to send the women on his own.

"No," Lady Sansa protests, getting off when Grey Worm tries to unravel the raft. First, he does not understand, and Sansa mutters something inaudible to him towards the other women. "Grey Worm I need you to accompany them and take them safely to White Harbor."

"No," he makes clear, without delving deeper into it.

Lady Sansa returns to the shore to complicate things and he feels an intense need to push her.

"I said no!" he yells at her, as he used to do with the Unsullied.

Sansa Stark disappears from his view a moment later and he returns to unberthing the raft from the barge. Something hits him from behind and then there's just darkness.

Gendry

Yara's fleet was fighting against White Knife's current that delayed them several days to Castle Cerwyn. Despite no communication with Jon or Daenerys, they decided to go north with a small fleet and send the infantry to Moat Cailin. They would not disembark in Cerwyn until they were sure of the situation, and they waited at some point to spot the men of Daenerys but nothing happened.

"I spent many years imprisoned," Yara Greyjoy comments while they both stare at the horizon, placed in the bow of the ship, "and Victarion never let a single of his men touch me. The ones who were bold enough to try," she makes a pause to smile, "And leave that place with their cocks intact, ended up in the scaffold because of it. That's why he kept being my favourite uncle."

"It's your only uncle," he reminds her.

She shakes her head, thoughtfully.

"Aye, but still," she frowns at looks up to him, "The man that sails to reaving and plunder the mainland, well, that could be Victarion. The man who assaulted Red Keep, that could be, with a
really good advantage, Victarion. The man who put a useless human shield in front of five dragons...that could be Euron, but not Victarion."

"MAN OVERBOARD!" a sailor alerts, and they rushed over the rails to see what's going on.

"It's Grey Worm!" Gendry shouts, seeing the man unconscious alongside with two women. They are freezing above a wretched raft.

"Man the ropes! Fetch a hook! Haul them aboard!" Yara commands to her men.

The current almost causes a collision but they manage to lower the anchor in time and get Grey Worm and his companions on board. None of them can speak until they are wrapped in heavy furs to warm their bodies. Grey Worm has a significant head wound almost similar to his. Gendry concludes that he will not wake up soon.

"Ww-winterfell," one of the women speaks first, the youngest, "takk-en."

Winterfell is taken.

Later, they gather around the meeting table discussing what to do. They are in a dangerous position if Victarion's men have climbed North.

"What in hells is wrong with Daenerys and Jon?" It's the first time Gendry speaks so harshly of them. "Where are they?"

They have let the older woman rest, because she was feverish and allegedly hurt. The youngest, named Bandy, explained the situation that left everyone even more frozen than them.

"A few days ago, maybe a week, something very serious happened. Queen Daenerys discovered that Lady Sansa wrote a letter many years ago alerting Cersei Lannister of her position in Dragonstone. She went furious, it was really terrible. Lady Sansa was judged by herself and then demanded that King Jon pass his sentence on her," Gendry opens his eyes, even more, when he hears that last part, "But he couldn't, he didn't and Queen Daenerys and her soldiers run amok, they were about to attack Winterfell. Something else happened, but I don't know well, they argued and she went north with four of the dragons and King Jon, after locking Sansa in the cells, flew with the red dragon to the south and no one has seen them since."

"That bitch has always been a damn traitor," Yara growls as she refers to Sansa, "The lack of stones of Jon Snow has again will condemn us!"

Gendry knows that he should chide Yara for saying it, but this was her fleet and her men, so he keeps in shock listening to what the girl is telling.

"People discovered that Lady Sansa broke a sacred oath, and for our culture it is a very serious sin, causing all the misfortunes that the North has suffered for so many years. People asked for Lady Sansa to be executed, but how? The king wasn't there, neither was the queen, her soldiers left and the few men left in the North wanted to join the peasants. We were terrified! Lady Jayne helped me escape and told me to run away with my mother to White Harbor, and it was like that as we found Grey Worm, I begged him to accompany me to find Lady Jayne and Lady Sansa-"

"Did you ask Grey Worm to save the woman who caused the death of Missandei of Naath?" Yara asks incredulously.
Bandy swallows hard and avoids his gaze.

Yara lets out a snort.

"Are all northerners that liars?"

"It's enough!" Gendry declares, trying to regain control of his hands, "continue," he asks Bandy to keep going.

"I didn't see him. I ran away from Winterfell a day earlier, but I know it's him! For years the rumors said that that was his way of getting into the fortresses, using people's anger. The only thing I could think of was to rescue Lady Jayne."

"And Sansa?"

"She," she stops looking at a lost point on the ceiling with a troubled expression, "The four of us didn't fit in the raft, and she hit Grey Worm so he wouldn't oppose aboard it. She ordered us to shut up and leave her behind. She stayed back, that's why Lady Jayne is destroyed, Lady Sansa was her best friend, I," the girl starts to sob, "I have to find my mother and my little sister in White Harbor, I beg you to take me there."

Gendry looks at her with understanding, what she has survived in those days is too much. She asks his guards to escort her to a cabin to eat something and rest.

"So what? It is obvious that Daenerys did not send that letter asking us to go to Winterfell, and if Victarion's men arrived at Winterfell, then it is assumed that we will also find them at Castle Cerwyn."

Yara's complaints were excessive for an excessively stressful situation itself.

"We're barely a thousand men, Gendry!"

"Victarion has no soldiers, he has people behind him. We can-" his words are locked, he cannot think clearly and the pain of the blow comes back to torture him, "Gods! We must retake Winterfell, we must ambush them."

Yara is immersed in some thought, he expects it to be a very good one.

"We have to turn around," she states and he is about to object, when she unrolls a map above the table, "We have to go back and take the other trail. Surprise them from the south and the east."

Gendry nods, still overwhelmed by the amount of information.

"And Gendry," she calls him in a menacing tone, "I don't give a damn that they are peasants with axes, I'm going to kill everyone who interferes in my path."

He nodded again.

It takes another couple of days to carry out Yara's plan, letting Bandy and Lady Jayne leave on a separate boat to White Harbor.

Gendry debated in his mind long hours how to tell Grey Worm what happened, however, Yara saves him and throws the truth at him by herself. The commander of Daenerys remains still, expressionless, only his chest going up and down as the only sign of how he took the news. They
offer him to leave for White Harbor, but he refuses, he wants to look for Daenerys now that he knows she went somewhere North.

The plan works quite well at first, they manage to ambush a couple of commands that were surrounding the perimeter of Winterfell. Although Grey Worm had no need to join them, the man participates in the siege as an animal released after so many years. Gendry prayed not to find Sansa in the middle of the forest, he would not be able to allow him to touch her in that state.

At some point, near Wintertown, the strife becomes impossible. For the first time, they have in front of them, the army of Victarion, some uniformed men in dark armoured, similar to those the Unsullied used to wear, with the black helmet covering their entire face.

The ambush fails because now they are facing an army that far exceeded them.

The unmistakable roar of a dragon helps Gendry breathe again. They look up at the sky and the crimson color of Barristal covers them, heading straight for Victarion's army.

Barristal lands in front of them, down the hill where Gendry can spot Jon mounted on the beast. The gates of the castle open letting a man dressed in a black coat.

"At least he shows up," Gendry observes as the tense situation unfolds in front of them.

"Who?" Yara asks.

"Victarion."

There's a moment of silence in which he senses Yara staring at him. Her face is bloodied.

"That's not Victarion," Yara mutters, and Gendry turns her head to watch her. "That's Victarion," then he turns his gaze back forward, at the battlements of the castle.

X

Sansa

She has run so many times in her life that now when she does it, she feels it would be a relief to stop. She has gone further than any of her siblings, in this regard. In her long nights of wanderings, she always imagined how this moment would eventually occur. She was forgiving at times and imagined herself aging in her chamber at Winterfell. Others, she imagined getting sick in the same way like her husband and son. Lost in the forest never came to her mind.

After knocking out Grey Worm and cutting off the knot to let Lady Jayne, Bandy and him escape, Sansa stared a long moment at the view of her last attempt of salvation leaving, and she didn't feel sad because it's gone.

She stared at the knife in her hand as the sound of the dogs increased, and for a second she thought in ending this slow agony. Sansa couldn't find the strength, notwithstanding. It was the peak of dishonour; running from the people she harms with her treachery.

As a last stroke of luck, there are four riders who appear to catch her. She closes her eyes and breathes deeply; Little Eddard's smile on her mind.

They take her back to Winterfell, where they make her cross Wintertown with her hands tied to the
horse.

She suspends her mind in the same memory of her son while receiving insults, spitting and other things she does not want to know what it is.

It doesn't last long but there's a feeling of utter despair when she's put back in the cell. It surprises her that they don't go further but Sansa is grateful for it. She has nothing left but to sit down and wait for her final destination to arrive.

She can't help going back and thinking all over again. Every moment, every detail she missed and all the mistakes she so rudely wanted to hide with mock disbelief. It was impossible for her to believe that on those same four stone walls she had once been a happy girl who dreamed of becoming queen.

She recalled the embroidery classes of Septa Mordane, Arya and her inability to thread a needle. Her mother's hands when she was fixing her hair. Robb warning her not to approach Joffrey. Bran and Rickon running around in the halls of Winterfell.

Jon.

She remembers Jon.

The brother she always knew he was there but chose to ignore in order to meet her mother's expectations. The brother who received her with open arms after all they had suffered. Who went to war to recover their home. And who put his heart aside to protect her.

And she paid that love with treason. She condemned him to live his life miserably, not intentionally, for she was sure he didn't love Daenerys anymore when she did what she did. Sansa came to think she was relieving him from that burden.

Her niece. She could've had a niece. Probably a silver-haired little thing with blue eyes, or dark ravenous curls with brown eyes. Their children could've ended up being the future of Westeros. Or they could end up being its doom, who knows at this point.

One of the ideas she dreaded was the restoration of their, Daenerys and Jon, house. People with an outstanding, great and absolute power to subdue the world. The notion of it it's what she just couldn't stand.

But again, people less powerful than Daenerys has wronged Westeros, and them, and Sansa. She, herself caused more harm to her lies.

Lies she told because of her innocence once and that ended in the death of her father, when she helped Littlefinger to maintain the power in the Vale by allowing him to escape from the death of her aunt and when she twisted Jon's good intentions.

Her father must be seeing her with so much despise, Sansa thinks. The child he raised but couldn't pass over his honour and morality. For so long she detested those ideas because of the consequences that brought for her, that she couldn't see what she was becoming into. A Cersei. A Petyr.

Two days later, a man with black hair she supposed is Victarion comes to the cells, smiling menacingly. She swallows the lump in her throat.
"Winter is coming," he announces, indicating the guards to take her outside.

Indeed, Winter was there. The skies were shining because of the whitish covering of heavy stormy clouds, and the castle full of people who gathered to see the final act.

Some faces are familiar, others not so. Then there are tons of strangers and those are the ones who claim her final the most.

She is not surprised to see other people in the same situation, people who tried to stop the madness before it climbed this level. All of them, including Gillberg who gives her a smile and a reassuring nod, join her on her walk to the east side battlements.

When she has the sight of Wintertown destroyed, Barristal at the foot of a hill, and two opposing armies on each side, her knees weaken and she gasps.

Jon is here.

She is placed in the center, beside her Gillberg also kneels. Victarion walks straight between black soldiers to face Jon. Barristal lets out a menacing scream.

Sansa barely hears that Jon and Victarion exchange a few words, but the situation is so overwhelming that they consume her mind completely.

"He is a good son of your father."

Gillberg's voice pulls her out of her thoughts.

"He did just like him, you know? He walked defeated to her, took her in his arms and she accepted him because she felt safe in there. It was Sansa's fault, he knew it, but you were just a child. What could have been done?"

He stands and his hands are untied. She didn't see it the first time.

"The wolf is of the North, he told Cersei, remember? She deserves better than a butcher."

"We had a good time together, Sansa. I wanted that, when this moment came, at least it was a helping hand that did it because it was inevitable that it would happen. If it must be done, then I'll do it myself."

He puts a hand on her left shoulder and squeezes it while Sansa plays Littlefinger's game for one last time.

"Chaos is a ladder, Sansa. Thank you for this chaos."

The answer was always there, she knows it now. It wasn't just Gillberg true motives but Victarion, Victarion true motives. And all of them were stupid enough to not see it.

"Say your last words," Victarion requires, and she stares at the aloofness where Jon is looking back at her, though no one of them can truly see the other.

The blade touches her neck when she screams.

"Winter fell."

Gillberg's hand in a clean motion slides the dagger, opening a gap in her neck, and when she falls, her eyes focus on the bright white of the sky.
I was so nervous writing the confrontation between Sansa and Jon, that I want to make clear some stuff:
- I do not believe that his immediate reaction is to feel vengeful but to feel a deep sadness and desolation. It is not the same when an enemy hurts you than when your own family does it. A few hours earlier that same day, his life was another thing. Therefore, his first response is to ask her (Sansa) if she ever accepted him as her family. How does someone who calls you her family do something like that to you? A similar feeling led Daenerys not to look for Jon for ten years.

- I have to watch a scene from Pirates of the Caribbean for this chapter lol
- Again, sorry if I do not detail too much into the battle scenes, I am not good at it, nor am I immersed in it.

- You know what it is funny? The resemblance of Sansa's coronation with Cersei's. Like a woman, it's hard for me just write the scene explicitly but Sansa's return to Winterfell in this chapter it's meant to recall Cersei's walk of shame in season 5.
- In my mind, there's a clear shot of the last moment when everyone finds out who Victarion is: We see Sansa and Gillberg, both knelt staring at the armies and Jon in front of them. Then we focus on Sansa (her right side) and behind her, Gillberg stands up, revealing he's always been Victarion.
- Lady's death and Daenerys death also share the same aesthetic: Ned/Jon walking defeating to do what must be done. Luring the victim in a false embrace of security. Framed as an act of mercy. It is truly gross if one thinks deeply. I feel like shit for trying to do the same with Sansa here, though she's never lured into a sense of security, she's just realizing one last time the extent of her doing: because of her actions in both cases, someone else had to do something terrible in order to protect her. I never will understand why D&D need to push the narrative that Jon did what he did because of his sisters, they should've gone straight with the notion that Daenerys was a threat, and that's it. Anyway, I chose to work with that premise in this story.
- I focused Sansa's death on her last thoughts instead of specific description, but yes, Gillberg / Victarion cuts her throat and she involuntarily falls off the battlements.

- EDIT: I know some of you are dissapointed because it wasn't Jon who did it. And I will let you fight over that until next chapter where the scene unfolds properly from his point of view.
Winter Fell

Chapter Summary

Past and present convey on Jon's mind as he must embrace one path.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 8: "Winter Fell"

I: The Shield Must Be Removed

R'hllor crosses the branches that surround him without much trouble as he advances to find his son still trapped in his own condemn. He still maintains the image of the Stark boy, but through that facade, he can see his true image. He has always been so beautiful; that was what R'hllor had in mind when he created Raven. It would be special, it would be different and better than everything he had done before.

So it was.

"You trust her too much, R'hllor," Raven mocks, while his white eyes contemplate him. Humans call this feeling disappointment.

"It is not trusting, son, it is a certainty," he replies, "it will soon be over, and we will be together again. You could do this simply, you know time is running out."

Raven smiles again to avoid feeling affected.

"You trust humans a lot, and they are unpredictable when chaos surrounds them, you know it better than anyone," he always responds so arrogant and reluctant to the truth, "He wants to do it and he is going to do it, the shield is where I need it to be and soon is going to be removed."

R'hllor nods because it's true. Raven has a great advantage on its favour. The same lack of control that he used for the warrior of fire to return his other children to him, and destroy the darkness in Asshai, Raven would use to remove the shield.

"It's fine, but you know what the rules of the game are, my son," he warns, "free willing and total awareness of what he's doing."

"It shall be like that," Raven promises, for what he had not broken the rules in long years. He respects the game as he loves his pride.

II: Forgive me

Forgive me.
I want you to know that, wherever you are, I’m so sorry. I love you and I’m so sorry. I will love you always, even if I don't know you and I never know you, I want you to know that you are the most important thing I could have had.

I have dreamed you many times, you know? In a boat first, when I hugged your mother close and asked any god that would hear me grant me the miracle of surviving the great war and your mother telling me that you existed. That we had done a miracle.

I never thought it was true, what she said about the witch who killed her first husband. How could I? I was never a believer in those things, although a witch brought me back to life. I guess I wanted to make her understand that she could because if I’m honest, all I thought at the time was that I could give her that. If I believed enough for both, then you would come.

I’m so sorry.

My daughter, forgive me. I have failed you and I have failed your mother. I wonder if from the threshold you could watch me; If you know about me. I’d like to think so but I’m afraid of what you would think about me. Every part of my body hurts, just imagining that you believe me your murderer.

I am your father and I could not protect you. I am responsible for all of them hurting you. I deserve to be dead but I don’t deserve the tranquility of the darkness that I also could steal from me your memory, the knowledge of your existence. Am I selfish for believing that? Am I selfish for holding on to something I had without knowing but can I never have again?

Your mother cried you twelve years. Twelve years she carried this pain of having seen you on her threshold and leave you to return with your brother Drogon. And then he also left, and now everything makes sense when I think back on the tower. When I think how she begged me to return her to you.

I’m not worth it, I have never been. But had I know of you earlier, I would have burnt this world for having you protected. I would have destroyed all of those who finally deprived you of your first breath.

I’m not worthy of you or your mother. She left me and I deserve it. She will leave me, and I can't protest because if I could have the chance to see you at least one second I will also choose to be at the threshold.

Forgive me.

Forgive me.

III: Reminiscences

Nothing remains intact in the bedchamber of the Lord of Winterfell when Longclaw makes contact with things. Nobody is encouraged to enter or interrupt him, thanks in part to Barristal who hovers over the great keep and warns with his roars that no one should approach them.

Jon feels it too, Barristal’s anger with his siblings, a sentiment that feels one at times.

Hate. That is what he feels.

Pain. A void that burns.
I don't know what else I can say.

You can say nothing. To anyone, ever. Never tell them who you really are. Or it will take on a life of its own and you won't be able to control it or what it does to people.

He destroys the bed where they laid on just that morning. Where he was the happiest he has ever been in over a decade. Where he felt hope. Where he felt safe.

I have to tell Sansa and Arya.

Sansa will want to see me gone and you on the Iron Throne.

She won't.

She's not the girl you grew up with. Not after what she's seen, not after what they've done to her.

He busts the chest where she sat the night before. He doesn't know how the wood yields that easy but doesn't care anymore, he just keeps going until he founds the old coat Sansa made for him before he went to fight against Ramsey.

I owe them the truth.

Even if the truth destroys us?

It won't.

It will.

Everything in this place makes him sick. He wants to see it burn. He doesn't care anymore.

As he screams and tears burn his eyes he goes on and goes on. Nothing worth the fight, every battle, every sacrifice, every moment is tainted with the blood of his daughter. The blood of the only innocent he should've cared about.

I've never begged for anything but I'm begging you. Don't do this. Please.

You are my queen. Nothing will change that. And they are my family. We can live together.

Outside of the castle people gathered up after the revelation of all the misery they went through had the name of their protector. He hears those people's outcry but nothing can deafen the words that resound in his mind.

We can. I've just told you how.

The skin that hung from the burn on his arm breaks off and the pain subdues him. Longclaw falls thunderously to the floor and Jon desperately searches for cold water to calm the pain. By chance, he finds a vial he had thought was lost after so much time. The pain killer, no, the pain silencer of the poison king.

If it's a boy, we want to name him Jon.

I hope it's a girl.

Jon doesn't doubt it and drinks it completely.

"Then you have to get rid of those phantoms."
When he leaves the great keep some men tried to talk to him but he doesn't listen, all he thinks is that he has to face Sansa. So in the past when he thought insultingly that he had to prevent her from Daenerys' returning, and before that when he thought he should protect her from her anger, Jon always focused on the wrong victim. He protected the wrong blood.

"The child whose existence Sansa knew about."

When he has her in front of him, Jon's hands tremble but it is different from what he felt a few moments ago when Dany asked him to pass his sentence on her. Before he felt fear, he knew it was just what she was asking but he wanted to ask Sansa why, first; why she did something so cruel. He couldn't let her go without first knowing why.

Jon feels that if the grills didn't separate them, he could do something terrible. This goes beyond justice and honour, he really wants to hurt her.

He can't even see her anymore, he has an unfocused look. He hears that she speaks to him, that she apologises, that she throws herself on the ground, trembles and is terrified. So Jon has to walk a few steps back because he feels disgusted with himself for what he is doing.

Or was it always this? Could it be that she never saw him as her family? Could it be that she always felt disgusted by her brother, the bastard?

No, he chides himself, you are not like all those who hurt her.

"I did tell Varys about the pregnancy."

Jon cries out of despair. He protected her and she paid him by killing his offspring. He wanted to secure Eddard Stark legacy through her and she made sure to end the Targaryens.

His child.

Legacy, he thinks while staring at the ceiling, at the walls, at the surroundings. There's no value in this place for him anymore.

And yet Jon is contained. When Barristal asks - demands - that Winterfell be transformed into ashes, he retains himself. He ignores the crowding of people outside the fortress, he doesn't care that they no longer have defenses or warn White Harbor of the current situation.

Jon leaves.

He takes Barristal and for the first time in his life, he doesn't give a damn what will happen to Winterfell and everything around him.

There is only one place he wants to be.

IV: Father

The waterfall, where they should have stayed for a thousand years.

Once the darkness envelops him, he throws himself on the ground waiting to close his eyes and let the dream take him. He's tired. A pain is injected into his entire body when he remembers the reason for it; the night he spent awake.
At some point, he hears the sound of Barristal entering the cave, breaking the ice cover of the frozen waterfall as he crosses through. The cold will soon kill him from hypothermia, he thinks, even if he doesn't care. Jon barely bandaged his arm thinking that he would have to use all his strength to cut off Sansa's head. But he couldn't do it yet. But he will. Sentencing her is the promise that he will. Jon simply needs to sleep first. Lie down and just sleep.

He doesn't know how much time passes but at no time does he feel cold with Barristal sheltering him with the heat that naturally springs from his body. Jon tries to get up to return to Winterfell but does not find the forces in his body even to finish opening his eyes. Everything is just darkness.

Maybe he is in the darkness again.

The crackling of a fire coming from inside the cave, behind Barristal's huge figure, awakes him. First, he ignores it until it gets more intense as if someone was throwing more firewood.

His arm does not stop hurting as a reminder that it has not been a dream, that it has been real that Dany left him for good and with her the knowledge that on that day that Drogon took her body in his claw, his daughter also went bleeding out of her.

Jon lets out a gasp as tears burn his eyes.

He moves, crawling around Barristal's body, who sleeps to silence his own pain at the abandonment of his siblings. Jon knows, he feels it, that they have never separated in that way. They were born together and did not like to be separated.

*Rejection.* That's what Barristal senses. His siblings wanted to hurt him and he didn't understand what was happening, he had to protect Jon.

And Jon just wanted to keep Dany from leaving.

When he finally reaches the other side, a silhouette looms near the campfire. He has his back to him and Jon has to get up to keep moving forward. His whole body is numb except for the damn wound on his arm.

Standing behind the man, Jon places a hand on his shoulder to make him turn around.

Jon screams and leans back, falling thunderously to the ground.

Lord Eddard Stark looks at him with concern but does nothing to help him. As he did all his life, seeing him suffer the consequences of being his false bastard, letting Jon go to the Night's Watch like any other thief or rapist or letting his wife belittle him for his condition.

"You lied to me," is the first thing he says to the man that he believed his father. Even when he knew he was no longer.

"I did," Ned replies in a gloomy way; he knows about his damage.

"Why?"
"I had to protect you."

What kind of protection was that? He would've rather being slaughtered by Robert's hands.

"You were protecting him," he shouts, the first time he addressed him that way. Jon can't find another way to vent so many years of repressed anger. Since he knew the truth about his origin, he had not given his uncle much thought. The two stopped respecting their honour at the time they betrayed the kings they were sworn to, for the sake of protecting their own blood. And in Jon's case, that was an election between one blood and the other. And he chose wrong.

Ned sighs in shame and nods, "He was a brute, but he brought tranquility to the kingdoms, Jon. Didn't you do the same when you gave your claim to the throne to Daenerys? Didn't you think the same as me? You just wanted peace?"

"I killed my own daughter," Jon cries, taking his knees protectively. "So much honour, so much duty and I couldn't even protect her."

"You didn't. The spider did it. You had no way of knowing."

"Sansa knew!" he tells him with contempt, "She could've told me."

"Sansa did something terrible, son," Ned agrees, touching the fire with a stick, "terrible things happened to her and she responded with the same aggressiveness."

"Are you trying to justify her?"

"Of course not, Jon," he clarifies, turning around to see him. "She will pay the price of her evil deeds, she already paid part of it."

Jon wants to tell him not to doubt that she will, but he fears that a look from him could change his mind. He wonders if his lord uncle can sense what he also wants to do with Winterfell.

"All my life I tried to live by your example and it cost me everything," at it sounds like an early justification for what he's almost sure he wants -he needs to do. The path he wants to take.

"You were better than me," Ned says with a gesture between a smile and just surprise, "You have it worse than me, too."

And maybe it's because Jon would soon be Ned's age when he died, but at that moment he realised that he felt too old and too lived.

"You've your threshold?"

Ned looks at him confused first until he understands the meaning of his question.

"We all have one," he says.

"I don't," Jon reveals in his broken voice, "They don't allow me to have one."

"We all have one, Jon," he repeats again with certainty, "I wish I had come back to tell you to go east, to take Daenerys away and never come back here. Would you have done it, son?"

"No," it is Jon this time who does not hesitate to assure him, "She was destined to be a queen," none of the other kings could reach the milestones of the Dragon Queen.

"I know," Ned accepts, getting up to walk back into the darkness, "That also terrified Robert."
Before he could leave, Jon needs to hear him saying it at least once even if it's just in a dream, which is all he has. At that moment Jon thought how ironic it was that Dany had no dreams but have her threshold, and Jon had only dreams.

"Father," he calls Ned Stark for the last time, the final time, "You said that the next time we see each other, we were going to talk about my mother."

Lord Eddard Stark's face contorted in a gesture of terrible pain and sorrow.

"Her name was Lyanna."

And with that, he leaves.

V: Brother

"I told you next time I see you, you'd be all in black," Robb teases when he approaches and sits by his side.

Robb looks different from the last time he saw him, although Jon is sure he shouldn't look so young at thirty-six, the age he should have had, had he lived such years. He was only nineteen when he was killed.

"Time didn't make you less melancholic, Jon," he keeps jesting, while he takes the same stick and fiddles with the flames of the fire.

"Thank you for defending the North," he adds, pushing him a little with his shoulder, "You don't know how proud I felt when they named you King in the North. Even though, you know, they're not the best vassals if one thinks it deeply," he admits.

Robb was betrayed by the same men of the North. Jon was betrayed by his brothers of the Night's Watch. Dany was betrayed by him, who willingly bent his knee to her. All kings fall for their own allies, never for their enemies.

"You also come from there right?" Jon can't help but insist on that question, like when he was a child and envied his older brother, the future Lord of Winterfell.

"Aye," he replies with his same sly smile, "With Talisa and my boy."

A boy.

"What did you call him?"

"While alive my thought was to name him Eddard, you know, a matter of honour and the notion to have a king with his name, someday," he sighs saddened, "His name is Jon. Jon Stark. Before meeting Talisa, knowing I was a king fighting a war against Tywin Lannister, with my two little brothers trapped in Winterfell and my practically lost sisters, there was only one option to continue my legacy, and that was you, Jon. I wrote the will and handed it to Maege Mormont, you know the rest."

Then there was a will naming him king and surely freeing him from the vows of the Night's Watch. A will they would never find because Maege died in the war.

"I always said if I had a son, I'll name him Robb," Jon shares true statement, "but she was a girl, I-"
He stops dead remembering the pain in his arm. Does she have a name? If Daenerys never returns he will never know.

When he starts sobbing, Robb puts his arm around his shoulders to lure him into a hug.

"Easy, Jon, it wasn't your fault," Robb reassures him. "You try to do the right thing."

Again that same excuse, he curses in his mind. However, Robb chose love over duty and that condemned him, as Sansa once said.

"I don't know what's right anymore," he confesses, throwing his head between his knees.

Robb ignores it, when Barristal stirs behind them.

"A dragon, huh?" he asks, returning to his jovial tone. "I could have used one of those."

*Ask Daenerys,* Jon wanted to answer him, *with three dragons she couldn't get what she wanted. Her good intentions condemned her quest.*

"By the way, Jon," he smiles jokingly, as if he could read his mind, "she is damn gorgeous, brother."

Then Jon chuckles amid a tide of agony that threatens to take him away and drown him.

"Whatever you decide, Jon," he, like Ned before, gets up to leave. "I am proud that you came all the way here. Talisa rebuked me once because I had no one to replace Joffrey; I wish I had known about you back then. You are the king for whom I had bent my knee."

Jon stifles a groan and sniff.

"Farewell, Targaryen," Robb says.

"Farewell, Stark," Jon replies.

**VI: Mother**

Her smile is beautiful.

She approaches with more resilience than Ned and Robb; She wears a blue dress too thin for the cold around them, and Jon feels the need to take off his cloak and hand it over.

"Do not," she indicates him, "It's not necessary."

*Dany doesn't feel cold either,* he remembers.

When his mother sits next to him, Jon realises that what they said about her and Arya is true. They are similar although she has brown eyes like him. She is also much younger than Jon; She was only sixteen when she died.

"You have my eyes, and my hair," she points out, stroking his cheek with her smooth hand. "I could hardly see you when you were born, you didn't want to open your eyes, I'd like to think because you knew what kind of world awaited you."

Jon can't say a word, he only drops futile tears down his cheeks while his mother, Lyanna Stark,
"I'm so sorry I left you in this world, Aegon," she apologises but Jon knows it was out of her control. "I regret that so many bad things have happened because of me."

A war. Her love for Rhaegar caused a war. His parents' love caused too many deaths, and that he thought as Dany watched him with love, begging him to be with her. If I choose to love her, I will be condemning millions, he had told himself. I would be condemning Arya and Sansa. Bran and Sam.

Then he chose duty and Dany left, taking with her all his desires to live.

"You are like him," she whispers, still cleaning the trail of silent crying. "Thinking, thinking, thinking. He used to spend the entire nights just looking at the sky and wondering what to do to bring peace to the Realm. He wanted to take the throne out of his father. I begged him to flee Westeros, but he told me "We can live together", Elia, the children, his mother, and Viserys', he still didn't know about Daenerys, but that was his fool dream. He wanted us to be a large family."

A true fool, Jon agrees with her. Lyanna looked young but wise, anyway, Jon feels a strange detachment towards Rhaegar when he remembers that he convinced her to abandon her family and her duty, to set up a meaningless plan that condemned them all. That condemned Daenerys.

"It was worth it?" This time his question is different, "When it was over, did you think it was worth it?"

Because Jon is sure that Dany concluded that for her, it was not. Their love was not worth the sacrifices she made for him. Lyanna probably thought the same.

"The moment I felt your little kicks inside my belly, I was sure it was all worth it, Aegon," and this time when she smiles, it's the most sincere thing he has seen. "I met your little girl."

His heart skips a beat.

"She has the Targaryen's hair, but it is curly like yours and Rhaegar's," she says as she fiddles with his hair and Jon feels drowned, "Her eyes are like ours, and she has my nose."

He subsumes again in a cry that burns in his lungs. This time the sadness is overshadowed by the helplessness of knowing that he can never see her.

"Sh, my son," she brings him to her chest and Jon cries in his mother's embrace, something he would have liked to have when he was a bastard child crying because Lady Catelyn scolded him or because someone in Wintertown called him by foul names. And he was never a bastard. "She doesn't hate you, she can't hate you."

Jon raises his head to look at her and confirm that her words are true. Does she mean his girl or Daenerys? But he fears knowing the answer.

VII: Stranger

Jon is not reflected in him with the naked eye, but anyway, he recognises Rhaegar from those dreams where he saw him with Lyanna. The two contemplate the other in silence, and unlike the rest, he sits in front of him, not at his side.
"I should start asking for your forgiveness," Rhaegar is the first to speak. "But I know I don't deserve it."

Jon's first instinct is to tell him that it is not to him who he should ask forgiveness but to Dany, because his selfish desire pushed her to live a life of misery beyond the humanly bearable. And yet she survived.

"We have that in common," Jon says a thought out loud, "we don't deserve the forgiveness of our children."

Rhaegar sighs defeated but nods, and Jon realises they are in the same position; the two sat facing each other, with their knees raised against their chest. He even wears similar clothes that Jon's, who was wearing the black suit he was preparing for his failed attempt to marriage and Rhagar with a crimson suit that reminded him of Barristal's scales.

Red and black.

"When you see her," Rhaegar again breaks the long silence, "tell her that she is everything I would have wanted to be in life. Tell her that I have failed her, my mother and Viserys, and that haunts me even in my place of resting."

So he also has his threshold, Jon thinks, narrowing his eyes at the wave of hate that wants to swallow him. Jon knows if he delves deeper, he will discover that even the fucking Viserys had one.

"If you let me tell you something, Jon or Aegon, I feel I have no right to call you by any of those names," he pauses to look toward the fire, a solemn expression that feels familiar. "Don't waste your time looking back. No matter what you decide, just don't look back."

Dany's words resonate in his memory.

Walk forward and never look back, Jon Snow.

"We also have that in common," Jon acknowledges.

"What thing?"

"Neither of us deserves Dany's forgiveness."

Rhaegar nods, stands and withdraws.

Of all the people he has talked to, this was the strangest.

VIII: Lover

He was putting light kisses on her naked back, fighting against the sleeping and gathering strength to continue showing her how much he desired her and how much he loved her. Jon wished to have the power to make the scars disappear, each one of them.

"I'm going to be all sticky if you kept doing that," she jested, turning her head one side, still resting on her arms. She looked magnificent even with her ruffled white hair.

"It is a complaint?" he asked stopping his doings, smiling when she shivered underneath him as he trailed with the fingertips, space from her ribs to the bone of her hip.
“No,” she protested, "I didn't tell you to stop, Jon Snow."

He sighed when he heard his name on her lips again, with her rough, queenly tone prompting his arousal all over again.

“You never call me Aegon,” he said just a curious fact, sliding his hand under her belly to lift her hips, although she interrupted the movement by turning around and facing him. In her face, there was a concern.

“Do you want me to call you Aegon?” she questioned him, as Jon bring himself closer to her.

He hadn’t made that comment to provoke more questions, it was something that came up in his mind too quickly to stop it. When formalities were necessary, she called him King Aegon, but in privacy, they were always Dany and Jon.

However, with the subject on the table as she had suggested a few moments earlier, and as much as it hurt to put a brake on his excitement to keep on with their coupling, Jon looked into her eyes and asked,

“Do you want me to be Aegon?”

Dany frowned lowering her eyes to his mouth, not in a seductive move but like truly thinking the matter out. Her lips were parted, as her breathing started agitating, prompting a reaction off him who tried to appease her sudden uneasiness placing a long kiss on her sternum.

"It scares me," she admitted with a fragile and improper voice for a woman who a few seconds ago ordered him to continue.

"What?" Jon's asked astonished, lifting himself up.

"I know for our current situation that it seems not bothering you, anymore," she downed him to her as if she was afraid to lose the contact, "But...I can't erase it from my mind. The way you pushed me away, you couldn't even give me your hand. What if-" her words trailed off, "What if it comes back and you can't stand me anymore?"

Being Aegon implied being her nephew, he understood what she was trying to say. In fact, that was her plan by returning to support the campaign.

"I'm not your ally. I'm your aunt," she tried to draw out a line for them that they couldn't -mostly him-, respect and would've never been able to respect.

"I was confused," Jon apologised for the thousandth time, and he would have to keep reminding her that each day of their lives because of the insecurity that created in her about his true feelings. "I never dared to think in this kind of unions," he intended to expatiate upon the matter but she interrupted him.

"Incest," Dany stated, sitting against the pillows and hiding her bare chest with the furs; a move he didn't like because it felt again as if she were shielding against him. He followed her close, refusing to let her get away from him. She stopped him by placing the hand that did not hold the padding, on one of his arms that was intended to help him hover over her. "Look, how the word still troubles you," she pointed at his sudden goose pimples.

Jon chuckled because it was an overstatement; he just felt a stream of fresh air. At the same time, he felt sorry that something so simple could make her feel belittled.
Finally, he gave her the space she was asking for and placed himself beside her without letting them lose skin-to-skin contact, so he put his leg against hers under the duvet.

"Cersei and Jaime Lannister-,

"We are not brother and sister," his stubborn companion cut him off. "The Starks also had that kind of unions-,

"I know, let me finish, please," Jon halter her this time. She nodded lying on her side and listening to him attentively, "For years, all I heard about the South was the chaos provoked by that people. The heinous child that came up from them," something in her eyes darkened and he rushed to explain, "Joffrey killed my fath-" he bit his tongue, "Lord Stark. He abused Sansa and then he celebrated the death of Robb in front of her, all of that because-"

"He was a monster," she completed the idea, "My father was a monster, Viserys was a monster, Maegor the cruel was a monster, I am a monster-" but he did no let her continue.

"You are not a monster," he stated firmly.

Jon didn't mean to direct that concept on her, though he wouldn't blame her for feeling that level of neglecting from his part. He still stared at her as the most marvelous thing he could've known.

"I-" she began but stopped trying to find the right words, "Tommen and Myrcella were good children. My mother Rhaella was a good person, and so on many others born out of those unions, and-" she sighed, "There are millions of other people born from people unrelated that are cruel and evil. In any case, I only wanted you to hug me and tell me everything was going to be okay. Now, I can't help but feel that-" and then a sole tear escape from his eye, "You can love me intensely one day and then leave me just like that. Leave me loving alone again."

Then, he accepted that he would deal with it the rest of their life together. Irreparable damage perhaps, or the hope of fools who refused to accept the impediments that warned them not to be together. Anyway, Jon decided that this was the way he was going to follow. She was everything that gave foundation to an existence that would end in the darkness. If showing her every day the loyalty of his feelings for her to placate the horrors of the past was his destiny, he was going to embrace it.

"I always be there, if you let me, Dany" he promised, caressing her face as she leaned on his touch, "You are more than a word for me, you are...unreachable for our world's understanding. What I feel for you won't change."

"I don't want you to change," Dany answered, approaching her face to his, "I fell in love with you because you know what it's good," it was the closer to say those words sincerely she's been.

"I don't," he opposed because it was truer than she would think. He made things right for the sake of others and never something that could bring joy to his own life. If everything that makes him happy was wrong then he had to choose at least one sin.

"I only want you to be there for me, like anything you want to be," she requested.

"Tomorrow night we'll be family for certain, and I don't want to put pressure on you but the Old Gods of the Forest don't take a broken oath very well," he acknowledged, pushing her over the pillows and ready to go on with their journey of rediscovering each other's skin. He cupped her face with both hands to show how serious the matter was. He's already broken some of them and every time he paid a price.
"So, I'll be chained to you?" she teased.

"Forever," he sentenced before lowering his lips to meet hers and lose themselves in the other's arms.

"That sounds well for me," she conceded beaming at him, returning the kiss with the same passion and pushing him onto his back to straddle him. "But now I needed you to be my lover, Aegon," she demanded, slowly guiding his cock in her entrance, and lowering herself on it. She rode him as she used to do it in their final days on the boat when she lost all the fear to be discovered, but instead of screaming Jon Snow's name at the arrival of their collapse, it's Aegon whose name she shouted, awakening the castle.

Jon knows what follows it's not true because it didn't happen. She never walked down the aisle with the white bridal gown to meet him at the Heart Tree. That's the dream he had out of anxiety as if something in his mind was already warning him that it wasn't going to work out.

He never put his cloak on her shoulders. He never got to hear her response, taking him as her husband. Carrying her to the feast, becoming the King and the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. Consummate their marriage. Taking her as his wife. Praying for his seed to give form to a child. Their child.

But they never married.

Their child was long dead.

She can't love him anymore.

He was her greatest misfortune.

IX: Protector

He is again in the corridors of Red Keep, but this time his child version does not run for them alongside Daenerys. Is Jon himself who advances enticed by the sound of cheerful laughter, full of joy and carefreeness. They get stronger as he moves forward, an intense feeling of warmth smothering his chest, eliciting the need to reach his destination sooner rather than later.

At the end of the hallway, there's a large, wooden door, with the design of a three-headed dragon in black iron. There are two guards posted on each side, Jon doesn't recognise any of them, but they also ignore him when he opens the gate to find out where the sound is coming from.

It is a beautiful chamber, the most gorgeous one he has been in his entire life. Until now, the most elegant and regal thing Jon had known were the rooms at Great Keep, in Valyria. This one had no comparison, nonetheless.

Through the window, the day is warm and birds could be heard singing about a dream of summer.

"Kepa," the soft voice of a child says, forcing him to look where the laughter becomes more intense, "Please, another story!"

It's him and a girl, but Jon can't recognize himself in that man who holds the little girl in his lap. She is on her back so her face is not visible from where he stands, but Jon's face is different as if the weight of the years had not fallen so much on that man. Anyway, there is a shadow of sadness in his countenance.
"I've already told you all of them," he teases, his laughter is soft and jovial, like Robb's, "I told you about the dragons, about Meereen, about Dragonstone, and about Winterfell," the Jon who is not he, swallows hard, as if something put him in conflict, "You know all your mother's stories."

The girl extends her arms to bring her father's head toward her and whisper a secret in his ear. She must not be more than four years old.

"Oh," the jovial Jon laughs, "the story of the boat? Okay, I always forget that one. Well, it was a winter of the cruelest that Westeros was going through, it was after your mom agreed to help me defeat the Night King. One night I approached her to ask if she wanted to help me repair my heart, which was broken. Then your mother healed my heart."

Jon staggers and has to stand against the doorway to keep from falling.

"And what happened next? And what happened next, Kepa?"

Again, Jon laughs even though it sounds less lively than the previous one.

"Then we decided that we wanted to have a girl. We asked all the gods of heaven to send us one and they sent you shortly after."

The girl lies on her chest, "but why didn't she stay, Kepa?"

At that moment both Jon become the same Jon.

"Because she had to leave for you to come," he can feel like that other man, who is a dead man on the inside just like him. "She loved you so much, she loved you more than anything in this world."

The girl sighs with innocent compression.

"I wish she had stayed, Kepa," her little voice is defeated, when Jon turns around to return where he came from.

Then he would have lost her anyway. Doing things in the right way, he was going to lose Daenerys anyway. Not that he hadn't been grateful to have his daughter with him in that other life, but the emptiness would still be there. The pain in his chest that would not let him live would still be there.

Jon doesn't know how he does it, but things start to burn around him even though the flames don't reach him. Nothing makes sense, for him, no sacrifice or path will mean something if he doesn't have Dany next to him.

**X: The Dragon and the Wolf**

At the sound of some lost wolf crying for his pack, he awakens one day and decides is time to walk out the cave. Barristal brought one of his game and Jon feast from it like a wolf of his prey. In that sense, wolves and dragons are the same; there's always going to be a prey.

Dragon and direwolf are both beasts.

He flies forth Winterfell with a clear view on his mind, a red that covers his sight and it won't go nor he wishes for it to go.

He flies over Winterfell and is not surprised to learn that the castle has been taken. He laments that now he will have to play to be the king of Westeros.
Landing without watching which battle is released down there, Jon stares at the army posted outside the wall. He supposes, rightly, there's a human shield inside the castle.

Anyway, none of the obstacles that Victarion opposes will be sufficient.

So these are the true men of Victarion, who went from castle to castle massacring lords and anyone who opposed him, Jon thinks as he watches them. In the back of his mind, he always knew it, the peasants were the excuse he used to gain Westeros' power. None of his good intentions was ever going to be enough because this is what they always wanted; mess and chaos.

War.

They always want war.

His hands tremble on Barristal's grip, but the dragon does too. He wonders where his siblings are while Jon waits uselessly for Daenerys to appear at his side like the other times.

But now Jon is sure she will not return.

Maybe it was all a dream, he starts thinking. Maybe I'm dead and I just have to realise. Certainly, there are numb parts of his body, his movements are guided by Barristal at this point. All he has to do is give the beast the order and burn this dream down as the last one.

"Wouldn't you kill whoever stood between you and paradise?" Tyrion's words tried to tell him that day that she wouldn't ever stop. But if there's no paradise why to care at all? Tyrion pulled the strings of that decision and the paradise for him was forever gone. Jon killed his paradise.

Then why to care? If there's nothing, why he would care?

He came back with a goal and that goal is to protect the realm of men. And he will serve that goal at any cost. And for that Jon concludes that the war must end.

"Victarion!" he shouts, no, he growls at the view of the same man that stood in Moat Cailin. "Surrender the fucking castle, now, and I'll let you die soon and painless," he is telling a lie. No one cares about promises in war, so why will he?

People around Westeros need to understand war must end. And for that, terrible things need to happen.

He sees it now, back in the Night's Watch when Stannis burnt Mance. He needs to show them where the power is, otherwise they will not understand and that will lead them to keep questioning.

And questioning will lead to war again.

Victarion smiles as if he were enjoying the situation. All of them will die because of him, because of his obstinacy. Who holds the blame? Jon gave them many, many opportunities and they kept on. Warring against the hand that came to help them.

"We knew you wouldn't climb off the dragon once you came to see the power," he responds, still behind the blackened armour soldiers. They don't even show their faces, wiping them all will be easier. Not that he cares anymore about their faces when all he can see are ants. "Power reveals, Jon Snow. True and absolute power. I'm glad you stand in the right place now."

Jon swallows hard.
"My name is Aegon Targaryen and I am the King of the Seven Kingdoms. I came to save them but if they'll choose your side then all of you will burn as equals."

His grin intensifies but his eyes darkens.

"I'd be careful with what I say, after all, you are called by many names, right? White Wolf. Dragon King. The bastard of Winterfell."

Barristal screams in a warning.

He murmurs something else but it is imperceptible.

"In any case, King Aegon Targaryen, the sixth with the name, protector of the realm. On our side," he stares back at the castle, and Jon follows him. He sees people held on the battlements. "There are people who still believe in your good nature," Victarion returns to face him. "I'm just a communicator. I voice out their interests. And right now, the people ask for the head of this beautiful beast."

"Stop playing games, you know there's no chance for you," he warns, growing impatient. He is more exhausted for holding Barristal back. Jon doesn't know how much he will, or he wants to resist.

Daenerys burnt King's Landing just with Drogon, he could erase Winterfell in less than that. He can erase Wintertown, Castle Cerwyn, Moat Cailin and beyond.

Yet he chose to give them a chance that they rejected.

"Well, we are not saying you will gain nothing back," he turns around again and they stare at the battlements where the red hair of Sansa appears like a contrast against the white sky.

His heart skips a beat at the view.

He should've executed her when Dany asked it. When he sentenced her. Now this will be an undignified death for her.

As for your daughter, a voice reminds him. Your tiny baby was poisoned because she willingly provide the spider the information of her existence.

"She's a sentenced woman," Jon replies to his suggestion. "She committed crimes against her people and against her family. She's breathing borrowed air by now."

Vicatarion nods.

"Good to know you've chosen the dragon, then," the man gives a signal nod.

There's a moment of silence then, followed by Sansa's voice screaming,

"Winter fell," before the sound of her choking and the fall of her body against the stone.

The man by her side stands proudly, hands stained with her blood. The last Stark have been killed by a man that they don't even know. But Jon recognises him immediately. He is the scribe, a friend of hers.

What have just happened?

Jon stares at the surroundings confused. He can't convey with what he's feeling at the moment.
Should he feel sad? anger? happy that finally nothing matters and he can stop holding back Barristal?

"What did you think when you did it? When you were on the walls of King's Landing when you gave that speech in front of your soldiers."

"The greatest of the pains I thought I experienced. Heartbreak, betrayal, hatred, anger, put it in the words you want, everything was there. Stillness."

"I told you I'm just a communicator, Jon Snow," the man in front of him reveals.

Jon frowns as his sight becomes blurry. There's someone calling him from behind, a voice he heard before but does not recognise anymore.

Then Jon looks better to where the scribe stands with a victorious smile and the words that someone shouts behind him join in the understanding of what has happened.

Victarion

The scribe is Victarion.

On the ground, Gendry yells at him to alert him but he is late.

Would you have done it?

What?

You've been up there, on a dragon's back. You've had that power. Would you have burned the city down?

I don't know.

Now he knows, Jon thinks; let the world burn because he no longer will fight its war.

Jon takes Barristal to the skies.

Chapter End Notes

Here is the outline of this chapter because I'm just lazy sometimes and I don't describe the scenes exactly as I detail in the outlines:
https://archiveofourown.org/works/21613564/chapters/53041357
Nissa Nissa

Chapter Summary

History repeats itself,  
the first as tragedy, 
then as farce.

Chapter Notes

SORRY for the delay. I had this half written but I ended up changing so many things and rewriting, rewriting, rewriting. Again, I'm not good at fantasy.

There's a term in my country FALOPA to describe something extremely weird probably induced by drugs well this is the falopa chapter because I took several and big licenses, obviously, and there's inconsistencies with the source material (GRRM books). This is just fanfiction so I'm not proposing a theory here with his canon but using his canon to tell my story.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter 9: "Nissa Nissa"

I: Solitude

Winterfell
305, AC.

The Maester left her chamber silently at her indication that what he had just revealed to her there should not leave the four walls of this horrendous grave where she has spent the worst days of her life so far. She did not understand what led her to feel this way if she has experienced the same sentiment in the past: heartbreak, restlessness, the imminent danger of death hovering around every corner. A feeling that has only intensified now that her greatest protector had departed. Without Jorah, Dany felt as desolate as the girl of sixteen summers she was in her own wedding.

She let out a stifled groan and tears wetted the skirt of her dress.

Has it occurred to you that it might not have been a reliable source of information?

It was a suspicion she started to contemplate in the last sections of the road to Winterfell from White Harbor. The symptoms were there as her first pregnancy with Rhaego, the tenderness in her breasts, the morning weakness, her inability to eat food as cooked as those served at the feast that night. They were there but she ignored them all because it was impossible. How long has she been with Daario without any change? Why was Jon Snow going to be different? Then he confessed the truth and everything made sense.
She lay down without taking off her clothes or disheveled her braids; if it wasn't for Missandei every night she would do the same. She felt nothing anymore, little by little something inside her vanished. She could not even experience happiness because of, from having no one, from being the last of her family, a weight that had made her suffer for years, now suddenly she had two more members: Jon and the baby growing in her womb.

What more could I ask for, right?

She let out another groan and begged that the walls be loud enough to drown out the sound of her pathetic suffering so Varys' little birds couldn't hear her.

Throughout the night the spider has watched her and Dany wondered if he also realised about her current state. The idea terrified her. She had not experienced such fear since Drogo became ill and she was still pregnant with Rhaego. Even then, Jorah was there protecting her, being her unconditional shield against the evil that has always stalked her.

Was it her fault to have trusted too much? She has always said that in her position, she could not afford to fall in love as she had fallen for Jon. She fought against that feeling but gave in at the moment he knocked on her door. Now he couldn't even look at her.

You are my queen. Nothing will change that.

And they are my family.

He found no more cruel words and less suitable time to end what they had. And yet she didn't want to let it go. She did not want to let him go. Not only is he the man who has given her what she thought she would never have, but he was ideal for her, and perhaps that was the problem: what she saw as a great fortune could be her condemnation. She had no trouble loving him even being Rhaegar's son, a brother she didn't even know and was already dead when she was born. She had no problem ruling by his side, letting him lead where she didn't have the same skills.

But Daenerys was not an idiot. All those qualities that made her love him so much were the same that people like Varys, Tyrion and Sansa, would use to get her out of this game, to see her...gone. She told him but he did not understand or does not want to understand. She begged him to protect her and he could not.

He did not want it.

She put a hand on her lower belly, begging that all that sadness she felt would not harm the life that grew inside her.

To protect you I have to protect myself. And to protect myself I have to leave Winterfell as soon as possible. Take the throne as soon as possible.

Behind her, she heard the door opening and her heart skipped a beat because for a second she imagined it was him, who finally came to look for her. However, disappointment flooded her again like all those other nights he did not appear.

It was Missandei, who at the sight of Dany in that state ran to attend her.

"Daenerys," she called by her first name, the one they used when they were in private. "What's going on?"
She had taken it for granted that she would not come that night to help her with her arrangement for the bed, and the idea didn't bother her at all. Having survived what they have survived, Daenerys felt an extraordinary desire to send Missandei and Grey Worm away from there. But she couldn't, although the idea was in her head, she didn't want to lose more people around her. She felt so alone.

Feeling overwhelmed by everything that was happening, Daenerys told her everything. Absolutely everything. They were exchanging language, Dothraki, Valyrian, and Guiscari to mislead any wandering ear. Missandei hugged her and asked her to calm down, that everything would be fine.

"We need to get out of here now," she begged as if the matter were in her hands and not in herself; she was the queen, the one who had to protect them all, however, she felt helpless and with an only desire to protect the one she carried. "I can't stay here, anymore. My state makes me weak, and if they see a weakness they will destroy me at the first opportunity they have."

They. They. In her mind, she had begun to fear "they", though she did not know who they were.

They could be lions, as they could be wolves. In any case, if she had to become a dragon to protect that life she had inside, then Daenerys decided that a dragon she would be.

Missandei's expression turned troubled.

"May I suggest you something, Daenerys?" she asked for her permission, though she did not have to wait for Dany's response. "If Westeros does not make you happy and Jon Snow is not worthy of your affections, why don't we find another place?"

Hearing that blunt statement coming from someone else's mouth felt ridiculously humiliating for Daenerys; she has fallen in love with someone who can't love her back. Her quest in Westeros is almost doomed. Mostly because of him. His mere existence has been most of a misfortune for her if she delves into the matter.

Missandei's words were kind but surely cruel for Dany's wrecked heart.

And yet, Jon gave her something she thought long lost, and just because of that she chose to believe that there was a more deep reason for them to meet, for them to fight this battle for life together, creating life themselves in the process.

At that moment, Dany realised all she has now is her destiny. How to feel belittled by matter's of succession when she's the one who birthed dragons out of stone? Sure Jon mocked death itself, and that's why she does not want to see him as her opponent; he could be her companion on this journey.

It wasn't Jon the heir of the Iron Throne and it wasn't her. It was their child.

An outbreak of hope born in her chest.

"I have a fate and I must serve it," she replied, sure of her rumination. She squeezed Missandei's hand and smile, thankful for her affection and engagement. "I promise you that if I hadn't had this burden on my behalf, I'll go to Naath with you and Grey Worm."

Her friend's face fell dead at that declaration. She wasn't expecting Daenerys to know about their plans.
"Don't worry, Missandei. I always told you you are free to do as you please," Dany's reassured her.

"I don't want to leave you alone," Missandei's voice broke, "Please, consider what we talked."

But Daenerys didn't. Because she believed she wasn't going to be alone, she chose willingly to have faith in Jon reciprocity and loyalty. Her own blood and the father of her child, after all.

And she chose wrong.

Because he wasn't there when Rhaegal died, nor Missandei's head was ripped off her body, nor when the spider was infecting her food with poison. Neither was there with her even when his physical presence was. Ultimately, he left alone. And alone she died by his hand.

II: Cold Within The Fire

Lands of Always Winter

317, AC.

When Missanderys, Greywing, Daarion and Jorion's wings yielded at the exhaustion, they threw themselves somewhere in this strange remoteness, and let the snow bury their bodies.

Maybe that's we'll freeze and someday they'll find us like this, she thought. When winter becomes summer.

Dragons are fire made flesh, so she does not worry about how bad they are going through. The numbness she suffers seems to impact them as if they were the roots of the diseased trunk she is. She desperately wants to feel more than the emptiness inside her, but nothing comes. And the void doesn't even bother her. It is just void.

She should feel fed up with experiencing the same thing over and over again, however, this time, she decides she doesn't want to give it importance.

What else could she expect? She always knew that the Starks had caused her destruction; Sansa with her malice, Brandon with his silence and stealthy intentions, if something in that boy was still Bran, Arya with her immutable suspicion, although she had done nothing to him, and Jon, well, Jon with his weakness.

Twice she fell into the trap of believing that there was a possible reconciliation in that truth that subsumes them. Just as fire and ice destroyed each other, as winter would never be summer or summer winter, there was never possible conciliation. That initial hoax that Daenerys voluntarily accepted even before knowing about Jon's origin, when she agreed to love him as a Stark bastard.

She has loved him so much that he destroyed her, she has hated him so much that she has not cared to tell him a truth that has possibly destroyed him.

Now she feels nothing.

After the destruction, there's nothing.

The void in her chest that she came to accept as some vital part of her body, is gone. Gone as anything she ever tried to hold on to.
Daenerys sighs as she shakes the snow off her ruined bridal gown as warms the fabric with her own heat in order to dry it. As she did this, the hatchlings stir awake and start smelling near preys out. On the contrary than her, they need to eat, they are living beings.

As she waited for them to restore their energy, she sat on a formation of rocks within the white moor and muse over her next course of action. She can't return to Jon, that's obviously. She can't even bear the view of him, anymore. It's the relive feeling of long ago when she recently woke from death; a detachment that didn't even allow her to make justice for her own life and her daughter's life. At this point, he'd made her feel an array of emotions, from blind love to fundamental hatred. And she had tired of oscillating through that spectrum of sentiments. For her, it's enough.

Yet, she's not done with Sansa. Daenerys is sure she won't leave the continent until her head is ripped off her body. She will send Grey Worm to make sure that happens.

Then she would remain in some remote place until her time comes, maybe she even would find Kinvara and force her to lead her to her purpose. All Daenerys wanted was to return to the threshold. She has no reason to live anymore.

Jorion lifts his head to where she is, an interrogation in his eyes. Due she has trust in Quaithe's promise, Daenerys hasn't paid enough thought about what will happen with them if she's gone. She apologises as she caresses his snout, unable to find that answer now. She wanted them free.

Behind the hatchlings, she noticed the relief of a distant figure on the horizon, which she had not seen before. She narrows her eyes to get a better view but it is difficult with all the distance in between. Then something shines calling her attention, as an invitation. Like other times, Daenerys obeys the call of an extraordinary signal, and after waiting for the dragons to be satiated, she leads them in that direction.

It is a castle, buried between black stones and snowy mountains, not as huge as other fortresses in the realm of men but definitely extraordinary given the conditions in which it is located.

Is it possible for people to reside inside? Daenerys has witnessed many oddities, and it would not surprise her at all that indeed, there were people inhabiting the place, but with the unbearable cold for a regular human, she thought it unlikely. Even the dragons felt uncomfortable at that point, so she let them fly away while she ventured to discover what she had found.

It takes time to find an entrance, and she crosses a bridge and a frozen waterfall that made her chest ache at an intrusive memory. What will you be doing right now, she thinks as she continues moving forward. What should you feel right now? Will you finally understand the extent of my pain, Jon? Will you already understand how impossible it was for me to love you as I once loved you? Daenerys asks all those questions and gets rocked by the turmoil in her head, but her eyes are too dry to shed any tears.

Deep down, she begins to rationalise that she shouldn't have been so crude although it was in her full right. What if he had committed some mad act? And if he hurts himself? She still doesn't want to hurt him, although she had crossed a line by burning his arm. The stubborn part of her still cared for him. Perhaps the understanding that it was not malice but weakness; an unbroken disposition to the right and to the Starks that she could never compensate for. So it happened the first time, and it would continue to be that way, although soon, of the Stark, only Winterfell will remain, and that if she also did not destroy that. Daenerys remembers that she told him that Sansa knew about her baby. In any case, she had grown tired of having faith in Jon, so she will waste no time waiting for him to take the initiative.
She finds the entrance on one side, through a corridor so dark that she must help herself with her own fire to enter, the snow melting into thundering drops in her path. Daenerys almost stumble on some steps, so she goes down as slowly and cautiously as she can. It is an underground fortress, she concludes.

She reaches the base of the castle, or what she supposes it is, and it no longer needs her fire to light up. On the ceiling, there is a strange green phosphorescence that illuminates the space. She seems to be inside a huge cave, with walls covered with dead and frozen vegetation, as well as a couple of water springs in the same condition. Her boots start to get wet again, becoming uncomfortable to keep walking.

Then she encounters a circle formed with ice pikes protruding from the snow, almost like the stones that ritualists from remote communities in Valyria possess.

Daenerys shudders at the sound of footsteps approaching. A hooded figure comes out of nowhere, tall and thin, and if she was looking well, red flashes instead of a face. It is wearing a completely black suit and a cloak of the same tone, according to the cold that surrounded them.

"I've expected you many years," his masculine voice announces. She back up.

"Who are you?" Daenerys asks, contemplative.

The man throws the hood behind and the first thing she notices is the platinum white hair like hers, kissed by death some would say. His face is monstrous, but not unbearable for her who has seen worse. He has such white skin that Daenerys would swear that it is transparent on the other side. However, a crimson stain like red wine taints his pale face while the most macabre detail lies in an absent eye.

**Bloodraven.**

"Brynden," he replies, walking closer at a slow pace, "Brynden Rivers."

**III: Bloodraven**

Daenerys recalls that Viserys spoke very briefly about him and his participation in the Blackfyre rebellions. It was not until, in her days at the Red Temple, Kinvara vaguely explained about his existence that she paid true attention to his person.

However, just as Brandon Stark was dead many years ago even though his body had been taken by the Raven, Bloodraven was killed by the Night King for him to pass to Bran's body.

"That's no possible," she denies with a shake of her head, "He died."

He stops in front of her, near one of the ice pikes that surround her. Been closer, he seemed even more monstrous.

"You died, too," Brynden responds, "But that's true. Unlike you, I did not come back. I just did never go."

**He has a point,** Daenerys thinks although she is no longer sure what is real and what is not.

Perhaps aware of her confusion, who claims to be Bloodraven moves around the pikes to the side of Daenerys. She cannot discern his age, he does not seem young but neither does a wilted and
withered body as she hoped to find according to Kinvara's stories.

"What is this place?" she questions, staring at the fluorescent ceiling. He follows her sight.

"The Ice Castle. This was where the Night King and his army lived," he reveals and Daenerys trembles at the memory of those beings.

"Lived?" how they were supposed to lived, is what actually she wanted to know.

"They were living creatures, Daenerys."

"And what are you doing here?"

"I live here, now," he says with a mourning mood as if it was more of a condemn. "My essence was liberated when a more extraordinary mind was found."

Mind. Magic of the mind is how Kinvara called to what the crow was doing with his guests.

"R'hllor sent you?"

"I haven't seen R'hllor for years, but last time he told me to wait because one of the last Targaryen would come looking for me."

Daenerys blinks perplexed.

"I did not come in your search."

He just nods.

"But you want answers, and I'm the only one who will give them to you."

**Answers.** Nor is she looking for that, Daenerys thought. Rather signals are what she wants. However, she drew her here with the sparkles of his eyes, she patched that. Yet, she could not help feeling disappointed that it was not R'hllor who received her.

Bloodraven begins to move to another corner, it looks like an alternate exit, but it is also illuminated with that strange phosphorescence.

"Where are you going?" she asks, following him and leaving the circle of ice peaks.

"I'm showing you the way, Daenerys Stormborn," he tells her without turning around, "However, you should know that you pay a price for exploring the past."

Then she stops when she remembers Kinvara's words. Only sacrifice pays for victory. Only death pays for life. She does not want to underestimate the price of magic again.

"Where do I have to go? Why travel to the past, I have seen the past already in the flames," she stutters the words as if she could feel the icy sensation of that place. Actually, she did want to go to the past. Daenerys would return exactly at some point where her children, Jorah, Missandei and everyone else were with her, safe. However, that could affect her daughter's existence as well.

"See is not the same as travel, Daenerys. When we cross that entrance, we'll have spent a couple of hours in there but time is not uniform, here it could have been years, months, maybe just a couple of days, it's never the same."

Daenerys thinks back at when they found Jon in the House of the Undying, where the farce magic
of the Warlocks also made Jon believe that he spent only a few minutes trapped when he was actually missing for three days.

She found herself in a dichotomy because at last, she was receiving the message from the red god that could guide her towards her so-called purpose. But is she sure to leave time to its fate?

Bloodraven does not wait for her when she crosses the exit.

Daenerys decides to move forward.

IV: Deities and Stories

The first thing Bloodraven does is hand her a mask and when Daenerys asks what they need them for, he simply answers,

"Do you remember what happened to your eyes when you saw R’hhlor without Quaithe's mask?"

Daenerys puts the object on her face quickly.

They advance through a space not very clear for her understanding, but it is like walking through the void and at the same time focusing briefly on small objects that her memory relates to things she has seen in the realm of men. A table, a circle, moving figures crossing them on the side but ignoring them, etc. For Daenerys, it is incomprehensible at times.

"What are we going to see?" She asks anxiously, her voice appeased by the mask.

"The beginning," Brynden replies.

She hopes that he does not refer to the beginning of time, because she is not interested at all. No, she wants the answer to her purpose.

Then she sees something like lights moving in circles although at times she blinks and sees faces that she simply could not describe in words. Some are beautiful, a feeling of true calm awakens inside her. Others, not so many, a sanity that does not make her feel more than empty, and then there are some that are unbearable, which translate into terrible sensations.

"They know we're here, but they won't intercede, that's their rule," Brynden warns, "Although if your will is volatile, they can convince you."

Daenerys did not understand what he meant but when she captured the same face she saw in the tower of Qarth, which calmed her agony with its embrace, she realises they were facing R’hhlor.

"Even if you call him, he's going to ignore you," Brynden rushes to stop the urge to jump into the red god, as ritualists called him in the realm of men. Daenerys does not know where they have devised such a name, since she does not relate R’hhlor to that color, she cannot really relate it to anything her human eyes know. “R’hhlor is the strongest of them all, but he is also the most severe when it comes to the rules. If he wanted to, he could win the game, but always choose to follow the rules. For him, time is the flutter of a hummingbird.”

“You will not understand what they say, the sounds they produce are beyond our reach. Now they will give you their thoughts and you will have to be attentive and not confused to understand them. This happened or happens when they play the first time. R’hhlor tells his children to create stories because it’s the way humans live. Even if you come from the realm of men, your world is not the
only one. There are worlds that are not even aware of the existence of these others, where the gods relegated the world into the hands of humans to make it what they wanted. In any case, the result is always the same. Great chaos is orchestrated that puts an end to the story until it begins again. ”

Daenerys listens carefully but continues to think that it is not what she wants to know. She doesn't need that information, she is only interested in the gods to the extent that they can give her what she wants: her threshold.

*Fire,* comes to her mind. She is fire, it repeats.

*Visitor.*

*Strange.*

*Warrior.*

*Fire.*

"They sensed you," Brynden points.

Daenerys can feel them too. As little thoughts and whispers in her mind. The amount of sensations is overwhelming and she being able to pull away from there.

"Thus the first stories were created, in their hands. Some are better than others, some are bigger than others but they must always respect the rules. They do not intervene, except where they use warriors like you. Truth should never be used as an element of chaos. And the most important, win or die. Never both at the same time, as it happened to you."

Daenerys would've liked to tell him that it was out of her control, but he didn't mean like that.

The changing sensations began to create a feeling of terrible despair, to the point that she wanted to tear her head off her body and end it.

"It's time to move, Daenerys Stormborn," Brynden tells her, leading her away from the wicked, strange wills.

She follows him, although before they are gone, she hears a mocking laugh that whispers,

"Threshold."

*If I look back, I'm lost.*

**V: Prophecies and Sacrifice**

The next place they wander is less confusing than the previous one. It is a kind of temple, with infinite walls that seem to never find a roof. Daenerys realises that it is a circle, seven columns surround them.

"This is where the conflict begins," Brynden says.

In front of them, two figures appear, and Daenerys knows that one is R'hllor. The other silhouette recognises her, it is the one who laughed at her in that other place just moments before. Something tells her that the thing is aware of everything that is happening.
"The reason they can't manipulate the truth is that they know everything," Brynden explains, sighing. "R'hllor, however, had a favourite son."

Knowledge reaches Daenerys without the need to ask Bloodraven what is happening. R'hllor knew that his son would be just as powerful as he was, and that's why he locked him with Seven Spells, to keep him under control. Even so, they appreciated each other, and Raven admired his father's wisdom and strength.

Raven was the best story maker. He had created a plot so complex that R'hllor himself intervened to try his luck and beat him; that is, leaving the story with no resolution, partly because that forced the creator to review his work and on the other, remind R'hllor's children that he was always in control. Raven respected that.

"Give me the Realm of Men," Raven demanded, although they were still on good terms. "They are prone to chaos and that fills me with joy."

R'hllor flatly refused.

"It will not be an enduring joy. We are not his torturers, we are protectors of its essence."

It was the only thing he asked his father and he could not meet Raven. That hurt the pride of the entity, which tried unsuccessfully to act against him, only to be expelled by R'hllor to the Realm of Men, condemned to live under the Seven Spells.

Raven could not forgive R'hllor and his unjust punishment. He continued using his power from time to time, telling his all over again.

Until it came a time when Raven did something beyond terrible.

**VI: Nissa Nissa**

At last, they can say they are back in time, in the Realm of Men, Daenerys thinks as she raises an arm to cover her face when a snowstorm covers them. They no longer have the masks.

"Where are we now?" she shouts the question, fighting against the storm. It's dark and the moon does not shine in the cloudy sky.

Brynden turns to make sure she is following him, while his hair flies back leaving exposed the hole where there was an eye before.

"Have you heard about the long night?"

Of course, she has heard the stories about the almost mythological event that for her would be nothing more than a story of not having been because the army of the dead was a reality. Daenerys nods when Bloodraven reaches the top of a hill and invites her to join him to see what happens underneath.

Daenerys concludes that they have reached the first Great War, during the Long Night.

She can't help feeling a chill run through her body at the revived memory of the dead in front of her when men begin to fight against them. Those seemed to fight as if it were part of their routine.

"Come on," Brynden tells her, and she follows him until they are in a different fortress, though equally dark and bleak.
How many years before the Great War did that happen? she wonders looking at the dark sky. All the light they could provide came from the fire.

She soon hears voices from a room, so she lets herself be guided until she enters the place and meets several men and women gathered around a table.

"At this rate, they will reach us down South. And once in there, nothing will stop them to go east. There is no escape. We have to accept that we cannot win this war."

Desolation predominates the mood of the room, Daenerys realises. It reminds her in part of that night in Winterfell where she could only feel that. The first night of many where she only knew suffering.

"What little faith men maintain when they need it most," replies a dark-haired woman who is on her back, looking out one of the windows.

Daenerys stops dead when he recognises that voice.

Kinvara.

The red woman that brought her back from the threshold turned around and face the people, placing herself on the edge of the table beside a man who looked at her with adoration.

"I thought you brought the best in the North, my life, not a bunch of squeaky children," Kinvara complains playfully while leaning on the back of the chair where the man sits.

The man moves his gaze to the companions.

"They are men of the North, my love," he replies with a funny grin, "You will not know men tougher than Northerners. In many ways."

Kinvara let out a short sarcastic laugh, while the other men looked at her with distaste.

Daenerys vaguely remembers Kinvara's words.

"I had a son. He lived little and never met the sun arise. He born at night and died at the night. It was another time, great darkness loomed over our heads. The long night, some named it. Each day of this borrowed existence its flames fill my heart with peace because I knew this time will come. The day that was promised, the one that was promised."

So here is from where she came, Daenerys tells. The idea of living so many years waiting to fulfill a purpose torments her. She understands now why Kinvara seemed so distant from reality.

When Kinvara moves out of the room, Daenerys follows her, ignoring the conversation in the meeting room. They climb the stone steps to the bedchamber while she wonders if Kinvara could hear her, although it would be impossible, in this past she is not yet a priestess of R'hllor. Daenerys walks inside the room, watching the movements of the woman, who leans her head against the door when she closes it in a resigned gesture.

The unmistakable sound of a child -a baby- stuns both of them, who look in the direction of where it comes from.

Kinvara lifts a small baby in her arms, places him near her chest while staring at him with a serious countenance, the same one she used to have all the time in the Red Temple.
The man who she supposed her husband also enters the room, and at the sight of his wife and son, face lights up with a smile. Behind him, he's carrying an object that stirs a sense of fear in Daenerys.

"Soon we will leave," he announces, to which she looks at him with pain and concern.

"Did you finally get it?" She asks, ignoring his announcement.

He looks at the floor.

"Yes."

"Good," Kinvara replies, kissing the baby's head. "It won't be necessary unless it's necessary," she says, walking towards him with enlightened eyes. She had never seen her so human.

Daenerys wants to warn her not to approach him, that he has a weapon in his back. The image reminds her of when Jon made her believe that she could be close to him, a danger disguised as love. However, when Kinvara is wrapped in the man's arms, she surrounds his waist to catch his hands and take the sword in her grip.

"Do not fear while there is no fear," she calms him again, taking the sword to set it aside.

Kinvara proceeds to kiss her husband while Daenerys looks at Bloodraven in confusion and leaves the room. She had been sure that Kinvara would be killed.

They descend the step stones once again, walking to a kind of throne room. She realises that they are not on the same day, although it is still dark outside. There is more movement than in the previous event, soldiers coming and going everywhere as if something serious were about to happen.

Kinvara enters the throne room with the baby crying in her arms and her husband's sword on the other side. Behind her is her husband, with less dejection on his face.

"Close the doors and leave us alone," Kinvara orders the guards, and Daenerys can recognise the priestess in her voice. Demanding and determined. "It has to be fast, he comes with them," she says, leaving the child on the floor. Daenerys feels the urge to take him in her arms to calm him. "It has to be now, Azor!"

Daenerys begins to understand the situation and panics.

"Nissa, please," the man pleads, weakly holding the sword. His face is contracted in an expression of deep despair, so familiar to Daenerys.

Kinvara, or Nissa, because Daenerys no longer knows who she is, approaches the man and kisses him again on the lips to reassure him. "He won't survive anyway," she whispers, "you know there's no other way. Do it fast, he's cold."

Daenerys covers a muffled groan with his hand as she watches the man advance defeated toward his offspring, raising his sword right in the center of his small chest as his teary eyes look toward the dark ceiling. His cry ceases when the sword is thrust.

Kinvara turns to not see what has happened. A lonely tear falls down her cheek as her husband removes the sword from the tiny body now shattered, falling to the side with the arm.

"Then you were always a monster, Kinvara," Daenerys mutters among drowned sobs.
"It wasn't her," Brynden explains, "It's the raven's prophecy."

Daenerys wants to ask him what does he mean when Kinvara's steps distract her again towards the image of Azor Ahai and Nissa Nissa. Two parents who have just committed a crime against their own child.

"I don't understand," Kinvara says, not looking at her brutalised baby but at the sword stained with her blood. "It had to work, it had to light up!"

Azor rises from his miserable state, his face transformed into a gesture of pure hatred and perturbation. He also looks at the sword to finish understanding that it didn't happen whatever had to happen.

Kinvara puts a hand in her belly when she realised the mistake and horror they have committed. She bends over to cover the child's body; such a blunt image of their last hope faded away.

Azor hovers over her dwarfed figure, and she is startled although she understands what will happen as if she saw it in his eyes and not in the sword that he squeezes in his grip. Breathing deeply, she turns to him, still kneeling on the floor, and opens the robe that covers her body, to expose her bare chest.

"Just remember that I am with you until the end," Kinvara tells him, while Azhor raises his sword and directs it to her chest. It is an impulsive movement, not thought enough because even he is surprised when the sword lights up coming out of Nissa Nissa's chest.

"He never told anyone what happened in there," Brynden continues to narrate when Daenerys walks away from the disturbing image. "He let the stories mention them but never the child. Anyway, it was normal that at that time, parents would save their children by ending their suffering."

"I don't understand," Daenerys complain, "Why did they want to sacrifice the child?"

"Raven made her believe in the prophecy of the great sacrifice, which is necessary to end the darkness of the world. The rest of the story you already know, but this was the point where R'hllor lost control of Raven. Manipulating the truth as he pleased, he forced men against each other. Family against family. He was creating chaos out of amusement."

"Kinvara became R'hllor's first flame, after that. The guilt of having been manipulated led her to accept the punishment of living without finding her eternal rest. Not until now."

Daenerys watches as R'hllor, now wearing Quaithe's mask, revives Nissa Nissa, who became Kinvara.

VII: A Brother I Loved, A Brother I Hated, A Woman I Desired

They meet again in the North, this time on the Wall. Brynden lets out a breath of exhaustion as if he wasn't very happy to visit this time. Daenerys is again who follows his footsteps.

"It is obvious that R'hllor could not allow Raven to continue creating chaos to feed his amusement. He was secluded on the other side of the Wall," Brynden seems more defeated as they go on, "He was not supposed to cross it anymore."
Daenerys knows something about that part of the story thanks to the information provided in the Red Temple. Like Brandon the builder, Jon's existence is a product of an agreement between R'hllor and Raven to keep their magic in balance. As long as there was a guardian of the Realm of Men, this would be safe. So that threat out of ice or fire.

*Maybe I asked too much of someone condemned to ensure the good,* she says herself as they appear walking on the top of the Wall.

"What do you know about me?" Brynden asks.

Both stop their path.

"What?"

"What story have you heard about me?"

Suddenly, she realises that is something related to his past what they are about to see. Daenerys does not believe that he cares about what she thinks of him but that, just like her on other occasions, there was some insecurity in oneself when one had to revise their own past.

"Bastard son of Aegon IV. Knight of the Seven Kingdoms. Master of Whispers and Hand of the King of Two Kings. Targaryen loyalist during the Blackfyre rebellion. Kinslayer. Your story is impressive," for her it is a list Long stories, not just one.

"Lord Commander of the Night's Watch," he turns around and goes on his way. "I have lived as many lives as I have been allowed, and none of them seemed sufficient at the moment of truth."

Bloodraven of this time is older than who she has at his side. He is being selected as Lord Commander. Daenerys also recognises there, the young man in his Master's suit, like his great-uncle Aemon. Jon had told her about him.

"I admired Aemon. Not only because of his intelligence but because he was a good man, he would have been a great king. He was what the kingdoms needed but not what they deserved. I learned to love him like a brother," his gaze darkens. "And then, I learned to hate him like an enemy."

Daenerys does not understand until the image of Bryden appears encountering a beautiful woman with blond hair, in the distance of the haunted forest.

"Did you bring company?" she told him playfully, watching Aemon behind him. She does not know how they ended up in an aloof cabin in the deepness of the haunted forest.

"I promise you, he will only observe," Brynden replied in the same tone.

It didn't happen that way. Soon Aemon understood why his Lord Commander was willing to leave everything for that woman, and not just for her physical attractiveness. Routine visits became a getaway for young Aemon, who had infatuated with Shiera Seastar without understanding that even if she received him in her bed, she was still as free as the day she was born.

"I always knew she didn't belong to me as I would have liked," Brynden next to Daenerys confesses. "I accepted that condition even if it hurt. Aemon was young and Shiera Seastar took advantage of his innocence. Even the wisest of men can succumb to the desire for the unknown."

Daenerys continues to listen and observing.

"Shiera announced us that winter that a child was coming. I knew from the first moment that it
could not be mine, we had been together almost a lifetime and it was too late for something like this to happen to us,” while Bloodraven explained, Daenerys keeps watching the array of images crossing her view. "I told Aemon that it was his because I knew that would make him happy, although there was no certainty that it was. And because he wanted it ..." he pauses to contemplate his past with pain, "I decided to step aside and allow him for a while to believe Shiera belonged to him."

"Some time passed and I heard that the child was born. A boy. Aemon wanted to leave the Night's Watch to marry Shiera and that is when I had to intervene to make him understand that that would never be possible. He accused me of being a faker, trying to manipulate him to take him away from Shiera. He was sure she had chosen him. But Shiera was Shiera. I had to approach her to convince her to tell him the truth to prevent Aemon from doing something he will always regret."

"I went and what I found-" Brynden stops, stunned. "Shiera had been manipulated by the Raven's whispers that convinced her that her son would be the sire of a race of vile beings that would consume the world in a new long night."

Inside the cabin, they observe that Shiera walks nervously from side to side with a dagger in her hand. The boy cries like Kinvara's son on the cold ground of the fortress. Daenerys fears the worst coming again.

"Bryden, help me with this, please. You know I've never been wrong, trust me," Shiera begs as she approaches to hug him. "We can do this together. I promise you that when it's done, I'll be yours. Only yours. Look at me. We can do this together. Be with me."

"I didn't want to do it, I couldn't," the Brynden by her side says, "I've done terrible things in my life but that child was from Aemon... or maybe he was mine. It was those doubts that led me to make a serious mistake."

"I love you," the past Brynden confessed in pain, bringing his face closer and clashing his lips with hers in a kiss that is enough for her to give in and for the first time in weeks, feeling some peace. Daenerys' heart stops because she understands her.

And she knows what will happen.

When Brynden sinks the knife, not in the child but in Shiera, it is enough for Daenerys.

Walking outside the cabin disgusted, Daenerys puts as much distance as possible from what she just witnessed.

The same history. A desperate woman, a man with a terrible task and a child. It was the same damn story. And many years later, it would be repeated with Daenerys and Jon. Everything to feed the joy of a being who didn't even understand them.

Bloodraven from the past takes Shiera's body as far as possible, to the point that no one sees him again, and only cries are heard from the child.

"A wildling woman found the child malnourished and hypothermic sometime later," Brynden explains. "Aemon returned only a few days later but found nothing but a void and absence that he would have to accept forever."

"You killed her!" Daenerys yells at him, "She loved you, she trusted and you killed her."

He does not bother to defend himself.
When she thinks things would stay there, they appear in front of the past Bloodraven buried under the snow. A small figure approaches to inspect the body.

A child of the forest.

Two.

Three.

They pick it up and take it away.

"What did they do to you?"

"What I deserved," he replies sadly.

Daenerys observes that the children take the body to the ice castle.

"You were dead," she concludes, although it sounded like a question.

"Almost."

One of the children approaches with a black dagger in his hand and Daenerys knows it is dragonglass.

"What are they going to do to you?"

Then the bluish body comes alive, but not really. Strange deformities start to appear all over him.

Daenerys lets out a choked groan when the figure stands up and tries to strangle one of the children.

The Night King.

They transformed him into the Night King.

"No, no, no," Daenerys says, "The Night King was an ancient being, he was in the Long Night--"

"Daenerys!" he screams for the first time in their time together, "Who convinced Nissa she has to kill the baby? Who convinced Shiera she has to kill her baby? There was no fucking Night King. He is another creation of Raven to play his game. To tell his story. First, he used a man and the second time--"

He let her think by herself the rest of that idea.

"You," she says, "He used you. A Targaryen."

**VIII: Crow's Eye**

They are now walking through the streets of King's Landing, some years after she started her new campaign in Essos. Peasants were fleeing from King's Landing at the discovering that Daenerys Targaryen was still alive, that's how she knows what time is.

In Red Keep, the council headed by Tyrion asks Bran to provide solutions to deal with it, but he does not flinch.
"Your Grace!" Tyrion yells to get his attention. "Are you listening to something we say?"

"She will return, no matter what," Bran replies in his monotonous voice. "But you and several here will not see her do it."

They remain speechless at the words of him, who when focuses his white eyes on Daenerys, smiles wickedly recognising her presence there.

The night of the attack of the Ironborn, the city burns again but she is no longer in the sky with Drogon. As Yara once pointed out, their advantage was that the city was almost empty when they arrived. Daenerys ignores Tyrion's escape to focus on how the Raven got caught.

Red Keep is docked by the Ironborn and Daenerys is frozen when she finds out who runs them.

The scribe of Sansa.

"He uses a glass eye. You have to be very close to notice it," Yara warned her and they were idiots to believe that the other man was Victarion. The same that accompanies him as a right-hand man.

"It can't be," she whispers as she follows. "All this time he was in Winterfell, receiving our information."

"Not only that," Bloodraven adds.

Then everything makes sense. The confusion with the letters. Her seal on Brienne's letter that was addressed to Sansa. A truth manipulated at the whim of that man.

The horror for Daenerys doesn't end even when Victarion shows up in front of Bran to kill him, and instead, they both smile at each other.

"Very well," Bran congratulates him, "I'm glad you got the message, Crow's Eye."

Victarion, or the scribe as she knew him, walks to what used to be Bran Stark.

"My men told me that in the east my opponent rises with more power," he says in a serious and worried voice, "I have served you just as you asked. I want my chaos to serve you better."

"Don't hurry," Raven warns him, "She won't be your opponent until you're worthy. Meanwhile, keep playing."

Victarion nods and heads to his men.

Raven begins to expand the roots of a tree around him, filling the room.

"I'm glad you see it with your own eyes, Daenerys Stormborn," he says as he disappears between the branches. "We will meet soon."

*Victarion was a lure*, she realises while trying to suppress the imperative need to burn everything.

**IX: The Last Story**

Daenerys swallows the lump in her throat at the view in front of her, Jon lying in the stone ground trying to clean her blood from his hands. He is crying desperately as he let his tears fall upon his hand and tries to remove the rests of her body. He sobs uncontrollably, cornering in the dark while
hiding his head between his legs.

Before she starts feeling the urge to approaching him to comfort him, Daenerys back up until she stumbles upon Brynden.

"Why here?" she asks, turning around. "I've been here before."

What she's trying to say is that she has already seen him in this state. Yes, she knows he regretted, that's the only reason she gave themselves a second opportunity, and now she's sure she won't walk that futile way again.

"Why I would need to see this?"

Brynden stares at her but does not answer instead he moves to sit in the stone bed where Jon will lie down soon and wait there for weeks until Tyrion comes to tell him he is a free man finally. He can go with his people, to his North where he will meet Val and fall in love with her.

"You have a choice," he speaks after a moment of silence. "You'll stay with him until he let you go."

"Until he let me go?" she questions, astonished. "He'll learn about my resurrection in two years or so."

Bloodraven shrugs.

"Wait," he says, before disappearing again.

Daenerys instantly regrets not asking him what he meant by having a choice. She sighs and just accepts, as always.

First Daenerys distance herself from his image, she can't see it anyway. His crying is annoying, and they limit his ability to think while waiting for time to retire. Nothing happens for days, in which Jon searches and looks for ways to take his own life. First, he bangs his head against the wall until the guards guided by a Grey Worm, tie him up so that he doesn't keep hurting himself.

His headache, she remembers.

Grey Worm mocks cruelly, tortures him with words that not even Daenerys can bear.

"How does it feel to be here while the worms eat her body away? The Queen is now one of the dead we battle. The woman you love is a corpse."

And it was true, and she partly did the same when showing him her body when she was resurrected. She wanted him to be physically aware of what he had done. Did you want to continue with your life? Do it, but first, be aware of where I was while you enjoyed the life that my death gave you.

Hate. It is pure hate. Grey Worm had nothing to lose or win, just hate in his heart. But Daenerys loved him. She cares about him still. The view impacts her.

Later, he seems to opt for starvation. Again, Grey Worm intervenes to force him to drink water.

Daenerys is not aware of the passage of time, as an advantage of the magic that moves her from place to place, from moment to moment. Everything feels like a very long dream. At some point, he is released. Tyrion comes, tells him about his supposed sentence on the Wall, and Jon asks if what
he did was right because he doesn't feel that way.

\textit{At least if you were sure of what you did, it would be easier to just hate you.}

In the blink of an eye, they are somewhere else. In a small tent, where Jon and Ghost barely fit, while she curls up near his head as he trembles in his sleep. It must be when he left the Wall to follow the freefolk.

After the torture of Grey Worm, the sad sound that comes out of Ghost at the sight of his owner is what moves her to tears. She tells herself that it is a human response, to the suffering of a loved one. Because she still cares about him, no matter how much dislike she still feels.

Daenerys gives in to the impulse and caresses his hair while he sleeps and murmurs small cries in his sleep. Ghost licks her hand in a movement and that takes her by surprise.

The wolf and she stare at each other in understanding; he can see her.

Over time, Tormund forces Jon to eat and leave the tent, although sleeping is what he does most. Daenerys watches everything from a distance, sometimes distracted by the impatience of having to wait so long.

"\textit{You'll be with him until he lets you go.}" How much more time that mean? She's not even sure how much has already passed.

Jon meets Val, and Daenerys can see his fixation for her from the start. But it is strange anyway, the way he looks at her sadly, more like herself contemplating those memories. There are moments that he even seems horrified to see her, but he can't help it.

Eventually, he finds out about her. He goes to Sansa, he returns North beyond the Wall and then leaves his new life to seclude himself in that cave. A part of her hurts because he couldn't see that she wouldn't return to harm him. She had multiple times to got him killed and she never could.

How did he stay so long without talking to anyone? She used to escape to be alone for weeks, but Jon did it for months. Only he and Ghost, who occasionally watched her as if asking if she was going to do something. Daenerys felt that the wolf was getting older and weaker, and that also grieved Jon.

Then, one day, he is sitting in front of one of the walls of the cave, when he suddenly lets out a scream so loud that they almost make her scream at her. It is an agonized cry, desperate and painful, he cries so much that she is sure he has hurt his throat. In fact, soon after he coughs and spits blood.

Jon starts sobbing. Daenerys does not understand what is happening. She wishes she could ask him what torments him so much, tell him to pick up his things and leave, that she won't return to haunt him.

This is how he lives until Arya, his little sister comes looking for him next to Ser Davos. How strange seems for her thinking that they were both dead already when Jon and Daenerys should be too.

Just like Tormund before them, they tried to take him out of his miserable situation.

Suddenly they are in Winterfell and then in Braavos, and then in Volantis, and finally Valyria. Jon never allows her to go.
From an external perspective, it is hard not to feel sorry for him. His attempts to find peace in the midst of the conflict in the world and with himself, the desire for normality that would never come. Suddenly, Daenerys doesn't feel so alone in that feeling; Wanting to move on while looking back. Although Jon seemed more infatuated with the past.

Daenerys had never realised how much he cared about Gerael. She never intended to generate that feeling in him, she didn't even think he could care. After all, both had moved on. Or so they believed. However, seeing him with a troubled face is bleak in a certain way, now that she knows how much it affected him.

*If I had known that his presence hurt him, I wouldn't have taken Gerael with me in that campaign,* she thinks.

So the moments go on, and she gets to listen to all his conversations, feeling so invasive that she wants to find a way to escape. It is like being a slave to his will.

"*Daenerys was meant to be Queen. Not the Mad King, Rhaegar, Viserys, the other Aegon or me. It was always her.*"

"I wish it hadn't cost that much."

She would've to laugh. *I'd wish it hasn't cost me that much.*

Nothing happens, neither when she pushes him away on their return to Valyria, nor in Great Keep when she tried to make him understand that his deed would always be between them and much less on his return to Westeros on the various opportunities she continued to drive him away. The immutable truth is that she also didn't let him go completely. She would never do it.

Then comes the day of the wedding that was not, the betrayal that was unveiled and the truth that she exposed to him in the worst way. Daenerys believes that she will finally be released at that moment, but neither does it happen. Although this time, she cannot follow him when Jon flies away from Winterfell.

"*Where he went, you can't follow him,*" Brynden's voice explains, reappearing in her back. "I hope it was enough for you to understand."

Daenerys shakes her head as tears run down her cheeks at the painful memory.

"What's the point of all this? Make me see that he loves me? I know he loves me, but it's not enough. Our love hurts. It hurts us."

Brynden looks at her with a curious expression but does not respond. In the blink of an eye, they are in a battle. No, it is not a battle. There are a formation of black armoured soldiers outside Winterfell, and in the opposite direction, the men of Yara Greyjoy and Gendry on top of a hill.

"What is happening?" Daenerys asks.

Jon flies over all of them and lands Barristal in front of the black armoured soldiers stationed in front of the Stark's fortress. The false Victarion appears among his soldiers to negotiate with Jon, offering Sansa's head for Barristal's. Jon refuses, and Daenerys is perplexed although the situation still is confused for her. Then, she contemplates that in the battlement of Winterfell, Sansa appears with the true Victarion, who first is there with her and on another moment, stands and cuts her throat in a fast, clean move.

When Sansa is executed, while Daenerys cannot finish joining the threads to understand what is
"Don't you feel satisfaction?" Brynden questions him.

Daenerys wants to tell him that she didn't want satisfaction but justice. But before he can do it, Barristal lets out an agonizing roar like the one she remembers hearing from Drogon. Turning around immediately to see Jon take Barristal to the sky, Daenerys watches just a red shadow over Westeros and then flames.

**X: Breaking the Wheel**

Back in the Ice Castle, Daenerys curls up in the circle of ice spikes while sobbing and feeling a large hole in her chest. Outside, she hears the hatchlings replication of Barristal's agonising cry somewhere in Westeros.

They know what is happening. She knows it too.

"How long? ... How long we left?"

Bloodraven lies on a rock and sighs.

"There's no time here, really," he points out, "you're going to have to go back and find out for yourself."

But she doesn't want to come back and face it. She does not want to accept the irreversible damage she has caused to someone she loves, just out of a desire to harm him. And now, how many have to pay the wrath of the dragon, again?

"My son says that humans and chaos are united forever," Quaithe's voice pulls her out of her thoughts, "He insists that if one places the same elements, one will always get the same result. And for a long time, he's been right. It's a violent circle that revolves like a wheel."

*Wheel.*

Breaking the wheel

Daenerys came looking for answers and she finally found them.

"It's your choice, Daenerys Stormborn," Quaithe never enters the circle, but walks out of it until she positions herself in front of Daenerys. "Choose to break the wheel and I assure you that everything is going to end. Or choose to roll with it, and give Raven the necessary motivation to never stop with his game."

Jon has chosen, and Daenerys does too.

Getting up and walking outside the Ice Castle where she has learned about stories and misfortunes that have been repeated for centuries, Daenerys promised herself she will break the wheel for good.
After Truth chapter, some of you questioned how would be possible for them to be together ever again. In my opinion, under normal circumstances, they should never ever getting back together (Taylor Swift voice sounds) but the point is that neither of them are regular people. My goal with this chapter in regards of Dany's feelings is to finally close her resentment against him because now she came to see the tragedy of their lives and the current state of Jon, in part boosted by herself.

At the realization of the circle of pain in which they are trapped (a metaphor of a wheel of events that Raven sets up from time to time), Daenerys decides to break the circle (wheel) and liberate herself from that burden. Even if it momentarily means to let him go.

She will definitely return to help him deal with what he's done though Jon will not regret what he's done in Westeros, because ultimately, it is what will help to establish a new order. (Historically, awful stuff had to happen for things to change, and this is GOT, we can't speak of Geneva convention).

In another take, making the Raven a perverse storyteller is just my way to address what D&D did lol. Mostly because, even if King Bran comes from GRRM, what annoys me the most if the justification for that in the show (stories unite people/who has the better story, etc).

Movies I took inspiration from, and I really recommend you.

- The Endless (2017) Dir. Aaron Moorhead, Justin Benson. [Raven plot]
- A Ghost Story (2017) Dir. David Lowery. [Daenerys watching Jon's life through those ten years and in general, is how she perceives what she's seeing]

I REPEAT, this is highly incorrect compared with the canonical source. I don't think that Shiera went North to stay with Bloodraven. Neither that Aemon had a child with her. And yes, the baby that was left abandoned became Craster. Yes, that makes Gilly and Little Sam dragonseeds, but it won't have any importance in this story.

I let you decide if Craster was Aemon or Bloodraven son, at the end of the day the White Walkers were all dragonseed too.

Again, here you got the outline that could explain better what you read:
https://archiveofourown.org/works/21613564/chapters/53152954

End Notes

Oh, god, I can't believe I actually post this.

Let me say some things from the get-go. This is my first fanfic. I had never been inspired to write fanfic till S8. Not just because I really felt bad for Daenerys' character being butchered, but because the message of the show attacked me, on a personal level. So this is me going against it.
So, sorry if this Jon is too much OOC for you. His character was reduced to be a plot device, living for other's will, and interpretations of him are multiple. This journey will not be easy for him.

In the case of Dany, well, do you remember that quote from GRRM saying he's not against a character being resurrected while he or she returns different? That's pretty much what I'm doing here. She's been traumatized in S8, and actually, someone had said on Twitter that resurrect her was actually worse because now she would've to live with all that pain again, and it's partially true!

Please do not rant in the comments if you don't like this depiction of the characters and the story, there's no use in it. You can just go and read one of the other stories.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!