Table for Two: Part 1

by tm_writes

Summary

Jaime Lannister is a famous chef who is headed North to tape 10 episodes of his show with the latest contestant to win a cooking competition- Bran Stark.

Sansa Stark owns the winery that supplies Bran's restaurant and has agreed to let Jaime stay with her for a week.

Both have been burned by their exes and have sworn off love but soon find themselves drawn to one another.

Can Jaime and Sansa find love, build a life and be that sickenly sweet happy ever after couple? Or will others conspire to keep them apart?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
Sansa was singing, loudly and decidedly off-key, as she drove her little truck over the gravel roads that connected her winery to her brother's farm and ranch. She'd just come from the best family meeting in a long time, and finally, at twenty-six, felt like everything in her life was going right.

She couldn't help but glance down at her left hand, one that did not have either an engagement ring or a wedding ring on it, and frown. It was the one area of her life that she wished was just a little bit more perfect. All her siblings, it seemed, were happy and settled. And she wasn't.

She shook that negative thought off as she reached over to pet Tank, the little brindle French bulldog that went everywhere with her. His tongue was hanging out and his big bat ears flapping as he poked his big head out the window, looking as if he didn't have a care in the world. She always got a kick out of how much he enjoyed life. When he'd been at Robb's, he'd chased the chickens and horses and then rolled in some dirt, before he'd finally passed out on the kitchen floor, exhausted by his adventures.

As Sansa drove over the road as familiar to her as her own hands, she let her mind drift back to the meeting she'd just come from. She could hardly believe that she and her siblings were finally in the position they were. Seven years ago, their parents had been killed by a drunk driver. It had been tragic and devastating to the Stark family, but through love, grit and determination, they had pulled through. And now they were on the cusp of something significant; something monumental.

Robb, the eldest, had buckled down to take over the family ranch that had been in the Stark family for generations when Catelyn and Ned had died. He'd married Sansa's best friend Jeyne a couple of years ago, and at almost twenty-nine was on child number two, (both boys) and was a successful rancher who produced some of the best beef, chicken and pork in all of Westeros.

Her cousin, Jon, had married his college sweetheart, Val, and they ran the large fruit and vegetable farm on the land adjacent to Robb's ranch. It had been left to Jon by his mother, Lyanna, years ago when she died, and Ned Stark had always kept the land for Jon. After Jon had graduated from college, he'd come home and started developing the farm, and there were now rows of greenhouses, as well as acres of fruit trees and gardens dedicated to growing some of the best produce in the North.

Jon and Val had just had their first baby, a little girl, and Sansa had major baby fever holding her this afternoon. She was an absolute doll, and Sansa couldn't wait to have her own family. Soon. Her biological clock was ticking!

Sansa's sister Arya, wild and nomadic, had dragged home a strapping man named Gendry a year ago and plunked herself down on Jon's property claiming she now saw the benefits of organic farming and wanted to be part of the family business. Jon, having always had a soft spot with her, helped her and Gendry cultivate a little piece of land for themselves, where they had built a tiny two-bedroom cabin. They had gotten married this past summer, Arya barefoot and in a white sundress, beautiful and totally in love. Today, two months after their wedding, she had announced she was pregnant. Sansa was happy for her, but the tiny sliver of jealousy that had wormed its way into Sansa's heart wouldn't leave. She couldn't believe that Arya was married, let alone pregnant, before her.

Sansa had wanted to be a wife and mother her entire life, but it just wasn't working out for her. She
sighed and then thought about her business. If her personal life wasn't quite up to snuff, her professional one was. Their family meeting today had been all about their brother Bran.

Bran, along with his partner Jojen, had opened a farm-to-table restaurant in Wintertown two years ago. The Stark's provided all the food, and it was a moderate success. All that was about to change now that Bran had won a prestigious television cooking competition down in King's Landing.

First came the prize money of almost half a million dollars that he was going to put directly into their businesses. Then came the real prize; Jaime Lannister, a famous chef and restaurateur, was set to come and tape ten episodes of his popular cooking show at Bran's restaurant, which meant that finally, after four years of hard work, Sansa would have exposure to the Lannister's and their wealth and connections to promote her wine.

That was Sansa's baby. The winery that she had fought tooth and nail to open up. She'd heard all the critics when she had started; she was too far North, no one would drink fruit wines, and no one would buy into such a concept. Winemaking had primarily been left to the southern regions, and that was fine for those who used grapes. But Sansa had a vision, and her wine was fruit-based; strawberry, rhubarb, blueberry, bumbleberry, and apple. She was experimenting with even more varieties and had sunk her inheritance into building her business on the land on the opposite side of Robb's vast ranch. Jon and Arya provided her with the produce, she made the wine, and she had built her business into a success.

She'd turned all the doubters into believers within the first two years, and now her wine was available in stores across the North and of course, at Bran's restaurant. But if she genuinely wanted to make her mark, she needed to convince the snobs in the south that her wine was just as good as theirs. And that's where Jaime Lannister came in. He'd be spending a month in the North, taping his show and learning all about their massive family operation. Bran had said he'd seemed interested in the entire production and how they controlled all their ingredients; from the first seed to the harvest and then the presentation at Bran's restaurant for eating.

The Stark's all believed in their way of life; people should know where their food came from, know that it wasn't laced with hormones or chemicals and know that it was safe and delicious. It had taken years, but they were finally able to say they were successful and happy and the cherry on top was Jaime Lannister coming here, expanding their platform to even more people.

Sansa couldn't wait- it was just the professional exposure they needed. The only fly in the ointment was her current boyfriend. Harry Harding. Sansa had met him in university and had fallen head over heels in love with him. He was charming, handsome and doted on her at first. Lately, in the past few years, their relationship had been… different. Where Sansa worked her butt off at her winery, Harry, who was in finance, found more and more excuses to not go into work, and not pull his own weight. When they'd met, Sansa had explained her goal and her vision, and he'd been more than supportive, but lately, he complained bitterly about the time she spent at the winery and how she was ignoring him.

Sansa was more than frustrated with him. Right now, it was a crucial time for her family, and while she knew that everyone was doing alright financially, this could give them some real financial freedom. She didn't have time to coddle Harry - to stroke his ego. In fact, in her less charitable moments, she thought he should be doing that for her. Hell, she'd even offered him a position at the winery as its chief financial offer, but he'd turned it down.

Even more worrying was the fact that they hadn't been intimate in weeks. Maybe even months if she thought about it. They were rarely home at the same time, and even though the winery was only fifteen minutes from town, Harry complained bitterly about living in the sticks. Still, they'd
been together for four years, and Sansa wasn't ready to give up on him. She told herself if she could secure a contract with the Lannisters to distribute her wine in their vast network of restaurants in the south, she could step back from her insane duties and focus on Harry just a bit more.

More than even the winery, and being a successful businesswoman, Sansa wanted a husband and a family. She wanted what her parents and her siblings had, and each day, she felt it slipping away from her. She crested the final hill and felt a wave of happiness come over her when she saw the building that was the main headquarters for the winery, along with her farmhouse in the distance. It was a classic house; far too large for a woman with no husband and no children, but she'd fallen in love with it the moment she’d seen it.

Two stories with a huge wrap around porch, and a large finished basement, Sansa had dreamed about filling her home with children. She thought four was a good number, but sometimes she wished for even more. So far, that hadn't happened.

Tank spotted the house, and his little stub of a tail started to wag. Sansa couldn't help but grin at him. He was her most loyal companion and came everywhere with her.

"Almost home baby," she crooned to him, and he panted louder. Five minutes later, she pulled up in front of her house, and Tank hopped out and went to do his business. Hoping that Harry had at least taken something out for dinner, Sansa walked into the house and at first didn't register the sounds coming from within.

When she did, she thought someone must be hurt; the moaning was so loud and painful sounding. Then a small ball of dread curled in her stomach as she raced up the stair and opened the door to the master bedroom. She could hardly believe her eyes, seeing Harry balls deep inside a woman that wasn't her. In their bedroom. In their bed! She must have let out some sound because his head whipped around, and a look of guilt crossed his face.

"Sansa," he started to say, pulling out of the woman on the bed, as she spun and fled down the stairs. She pulled out her phone and dialled Robb, barely able to choke out what had just happened.

"Stay there, San. We're coming over." His tone brooked no argument, and she sat on the front porch, arms wrapped around herself.

Within moments Harry was there, having hastily thrown on a pair of jeans, with no shirt. She thought she might be sick, having to look at him.

"Sansa," he started to say, and she shook her head.

"Get your shit and get your slut and get the f out of my house, Harry," Sansa said, voice quivering in rage. For once she was so grateful for the paperwork Robb had forced them both to sign before Harry had moved in, stating that everything belonged to Sansa. He might have broken her heart but at least he couldn’t ruin her financially.

"San come on. Listen to me, it was one mistake," Harry tried pleading, and her blue eyes turned murderous.

"Get. Out."

When he didn't move, she narrowed her eyes. "Robb and Jon are on their way over Harry. Are you sure you want to be here when they get here?"

Harry let out a frustrated huff. "You can't fucking kick me out of my own house, Sansa. I know
you're an ice queen, but that's cold, even for you."

Sansa let out a bitter laugh. "I'm an ice queen? That's rich, coming from you."

Harry sneered at you. "Jesus, San. We never have sex. You're always so busy with your family and the winery. And even when we do, you're not into it. It's not good."

Sansa's face paled. She'd only ever been with one man, and that was Harry. She didn't know any fancy tips or tricks to keep a man's interest. She had thought that if you loved someone, it was enough. Apparently not.

"Sorry, I'm not some hoe-bag slut, Harry. You're the only man I've ever been with," she choked out, beyond humiliated.

At that moment, Jon and Robb roared into the driveway and Sansa had never been more grateful to see them.

"Get your shit and get out, Harry," was all Robb said, Jon coming and wrapping Sansa in his arms. Harry glared at the both but turned and disappeared into the house. Thirty minutes later, he reappeared, with two suitcases and his side piece. Sansa recognized her; she worked at one of the banks in Wintertown. Bailey something. Sansa turned her head into Jon's shoulder.

Harry threw his bags into his car and stormed back over. "This isn't over San. We've been together for four years. You can't just throw away our life because I made a mistake."

Sansa shook, and Jon growled. "Leave her alone, Harry. If you come near her, we'll make your life hell."

Harry shot one last glance at Sansa and then went back to his car, squealing and speeding down the driveway. When he was gone, Sansa reassured her brother and her cousin she was fine and eventually sent them on their way. She wasn't fine, but she didn't need them around to have a meltdown. She went back inside her house, so sick at the thought that he'd been in their bed with another woman and curled up in one of the guest beds. Here she was, on the cusp of the most significant business success of her life, and an utter failure in her personal one.

Tank hopped up onto the bed beside her, his tongue licking away the tears, as she sobbed into his little body and wished for a good man that would love her and give her the family she wanted. Eventually, exhaustion claimed her, and she willingly gave herself over to it, berating herself for being a complete fool when it came to men.

The next week was brutal. Sansa spent two days getting rid of everything that either belonged to Harry or reminded her of him. She ordered her entire bed to be taken to the local landfill by Robb and Jon and went to town to pick a new one out. There they dropped off the rest of Harry's belongings at the hotel he was staying at. He tried to talk with her, but she remained in the truck, unwilling to even look at him.

When she finally had his stuff out of her house, she spent the next few days madly cleaning, until Arya, Jeyne and Val showed up on her doorstep with babies, sympathetic ears and dinner. Finally allowing herself the comfort of her family, Sansa cuddled her new niece, laughed with her two rambunctious nephews and drank too much wine and railed against the horrid Harry Harding. And men. All men. Men were assholes. Men were bastards. She was on a self-imposed man-sabbatical. Sansa thanked the gods that most of her employees were women, and her one chief winemaker was well into his sixties and spoke in one-worded answers.
The next morning, Sunday, Bran sent her a text, reminding her that Jaime Lannister was coming into town on Monday, and as much as he hated to be ‘that guy’ they needed her on her A-game for the time he was here.

She texted Bran back that she would be on her game and for him not to worry. Then she pushed all thoughts of the Lannisters from her mind and went about her day, spending time in the winery, watching as her staff led group after group through tours, happy to see that her business hadn't suffered even though her personal life was a mess.

Late Sunday evening, an urgent group text came over her phone.

Robb: Sorry guys- both boys are sick. With the flu. I know we said we'd put Jaime up here, but we have no space.

Arya: Well, we only have the one spare room, and I'm not sure he'd be happy out here- no Wi-Fi, no TV, no amenities.

Jon: Shit. Val's sister and brother-in-law, and their three kids are here for the next two weeks.

Robb: San? I know it's a lot to ask, but even for a week? Just until the boys are better?

No, no, no, no, NO! Sansa's brain screamed. They cannot expect her to move a MAN into her house for a freaking week!!!!

Bran: San, we need this. I know Harry did a number on you. And he's a bastard. But we're desperate. Jojen and I don't have space, and not everyone is comfortable living with a gay couple.

Sansa banged her head against her kitchen counter. No, no, no, no, no.

But she knew she would relent. This was the opportunity of a lifetime, and she had the room. She laughed bitterly. She had more than enough room. She had room for days because she had no husband, no boyfriend, no children and no hope of changing that.

She picked up her phone.

Sansa: Fine. One week. Then he's out. And he does his own laundry.

Her family's relief was evident. That night Sansa settled into her new, king-sized bed with a glass of her bumbleberry wine, Tank and her laptop. She knew who Jaime Lannister was, of course. She'd watched the show that Bran had been on and caught his show on occasion. She wasn't the best cook, though, so she tended towards gossipy reality TV rather than cooking shows. But she didn't really know anything about Jaime Lannister. She didn’t know personal details and she only had a vague notion of what he looked like.

She googled him and was flooded with a plethora of images.

Holy shit, he's hot, was Sansa’s first thought, before she scowled at her traitorous brain. Man-sabbatical, she lectured it sternly.

She clicked through a few articles. He was 46, divorced for six years and had three children. The oldest, Joffrey, was 24, followed by Myrcella at 22 and Tommen at 20.

Wow must have had them young, Sansa thought, as she clicked on pictures of them at different events.
His divorce had been a spectacle; costly, public and nasty. He'd caught his wife, Cersei, in bed with another man and had literally kicked them naked out of his house. The paparazzi had a field day with that image. Sansa felt a twinge of sympathy for what he'd been through—after all, she knew exactly what that felt like, except at least she didn't have the press breathing down her neck. Since they'd been young when they'd married, she'd gone after him for half his wealth. Of course, Jaime's father, Tywin, had sicked his lawyers on her, but still, the papers indicated that Cersei Lannister had taken a chunk out of Jaime.

In the past six years, he had become known as a playboy; always single and always with a different beautiful woman on his arm at each of his events. He seemed like a dedicated father and was committed to his restaurants, his shows and his career. She felt the ice around her heart start to melt just a tiny bit before she shook her head.

He was too good looking and too successful, and Sansa thanked the gods she'd sworn off men. She'd be polite, courteous and stun him with her business plan, nothing more. Jaime Lannister could catapult their businesses into the next level, but that was all. Sansa was done with men who looked too good to be true. She'd had her heartbroken, and she couldn't afford to let someone into it again.

She shut down her laptop, finished her wine, and turned off her lamp. Tank's small body curled into hers, and she gave him a soft kiss. He was all the man she needed in her life, and if her brain dreamed of Jaime and his bright green eyes, she wouldn't even acknowledge that. Jaime Lannister was here for one reason only; to help the Stark's become as successful as possible. Anything else was out of the question.
Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Jaime's POV

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jaime looked down and debated between the two sweaters currently in his hand. One was a lovely deep blue cashmere one, the other a warm woollen one. Shrugging philosophically, he folded them both and added them to the growing pile of clothing he was planning on taking North with him. He hadn't admitted it to anyone, but he was secretly looking forward to getting out of King's Landing for the next month. Lately, his celebrity status, coupled with his father's relentless desire to see him remarried, were driving Jaime crazy.

He understood entirely that so much of his success was dependant on his fame, and he was grateful every day for the path his name, talent and good looks had allowed him to tread. But the past few years, since his divorce had been finalized and his children grown, he'd felt lonely and isolated.

He'd taken the time since finding Cersei sleeping with his friend Bronn, to become close to his father and brother again. For so many years he'd been focused only on his career and his family; not that it had done any good. He'd known almost from the moment he'd married Cersei that it had been a mistake. He'd had no one to blame but himself; even his father had warned him that Cersei Marbrand wasn't what he'd thought. He hadn't listened, and within the first few years, he'd suspected that she'd been cheating on him. Pride and the announcement of her first pregnancy had kept him loyal to her, and to trying to make their marriage work. Joff had barely been a year old before she'd announced her second pregnancy, and then a third. By that time, Jaime felt well and truly trapped, a man that loved his children but not his wife.

He was almost sure there had been a few years when she'd been loyal to him, but by the time Joff was twelve, Jaime was more than confident she was sleeping around again.

Just as he was considering leaving her, his career had finally taken off. He'd been ‘discovered’ as they say, by the new Food Network channel, and his name and family connections had catapulted him into becoming their first real star on the Network.

For years Jaime had been content to be the head chef at the Lannister's premier five-star restaurant in King's Landing, along with helping his father develop other restaurants throughout Westeros. He'd been torn between staying with his cheating wife and allowing the money and prestige of being a star placate him and taking a stand and leaving her and blowing up his career. There were times he was still ashamed he'd chosen money and fame over staying true to himself and leaving her.

The final straw with Cersei had been when he'd caught her naked in bed with his best friend. He was done, and even to this day, he regretted nothing about how he'd handled that situation. It had long been over between them, but he was bitter that he'd spent nearly twenty years of his life married to a woman that didn't love him. Even worse, he barely spoke to his eldest son- Cersei had poisoned Joffrey against Jaime when he'd been a teenager. He was a mean spirited and nasty man,
and Jaime wanted nothing to do with Joff. Thankfully, his daughter and second son were lovely people, and Jaime treasured them and the relationship he had with them.

Jaime had to admit as he packed his bags, he was intrigued by the Stark's. Bran Stark had been a breath of fresh air when he'd been on the cooking show, passionate about their farm-to-table approach and devoted to his family. He spoke fondly about his brother and cousin and their farm and ranch. He had practically fallen over himself with pride when he spoke of his sister who had gone against all doubters and developed her winery in the North. Jaime had heard of her winery, although the snobs in the south wanted nothing to do with it. But Jaime was interested, and he had an adventurous palate, which meant he was eager to see the whole operation, including the winery. He had no idea what it might be like to raise your own food that you would then serve to customers, and it excited him as nothing had lately. It was so different from anything that was being done in the south.

Jaime's phone rang, and he glanced down to see his father's name on the screen.

"Hello," Jaime said pleasantly. Since his divorce, he'd become especially close with Tywin. His father was still a severe and intimidating man, but he'd opened himself up to Jaime when he'd been reeling from the divorce, and a solid friendship between the two men had developed.

"When do you leave?" Tywin's distinctive deep voice came over the line.

Jaime glanced at his watch. "The car will be here in an hour."

"Are you sure about this?"

Tywin had never been North, and Jaime had to smile. He was a grown man with his own grown children, and still, Tywin would worry in his own way.

"I am. It's an interesting concept, and Bran earned it," Jaime responded, a grin on his handsome face. "Perhaps you should come and visit."

Tywin grunted at that thought. Jaime knew he took an active role in their vast network of restaurants in King's Landing and Lannisport, but even Tywin could take a short vacation.

"Stay in touch, son." Then Tywin was gone, and Jaime shook his head at how his father expressed his love and concern.

Jaime finished packing and walked through his apartment. He'd willingly given Cersei the mansion he'd kicked her naked and screaming out of in the divorce and moved into a new place the very next day. Myrcella was coming by to stay here for the month he was gone, and he made sure to leave all the instructions for her stay on the main table. Then his phone buzzed again, and his car service was here. Jaime took one last look around his home, noting not for the first time how even though he'd lived here for five years, it remained largely as it had been when he'd moved in. He'd added few personal touches but it looked almost like a showroom and not a home. Shrugging, he grabbed his bags, locked his doors and smiled at the adventure that awaited him, happy to put King's Landing behind him for a time.

Four hours later, Jaime touched down in Wintertown and exited the plane to grab his luggage. He checked his phone and saw a message from Bran.

Bran: See you when you land, Jaime.
Jaime scanned the small crowd that had gathered to await the flight and saw a stocky looking man, wearing Wrangler jeans, cowboy boots, a cowboy hat and a plaid shirt.

"Holy shit," Jaime whispered to himself, grinning at the picture he made. A real cowboy! Standing next to the cowboy was the man who'd won the cooking competition; Bran Stark. He was a thin man, impeccably dressed with dark-rimmed glasses on his pale face. Bran spotted him and let out a small wave, which Jaime returned, walking up to him and shaking his hand.

"Bran, good to see you."

Bran gave him a soft smile. "Jaime, I hope your flight was good."

"It was. And so far, no press."

Robb let out a snort. "Nope. Not up here."

Robb held out his hand, and Jaime shook it, feeling the rough callouses on Robb's hands that clearly indicated he worked with them. Jaime's were dotted with nicks, scars and burns- a true testament to his profession. Robb eyed him critically, taking in his expensive pants, designer sweater and soft leather shoes. Jaime thought he heard the man mutter something that sounded suspiciously like good thing you're staying with Sansa before all three men turned towards the luggage carousel that had just started moving.

Jaime spotted his luggage immediately, as it was an unmistakable famous designer brand, and he and Robb picked up his bags and walked out of the airport to Robb's truck.

Jaime's eyebrows arched. It wasn't old or rusted, but it was covered in mud and was used for farm work. Robb chucked Jaime's expensive luggage in the box and gestured to the passenger door as Bran climbed in the back.

Kicking aside a discarded coffee cup, the trepidation in Jaime grew, wondering exactly what he'd gotten himself into. Loud country music came over the speakers before Robb turn the dial so they could speak.

"Where to first, Bran Muffin?" Robb asked, and Jaime turned and saw Bran grimace at the use of his hated nickname.

Then Bran gave Jaime a look. "I thought it might be nice for you to see the ranch and farm before we take you to Sansa's."

"Sansa's? I thought I was staying at the ranch?" Jaime said, confusion on his handsome face.

Bran shook his head, and Robb piped up. "Two kids with the flu. It's coming out both ends. Trust me; you don't want to be anywhere near the inside of my house right now."

Jaime paled and looked at Bran, who gave him an apologetic look. "Sansa's house is beautiful, and the winery is right there. She's agreed you can be there for a week, although you have to do your own laundry."

Jaime laughed and nodded. He could do that.

"Sounds good." Jaime settled in to watch as Robb navigated the roads out of Wintertown and out to the ranch.

"When do I get to see your restaurant, Bran?" Jaime asked as the houses got further and further
apart.

"Tomorrow I was thinking. I'll see if Sansa can bring you in," Bran said. Then he frowned. "Or perhaps we can work out you having a car. We'll see what we can do."

Jaime nodded and let himself relax. It was nice not to have anything else to do but observe for the first few days. His camera crew and producer would be up early next week with the plan to tape the ten episodes over two weeks. Jaime had wanted some time to develop his ideas of what he wanted to tape. Part of the reason he was excited to be here was to see how these Stark's managed their food supply. It was almost a foreign concept to Jaime, even though he'd been a chef for close to twenty-five years.

Soon enough, they were turning down a series of dirt roads, until they crested a hill and Jaime's breath caught. As far as he could see were fields filled with cattle. There were endless rolling hills with mountains in the background. It was one of the most beautiful sights Jaime had ever seen.

"Gorgeous isn't it," Robb said, grinning at him.

Jaime just nodded. "It is."

"Do you ride?"

"Ride?"

Robb smirked. "A horse, city boy."

Jaime gave him a wry grin. "I have, but not for a while. Still, I'd love to do it again."

Robb nodded and said nothing more, letting the pride in his land speak for itself. Jaime caught sight of the huge log house in the distance and Robb smiled. "It's the Stark family homestead. Been in Stark hands for a hundred years."

As they got closer, Jaime understood Robb's pride in the house. It was a stunning log and stone home, one of the most impressive homes Jaime had ever seen. Of course, his family also owned Casterly Rock, so Jaime was used to nice homes.

Off in the distance, Jaime saw rows of greenhouses, and another log house, and asked if that was the farm.

"Yes, that's where Jon and Val live."

Given that it was September, Jaime could see that some of the fields had already been harvested. Jaime had to admit that it was a stunning operation to see, and both Bran and Robb grinned. As they got closer to the ranch itself, the typical ranch buildings and implements were there. When they finally pulled up to the main house, Jaime saw a trio of ranch dogs race out to greet Robb, who had slammed the truck into park and hopped out, rubbing his hands through the border collies fur as they wiggled under his hands.

A pretty dark-haired woman emerged on the porch, making her way down to them. She pressed a kiss to Robb's lips and then smiled at Jaime.

"I'd offer to shake your hand, but I can't promise I won't be contaminated," she said wryly.

"How are the boys?" Robb asked, concern evident in his voice.
Jeyne gave a shake of her head. "Crawling the walls, now. I think the worst is passed, but we'll see." She turned back to Jaime. "Trust me; you'll have a quieter stay at Sansa's place." It was almost word for word what her husband had previously said, and Jaime got the feeling that Robb and Jeyne loved each other. A lot. He felt that familiar pang when he saw other married couples that worked when his marriage had failed so spectacularly. He'd always wanted to be a husband and father, but it just hadn't worked out for him.

Jaime nodded at her and Jeyne asked if Robb was going to give him a tour of the ranch. Jaime looked around eagerly.

Robb gave him a critical look.

"Are you sure are wanting to with those shoes, city boy?"

Jaime grimaced and looked down at his soft loafers, but then nodded. He had a feeling that if he showed any weakness, Robb would never let him live it down. And besides, he could always buy another pair.

Bran and Robb gave him a tour, showing him where the chickens were housed, along with the huge pens of pigs and some of the cattle they had in from the fields.

"And you harvest all these animals yourselves?" Jaime asked, incredulous.

Robb nodded, launching into an explanation of the whole operation, including the dairy cows and the chickens for eggs, versus the animals they raised for auction and butchering.

"Fascinating," Jaime said, completely intrigued and captivated. He snapped a few pictures, enjoying the tour immensely. They spent hours at the ranch, and even though Robb was a true country boy, he was incredibly knowledgeable about his ranch, and the pride in his land and animals was obvious. They spent so much time at the ranch, that when they finally came back to Robb's truck, they decided to forgo a tour of the farm and head straight over to Sansa's.

"Are you sure she is ok with this?" Jaime asked, worried that she might be uncomfortable with a strange man essentially moving in with her.

"We have guns. And hundreds of acres where we can bury your body where no one can find you," Robb said in a monotone voice.

Jaime let out a nervous laugh and shot a glance to Bran, but even he appeared stoic and serious.

After a few tense minutes, Robb barked out a laugh and clapped Jaime on the back. "Nah, you seem ok, and Sansa agreed." He paused and then added, "She just had a bad breakup, and honestly, a part of me likes the idea of someone else being around just in case her asshole ex comes sniffing around."

Jaime nodded, slightly relieved and oddly nervous. He wondered what this Sansa was like. Bran was quite refined, but Robb was rough around the edges. He imagined some hearty, sturdy dark-haired woman, a typical farm girl as a sister to these two.

They crested the little hill, and Sansa's winery and white farmhouse came into view, and Jaime felt something odd settle in his chest. It was unlike anything he'd ever felt; almost like he was coming home. Shaking himself at that fanciful thought, he looked at the operation critically, noting where she had placed the winery and the beautiful classic farmhouse. He saw a woman standing on the porch, and what looked like a dark little potato shoot across the yard, but both dog and woman were too far away to make out any features.
As they came closer, he felt his heart start to race as they drove up to the farmhouse, and the most stunningly beautiful woman he'd ever seen stood on the porch, arms crossed over her chest watching them approach. She was tall and willowy, elegant and gorgeous, her long red hair a riot of curls that fell like a waterfall down her back. Her skin was a perfect porcelain colour, and Jaime saw that she had brilliant blue eyes.

"That's Sansa and Tank," Bran said quietly, and Jaime looked down to see a strange-looking dog at her feet. "He's a French Bulldog," Bran said by way of explanation. Then his brow creased. "You're not allergic, are you?"

Jaime shook his head; his voice had left him. "No," he croaked and then coughed. Robb gave him an odd look and then smirked.

"She's always had that effect on men. And she doesn't even get how beautiful she is."

Jaime's jaw dropped. How on earth could she not know?

Then Robb grimaced. "Fucker cheated on her in their bed. Asshole." Then he gave Jaime a wicked grin. "Good thing she'd on a man-sabbatical."

What the fuck was a man-sabbatical? Jaime thought. Before he could ask, they had parked, and both Stark brothers had jumped out of the truck.

"San," they called, and she grinned. If Jaime thought she was beautiful before, she practically stopped him in his tracks when she smiled at her brothers. Soon enough, all three Stark's turned, and Bran was calling his name.

Jaime realized his hand was damp, and he wiped it on his pants before he offered it.

"Jaime," he said, and she gave him a small, enigmatic smile.

"Sansa." Then he leaned down and picked up the little dog. "And this is Tank."

Jaime grinned and gave the funny-looking dog a quick pat. His tongue came out and licked Jaime, and he wiggled before Sansa set him down, and he darted off the porch.

"Well, I guess I'd better give you the tour. Come on, Jaime."

She turned on her heel and led him into the house as Robb and Bran headed back to the truck. Jaime had made plans to meet up with Bran tomorrow to go over the winery and the farm as Robb brought Jaime's bags into the house.

Jaime smiled as he took in her home. It was everything a farmhouse should be; gleaming hardwood floors, lots of windows to let light in, and beautiful handcrafted wooden furniture. She showed him the dining room, a living room and then the biggest part of the main floor; a huge great room that contained the kitchen, eating room and family room. Jaime fell in love with the space instantly. She had top of the line appliance, including the biggest fridge/freezer combination he'd ever seen outside a restaurant or Casterly Rock, along with a huge island, two sinks, a massive gas range with eight burners and two built-in convection stoves. An entire wall was brick, and there were pots of herbs and spices that grew along the windowsill that overlooked her backyard. There were some bar stools where people could sit at the island as someone prepped and cooked, and another kitchen table that seated six easily. In the adjacent living room, she had a working fireplace, with a huge television over it and a comfortable looking couch. And the best part were the bottles of wine she had in the little wine fridge in the island, along with several in cute little wine holders throughout the room that proudly displayed her brand.
"Sansa, this is stunning," Jaime said, the truth coming through his voice. Sansa gave him a small smile and laughed.

"You'd think I could cook but," she said, shrugging gesturing to the impressive kitchen.

His jaw dropped. "You don't cook, and you own this kitchen?"

She blushed and shook her head. "I mean, I can do the basics, but nothing like you or Bran. Feel free when you're here, but not obligated."

He nodded eagerly and then followed her up the back stairway to the bedrooms on the top floor. She led him down the hallway and opened the door to a beautiful guest room with an adjoining ensuite. "I hope this will be alright," she said, a bit nervous. She knew how much Jaime Lannister was worth. Not only was he famous in his own right, but he came from the wealthiest family in Westeros.

"It's perfect. Thank you," he said truthfully, turning back and smiling at her.

She blushed. "Yes, well, make yourself at home. I'm not sure if you've eaten, but I'm sure I can round something up. I took out some chicken," she started to say, and he shook his head.

He gave her another devastating smile. "Maybe I can earn my keep and cook us dinner. Will you join me?"

"Sure."

They stood there staring at one another until Sansa finally coughed. "I'll let you freshen up, and then meet you in the kitchen. I'll just take Tank out for a little walk."

Before Jaime could say anything, she was gone, and Jaime finally let out a breath. He closed the door; Robb having brought up his luggage before leaving.

He sunk onto the comfortable bed, stunned by the last hour. How on earth had he travelled to the ends of Westeros to find the most beautiful woman in the entire world?

Everything about this place felt right; from the woman whose house he was currently in, to the house itself. He had no idea what he was going to do; it had taken all his control not to try to kiss her. He couldn't even remember the last time he'd felt this way around a woman, even Cersei. Everything about Sansa and this place spoke to him.

He shook his head, unpacked his bags and squared his shoulders. Her brother had indicated that she'd been in a bad breakup, and he was a guest in her home. And worse, he was only here for a month. Nothing could happen, no matter how much he wanted with the beautiful Sansa Stark. So, he'd be her friend, keep his dick in his pants and his attraction to her to himself. She needed a friend, and he wouldn't infringe on her hospitality. He was a guest and nothing more could come of it no matter how much he might want it. Sansa Stark was off-limits, and Jaime Lannister once again cursed his bad luck and terrible timing when it came to women. Sighing, he squared his shoulders and prepared himself to be a perfect gentleman for the next month. He heard the front door open and went downstairs, eager to cook for Sansa and find out more about her. After all, that's what friends did.

Chapter End Notes
I don't normally write stories with alternating POVs and this story most likely won't be either- it just worked out that way in the first two chapters.

Thanks for the comments- they really are appreciated.

Some things of note for this story:
1. I love the idea of all the Stark's being happy and settled
2. Yes we will meet Rickon, because I love him and I get a kick out of writing him
3. Yes, Tywin will have a prominent place in this story- wait until Jaime tells him about Sansa- FULL TYWIN matchmaker mode!
4. No, I have no idea how to write one-shots or quick stories!
Sansa raced down the stairs, hoping like hell that Jaime didn’t see her lingering at his door. She would be mortified. She gave a soft call for Tank, and his little body came careening around the corner.

“Wanna go for a walk, buddy?” She asked his little stub tail wagging. She exited the front door, Tank trotting beside her and let her thoughts drift to her new houseguest.

Jaime Lannister. 46. Divorced. Single. Celebrity chef. Hot as f!!!! Holy crap, Sansa thought as she wandered towards the winery. The pictures hadn’t done him justice. They hadn’t emphasized his lean, muscular frame, nor his bright green eyes. They hadn’t shown the warmth of his smile, especially when he complimented her on her home. And they hadn’t prepared her for the physical reaction she’d had when she’d shaken his hand.

He had longish sandy blonde hair that should have made him look ridiculous but instead it was insanely hot. His slightly stubbled and tanned face was to die for. And Gods, what he smelled like, Sansa thought. Some expensive cologne that was both spicy and exotic. Jeez, she felt the ache low in her body, her lady parts practically pulsing in want and need. That thought stopped her short.

She’d barely broken up with Harry, having caught him cheating on her just over a week ago, and here she was, practically panting over a man she didn’t even know!

At first, she thought she should be ashamed of such a reaction, and then she realized that it had been a very long time since she’d ever reacted like that to a man. Not even Harry and he was the only person she’d ever even slept with.

She looked at Tank, and his little bug-eyes, full of devotion looked back at her. “Huh, buddy. What does that make me?” Unsurprisingly, Tank didn’t have an answer.

Sansa let her thoughts wander over her relationship with Harry. Here, alone and with nothing but the truth and Tank as her companion, she could finally admit that it was over years ago; or should have been. He was a habit more than anything, and her desperate attempt to have what her brother and cousin had with their wives. The truth was, she was never going to have what they had with their wives because they’d loved one another, and Sansa hadn’t been in love with Harry for a long time. She had been in love with the idea of him, and perhaps a bit desperate to be a wife and mother, but not capital L in love with him. Not the way she had dreamed of since she’d been a little girl.

She wanted the wild love- the heart-stopping, passionate embraces, the feeling of needing each other so much you couldn’t even wait to get home to tear each other’s clothes off. She wanted the romance and the cheesy gestures; flowers, chocolates, anniversary dinners and special inside jokes and memories. She wanted a man to fall madly in love with her, to sweep her off her feet and make
her his entire world.

She wanted, she could finally admit, what she’d never had- to be the centre of someone’s world and to be theirs. To belong to someone and have them want to build a life and a future with her, here in the North. She wanted a husband that loved her and wanted to fill their home with children, who would take their children trick or treating and out to find the perfect Christmas tree. She wanted to be loved, and walking with Tank; she finally realized that Harry never felt that way for her, nor did she feel that way about him.

“I won’t settle, baby,” she whispered to Tank as they turned back to her house. Jaime Lannister might be a handsome man. In fact, he just might be the most gorgeous man Sansa had ever seen, but he was only here temporarily. He had an entire life in Kings Landing, and grown children. The most he could ever be would be a fling, and at 26, Sansa was just too old and too broken-hearted to settle for that.

“We’ll be his friend, Tank, and that’s all.”

Sansa opened the front door to see Jaime at the top of the stairs. He flashed her another smile and was suddenly there, in her space.

“Good walk?” He asked, and she could only nod, before turning to walk into her kitchen. Being late September and the North, the sun had just set, and her house was dark. Sansa turned on some lights and set her phone down, the light warming the great room.

“Alexa play my music,” Sansa said, grabbing a lighter and flicking the tip to a few candles. Soft country music filled the kitchen as Sansa opened the fridge and reached for a bottle of wine.

When she glanced up, Jaime was standing there, a look of contented happiness on his face.

Sansa gave him a small smile. “Is this ok?” She wiggled the bottle of wine in his direction.

He nodded and moved further into the kitchen, reaching for the glass of wine she poured him.

Jaime, for his part, couldn’t even remember the last time he was so comfortable in a kitchen and looking forward to cooking for someone. His family had long grown accustomed to his talent, and Cersei was always on some diet, so he rarely cooked for them anymore. He had barely dated in the past few years, and it occurred to him, as his traitorous dick hardened at being in the same room as the beautiful Sansa Stark, that it had been years since he last slept with someone. The thought of being “just friends” with her suddenly seemed ludicrous if his body’s reaction was anything to go by. Still, the excitement to cook for a woman he was attracted to made his heart beat faster even if he knew the most they could ever be was friends.

He wondered for a moment if her ex was any good in the kitchen, and felt his jealousy rise. For Jaime, the act of cooking for a woman he was attracted to was almost as intimate as making love to her. Once again, he remembered his promise to be her friend, and he was determined to remain in that zone, even if he knew the worst case of blue balls by the time the month was up.

Jaime aimed what he hoped was a friendly smile in her direction and clinked her glass to his.

“To new friends,” he said. It must have been the right thing to say, as she instantly relaxed and gave him that smile that made him lose his breath. She was so freaking gorgeous, his traitorous brain whispered.

“To new friends.”
At ease now that they’d avoided the giant elephant in the room called mutual sexual attraction, Sansa became warm and welcoming. And chatty, not to mention flirty.

She hopped up on a stool and gestured to her kitchen. “So, famous chef, Jaime Lannister, what are you making us for dinner?”

Jaime threw back his head and laughed.

“First, winemaker Sansa Stark, I must say this is delicious.” He picked up the bottle and saw that was her apple flavour and took another sip. To his delight, she blushed, and he could only imagine her having that look on her face if he kissed her. Then he shook his head and winked at her.

“I’m impressed with your wine.”

“That means a lot coming from you, Jaime.”

Jaime felt his heart beat faster. Everything about this woman called to him; from her looks to her work ethic and skill to produce her wine her way, to her gentle teasing nature and soft smiles. There wasn’t a single thing about Sansa that Jaime didn’t like, and he knew he was in over his head. Desperate to not make her feel uncomfortable, he got the conversation back on track.

“First, are you allergic to anything?”

“Nope.” She shook her head and took another sip of wine.

“Major dislikes?”

She wrinkled her nose, and it was all he could do not to kiss it, she was so adorable. Sansa gave him an apologetic look.

“Mushrooms.”

Jaime let out a startled gasp, and she looked worried for a moment before he laughed. “Just teasing you. No mushrooms. I can work with that.”

She let out a relieved breath.

“Now, the most important question- can I look in your drawers?” Jaime wiggled his eyebrows, and Sansa laughed at how dirty he made it sound.

“Feel free. And just so you know, I’m an excellent sous chef.”

He gave her a look, and she shrugged. “Years of Bran’s experiments.”

He laughed softly, remembering fondly putting Tyrion through some truly hideous taste tests.

Jaime slid his watch off his wrist, and Sansa couldn’t help but admire the classic Patek Philippe piece.

“A gift from my father,” Jaime said by way of explanation for owning a watch that cost more than some people’s homes. “It was his for several years, and he gave it to me when I signed my first contract with the Food Network.”

Sansa nodded and then wondered what he thought about her home; it was big, and she loved it, but surely Jaime was used to something fancier. Would he be comfortable here?
They fell into an easy banter; conversation and wine flowing, as Sansa helped Jaime navigate her kitchen. He was more than pleasantly surprised to find top of the line pots and pans, knives and a fully stocked pantry, fridge and freezer.

Sansa rolled her eyes. “Thank Bran. He thinks I should be shot if I’m not prepared to host a seven-course meal here at a moment’s notice.”

Mock offended, Jaime told her he was right. “You should always have a well-stocked kitchen.” Another devastating wink and Sansa felt her pantries grow damp. How in seven hells was she going to keep her hands off this man in the month he was here was anyone’s guess.

Instead of answering, she took another large gulp of wine. “I bring the wine,” was her response and then she stuck out her tongue at him and instantly knew it was the wrong move. Well, wrong if she wanted to keep things platonic between them.

Jaime’s eyes flared wide with interest when she did that, and a palatable hum of desire almost physically manifested itself between them.

“Careful kitten.” There was a promise and a warning all wrapped up in these two words; and Jaime was no longer just a handsome man cooking in her kitchen, but a man that made her ache for him to take that next step. For a moment, Sansa wanted to say to hell with her vow to fall in love and just let herself sleep with this beautiful man, standing in her kitchen cooking for her. She knew he’d be an excellent lover, and who would it hurt? They were both single.

Sansa held his gaze but before she could either make a move or retreat, the moment was broken by Tank whining for his supper. She gratefully hopped off her stool and fed Tank his kibbles, and Jaime took the opportunity to plate their dinner. When she came back to the island, he slid in beside her and clinked her glass again.

“To welcoming a stranger into your home,” Jaime said, locking his eyes with her.

“To that stranger being an excellent cook,” Sansa said, nodding at him.

They picked up their previous conversation; Jaime asking lots of questions about the winery and the ranch and farm. He praised her and her siblings for what they were doing, and generally appeared interested in what it was like growing up on the ranch.

Sansa scowled when he mentioned the chickens.

“I’d like to see you try to collect their eggs,” she muttered darkly at him when she shared her most hated chore, and he had made fun of her.

“Deal,” he said quickly, wondering how hard it could be.

Eventually, they finished, and Jaime helped Sansa clean up. By that time, Tank needed another walk, and Jaime asked if he could join Sansa.

“Sure. I always walk down to the winery to make sure everything is locked up.”

“Give me five minutes,” Jaime said and disappeared up the stairs.

Moments later he was back, wearing more sensible boots and warm looking jacket. Still, Sansa caught the designer label and had to smirk at this very wealthy man wandering around her land.

“You’re lucky it’s not muddy today,” she told him, stating he might want to invest in either some
cowboy boots or at the very least a decent pair of Wellington’s.

“Noted,” he said, thanking her for her thoughtfulness.

As they approached the winery, he asked her why she’d gone her own way.

She cocked her head. “It was just always something I knew I wanted to do. The ranch was always going to be Robb’s, and I can’t grow anything. This called to me.”

“It’s a great building,” Jaime told her. It was sleek and modern – glass and wood and offered excellent views of the mountains, river and orchards.

“I want more,” she all but whispered into the night and then blushed.

Jaime reached out and grasped her arm, turning her towards him. “More?”

She nodded. “A little restaurant, maybe. Sometimes I think about opening a bed and breakfast out here. I’d love to host weddings. Imagine having a spa. The whole place could be a wellness retreat.” She shook her head and gave a nervous laugh. “It’s silly, don’t listen to me.”

Jaime took the arm he hadn’t let go of and turned her, so she faced him. “No it’s not, Sansa. I think it’s brilliant. I can see it all.”

She gave him a huge smile. “Really?”

“Yes.” Then held his gaze and she saw the truth in his eyes, and it warmed her. Harry had never had any interest in her work or her dreams.

She waved a hand. “It’s so much work, and ideally, I’d love to have a partner that has the same vision as me. I mean, I’m not afraid to work hard, it would just be nice to have someone to share the workload and the stress with.”

At that moment Jaime wished more than anything that he could be that man. The man that would help her build her dreams, make this place something spectacular, work with her to expand her vision. He could so easily see himself loving her, making a life here. But he wasn’t that man. He was a man on the downward slide to fifty, divorced with grown children and a whole life thousands of miles away from here. He couldn’t be the man to give Sansa the future she deserved.

She gave him a rueful grin and then Tank let out a low little growl and a bark, having caught his own shadow.

“Holy crap, what is that?” Jaime asked, startled, and Sansa laughed.

“That is the terrible Tank, protecting his Mama from his shadow,” Sansa said, and Jaime felt something in his gut tighten as he imagined Sansa being a mother. Gods, he thought, wondering what was wrong with him, and how he could want this woman so much. One word out of her mouth and all he could picture was her large with his child. It was an insane thought for a man who’d never even considered having another family, but it lodged itself in his brain, and he knew it wasn’t going away anytime soon.

They turned then and went back to the farmhouse, and she thanked him again for dinner and told him she’d show him the farm tomorrow and Bran’s restaurant. Then she and Tank disappeared into her bedroom, and Jaime was left standing alone in the hallway.

He went into his room and through his nightly ritual, getting ready for bed when his phone buzzed.
Tywin: How is the North?

Jaime: Interesting

Tywin: In what way?

In Tywin’s world, interesting usually meant a woman. His phone rang, and he looked down to see Jaime’s number. His son told him about meeting the Stark brothers and their ranch, the beautiful land and buildings. Then, in a different tone of voice, he spoke of meeting their sister, a Sansa Stark and at that moment, Tywin knew that Jaime had found the woman he was meant to be with.

Even thousands of miles away, he heard the longing in his son's voice; the confusion about how this woman made him feel, and the evident respect he had for her.

“Is she pretty?” Tywin asked.

“Stunning,” Jaime replied not even thinking before he answered. Then as if realizing he’d said too much, he hastily said his goodbyes and hung up.

Undeterred, Tywin opened his laptop and googled Sansa Stark. “Stunning is an understatement,” he muttered as he scrolled through pictures of her and a few articles listing her achievements. He snorted when he thought of his son.

“That fool is finally smitten with the right woman. Knowing him, he’ll do something to screw this up,” Tywin murmured, still speaking to himself.

Tywin had known the moment that Jaime had brought Cersei Marbrand home, she was the wrong woman for Jaime. She was too cold and calculating for his soft-hearted son. Jaime might have the looks to be a playboy, but he was more like Tywin then he cared to admit. Lannister men fell in love deeply and wholly; they committed fully to the woman they were with. Cersei had never deserved Jaime’s loyalty or love.

Tywin had been waiting for years for Jaime to find a woman and love her the way that Tywin had loved his wife. He still missed Joanna desperately after all these years, and he wanted Jaime to experience that same level of love and commitment that he had with his wife. He knew his son had stayed with Cersei for their children’s sake, but he wasn’t too old to have another family. This Sansa Stark was beautiful, smart and a hard worker if opening her own successful winery was any indication. Tywin knew that he needed to go North to ensure that Jaime did not ruin his chance with this woman. If he knew his son and Tywin felt he did, he would only see obstacles instead of opportunity.

He would give it a few more days and then he’d make his plans. It was time for the Great Lion to ensure that his favourite son was doing the right thing; besides, Tywin thought as he readied himself for bed, he’d never seen the North, and by all accounts, it was a picturesque if wild place. It was time the North met the Great Lion of the West.
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone,

I am really loving the build-up in this one and I hope you are as well. No worries, these two will be together... and sooner rather than later, but I'm liking how this is developing.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Life around the Stark household started early for obvious reasons. There was always an endless amount of things to do, and for Sansa and her brother and cousin, the autumn was an especially busy time. Tours at Sansa’s winery would start to wind down in the coming months, although she had booked a few corporate events in the upcoming months, and she was happy to note that people had started seeking the winery out as ‘the place’ to hold a beautiful event in Wintertown when you wanted more than just a restaurant. Of course, she had to cater to those events, and she usually used Bran, but it would be nice to develop her brand and menu to complement the wine she made.

She was humming softly along with the music playing, drinking her second cup of coffee when Jaime wandered in. She bit back a smile when she saw the designer jeans and a tight t-shirt, paired with a military-style jacket. He was so handsome he stole her breath, and she wondered, as she had all night as she had tossed and turned if she was a fool not to have a month-long fling with this man.

She’d seen the attraction and desire in his eyes; more than once if she were candid with herself. It had taken all her willpower last night not to do a solo run in her bedroom while she thought of him. It had been so long since a man had looked at her like Jaime did, and who seemed genuinely interested in her. Harry, she realized, had taken advantage of more than just her work ethic. He’d put so little effort into their relationship, and shamefully, Sansa had allowed him to get away with it.

Whether or not anything more happened with Jaime Lannister or not, even as her friend, he seemed to care a great deal about her thoughts and opinions.

Sansa had texted Robb that Jaime wanted to collect the eggs, and he’d sent her back a winky emoji with a thumbs up.

“Morning,” Jaime said, reaching gratefully for a coffee cup, pouring and doctoring it to his liking, before taking a long sip. They were quiet for a moment, both watching the other.

“I can make you breakfast if you’d like before we head up to the ranch,” Sansa said, standing and moving to take out bacon, eggs and bread, breaking the spell.

Sensing she needed something to do, Jaime sat and watched her. She had dressed casually again today; jeans and a plaid shirt, her fantastic hair in a plait down her back. Jaime wanted to wrap his hands around that braid and tug her closer, pressing her lips to his as she moaned into his mouth. But he didn’t. Because they were just friends, and friends didn't kiss each other until they were both breathless and needy, no matter how much they wanted too.
He smiled at her when she gave him a plate of food and then dug in, trying to keep his desire for her at bay.

“So, what’s the plan for today?”

She looked at him. “Well, if you’re up for it, I was going to take you back to Robb’s, so you can see just how dreadful collecting the chicken eggs is.”

He smirked; sure, she was exaggerating. “Then I’m sure you’ll want to see Jon’s farm. Gendry will be there as well; he’s our butcher.”

Jaime was just about to take a sip of coffee, when he stopped and looked at Sansa. “Your butcher?”

She nodded. “Yup. My little sister met him when she was in King’s Landing. He’d been apprenticing down there for a few years. It is amazing to have his skills. Bran has a million good things to say about him.”

“Wow, I had no idea,” Jaime said, mostly to himself, his mind thinking back to how he received his food in his main restaurant in King’s Landing. He was always fussy with his food, and mainly what he was serving his customers. But he’d never had this level of control, and never imagine wanting it. But he could understand the need for that innate knowledge of having your hand in every step of what your cooked and served for people. How rewarding that would feel.

“As I’ve heard, multiple times, a butcher used to be a critical part of the food chain, before big box stores and industrial-sized portions of meat being sold at supermarkets. We used to go to the butcher and the baker before all these mega stores popped up,” Sansa continued speaking.

Jaime laughed. “And the candle sticker maker.” He gave her a wink and Sansa’s lady parts cheered.

“Oh, hush, you. I’m just saying that we waste so much food because it’s cheaper to buy it in large quantities, and then we don’t use it and end up throwing so much out. People are disconnected from their food sources; they think beef is just some steaks that come wrapped in plastic. They don’t understand the difference between raising animals without all the extra hormones and chemicals, with good feed and land to roam. I’m not a vegetarian, and never will be, but I respect where my meat comes from, and I like knowing that the animal I’m eating had a good life; at least for a time.” At the end of her speech, Sansa blushed, Jaime’s eyes locked on her.

He rested his hand on her arm. “I get it. What you guys are doing here is commendable. You’ll get no arguments from me.”

She nodded, happy he seemed to understand. Harry thought they were all weird. “Even here at the winery, we take in donations from people; apples, raspberries, rhubarb. If people don’t clear their gardens, then they’ll attract wildlife, and that never has a happy ending.”

Jaime was more and more impressed by the Starks and their passion for the food they grew and the way they lived their lives. It had been a long time since he’d been challenged in such a way. Finishing their breakfast, they tidied up quickly and soon had Tank in Sansa’s truck.

“Never pictured you as the type to drive a truck,” Jaime said, winking at her.

Sansa laughed. “Jaime, it’s almost a brand-new Tacoma. Not exactly a beater like my brother’s. You should see the snow we get here in January. Trust me when I say, a truck is necessary.”

Then she shot him a sly grin. "I bet you drive a sports car."
Jaime wanted to be offended, but he thought about his flashy Jag back down in King’s Landing. It was a stereotype but true — the divorced forty-year-old man with the penis car.

"Guilty," he said, flashing her a grin.

He snapped his belt closed and then saw Tank standing on the consul between them, tongue hanging out, a look of pure joy on his face. Jaime reached a hand out to pet him, and Tank leapt into his lap, making Sansa laugh. “He thinks you’re his best friend now,” she told him. Jaime didn’t mind. Cersei had hated all animals, and Tywin had never been one to let either him or Tyrion have them when they were growing up. It was nice to have the little dog in his lap.

Soon enough they pulled up to Robb’s and two dark-haired boys came racing out of the house, followed by a flustered looking Jeyne and an amused Robb.

“Aunty Sansa,” they cried, their little arms reaching for her as she got out of the truck.

“Hi monsters,” she said, laughing at them. She shot a glance at Robb. “I’m taking it that they are fully recovered.”

He nodded and rubbed the back of his neck. “Yeah, you could say that. Are the arrangements with Jaime still ok?”

Sansa nodded. In truth, she liked having him there. It had been a long time since any man had taken such an interest in her, let alone cooked for her and came for walks at night. She liked the attention, even if nothing could come of it.

“It’s fine. He can stay the whole time he’s here. I have the most space.”

Robb gave her an enigmatic look and nodded slowly. “Alright, San. But let us know if it’s too much.”

“I will.”

Both Stark’s looked over to see the boys enthralling Jaime with stories of their dogs, as Tank wrestled with Robb’s three collies. Jaime had squatted down in, rapt attention on the two boys as they spoke over one another.

“City boy, I hear you’re here to collect eggs,” Robb called out and Jaime straightened.

“I am,” he said, shooting a shit-eating grin to Sansa. “Can’t be too hard.”

Robb snorted and Jeyne was there with the basket. “Sansa can show you.”

“Hell no, Robb Stark. I flat out refuse.” Robb gave her a look and she huffed out a sigh. “Grab the basket, Jaime.”

Of course, Robb’s sons needed to tag along; at four and two they thought themselves capable of doing almost anything their father could on the ranch. Ned, the eldest and by far the chattier one, snuck his little hand into Jaime’s. Sansa’s heart melted when Jaime squeezed it back. Harry had no time for children and never her nephews, but Jaime didn’t seem to mind in the least.

“You’ve never collected eggs before?” Ned asked Jaime, unable to understand that.

“Nope,” Jaime said with a grin. Then he lowered his voice. “Your Aunt Sansa hates it.”

Ned grinned. “You got to be quick,” he told Jaime who nodded solemnly.
Robb’s other son, Benjamin, began to whine, so Sansa picked him up and put him on her hip. “What’s wrong, little B?” she asked. He had stuck his thumb back in his mouth and put his head on her shoulder.

“Don’t feel so good,” he mumbled.

“Uh oh. Want to go see Mama?” Sansa asked and he nodded. She called out to Jaime and Ned, telling them she was running Ben back to the house.

When she finally caught up with them, she found Jaime and Ned deep in conversation about the best type of trucks. Sansa thought her ovaries might explode, seeing Jaime Lannister sitting outside her family’s chicken coop with a small dark-haired boy on his lap, earnestly listening to him talk about all things that fascinated a four-year-old boy.

“Hey men,” Sansa said and watched as a pair of brilliant green eyes and chocolate brown ones, met hers. “Should we go get some chicken eggs?”

Ned nodded and led them into the coup, where Jaime wrinkled his nose at the smell. They approached the first hen, and Sansa gestured to him.

“What do I do?” He looked baffled.

Sansa rolled her eyes and quickly reached in and grabbed the three eggs, placing them in the basket.

“You steal from them?” Jaime asked, voice incredulous.

Sansa let out a small laugh. “It’s not stealing. We need to collect the or else they won’t lay anymore.”

“Still,” Jaime said, shaking his head. For some reason, he thought the chickens wouldn’t be here when he was taking their eggs. He didn’t know if he could reach in there and take some chickens eggs when she was sitting on them for gods sakes.

He was contemplating the situation when he heard a soft, “bawk, bawk, bawk,” and saw Sansa mocking him. She winked at him and gave him a smirk. Jaime straightened his spine and then reached into the next pen and reached under the hen to grab the eggs. That’s when the chicken pecked Jaime’s hand. He ripped it out of there, sans egg, staring at the tiny nick and the bead of blood on his hand.

He was a professional chef; his hands had taken a beating over the years, and this was just one more. But it stung his pride more than anything. “What the f….” Jaime started to see, and then glanced down and saw Ned looking at him, eyes owlishly large.

“Ouch,” Jaime amended.

“I told you; you got to be quick,” the little boy said and snuck his and in and grabbed two eggs and plopped them in the basket. “And if you swear, Uncle Jaime, then you need to put money in the swear jar.”

Sansa wanted to protest that Jaime wasn’t an Uncle, and most likely wouldn’t be, but she saw the look of awe on Jaime’s face and shut her mouth. She’d talk to Robb and Jeyne later. Ned clearly thought because Jaime had come with Sansa, they were together.

“Great job, Neddy,” Sansa said, praising him and arching an eyebrow at Jaime.
He grimaced and went to the next chicken, who he swore gave him the evil eye and reached in, quicker this time and grabbed three warm eggs.

“Vicious little f…arts,” Jaime said, looking down at Ned, who was staring at him in rapt wonder. Jaime gave the boy a smile, and Ned grinned.

"Good job," Ned said, mimicking Sansa's earlier praise and both adults laughed.

They proceeded until they’d made their way through the entire chicken coop. Jaime ended up with a few more nicks on his hand. Sansa cursed when one of the hens squawked at her, but overall, the got the job done.

When they sat outside the coop, a full basket of eggs between them, Jaime held up his hands in mock defence. “You win. That’s the worst job.”

“Ned, sweetie, run and tell Daddy we have the eggs,” Sansa said, a grin wide across her face. When it was just her and Jaime, she finally let loose, holding her tummy as she laughed so hard, she had tears in her eyes.

“Oh my god, you thought we were stealing from them,” she howled, and Jaime grimaced before he saw the hilarity of the whole morning.

“Never again, Sansa. I’ll give up eggs before I go in there again,” Jaime said, his tone and voice completely serious. She patted him on the back and gave him a sympathetic look.

“I hear you. I hate them.” She gave him a soft laugh again as Robb wandered up, looking at the two of them, glancing down at the eggs in the basket.

“Still hate it, huh San.”

“Yup.”

“Jon said to come over anytime, although to warn you his brother in law is there, so it might be crazy.”

Sansa nodded. “Thanks.” Tank came trotting up to Sansa and Jaime and plunked his butt at Jaime’s feet. He rubbed his hand between the little dog’s big ears.

Sansa gave him a look. “Onto the next.” She rose and held her hand out to Jaime, pulling him to his feet, delighted at the feel of touching him. There was a hum of electricity between them, which she ruthlessly shut down.

“Let’s go check out the farm, Jaime Lannister.” She gave a critical eye to his boots, and then said, “And then we’ll head into Wintertown and get you some proper footwear.”

“I’ll have you know this is proper footwear, Sansa,” Jaime protested. He’d never had his wardrobe so questioned in his life. These Starks were obsessed with it.

“Maybe for King’s Landing, but up here, Salvatore Ferragamo’s have no place on a farm.”

“Impressive,” Jaime murmured at her knowing his favourite brand of boot. Or one of them. Jaime was an unapologetic clothes horse.

Sansa gave a shrug. “I may live in the North, but I have a serious love of fashion. Trust me when I say I’m not sure if I love your clothing or your cooking better.”
Jaime threw back his head and laughed. “Fair enough. Wait until you see my father,” Jaime said winking. He’d learned to dress well from a young age. Tywin Lannister had never met a bespoke suit he didn’t love.

They walked over to Sansa’s truck and climbed in, waving to Robb who had Ned upon his shoulders, and drove in companionable silence until Jaime broke it by asking about Jon.

“How did this farm all come about?” Jaime asked curiosity and interest in his voice. Sansa loved how he seemed so invested in their operation. She told him about Jon’s mom and the land that was hers, and how she’d left it to Jon.

“Our father always made a point of keeping it for him. He went away to university and met Val, and they fell in love. Val’s family has a huge homestead way up North, so she just was part of this life, organically from the beginning.”

Jaime snorted. “Bad pun, kitten.” Sansa felt the bolt of lust role through her body as the nickname Jaime had settled on for her. She had to admit; she loved it.

Sansa smiled and saw the corners of his eyes crinkle. “Sorry, I can’t help it. Anyways,” she said, shooting him a look, “When Jon came back with Val, they decided to try organic farming. At first, it was hard; weekends selling at farmer’s markets and local vendors. But then Bran opened his restaurant and wanted only Jon’s food, and they got a stable source of income.”

Sansa was quiet for a time, humming along with the music that pumped through her little stereo. “They just had a baby; a daughter named Ella. She’s an absolute doll.”

Jaime took a moment to look at Sansa as she spoke of her newest niece. He wasn’t an idiot; he could hear the longing in her voice.

“How old are you Sansa?” he asked softly.

She shot him a look and then sighed. “Twenty-six.”

Jaime startled a bit at that. By her age, he’d had three children with Cersei. They’d been married for six years and he’d already suspected that she’d cheated on him. He’d had the pressure of being the head chef at his father’s restaurant on his shoulders, along with a wife he didn’t love and three kids to raise. He’d missed so much because he and Cersei were often at odds, and no matter what anyone said, being a chef, even if your father owned the restaurant, meant working evenings and weekends. His family was nothing like what Jaime had pictured when he’d gotten married.

“You should be proud of your success, Sansa,” Jaime said, meaning every word. He could see how much she wanted her own family, and he had no doubts she’d have one. She was caring, smart, successful and beautiful. Any man would be lucky to have her love and to share this life with her.

Jaime looked out the window as they made their way to Jon’s farm, wondering how a place so far from home could feel so comfortable and welcoming. It had been years since he’d been happy, he realized, and life here seemed more straightforward.

They crested a small hill, and the homestead came into view. Jaime saw the rows of orchards, along with several large greenhouses, and then fields and field of harvested gardens, rich dark earth now waiting for next season.

Jon and Val’s house was a smaller version of Robb’s, but equally warm and inviting. Sansa parked her truck and led Jaime up to the front porch, knocking and then pushing inside. A pretty blond woman emerged from the kitchen with a baby on her hip. She smiled at Sansa; whose entire face lit
when she saw Ella.

“Come to Aunty, baby,” Sansa crooned, and Val happily handed her off. “She’s cranky,” Val said and then shot a grin to Jaime.

“Hi, I’m Val, Jon’s wife.”

“Jaime Lannister,” he said, flashing a grin at her. Val’s eyebrows rose. She was married to arguably one of the hottest men she’d ever seen, but Jaime took her breath away. Val shot a look to Sansa, as Jaime looked around.

“Wow,” she mouthed. “He’s smoking hot.”

Sansa blushed and nodded. It was impossible not to get swept away by Jaime’s charm. No one was immune from him it seemed; not even one month post-partum new moms who were happily married.

“My family is in town right now, so you came at a good time,” Val said by way of explanation for the slightly messy state of her house.

The back door banged, and Jon and Arya came stomping into the kitchen, arguing loudly about what and when to plant the fields. They didn’t even stop when they both realized they had a guest.

“I hear your Arya, I just don’t agree with you,” Jon said, running a frustrated hand through his dark curly hair. “I don’t want to change the planting schedule. It’s worked well for us these past few years, and you don’t screw with something that is working.”

“That’s fear talking Jon,” Arya argued. “If we follow my schedule, we can increase our yield on two of our six fields by 30%.”

“I’m not willing to risk it, Arya,” he said, frustration lacing every word.

Arya opened her mouth to argue again, and then turned almost green and bolted out of the room. Jon let out a soft chuckle. “God, I hate that this pregnancy makes her so sick, but damn if it doesn’t shut her up.” Then Jon’s eyes warmed as they landed on his wife.

“Hello beautiful,” he said, dragging her into his arms and nuzzling her neck, pressing soft kisses to her neck. “How’s the love of my life?” he whispered into her ear. He loved his daughter, but Jon worried about the lack of sleep Val was getting since Ella seemed to want to eat and then cry all day and night long.

“I’m good, baby,” Val said, blushing under Jon’s attention. They’d been together for years, and still, he made her heart race. Turning, linking hands, they faced Sansa and Jaime.

Jon wiped a hand on his rough work pants and held it out. “Sorry about that mate. Bit rude of me. Jon Snow,” he said, and Jaime shook his hand.

“Jaime Lannister. Quite an impressive operation you’ve got going on here,” Jaime said, an ache lodging in his heart having watched Jon and his wife. He’d never had anything like that with Cersei, and he wanted it. For the first time, he wondered if it was too late. Men had second families all the time, didn’t they? Surely, he wasn’t that old? Jaime shot a look of pure longing towards Sansa, who was cooing at the baby, so she missed it. But Jon didn’t, and he grunted as he watched Jaime look at his cousin.

Then Jaime was ripped from his musings, as Jon moved towards the back door. “Let’s go,” was all
he said and Jaime for the impression that Jon didn’t like him quite as much as Robb did. Jaime glanced back to Sansa, who was sitting at the kitchen table, a cup of coffee in front of her and the baby in her arms.

“Aren’t you coming?”

She shook her head. “Nope. I’m here for baby snuggles. Have fun, Jaime.”

When they got to the back porch, Jon scoffed when he looked at Jaime’s shoes. He gestured to a couple of muck boots that were lined up there. “I suggest you slip a pair of those on,” Jon said and waited as Jaime took off his designer boots and slipped into the clunky gumboots.

Jon said nothing as they made their way out to the greenhouses. “Geo-thermal heat.” Jon said, as they entered. “Cuts down on our carbon footprint and we can grow all year long.”

Jaime stood in wonder as he took in the vast array of vegetables before him. As a chef, no matter his skill, he was only as good as his ingredients. He ran his fingers reverently over some peppers. “No wonder Bran brags about all of this,” Jaime murmured, and Jon saw the respect in the famous chef’s eyes. It made Jon’s shoulders relax marginally.

They spent the next hour touring the farm, Jaime asking insightful and challenging questions. Jon found himself liking the man, despite his wealth and fame. He’d been prepared to tolerate him for what he could do for Bran’s restaurant and Sansa’s winery. But Jaime cared about the food he was cooking, and he had a lot of respect for their operation. As they rounded the corner to the house, they caught sight of all three women sitting on the porch, Val nursing Ella and laughing with the women who were as close to her as sisters.

Before Jon could lob a warning at Jaime, the handsome man looked at Jon, such a look of naked longing on his face, and said, “You’re a lucky man, Jon Snow.”

Jon grunted; he had a chip on his shoulder that he wasn’t as wealthy as others his entire life, but at that moment, he knew that meant nothing. He saw how Jaime looked at Sansa.

“She needs a man that’s going to step up. To be by her side. She deserves to be the centre of his world. If you can’t do that, Jaime, don’t start something. It’ll only hurt her in the long run.”

Jaime swallowed hard and nodded. He knew his life was in the south. He might want a life with Sansa, but it was impossible. He couldn’t just abandon his family, no matter how much he felt he’d found something incredible up here in the North.

Jaime turned and looked at Jon. “I’m just here to be her friend. That’s all. I promise.”

Jon cocked his head and then shook it ruefully. “Don’t be an idiot Jaime Lannister. A woman like that comes along; you do whatever necessary to be that man for her.”

With that last statement, Jon bounded up the stairs just as Ella finished nursing and cradled his baby girl in his arms. Sansa pressed one last kiss to her forehead and then met Jaime back at the truck. He’d changed back into his boots and thanked her for bringing her to the farm.

“Your welcome. Did you have a good time with Jon?” she asked, and he nodded.

“It was insightful,” was all he said, lost in his thoughts.

Was Jon, right? Was Sansa the type of woman to rearrange his entire life for? He’d given so much in his marriage and had so little given back to him. He knew it wasn’t fair to compare the two
women; they were as opposite as night and day. But still, he’d never imagine living anywhere but King’s Landing or maybe Lannisport. And what would his father say? He relied on Jaime to keep their restaurants as popular as they were. Jaime knew no matter what, he’d never do a long-distance relationship.

As for Sansa, holding Ella reminded her once again, of what she didn’t have; a husband and children. She knew she shouldn’t be so bitter. She had a loving family, a thriving career, and a beautiful home. But she wanted love. She felt supremely cheated that her siblings had found it before her. Even Arya, who Sansa thought would never even get married was now in love and pregnant. It just wasn’t fair.

Sansa was no longer upset that things had ended with Harry. She realized she’d been fooling herself with him. But it was hard having Jaime in her home and beside her, meeting her family and being so good with little Ned. She could see him as a father, doing all those things she wanted in a partner. Jon and Robb were both very hands-on fathers; hell they changed the first diapers of their children when they’d been born. They were sweet and attentive to their wives, helping them through the first crazy few months when the babies were so little and needy. And even now, Robb made sure to take Jeyne out once a month for a date, just the two of them. Sansa wanted all of that and more.

The drive into Wintertown was quiet, both of them lost in their thoughts, unable to see that if they could trust themselves and each other, everything they’d ever wanted was right there in front of them.

Chapter End Notes

As always, reviews fuel the muse. But honestly, I like how this one is developing.

I think it is really important to get Tywin up there, and I'm planning on some Harry interactions, and also some Sansa observing Jaime cooking in a restaurant, because a lot of this story has sort of been on her territory, and seeing sexy chef Jaime in control... well let's be honest, how could she resist.

And yes, they are both caught up in their own heads... not realizing what is before them.
Sansa glanced at her watch and saw that it was just past 10:30 am and knowing that Bran was typically prepping for his lunch crowd, she glanced at Jaime.

“Is it alright if we go to Bran’s restaurant now?” she asked him and startled out of his musings, he gave her a slight grin and nodded.

“The farm is great,” Jaime said after another few minutes of silence. “I’ve never really thought about how much work goes into growing your own food.”

“Never had a garden?”

Jaime shook his head and gave a bitter laugh. “No, my ex-wife wasn’t what you’d call the domestic type. And since I cooked, and she’d married a Lannister, she insisted on a gardener and a house cleaner.”

Sansa wondered about his ex. What type of woman let Jaime Lannister get away? More to the point, what kind of woman cheated on Jaime Lannister? Gods, if he were her husband, she’d drizzle him in chocolate sauce and lick him up like a sundae every night. Embarrassed by the turn of her thoughts, and now with the image of Jaime dipped in chocolate and nothing else lodged in her brain, Sansa blushed and scrambled for a topic of conversation. Something neutral. Something safe.

Unfortunately, her brain had other plans and blurted out, “I know what it’s like; to catch someone cheating on you.”

She was almost sure her brothers had let it slip why she and Harry had split up. Robb had an innate need to protect her at all costs, even when she insisted she was a grown adult and could take care of herself.

Sansa saw Jaime tense slightly and she scolded herself for bringing up a painful memory. Maybe he still loved her, his ex wife, despite her infidelity. He was a nice man. In fact, he was probably one of the nicest people Sansa had ever met, which was saying a lot, given his fame, looks and wealth. How someone with that pedigree remained as grounded and genuine as Jaime was a puzzle and one Sansa wanted to figure out.

She was just about to apologize for bringing up his ex, when he reached out and laid a hand on her arm. “I’m sorry as well. Robb mentioned that you’d just been in a bad breakup.”

Sansa nodded, liking how warm his hand felt on her arm. She shot him a rueful grin. “Want to know the worst part?”

He nodded, interested in everything she had to say.
“I knew I hadn’t loved him for a while. I was kidding myself, but I was so desperate to have what my siblings had, that I wanted it to work. I ignored so many signs that we weren’t mean to be. I was such an idiot,” she told him.

Jaime was quiet for a time, his hand still on her arm. “I knew Cersei was cheating on me within the first year of our marriage, and I stayed. It doesn’t make you an idiot Sansa, just someone who wants their partner to be something they’re not.”

“Like wanting them to be decent human beings?” she asked, unable to keep the bitterness from her voice.

He gave her a sad little grin. “I get it. We can tell ourselves it’s not our fault; that the failure is theirs for cheating, but it hurts. It breaks something in you, I think.”

“I just feel like such a failure,” Sansa all but whispered into the cab of the truck, and Jaime grunted his agreement, then let out a weary sigh.

“I hear you.” He was quiet for a time. “It does get easier, I promise you. And someday, you’ll find the right guy.”

She shot him a look. “What about you? Still looking for the right woman, Jaime?”

He held her gaze for longer than he thought possible. “Maybe,” was all he said.

Sansa felt her breath hitch, and her heart started to beat a little faster until she realized that they were almost at Bran’s place.

“When do you guys start filming?” she asked, suddenly desperate to change the subject. She’d rarely shared her real feelings about Harry with anyone and had no idea why she’d felt the need to open up to Jaime of all people. She wondered if it was something more than a mutually shared horrible experience.

“Film crew is set to arrive on Monday. I’m still tossing around some ideas about what I’d like to film,” he told her, finally taking his hand back and letting it rest on Tank’s head.

“Yeah?”

He nodded and then winked. “I’ve seen lots of interesting things in the two days I’ve been here.” Sansa wondered briefly if he meant more than just the ranch and the farm; was it possible he meant her as well? Was she interesting to someone like Jaime?

She laughed then. “Oh god, you should tape you trying to get chicken eggs!” laughing as Jaime scowled and muttered never again.

When they pulled up to Bran’s restaurant, Jaime was pleased to see it was right downtown, in an area with great foot traffic and condos and apartments nearby. There was a little coffee shop on the corner and some boutiques, along with what looked like two or three other places to grab a bite to eat.

“Great spot,” Jaime said as Sansa leashed Tank and they went into the restaurant. They weren’t quite open yet, and Bran had a small space out back where Tank was free to roam. When they entered, Bran looked up and smiled. He waved them over, having just gone over the fresh sheet with his wait staff, prepping them for the lunch rush.

The restaurant was two stories, with the upstairs opening to a huge patio that was packed in spring,
summer and fall. Bran and Jojen grew lots of herbs and spices up there, and it was a favourite and popular hangout in downtown Winterfell.

A hush had fallen over Bran’s staff, and someone must have told the cooks in the back that Jaime was finally here, because they came tumbling out from the kitchen, looks of awe on their faces. For the first time, Sansa got a taste of just how famous Jaime was. The female staff in Bran’s crew were practically swooning over him, and Sansa swore she saw more than one woman undo a top button of her blouse to show just a little bit more cleavage. Several batted their eyelashes and asked for his autograph, and there was simpering, giggling and more high pitched squeals than Sansa had ever heard.

Still sensitive over Harry’s cheating, Sansa stepped back. She knew they were nothing alike, Jaime and Harry. Jaime had more than proven that in the past few days, but it didn’t stop her from seeing him as a man that would always be able to choose whatever woman he wanted. She’d forgotten how popular he was; he was a television star, for God’s sakes, she scolded herself. The last type of man she should ever get involved with was someone who literally had women throwing themselves at him wherever he was in public.

How could she ever be sure he wanted only her? She hadn’t been enough to keep a man like Harry, what possible hope did she have with a guy like Jaime? It had been a ridiculous thought to even contemplate, and she pushed it from her head. She was here to get him to help her and her siblings with their business; nothing more. Sansa was happier than ever that she hadn’t thrown herself at Jaime last night, despite the hum of desire that seemed to exist between them.

Jaime, for his part, played to them; laughing and smiling and teasing as he had done with her. She wasn’t anything special. Jaime was just a nice guy, and this was what he did. It was as much a part of him as his skill in the kitchen, and she’d obviously read too much into the attention from him these past two days if his current high wattage smile was anything to go by. Jaime Lannister was a charmer.

Sansa whistled softly to Tank, who didn’t quite understand why he wasn’t the centre of attention and went to leave Jaime to his adoring public when an arm stopped her.

“Kitten?” He had a look of confusion on his face as if he didn’t know why she was leaving.

Sansa looked down and saw Jaime’s hand on her arm, stopping her from retreating. “I thought you were my tour guide today.” He smiled at her, and she saw that it reached his eyes. That’s when she realized that his smile for her wasn’t the same as it was for the others. It was something more; real and more profound and with a wealth of meaning behind it.

“I am,” she said, instantly warmed that he’d noticed she’d been uncomfortable with the group surrounding him.

He gave a look to Bran’s staff, seemed to figure it out immediately, and then pulled her closer to him, where he said, “Sorry guys; my time here is with the Starks.”

Several women pouted, some even sent Sansa a few dirty looks, but Jaime kept his hand on her arm, and her by his side. He turned to Bran, who was looking at the two of them with a funny little smirk on his face. Sansa blushed a bit but didn’t move from Jaime’s side. She couldn’t remember the last time a man had so publicly declared that she was his; even if it was just as a friend.

“Please tell me I can get my hands dirty in your kitchen. I’m dying here,” Jaime said to break the slight tension that had erupted, and Bran laughed.
“Come on, Jaime, right this way.”

The three of them, plus Tank, made their way back to the kitchen. Bran’s partner Jojen stepped in to manage the front of the restaurant while Bran slid into his happy place at the back.

Jaime let out a low whistle when he spotted into Bran’s kitchen and the set up. “Well done, brother,” he told the young chef, patting him on the back, and Bran preened under the compliment.

“Fresh sheet?” Jaime asked, and one of the sous chefs handed it to him. He shucked off his jacket and left in only his designer t-shirt and tight jeans, looked right at home, rubbing his hands in anticipation. He had a gleam in his eye and a smile on his face, and Sansa was stunned by how much she wanted him at that moment.

“You mind?” he asked Bran. Sansa watched as her brother shook his head. Then Jaime took off his costly watch and grabbed Sansa’s wrist, putting it on her.

“Keep it safe for me, kitten,” he said, winking at her, the corners of his mouth turning up slightly. Then Jaime gathered the kitchen staff around to talk about the specials and menu for the day. Both Stark’s stood back and watched as he took command of the room.

“You don’t care?” Sansa asked after watching for a few minutes, leaning in to speak softly with Bran.

Bran shook his head. “No. We talked about this. He said the only way he can get a feel for a place is to cook in it. It’s good for my staff; they’ll learn more from him today than I can teach them in a month. Afterwards, we can discuss the menu, branding and flow of the restaurant.”

Sansa murmured something that sounded like her agreement, but she was distracted, utterly fascinated by watching Jaime take control of the kitchen and by his skill there. He was fast and commanding and seemed to be everywhere. He barked out orders but tempered them with a grin or a wink and treated everyone in the kitchen as if they had a critical role to play. He built beautiful plates of food, seeming to know instinctively what Bran had planned for today, and delivered gorgeous home grown Stark food to the packed restaurant. Word had spread in Wintertown, that celebrity chef Jaime Lannister was cooking at Bran’s place, and they had a lineup out the door.

Sansa sat back and watched it all unfold, her desire for Jaime growing by the minute. She tried not to look at his watch on her wrist, but it felt like something had changed; like she had been marked as his. She tried not to read too much into how he’d called her kitten and made her feel special in front of all those women who had been clamouring for his attention, but she failed miserably there as well, smiling when she thought of that. She tried not to think about him too much, but he always made a point of catching her eye, winking at her as if it were perfectly natural for her to be sitting there watching him work.

Several times he made individual little bites of food for her to try, and at one point, he even handed her a little appetizer he’d made, and she let out a small moan. His bright green eyes had flared, and the attraction between them was thick.

Bran wandered in an out and leaned over to whisper in her ear, “He’s so good at what he does, San. Don’t let his easy-going demeanour fool you. He’s the best chef in all of Westeros right now. No one is even near him.”

Sansa believed it as she watched Jaime work tirelessly for three solid hours. He never slowed down, his long elegant hands, chopping and dicing, cooking and pinching spices, and that mouth of his, always talking or tasting.
Sansa had never before given much thought to what part of a man she was most attracted too, but Jaime Lannister’s tanned and muscular forearms, along with those talented hands had her almost moaning. She shifted a bit in her seat, knowing she was dripping and more than a little aroused by watching him. The idea of remaining just friends seemed to go up in smoke before her very eyes. *Who cared that he was only here for a month,* she thought, almost desperately. It had been so damn long since a man had made her feel like this, and hell, there wasn’t a more prime specimen to have a fling with. She’d have to make sure her heart didn’t get involved because that would be a disaster. Jaime wasn’t staying in the North. A fling was fine, as long as it was only her he was with for the month he was here. She could handle that.

Sansa must have let her thoughts come into her eyes because the next time she looked up, Jaime’s green eyes had her pinned, and he was no longer guarding how much he wanted her. She saw the same desire she had for him, reflected in his eyes.

He set down his knife and stalked towards her, much like a lion might when he had his prey in sight. *I’m the prey!* Sansa’s body and brain screamed happily. When he was suddenly there, he didn’t say a word, but carded his hands through her hair and slammed his lips on hers, dragging her half off her little stool and into his arms. Strong arms that held on to her, arms that were nothing like Harry’s; arms she knew that would never let her fall.

Sansa moaned and angled her head, needing to devour him as much as he was her. Jaime took the heat she had pouring off of her and all but dragged her fully into his arms, tongue and teeth nipping and sucking at her, refusing to let either one of them come up for air, determined to have this woman who’d driven him crazy for the past 48 hours.

When they finally needed to breathe, he pulled back only a fraction.

“Fuck kitten, I wanted to do that since the first moment I saw you.”

“Jaime,” she said, her voice a breathy moan she hardly recognized. He let his forehead rest against hers, breathing in that scent that had driven him wild; lavender and he swore lemons. It was something unique to Sansa.

“I have to finish up here, kitten, but we aren’t done. Not by a long shot,” he told her when he found her eyes. She saw the promise there; that this was something for just them and that he wanted her as much as she wanted him.

“Alright,” she agreed, grinning stupidly. When they finally pulled apart, half of Bran’s wait staff and the entire kitchen was looking at them.

“Did we forget we have customers?” Jaime barked at them, refusing to speak about something that was between him and Sansa and watched as they all scrambled to get back to work.

Sansa grinned, unable to wipe the smile from her face, and she even smirked at a few of Bran’s prettier waitresses that were glaring at her. She couldn’t help but love the feeling of triumphant she felt. She had been chosen by Jaime Lannister. Jaime Lannister. Her, Sansa Stark, was the woman that Jaime wanted to be with while he was here.

She glanced down at his expensive and complicated watch and saw it was almost 3 pm, when her stomach let out a little rumble. As if he were connected to her by some crazy link, Jaime was suddenly there, a fresh plate of homemade beef ravioli in his hands.

“Eat, kitten,” he all but ordered her, grabbing a bite on the fork. Sansa opened her mouth, and he fed her, their eyes locked, neither caring about the pure spectacle they were creating.
She moaned when the pasta hit her tongue; it was creamy and delicious, and she closed her eyes to savour it.

“Fuck me, I’ll feed you every day for the rest of our lives just to see that look on your face,” came Jaime’s pained whisper. Sansa’s eyes flew open, and there was such naked need in them, she moaned again. His eyes narrowed in lust, and Sansa saw the longing there. For her.

“Jaime, what is this?” she whispered the words into the space between them.

He shook his head and fed her another bite of food. “I don’t know, but we are sure as hell going to find out, Sansa.”

She nodded, understanding exactly what he meant. She finished the plate of food, Jaime feeding her the entire time, and then they turned as one as Bran came back into the kitchen. He arched his eyebrow at the two of them, before thanking Jaime for being there. Somehow Jaime’s hand came to rest in Sansa’s as the two chefs spoke; Jaime promised to come back the rest of the week and cook in Bran’s kitchen, including each evening.

“I want to get a feel for all aspects, before we decide on what to tape,” Jaime was saying by way of explanation, still having not let go of Sansa. She sat there watching the two of them, enjoying the feeling of being part of a pair, even if it was temporary. Harry had never been affection with the public displays of affection, whereas it seemed Jaime was determined to let everyone know they were together.

“Well, Bran, I need to get back to the winery,” Sansa said, blushing furiously when her brother gave her a look as if to say, yeah right. “Jaime can have my truck tomorrow. I have so much to do at home,” she hurriedly said, forgetting all about her plan to buy Jaime boots.

They quickly said their goodbyes, gathered Tank who had passed out in a patch of sunlight in the back garden and walked, hand in hand to the truck, grinning like fools at each other.

What neither saw or was privilege to, was Bran’s text message to the family.

**Bran:** Proof positive they like each other.

He attached the picture he’d snapped when Jaime had first kissed Sansa, and then for good measure, another of Jaime feeding Sansa bits of food.

**Robb:** You’d better be right, Bran, because if he hurts her, or is a dog, I’ll kick his ass.

Bran barely refrained from rolling his eyes at Robb’s macho bullshit.

**Jon:** That moved fast.

Bran could practically feel the judgement oozing off of his broody cousin. Thankfully, Val stepped in.

**Val:** Hell yeah, Sansa. That man is HOT. Don’t be too judgy, Jon. My family didn’t like you either. They thought you were too pretty.

**Jon:** Val, Hunny, please.

**Val:** What? It’s true. And have you seen him? Jaime Lannister is one good looking man.

**Jeyne:** Go Sansa. Take that man for a ride!
Robb: Jesus, Jeyne. You’re a mother of two and married. Happily, I thought. Why are you even looking at Jaime Lannister?

Jeyne: Still have eyes, my love. And man, Jaime Lannister is one fine man.

Jojen: He was lovely and possessive of her in a good way. I think he will be perfect for her.

Arya: The big question is, how’s he going to be in bed. A man that good looking might be all shiny packaging with nothing to back it up.

Gendry: Oh, gods, Arry. Too much.

Arya: It’s a fair question, lover. I had my doubts about you but no worries, you more than stepped up.

Robb: Bleach. I need bleach for my brain. I do NOT need to know about my sisters and their sex lives. Thank you.

Arya: Yeah, because I’m pregnant through immaculate conception, Robb. Just like Jeyne. You two go at it like rabbits, I’m surprised baby number three isn’t on the way.

Jeyne: Well, about that….

Val: Holy shit, are you guys serious? Baby #3????? Congrats!!!!!!!!!!!!

Robb: What can I say? I know how to get the job done.

Arya: Holy shitballs- our kids are going to grow up together, Robb. That’s cool. Also, you’re stealing my spotlight.

Jon: Oh, god, this conversation needs to end. I’ve got work to do, you dirty buggers.

Bran: I think he likes her as much as she likes him. But they both probably think this can only be a fling. It’s up to us to make sure they can see a future with one another. Now if you’ll excuse me, I have a restaurant to run.

Jojen came into the back kitchen just as Bran set his phone down and wrapped his arms around Bran, pressing a kiss to his cheek.

“He likes her, Bran,” Jojen said, and Bran smiled and nodded, squeezing the man he loved.

“I know. Now we just have to make sure they don’t screw it up.”

Chapter End Notes

Who could possibly be waiting at Sansa’s house when they arrive???

Has the great lion roused himself North?
Sansa thought things might be weird with Jaime after they’d kissed, and he’d fed her in the restaurant. He’d made such bold gestures towards her and having never really been on the receiving end of anything like that before; she was practically a puddle of goo at how he made her feel. But she should have known that Jaime wouldn’t let her get too into her head. It was as if he could sense that she was second-guessing herself after their scorching display at Bran’s place.

When they got to her truck, he pulled her into his arms, and kissed her again, this time slow and easy, making her whimper a bit when his lips left hers.

“Easy kitten,” he whispered into her ear. “Nothing has to happen that we don’t want. Nothing that you don’t want. Even if all we do is go home, open a bottle of your wine and cuddle on the couch, making out like a couple of horny teenagers.”

Sansa giggled then and felt the tension leave her, knowing Jaime meant every word. He wouldn't pressure her at all for anything she wasn't willing to give.

“I promise I’ll be good, kitten. I’d hate to have to stay at Robb’s; little Ned would make me collect those damn eggs each day.”

Sansa threw her head back and laughed wholeheartedly, and Jaime was utterly captivated by her. She was so beautiful she took his breath away.

When they’d first arrived at the restaurant, he’d expected the celebrity greeting; it was standard wherever he went. It would shock the average person just how many hotel keys, panties, and cell phone numbers a chef with Jaime’s looks and fame received. At first, when he’d been fresh off his divorce from Cersei, he was ashamed to think back to how many times he’d taken advantage of the ability to lose himself in some random nameless woman.

It had been his father that had dragged him from his own self-loathing and downward spiral, spiriting him away to Casterly Rock for a heart to heart after another tabloid had caught Jaime emerging, late one night, from a strip club, two women hanging off each arm.

Jaime could still recall Tywin’s stern face, but more the sheer disappointment there. “We are Lannister’s; we do not behave like common whores, and if we do so, we do it behind closed doors,” Tywin all but spat at him.

“And please tell me you’ve kept yourself safe. The last thing you need is some disease or one of those women claiming you’ve gotten her pregnant.”

Jaime snarled and snapped, furious that he was being questioned on his choices when he’d done everything right in his marriage and still ended up cuckolded and embarrassed. It was hell on any man's ego to have your wife sleep with someone else, even someone like Jaime Lannister.

Tywin had sunk into the seat opposite of Jaime, both with a glass of scotch in their hands. “She was the wrong woman for you and was from the moment you brought her home. But there was no dissuading you, son.”

All the fight had gone out of Jaime at that moment, knowing it had been the truth. Tywin hadn’t even given Jaime his mother’s ring when he’d proposed, saying it wasn’t meant for Cersei. At the time, Jaime had been beyond angry with his father, but he felt only gratitude that Tywin hadn’t given in, once he’d caught her cheating. The thought of Cersei having his mother's ring would have
devastated him.

After their weekend together, where Tywin had opened up to Jaime more than ever before about Joanna, Jaime got his shit together. He only slept with women occasionally, and even that had trickled down to almost nothing over the past few years. He’d dived into work, helping Tywin with their family business and devoting himself to his contract that he’d signed with the Food Network. And he’d become a better father to Myrcella and Tommen.

He hadn’t had a relationship since Cersei, and now, standing with Sansa in his arms, Jaime realized that’s what he wanted, however improbable. He’d thought he couldn’t do long distance, but with his wealth and modern travel, would it be that bad? Jaime knew that none of his feelings for Sansa were casual; he’d never remembered wanting someone so much, and he liked being around her just as much. And now she was in his arms, and he didn’t want to scare her off with all that he felt, so he was serious when he said they’d take this at her pace and was rewarded with her relaxing in his arms.

“So you're using me, so you don’t have to be on egg duty, huh,” she said, grinning. She pushed him a bit and winked at him. “Get in the truck, Jaime Lannister.”

"Oh ya baby." Grinning, he kissed her again, loving how right this felt as they climbed in the truck. He buckled up quickly, rubbing Tank on his little chest and the dog came to sit on his lap. Sansa sang along to the country station that she seemed to have on non-stop and Jaime learned that country songs could be downright dirty if you listened closely enough. They had the windows rolled down, and the fresh fall air on this sunny day washed over them.

“Dang, we forgot your boots,” Sansa said suddenly and pouted a bit as she belatedly remembered her original plan for today. She'd been distracted by Jaime's lips. Lips of Jaime.

“Darn,” he said, not meaning it at all. He would do a lot of things for Sansa but wearing cowboy boots was just a step too far he thought, good-naturedly.

She gave him the side-eye. “You’re not off the hook yet, buster. I’ll have you in a pair of cowboy boots before you leave.”

He wiggled his eyebrows at her. “Bossy. I like it.” Sansa’s eyes got a bit darker with desire. She bit her lip, and Jaime felt his dick harden. She was freaking delightful, and he knew she was very inexperienced. He couldn’t wait to unlock all her secrets and hoped to god that she'd let him.

They were joking, talking about Bran’s restaurant, what had gone well, and Jaime was talking about how they should think about rebranding their entire operation when Sansa’s house came into view. Because he was busy watching her, he saw the exact moment her face tightened and the frown that marred it.

“What is it?”

She sighed and gave him an apologetic look. “I’m sorry. It’s Harry.”

“Your ex?”

She nodded. “That’s his car at my house.”

A wave of jealousy so fierce and potent rose up in Jaime that he would have staggered had he been standing. He had no idea what Harry could possibly want with Sansa, but Jaime knew what it was like to have your ex come crawling back.
In his case, Cersei had floated into his new flat in a cloud of expensive perfume and Jimmy Choo shoes, still wearing the ridiculous wedding ring she’d insisted on and told him he was acting immature for kicking her out, and that it was terrible for their image. No words of love or apology; just that he was a fool to have overreacted and if he wanted, she’d let him fuck someone else, so they’d be even. Jaime had kicked her out, called his security people and reamed them out for allowing her in and then proceeded to go on a weekend-long bender after that performance.

For the first time since his ex-wife had all but destroyed him, he’d found someone. And now her ex was suddenly back in the picture. The tension in the truck was thick.

“What do you want me to do?” Jaime asked. He knew this wasn’t about him, but he could almost feel the intimacy between them slipping away, and he wanted to howl at someone that he might not even get a shot with this incredible woman.

She gave him a sad smile. “I’m sorry. He’s most likely going to be an ass.”

Jaime nodded tightly. “And us?”

She cocked her head. “I get it if it’s all too much. I mean, you weren’t looking to get in between something like this.”

He could see the sadness in her eyes and knew she’d misunderstood. They pulled into the driveway, and she put the truck in park. Jaime could see Harry sitting on the porch, glaring at them. Jaime let his hand rest on hers.

“That’s not what I’m worried about Sansa. I have no problems letting him know that you’ve moved on, but I wasn’t sure that was what you wanted. What am I? Potential boyfriend? Celebrity guest? Friend?”

Her eyes filled with tears as she realized Jaime wasn’t running away. “You’d do that? Go toe to toe with him over a woman you’ve kissed a couple of times.”

Jaime cupped her face. “Oh kitten, you have no idea what I’d do for you.”

Sansa’s breath hitched and she wondered if her luck with men had finally changed.

“Together then. At least, I want us to figure that out on our own. I don’t want Harry to ruin something before I can do it myself,” she said, giving him a watery laugh.

“All right sweetheart, then just sit tight, and follow my lead,” Jaime said, and Sansa watched as he exited the truck, holding Tank under one arm, before gently setting the French bulldog down and then coming and opening her door. He drew her from her vehicle, and into his arms, and in front of Harry, Jaime kissed her, pouring all his pent up emotion into the embrace, until Sansa was flushed, and her knees felt weak.

“Still with me, kitten?”

She nodded as he grabbed her hand. Tank was at their feet, barking softly at Harry.

Harry was glaring at the two of them, having come off his seat on the porch when Sansa had parked her truck.

“You’re such a fucking hypocrite,” Harry almost spat at her, his face red and blotchy. “How long have you been fucking him, San?”
Jaime squeezed her hand and then narrowed his eyes. “Hello. I’m Jaime. We’re dating. I’m assuming you’re the fuck up that cheated on her.”

Harry’s jaw dropped open, just as they heard two new vehicles pull into the yard. Sansa moaned as she realized that someone must have spotted Harry here, and sent word to Robb and Jon. They hopped out and stood next to Jaime and Sansa, neither one saying a word about the hand-holding between Jaime and Sansa.

“It was one time, for fuck sakes. One screwup and the mighty Starks have deemed me the bad guy.”

Sansa’s jaw dropped at his audacity. “You were fucking her in our bed, Harry. That makes you the bad guy.”

Harry ran a hand through his hair, making it appear even more dishevelled if possible. “One time, San. And Jesus, it’s not like you put out regularly. It’s harder to get between your legs than it is to get a free coffee at the local bakery.”

“That’s your excuse? That I didn’t sleep with you enough? Stroke your ego? Make you feel like the man?”

Harry’s face went even redder.

“You were always too busy with your family and winery. There was never enough time for me,” Harry whined. Then he shot Jaime a look of such bitter jealousy that Sansa almost stepped back with his venom. “Trust me, if you ever want to be more than third best, find a new woman to sleep with. You’ll barely get your dick wet with her, and she hardly knows what she’s doing in the bedroom.”

That was it for Jaime. He was a reasonably even-tempered man, and he was slow to react, but once his fuse was lit, it was explosive. He dropped Sansa’s hand, murmured something that sounded like, I’m sorry, and then walked up to Harry and smashed his fist into the man’s pretty face. Harry screamed in pain as his nose exploded in blood, clutching at it and backing up, looking around wildly.

Jaime shook his hand, sure it wasn’t broken, but knowing if it was, it would be worth it. Harry was an asshole. Jon and Robb looked on in awed appreciation, while Sansa’s mouth had dropped open.

“That’s assault, you asshole. I’ll fucking have you arrested,” Harry screamed.

“Assault? What assault. I didn’t see a thing, did you, Jon?” Robb asked in his smooth drawl, his eyes glittering.

Jon shook his head. “All I saw was Harry here walking into Sansa’s front porch. Shame really that he missed that step and broke his nose.”

Hatred poured off Harry as he almost ran to his car. “You’re all fucking crazy,” he said and then slammed his door, backing out of the driveway and speeding away.

“Jaime,” Sansa cried, running to him, grasping the hand he was holding. “Gods that was stupid. What if you’d broken your hand? Harry isn’t worth it.”

Jaime gave her a rueful grin and smirked. “Told you I’d do anything for you. He shouldn’t have said those things about you.”
Sansa huffed out a breath and hurried him inside, finding a bag of frozen vegetables to put on his swelling hand. She was in a state that it might be broken until Jaime hauled her onto his lap, where he’d taken a seat on one of the stools.

“Kitten, it’s fine. It’s not broken, and Harry deserved it,” he said, nuzzling her neck and pressing a soft kiss to her ear. She turned and captured his lips.

“Still, Jaime. You shouldn’t have.”

A large hand clapped down on Jaime’s back. “Well, that’s where you’re wrong San. That’s exactly what a man that’s defending his woman should do,” came Robb’s reply. His eyes held a wealth of respect and acceptance in them for Jaime. “Well done, brother.”

Jaime nodded, grinning like a fool. Jon entered then and shook his head. “Mean right hook you’ve got there. Didn’t see that coming.” Then he grinned and also patted Jaime on the back.

The cousins looked at Jaime like he was one of them now, and Sansa shook her head at men and their egos.

“San, when you and Jaime clean up, come over to the house for dinner. Everyone’s going to be there. Jeyne has some news, and you guys shouldn’t be alone tonight. Even Bran and Jo are coming out.”

Sansa’s eyes widened and then she gasped. “Seriously, you knocked your wife up again, Robb Stark?”

Her brother just grinned, full and happy. “Didn’t say that, San. Let Jeyne share the news.”

Sansa shook her head but gave him aa big hug. She knew they were both hoping for a little girl. Robb and Jon both left, leaving Jaime and Sansa alone, and she puttered around the kitchen, shooting worried glances his way.

“Sansa, I’m fine,” Jaime said for the tenth time. Had he known what a worrywart she was, he might have hesitated in hitting Harry. Then he thought of the cruel words the man had said and how she’d been embarrassed and knew he wouldn’t. Eventually, he dragged her over to the couch and settled her on his lap.

“I believe I owe you a make-out session, Ms. Stark,” he said, his voice low and rumbly. The pain in his hand had faded, and while he knew she responded to him, he wanted more than just her body

First, that Sansa was special. Very special. This thing between them wasn’t just some cheap month-long fling and Jaime wouldn’t rush things. It would be easy to fall into bed with her and offer them both nothing more than a month of pleasure, but that wouldn’t be enough. Not now, and he was beginning to suspect, not ever.

Second, Sansa deserved romance. She deserved dates and flowers and romantic evenings and Jaime was determined to give that to her. He had a feeling Harry had been seriously lacking in that department.

Third, no matter what, this wouldn’t end when he had to leave. Somehow, someday, Jaime would find a way to make this work between them.

Having come to all these conclusions, he was content to take his time with her. She was still fresh from the bad breakup, and while he knew she responded to him, he wanted more than just her body
and more than being the rebound guy. So, he’d go slow and build her trust in him and show her that not all men were assholes like Harry Harding.

He made her laugh as he kissed her lips and her neck, sucking on her ear as she moaned. He learned that she was extremely ticklish, and she shrieked when he let his hands wander down to her ribs. He made her gasp when he brushed his hands lightly over her breasts, her nipples peaking.

“Jaime,” she moaned, and he felt himself harden when she said his name like that.

“Patience, kitten.”

She turned her head, so their eyes met, unanswered questions in her bright blue eyes.

“I’m not going to rush this Sansa. You’re too special for this to be just a hookup, darling,” Jaime told her and watched as her breath hitched.

“Are you sure?”

Jaime could see he’d made the right call immediately. “Never more sure of anything in my life, Sansa. We’ll get there, and I promise you, when we do, it will be amazing. But I’m not going to act like some teenager that can’t keep his wits about him around a pretty girl.”

She giggled softly, and any lingering tension dissolved on the spot.

“Thank you,” she said, and he just shook his head at her. He should be thanking her that he was even willing to give him a chance. He was a divorced father of three with a not so stellar reputation. She was the real prize.

With one last kiss, she pulled him to his feet. “Come on, let’s go. If we don’t make dinner, they’ll be back. They are ridiculously protective of me,” Sansa muttered.

Secretly, Jaime thought she liked it. It was evident that the Starks were close, and Jaime envied their family dynamic. While he got on well with his father, and he and Tyrion were friends, they had never been like the Starks were.

Jaime liked that he’d earned the acceptance of Sansa’s cousin and brother and getting ready for dinner; there was a part of him that could imagine this being his life and loving it. The hardest part was his commitments in the south and feeling like he was letting his family down.

Tank was waiting for them at the front door, and Sansa grabbed several bottles of wine.

“It’s Tuesday,” Jaime said when she packed six bottles, and she rolled her eyes.

“Ummm, there is a whole bunch of us,” she said by way of explanation. “And we like to drink.”

When they pulled up to the ranch house, the lights were on, and music could be heard. Jaime exited the truck and took Sansa’s hand in his, pleased when she smiled at him, a warm feeling in both of them at being part of pair again.

They entered the large house to a cacophony of voices, each louder than the last and knew immediately that they were talking about Jaime punching Harry.

“Uncle Jaime,” came Ned’s cry as he saw his new hero, launching himself into his arms. Jaime caught him and swung him around, his little arms tightening around Jaime’s neck. Like a monkey, he held on as Jaime and Sansa made their way to the enormous kitchen, where all the Stark’s had
gathered, including a dark-haired man that Jaime had yet to meet. Still holding Ned, and Sansa’s hand, Jaime, shot the man a grin.

Robb smacked him on the back, and Jon was right there as well.

“There he is! Jaime fucking Lannister, the hero of the hour,” they cried, clearly in a great mood. Jaime grinned as Sansa rolled her eyes.

“Uncle Jaime hurt the bad man that made Aunty Sansa cry,” Ned announced to everyone. More than a few eyebrows raised at Ned’s pronouncement. Jeyne shook her head.

“He’s insistent on calling Jaime that. Nothing will dissuade him,” she said by way of explanation. Jaime finally plunked Ned’s little butt on the big kitchen island, the boy relented his grip on Jaime before the man from the south was swallowed up by Stark men that wanted to rehash his punching of Harry Harding.

Jaime met Gendry, Arya’s husband, as well as Jon’s brother in law, a stern-looking man named Mance. Bran and Jojen joined them in Robb’s huge study that had a massive stone fireplace, leaving the women to prepare dinner.

“Are you sure we shouldn’t help?” Jaime asked, casting an eye back to where he had left Sansa. Robb waved a hand. “Jeyne will take your head off if you step in. When you’re here, this is her domain.”

Having decided that was settled, Jaime was handed a glass of whiskey and brought into the circle of Stark men. Three drinks later, happily drunk and entirely in love with this family, they were called for dinner. Stumbling only a little bit, Jaime pulled Sansa close to him, kissing her soundly in front of everyone.

“You always smell so good,” he said into her ear, making her laugh and press her hands to his chest. She shot a glare to Robb and Jon.

“You had to get him drunk, huh?”

They laughed, both having indulged themselves. When they were seated around the large Stark family table, Jaime’s mouth dropped at the amount of food. It was a Tuesday night, and somehow there was a huge roast, the biggest bowl of creamy mashed potatoes he’d ever seen and every conceivable vegetable under the sun. Buns and silky looking gravy capped off the meal.

Jaime grinned at Jeyne and Val. “Well done ladies.” They blushed under his compliment and Sansa tugged his hand.

“Hey, I helped stir.”

Jaime laughed and then pressed a kiss to her lips. “It’s ok kitten; I’ll do all the cooking in our home.”

Sansa swatted him but was thrilled by his words. She wondered if he meant them to be something more, or if he was talking about the month that he was here. She wanted to ask but thought it might be too soon. She remembered their earlier conversation, and for once, allowed herself to go with the flow. Jaime seemed committed to her and a relationship, and she would have to see where things went.
Ned announced he was hungry. Robb stood and coughed and thanked everyone for coming, and then proceed to welcome Jaime, officially, to the family, and announce Jeyne’s pregnancy. Then he told them all to dive in, and Jaime was washed in the warm feeling of a family that truly loved one another. He enjoyed the evening immensely; the food absorbed some of the alcohol until he was handed a glass of Sansa’s wine and drank more than his fair share, loving the tart taste on his tongue.

Later, when it was time to leave, he was hugged by Robb, Gendry and Jon and promised to be in touch soon. The men had bonded tonight, and a true bromance had blossomed between them all.

“A guys weekend, that’s what we need,” Robb exclaimed at one point when they were busy hugging each other again.

Val, Sansa, Jeyne and Arya just watched them, amused grins on their faces, none of them having had even a drop of wine tonight.

“Fucking lightweights,” Arya growled, watching as Gendry and Jon started to wrestle each other.

“Children,” Val huffed.

Sansa just watched in utter amusement as Jaime and Robb started making enormous plans for some elaborate getaway, knowing nothing would come of it. Robb was all but tied to the ranch, and Jaime wouldn’t be here in two months when Robb thought the boys should all have a weekend at the cabin deep in the woods. When they eventually pulled themselves apart, Jaime hugged her close.

“Sansa, my beautiful kitten,” he purred into her ear. “So gorgeous.” He pressed a sloppy kiss to her lips, and she laughed.

“Alright, let’s get you home, Jaime,” as she got him into the passenger seat of the truck, putting Tank on his lap. Before she could close the door, he snatched her arm.

“Home. I like that word. I haven’t had a home in years, Sansa. Not like yours.” She could see the truth in his eyes. Gone was any playfulness, and left was pain and heartache, so deep she could almost touch it. She nodded as he held on to her. “She never made our house a home Sansa. Not ever.”

Her heart broke for him, and she cupped his cheek. “I know, Jaime.”

“Good.” Then he closed his eyes and let her go.

On the way back to her house, Sansa thought about the two of them. She had seen more aspects of Jaime Lannister in the past couple days than she’d ever seen of Harry. On the surface, he appeared to be nothing more than a playboy; a rich, handsome man that had the world at his fingertips. But she’d seen beneath that mask. He was as lonely as her, and she was sure he was searching for the same thing she was; a connection to that one person who would be their entire world.

She loved that he’d defended her against Harry, that he wanted to date her, and that he got along with her family. She’d be a liar if she said she wasn’t turned on almost every moment she spent with him, and even though he could have any woman he wanted, he’d chosen her. The only thing she wondered was if this could be something more; could this be more than just one month?

Then there was the big question. Would he ever be willing to be married again? Sansa wanted that; she wanted to be a wife and to make a lifelong commitment to someone. But had his ex damaged him too much? And as much as Sansa wanted a husband, she wanted children even more. Would
he even entertain the idea of more children? Watching him with Ned, it was impossible to believe he wouldn’t make an excellent father, but he already had three, and some men would be done.

She glanced over and saw Tank curled in his lap, Jaime snoring softly and reached out to rest her hand on his arm. For now, he was here, and he was hers, and they had the next month to figure everything else.
Jaime woke to the sun shining brightly through his window, Tank pressed up against his stomach
snoring and his head pounding. He smacked his lips and felt like something had died in his mouth,
wondering for a moment what had happened. He quickly opened his eyes, was hit with a bright
shock of pain, and closed them. When he opened them again, slowly this time, he was grateful to
realize that his only bedmate was Sansa’s dog.

“Hey, buddy, what the fuck did I get up to last night?” As he went to pet the little dog, his hand
hurt, and it all came rushing back. Harry, Robb and Jon, kissing Sansa and the Stark family dinner.
Jaime flopped back down on his pillow, closing his eyes and focussing on the most important part;
Sansa.

He couldn’t believe that he’d only been here for a couple of days and he was already falling hard
for the gorgeous redhead. She was unlike anyone he’d ever met, and he could so easily see a life
with her, a second chance that he never thought he’d have. He spent several minutes recalling how
delightful it was to kiss her; the way she tasted and the softness of her lips before he glanced at his
watch and saw it was well past 9 am. He’d have to move if he wanted to be at Bran’s place today
for lunch and dinner.

He stumbled down to the kitchen, smiling when he saw the thermos of coffee and two small pills
waiting for him, along with what looked like a freshly baked muffin. And a note. Jaime couldn’t
ever recall a time in his life when someone had left him a note and his heart skipped at the
sweetness of it all.

Jaime,

I thought your head might appreciate these. I doctored your coffee the way you like it. I’m at the
winery when you need a ride into town. I hope your head isn’t too heavy. My family has no
boundaries and for that I’m sorry.

Sansa

She’d put a heart by her name and some xoxo’s and Jaime grinned. He swallowed the pills and
then gulped down the coffee, tearing into the muffin. When he finally felt human again, he
showered and dressed, before sitting at Sansa’s kitchen counter and texted his dad.

Jaime: Free for a chat?

Tywin: Yes

Soon Tywin’s deep voice filled the kitchen.

“How is the North, son?”
“Good. Different but good. Really good.”

Tywin smirked. Jaime had never been able to hide anything from him and Tywin knew his soon was taken with Sansa. He also knew that Jaime had been deeply hurt by Cersei and would most likely use whatever excuse or reason he could find to sabotage this potential new relationship. Tywin was determined to not to allow that to happen. Before Jaime could say anything more, Tywin spoke.

“I’m coming North. I have been looking at this winery, and I’m interested in seeing Ms. Stark’s operation. I think it could be the leg up we are looking for in the competitive market here in the south – to be the first restaurants to offer her wine outside the North.”

Jaime sat up straighter. He knew that Sansa was eager to break into the south, and he’d thought he’d have to work a lot harder to convince his father to give her product a try. Now it seemed like something about the winery had caught Tywin’s eye and this could be a huge opportunity for Sansa.

“That sounds perfect. Her wine is delicious and pairs well with lots of different meals. And her operation is slick; she’s a real professional, Father,” Jaime said eagerly. He had no idea how effusive his praise was for Sansa, and Tywin smirked. Smitten indeed, the Great Lion thought.

“I’ll be there on Friday. I assume you can pick me up?”

“Yes of course,” Jaime said quickly. “Where are you staying?”

Before Tywin could say that he’d rented a suite at the nicest hotel in Wintertown, Jaime interrupted. “Wait, let me ask Sansa if you can stay here. Her house is big, and she has empty rooms, and honestly, if you want to get to know about the winery, it makes sense for you to be on-site so to speak.”

“That sounds perfect son, but only if she doesn’t mind. I would hate for Ms. Stark to feel obligated,” Tywin said, thinking it would be the perfect opportunity to observe the two of them together. As much as Tywin wanted Jaime to find the right woman to love and to marry again, Tywin would never allow another disaster like Cersei Marbrand to happen to his son. If he was essentially living at Sansa’s he could ensure she was the correct woman for Jaime.

“Alright, I’ll ask. Give me a few minutes. I’m just about to walk over to the winery and find her. I’ll text you later. And send me your flight details.”

Tywin grunted and said he’d speak with Jaime soon, before signing off. Jaime, feeling much better, whistled for Tank and then stepped out into the beautiful fall day, inhaling a lungful of clean, Northern air. He realized how much he liked it up here, and how he didn’t miss the city at all. Not the traffic, not the hustle and not the noise. It was a startling revelation for a man that had lived in a city his entire life.

Jaime happily sipped a third cup of coffee as he walked towards the winery. When he pushed inside, he smiled at the employee there. Clearly, she knew who he was; either because word had spread or he had Tank with him, but she said that Sansa was in her office and then gave him directions. Jaime knocked softly and then pushed inside, where Sansa was seated behind an impressive desk.

“Hi,” she said, rising with a smile on her face. “I see you survived your first Stark family dinner.”

Jaime ran a hand through his hair, musing it and making Sansa pant, before giving her a grin that
had separated more than one woman from her panties. “Yeah, thanks for the little hangover cure this morning.”

She smiled wider as he stalked towards her and pulled her into his arms.

“Let’s do this properly, huh kitten,” Jaime purred, kissing her soundly on the lips, taking his time to taste her.

“Good morning, Sansa.”

She couldn’t help the stupid grin that creased her face. “Good morning, Jaime.” He traced a hand down her cheek.

“I have a favour to ask, and you shouldn’t feel obligated in any way to say yes. My father is coming North on Friday and I was wondering if he might stay at your place?”

Sansa’s eyes widened and then the lit with glee. “He’s coming here? Tywin Lannister?” Sansa actually squealed in excitement.

Jaime had rarely heard anyone speak of his father with such anticipation, and he frowned. “Yes. He wanted to check out the winery; he thinks it might be the next step to set us apart in King’s Landing if we were to be the first restaurant to offer your wine to our customers.”

“Jaime,” Sansa all but screamed in delight and then threw her arms around him. “This is amazing. Of course, he can stay with us. I’ve been trying for a year to get the Great Lion to pay attention to my winery and now he’s coming! Here! To see it. Oh my god, I have so much to do. Did you say Friday? This Friday? Oh god…” she was almost in full panic mode when Jaime shook her a bit.

“Kitten, deep breaths. First, if I know my father, and I do, I’d say he’s most likely already decided he wants to give your product a test run. Second, you don’t have to prepare a thing. You’re perfect and so is the winery and your house. And third, I’ve never in all my days seen someone so excited to meet him. He scares the crap out of most people.”

Sansa hit Jaime on the chest and blushed. “Listen here, Jaime Lannister. Yes, I have to prepare, because I need to wow him. He’s Tywin freaking Lannister. He’s a legend,” she all but gushed.

Jaime quirked an eyebrow. “Sure, you’re with the right Lannister, kitten?”

Sansa blushed and then nodded. “I’m sure, silly. It’s just that I just have been trying so hard to break into that market, and now it feels like it’s all coming together. But yes, I’m sure I’m with the right lion.” She pushed herself against Jaime and wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling his head down to hers, for once initiating the kiss. Never one to pass up an opportunity, especially when it meant kissing Sansa, Jaime used every skill he had to leave her panting.

“That’s good, kitten. Because as much as I love my father, I’m a possessive man, and as of now, you’re mine.” He cupped her ass and pulled her closer, taking just a little bit more from her, kissing her again.

“Jaime,” Sansa finally said, eyes glazed in lust.

He nipped at her ear. “What are your plans for tomorrow night, love?” he asked.

“Tomorrow?” Sansa could barely remember what her plans were in an hour with Jaime touching her like he was.
“I want to take you on a date, Sansa. Tomorrow night.”

“Yes, I’m free,” she said as he sucked on her neck, making her moan again. Finally, a discreet knock on the door had them stepping back from each other, both flushed and breathing heavy. Jaime held her hand, as Sansa’s assistant poked her head in.

“Tom’s here to talk about your next vintage, San,” she said, and Sansa nodded.

She went back to her desk and found her car keys and handed them to Jaime, kissing him again. “Here take my truck. I’m slammed here all day.”

Jaime frowned at them. “Are you sure? I’m planning on staying for the evening as well.”

She waved a hand. “Trust me. I have piles of work to do, especially if your father is coming in two days. I’ll hardly notice my truck is gone.”

Jaime tugged her closer for one last kiss. “I’m sorry I can’t be home tonight for dinner.” Sansa saw the real worry in his eyes.

“Hey, babe, it’s fine. I totally understand the demands of your job.” She kissed him again and hugged him hard. “I’ll see you when you’re back.”

Jaime looked in her eyes, seeing that she did understand. It had been a constant war with Cersei; the hours a chef had to put in, and how she’d been left with all the hard work of raising their children while he was ‘playing at the restaurant.’ Of course the three nannies she’d hired had done most of the work, but it was something that he had never quite gotten over; the guilt of his job taking him away from his wife and children and Cersei had never let him forget it either.

Standing there, looking at her, he realized that Sansa wasn’t Cersei and that he’d have to trust her when she said she was fine with him working tonight. He had to stop comparing the two women and give Sansa a fair shot if he wanted this relationship to have any chance at working.

With one last kiss to Sansa and then a pat to Tank, Jaime palmed the keys and went back to the house, slipping into Sansa’s truck and driving into Wintertown. While he drove he thought about Sansa and decided he’d ask Bran for date ideas for Sansa, loving the thought of having her all to himself for an entire evening. And he’d also find out what florist was the best in Wintertown. He might not be able to be at home tonight, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t do something special for her to let her know he was thinking about her. Finally, he texted his Dad and told him that he was good to go to stay with him and Sansa when he arrived on Friday. For a man that had woken up with a brutal handover a few short hours ago, Jaime was in an incredibly good mood as he found himself singing along to country music as he cruised into Wintertown.

When he got to the restaurant, he pulled Bran aside and asked about date night and the best place to send flowers from. Bran grinned and they got to work.

A few hours later, another discreet knock on Sansa’s door had her assistant carrying in a huge bouquet of flowers. Sansa’s face broke into a wide grin. Of course, Jaime couldn’t send roses; instead, he sent tiger lilies along with some colourful orchids and mums in a riot of fall colours. The card read, Looking forward to our date. The fall colours reminded me of your hair. J

Sansa snapped a picture and sent it to Jeyne, Arya and Val who all approved.

Val: That man is a keeper! WTG San!

Jeyne: So sweet. Any ideas where you’re going tomorrow night?
Sansa chatted back and forth with her sisters for a couple of minutes, also wondering where Jaime might take her. It had been so long since she’d been on a proper date and she was excited. She loved how he was making the effort and how he was treating this as if it were something special, even though they both knew it would have taken almost nothing to get her into bed.

That night, alone in her home, she realized it felt lonely without him here. She understood the demands of his job, but it was nice to miss him. So many times, Harry was lazy and hardly worked, reminding Sansa that he had an inheritance he could comfortably live off of. She hadn’t understood how much that had bothered her at the time- to be with a man who didn’t have the same work ethic as her.

Sansa was curled up on the couch with Tank, watching a silly reality TV show, mindlessly scrolling on her iPad when the front door opened. Tank shot off the couch, determined to protect Sansa, and then he fell silent.

“Hey there, brave boy,” she heard Jaime’s voice say to her dog. “Protecting Mom?”

Jaime wandered into the family room, Tank in his arms and flopped down on the couch beside Sansa. Leaning over, he dropped a kiss on her lips. “Hi honey, I’m home.”

Sansa grinned and pulled him back for more action, Jaime groaning as he laid his body over hers.

“Dangerous waters, kitten,” he growled into her ear, loving it when she giggled.

“I trust you,” she said, and it was the absolute truth. No matter how much they might want to tear each other’s clothes off, they’d do this the right way. Eventually, Jaime rearranged them, so Sansa lay half on him, cuddled upon his chest. Tank was at the far end of the couch, giving them space, and Jaime felt contentment settle over him, as Sansa tried to explain what the f was going on in the program she was watching. Jaime didn’t understand and couldn’t care less; being with Sansa was all that mattered.

The next morning, before he left to head back to the restaurant, Sansa asked where they were going on their date.

Jaime grinned and shook his head. “Can’t say, babe.”

She frowned. “What do I wear?”

He glanced over and saw she was in black pants with a bright blue blouse and black ballet flats. “You look perfect, kitten.” Then he kissed her and darted out the door, hearing her protests at his back. Bran had suggested a local theatre company that was currently in the middle of a production and sushi as Sansa’s preferred dating preferences. Jaime briefly thought about doing something grand like flying her to King’s Landing to attend the opening of the ballet, where people dressed in couture gowns and wore insanely expensive jewelry, but he thought he’d save that until they were a bit more established. The idea of having Sansa on his arm for such an event excited him, but for now, he’d keep it low key. There was plenty of time to sweep her off her feet with the Lannister wealth.

Sansa fretted the entire day about her wardrobe for tonight, even going so far as to threaten Bran who wouldn’t be moved into disclosing what Jaime had planned. Keep it casual San. It’s Wintertown, was his response.

By six p.m. she was pacing through her house, having changed several times before settling on a
little black dress and her favourite stilettos. When there was a knock on the door, she startled and opened it up, and saw Jaime standing there wearing a designer suit and with a box of lemon pastries in his hand a bone for Tank.

“Hello, Ms. Stark, I’m your date,” Jaime said, wiggling his eyebrows. Tank came darting out, and Jaime rubbed a hand over him, then presented the dog with his bone which he happily carted off.

Sansa snorted. “Casual my ass, Bran muffin,” vowing to kill her brother and happy she’d chosen to wear a dress.

“You look beautiful, kitten,” Jaime murmured, and handed her the box of treats and then pressed a kiss to her cheek. When she accepted his arm, she stepped out on her front porch to see a sporty Mercedes sitting in her driveway.

“Did you kidnap my truck?”

Jaime threw back his head and laughed. “Nope. But I decided that I needed my own wheels for the time I’m here.”

“You didn’t buy this, did you?” She seemed horrified at the thought, and Jaime laughed again softer this time. She obviously had no idea how much money the Lannister family had.

“No kitten. Just borrowing it for the month.”

“Thank gods,” she said and smiled when he opened the door. As they drove into Winterfell, classical music filled the car, and Jaime asked all about her day. What followed was one of the best dates Sansa had ever had. The conversation was easy, they flirted shamelessly, and Jaime ordered an insane amount of sushi at Sansa’s second favourite restaurant, after Bran’s. He never once looked at another woman, his entire focus on her and her enjoyment. Later, when he drove them to the theatre, he clasped his hand in hers and didn’t let go the rest of the evening. He had no issues when Sansa leaned against him in the darkened room, and whispered funny things in her ear, making her giggle during the show.

When they finally got home, Jaime walked her to her front door.

“Normally this is the part where I’d be sweating it. Do I go in for a goodnight kiss? Is she expecting more?” Jaime said, softly, tucking a lock of hair behind her ear. “But since I’m living here, and we’ve agreed to wait, I can safely say I’m looking forward to this goodnight kiss.”

“Jaime, tonight was perfect,” Sansa said, overwhelmed by him and the care he had for her.

He tugged her forward into his arms and fit his lips against hers, soft at first, until the heat built, sparking the passion that was always there. They wrapped themselves in each other, and Jaime angled his lips to pull her in deeper. Panting a bit, Sansa looked into his eyes.

“I know you’re a good guy, Jaime. And I know you want to do this right. But next date, you’d better bring condoms with full intentions of using them,” she all but growled into his mouth.

Jaime laughed and nodded. “Noted, kitten. I’ll plan on it.” He waited a moment, then tipped her head. “So, what are you doing Saturday night? I’d ask you out for tomorrow night, but I’m cooking at the restaurant.”

She frowned and then shook her head. “I agreed to babysit for Jeyne and Robb.” Then her mouth opened. “Oh shit, that was before I knew you and your father would be here. Crap on a cracker, Jaime, I’m sorry. The boys are going to have a sleepover here. Is that a problem for you guys? I can
always stay at Robb’s place.”

Jaime stroked her cheek, delighted by her. “Sansa, this is your home. So no, it’s not a problem.” Then he grinned, widely. “Besides I cannot wait to see my father put up with a two-year-old and a four-year-old.”

Sansa laughed and then kissed him again.

“Sunday?”

“Family dinner which you both have to attend with me.”

“Monday? I’m getting desperate here, kitten,” Jaime said, smiling ruefully.

“Monday works perfectly.”

“Monday then,” Jaime said, eyes lit with excitement. Then Jaime kissed her again and then opened the door and they went inside, hand in hand, happiness practically radiating off the two of them.

Friday Morning

Bran and Jojen had driven Sansa’s truck back the night before, so Friday morning when Jaime came into the kitchen and grabbed a coffee, he let Sansa know he’d take the car in to pick up Tywin.

“Is it ok if we come back here? I’m not scheduled at Bran’s place until the evening,” he asked, and Sansa nodded. She looked nervous.

“Are you sure my house is good enough for him to stay here?” she said, glancing around.

While Tywin Lannister was the richest man in Westeros, he was, surprisingly, not snobby. He appreciated fine things and worked hard his entire life to afford them. But he wasn’t one of those assholes that had to stay in castle wherever he went, and Jaime knew that he would like Sansa’s home and appreciate how hard she’d worked for it.

Jaime cupped her cheeks. “Kitten, you need to take some deep breaths and trust me when I say my father will love you.” He saw her open her mouth to protest and he kissed her until she was silent.

“Sansa, please trust me. He’s just a man.”

She pouted, cutely, and gave Jaime a look. “If you’re lying about him being comfortable here, I’m going to withhold second date sex, Jaime.”

He laughed and smacked her butt as she walked out the door to the winery. “Trust me kitten.”

An hour later, Jaime saw his father’s private plane land, and soon enough, Tywin Lannister was striding through the small Wintertown airport. His father’s stern face cracked a slight smile when he took Jaime in, and he gave his son a short hug, noting how relaxed and happy Jaime looked.

“It’s practically an outpost,” Tywin grumbled, looking around the airport. Jaime slapped him on the back.

“Oh Dad, you have no idea what you’re in for.” With that cryptic comment, the two Lannister men gathered Tywin’s luggage and went to Jaime’s temporary car. Once settled and on their way, Tywin peppered Jaime with questions about the Stark operation, which Jaime was more than happy to answer.
“And this Sansa Stark? You like her?” Tywin asked, watching Jaime’s reaction carefully.

Jaime grinned. “I do. So, don’t scare her off. She’s a nervous wreck about meeting you. Apparently, she’s been angling for a meeting with you for a year but couldn’t get past your EA for a meeting.”

Tywin grunted. He’d inquired and heard how persistent she was. She’d even sent him a package about her winery and the benefits of partnering with her. He had been suitably impressed.

“And her home? It is adequate?”

Jaime laughed. “It is, Dad. Just, try not to be so…. Jaime trailed off and looked at his father. He was wearing a custom made Brioni suit in charcoal grey, black Christian Louboutin leather designer shoes and another Patek Phillipe watch. He looked every inch the billionaire he was.

“Not be so what?” Tywin asked, arching an elegant eyebrow.

“Intimidating.”

Tywin huffed. “Just because you are interested in this woman, does not mean I will give away the farm, so to speak. If her wine is as good as she says it is, it will stand on its own.”

Jaime sighed. He loved his father, he really did. But Tywin Lannister was not an easy man. They were quiet as they drove out of Wintertown, even the Great Lion finally remarking at how beautiful the countryside was. When they crested the hill to the winery and farmhouse, Jaime stopped the car so he could watch his father’s reaction. He saw the pleasure skirt across Tywin’s face, along with his approval and felt himself relax. Jaime had known the entire operation would charm his father, and he was pleased to discover he wasn’t wrong.

“She built all this herself,” Jaime said quietly. “Her oldest brother inherited the family ranch, and her cousin some land that was always going to be his. But this is all her, Father.”

“Impressive,” was all that Tywin said, but it was enough. Jaime felt his phone buzz and looked down.

Sansa: I’m at the house. A nervous wreck if you’re wondering.

Jaime grinned.


When they pulled up to the farmhouse, the door opened, and Sansa stepped out. She’d dressed in black dress pants, a grey sweater and low heels. She looked elegant and beautiful, and Jaime’s breath caught. She’d left her hair loose, so it was a riot of curls down her back and Tywin’s green eyes flicked between his son and the woman that had captivated him.

She was a stunning creature to be sure, but Tywin had seen more than one beautiful woman in his life. Then Tywin saw what made her special. It was more than her beauty; it was the way she was looking at Jaime as they exited the car. Tywin watched as Jaime almost bounded up the stairs and drew her into his arms, nuzzling his lips against her and tucking her tightly to his side, as if to protect her from anything that might harm her, including him.

Tywin had waited his entire life to see Jaime act like this with a woman and he felt his heart clench, thinking about how much he’d loved his wife and treated her much the same way; as if she were the most precious thing in the entire world. Tywin strode purposely towards them and watched as
Sansa’s bright blue eyes met his. She smiled at him and held out her hand.

“Hello, Mr. Lannister. Welcome to Winterfell Wintery and my home,” she said.

Tywin held her hand and drew it to his lips, pressing a soft kiss to it. “The pleasure is all mine, Ms. Stark. Thank you for having me. And please, call me Tywin.”

“Sansa,” she said and then let out a bright laugh as a little dog came rocketing out of the house. “And that’s Tank. He’s kind of in love with Jaime,” she said and turned and looked at his son with such emotion that Tywin knew at that moment that he’d move heaven and earth to ensure these two ended up together.

Jaime picked up Tank, finally leaving Sansa’s side and went to get Tywin’s luggage. She gave Tywin another look and then waved him inside the house. “I’ll give you the tour, although I’m not sure it’s up to your standards.”

Tywin grabbed her elbow lightly and shook his head at her. “Sansa don’t do that. Your home is impressive. Be proud of it.”

She stopped and looked at him; really looked at him. “Jaime said you would be comfortable here, but I didn’t believe him. I’m glad to be wrong and I’m happy you chose to stay with us.”

Tywin gave her what he hoped was a soft smile. This woman was an utter delight with her honestly, and her integrity and with ethic. Tywin had rarely found such a combination and knew she was special, a rare thing indeed.

She showed him around, and Tywin could see why Jaime was over the moon about this woman and this home. It was as if the house had been designed with him in mind. The kitchen alone would have sold his son on such a place, but coupled with the several empty bedrooms, and Tywin knew he’d never see Jaime in the south for more than a visit. Jaime and Sansa might not know it, but this was his home now and he was sure they’d fill it with children.

Jaime put Tywin’s bags in the room adjacent to his, and then met his father and Sansa downstairs in the kitchen where they were talking about the whole Stark operation. Comfortable now in her home, Jaime started pulling ingredients out to make lunch. They moved together easily, laughing and joking with one another and Tywin as they explained the philosophy behind Stark Ranch and Farms.

They ate a delicious lunch, prepared by Jaime until his phone buzzed.

**Bran**: Are you free to come in early? I want to run an idea by you.

**Jaime**: Sure. Just let me get my father settled. Give me an hour

Jaime turned back to Tywin and Sansa and saw them in an animated discussion about supply and demand and the southern wine making industry. It was a perfect segue for him to get them to the winery so he could go into town a bit early. Jaime walked up to Sansa and let his hand rest on her back.

“Who was that?” she asked.

“Bran. He wants me to come in a bit early. I’ve reserved you two a table at the restaurant tonight. I was thinking, if it’s not too much trouble, you could spend the afternoon showing my father the winery and then come for dinner?”
Sansa smiled at Jaime’s thoughtfulness, and in anticipation of showing Tywin what she’d built.

“That sounds perfect.” She tilted her head and Jaime leaned down to kiss her.

Lost in each, they had forgotten Tywin. Hearing a cough, they broke apart and smiled at Tywin.

“I’ll take the truck, kitten and leave you and my Dad the car,” Jaime said as he grabbed her keys. Sansa waved a hand.

“Alright, we’ll see you later, babe,” she said, eager to get Tywin to the winery.

Jaime took one last look at them, walking together and shook his head. His father already loved Sansa, Jaime could tell, and he was sure that by the end of the afternoon, Sansa Stark would have a deal with Tywin Lannister to have Winterfall Winery wines in their restaurants. He felt a brief flash of guilt about leaving them alone together but then shook his head. After all, how much trouble could they get into?

Chapter End Notes

Yes, Jaime, Sansa and Tywin are going to babysit Robb's kids, and yes it might be the best thing I've ever written.
Chapter 8

Jaime found Bran speaking with his staff in the back kitchen when he sauntered into the restaurant. Bran’s face lit when he saw Jaime, and he asked how date night had gone.

“Perfect,” Jaime replied, thanking Bran for the leads with Sansa, knowing that her brother had helped make it a success.

“You really like her,” Bran said, a look of wonder on his face before he broke out into a huge grin. He’d hoped when he’d met and gotten to know Jaime down in King’s Landing, that something might happen between the famous chef and his sister, but he’d never imagined it would take off so quickly.

“I do, and I have you to thank for meeting her, Bran. I couldn’t even imagine her not in my life. I left her and my father together, wandering off towards the winery. They’ll be by for dinner later.”

Bran shook his head at how ensconced Jaime had become in their family already and wondered if the southern man had any desire to stay here when the month was up. Unlike his siblings, he’d seen how famous Jaime was in King’s Landing and knew the type of crowds the man commanded. Still, he seemed to be especially taken with Sansa, and happier than he’d ever appeared in the capital, so Bran thought there might be hope that he would stay.

Right now, though, Bran was interested in Jaime’s opinion on his next adventure. “I want to show you something, and I want your honest opinion.”

Jaime cocked his head and nodded, then followed Bran out of the restaurant and over a couple of blocks until they were standing before what appeared to be an empty restaurant; freestanding and much more substantial than Bran’s current one.

“I want to open a micro-brewery and restaurant here,” Bran announced, watching Jaime’s eyes get animated. “But I need a partner.”

Jaime’s face split into a wide grin, while Bran continued to talk. He had to keys from the realtor and they entered the building.

“It’s been four failed restaurants now, but the location is prime, right downtown. I don’t want to ever compete with Sansa and the winery, so this would be strictly a brewery with tapas and pizza on the menu. I imagine a huge stone pizza oven in one corner, along with the brewery itself in the back. As far as I can tell, no one in Wintertown is doing anything like this, and we’d be the first.”

“Silent or full partner?” Jaime asked, unable to keep the excitement out of his voice. These Starks were going to own this town when they were done all their expanding.

“Full,” Bran said and grinned at Jaime’s enthusiasm. “I won’t lie and say I’m not still heavily invested and interested in my restaurant. But I don’t want this opportunity to pass me by, and if you’re interested, I think you’d be the man for the job.” Bran paused. “Plus, I think we could make a lot of money.”

Jaime laughed and clapped Bran on the back. A part of him had been wondering what he might do if he did stay in the North; he knew Sansa wanted to expand the winery, but that was seasonal at best. Even if she opened a B and B, that was morning fare and Jaime was used to cooking for hours. This was exciting and something totally new and he was being offered a full partnership with Bran, a man he both liked and respected. Jaime could already visualize it in his head, and Bran
was right. Micro-breweries were gaining in popularity, but even King’s Landing only had one. If they were successful here, it might be possible to expand elsewhere in Westeros, and that, Jaime knew, would make his father very happy indeed.

The two men locked up, having taken some pictures, and went back to Bran’s current restaurant to chat, both excited at the possibilities before them.

_Meanwhile at the winery…_

Sansa had lost her nervousness around Tywin within an hour of the man sitting at her kitchen table and eating lunch with her and his son. She knew it was because she’d suddenly seen him as a father, and not just as Tywin Lannister, billionaire and the man who could single-handily catapult her winery into the next level.

He was still that man, but watching him with Jaime, he’d become approachable. And likable. That was the craziest part. There was no doubt that he was still a very intimidating man; almost severe at times, but along with that, he was intelligent, quick-witted and had a very dry sense of humour. And he loved his son in a way that most men were not even capable of showing. It was clear that he and Jaime were close and that warmed Sansa’s heart to no end while making her miss her own father fiercely. She wished, more than anything, that her parents had lived to see what their children had accomplished and to meet their significant other’s and grandchildren.

It was Tywin’s clear love of his son that fully relaxed Sansa and she opened up to the businessman, chatting easily with him. When Jaime said he’d leave them to the winery, Sansa jumped at the chance to show Tywin Lannister what she had accomplished.

She soon discovered that he was extremely knowledgeable, and after a tour of the building itself, along with a meeting with her head winemaker, they settled at a table with several bottles before them, along with some fruit, crackers and of course, cheese. She poured him a glass of her favourite red wine, a black current one with small amounts of blueberries and held her breath as he sampled it.

This was a man with impeccable taste, and as he rolled it over his tongue, his eyes lit. It was quite unlike anything he’d ever had before, and he took another sip.

“Delightful, Sansa,” he said, giving her a rare smile. “What else do you have?”

Sansa laughed and then took a decent sip of her glass. “Slow down, tiger; we’ve got all afternoon.”

Tywin threw back his head and laughed, his bright green eyes meeting hers. “I can see why my son is smitten with you. And just for the record, I’m a lion.” Tywin winked at her, and Sansa blushed. Then she latched on to what Tywin had said about Jaime being smitten. That was the important part.

“You think?”

Tywin nodded, settling in. It wasn’t a hard way to pass an afternoon; gorgeous fall sunshine, a beautiful woman that his son was taken with, and excellent wine. There had always been stories about how much the Great Lion loved his wife, and over the course of the afternoon, Sansa understood why. He was singular in his focus and devoted to someone when he deemed them worthy of his time. And Sansa was worthy.

They polished off the first bottle, and Sansa called for her favourite white, this one a blend of apricot, apple and rhubarb. Tywin hummed in appreciation as the dry wine slid down his throat,
“Well, Sansa, based on these two bottles, I think it is safe to say that Lannister Corp would be delighted to offer your wine, exclusively, in our restaurants in King’s Landing and Lannisport.” In truth, unless he tasted vinegar, Tywin had already been prepared to offer her a deal, for several reasons, not the least of which was he knew it would make Jaime happy. Tywin was more than happy to discover that her wine was delicious and that made offering her this deal that much sweeter.

She couldn't help it; her jaw dropped, and she squealed and then gathered herself and held out her hand.

"You've got yourself a deal, Mr. Lannister."

"Alright, Ms. Stark." They shook on it and then smiled at each other.

Now that business was out of the way, Sansa shared her vision behind the winery, including her plans for expansion, determined to pick Tywin's brain for the best possible way to go about it. After all, she figured, you didn't become a billionaire by making stupid choices.

She was pleasantly surprised when Tywin produced a notepad and started to sketch out some basic principles to consider when expanding her business. He thought catering to events such as weddings and corporate evenings was where she might charge a premium and named such an astronomical price that Sansa’s eyes bugged out.

“You need to value yourself first, Sansa. You are giving them a one of a kind experience unlike any they can find in the North. Do not set your price too low, my dear,” he told her sternly and she nodded.

“Do you think I could get that?” she all but whispered to him. Or she thought she whispered, but since they were now three bottles in, it was louder than she’d anticipated.

He nodded. “I’d be hesitant to have a B and B here. To me, it seems intrusive, and you strike me as a woman who values your privacy.”

She nodded. “It was after I’d broken up with Harry; I was lonely and was sure if I didn’t do something, I’d become that weird cat lady.”

Tywin smirked. “I can assure you, that will not be the case.”

“As for a restaurant or an eatery, you’d have to be careful. First, you are a fair distance from town. I can see something that would offer more substantial fare to those who have completed a tour. Perhaps partnering with Jaime to offer classes where he can teach them to cook and offer wine pairings would be a place to start. Again, I’d say less is more. Be selective and craft a brand that demands excellence and people will pay for it.”

Sansa cocked her head and looked at Tywin. “That makes so much sense,” she almost murmured to herself, her mind racing. “You’re writing this down, right?”

Tywin grinned. He had written his thoughts down, and he’d be sure to share them with her. When they’d finished talking about her business, and for the first time in a long time, Tywin had thoroughly enjoyed having a beautiful woman pump him for his experiences in that area, Sansa asked about Jaime; specifically, him as a child.

Enchanted by her, they opened yet another bottle of wine, and Tywin proceeded to tell Sansa all
about Jaime’s childhood, sure to include as many embarrassing and heartwarming stories as he could. He loved his son deeply and took great pride in sharing his early life with Sansa.

“He sounds precocious,” Sansa said, her voice full of emotion.

“Do you want children, Sansa?” It was an intensely personal question, but they’d become quite close over the course of the afternoon and Tywin wanted to know. He was sure that Cersei had only gotten pregnant as a way of trapping Jaime into staying with her.

“Of gods, yes. Four at the very minimum, but I’d have more if possible,” Sansa said immediately, and Tywin could see the truth in her eyes.

She blushed and fiddled with her wine glass. “I know it’s not what a modern woman is supposed to want. I mean, we’ve been told to be these professional women and that we can have it all. And don’t get me wrong, I love the winery. But gods, do I want a family. I want that whole Hallmark package you know. A husband that dotes on me, and one who loves our kids. The guy that dresses up with them on Halloween and loves Christmas and makes a huge deal about their birthdays. He’d be the first guy to volunteer coach their little league team.”

Tywin squeezed her hand, fully and utterly convinced that she was the absolute perfect woman for his son.

“I think that sounds lovely Sansa.”

Her eyes raised and she had tears in them, her voice barely above a whisper. “He already has a family, Tywin. What if he’s done?”

Tywin stood, a bit unsteady, and pulled her into his arms. “Shhh, now dear. Believe me when I say that you need to trust Jaime. He is a good man, Sansa, and the two of you are more similar than you both realize.”

She raised her blue eyes to his. “Do you think so?”

He cupped her cheek. “I do, my dear. And if not, I’ll kick his arse.”

Sansa let out a bright laugh. “I know it’s moved so quickly, but I have such feelings for him.”

Tywin nodded sagely, just as Sansa’s assistant came up.

“Hey guys, we’re closing up. It’s almost 6. I thought, if you’d like, I could give you a ride into Wintertown.”

Sansa started to protest that she could drive them there, but then looked down at the table and saw four and a half-empty wine bottles. She started to giggle. “Oh gods, we didn’t drink that much did we?”

Tywin looked a bit shocked as well. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d had such an enjoyable afternoon. He offered the pretty Louise one arm, and Sansa the other, briefly wondering if Jaime might be angry that they’d gotten so smashed but then shook off that thought.

Soon enough, they were in Louise’s car and zipping towards Wintertown. Sansa sent Jaime a quick text that they were on their way, leaving out how much they had drunk.

**Jaime:** I trust things went well with my father. I know he can be a lot, but thank you for spending time with him kitten
Sansa: Things are GREAT! He’s awesome Jaime!!!!!!! SEE YOU SOON!!!!!!
OXOXOXOXOXOXO

Jaime, who was slammed in the kitchen, glanced down and read her text. He couldn’t remember Sansa ever using so many capitals, but she seemed happy and he’d see her soon.

When they got to Bran’s restaurant, there was a lineup out the door. Tywin helped Sansa from the car, and they linked arms as they approached the front door. There might have been a few glares, those who thought they might have been cutting the line, but Sansa got to the hostess and let out a smile.

“Party of two; reservation under Lannister,” Tywin said, his tone one he'd used his entire life to make people bend to his will.

The hostess, a vapid blond with huge boobs named Missy, took one look at Sansa’s arm linked with Tywin’s and smirked. She was one who had tried hard to capture Jaime’s attention the other day, only to be soundly rejected by him. Now here was the perfect Sansa Stark, practically clinging to a man old enough to be her grandfather, Missy thought.

“Found yourself an even richer sugar daddy, huh,” Missy snarked at Sansa, not realizing who Tywin was.

Tywin, less drunk than Sansa, immediately bristled. Another server, Katie, brunette, came up to the little desk and took one look at Sansa and Tywin and got a disgusted look on her face. Katie and Missy were best friends, and they had spent the past few days bitching about how Sansa had all but stolen Jaime from them.

“What is she doing here with him?” Katie asked rudely.

“What did you say?” Tywin's gaze had narrowed, and he was enraged.

The woman, too stupid to realize who she was angering, tsk'd at Sansa. “I can’t wait to see Chef Jaime’s face when he sees you on his arm. God, I can't believe you'd come here and do this to him. He deserves someone so much better than you."

Sansa had paled and looked like she might be sick.

Tywin’s eyes narrowed. “Yes, let’s call Chef Jaime out here and see what his reaction is.”

Both women suddenly seemed to realize that something wasn’t quite right, as Jojen was suddenly there.

“Sansa! Tywin! We’ve been waiting for you.” Jojen's voice was too bright as he took one look at the four people glaring at one another, and the rapt audience and knew something bad had happened.

“Call my son. I want him to witness the treatment these women you have working for you decided to bestow upon us.” Tywin growled, and Joen swallowed hard. He hurried away to find Bran and Jaime, while everyone else stood frozen.

"Jaime's your son?" Missy asked stupidly. Neither Tywin nor Sansa answered her.

Jaime came striding through the restaurant, a worried look on his face until he spotted Sansa on the arm of his father. Joen had only said there was trouble and his mind had immediately went to Harry. He walked up to them and saw his father glaring daggers at the server and hostess and
wondered what the fuck had happened. When he in front of them, Sansa let out a shaky smile.

“Hey kitten, what’s going on?”

Her eyes filled with tears, and she drunkenly tried to explain that Katie and Missy had made her feel like she had done something wrong by showing up with Tywin.

“Shh baby, it’s ok,” Jaime said, drawing her into his arms as she cried a bit. He looked at the two women; his eyes narrowed in anger. He’d seen their lustful looks the other day, but he’d assumed his very public display with Sansa would have given them a clear message.

“What the fuck is going on here?” Jaime growled at the two of them.

“Sir, we, I mean, she showed up here, on the arm of him,” the hostess said, pointing to Tywin.

“That is my father, you fool. Of course, she came with him. They’ve been together all afternoon,” Jaime snarled at her, holding Sansa tighter. “What the fuck is your problem making my girlfriend feel this way?”

Bran stepped in then, knowing exactly what was going on. He’d heard several of the women in his employment talking poorly about Sansa, and how Jaime must have chosen her because of her connection to the Starks. He’d thought he’d handled it, but clearly, he had not.

“You’re both done for tonight. Come in tomorrow and we’ll deal with the fallout,” Bran said, resigned to having failed to protect Sansa from his own staff.

“What? You can’t do that. We didn’t do anything wrong. She’s the slut that’s sleeping with Jaime Lannister and his father,” the idiotic blond woman said. Loudly.

Both Jaime and Tywin visibly reacted, outraged and disgusted by her and her allegation. But it was Sansa that was the angriest.

“I am not sleeping with either one of them. At least not yet,” she yelled at the hostess, Missy. “I mean, I have Monday sex planned with Jaime, but I’m not sleeping with his father. We’re friends and business colleagues,” she continued, voice raised, too tipsy to be embarrassed.

Jaime’s mouth dropped open, and then he rumbled out a laugh. “Good save, kitten,” and pressed a kiss to her lips. She smiled and kissed him back, pleased with herself.

“I can’t wait to sleep with you, Jaime.” She might have said this loud enough for half the restaurant to hear, but Jaime didn't care.

His grin widened, and he let out a little laugh. “Alright kitten let’s get you to your seat,” he said, delighted by her. He wondered just how embarrassed she was going to be tomorrow morning when she remembered this evening. “I trust you can take of them,” Jaime said to Bran, refusing to even look at the two women who had caused such problems.

“I will.” Bran felt and looked awful.

Jaime started to walk through the restaurant until they got to their table and pulled out a chair for Sansa, who counted three.

“You’re joining us?” The pure happiness on her face made Jaime’s heart trip and fall. There wasn’t another woman he’d ever met that had wanted him for him the way that Sansa did. He dropped a kiss to her lips, lingering there.
“I am baby. That was another part of the surprise.”

“Excellent,” she said. Tywin had followed them over, still not happy with how things had been handled at the front. He was about to make a disparaging comment about Bran Stark and how he managed his restaurant when Jaime held up a hand. “It is because of me this happened, and you know it as much as I do, father. Do not take this out on Bran.”

Tywin huffed out a frustrated breath. “She did not deserve to be treated that way, Jaime.”

Jaime nodded. He couldn’t agree more. But what Tywin didn’t understand was the price of celebrity. It was something he and Sansa would have to learn to navigate. Tonight had been a harsh reminder of the jealousy and pettiness of others.

One of Sansa’s favourite waiters, Trey, came right over with fresh bread and butter and smiled at Sansa. “Don’t worry about Missy and Katie. They are just bitches,” he said to the little group. Sansa giggled and thanked him for the bread, taking a large drink of water.

“Oh, man, that is good,” Sansa said, draining her glass and then moving on to Jaime’s.

He gave a stunned look to his father. “What on god’s green earth did you do to her?”

Tywin barked out a laugh. “We might have sampled some of her wine.”

“How much?”

“Five bottles Jaime,” came Sansa’s reply, along with another laugh. “I haven’t drunk five bottles of wine since I was in university.”

“And did you two accomplish anything, apart from day drinking? And how the hell did you get here?” Jaime’s brow creased in sudden concern.


“Relax, kitten. I’ll call Robb and get him or Jon to pop over,” Jaime said, holding her hand and watching as she calmed down. Drunk Sansa was hilarious, not to mention freaking adorable.

“I’m sorry, Sansa. I too forgot about your pet,” Tywin said, holding her gaze, by now having sobered up quicker than her.

“He’s more than a pet. He’s my baby,” she cried just as Jaime was hanging up the phone.

“Kitten calm down. Robb is on his way over. Tank will hang with them tonight, and we can get him in the morning. I’m sure my Dad can’t wait to see the ranch and farm.”

“Oh, we should get him to do the eggs. I hate those hens. Evil eyes,” Sansa muttered.

Tywin smirked. “Please. How hard can collecting eggs be?”

Had he been a bit soberer, Tywin would have noticed the evil gleam in Jaime’s eyes, but as he was still a bit flushed, he missed it. “Oh, I’m sure you’ll find out. We’ll get Ned to help you.”

The conversation turned to what Sansa and Tywin had discussed, and Jaime settled in. They did get another bottle or two of wine, and the meal that Jaime had prepared for them was delivered. Sansa delighted both Lannister men with her sharp wit as her inhibitions were down due to her slightly
inebriated state. Eventually, Bran and Jojen joined them, and Tywin relaxed, finding Bran to be professional and competent, despite the earlier debacle.

When Sansa yawned for the third time, Jaime finally called an end to the evening, despite her killer pout that she didn’t want to go home yet. When Jaime was helping her into her coat, she turned in his arms, lip still out there.

“You always go to your own room,” she whined softly, pressing a kiss to his lips.

Jaime groaned; he was rock hard and had been for hours. He wanted this woman more than he’d ever wanted anyone, and he had enough condoms in his drawer to keep them going all weekend long. But they’d agreed to wait until their second date, and no way was their first time going to be when she was drunk off her cute little ass.

“Baby, you know I want you,” Jaime started to say and then yipped when she grabbed him by the junk.

“I can feel that you do,” she all but purred into his ear, nipping at him. Jaime groaned again, closing his eyes for a moment and letting the feeling of Sansa gripping his cock wash over him. Then he gathered his metaphorical balls, and pulled her hand away, bringing it to his lips to kiss.

“Kitten, I promise you, it’ll be worth it,” he told her.

She pulled him closer. “At least spend the night with me.” She held up a hand. “Not sleeping with me, Jaime. Just hold me. We can do that, can’t we?” Jaime had to give her credit; she was a champion negotiator, and that pout could solve wars he was sure.

“Good god, son, surely you can sleep in the same bed and not ravage her,” Tywin barked at Jaime, having watched the entire display with an amused expression on his face.

Jaime scrubbed a hand down his face, wondering what he’d done to get into this mess. This morning he’d been worried about his father liking Sansa, and now the two were thick as thieves.

“Yes, Jaime, surely you can hold me and nothing more,” Sansa said, batting her eyelashes. Then she locked arms with Tywin and Jaime and all but marched them out of the restaurant, calling thank you over her shoulder to Bran. “If I’m sleeping with the both of you, might as well make it believable.”

Tywin threw his head back and laughed, while Jaime’s mouth just dropped open. He shot his father a glare and said, “Never again will I leave the two of you alone together.” Inside though, both Lannister men were so taken with Sansa that they willingly followed her out the door.

When they got home, Jaime did indeed walk Sansa to her room after he made her drink more water and take two pain pills. Once there, she tugged him inside, calling over her shoulder to Tywin that she had a great day and that they’d see him in the morning. The Great Lion just shook his head at the two of them and thought his son deserved the uncomfortable sleep he was about to get.

Sansa closed her door and then locked it. “I know we’re not sleeping together tonight Jaime, but I’m sick and tired of not having you in my bed. Even to hold me.” Then it seemed like all her courage fled, and she looked away.

“Kitten, what’s wrong?” Jaime asked, voice soft as he cupped her cheek.

“I’ve only ever slept with one man, Jaime. And I want you to cuddle me tonight. I know that seems silly, and I’m sorry…” Jaime cut her off with a kiss, tender and sweet.
“Stop baby. It’s perfect, Sansa. I’m honoured,” he told her. “Get ready for bed, and I’ll be back. I’m just going to go and grab some sleep clothes and brush my teeth.”

She nodded and then turned and went into her bathroom, while Jaime went to his. When he came back to her room, she was under the covers and he turned out the lamp she’d left on. He crawled under the sheets and pulled her closer, a sense of wonder stealing over him as she cuddled into his chest. He inhaled, loving the smell that was Sansa and felt a sense of rightness that settled over him, having this woman in his arms.

“Thank you, Sansa, for inviting me here,” Jaime whispered to her, pressing a kiss to her forehead.

“Thanks for not pressuring me,” Sansa murmured back, the entire day making her sleepy.

Jaime knew as long as he lived, he’d never deserve someone like her; she was everything he’d ever dreamed of, and now she was in his arms. He had no idea how he might make it work, their lives at opposite ends of the country, but he vowed to find a way. He felt her slip into sleep and smiled at her trust. He pressed one last kiss to her head and then followed her under, excited for what the future had in store for the two of them and their wild, crazy families.
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

I feel my brain is ridiculous but I love it and hope you do as well.

Also, I hope you LOL because this is meant to be funny and so sweet!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sansa woke to the feeling of something warm and delightful on her neck. She arched, bumped into a very hard, very male body, and opened her eyes wide. She was in her bed, with Jaime. Thankfully, she was clothed in her sleepwear, but if Jaime’s lips on her neck were any indication, along with the hardened length she felt pressing into her butt, he was angling for something a little bit more.

Surprisingly, she had no headache, which she was grateful for, as the previous night came rushing back. She tried to recall what she said at the restaurant, but then Jaime’s hand worked its way up and under her tank top, stroking over her breast, pebbling her nipple into a hard peak.

“Good morning, kitten,” he purred into her ear, sucking on her lobe and making her squirm.

“Jaime,” she said, loving how she was pinned against his body.

“How’s the head, baby?”

“Good.”

He rumbled out a laugh and then let his hand wander lower, over her slim stomach, until it dipped inside her panties.

“Let me make you feel good, Sansa,” Jaime whispered into her ear, and she moaned out a yes as those talented fingers that she had watched in Bran’s kitchen a few days ago, went to work on her.

He was masterful, stroking her and rubbing her in the right places, sinking first one, then two digits inside her, petting her in such a way that she cried out his name into the room within a few minutes. She wanted to be embarrassed at how quickly she had orgasmed, but she felt so dang good.

“That was the hottest thing I’ve seen in a very long time,” Jaime said, turning her and pressing his lips to her. She kissed him back until she realized she hadn’t brushed her teeth.

“Jaime, morning breath,” Sansa said, horrified. She jumped out of bed and raced to the bathroom, scrubbing her teeth and taking a moment to assess the damage. Despite drinking her fair share of wine, her blue eyes were bright and cheerful, her cheeks flushed and that delightful post-orgasmic bloom apparent on her face. When she finally emerged from the bathroom, Jaime was propped up in bed, looking sinfully handsome and welcoming.

“Come back to bed, kitten,” he said, opening his arms. She crawled up to him and then pressed her lips back against his, tasting the minty tang on his tongue as well.
“Good morning, Jaime.”

“Good morning, Sansa.”

They grinned stupidly at each other.

“I didn’t embarrass you too much last night?” Sansa asked. She had remembered everything, including announcing when they were going to sleep together, grabbing his hard penis in the restaurant and linking arms with both Lannister men before exiting Bran’s restaurant.

Jaime laughed and stroked her cheek. “No, kitten. You were adorably hilarious.”

She worried her lip. “And your father? He won’t think poorly of me?”

Jaime shook his head in wonder at her. He was sure that Tywin was half in love with her and would not be surprised if the wily Old Lion somehow produced Joanna’s ring for Jaime to propose. He’d seen his father react protectively towards Sansa, and that was a sure sign he viewed her as family, which made Jaime extremely happy. He knew that they’d have to discuss the future, and soon, but for now, Jaime was just content that everyone was getting along.

Taking a few more minutes to thoroughly kiss Sansa, Jaime eventually pulled them from her bedroom. He wondered if he’d be invited to cuddle and sleep beside her again tonight, and he desperately hoped so. He’d move all his stuff in here, happy to play house for the remaining three weeks he was here, until he could make it more permanent.

They dressed quickly and strolled into the kitchen, hand in hand, to Tywin sipping coffee and working on his laptop. He smirked at the two of them, and then pressed a soft kiss to Sansa’s cheek.

“How do you feel this morning, my dear?” he asked her.

“Good. I can hold my wine at least. Hard liquor and all bets are off.” She paused and looked at this very rich and powerful man in her kitchen and then spoke again. “I’m sorry if I did anything to embarrass you last evening…” before Tywin held up his hand.

“Stop, Sansa,” he commanded gently. “You did not.” He ensured she saw the truth in his eyes, and she nodded, relieved.

Jaime was gathering things for breakfast when Sansa’s phone chimed.

“Ned’s wondering when we are coming over for Tank. And Robb says he’s also already packed his bag for the sleepover tonight.”

“Sleepover?” Tywin asked, eyebrow arched.

“Yes, Father. We’re babysitting Sansa’s two nephews tonight; Ned age four going on forty and Ben, only two. It should be fun.” Jaime had a huge smile on his face.

Tywin grunted. It had been an age since he’d been around his grandchildren, and even though he loved Jaime, he’d never quite bonded with his and Cersei’s. Tywin knew it had more to do with how Cersei had limited his access to them when they were small, and as such, he hardly knew them. But Sansa and Jaime would be here, so Tywin assumed he’d have very little to do with her nephews.

“Should we head up to the ranch after breakfast? I’m sure you want to see the whole operation. We
could also stop by Jon and Val’s.”

Tywin nodded his agreement. He could admit to being a man that preferred the city, but these Stark’s had intrigued him. Sansa was nothing like what he would have expected before Jaime came North, although he was sure her brother and her cousin would be rougher, living the life they did. Still, the operation they had going had such potential, and Tywin lived for potential.

After breakfast, Sansa looked at the two Lannister men and sighed. “I’d tell you to dress casually, but somehow I don’t think we’re speaking the same language.”

Jaime pretended to be offended. “Kitten, I have jeans.”

She rubbed her head. She’d seen Jaime’s jeans; they had a designer label and cost over $600 a pair, not to mention his ‘boots’ that he still argued were more than adequate.

“Just… whatever. Wear whatever you’d like. I’m sure Robb has some boots you can borrow if it’s too mucky.”

Tywin’s back stiffened. “I will not wear other people’s footwear,” his tone haughty.

Sansa sighed and waved a hand. Who the hell was she to argue if he wanted to wreck $1300 shoes? It was his money, not hers.

She slipped on dark skinny jeans, pulled on her favourite cowboy boots, along with a white t-shirt and a soft leather jacket and waited for them on the porch. When they emerged, all she could think of was they looked like peacocks in a room full of chickens. Tywin’s version of casual was dark grey pants, a beautiful blue cashmere sweater and yes, designer boots that cost as much as some people’s paycheque. Sansa sighed. Jaime wasn’t much better, although he did have on jeans at least that hugged his butt in a way that had Sansa’s mouth-watering, even if they were sinfully expensive.

She explained her family’s operation in more detail to Tywin on their drive over to the farm; he was especially interested in the fact that they butchered their own animals. She discovered that he was a history buff, and the role of the butcher in village life in the medieval ages was a critical one and he’d never had the chance to see it up close and personal as he put it.

“I never thought I’d see it in real life. Can we go to his shop?”

Sansa nodded and promised to send a quick text to Arya. Gendry did all of his butchering out of a shop at the farm that they had converted for him. They had communal meat lockers for all the Starks, and everyone just ‘shopped’ there when they needed something for dinner.

When they pulled up to the ranch house, Tywin let out a low sound of appreciation and Sansa felt the pride in her family swell. It was an impressive dwelling, and she liked that Tywin saw that and approved. After all, he was a man with impeccable taste.

“It’s beautiful,” he told her, wondering what she might thing of Casterly Rock and eager to see her and Jaime there.

“Thanks. I’ll warn you now, Ned is… precocious.”

Tywin smirked, having raised two boys, not worried. How rambunctious could he be?

When they exited her truck, a small dark-haired figure came rocketing towards them, yelling, “Uncle Jaime,” before launching himself into Jaime’s outstretched arms.
Jaime picked Ned up and swung him around. “Hey buddy,” he said, tickling his belly. Ned giggled and hugged Jaime tighter. Jaime’s green eyes saw the longing in Sansa’s, and he vowed to give her this one day—her own children and family.

Sansa let out a small sigh. “I’ve been replaced already.”

Ned’s brown eyes swung to hers, suddenly serious. “No, you haven’t Aunty Sansa. But I gots to make up the hugs for Uncle Jaime because you’ve had so many more.” It was with that irrefutable logic in which Sansa threw her head back and laughed.

“Fair enough, bud, fair enough.” In truth, Sansa loved how Ned had bonded so quickly with Jaime. It had never been like that with Harry.

Tywin stood watching the whole scene in utter fascination as a dark-haired man strolled out, another little boy in his arms. Robb took in what Jaime and Tywin were wearing with a critical eye and just shook his head at these city folk and their fancy shoes and clothes. Then he held out his hand as he handed Ben to Sansa.

“Robb Stark.”

“Tywin Lannister.”

They shook hands and took stock of one another before Ned interrupted.

“Who’s that?”

Jaime let out a small laugh. “That is my father. His name is Tywin, but we call him the Great Lion.” Jaime had a shit-eating grin on his face while his father grunted at the small boy. Jaime put Ned on the ground and slapped Robb on the back in the way of brothers.

Ned’s brow crinkled as he processed that new information, and the three grown men started speaking about the ranch and how it was run. Sansa had slipped into the ranch house to talk with Jeyne and find Tank along with Ben.

“Papa Lion,” Ned suddenly called. All three heads turned to look at Ned, stunned.

Clearly, he had mixed up Tywin for lion, and the results were epic.

“Papa Lion,” he said again, this time more demanding as he walked up and took Tywin’s hand. “I heard we are getting the eggs.”

Tywin looked down to see Ned’s small hand in his as he tugged him towards the chicken coop. Tywin Lannister, a man that had literally toppled government’s he didn’t like, had no idea how to react to any of it. Not to his new name, nor to the clear intelligence of this four-year-old, and certainly not to the demand that they collect chicken eggs on this bright fall morning.

“Ummm, yes, well, see here, young Ned…” Tywin started to say, as Ned kept tugging.

“Daddy bring the basket,” Ned ordered. Robb snickered and strolled beside then, snatching the egg basket from the porch as they walked towards the chicken coop. Ned kept up an endless commentary, words tumbling out of his mouth.

“Aunty Sansa hates the chickens. She calls them evil bas…” Ned stopped talking and gave a sly grin to Tywin and his voice dropped. “A bad word. I can’t say it, or else I owe money to the swear jar. But then Uncle Jaime said it was easy, but the one chicken got him, hard and he swore as well.
He had to put money into my jar as well. I tried to tell them you have to be quick, but they don’t listen. Will you listen Papa Lion?”

Tywin looked utterly stunned. Of course, he’d said he’d collect the damn eggs, but he’d assumed it would be with Sansa and to be honest, he thought they might have forgotten. It turned out, they had not. Never one to back down from a challenge, even from a four-year-old, Tywin straightened his spine.

“I can’t imagine it is too difficult, young Ned,” he said in a formal tone.

Ned looked up him, eyes owlishly large. “Why do you talk like that?”

“What do you mean, why do I talk like what?”

“Like Mufasa.”

Tywin gave Robb a look that said, who the hell is Mufasa? Robb was trying hard not to laugh, watching Ned befuddle the richest man in Westeros. God knew there had been days when Ned had done the same thing to Robb. They’d had him tested and his IQ was through the charts and the boy could talk the ears off anyone.

“It’s from Ned’s favourite movie; the Lion King.”

Ned’s eyes went wide, an idea forming instantly. “Daddy, can Papa Lion watch the Lion King with me today?”

Robb nodded and squatted down, so he was eye level with his son. “Buddy, I think that’s a great idea. Remember, you’re going to Aunt Sansa’s and Uncle Jaime’s for a sleepover later. I’m sure Papa Tywin would love to watch that movie with you.”

Tywin snorted and glared at Sansa’s brother, well aware of what he was doing, and vowed to return the favour tenfold.

Robb clapped Tywin on the back. “Welcome to the family Pops,” he said, grinning widely. Ned had no grandparents, as both Jeyne’s and Robb’s parents were gone, so as much as Robb was amused, he was also deeply touched that Ned had taken so quickly to Tywin. Robb could see the writing on the wall with Sansa and Jaime, and he was sure the southern chef would be moving North soon. And now Tywin was Ned’s honorary grandfather.

Tywin started a bit, and then nodded, realizing that Ned had appointed him to that position and Robb had accepted it.

Then Tywin was drug into the chicken coop by Ned.

Jaime and Robb held it together as the two of them, hand in hand, disappeared. Then they howled in laughter at the curses and Ned’s constant instructions that came drifting out.

“Like this Papa Lion.”

“No, too slow.”

“That’s another swear, Papa Lion.”

“Ouch, that looks like it hurts.”

Along with Ned’s observations, came Tywin’s mutterings, until Jaime and Robb had tears
streaming down their faces. When the two of them emerged, Tywin looked ready to kill someone, a series of nicks and gouges on his hand, along with some blood, and Ned looked disappointed.

“Papa Lion owes me a lot of money,” he told Robb and Jaime solemnly, shaking his head.

Tywin thrust the basket at Robb and snarled, “Where is Sansa?” He knew she wouldn’t let him suffer any more indignities, not like his ungrateful son, who he was glaring at.

Jaime slapped his father on his back, and they started to wander towards the farmhouse until Ned’s voice stopped them.

“Don’t you want to see the pigs, Pape Lion? I called my piglet Bacon because I love bacon and when he grows up that’s what he’s going to be. Uncle Gendry makes sure of it.”

Tywin and Jaime stopped and just stared at the little boy, almost horrified looks of disbelief on both their faces, until they turned to Robb.

He was rubbing the back of his neck and looked a bit sheepish. “It’s best that the kids don’t get too attached to the animals we butcher for meat. I have no idea how he came up with the name though.”


“My gods, I don’t know how you’ll survive,” Tywin said, new respect in his eyes for Robb Stark. Jaime had been precocious, but Ned was another level.

That was how Jaime, Robb, Tywin and little Ned found themselves in the barn, looking at animals. “Aunty Arya says I should call my next piglet Pork Chop, but I like Ham better,” Ned told them, sending the men into another round of morbid laughter.

“I’m honestly going to kill her,” Robb muttered, wondering how long it would be before he was hauled into a parent-teacher conference for Ned when his son went to school next year.

When they finally made their way back to the ranch house, Sansa, Jeyne and Ben were sitting on the porch. There was a pitcher of lemonade and fresh baking, and they sunk into the comfortable chairs, content for a time to look out over the ranch and sip their drinks.

Ned scrambled up onto Sansa’s lap, playing with her necklace.

“What are you angling for, little buddy?” She knew all his looks and knew he was after something. He dipped his eyes and then raised them, and Sansa wondered if there was anyone on this planet that would ever be able to say to no to this little boy.

“Can Papa Lion watch the Lion King with me today?”

Sansa shot a glance over to Tywin, who appeared to be a bit stunned.

“Tell you what, Ned,” Sansa said. “If you’re a good boy and if you eat your dinner, and take a bath, then yes, we can make some popcorn, and we can all watch the movie after we put Ben to bed tonight.”

“Ok,” he agreed readily and then frowned. “What’s for dinner?”

“I don’t know. Right now, Uncle Jaime is doing the cooking.”
Ned’s head swivelled, pinning Jaime with a hopeful look. “Pizza?”

Jaime threw back his head and laughed. “Hmmm, I was thinking about spinach and liver and onions.”

Ned let out a retching sound. “Please no, Uncle Jaime.”

Jaime, a sucker for that lip that bore a startling resemblance to Sansa’s from last night, cocked his head. “What’s your favourite meal?”

“Skabetti.”

Jaime laughed. “We can make pasta, buddy. But there will also be a salad.”

Ned sighed, resigned to eating some greens.

Sansa glanced at her watch and saw it was getting late. “We should pop by Jon’s place. Tywin wanted to see Gendry’s shop.”

Robb nodded. “We’ll drop them off around five, San. And thanks.”

Tywin, Jaime and Sansa got back in her truck, Tank on Jaime’s lap again, and drove the short distance to Jon’s farm. He and Val were out with the baby, doing their regular farmer’s market thing on Saturdays, but Arya and Gendry were around. Sansa took the short, windy road down to their cabin and saw that they were outside, Arya hanging laundry on a line. Sansa shook her head at how granola her sister had become. Their house was run almost exclusively off geothermal heat and solar panels, and they liked to live ‘close to the land.’ Someday Sansa wondered if her baby sister even wore deodorant; Arya had lost Sansa when she’d started talking about making her own. Sansa liked to smell good, and no way was she giving that up.

When they exited the car, Sansa had a brief worry about how this might go. Arya had become more and more judgemental about how the ‘mainstream’ lived and looking at Tywin and Jaime; they’d never met a designer they didn’t love. They fairly screamed couture fashion and made no apologies for it. They were the one-percenters and even though Arya lived a comfortable life, the Starks weren’t in the same league as the Lannisters when it came to wealth.

Sure enough, one look at Tywin and Arya scoffed, which had Tywin’s back stiffening. Sansa had to give him credit; he’d handled himself well at the ranch. But it was one thing to get the gears from a child, another from an adult.

“Arya be nice,” Gendry said, having come to stand beside his wife. He wasn’t quite as into this lifestyle as she was, but he loved her, so he mostly went along with what she wanted. It was easier that way. He held out his hand to Tywin and shook it. “I hear you’re interested in butchering.”

To everyone’s shock, Tywin smiled warmly at the butcher and nodded eagerly, launching into an explanation of what he’d read. Gendry quickly picked up the conversation, as the other three trailed after them as they walked towards Gendry’s shop.

“I was just about to do a deer,” Gendry said. He’d had the meat hung on the rack, and as they stepped in, Jaime’s eyes widened.

“A big part of my business is butchering for local hunters,” he said by way of explanation. Then he shot Jaime a look. “Ever had venison? Or moose?”

Jaime shook his head, the chef in him fascinated. He wasn’t the only Lannister, as Tywin looked
on eagerly. Seeing these two men, and the respect in their eyes, Gendry made a split decision. He palmed a knife and flipped it, holding it out to Tywin. “Want to do the honours? We need to skin him first.”

Tywin’s eyes lit, and he nodded. He pulled off his cashmere sweater and handed it to Sansa, who stood beside her sister with their mouths open. This was not how either one of them had seen today going. Then Tywin all but rubbed his hands together, while Gendry gave him a butchers apron and some gloves. Not one to shy away, Jaime stepped in as well, as both Lannister men were treated to a first-hand demonstration on how to skin a deer, and then cut it into primal sections, before they got down to the business of the individual cuts of meat.

All in all, it took a few hours, and Tywin was a natural. He took the blade and easily felt how to separate the hide from the meat, intrigued by the age-old techniques.

“Hundreds of years, and yet man still needs to kill, clean and butcher his meat,” Tywin said, and Gendry grinned.

“Exactly. So, few appreciate what a skilled butcher can do.”

Then they were lost in the process, while Sansa and Arya went back to their little cabin. Her sister had turned green when the flesh was being pulled back, and Sansa did not need to see Arya puke.

“Who knew that Daddy Warbucks out there would dive right in,” Arya said, rolling her eyes, but secretly a bit impressed. There weren’t many people who willingly helped Gendry and seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Sansa sighed as they sat on the porch, the fall day warm and pleasant. “How are you feeling, sister?” Sansa knew that Arya had horrid all day sickness.

“Slightly better.”

“That’s good because I think Robb’s going to kill you,” Sansa told her sister.

“Why?”

“Bacon for Ned’s pig’s name?”

Arya snorted. “Fucking hilarious if you ask me.” She snickered again, and Sansa gave her a look.

“I swear, Arry, if you do that to my kids, I’ll kill you,” Sansa threatened, and Arya’s eyebrows winged up, and she leaned in closer.

“Kids San? Last I checked, he was barely your boyfriend.”

In truth, Arya liked how Jaime treated Sansa. He’d barely been here a week, and already his father was here, and the man had slotted into their family with an ease few had achieved. He seemed to worship the ground that Sansa walked on and was bending over backwards to make her sister happy. Arya just worried because as far as she knew, they hadn’t discussed anything beyond what happened when Jaime’s month was up.

When Arya asked Sansa about it, her sister got quiet.

“What if he just wants to leave, Arya?” Sansa had promised that her heart wouldn’t fall to Jaime, but she knew that was in serious jeopardy. How could it not be? He was everything she wanted in a husband, and he was so good with children. Beyond all that, he treated her like a queen.
For once in her life, Arya was gentle with her sister. She reached out and squeezed Sansa’s hand. “You need to ask him San. I mean, you guys can work it out, but you need to know what he’s thinking.”

Sansa sniffed a bit and nodded. She knew that was true; she was just afraid of Jaime’s answer. “I will, sister. I promise.”

“Good.”

An hour later, the three men came out of Gendry’s shop, looks of accomplishment on their faces. Tywin looked especially proud of himself, and his mind was racing with possibilities for these Starks. They were sitting on a gold mine up here; not an actual one, but a real chance to do something impactful, not only for themselves but their children as well. Tywin wondered if his insights would be welcome and vowed to speak with Sansa about it before addressing it with the rest of them.

When they were leaving, Arya reminded them of Sunday night dinner and Robb and Jeyne’s and then wished them luck with babysitting tonight. She had a smirk on her face that gave Tywin pause.

“What is that look on your face?”

“Nothing, DWB,” she snarked back.

“DWB?”

She grinned. “Daddy Warbucks, Scrooge McDuck,” she taunted him and stuck out her tongue, laughing brightly. Sansa shook her head.

Tywin sneered at her. “Yes, because looking like little orphan Annie is the height of respectability.”

Arya’s eyes widened and then she threw back her head and laughed. “I like you, Rockefeller, I really do.”

Tywin shook his head. “Granola munching hippies,” he muttered.

Arya and Jon both had serious chips on their shoulders when it came to people with money. In some ways, Sansa was glad that Jon and Val were gone today; it probably would have been too much for Tywin and who could blame him? He’d been a trooper, that was for sure.

The rest of the afternoon, Sansa spent cleaning her house and prepping for the boys to come. She always kept it in a semi-state of babyproofing but wandered through making sure Ben couldn’t get into anything she didn’t want him too. She found Jaime in his room, packing his bags and laughed. “Presumptuous much?”

He pulled her closer, kissing her soundly. “Not presumptuous, just prepared.” She kissed him again and wrapped her arms around his neck.

“Jaime, do you want to share my bedroom?”

“Why Sansa, that’s awfully forward of you. What would my father think?”

“He’d think you are a damn fool if you don’t take her up on her offer,” Tywin muttered as he
walked by on the way to his bedroom.

Sansa and Jaime laughed and then worked on getting his things moved over. Sansa had to admit; she liked what they looked like there. So did Jaime.

When the doorbell rang at five pm, Tank barked and ran to the front door, just as Ned pushed inside. “Aunty! Uncle! Papa! I’m here,” he singongsonged out, kicking off his little cowboy boots and racing inside to find them.

Jeyne and Robb were right behind them, passing Ben off to Sansa’s waiting arms, carrying two little bags.

“You’re an angel San,” Robb said, grinning at his sister and kissing her cheek. “Ned,” Robb called, wondering where on earth his son had run off to. He had a fascination with these Lannister’s that was for sure, and both Sansa and Robb felt the pain of their father not being here.

“Daddy?” he said, popping his head around the corner.

“Ned, come and kiss your Mama and me goodnight,” Robb ordered, and Ned streaked back over, hugging his parents, who were soon out the door.

“Ahhh, kid-free time,” Jaime said, grinning and then winked at Sansa. “Good thing she’s already pregnant again.” Sansa laughed, agreeing. Robb had a look in his eyes.

When they got to the kitchen, Sansa put Ben in a booster seat and looked for Ned, smiling when she saw him glued to Tywin on the couch, talking a mile a minute. He’d had a large poop that afternoon, which had clogged the toilet to his endless delight and caused quite an uproar in the household. Tywin was looking slightly horrified at Ned’s description of the events. Jaime had tears rolling down his face in laughter as he grabbed Sansa.

“I swear, kitten, that kid is the funniest one I’ve ever met.”

Sansa had to agree, but still, she felt for Tywin.

“Ned, come here and help us make dinner,” she called, and the little boy gave one more look of longing to Tywin, before hurrying into the kitchen.

He climbed up onto a stool as Jaime took out ingredients to make the sauce. Ned wrinkled his nose. “Doesn’t it come out of a jar?”

Jaime looked horrified, and Sansa laughed, patting him on the back. “All you babe,” she said and watched as Jaime got Ned involved in little tasks, including stirring and helping wash vegetables for the salad.

“Mama never puts any of that in her sauce,” Ned said at one point, and Jaime winked at him.

“Do I look like Mama?”

Ned laughed and shook his head. “No, Uncle Jaime, you don’t.”

Even with a little helper, dinner was soon ready, and the five of them sat down. Of course, Ben had to be helped, which Sansa willingly did. The boy was an eater, while Ned picked at his dinner.

Tywin gave him a stern look. “I suppose if your plate isn’t clean, there will be no tiger prince movie.”
Ned’s eyes got wide. “Papa Lion, it’s The Lion King movie.” Then he frowned and looked at his plate, let out a sigh and started to eat.

“Papa Lion, do you like vegetables?” Ned asked after a few more bites.

Tywin nodded. “I do.”

“Hmm,” Ned said, taking another bite of spaghetti.

“Uncle Jaime, do you?”

“Yup. Veggies make us strong.”

Ned let out a long-suffering sigh, not having found an ally.

“If you eat some more, you can have dessert,” Sansa said, winking at him and he gave her a sigh.

“That’s a bribe, Aunty Sansa,” Ned told her, and she laughed.

“You bet it is. But if your little butt doesn’t hurry up, they’ll be no ice cream and no movie, little man,” Sansa said to him. She’d been wise to his game for years and watched as he reluctantly started shovelling food in his mouth.

Afterwards, she hustled both boys upstairs to the large bathroom with a huge tub, filling it with bubble bath that they liked, scrubbing and washing them clean. When they were dry and, in their pyjama’s, Ned hurried back downstairs, while Sansa took Ben to the room they shared and rocked him for a while, reading stories. She knew Jaime would take care of Ned and the ice cream treat, and soon enough, Ben rubbed his eyes.

“Night Sanny,” he said in his sweet little voice, kissing her. She lingered a moment, his sweet smell and words making her heartache. She wanted this so badly she could taste it. She gave him another kiss, and then closed his door, a little melancholy the way she always was when she watched her nephews.

When she entered the kitchen, she found Jaime had made Ned a huge chocolate sundae and gave him a look. “I’d almost think you’d never done this parenting gig by the number of things you let him get away with,” she said dryly. Jaime grinned and pulled her into his arms.

“I’m the fun parent, kitten,” he said, laughing and kissing her soundly.

“Ewww, Uncle Jaime, why do you kiss Aunt Sansa?” Ned asked, covering his eyes.

“Because I like her Ned, and one day, you’ll like someone and want to kiss them.”

“How very PC of you, Jaime,” Tywin said drolly from his spot on the couch. He had the business news on and was scanning his emails.

Jaime laughed, wrapping Sansa up in his arms. “Movie time?” he asked as she flicked on the kettle for tea.

“You’re joining us?” She was a bit surprised; she thought he might take himself elsewhere.

He wiggled his eyebrows. “How can you think I’d miss the Great Lion watching the Lion King, kitten?”

Sansa shook her head and made her tea, by which time, Ned was done. He all but launched himself
onto the couch, curling up beside Tywin with his favourite blanket.

“Can we have lights out?” he asked eagerly, and Sansa nodded. Her and Jaime took a spot on the other end of the huge sectional, trying not to smirk at the little boy who by now had crawled into Tywin’s lap. Left with no other choice, Tywin opened his arms. It was odd to have the weight of a grandchild there after so many years, and he didn’t find it at all unpleasant; he liked his new role as a grandfather, realizing how much he’d missed out on with Jaime’s children.

With the lights dimmed and the movie starting, Ned sat enraptured as the first strains of the now-familiar opening song came through the sound system.

“I thought this was a cartoon?” Jaime whispered, perplexed.

Sansa gave him a look. “Live animation remake, babe. Try to keep up.”

Tywin grunted as they were introduced to Mufasa and the pride, and then met Scar. “He’s sure to be trouble,” he grumbled. “Ungrateful sod.”

“Papa Lion, shhhhh,” Ned said, pressing closer to Tywin.

Tywin appeared intrigued, especially when Mufasa was explaining to Simba everything that would be his, and arched an eyebrow at Jaime, who was grinning, having as much fun watching Tywin and Ned as he was the movie.

When the stampede came, and Simba was trapped, Ned whimpered and pressed closer to Tywin, hiding his eyes. “It’s alright, Ned.”

“No, it’s not. Simba’s dad dies because Scar is mean!” Ned cried, and Tywin shot a look to Sansa. “What is this? I thought this was a children’s movie? He is distraught!” Tywin barked into the room.

Sansa gave him a look. “Ty, he’s seen this a dozen times. Yes, it’s sad, but it’s part of the movie.”

“It’s ok Papa Lion, it’s over soon,” Ned said bravely and then soldiered on.

When Simba laughed and played with Timon and Pumba, Tywin huffed out a breath. “Lazy. Doesn’t he understand he has a kingdom to run.”

When Scar and the pride were shown to suffer, Tywin snarked, “Piss poor management, cleary.”

When the crazy baboon showed Simba his destiny, Tywin snorted, “Nonsensical magic. He should remember his father’s sacrifice.”

Still, in the end, it worked out, and Tywin looked down at Ned when Sansa turned the lights back on.

“Did you like it, Papa Lion?” Ned asked.

Tywin nodded. “Yes, Ned, I did.”

“Come on, buddy, time for bed. Say you’re goodnights.”

Ned hugged Tywin and Jaime, eliciting promises that they would be there in the morning, and then took Sansa’s hand. As they walked up the stairs, he could be heard talking about how much he liked Sansa’s new family.
Tywin looked to Jaime. “You’d better be planning on marrying that woman, son.”

Jaime nodded. “What about the south and my commitments?”

Tywin waved a hand. “Do you seriously see those as impediments?”

Jaime ran a hand through his hair and leaned in closer. “I don’t want just to abandon you and the restaurants down south.”

“Jaime, a woman like that comes along once in a lifetime, and I’d like more grandchildren. Between myself, Tyrion and Tommen, we will manage. And you can always come down for a weekend when we need you.”

“You don’t think it’s too soon to know? I’ve been here less than a week.”

Tywin let out a warm laugh. “That means you’re a true Lannister, son. When we find the one, time doesn’t matter.”

Jaime nodded and then smiled. “I’m glad you came up here. I’m glad you met her and her family, father.”

“So am I.”

Jaime cleaned up downstairs as Tywin went to his room. When he’d let Tank out and locked all the doors, he turned to see Sansa waiting for him. She gave him a soft smile and held out her hand. “Take me to bed, Jaime,” she said, and he smiled at her and took her hand, doing just that.

Chapter End Notes

Yes the whole scene with Gendry, Tywin and the deer was a nod to one of the great ones in the show
Sansa woke up for a second straight morning in Jaime's arms and realized how good it felt. She stretched slightly, liking how he grumbled and pulled her closer as if her being even an inch from him was too much.

"Morning kitten," he said in a sleepy voice pressing a kiss to her neck, not willing to risk her jumping out of bed to brush her teeth when he had her right where he wanted.

"Morning Jaime," she said, happily snuggling deeper much to his delight.

Jaime thanked the gods that tomorrow was Monday. Not because his camera crew and producer were showing up, but because it meant that it was date night and sleeping with Sansa was finally a reality. Jaime couldn't wait to taste everything and was already planning his menu, which not surprisingly included her. He’d cook for her here; there was no way he wanted to share his time with anyone else- he’d done enough of that over the past few days. Now he wanted to be greedy and have her all to himself.

"What's the plan today, baby?" Jaime asked her, tracing her ear and feeling her shiver in his arms which made him smile. He let his hand roam over her body, loving how she arched back into his touch. He couldn’t wait to explore every inch of her without the risk of being interrupted.

"Ummm, we always have a family dinner on Sunday, but it's more like in the afternoon. Ben and Ned should be up soon, so they'll be wanting breakfast…. Oh Jaime," she cried out when he sunk two fingers into her and stroked, losing her train of thought as he worked his magical fingers that seemed to know just how to touch her.

"I can't wait until tomorrow night, kitten when you cry my name out when I'm deep inside you," Jaime whispered into her ear, and Sansa let out a long moan.

"Why wait?"

He laughed softly, and kissed her shoulder, nibbling at her. "Because I want you all to myself. No adorable nephews and no interfering father. Just you and me, babe, where I can feast on you.”

Sansa shuddered in his arms at that though and she turned her head and looked into his eyes as he continued to stroke her.

"Jaime," his name was almost a plea on her lips.

"Baby, come for me," he all but commanded her, loving as she fell apart in his arms. When she was trying to catch her breath, he snapped a kiss. "I'm going to love watching you do that for a long time, Sansa."
His face was serious now, and he met her eyes.

They filled with tears. "You're not leaving?"

He shook his head. "Not unless you kick me out, kitten. I've never felt like this before." He didn't have to add, not even with Cersei; Sansa could see it all over his face.

"What about all your commitments in the south?"

Jaime traced a finger over her jaw, loving his soft her skin was. He leaned down and sucked at a sensitive spot on the base of her neck. "My father assures me that they can manage. I think we both know my future is here."

He went to say more, but their door opened, and Ned rocketed inside, throwing himself on the bed, as both adults sighed. They definitely needed time with no interruptions, no matter how cute said interruptions were.

"You two are lazy," he pronounced, bouncing on them until Sansa grabbed him and started tickling him. He giggled and burrowed under the blankets until Ben was there, and Sansa pulled him into the bed as well.

"What do you monsters want for breakfast?" She asked as they were all stretched out, relaxing.


"I can do that."

In truth, while Sansa didn't love to cook, baking was another story. She managed reasonably well on that front, and she had discovered that crepes were a Ned sleepover favourite.

Both boys tumbled out of bed, Ned pronouncing loudly what cartoons they could watch as he took Ben by the hand and they went downstairs. Sansa rose and wound her long hair into a messy bun. She stretched, and her tank top rose up exposing an expanse of pale, creamy skin, and then she bent over to pick up a sweater that she pulled over her head, giving Jaime a first-class view of her butt.

She heard a whistle and then she glanced down at Jaime, sprawled out in her bed, looking too gorgeous for words. How was it he'd seen her "morning after" look before they'd even slept together? It was crazy how fast their relationship developed.

"Come on lazy bones, let's go," she said, throwing a pillow at him, rolling her eyes at his catcalls but secretly delighted. Sansa was quite innocent when it came to men; Harry hadn’t done much exploring and she’d only ever been with him. It still spun her head a bit that a man like Jaime wanted her.

He gave her a smirk. "Kitten you do not want me getting out of bed right now." He wiggled his eyebrows and pointed to the impressive morning wood he was sporting. Sansa blushed and then shook her head, hurrying out of the room and downstairs, hearing his laughter at her back. When she rounded the corner, she heard Ned's voice.

"But Papa Lion I'm allowed to watch cartoons on Sunday morning." There might have been a foot stomp, but she wasn’t sure as she’d halted, eavesdropping in on them.

"We will wait for your Aunt. But just know that too much TV is not good for you."
"Why?"

"Because it can rot your brain."

"Like a zombie?"

Tywin sputtered a bit at a loss and wondering where in the hell Sansa and Jaime were. Sansa was trying not to laugh, biting her fist to keep the giggles in.

"Papa Lion, I said like a zombie?" Ned's voice had increased in volume, demanding an answer.

Tywin sighed. "Zombies aren't real Ned. But too much television is bad for you."

Ned appeared to be debating that while Ben was playing with his toys on the rug in the family room.

"What about Santa? Is he real?"

"Seven fucking hells," Sansa heard Tywin mutter, finally taking pity on him. She sailed into the room, a bright smile on her.

“Good morning my loves,” she called out happily, shooting a smile to Tywin who did appear quite flustered.

"Aunty Sansa, Papa Lion says I will be a zombie if I watch TV. But you said it was fine," Ned declared.

"I did not say you will become a zombie," Tywin all but sputtered looking at the little boy who smiled at him.

"Ned quick bugging Papa. Yes, you can have some TV time, but first can you please feed Tank?"

Ned sighed as if he were being asked to do some dangerous task, and reluctantly got Tank his kibbles as Sansa scooped up Ben and patted Tywin on the shoulder.

"You've been a trooper. Come sit and let me make you breakfast." She flicked on the cartoon channel for Ned, sat Ben in his booster seat and then started a fresh pot of coffee. Tywin took a seat, enjoying watching how easily she managed her nephews. She pulled out eggs and winked at Ty, then thick bacon as well as the ingredients to make crepes. There was also fresh juice, strawberries, maple syrup and whipping cream.

While she cooked, she kept up a constant conversation with Ty, asking questions about expanding her business and her siblings’ businesses.

Tywin was utterly delighted in watching her, fascinated by such a woman who reminded him so much of Joanna. She was graceful and talented, a hard worker and amazing with children. When Jaime finally sauntered in, she had the batter made and bacon frying and looked at Ty.

"How do you like your eggs?"

"Over easy," he replied and watched Jaime press a kiss to her kips before he grabbed a coffee and then took over at the stove.

"Let me, babe," he said, taking the mixing bowl and flipper from her hand. She smiled and went and cut up fresh fruit, placing it on Ben’s plate as he shovelled it in, giving her a big grin.
“Big boy Ben likes to eat, doesn’t he,” she cooed at him, as he giggled and kept chewing. Tywin and Jaime both wore adoring looks towards her, beyond charmed by Sansa Stark.

"Five minutes, Neddy," she called, and he grunted in response.

Jaime and she worked as a team until the food was ready.

When Sansa called Ned, he reluctantly dragged himself over, then brightened at the food in front of him. He shot a grin to Tywin.

"I loooove bacon Papa Lion," he said, gobbling down two pieces in quick succession.

Tywin let out a laugh. The child was going to keep his parents busy that was for sure.

"I enjoy bacon as well, Young Ned," Tywin said, taking a bite and wondering if this had been one of Ned's little piglets. It certainly was a different way of raising children, but Tywin could see the appeal. It wasn't hard to imagine Jaime and Sansa with a whole brood of their own, sitting around this large island, sharing breakfast. Their children would be close with their cousins and grow up in a family that valued hard work and each other. It was everything that Tywin wanted for Jaime.

Of course, Ned also loved sugar and Tywin watched as he added copious amounts of syrup and whipping cream to his crepe creation.

Tywin gave Sansa a look and she shrugged defensively. "Aunty's privilege, Ty."

Tywin supposed it was; he could hardly see her being so blasé with her own children. As if she could read his mind, she rolled her eyes at him.

"I get them wound up with sugar, and then send them home, Tywin. It's a special treat.” He nodded and left it at that.

After a leisurely breakfast, Sansa got the boys dressed and she and Jaime took them for a walk with Tank, down to the river by the vineyard. Jaime held Sansa's hand as the boys raced after the little dog.

"We need to finish our earlier conversation, kitten. But one thing for sure, I'd like you to come down to Kings Landing to meet Myrcella and Tommen. Maybe next weekend?"

Sansa grinned and nodded, eager to meet Jaime's children and take that another important step in their relationship.

"I'd love that."

His smiled widened and he nodded.

"I'll make all the arrangements. I'm sure my father won't mind if we use the plane."

"Plane?"

Jaime nodded. "Yeah, the Lannister family jet. Makes travel so much easier."

Sansa stopped and looked at him. "You guys have your own jet?"

He laughed and pulled her closer to kiss her. "Yup. I'm not just designer jeans and excellent footwear kitten." His damn eyebrows were going again, and he had that cocky grin on her face. Sansa wanted to hate it, but it just made him that much more attractive. Confidence thy name is
Jaime Lannister, she thought.

She pushed him a bit and shook her head. "Jaime, normal people don't have jets."

"No, they don't, but we are Lannister's babe." He could see her mulling that statement over and before she got too deep into her own head, he tugged her closer seeing the worry on her face. "Sansa, my wealth is part of me. Not the most important part, I don't think, but part of me. Like the fame and popularity." She nodded, seeing the boys wrestling with Tank. "I hope it's not a problem for you."

She sighed and looked at his eyes. "Am I enough? I'm just Sansa, who owns a winery in the North. I'm not very fancy Jaime, even though I do love nice things."

Jaime pulled her closer, wondering how he could explain that she was beyond enough. "Sansa, you're perfect for me." He tilted her chin. "Trust me, baby, you are more than enough."

Sansa relaxed and wound her arms around his neck. "I can't believe what a crazy week it's been. I'm so glad Bran won that contest."

Jaime rumbled out a laugh. "Oh, me too." He'd grown up with the story from his father who had claimed to fall in love with Joanna the moment he'd met her. Jaime would have said that was utter bullshit until he'd met Sansa. Now, a week later and he wanted to promise her everything; marriage, kids and a life together. He hadn't even slept with her, and he was half in love with her. It seemed he really was a Lannister man after all.

Jaime had thought he'd never find someone to love the way he wanted to, to have the life he dreamed of. But Sansa and her family and this place was everything he could have ever wanted. He knew Tommen and Myrcella would love her and so would Tyrion and couldn't wait for them to meet her. Lost in each other, they stood holding hands, thinking about the happiness that came from finding someone you connected with.

Suddenly there was a cry and they looked over to see Ben on his bum, Ned looking sheepish and a whole lot of tears about to come their way. Reacting they each scooped a boy up in their arms, where they took them back to the farmhouse. Once there, Tywin took Ned to the couch, reassuring him they could watch another movie. This time his choice was Finding Nemo and Ned curled up again Tywin, who draped a blanket over his small body.

Sansa brought Ben upstairs, and tucked him into bed, reading him stories until he fell asleep. When she came back downstairs, she found Tywin muttering about bad fathers and Ned pushing his little fingers against Tywin's mouth.

"No Papa Lion it was an accident. Nemo's Daddy didn't mean to lose him."

Tywin huffed but settled in to see if this fish could find his son, Ned's little body now firmly in his lap.

A few moments later, Tywin barked out a harsh laugh. "That fish is hardly one to help. She can't remember a damn thing. Who in the hell makes these movies?"

"Swear jar, Papa Lion," Ned said, never taking his eyes from the movie, while Tywin rolled his.

Jaime was in the kitchen, wondering what they could bring with them today to the ranch for the family dinner. Sansa was telling him not to worry about it.

"We can't go empty-handed," Jaime said, scandalized.
"We won't. I normally bring wine," Sansa said, and Jaime shook his head at her.

"At least a salad, kitten," he said as he puttered around her kitchen.

“Fly at it. I stand by my wine donation, and with the amount my brother’s drink, it’s more than generous.”

Still, she smiled as Jaime got to work, and she settled in with a glass of wine and her laptop, working on some of the advertising for the upcoming season at the winery.

When Ben woke up, Sansa was there in an instant, changing him and packing their bags to head back to the ranch and getting one last sleepy toddler cuddle in.

Jaime had created a beautiful Cobb Salad, still bewildered that Sansa was going to go with only wine. Tywin, more interested in the winery, asked Sansa about what wines she would take tonight and they chatted easily while Ned huffed his impatience.

"Papa Lion, it's time to go," Ned demanded, stomping his feet.

Tywin felt he had been more than accommodating to the boy, arched an eyebrow and held up a finger to keep Sansa from speaking. He turned and walked towards Ned, who was waiting at the doorway.

"Ned, what was I doing?" Tywin asked. He had knelt down, so he was eye level with the child.

"Talking with Aunty."

"I was busy, wasn't I?"

"Yes."

"And you interrupted and didn't even say excuse me, or I'm sorry."

Ned's eyes widened as he glanced at his Aunt, who was trying her level best not to smile at the picture they made.

"That was rude, Ned. And one thing I do not tolerate is rudeness." Tywin met the child's gaze. "Do you understand?"

Ned nodded solemnly and Tywin stood back up, engaging with Sansa again.

They had only taken a few steps when they heard Ned say, in what he assumed was a whisper to Jaime, "He's a growly lion today." Jaime barked out a laugh, recalling more than one conversation with his father about decorum and proper behaviour. Jaime had been rambunctious as a child, and it had been hard to be still and appropriate when it was called for.

Jaime scooped Ned up into his arms. "How about you take Tank and throw the ball for him. I'm sure Aunty and Papa Tywin will be ready soon."

Ned's eyes lit with that idea, and he hugged Jaime and then scrambled out the door, calling for Tank.

Soon enough the five of them were on their way to the ranch, Ned chatting happily with Papa Lion again, having forgiven him for his harsh words. When they got to the ranch, Ned was out of the truck, excited to see his parents.
Sansa led Jaime and Tywin into the house, letting out a delighted squeal when she saw her youngest brother standing in the entryway.

"San!" Ric cried and she opened her arms, hugging him as he twirled her around.

"What are you doing home?" She cried. Rickon was a professional hockey player, and he was currently playing for the White Harbour Whales. It was still pre-season, and training camp was in full swing, and he'd been gone for a couple of weeks.

"Break in the schedule for a couple of days. Heard Harry was a dick and thought I'd come home and hang for a few days."

Sansa laughed again and threw her arms around him, hard. After their parents had died, Sansa had primarily been responsible for raising Bran and Ric and helping Robb keep the ranch going, while at the same time finishing her schooling. It had been a crazy time, and it made her especially close with her two youngest brothers.

Realizing she hadn't introduced either Tywin or Jaime, Sansa laughed and turned, waving them forward, and blushing as Jaime shook Ric's hand, and then kissed her on the lips.

"Harry was an ass. I'm not," Jaime said, cocky attitude entirely in place.

Ric laughed and shook his head. "I've heard about you, and as long as you treat my sister right, we won't have any problems."

Jaime nodded and then stepped back as Tywin held his hand out for Sansa's youngest brother. He had a massive grin on his face, just as Ned came running around the corner.

"Uncle Ric, that's Papa Lion," Ned said excitedly. Like most boys in the North, Ned loved hockey and was already signed up for skating lessons that started in a few weeks. The fact that his Uncle Ric, his new Papa and his Uncle Jaime were in the same room was almost too much for him.

"Tywin," the Great Lion said, holding his hand out to Rickon, who shook it and then grabbed Ned, twirling him upside down and tickling his belly.

"Uncle Ric, I'm gonna pee," Ned squealed happily, clutching at his stomach. The noise only increased from there, as Val, Jon and Ella showed up, along with Val's family, and then Arya and Gendry came in followed quickly by Bran and Jojen.

Jaime and Tywin fit in seamlessly, and Jeyne was pleased when Jaime gave her the salad. Sansa laughed as the wine was open, and Jaime pulled her closer, keeping their hands linked as family and friendship ruled the afternoon. Unlike Tuesday, no men were sneaking off to drink in Robb's study, although the beer and wine flowed freely. Today was all about family. Children were handed around, and both Bran and Jaime couldn't help but sneak into the kitchen to help Jeyne.

When the meal was finally served, the table almost groaned under the weight and amount of food, and Sansa looked around happily at her family. Jaime was on one side, Tywin on the other, and both had enjoyed their afternoon with the Starks.

At one point, Tywin had gathered Robb, Jon, Arya, Gendry, Sansa and Bran and said he wanted to speak with them about their businesses.

Jon and Arya had automatically stiffened when he'd made his offer, and it took all Sansa's patience not to scold them for their overreaction. She was so sick of his and Arya's attitude towards anyone with money. Tywin had been fantastic since he'd come North, and Jon was acting a bit like a jerk.
Funnily enough, it was Gendry and Robb that agreed first.

"I'd imagine we'd be utter fools to not listen to the wealthiest man in Westeros; especially when he says he wants to help us," Robb said, giving Jon a pointed look.

Gendry, who'd spoken with Tywin when they'd butchered the deer, was equally excited. "Guys, I know I'm not a Stark, but trust me when I say, it would be a benefit to us all to meet with him."

Finally, Sansa gave both her cousin and sister the look. "We will meet with Tywin because, in one afternoon, he helped me formulate a proper business plan to expand the winery and increase my revenue. I will not let the two of you, ruin this for the rest of us. This is what we hoped for when Bran won; that Jaime's presence here would shine a spotlight on our businesses. But this is so much more- people would kill to have the advice and backing of Tywin Lannister."

Jon and Arya finally looked chagrined and they agreed to first thing tomorrow morning. Tywin was leaving late afternoon after Jaime's film crew arrived. The group had drifted back into the main room, each finding their significant other.

"There is no part of me that needs to be around for their date," Tywin said, smirking and shooting a sly smile at Jaime and Sansa.

Robb howled. "Oh ya, Monday night sex, right San. I'm pretty sure all of Wintertown knows about your plans."

Sansa blushed and hid her face in Jaime's chest, beyond embarrassed. She had been wondering when it would be brought up, and her family wasn't one to miss an opportunity, especially Robb.

When she finally pulled her head from Jaime's chest, she glared at Tywin. "Traitor! I thought we were friends."

The Great Lion threw his head back and laughed. "Oh, my dear, it wasn't me that announced it to the entire restaurant when you planned to take the next step. Although I have to admit, it does warm my heart that you find my son attractive."

Jaime, who had a massive grin on his face, squeezed Sansa tight. "Don't worry kitten, and they're just jealous."

Robb shook his head, stretched out and pulled his wife onto his lap. "Baby number three, city boy. Let me know when you've caught up."

Jaime's eye lit; he was naturally competitive, and he turned to Sansa, nuzzling at her neck. "How many babies do you want, Sansa? I like the sound of at least four."

Her heart thumped, hard, and she turned, so her eyes met Jaime's. She knew her brother was trying to rile Jaime up, but this wasn't something to joke about. "Don't play with me, Jaime."

He cupped her cheek and stroked it. "Oh, sweetheart, you have no idea how serious I am."

Sansa gazed into his eyes and saw the truth there and kissed him then, in front of their whole family.

When she pulled back, he whispered, "We're going to have a serious conversation tomorrow night, kitten. Just you and me in your bed."

He could see the excitement in her eyes, along with just a sliver of doubt. Jaime was sure that was
leftover from Harry, but perhaps a slight bit could be attributed to him. After all, they'd danced around how serious this was. No one fell in love in a week- except for them it seemed, and Jaime knew there were plenty of women who would question the authenticity of his feelings. He just had to hope that Sansa was there with him and that she believed him.

"Alright," Sansa said softly, hoping he wasn't playing with her. She kissed him again, and cuddled deeper into his arms, lifting her head to meet Tywin's eyes. There was a softness there as he observed them, and she knew that if Jaime were playing her, he was playing them all. She had to trust that Lannister men fell in love the way Tywin described it; hard, fast, deep and forever.

There was a round of coffee and dessert, and then Ned had to bring Jaime and Tywin to see his playroom and his bedroom, where they made the appropriate sounds of wonder at his toys. Sansa held and rocked Ella, and Jaime knew he hadn't been lying at all when he said he wanted children with her; his heart almost ached to see her pregnant with his child, and he could only imagine the joy of raising children with her, in this wild northern land.

Eventually, the tears came as Ned learned that his new Papa was heading home tomorrow. Tywin hugged Ned and promised he'd be back soon, and Robb even said they might be able to Facetime him the way they did Uncle Ric, which stopped the wailing. When Jaime, Sansa and Tywin finally settled in her farmhouse, they let out a collective sigh. Ned was adorable, but utterly exhausting.

"He's quite the child," Tywin said, having very rarely met anyone that could give him a run for his money.

Sansa, who had her head on Jaime's lap, smiled and nodded sleepily. "He is. I can't believe that he's Robb’s. My brother hated school and barely spoke, content to bully us around as the older brother for years. I swear Ned's been talking since Jeyne gave birth to him."

Jaime ran his hands through her long hair, eliciting a moan now and then, and met his father's eyes, who was delighted by them.

"Have you decided what you are going to tape, Jaime?" Tywin asked. The restaurants had only ever been a side business for Tywin, one he had begun to invest in when he'd realized that Jaime wanted to be a chef. His main business was still import/export, and he ran a large multi-million dollar company down in King's Landing. When Jaime had been approached by the Food Network, he'd spoken with his father about what it might mean for their family, to have that type of exposure.

They had come up with rules; never involve anyone who didn’t want to be on camera, always be prepared to walk away if something felt 'off,' and always be aware of how much of yourself and your family you wanted to be exposed on camera. So far, things had worked well, the only real blip being when Jaime and Cersei were going through their very public divorce and the subsequent fallout.

Jaime's face lit excitedly. He'd spoken at length with Bran and wondered what the rest of the Stark's might think. "I'd like to do an episode at the farm, the ranch and the winery and then seven or so at Bran's restaurant."

Sansa's eyebrows arched at that. She'd never expected to be in the show. "Really? Here?" Jaime nodded and then explained the potential pitfalls of being on camera and watched as Sansa frowned.

"It's not all bad kitten. Huge exposure for your winery, and you, if you want to be on camera," Jaime said, almost shyly.
"You'd want that?" She seemed surprised and he wondered at that.

Jaime laughed and kept his hands in her hair. "Baby, I've got a whole Instagram account just for me. The moment you say the word, I'm posting pictures of you all over it." He wiggled her eyebrows at her, and she blushed, but she felt something settle in her. Jaime must be serious about her if he wanted to put her on his social media account. She'd followed him for a few years and had never seen anything remotely that personal on it.

"I'd be fine with it," she said, trying to act cool but something in her tone must have given her away.

Jaime let his hands dance over her ribs, tickling her slightly. "Kitten, do you follow my page?"

Sansa felt her face heat and she stammered out an answer. "Yes, Jaime I do. I mean, when I knew Bran had qualified for your show, of course, I was going to follow you."

Jaime laughed. "Liar! I know you've been following me for a few years. I checked," he told her and watched as she huffed out a breath.


Jaime took out his phone and pulled her up, loving what she looked like; flushed, happy and dare he say it, just a bit more than 'in like' with him. He snapped a quick picture and adjusted the filter. He showed her quickly, and she saw that they looked impossibly beautiful and deeply taken with one another. Then he added the following hashtags:

#wentNorthtocook #foundmyheartinstead #winterfellwinery #sansastark#1gf #chefsfallinginlove #secondchances #mykitten

Before she could protest, Jaime approved the picture to his account and then updated his profile picture, so it showed the two of them, not caring one bit about the consequences. He knew when Cersei saw it, or more like when one of her awful friends showed it to her, she'd fire off some nasty email. He also thought his manager might have a thing or two to say, but because it was his good friend Addam, Jaime was less worried about that. There was only one other person who might object, and that was his show's producer, Brienne Tarth.

"I wonder what Brienne will say," Tywin murmured, shooting Jaime a look. Lately, the large woman had been insistent that he maintain his image as the single, playboy chef. Jaime had spoken at length with Tywin about how uncomfortable that had made him, even going so far as to bring it up with Brienne.

"Our audience is mainly women, Jaime, and they want to know that they have a chance," Brienne said to him.

"At what Brienne? Making a good meal?"

She had giggled then and shook her head, which was quite unlike her. "No Jaime, at you. Being single maintains the illusion that they might have a shot with you."

That had made Jaime feel awkward and weird, and perhaps explained why he got propositioned so much when he was just out doing normal things around King's Landing. Still, there hadn't been anyone he'd ever wanted to link himself to until Sansa.

"As much as I'm all for this relationship, son, perhaps a quick phone call to the two children you
like to inform them of Sansa might be in order," Tywin said dryly, giving Jaime a look that only a father could.

Jaime's mouth popped into an O, and he kissed Sansa, before leaving the room to talk with Tommen and Myrcella. Sansa curled on her side and eyed Tywin.

"So, Jaime's producer," Sansa said, fishing for an explanation.

Tywin arched an eyebrow at her, liking that she didn't miss a thing. Sansa Stark was one smart woman.

"I'll let you be the judge of her, but let it just be on record that I've had some concerns regarding her. Be on guard, Sansa, and don't take any shit from her," Tywin said, voice low and intense. "It's just a feeling I have about her."

Sansa nodded but felt a small curl of unease in her stomach. "I don't want to cause any problems," she started to say, and Tywin shook his head, stopping her.

"My dear, you are worth ten shows, and I'm sure Jaime would agree. It is his life, and part of his contract is that he would retain full control over his social media accounts. He is free to put whatever he wants on them and make no mistake, he wants you, Sansa."

Feeling more settled, she smiled and saw Jaime come back in, lifting her head and positioning himself again so her head was on his lap.

"How are they? Outraged and upset about me?" Sansa asked, only a bit nervous.

Jaime grinned. "Not at all kitten. I'd say more excited and anxious to meet you. Myr said something about your excellent bone structure and how she wants to dress you."

At Sansa's bewildered look, Jaime explained that she was a fashion designer and then spent the rest of the evening telling Sansa all about Tommen and Myr. There would be time, he figured, to discuss Joff. It was a sore subject for both him and Tywin and one he avoided whenever possible. It was hard to explain to someone just how much his son hated him, and how deeply that cut. Jaime knew Sansa would be empathetic, but he didn't want to spoil the evening.

That night, when they were in bed, lying wrapped up in each other, Jaime let his mind wander back to the conversation at Robb's house. He'd been serious when he said he wanted more children and wondered if Sansa would agree to a Christmas wedding. It seemed insane to wait until spring, but as he gazed down at her, he knew she was the type of woman that would have it all planned out. He shrugged philosophically, knowing that all that mattered to him was that he was falling in love with her and he wanted to spend the rest of his life with her. The rest, well, that was just details.

Chapter End Notes

Because there seems to be a lot of love for this story, I spent some time w/ Celia brainstorming on ideas to extend it. Bascially, I needed some drama and angst. Let me introduce Brienne.

I will also say, I know these are beloved characters and I know we each have our own hopes for them. If this bothers you, that Brienne is going to be the 'drama' character,
then perhaps this story isn’t for you.

I do have three stories where Jaime and Brienne are together *not the main pairing, but together* so I'm not just after her.

Anyways, comments are most welcome and enjoyed!

Happy Sunday

T
Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Happy weekend!!!

What a week.

I am so excited to give this update!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been decided that the meeting with the Stark family would take place in Sansa’s kitchen. Everyone knew that the moment Tywin stepped foot on the Ranch, Ned would be glued to his side, so to get something accomplished, Jeyne would stay at the ranch with him while the others met at Sansa’s.

Bran was the first to arrive, walking through Sansa’s front door just as Tywin had finished packing. Bran smiled at Tywin, finding that he liked Jaime’s father. The two of them made their way to the kitchen, where Jaime had his arms around Sansa, whispering into her ear as she giggled.

Just as they entered, she turned her head so Jaime could kiss her, and he kept her close as he lost himself in her. Jaime could spend hours just touching her; back, hair, lips, an arm. She was a miracle to him. Generous and kind, feminine, and so loving, that he basked in her adoration each day, knowing it was an addiction he’d crave for life. Sansa Stark; his second chance.

Ty looked at Bran, who only shook his head at them.

“They are perfect for one another,” Bran said quietly, and Tywin grunted his agreement. They were, and anyone with half a brain and two eyes could see it.

Once Jaime and Sansa saw Bran and Ty were there, they broke apart, but still stayed close to one another, as Sansa started to put out drinks for everyone. Jaime made a point to touch her, and that easy intimacy spoke volumes about their feelings for each other.

The four of them were engaged in a fascinating discussion about expanding their business with the Great Lion with actual wood and stone buildings, when loud voices came through the front door.

“Arya, I’m going to thump you if you don’t shut up about it,” Jon growled, exasperation clear in his voice. “I said you could expand the cottage whenever you’d like, but I can’t just drop everything to do your bidding.”

“But Jon, the baby is coming, and what if we want Gendry’s cousin to come and stay with us? Where will she stay?”

Jon just stood there, looking at her, shaking his head. Then he looked to Gendry. “You talk with her; she’s your wife, and I want to wring her neck.”

Gendry laughed and grabbed Arya’s hand. “Let’s speak with Robb as well. It’s not that urgent, Arya. Jon and Val have a ton of room, and so does Sansa and Robb. I’m sure Shireen would be more than happy to stay with any of them.”
Arya huffed out a breath and then shot a sly look to Gendry. “I guess I can live with that; more private time for us.”

“I don’t want to know, Arya,” Jon said, walking into the kitchen.

He spotted Tywin, sitting there looking every inch the billionaire he was and frowned. Jon couldn’t help it. He had issues with the super-wealthy, even though Tywin hadn’t done a damn thing wrong since he’d been here. Jon thought it probably stemmed from growing up an orphan; Cat had never treated him the same as Robb, and while his Uncle Ned gave him everything and treated him like his own, his wife had never let him forget that he was living there under her charity.

Still, Tywin seemed decent for a man that could buy them all out with a stroke of his pen. Jon knew they were amateurs to a man like him, and had he wanted; he could have made their lives miserable. He doted on Sansa, loved his son, and seemed to be interested in helping them.

Jon grabbed a coffee and gave Sansa a quick hug, leaning down to whisper in her ear, “I’ll be good, San.” The smile she gave him washed away the last of his worries and also made him feel like a bit of an ass as he could see that she had been worried about his behaviour. He’d gotten “the talk” from Val this morning, who said if he angered Sansa, she’d withhold sex. Considering that they hadn’t even resumed their sexual relationship since Ella wasn’t quite six weeks, Jon wanted nothing to delay it further. He missed his wife.

Robb was the last Stark to arrive, a distracted and harried look on his face. “We’ve got a fence down in one of the far pastures,” he said by way of explanation. He glanced at Jon and Gendry. “I hate to ask, but is there any way you guys are free after this meeting? I’ve got three hands working on it, but I could use the help.”

Both men agreed they’d go with Robb, and the eldest Stark visibly relaxed.

When her family had drinks and had finally settled, Sansa coughed to get their attention. All eyes on him, Tywin rose to stand at the head of the table, comfortable being in charge and given such a role; he’d commanded such respect his entire life. Tywin had spent his whole life building his vast empire, and now he had endless ideas on how to help the Starks of the North with theirs.

He spoke of the ideas already in progress to expand currently; the winery along with Bran and Jaime’s new venture with a micro-brewery and restaurant. But it was combining what the three others did where Tywin thought they had the most potential.

“You need a store,” he said to them, noting the looks of confusion on their faces.

He’d spoken with Bran and Sansa about it, and so they laughed at the slightly confused looks on their siblings’ faces.

“A brick and mortar store to market and sell your products. Gendry, people will pay good money to a butcher they trust. Jon, the same idea applies to locally grown produce. And Robb, the meat you raise, and butcher is some of the best in the North if not all of Westeros. A storefront located close to Bran’s restaurants would allow people to replicate what they can only find in eating out at his place.”

Tywin let the idea work its way into their heads before he pressed on.

“Then, there is your brand. You need to market yourselves as the name to trust and rely on for fine food and the entire experience. A place where the average person can stop in on a Tuesday, pick up a bottle of wine from Sansa’s winery, and some cuts of meat to make their charcuterie board at
home. A place where fresh vegetables and fruit are readily available, and when you want a great steak, you know that stopping at the Starks will be worth your money.”

Tywin could see that his idea appealed to both Jon and Gendry. Jon sent him a look. “And the farmer’s markets?”

Tywin shrugged. “That is entirely up to you, but you need to decide what you are selling and how to value your product. And what your time is worth.”

Jon leaned forward, crossed his arms, and eyed the Great Lion. There was no denying how successful the man was, and the thought of not having to schlep down to a farmer’s market every Saturday made Jon almost deliriously happy. They could start to choose what events they wanted to attend, and they could guarantee a little bit more financial stability for their family, along with giving more people of the North access to good, wholesome food if they pursued the idea of a store.

“Aye, it’d be nice not to have to go every weekend, but instead when we chose. But then we’d have the cost of a building, taxes, and staff.”

Tywin nodded at him, turning all his attention to the farmer. “You would. You would also have a steady stream of customers and the ability to sell more than one product your family produces in one spot. Steaks, potatoes, a bottle of wine. The real gold mine, and you’ll excuse the allusion to what made Lannister’s so wealthy, is him.”

Tywin pointed to Gendry.

“Me?” The butcher looked stunned.

“It is a lost art, Gendry and one that should be upheld and exposed and valued; especially up here in the North. People want a guarantee of their food. How it is raised, if it is healthy, is it slaughtered humanely, and are they getting the best cuts of meat? All of you represent a part of that chain, and I believe, a store would give you exposure, unlike what you’ve ever dreamed of.”

Jon, Robb, and Gendry looked at one another, thinking about what Tywin had said. It was true that Bran cooked primarily with their ingredients, but what they delivered to him in raw, unprocessed form, looked far different from what their talented little brother put on a plate in front of people in his restaurant. Was this the missing link for them to achieve real financial stability?

Sansa and Jaime mostly sat back, content to sip coffee and watch the debate flow around them. She liked how sitting there, her hand in Jaime’s while his other one was on her lower back made them a real couple. And it was delightful how quickly their families had blended, neither one having anticipated anything quite like what was happening before them.

Eventually, Robb decreed that the idea was valid and that they should explore it more. Everyone could see he was anxious to get back to the ranch and deal with the fence, but before he could leave, Jaime stood and asked for a few more minutes of their time.

“As you are all aware, to some extent, Bran being on my show and winning the cooking competition has brought his restaurant a certain level of exposure.” Before Jaime could say more, Arya smirked.

“And you added to it with that picture of you and San yesterday, huh stud!”

Jon and Robb, both adverse to all things social media, looked befuddled, while Bran smiled. He, too, had seen Jaime’s Instagram post and thought it was beautiful.
“Arya, stop,” Sansa berated her sister gently, still pleased that Jaime had made such a public declaration of their relationship.

“What the hell is she talking about?” Robb asked, voice loud because he had no idea what was going on. Bran took out his phone and opened the app, and then showed them Jaime’s new profile picture, as well as his and Sansa’s photo from last night.

“Wow. Over 50,000 likes so far, Jaime,” Bran said, suitably impressed.

He had been south, and was years younger than Robb and knew the power of social media for people like him and Jaime. So many people snapped selfies and posted where they ate, and Bran had dreamed that he’d garner the same following in the North for his restaurant as Jaime had in the south. People went to La Plaque D’Or for the entire experience, including snapping a selfie and tagging the restaurant.

Robb and Jon just looked at the picture and then Jaime, who still had a hand on Sansa’s back. They knew it had been fast for their sister and this lion, but both men had fallen in love with their wives quickly. After spending a week with Jaime, they, oddly enough, trusted him. And they hadn’t pushed him or Sansa for answers about where this was going. For once, they had backed off, letting Sansa handle her relationship, to her great relief.

Robb met Jaime’s eyes and nodded. “Alright.” That was all that needed to be said. Sansa didn’t need his permission, and he liked Jaime, much more than he ever had Harry.

“Yes, well, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted,” Jaime glared at Arya, who stuck her tongue out at him.

It was a wonder, Tywin thought, that she was related to Sansa.

“Was that my camera crew and producer arrive today. One of the reasons I came a week early was to try to determine what I should tape, and if there was a possibility of more than just me cooking in Bran’s restaurant.”

Jaime could see the excitement in the eyes of the other, and while that made him happy, he needed them to know exactly what that level of exposure might mean. He took his time, sharing what happened to him after his “big break” as they say; some good, some bad, and some things he wished someone had told him before he’d signed his contract.

“The most important thing to think about is exposure; mostly for your families.” Jaime looked at Robb and Jon. “Ned is an amazing child, but it is understandable, even probably preferable if we shelter him from TV exposure at such a young age. Same thing for your homes and businesses.”

Jaime was happy to see the Starks were taking him seriously.

“I won’t lie and tell you it wouldn’t be a financial boost because it most likely would. But Bran and I are in the game, and we have consented the price of fame and exposure. None of you are, and there is no pressure. Having gotten to know all of you, I know you believe in what you do, and I would love nothing more than to give you a broader platform. But completely understand if you say no.”

Robb met Jaime’s eyes and saw nothing but the unvarnished truth there. He walked over and held out his hand, then pulled Jaime into a hug.

“Thank you, brother,” he said quietly. “For telling us this.”
Robb knew Jaime had just proven that their family, this wild combination of Starks, Snows, and Lannister’s, was more important than money or fame.

Jaime felt his throat get thick with emotion. He’d do anything to both help and protect these people he’d come to care a great deal for.

Sansa coughed and looked at her family.

“You should all know, I’ve decided to tape an episode at the winery.”

She smiled at Jaime, and he pulled her into his arms, looking at her with such softness and devotion than even Arya held her tongue. When Sansa realized she’d been lost in his very green eyes, she blushed and looked back at her family.

“I trust Jaime, and I think it’s the next best step for the winery. And, well, after that post yesterday…” She let her voice trail off, but she was smiling.

She’d never had a man so publicly declare that he wanted to be with her, so much so that he announced it to the world! It was a heady feeling for Sansa and one that made her feel very special.

“Kitten, you slay me,” Jaime murmured into her ear. Then he cupped her cheeks and kissed her in front of their families, not stopping even when the catcalls and teasing escalated.

Finally, Robb cleared his throat, grinning when Jaime barely moved from Sansa’s side. “We need to go. I appreciate everything you’ve done for us. Tywin, we’ll be in touch.”

The Great Lion rose, and held his hand, shaking them all and wishing them the best of luck as the others left.

The four of them, Sansa, Jaime, Bran, and Tywin, were headed into Wintertown to meet with Jaime’s team when they landed. Tywin and Bran were outside, having loaded Ty’s bags into Bran’s car, and took a moment to observe Jaime and Sansa. Once again, Jaime had Sansa wrapped up in his arms and was whispering something into her ear, which was making her smile. They were the picture of a couple in love, even if neither would get acknowledge it, yet.

“He’s good for her,” Bran said, and Tywin grunted and gave Bran a pointed look.

On their way into town, Jaime’s phone rang, and he answered it happily, seeing who it was.

“Addam, just the man I wanted to speak with.” Jaime sounded quite pleased that his manager had gotten back to him so quickly. He proceeded to explain what he’d been up to in the North and that he wanted confirmation his social media accounts were in no way linked to or controlled by the Food Network and his contract with them.

“Does this have anything to do with the gorgeous redhead you’re wrapped around in your latest Instagram post?” Addam teased.

“It does.” Jaime had reached for Sansa’s hand as she drove and was grinning at her.

“What you do in your private life, and on social media, is complete in your control Jaime. No one has any pull, sway or hold on you.”

Jaime let out a relieved breath. He had thought that had been the case, but it felt good to have
Addam confirm it.

“So when do I get to meet her?”

Addam and Jaime had been friends since childhood, and he’d seen his friend go through hell with Cersei, his cousin. He’d tried to warn Jaime about her; from a young age, she’d been manipulative and cold, but Jaime had fallen hard and fast for her and her deceitful ways. In a lot of ways, Addam felt responsible for them even meeting and had stood by Jaime as he’d tried to pick up the pieces of his life. Now to see, even through social media, that Jaime had found someone new that he was crazy about, made Addam extremely happy.

“We’re going to come to King’s Landing in a few weeks. We will make time to catch up,” Jaime said, loving how excited he was to introduce Sansa to his family and friends. Jaime and Addam chatted for a few more minutes until they pulled into the restaurant behind Bran and Tywin.

When Jaime finally got off the phone, he explained to Sansa who Addam was and what he’d said.

“He sounds like a dear friend, Jaime.”

“He is, and I can’t wait for the two of you to meet.”

They had remained seated in the car, Jaime’s hand stroking Sansa’s. She cocked her head and gave him a questioning glance, wondering what he was thinking about.

“Date night kitten,” he said suddenly, wiggling his eyebrows.

Sansa blushed and laughed; they both knew what was on the agenda tonight. Sex and hopefully a lot of it. Sansa wondered if Jaime was a more than one time per night kind of guy; Harry had been one and done and rarely cared about her pleasure. She was both nervous and extremely excited to be with Jaime, and she had a feeling she’d centre prominently in his plans. The Jaime she’d gotten to know, cared about her happiness and comfort everywhere else; she couldn’t imagine the bedroom would be any different.

“What have you got planned, Mr. Lannister?”

Jaime gave her a gaze that was filled with so much desire, Sansa felt her whole body respond; her belly fluttered, her core clenched, and she swore her nipples hardened.

“A most delightful evening, Ms. Stark, I assure you, where all your appetites will be fulfilled.” He did the wiggly eyebrow thing, along with the smouldering smirk, and Sansa, like countless women before her, was powerless to resist.

Only this time, Jaime pulled her head close to his and lowered his voice, all playfulness was gone.

“I have such a need for you, Sansa, and I cannot wait to be alone with you finally, to take my time and discover all the secrets that are you.”

“Jaime, I have no secrets,” she all but whimpered in need.

“Oh kitten, that’s where you are very wrong. What do you taste like? How does it feel when you come on my tongue? Will you scream my name or whisper it breathlessly when you come apart while I’m deep inside you?”

Sansa’s eyes had gone impossibly wide, her breath short. Jaime had stolen any thoughts her brain might have had, turning it to mush.
“What are you doing to me?”

He brushed his lips softly against hers, then angled his head to make the kiss deeper and more meaningful.

“What are you doing to me?”

“Seducing you, sweet girl, and hoping you feel the same things I do.”

“Oh, Jaime, I do.” She put her arms around his neck and pulled him closer, eagerly kissing him again and again until they were both panting and flushed.

“I’m going to taste every part of you, kitten,” Jaime started to say before he was interrupted by a rapping on the window. He turned to see his father standing there, a bemused expression on his face.

“Your crew is waiting in the restaurant, Jaime,” Tywin smirked as Jaime and Sansa looked only slightly chagrined at being caught making out like teenagers.

Eager to see his crew, Jaime tugged her inside the restaurant, still holding her hand and excited for the entire day before him.

When they walked in, Sansa saw three people speaking with Bran; a huge woman with a shock of bright blond hair, and two men, around Sansa’s age. Jaime didn’t let go of her hand, even as Sansa saw a look of shocked displeasure glance across the woman’s face before it was gone, her features schooled into a polite mask. Sansa could almost believe she imagined it, but there was no warmth in the woman’s eyes when she looked at Sansa.

“Jaime,” the taller man cried, a smile on his face.

“Dickon, buddy, great to see you. Thank you for coming up,” Jaime said, the men hugging each other, while Sansa stood beside Jaime, shaking her head at his enthusiasm.

“Dickon Tarly, Podrick Payne, I’m pleased to introduce you to Sansa Stark.”

Jaime was grinning at them all, and the two men fairly fell over themselves to shake Sansa’s hand. A small cough alerted Jaime to Brienne, and he gave Sansa a quick kiss before stepping aside to talk with Brienne.

“Be nice to her,” Jaime warned them.

“So Sansa,” Dickon said, clearly the more forward of the two men, “What do you do here?”

She wrinkled her brow and looked around. “Oh, the restaurant is my brother’s. I own Winterfell Wineries.”

“I love wine,” Pod said, a big grin on his handsome face.

Sansa laughed at them, and their clear flirting. She could admit, it felt good. She wondered for a single second what her life might have been like had she met one of them instead of Jaime, but couldn’t even imagine not having him in her life. Jaime was everything.

They asked her several questions about her operation, and the North, and she enjoyed talking with them. They seemed like excellent people, and Sansa could see why Jaime liked them.

After a little while, when they were going on about some woman they both liked in Kings Landing, Sansa looked over and saw Jaime in discussion with Brienne. As if there was some mysterious
connection between them, his eyes left Brienne’s to meet hers.

He stopped talking with his producer, and came back to her, pulling Sansa close. Just as he did so, Sansa saw a look cross Brienne’s face that was almost angry.

“Hey, baby,” he said softly. “Are these two bothering you?” He mock growled at them. “She’s taken, boys.”

Pod and Dic both laughed and held up their hands. “Clearly, mate.”

Dic winked at Jaime and punched him in the shoulder.

“Still, can’t blame a guy for trying,” Pod quipped in good humour.

“Way to go, man,” Dic said and gave Sansa one last go over with his eyes, making Jaime growl louder.

“Oh gods, stop you, silly man. You know I’m yours, Jaime,” Sansa said, laughing brightly as she hugged him to her side, secretly delighted by his possessiveness. “You boys are more than welcome to come and visit my home,” Sansa said.

“Kitten, are you inviting people to our house without checking with me first? How dare you!” Jaime said in mock indignation.

Sansa shook her head at his antics, loving this playful side of him. “Jaime, stop. You know I love it when we have guests.”

“What guests?”

Sansa turned when she heard the low, clipped voice to see Brienne, Jaime’s producer, standing right behind them, a look of confusion on her features. Jaime smiled at her, but Sansa saw the discontent on her face.

“Me, Brienne!” Jaime chirped.

“Sansa has graciously allowed me to stay at her home while I’m here, thereby making it our home and our guests!”

Brienne stiffened. “Well, I hope she’s not charging more than the hotel you were booked in Jaime.”

Jaime frowned and then laughed. “No, no charge. Right kitten?” Jaime nuzzled her, and Sansa laughed.

“No babe. No charge, especially when you cook dinner and keep me warm each night.”

Tywin strolled up then and noted the tension in Brienne’s shoulders. He’d overheard everything and would do whatever necessary to prevent her from trying to destroy Sansa and Jaime’s burgeoning relationship. Tywin had known the large woman had feelings for Jaime for years.

“Boys, I highly suggest you take the drive to Sansa’s place. It is as beautiful as she is,” Tywin said, smiling softly at Sansa. Sansa blushed under the Great Lions praise.

“You stayed there as well?” Brienne’s voice had taken on a particularly high pitch as Tywin nodded. He gave Brienne a cold glare.

Jaime laughed. “Brienne, let me officially introduce you to Sansa Stark; wine marker extortionate
and the woman who has captivated me from the moment I met her.”

“Jaime,” Sansa said, melting at his declaration.

He kissed her and whispered, “It’s true, and you know it.”

Dic, Pod and Tywin were all smirking at the two of them, while Brienne fumed. They had just broken apart again when the door to the restaurant opened, and a harried-looking Jeyne entered, with Ned running out in front, and a sleepy Ben in her arms.

“Papa Lion! Uncle Jaime! Aunty Sanny!” He cried and ran straight towards Tywin, who smiled happily and opened his arms, lifting Ned.

“Hello, Young Ned. What brings you’re here?”

“I drew you a picture Papa Lion, and Mama said maybe if it’s ok with Aunty, I can come with you to the airport. I love to see the planes. Do you like planes, Papa Lion?”

Tywin let out a chuckle. “I do.”

Ned giggled, burrowing deeper into Tywin’s arms. “You’re all rumbly Papa Lion.”

Tywin smirked softly at the boy and set him on his feet, bending low. “Show me this picture, Ned.”

Ned proudly held his drawing out. “It’s us getting the eggs, Papa Lion. And the squiggly lines are your swears, Papa Lion.” Ned paused and looked around. “You had a lot.”

Jaime was laughing hysterically, clutching at Sansa. “Gods, this kid.”

Ned turned his eyes in Jaime then.

“Uncle Jaime, you had lots of swears as well. You should be nicer to Papa Lion.”

Jaime picked Ned up and tickled him, laughing with the small boy, as Ned laughed in glee.

“You don’t mind if we bring him with us to the airport, do you?” Sansa asked Tywin.

“Gods no. You two can even come and check out my private jet,” Tywin said, winking at her as they both watched Jaime with Ned. Sansa risked another glance at Brienne as she looked as if she’d been hit by a truck, she was so confused.

“Oh man, Ty, he’s going to go bananas.”

When Jaime finally put Ned down, and he had a huge smile on his face. “Uncle Jaime, that was the best.”

“Alright, Ned, listen to Aunty San. She’ll bring you home later,” Jeyne said, coming out from the kitchen with Ben. Her youngest had been hungry, as always, and Bran, darling man, had fed him. She ruffled her hand through Ned’s hair.

“I’ll be good, Mama.”

Sansa shot a look at Jaime, who smiled at her. “You’re alright if we drop Ned off on our way
“No problem. Then it’s date night, kitten, and you’re all mine!” Sansa’s face had a permanent grin.

Neither one noticed the sour look on Brienne’s face, although Tywin did. He’d speak with Sansa on the drive the airport or perhaps a phone call to her when he got home.

“What’s date night, Uncle Jaime?”

“That’s when I have Aunty Sansa all to myself.”

“Like for a sleepover?”

Jaime, Pod, Dic, Tywin, and Bran all laughed, uproariously. Sansa coloured.

“Yes, Ned. Like a sleepover.” Jaime winked at her.

“Mama and Daddy have sleepovers all the time, but sometimes I hear Mama screaming. Daddy says that’s ok; she has bad dreams, and he’s the one who makes her feel better. Aunty Sansa, I’m sure if you scream and have bad dreams, Uncle Jaime will help you.”

Jeyne’s face was bright red, and Sansa looked slightly bewildered while Tywin howled in laughter.

“Oh yes, I’m sure uncle Jaime will be most helpful for Aunty Sansa,” Tywin smirked at the two of them, while Ned solemnly agreed.

“He will Papa Lion.” Ned was fiercely devoted to Jaime already.

“Ok, guys, let’s go,” Sansa said, still a bit red in the face. She’d never consider herself prudish, but it was so odd to have her sex life with Jaime (which hadn’t even really started, thank you very much) be so openly talked about. These southern lions were quite unlike anything she’d ever encountered before.

Tywin gave his son a brief hug and then found his hand once again in Ned’s, and they prepared to exit the building.

Jaime grabbed Sansa before she left, happy when she wrapped her arms around him.

“Countdown is on kitten,” he said, green eyes bright and with a grin that showcased his happiness with her, the North and his entire life right now. He’d never felt such optimism and hope; nor such need. He wanted Sansa with a physicality that he positively ached with and he couldn’t wait for tonight.

“Be back soon,” she said, kissing him one last time. As she stepped back from his arms, she had the chance to glance towards Brienne, whose expression was almost thunderous. As soon as Jaime looked at her, however, the anger was replaced with a benign smile.

Sansa bit her bottom lip, wondering if Tywin was correct. Did Jaime’s producer like him? Had anything ever happened between them? And would Brienne cause problems for them?

Then she shook herself from such thoughts. She trusted Jaime implicitly and he knew what she had been through with Harry. He’d never lie or keep something like that from her. Tywin gave no indication that there was anything more between them than a professional relationship; at least on Jaime’s behalf.

When she got to the truck, Tywin had already put Ned in his car seat and taken the front passenger
seat, while Ned happily chatted to his current favourite person in the whole world.

Right now, he was discussing his favourite show, Paw Patrol, and Sansa gave Tywin a sympathetic look.

“He can spend hours talking about it.”

Tywin simply smiled, letting the little boy’s chatter fill the vehicle as they drove to the airport. He’d enjoyed himself immensely in the North, due in large part to the woman seated next to him. She would make a fine Mrs. Jaime Lannister Tywin thought; far better than Cersei Marbrand had ever been.

They parked at the airport and then Sansa watched in utter amazement as Tywin all but glided through security, barking out sharp orders that Sansa and Ned were with him and having people almost fall over themselves to do his bidding.

“Papa Lion is important,” Ned whispered to Sansa as they both watched staff scramble to get them through security without delay. When they were finally cleared to walk out on the tarmac, both Sansa and Ned’s jaws dropped.

Sansa remembered Jaime mentioning a private jet, but this was beyond anything she had imagined.

“Papa Lion, you have your own plane?!?” Ned cried excitedly and ran to him, scrambling up into his arms as Tywin grinned and walked up the stairs.

“I do, Ned. Would you like a tour?”

Ned, for once in his life, too stunned to speak, could only nod as Sansa trailed behind, wondering at this family; their wealth, their warmness when it came to accepting her and her family, and how much she already cared for both Jaime and his father.

Inside, Ned had recovered from his temporary speechlessness, and was bombarding the two pilots as well as the stewardess with as many questions as his brain could manufacture. He turned to Tywin at one point, clear love in his brown eyes, and said, “Papa Lion, one day, can I have a ride on your plane?”

Tywin nodded. “If you are a good boy, and mind your parents and your aunts and uncles, perhaps one day you can take the plane all the way to the Westerlands and come see my home; Casterly Rock.”

Ned flew into Tywin’s arms, wrapping his small arms around Tywin’s neck. “I love you, Papa Lion and I’m so glad you are my Papa.”

Tywin Lannister, one of the harshest and most severe men in the entire country, melted under his embrace.

“I love you as well, Ned.” His voice was thick and full of emotion, and his green-gold eyes met Sansa’s. He had never expected to gain this family, and it threatened to bring the Old Lion to his knees.

“I’ll be back soon, Ned and we can FaceTime.”

“Ok, Papa.” When Tywin transferred Ned to Sansa’s waiting arms, he could almost see the new grandchildren Jaime and Sansa would give him, and he knew, unlike Cersei, Sansa would allow him access to them, so he would, in truth and deed be their Papa. They would know him, like Ned
and he’d be part of their lives.

He cupped Sansa’s cheek. “You remind me so much of my Joanna, and I’m delighted you are part of our lives my dear.”

Sansa felt her eyes fill with tears, knowing how much Tywin loved his wife.

“Come back soon, please,” she told him and he nodded.

Then Sansa and Ned left Tywin alone on his jet. Ned insisted they wait to see the plane take off, and then held Sansa’s hand as they walked to the truck.

“Let’s go get Uncle Jaime buddy,” she told him, seeing a smile brighten his little face at the mention of his second favourite person. Sansa herself felt her heart start to race in anticipation; date night was almost here and she couldn’t wait to spend time with Jaime, alone, knowing they were creating something magical up here in the North, together.

Chapter End Notes

I promise I will give you DATE night, and plenty of love and sexy times in chapter 12!!!

Comments are loved and appreciated!
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Hope you all like this one.

Music selection curtesy of Celia :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The moment Tywin, Sansa and Ned left, Jaime forced his mind to the people who stood in Bran's restaurant. Dic and Pod had been part of his crew for the past five years, while Brienne had come on about six years ago, right around the time his personal life was imploding and when he'd found Cersei cheating on him in their bed.

He could admit that he hadn't liked Brienne at first; his previous producer was much easier going than her and allowed him a lot of creative liberties, while Brienne was by the book and wanted to discuss things endlessly, plotting out what they would do. It had been more work than Jaime had ever anticipated, but he had to give her credit- she'd done wonders for his career. He'd been sort of well known before her, but she had catapulted his name into the stratosphere, and they'd been close friends since after a few major blowouts in their early years of working together.

Jaime had always suspected that Brienne hadn't approved of how public his breakup was with Cersei, nor his partying ways or the number of women he’d slept with in those early years of his divorce. Looking back, he could admit he’d been a bit of a mess, and it was only thanks to his father, and his friendship with her, that he’d achieved the type of success he now enjoyed. She was a great friend and an even better producer.

Now when they worked together, it was almost seamless, each knowing what the other needed and expected. Jaime had known that Brienne considered them friends as much as colleagues. He'd been there for her to give her comfort when she'd poured her heart out that the man, she had loved turned out to be gay. She had never given Jaime a name, but he had his suspicions, and the few times he'd asked her about her love life after that, she'd brushed him off, saying she was much too busy. It was how they had gotten into a discussion about his personal life, and when she'd suggested he remain single for the public, he'd agreed because there had been no one else in his life at the time, and it seemed easier.

Now, however, there was Sansa, and he was so excited that his crew had met her. Jaime turned to the three of them, a light in his eyes that none of them had seen before.

"So, tell me what you thought about her," he asked them eagerly.


Pod also grinned and shook his head. "Hope she knows what she's getting with you. You are batting way above your average with her, Jaime." His friends smiled at him, happy for him.

Jaime was grinning like a fool, as Bran and Jojen came out from the back. "Sansa get away?" Bran asked, and Jaime nodded.
"Brienne, what did you think of her?" Jaime asked, eager for his closest friend's opinion of his new girlfriend. She was nothing like the women he’d ‘dated’ down in King’s Landing. Sansa was smart, educated, successful and so beautiful she made Jaime’s stomach ache when he thought about her.

Brienne gave him a small, tight smile, that Jaime didn't realize, didn't quite go to her eyes. "She seemed… Nice. I wonder, though, about what she was doing here, Jaime. As you know, we are here to feature you cooking at Bran Stark's restaurant. I'm not sure what role your friend, Ms. Stark, plays in that."

Missing her intentions completely, Jaime laughed. "Brienne, she's not just my friend. She's my girlfriend. Didn't you check out my Instagram post?"

Brienne's face had gone pale white, and she shook her head, whipping out her phone, as Dickon and Pod asked Jaime how they’d met and what her winery was like. And if she had any sisters. Jaime let out a laugh at that question, telling both men that they'd not find another woman like Sansa anywhere. He knew; he’d been searching for her his whole life, he thought.

Meanwhile, Brienne’s heart had almost stopped when she saw Jaime's latest posts. Several of them, all featuring prominently, one Sansa Stark. Whom he called kitten and proclaimed he was falling for. She felt her heartbreak and then harden. She'd been so convinced that any day he would finally see what was right in front of him; her. A woman who loved him, despite his faults and his partying ways, and the endless parade of a woman. A woman who knew what Jaime needed and could keep his career going.

Brienne had fallen for Jaime in between begging him to get his act together, and planning sessions for his show. He’d often invite her over to his place, trying out new dishes on her, and she had thought that meant he cared. After all, in her limited experience, men only put the time in for women they cared about, right? And now, to find out that he'd come North and fell in love inside a week, with a woman twenty years his junior- Brienne thought she might be sick.

Jaime had no idea how she felt for him, and she needed to do damage control immediately. Perhaps if she could make him see what a mistake he was making with this Sansa Stark, he'd break up with her and things would get back to normal when they went south again. Then, after a few months of him lamenting this latest break up, he'd be ready for a real relationship with her.

So lost in her thoughts, she missed Jaime's whole speech on including the Stark family in the taping of his show, including an entire episode dedicated to Sansa and her winery.

Jaime's phone chimed, and he looked down and smiled. "Sansa's just pulling up. Brienne, Bran can fill you in. Oh, and don't worry. I checked with Addam, and there's nothing in my contract that says I have to be single or can't put stuff on my social media accounts. So, no worries, Brienne, you won't get in trouble that I did that."

Then Jaime was gone, out the door and into the waiting arms of the most beautiful woman Brienne had ever seen. Silence followed his departure until Dickon, with a funny look on his face, spoke.

"What did he mean, Brienne, when Jaime said he's allowed to put whatever he wants on social media, and it won't get you in trouble?"

Brienne coloured and then snarled, "Nothing, Dick. Mind your own business. Are we all set for tomorrow?"

"We are," Bran replied, cocking his head at an odd angle and observing the large woman. Tywin had warned Bran before he'd left that she had feelings for his son and that he was worried she
might do something to sabotage his relationship with Sansa. Once again, it appeared the old lion was right. As if to further test his theory, Bran added, "He and Sansa will be here early, around 8 am," and then watched as Brienne's eyes tightened in displeasure.

Still, she said nothing and spoke directly to Pod and Dic about taping, the process, and what they wanted to accomplish for tomorrow before the three of them finally left to go to their hotel for the evening. When they were gone, Jojen came and wrapped his arms around Bran.

"She's going to be a problem," he said astutely, and Bran murmured his agreement.

"Yes, she is. I'll let Tywin know. Hopefully, Jaime and Sansa had a good night this evening, because I have a feeling, things might get quite dramatic around here in the next few weeks."

Jaime laughed and chatted with Ned as Sansa drove them out of Wintertown and towards the ranch and then her farm. Jaime had been planning the menu for tonight since Sansa had agreed to this second date, and he was confident with his menu choices. That meant he could listen to Ned's impression of his new Papa.

Hearing Ned talk about Tywin, Jaime could see just how much Cersei had kept their children out of his life. It made him ache for something he couldn't get back, but perhaps there was still a chance for Myrcella and Tommen to be close with him. It seemed like Tywin liked being a grandfather, which came as almost a shock to Jaime.

"Papa Lion's plane is amazing, Uncle Jaime. And he said if I was really, really, REALLY good I could fly to the Castle of Rocks to visit him."

Jaime turned and laughed and proceeded to tell Ned stories about the Castle of Rocks, not bothering to correct his pronunciation. Even Sansa heard how much Jaime loved his childhood home, and she reached for his hand.

"It sounds like a magical place, Jaime."

"We'll go, Sansa. Soon. I'm sure my father would like nothing more than to show you the place where all the Lannister pride comes from."

Sansa laughed, knowing it wasn't entirely untrue. She'd never met men such as Jaime and Tywin Lannister; they were so self-assured and confident and had boundless charm and egos.

As they got closer to the ranch, Ned quieted, and both Jaime and Sansa shared a look. He was rarely this mute, so something had to be up.

Sansa glanced in her rear-view mirror and saw Ned looking out the window. "Hey buddy, what's going on in that big brain of yours?" she asked him softly.

He said nothing for a few minutes and then blurted out, "I don't want Uncle Jaime to leave as well. Not like Papa Lion did."

Jaime and Sansa shared a startled glance before Jaime turned to face Ned. "Hey, little man. I'm not going anywhere, and even if I have to leave for a short time, I'll always come back."

"Promise? You won't leave Aunty Sansa alone?"

Jaime shook his head. "No bud. I won't leave her alone. And Papa Lion will be back as well, Ned."
Sometimes we have to leave for a little bit, but we know our way back."

He smiled then, reassured with Jaime's words as Sansa pulled into the ranch. Robb was there, having spent the entire day fixing the fence and just had finished. Ned happily climbed into his arms, chatting about Papa Lion's big plane and the afternoon he had. Jaime and Sansa didn't linger; they had plans and as much as they loved Ned, and Robb and Sansa's family, tonight was about them.

Jaime glanced at his watch and saw it was just past 4 pm, which was perfect for everything he had planned; plenty of time to cook, feed and then feast on Sansa. He shot her a look that was pure desire.

"Jaime, when you look at me like that, it makes me feel like I'm the main course tonight."

"Oh kitten, that's because you are."

Sansa might have stepped on the gas just a little bit harder, to get them home sooner. Once there, Tank needed out, and Sansa said she'd take him for a walk, giving Jaime time to prepare. Right before she left the house, he pulled her back into his arms and carded his hands through her hair.

"Don't take too long, baby. Dinner's not going to take that long, and I have plans for you," Jaime said, before he captured her lips in a searing kiss, his tongue probing inside her mouth, and giving her no illusions about how much he wanted her. When she was breathless, he let her go and patted her butt.

Recovering, Sansa looked down at Tank, who was staring at the two of them. "Ok, come on, Tank. Let's get you dealt with."

As soon as Sansa was out of the house, Jaime moved. He'd planned everything and had taken the time, while his father had distracted her, to hide candles and the dish wear he wanted to use. He'd owned a restaurant long enough to understand about presentation and how important that was. He wanted things perfect for Sansa.

When he had the table set to his exacting standard, he opened a bottle of her red wine to let it breathe.

Then he turned on the music he liked, in this case, Rossini and his overtures. He knew his girlfriend loved her country music, but that would not be what he seduced her to for the first time. Jaime couldn't help it; he was raised by a father who believed in a 'full education' as Tywin had often said to his two sons, including a full background in classical music. Jaime could admit to loving it and being a bit of an addict. Often, depending on his mood, he cranked it loud and let it crash through his loft in King’s Landing, losing himself in it.

The soaring strains filled the kitchen, and Jaime lit the candles that Sansa seemed to have by the dozen. The atmosphere was intimate, romantic and warm, and he knew she'd be comfortable here and hopefully, a bit dazzled and a lot impressed.

With one last glance around the room, satisfied with the presentation, Jaime darted up the stairs to their bedroom. He dashed through the shower, quickly and then dragged on jeans and t-shirt, running a hand messily through his hair before did some essential grooming and then gave himself one last go over.

Finally, he checked and made sure he had a full box of condoms in the nightstand on his side of the bed, although he wondered if they were necessary. He hadn't been with anyone for ages and was
clean. He knew Sansa had only been with Harry, so he had no concerns there. He'd overheard her tell Arya and Jeyne it had been humiliating having to be tested after she'd caught him cheating, and she thanked the gods she hadn't caught anything from him. That left birth control. Jaime wanted nothing more than to have children with Sansa, but even he knew they were a ways away from that. He shrugged, guessing they'd discuss it later and turned from the bedroom. Still, the idea that he might be able to be with her, this woman that he felt so much for, without a barrier, put a bounce in his step. It had been years since he'd had sex without a condom. He'd even wrapped up with Cersei after Tommen had been born, which said a lot for the state of his marriage when he didn't even trust his wife and her cheating ways.

Barefoot, he came back downstairs, pleased to see Sansa just walking through the door.

She unclipped Tank and took one look at Jaime standing on the stairs; his jeans hugged his long legs, and she swore the t-shirt outlined the abs on his stomach, and she felt an instant jolt of heat through her body.

"Hey kitten," he all but purred and kissed her again. She inhaled, his spicy scent driving her wild, and was pleased he hadn't shaved, even though he smelled so good. She rubbed her face against his stubble, wondering what it would feel like on her body; neck, breasts, between her legs.

"Jaime," she moaned.

He nipped at her. "Go wash up, kitten, and then I'll start dinner."

In a bit of a daze, she nodded and raced up the stairs, missing how he grinned at her retreating form.

Then Jaime looked at Tank. "Time for dinner, bud?" The little dog's ears perked up, and he followed Jaime to the kitchen. Jaime spoke with him as Tank followed him and then began to eat when the kibbles were in his dish. Jaime knew that he'd be passed out in a food coma in a matter of moments after finishing.

Glancing around the kitchen and dining area, still happy with how things looked, Jaime started to pull his ingredients and pots and pans from the fridge and cupboards, as at home here in her kitchen as he was in his down in King's Landing. He didn't even stop to think about how remarkable that was.

His menu tonight was light and simple, perfect, in his mind, for a first at-home date. He tried to recall the last time he'd been so excited for an evening and couldn't. It wasn't just sex, although he'd be a liar if he said he wasn't looking forward to that, it was just being alone with Sansa and spending time with her.

He pulled out the makings for the Caprese salad, loving the freshness of tomatoes, the basil that was more fragrant than he'd ever smelled and the soft mozzarella that he'd procured at an exclusive shop that Bran used. That was one area the Stark's had not dipped their toe into; dairy although Robb did have dairy cows, but mostly for their own consumption.

Jaime was slicing the tomatoes when Sansa walked in.

She had taken a quick bath, winding her hair in a knot on the top of her head, as she worked diligently to shave her legs and other areas, ensuring she was groomed to her satisfaction. She applied a light coating of makeup, and then following Jaime's lead, put on black leggings and a soft cream cashmere sweater. Thankfully, underneath, she'd added a lacy red thong and a daring bra that barely contained her breasts. Even now, she could feel her nipples pebble against the lace, and she
was sure if she looked down, Jaime would see just how excited she was for tonight.

As soon as she entered her kitchen, Jaime's eyes rose and found hers, and thankfully, they stayed on her face, so she saw how they softened with all sorts of unnamed emotions for her. It was that look that allowed her to fully relax and give herself over to what was going to happen tonight. She trusted Jaime implicitly, and she knew he'd never deliberately hurt her. She was so inexperienced when it came to men, relationships and sex, but she knew that Jaime would make this special.

He put down his knife and tugged her closer to him, cupping her face and leaning down to rub his nose against hers, making her giggle just as the music swelled, and he grinned.

"You look beautiful, Sansa," he told her she sighed at how perfect he was. He kissed her on the lips and then pushed her towards a stool where she could watch him cook. When she was seated, he poured her a glass of wine, and then finished the salad, plating it for her.

"I thought we could eat the salad here, while I prep the main course. I promise I'm not some heathen, and we will make it to a proper dining table for dinner," he said, wiggling his eyebrows. Sansa laughed and took a sip of wine.

Then Jaime was there, a fork in his hand as he speared tomatoes, cheese and basil, dragging it through the balsamic reduction and oil. He had moved to stand between her legs, which she had opened willingly, so there was hardly any space between them.

"Open up, kitten," he said, his voice husky as he held the fork. She obediently did, and Jaime groaned at the picture she made. She was everything he'd ever wanted in a woman, and she was his.

She closed her lips over the fork and moaned when it hit her taste buds, and Jaime had to use all his self-control not to take her right here, right now, against the island in her kitchen.

"Sansa, sweetheart, if you keep making those noises, dinner is going to be delayed," Jaime said, his face tight with desire.

Sansa got a wicked gleam in her eyes. She'd never elicited this type of reaction from Harry before. Ever. Their sex had been very staid and routine.

Boldly, liking who she was when she was with Jaime and he was looking at her like that, she reached a hand out and let it trail down his chest, delighted when he sucked in a breath. Then she ran it over his rock hard abs, and lower still until she cupped his dick.

"Maybe I want dessert first," she said.

"Sansa," Jaime groaned, his eyes flashing. "Be sure, kitten. Because I'm trying to be a gentleman here when all I want to do is rip off your clothes and feast on you."

"Then feast, Jaime." Her voice was husky with desire and need.

He took one look in her eyes and saw the truth there; she wanted this and him. And she wanted him like this—on edge, needy and entirely out of their minds with lust for each other. Jaime dropped the fork and pulled off her sweater, eyes widening at the tiny bra that was the only thing between him and her milky flesh.

"Jesus Christ, kitten, you are perfect," he said, and then leaned down and took a lace-covered nipple in his mouth, the peak already hardening as Jaime ran his hand down her slim torso and dipped inside her leggings. He ran his fingers through her curls, and then lower, feeling how wet
she was, and something in Jaime snapped.

He stood up, and then pulled down her leggings, as she kicked them off, her movements as hurried as his. She stood before him in nothing more than the skimpiest red lingerie, and he moaned at the sight of her. Then he lifted her, so her ass was on the island and pushed her legs apart, ripping the thong off as her eyes widened in shocked glee, and he sunk onto the stool before her.

"Finally," he muttered and then proceeded to feast on her, licking from one end to the other, using his hands and tongue, relishing when she sunk her hands into his hair to keep him pinned to her.

Sansa couldn't even imagine the picture they made. She was naked except for her bra, fully on display in her kitchen island as Rossini’s overtures soared in the background, and Jaime Lannister was dining on her as if he was a man starved. She could barely catch her breath when she felt the orgasm steal over her, and she cried out his name. She thought that might be the end of it, but he added his fingers and glanced up at her, a wicked light in his eyes.

"That's one, kitten, but I'm greedy. I want more."

"More?" she almost stuttered. She'd been lucky to get one with Harry. More? Was that even possible? she thought and then stopped thinking as Jaime proved it was.

Two more times he brought her up again, at one point pouring wine over her breasts before licking it off, all the while making sure she was the very centre of his world. When she was wrung out, sure she'd never felt so boneless in her entire life, she had enough presence of mind to realize he was still hard. She sat up, comfortable now in her nudity as he'd seen every part of her and pulled his shirt off, grinning and licking her lips at his chest. Then she gave him a look.

"Pants off babe," and he quickly got rid of them, until like her, he was naked in her kitchen. Jaime was supremely confident in what he looked like, but still, it did something to him to see Sansa look at him like he was chocolate and she wanted to eat him up.

She moved fast and was kneeling before him, wrapping her hands around him, loving how hard and big he was, until she took him in her mouth, working him over and deeper and deeper, loving when he thrust inside her and panted her name. She felt the power of pleasuring him wash over her, and was lost in her task, when he finally pulled her to her feet and kissed her, their tastes mingling in their mouths; Sansa, Jaime, wine, and the long-forgotten salad.

"Jaime," she whined, moving against him.

"I want to finish inside you, kitten, the first time. But I have to ask; do you want me to wear a condom?"

Sansa's eyes widened, and she looked at him. She was clean, just tested and knew he'd never harm her. And she hadn't stopped taking her pill.

"I'm clean, and I'm on the pill," she told him, almost shyly and he let out a tiny sigh.

"Thank the gods. I haven't been with a woman without a condom since… well… for years Sansa. Probably close to twenty. But I don't want anything between us." His green eyes were intense, locked on hers as he tried to convey what this might mean. He could imagine a lifetime of having nothing between him and this woman in his arms.

"Neither do I, Jaime."

"Good," he murmured and then lifted her, settling her on the island before he kissed her again,
nudging at her entrance.

"Last chance, kitten because once I’m in you, you're mine," he said against her lips. Sansa answered him by thrusting her hips forward so that he bumped inside her.

"Jaime, make love to me," she told him, wrapping her arms around his neck and tilting her head so that she could prolong their kiss.

With a groan, Jaime sunk inside her, all the way, so deep he touched a part of her that Sansa was sure had never been touched before. It felt like coming home, like perfection and every silly romantic cliché she could think of, and when she looked at Jaime's face, he had the same blissful expression on his as she was sure was on hers.

"Kitten, I am never leaving you again. You feel so good, baby," Jaime said as he started to move, dragging himself along her insides and making her moan.

Sansa could do nothing more than hang on as he took them both somewhere they had only dreamed of; the feelings too much to put into words, until they were slicked with sweat and panting into each other.

"Jaime, please," Sansa all but begged him, sometime later. He'd made her feel things she didn't even know where possible, but now, she was on that keen edge again, and she wanted to fall over it when he was inside her.

"Ready, baby?" he asked, his face a portrait in concentration, need and love. So much love, Sansa realized, suddenly, and all for her.

She looked him in the eyes, no longer afraid, and knew what they both needed. Stilling for a moment, until he met her gaze as she smiled and said, "I love you, Jaime Lannister."

Jaime was lost; undone in a maelstrom of emotions and want, knowing he held his future in his very hands right now. "Sansa, gods, baby, I love you so much," Jaime said, surging inside her over and over again, reaching down to stroke her, so she broke apart in his arms, and he could finally, blessedly follow her over.

He had enough presence of mind, thank god, to wrap his arms around her and push himself against the island, or else he was sure his legs would have given out. He nuzzled her neck, sweaty like his and licked at her, leaning down to whisper in her ear. "Did you mean it? Do you love me, Sansa?"

She heard the doubt and uncertainty in his voice, and her heart almost broke for him. Her lion, so alone and ill used his whole life by a vicious woman who had never deserved him. Sansa pulled back so he could look in her eyes. "I did, Jaime. I love you. Today, tomorrow, forever."

She saw his shoulders slump in relief almost, before that soft grin she realized he reserved only for her, was back. "I meant it as well, Sansa. I love you."

They stayed like that, still locked together, grinning like fools, until finally, she shivered, and they came to their senses, realizing they were naked and hungry. They laughed as Jaime got a warm cloth and washed her, kissing and touching as they dressed. Sansa had never felt this good in her entire life as she ate her slightly wilted salad, much to Jaime's horror.

"Gods, I've never served food that looked so awful," he complained, but Sansa shrugged. It tasted divine, and she knew she'd never look at a Caprese salad the same way again.

The laughed and drank their way through the bottle of wine as Jaime readied the rest of their
dinner; pan-fried halibut with a special homemade cream sauce, a parmesan and brown butter risotto and garden-fresh vegetables, cooked to perfection.

"Kitten, it's positively scandalous that you don't like mushrooms. I mean, risotto and mushrooms practically go hand in hand," Jaime gently teased her. She blushed slightly, which he found delightful, and he made it a point to touch her as often as he could, frequently leaning over to kiss her or run a hand under her sweater and over her lower back, delighting when she shivered into his touch.

When the food was finally ready, he plated it perfectly and brought it to the table he'd set. Sansa hadn't even noticed it, and she warmed with the care he had taken. Her first bites melted on her mouth, and she moaned, causing his dick to harden once again, a feeling Jaime was quite happy for. He meant to have her again, only this time, he'd make it to their bedroom.

The basked in each other. Excellent food, great wine and new love that was so all-consuming they both knew the road they were on. Their trust in one another was almost absolute, despite only knowing each other a week.

"Is it like this for Lannister men?" Sansa asked, curiously. She recalled Tywin mentioning how quickly he'd fallen for Joanna and Jaime grinned.

"I grew up on tales from my father, telling us how he'd fallen in love at first sight with my mother," Jaime told Sansa, holding her hand and stroking his fingers over it, loving how she focused on him. "I never imagined it happening for me, but here we are."

When they were done, Sansa insisted she clean up, asking if Jaime would take Tank for a walk. The little dog, who'd happily snored through their counter sex, wiggled his butt as Jaime opened the door. Sansa puttered around the kitchen, putting it back together, shaking her head at chefs and the number of dishes they made. Still, it was worth it to have someone with Jaime's skills cook for her. She had the dishwasher going, the counters wiped down (she'd been positively scarlet when she'd done that), and the candles just extinguished when Jaime and Tank came back in. The dog ran to his bed, as Jaime tugged her by the hand.

"Come on, kitten, enough cleaning for tonight."

She shook her head at how playful he was and followed him up the stairs, where to her delight, they got ready for bed, together. When she emerged from the bathroom, Jaime was tucked under the covers, and she watched in delight as his eyes widened.

It seemed, Jaime discovered, that the very proper Sansa Stark had a thing for daring and racy lingerie. She stood there in a white piece, that should have looked innocent, but was anything but.

"Jesus, Sansa, you are perfect," Jaime muttered and then threw back the covers, unable to stay away from her. He was by her side in two seconds and captured her lips as his hands roamed over her body. "Wherever you get this stuff, keep doing it kitten."

Sansa laughed, and it warmed Jaime all the way through. "You silly goose. If you like it, I've got loads more."

His eyes widened, and then he grinned. "I want to see every piece."

Jaime picked her up then, delighted when she let out a little shriek and then put her on the bed, where he took his time, kissing and stroking her from head to toe until she was shaking with need. He hadn't let her come, and she was practically begging him by the time he sunk back inside her.
"You're mine, Sansa," Jaime said, his voice suddenly low and intense. She nodded and confirmed it when he'd stilled so she could look at him.

"Yours, Jaime. All yours," she told him, and he finally started to move.

"I'm going to marry you, Sansa. Put my mother's ring on your finger; give you the wedding of your dreams. Children, baby. We're going to have a family, Sansa," Jaime was saying, unable to keep any of his dreams for them at bay.

She said yes to it all, writhing underneath him and tugging him closer, keeping him locked deep inside her. She wanted it all and all with him.

When she finally tightened and cried out his name, he grunted and followed her over. "Love you, kitten, so damn much."

He felt her run her fingers through his hair and caught the smile on her face. "I love you too, Jaime. So very much."

Without moving too much, he got them settled underneath the covers, with her in his arms. "I can't let you go, Sansa," he told her, overcome by the emotion of tonight. He'd always known it would be good between them, but this was beyond his wildest expectations. Sansa Stark loved him back. And he'd be damned if he'd let anything get in his way of making her his in every possible way. When Tywin came back, he'd ask his Dad to bring Joanna's ring, and he'd give Sansa the most romantic proposal the North had ever seen.

Sansa turned slightly to look at the man she'd lost her heart too. It was crazy to think that a few short weeks ago she'd thought her world ending with Harry and the slut. Now she knew he was never meant to be her forever. That was Jaime. And a funny little part of her thought, it was always meant to be this way. He was her other half, and she couldn't wait to see how amazing their life together would be.

Chapter End Notes

Meh, I don't do a slow burn. Kudos to those who do.

Crazy week coming up, so not sure when I'll update.
Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

First, I will put out a warning. Brienne is a well-loved character by many, but she's not a 'good guy' in this story. SOOOO please don't read more if this is going to bother you.

Also, for the first time, I have a new friend for Sansa that I love!

Jaime was utterly fascinated by what he felt by watching the woman he was in love with sleep. He'd woken early, as he tended to do, while Sansa continued to sleep soundly beside him. It gave him unfettered access to observe her.

Her skin was so smooth; so pure it reminded him of cream, cream that he wanted to lick. She coloured so easily he had discovered. In happiness, delight, embarrassment or desire, and was an open book when it came to her expressions. Her eyes, closed now, were windows into her very soul, and for a week, since the moment he'd met her, she had never hidden anything from him. It was addictive to a man that had been married to someone so manipulative for nearly twenty years.

Jaime had been burned so deeply, so thoroughly by Cersei, that for the longest time, he had honestly thought he'd never meet anyone he could trust again. He'd been young, and painfully in love with Cersei, giving her every part of himself, unable to hold anything back. More than once, his father had compared him to his mother, that he let his emotions rule him. Jaime hadn't seen a problem with that. You met someone and fell in love; that was the fairy-tale, right? Jaime had wanted that; he'd grown up with stories about how much his father had loved his mother.

It had been a bitter blow, not just to his ego, but his very heart and soul when he'd discovered that Cersei hadn't loved him the same way he did her. It was more than just the cheating, although that had been brutal. It had been that she had never cared with the same depth that he had. He wasn't even sure that she was capable of caring about someone with that amount of selflessness and in any relationship when it was all one side, eventually, the scales tipped too far over.

After the divorce, the parade of women had done nothing to reassure Jaime that there was someone who loved as he did out there. He'd resigned himself to mostly meaningless encounters, feeling that he'd had his shot, and had failed spectacularly. He was too old, too broken and too hurt ever to have the type of relationship he'd longed for; to be completely in love and loved by someone equally in return.

Then he came North. He recalled the visceral reaction he'd had the moment he'd pulled up to this very farmhouse as if something had reached inside him and grabbed him by the guts. From that very moment, Sansa had been everything; his future, his heart, his home. He wanted a full life with her, a family and a love that rivalled those in great stories and songs.

Jaime reached out and twirled a lock of her hair, the most brilliant colour he'd ever seen, around his finger and wondered at the picture she would make in a wedding dress, her face radiant with happiness as she walked towards him. He let his hand drift lower, over her slim stomach, and his heart thumped wildly at the thought of her round with a child of theirs, safe and growing there. He imagined she'd want him to be part of every step; the first test, the first doctor's appointment, the
first ultrasound. He'd be by her side the whole way, including in the delivery room and afterwards. So lost in his plans, he missed when her eyes opened.

Sansa woke to see Jaime completely unguarded and open with his emotions as he stared at her stomach, his hand resting almost reverently there. She saw every hope, dream and fantasy she'd had since she first believed in everlasting love, there on his face. She'd asked Tywin if Jaime wanted another family, and he'd told her to trust him. She did; wholly and completely.

Her whole future was in Jaime's eyes right now.

"Hi," she said softly, not wanting to break the spell.

She watched in pleasure as Jaime's eyes found hers, softening further and filling with love.

"Hi kitten," he murmured, leaning down and brushing his lips across her smooth stomach. She giggled when he rubbed his stubble there, loving what it felt like.

Then he licked lower and lower until he parted her legs and gazed at her.

"So pretty, my kitten," he was murmuring. He inhaled her, imprinting her scent on him. And then he set about to drive her wild. He licked, flattening his tongue to lap at her like a big cat would, growling his encouragement when she ground into his face and screamed his name.

He gave her no chance to linger on that high before he sunk inside her.

"God, Sansa, your like nothing I've ever felt before," he said, framing her face with his hands, kissing her to oblivion as he moved in and out of her, his pace relentless. Then she arched and wrapped her long legs around him, and tightened her muscles. Sansa grinned as Jaime's eyes almost rolled back in his head.

"Holy hell, woman, do that again," he groaned.

Drunk on lust and her newfound power, Sansa started to move. She scored her nails down his back, digging in, so they left little crescent-shaped marks on his flesh and loved it when Jaime responded to the nip of pain by groaning into her ear.

"You feel so good, Jaime. So good inside me." Sansa blushed a bit, never having ever talked like that to a man.

Jaime, however, seemed to love it.

"Kitten I could live in this sweet pu...," he started to murmur into her ear before Sansa said, "Jaime," almost scandalized by him and his dirty word. He winked at her.

"Live in your sweetness, kitten. Never felt anything like you baby. Not in my whole life."

Despite his best intentions to last, to draw out their pleasure, it was too much. All of it; her warm heat, her sweet sighs on well-kissed lips and the way she ground her body into his as if she couldn't get close enough to him.

When she clamped down on him peaking again, Jaime swore she pulled him inside her further than he'd ever been, and he pumped twice more before he finished, roaring her name.

"Sansa, Sansa, my heart, my love," he was whispering into her ear, lazily moving inside her, still half-hard as he tried to catch his breath.
She leaned up and kissed him, running her fingers through his hair and laughing when he all but purred against her.

"Is it always like this?"

Jaime looked a bit startled and then shook his head. "No, my love, it's not."

That made her happy, to think this was something more than he’d had with anyone else.

"Sansa, I'm so in love with you I can hardly see straight kitten. It's never been like this." He caught her face so she could see the truth there. "Not ever love."

"I'm glad," she whispered, and he laughed softly, agreeing wholeheartedly.

Eventually, their alarms went off, and Sansa discovered Jaime was just as playful in the shower.

When he had her soaped up, he pulled her back to his chest, holding her still and sunk two fingers inside her. "One more, for me, kitten."

She shook her head, so sensitive and doubting she could until his magic fingers had her arching again.

"Jaime, what have you done to me?" She asked him, writhing on his hand until he stroked her to yet another morning orgasm. She was going to be boneless today from so much pleasure.

When she finally turned to look at him, he was grinning happily, and she couldn't doubt how relaxed he looked.

"I'm loving you kitten," was his reply, to which Sansa's romantic heart fluttered. He was the absolute perfect man for her.

"And I love you." It gave Sansa so much happiness to see how much joy those three little words brought him, almost as if he still couldn't quite believe it. Sansa made a note to herself to make Jaime feel as secured and loved as he did her; they both needed that.

Finally, half an hour late, walked into Bran's place hand in hand, both the coffees and their grins huge. They were almost oblivious to anyone else, so blissed out in their own little world.

"Jaime, you're late," Brienne snapped at him. He gave her a funny look and then one of his devastating grins.

"Brienne, it's fine. I know exactly what I'm doing today," he said with a breezy air, not taking his eyes of Sansa the entire time.

The look in Jaime's eye gave Brienne a funny feeling, but she said nothing, already a bit upset at herself for allowing emotion to come through when she addressed him. She'd kept her feelings a secret from Jaime for years; surely she could do so for the next few weeks until he came back home? Back home where there was no Sansa Stark and things could return to normal.

Dickon and Pod took one look at them and smiled, slapping Jaime on the back, while Bran asked Sansa how she was. Her smile answered every question her brother had. He’d never seen her quite so radiant.

When Sansa took a seat, content to sit back and watch the production, Jaime was right there beside her.
"Don't think I'm going to let you out of reach, did you love?" He brushed his lips over hers, both of them missing how Brienne's face was awash in displeasure. "I have this need to taste you kitten, and I'm ravenous." He was nipping at her, playful and in such a light mood this morning.

"Jaime," Sansa laughed, unable to keep the love and adoration from her tone, putting her hands on his chest. He kissed her again and lingered, and Sansa's whole body melted into his.

But then Brienne was there, telling them they needed to get started taping, and Sansa saw the excitement and eagerness in Jaime's eyes. This was his element, and he was dying to share it with her. He looked at her and then to the kitchen. Sansa shook her head at his dramatics.

"Go, you silly man. I'm fine here."

With one last kiss, he turned his full attention to Brienne, who had, in Sansa's opinion, worked up a head of steam over nothing. Jaime wasn't worried about them being late, so why was she? Brienne hustled Jaime away, leaving Sansa at her little table, where Jojen soon joined her, a plate of pastries and a latte in his hand. She thanked Bran's boyfriend and they chatted happily, watching the show around them.

Once she was out of Jaime's orbit, Sansa was able to look around the restaurant and notice all the changes. Bran had agreed to be closed for lunches this week, to give them time to tape the show in the morning and early afternoon, and Sansa could now see a wardrobe rack, full of men's clothes, along with what had to be dozens of shoes that Jaime adored. Why they needed so many different shoes when he was taped from the waist up was anyone's guess, but it wasn't her place to say.

She saw there was a makeup chair, where Jaime currently was. Standing in front of him was a pretty woman, small with bright silver hair that was laughing with Jaime as she applied his makeup for the taping. There were lights and wires and more people than had been here last night. As if sensing she might have questions, Dickon came over at one point and explained who everyone was and their role. It was vastly more complicated than Sansa had initially thought, and watching all these people; she felt terrible now that they were late.

When she said that to Dickon, he smiled kindly at her and shook his head. "Jaime's the star, Sansa. And he's always late. I'm not sure if you've noticed, but he lives life on his terms. Brienne's just..." Dic looked a bit sheepish and shrugged his shoulders. "Brienne's out of sorts." He said nothing more, but the message was clear. Brienne was 'out of sorts' because of her.

Sansa looked stricken at the thought that she might be somehow responsible for the anger that Brienne had.

"Perhaps I shouldn't be here," she mumbled, all of a sudden feeling uncomfortable.

"Awww fuck," Dic said, scrubbing a hand down his face. "No, Sansa. Don't go. Jaime will kill me and everyone in here if you leave. And if he sees I've upset you, then it'll be even worse. Look, Jaime wants you here, and that's all that matters. Brienne just needs to get over herself."

Dickon shot Sansa one more glance and then was gone, leaving her to feel worse than ever. Maybe she shouldn't be here, Sansa thought. She watched as Jaime laughed as he interacted with his crew, and he and Brienne went over the plan for today. It was, in truth, his job, and who was she to be here? Especially if it made his producer upset.

Suddenly, as if he knew what she was thinking, he shot her a smile and winked, and Sansa felt her tummy settle; she'd stay for a little while, as it seemed like things were back on track. Soon enough, Brienne declared him "ready," and they all moved into the kitchen. Jojen and Bran were
by her side, assuring her that Jaime had explicitly asked for her to be here for all of this.

"Sansa, you're what is most important to him," Bran told her, giving her that enigmatic smile he often wore. "Tywin and I agree that you two are so utterly perfect for one another that is surprising the universe has waited so long to bring you two together."

Sansa stopped and reached out to her little brother, several areas of that sentence requiring more attention. Bran, who was the only Stark that was taller than her, looked down as they stood off to the side in the kitchen, a mass of people and cameras moving around them.

"First, little brother, I had no idea you were such a romantic."

Bran had the grace to blush slightly and looked towards Jojen. "I simply know what it feels like to find your other half, and knowing what it feels like, I can also recognize it when it happens to someone I love. That is all I meant, sweet sister."

Sansa's heart melted a bit, not having realized how deeply Bran cared. He was the epitome of still waters run deep.

"And Tywin?"

Bran cocked his head and looked at Sansa. "We find ourselves with a mutual goal and an affinity to see that goal come to fruition."

Sansa snorted. "And what, pray tell, dear brother, is your goal?"

Bran cupped her cheek gently. "For the two of you to be happy."

Sansa felt the tears then and could help but let one escape. "Bran." Her brother pulled her close and hugged her.

"Trust yourself and trust him, Sansa. He loves you."

She nodded into Bran's neck, so grateful for her family and how much they loved and supported one another.

When he let her go, she slipped away to the bathroom and splashed cold water on her face, and then retouched her makeup. Just as she was finishing, the little makeup artist was there.

"Oh! It's you," she said, her eyes brightening in delight. "Your Jaime's Sansa. I'm Dany."

"Jaime's Sansa?" Sansa said, shaking her head and wondering what her incorrigible man had been saying. He seemed to have absolutely no filter.

Dany's smile widened. "Sweetie, I've been doing his hair and makeup for ages and trust me, that man looks and talks about you the way my husband does me." Then she whipped out a phone and showed Sansa a series of pictures of a huge tattooed man and the most adorable little boy in his arm, both gazing at Dany with looks of pure adoration on their faces.

"My handsome men," she gushed and flipped through a few more pictures. Sansa made all the appropriate noises and then suddenly found herself being scrutinized by Dany. Sansa could tell she was madly in love with her husband and son, and it was fun to have this woman from Jaime's other life be so open and friendly with her; especially when Brienne just seemed to hate her.
"Well, come on. Let me fix you up. Jaime said he had a surprise this morning." Dany wiggled some truly impressive eyebrows and then before Sansa knew it, she was in the makeup chair with Dany almost buzzing about you.

"Why do I need makeup?" Sansa asked, a bit bewildered by what had just happened. Dany winked and smiled but said nothing, keeping up a steady stream of chatter about her husband Kal, and son Rocco. Dany might be small, but Sansa learned she was a force, and a short time later, she stepped back and showed Sansa her work.

Sansa's blue eyes widened. "Wow. You're amazing," she said, sincerity in every word.

Dany grinned. "You have the most beautiful skin and such amazing bone structure, Sansa. I only had to add a little to enhance your natural beauty."

Sansa blushed at the compliment, wondering what it was about Dany that made it so easy to talk with her. "Thank you. I'm still not quite sure why I needed to look like a movie star, but you're very talented."

It had been over an hour now since Jaime had walked into the kitchen, and Sansa was eager to see him cook. She thanked Dany again and told her to let her know if she needed any recommendations when in the North.

"I'd love to come and see your winery," Dany said enthusiastically. "It's that's not too forward of me. And Jaime was telling me about your nephew and the ranch. It all sounds so fascinating. I grew up in Essos, and I've never been this far north before."

Sansa decided then and there that she was going to take a chance and open herself up to a friendship with this woman. She seemed warm and genuine and caring. Sansa beamed at her. "I'd love to show you around Winterfell Winery, Ranch and Farm."

As soon as she did, Jaime's eyes met hers, and he stopped what he was doing. Then a massive grin broke out across his face.

"Ahhh, perfect timing. This show has been about simple but elegant food that anyone can make to fool their date into thinking they are a professional chef. And who better to sample some of this food, then my girlfriend, Sansa Stark. Come here, kitten," Jaime said, looking at her while a camera panned to capture her face.

She stood immobilized, unable to comprehend what Jaime had just done. Then he moved, in that way he had; strong, sure and graceful, until he was in front of her and took her face in his hands and then leaned down to press his lips to her.

"Breath, baby, and go with it." He grabbed her hand and tugged her towards a stool she hadn't previously seen, sitting at one end of the counter.

The clues finally connected in her brain; he was recreating their date last night for his first show. Her heart just about exploded at how romantic it was, and she beamed at him. Once she was settled on the stool, he poured her a glass of wine. Sansa had no idea where to look or what to do, so she just focused on Jaime.

"Sansa talk to me about your wine," Jaime said, while he chopped and diced, all the while keeping his attention and focus on her.

Thankful he'd chosen a topic she was comfortable with, Sansa happily told Jaime (and his millions
of viewers) about the bottle he had selected.

"And would this be the one you would have recommended with my beef tongue bruschetta?"

Sansa smiled and shook her head. "No, Jaime, I wouldn't have."

He gave her a pout and she just about swooned at how adorable he was.

"Kitten, you haven't even tried it." He pointed to the beef tongue, thinking he'd get a reaction out of her.

She laughed and then said, "No, but it's not my first rodeo Jaime, and if you think to shock me by feeding me beef tongue, you have clearly forgotten what my brother does."

It was the perfect segue into the ranch and the farm, giving Jaime and Sansa a platform to discuss her family and how they raised the beef that Jaime was using, along with the tomatoes and onions and many of the other ingredients he had arranged on the counter.

Jaime looked straight at the camera and told his viewers if they weren't quite as bold as he was, they could make bruschetta the 'old fashioned way,' but then gave that panty-dropping smirk, as he waved his knife at 'them.'

"But no hate mail when you don't stun her into spending the night, or I'll tell you it was all about the beef tongue and you failed to deliver." Then he winked, to soften his message and continue talking to Sansa.

Jaime's menu also gave Sansa a chance to show off her wine, as he added two salads; a delicious artichoke salad and an arugula and fennel one. The main entrée choices were a perfectly grilled steak, with fresh baby potatoes and vegetables as sides, or roasted chicken with parmesan risotto.

"Now, many of you might be thinking, But Chef Jaime, isn't risotto normally made with mushrooms? And you would be correct. However, sometimes, you will have a date that doesn't like mushrooms." The camera panned to Sansa, who blushed adorably. Jaime winked at her.

"That's ok kitten. I still love you." He continued cooking and talking as if he just hadn't declared his love for her to all of Westeros on his show. "And if your date doesn't like the main ingredient, then your best bet is to improvise."

Sansa just sat there staring at the man she was in love with, unable to believe what he'd just said to... well, everyone. Then Jaime picked up a glass of wine, took a sip and asked her a question about blending certain types of fruit as if he hadn't publicly just claimed her - like this was something he did every day, announcing his love on national television. Still a bit stunned, Sansa shook her head and answered him, trying to refocus.

When Jaime joined Sansa in sampling more than one bottle of wine, he debated easily with her about which one paired best and asking her about her process. They spoke comfortably as Jaime prepared and served Sansa food, and she soon forgot about the cameras and just focused on Jaime, the man that had come to mean everything to her.

What neither saw was that Jaime's crew was standing there in awe of the two of them. Jaime hadn't told Brienne he was pulling Sansa onto the show, knowing it was better to ask for forgiveness than permission with her. He knew Brienne would never consent to his plans, so he'd simply gone around her, doing what he wanted with brilliant results.

The others, Dickon, Pod and Dany, were grinning like fools at the chemistry between their friend, this famous chef, and the beautiful woman he was head over heels in love with.
Dany had taken a spot next to Bran and Jojen, whom she found she liked immensely and leaned in at one point. "They are magic together," and saw both men nod their heads in agreement.

Pod, who aspired to be a producer like Brienne one day, knew immediately that they had struck literal gold with Sansa Stark. This was going to skyrocket Jaime's career; they couldn't buy this type of banter and chemistry, and they'd be idiots not to have Sansa on each episode they taped up here. She was classically beautiful, and the camera loved her. But more, she was warm, gracious and inviting. She made Jaime seem more attainable and down to earth, and at the same time, it was clear that she cared for him deeply. She spoke passionately about what her family was doing in the North on their land, and everyone could see how this was a home run. The best thing that had happened to Jaime’s show, was Bran Stark winning that competition.

Sansa knew as she sat there, why Jaime was so popular; it had nothing to do with Brienne, no matter what Jaime might say. He was the star. He made everyone feel like they could cook like him, and he made it light and easy and fun. He was so handsome, Sansa's eyes almost ached just looking at him. And he was hers. Jaime Lannister was ALL hers. He loved her. It was a wild idea for this woman from the North who had longed for a great love story, to realize that she was smack dab living in the middle of one right at this very moment.

When they finally finished taping, Sansa was a little bit buzzed and was smiling at Jaime, who came over and pulled her into his arms.

"Kitten, you were perfect," he said, just about to kiss her when Brienne's shrill voice rang through the kitchen.

"Jaime, what the fuck was that?" She didn't even let him finish when she all but jerked him outside, ready to tear a strip off him. He gave Sansa a lopsided grin and followed Brienne out the back door.

Sansa, who only moments ago had been feeling great, crashed, worried about Jaime and the fallout from his impulsive actions.

"Oh no, girlfriend, no, you don't," came Dany's voice. The small woman threw her arms around Sansa and hugged her tight. "You were amazing, darling!"

Dany all but squealed, and soon more of the crew surrounded Sansa, telling her that was the best show they'd ever taped and asking questions about her family's business. Sansa, blessedly distracted from the yelling outside, eagerly answered them. When a particularly loud exchanged came through, Sansa got a worried look on her face, and Dany shooed them all away, and took a stool next to Sansa's, clasping their hands together.

"You have to remember who Jaime's father is Sansa. There is nothing he can't or won't do for his son. Including buying this whole network to make sure Jaime can keep doing what he loves."

Sansa bit her bottom lip and nodded. "I know. Tywin is great, and I'd just hate for...."

Dany stopped her with a hand.

"Wait. You've met his Dad? When?" Dany's eyebrows drew together into a crease.

"Oh, well, Tywin came up this past weekend and stayed with Jaime and me at my house."

Dany's jaw dropped, and she was momentarily stunned, thinking back to when she had first met Jaime. He had befriended her after her father had gone crazy and basically left her an orphan in Essos. He'd been travelling, early in his career, and he knew that his father and her father had not
gotten along. When Tywin had pushed Aerys to the brink of bankruptcy, her father, coward that he was, had taken his own life. Jaime had stumbled upon Dany, nineteen, working three jobs to try to support herself in different restaurants in Braavos, her dreams of going to university shattered when her father had died. Jaime had known who she was by her silver hair, and had called his father, demanding that Tywin at least ensure that she had enough money to go to school and live. Stunned at his eldest son's outburst, Tywin had reluctantly agreed, and Dany soon had the funds to attend university and get her fine arts degree.

Years later, Dany, now married, ran into Jaime at another restaurant, this one in Mereen. She'd just married Kal, and the three had spent a wonderful evening catching up. Dany told Jaime he'd been her saviour back then, and he'd confessed that it had been the one time he'd stood up to his father like that. And he'd told her if she ever needed anything else, not to hesitate to get in touch with him.

When Dany and her husband came to King's Landing a few years ago, Jaime had instantly gotten her a job at the network and helped Kal find the perfect spot for his tattoo shop. Needless to say, there wasn't anything Dany wouldn't do for Jaime Lannister. Despite how close she was to Jaime, though, she'd never warmed to his father. Truth be told, Tywin Lannister scared her a bit. He just seemed too cold and too harsh, and she wondered where Jaime got his big heart from because it wasn't the Great Lion as far as she could tell.

Now Sansa was sitting here, telling Dany that the Tywin Lannister had come and stayed at her house. And that he was "great."

Sansa looked at Dany's stunned face and let out a little laugh. "I admit, he can be a little intimidating, but we got drunk together the first afternoon, and I think that broke the ice between us."

Dany waved a hand, her mind racing. "Let me get this straight. First, Jaime came and stayed at your house."

Sansa nodded.

"Then Tywin Lannister, the man who ONLY goes between King's Landing and Casterly Rock, came North. And he stayed at your house."

Sansa nodded again.

"And you got drunk with him."

Sansa grinned. "Yup. At the winery. And then Ty and I came into town, and one of Bran's servers was mean to me, indicating that I was sleeping with Ty and not Jaime, so I might have announced to the whole restaurant that I had Monday night sex planned with Jaime." Sansa finished that sentence a bit out of breath.

Dany was speechless, not knowing what to comment on first. Sansa filled in the gaps. "That was Friday. Then on Saturday, I gave Tywin a tour of the ranch, and my nephew, Ned, well, he fell in love with Tywin instantly." Dany’s mouth dropped open.

"I can't even believe this. This is fantastic," Dany said, pouring herself a glass of wine and leaning closer. "Go on."

Sansa blushed but continued. "Well instead of calling him Tywin, Ned got confused and called him Papa Lion and it just kind of... stuck. So now Ned has a new Papa... Papa Lion. He’s mad for
"Papa Lion. Priceless. This is gold, pardon the crass reference to Tywin’s wealth. Keep going."

Sansa told her all about the egg gathering and then the butcher shop, along with Ned naming his piglets and them babysitting the boys.

"Tywin freaking Lannister watching the Lion King." Dany was howling in laughter and shaking her head, as the women made their way through more wine. When it got to date night, Dany squealed.

"And how was it?" Her crazy eyebrows wiggled, and Sansa leaned in closer, her face red, but loving this new friend of hers.

"So hot, Dany. He did things to me that no man has ever done. Good things, delightful things," Sansa sighed and then told her all about it. Both had long forgotten their original concern about Brienne yelling at Jaime, too caught up in the romance of it all.

"I am so happy he found you, Sansa," Dany said softly, squeezing Sansa's hand. "He is the best man; good and true and kind. He loves so deeply and that bitch of his ex-wife did a number on him. I'm so glad he convinced me to come up here. I'm so happy to have met you."

Sansa was close with her sisters-in-law, and she and Arya bumped along alright, but it had been an age since she'd had a girlfriend. "I'm glad you came here as well, Dany."

Then Dany poured more wine and asked Sansa all about her brothers, the winery and life in the North.

Meanwhile...

Jaime ran a frustrated hand through his hair, wondering when Brienne might stop yelling at him. He had only rarely seen her so upset. It seemed she felt he had disrespected her by not telling her about Sansa and the plan for taping today. But since Jaime knew, as much as she did, that he'd just had one of the best shows of his life, he was sure she'd come to that conclusion herself. Eventually. Hopefully sooner than later. Standing outside being yelled at by her, while Sansa was inside was not Jaime’s idea of a good time.

When she finally stopped ranting, he took a calming breath and looked at her.

"Brienne, it was a show about making food at home for your lover. What better way to do that than with my actual lover?" Before Brienne could respond, Jaime kept talking. "Besides, she is stunningly beautiful, well-spoken, educated, and she has signed all the forms and paperwork to be on the show. We'd already agreed to her being part of the taping, and," he said, seeing her open her mouth to protest, "it perfectly frames the upcoming episodes. You know, the ones we're doing at the ranch, farm and winery."

Brienne scowled, and Jaime gentled his tone. "I'm sorry I didn't get your permission, but that is all I'm sorry for Brienne. Sansa is a natural. Hell, I could do all my shows with her there, and I'm sure they'd be a hit. Can you honestly tell me that wasn't one of the best shows of my entire career?"

Brienne snapped her mouth shut. She couldn't. She had been stunned, then embarrassed, then enraged when Jaime had pulled Sansa onto the show they had started to tape. She had hoped, secretly, that it would be a disaster, but it wasn't. Even she could admit that. Sansa Stark was as advertised; beautiful, intelligent and madly in love with Jaime Lannister. She was one of those women that everything obviously came easy too, Brienne could see, and she doubted Sansa had
struggled a single day in her life. It was more than obvious that Jaime was infatuated with her (he said love, but then, his track record wasn't exactly the best), so Brienne didn't believe his feelings were anything more than the excitement that came when you got a new lover.

Trying different tact, since yelling at Jaime wasn't working, Brienne lowered her voice. "Jaime, I am concerned. A week ago, you didn't know this woman. Now she is starring in your show? What if something goes wrong? What if she is only in this for the fame? Or your money? Not only would I hate for you to get hurt, but it could also destroy your career." In the past, whenever Brienne had expressed her 'concerns' about someone Jaime was dating, he'd listened. Now he just shook his head.

Then he grinned and grasped Brienne's hand. "B, it's not like that. She's not like that. She's the real deal. My father always said Lannister men fall in love at first sight. I thought it was a myth, Brienne. Until her. I just saw her, and it was like, my whole world was there. Everything I've ever wanted, and it was all just her."

Jaime had got a distant look in his eye, so he missed the pain in Brienne's.

"Jaime still, as your producer, I think we should be cautious with adding new people to the show," she started to say again, but Jaime shook his head.

"No, Brienne, on this, I won't negotiate." Very rarely had Jaime ever said a flat out no to Brienne, but he did now. He knew like he was sure she did, that he all he needed to do was pick up the phone and make a call, and all of this would be a moot point. Tywin could and would buy the network for Jaime's show, giving his son carte blanch to do whatever he wanted, should Jaime demand.

Jaime never had asked his father to become involved, liking that he'd struck out on his own, so to speak, when it came to his career. Jaime had some epic battles with his father when he first expressed interest in being a chef to his father. Tywin could not, for any reason, understand why his son wanted to serve people. They were Lannister's after all; they had people that did this for them.

It helped that Tyrion turned out to be a financial whiz kid, while Jaime's scholastic struggles had hammered home to Tywin that as much as he may WISH to have his eldest son follow in his footsteps, he never would. Once Tywin had accepted that Jaime wasn't going to be the next CEO of his company, he'd backed his son wholeheartedly. Despite the often cold and demanding nature of his father, Jaime had learned that when it came to his eldest son, he loved him deeply and was willing to do almost anything to ensure his happiness.

Unspoken between Jaime and Brienne right now was that threat; the unacknowledged elephant in the room that as much as she might like to think she had some power of him and his show, she did not. Because of who Jaime Lannister was.

Brienne's back stiffened. "Jaime, I will go on record to say that I think having Sansa Stark on your show is a mistake. Further, I think your personal association with her is clouding your judgement. You don't know this woman, despite what you might think and feel for her, and I ask that you reconsider your plans for the shows for up here."

Jaime shook his head. "I'm sorry, Brienne, but I won't. Sansa and the Starks stay." He narrowed his gaze. "I know what we taped, and I want to see the final show before it's submitted to the network for airing- in two days." It had been another part of his contract that Addam had negotiated; Jaime had the final say on what went to the network. He'd never been more grateful for his friend and manager than he was at that moment.
Jaime patted her awkwardly on the back, and then went back inside. His show wasn't a live one; Brienne and the others would have their work cut out to edit it in the timeframe allotted, but he'd been clear with his direction. He knew that Brienne hated change, and he'd thrown her a major curveball today, but he couldn't understand why she was such a hard ass all of a sudden. The show they had taped today, Tuesday, was due to be aired next Monday, a prime spot on the Food Network and Jaime couldn’t wait for all of Westeros to meet Sansa.

When Jaime walked back inside Bran's place, he shook the negative thoughts from his head and turned to look for Sansa. It was afternoon, and he knew she'd be eager to get home and see to Tank. He spotted her and Dany laughing and drinking wine, a huge plate of pasta between the two of them that Bran had obviously cooked up. The camera crew had packed up; Bran was opening up in a couple of hours, and some of his kitchen staff was starting to filter in.

It made Jaime extremely happy to see Sansa getting along so well with Dany; she was a nice woman, and Jaime knew she hadn't made many friends since they'd come to Westeros. Jaime took a few minutes to talk with Bran. He had an idea for another show, but he needed Robb's permission.

"Has Robb talked with you about doing a kids' show?" Bran's eyes widened, and then he grinned.

"How did you know? Both Jeyne and Robb are fine with Ned being on the show. He's been asking them about the film crew all day, and they can barely keep him contained. What are you thinking?" Bran asked, eager to see what Jaime had in mind.

They put their heads together and started talking; Jaime wanted a chance to cook with Bran on camera, and he had the perfect thought that would include Bran, Ned, Robb and Sansa and would most likely be a two-part episode: From Ranch to Plate- How to cook good food and trick your kids into eating it.

Bran and Jaime phoned Robb, asking if it was too short of notice to come to the ranch tomorrow. Robb was agreeable, and they said they'd see them bright and early in the morning. Jaime would have his crew meet him at the restaurant, and then they'd transport everyone out to the ranch for taping.

Half an hour later, Sansa's bright laugh drew Jaime's eyes, and he saw that she was giggling with Dany about something. When he smiled at her, both women clutched at each other, and the laughter started again. He patted Bran on the back and then swaggered over to the women.

Once there, he dropped a kiss on Sansa's lips, loving how she tilted her head up to receive it, while he laid a hand on her back.

"Hello kitten, making friends, I see?" Jaime's green eyes were warm and filled with joy. Other than his little disagreement with Brienne, the day had been perfect.

"Jaime, Dany is the best," Sansa gushed, happily buzzed on her wine.

"Well done, Lannister. She's a keeper," Dany said, patting Jaime on the back.

Jaime couldn't help but grin. Dany was one of his oldest friends, one of the few people in his life that was his friend because she liked him and not because of his fame or wealth. The fact that she and Sansa seemed to be fast friends was just another indication to Jaime that Sansa Stark was the right woman for him.

"Ready to head home, babe?" Jaime couldn't help but keep the eagerness from his voice. He'd had so little time with just Sansa, that he was less inclined to linger here.
"I am. Dany, it was great to meet you," Sansa said, quickly hugging the silver-haired woman whom she had bonded with so quickly.

"You as well, Sansa. Take care of him." Dany winked at her and Sansa nodded.

"I will." The look on both their faces told Dany everything she needed to know. These two were crazy in love with each other, and the woman from Essos couldn't be happier for both of them.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next

1. Tywin has Tyrion over for dinner.... with his wife. Any guesses? And Tyrion and wife will be coming to the North ASAP
2. Heck yeah, we're heading to the farm w/ Ned. Because that kid was MADE for TV!!
3. Thoughts on the Dany/Sansa friendships????
Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

Hey all!

I hope you like this one. We backtrack a bit to when Ty left the North so we see a bit behind the scenes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

King's Landing- Monday after Tywin left the North

Tywin landed back in the capital in the early evening. As was his custom, his driver was waiting to take him back to his mansion that he maintained here. It had been impossible not to think of Jaime and Sansa on his trip home; a large part of him was surprised to discover how much he hadn't wanted to leave the North. He'd never had any desire to travel there in his entire life, but he was hooked now, he knew. It wasn't hard to see that Jaime's life would shift now that he had met her. Sansa was firmly planted there, and his son would do whatever was necessary to ensure her happiness, that much was more than obvious.

There was a large part of Tywin that was relieved Jaime had found someone so worthy of him, someone, that loved him so unreservedly as the Stark woman did. Jaime's first marriage had been an unmitigated disaster from the very start, and Tywin knew how sensitive his son was.

Ty had been home for a few hours when his phone chimed. Expecting Bran, he frowned slightly to see Tyrion's name.

Tyrion: We'd like to come by tomorrow evening. We have some news to share.

Tywin's brow furrowed deeper. As much as he hated to admit it, it had been his youngest son that had married well, found love and had followed in Tywin's footsteps into the family business. His wife was as loud, crude and intelligent as he was- they suited each other perfectly. They had been married for just over five years now, and the biggest issue was that they'd failed to give Tywin any grandchildren.

Tywin: I'll inform the cook. Dinner will be at 7 pm. See you then.

A few hours later, right as he was preparing for bed, his phone chimed once more. Tywin prayed it wasn't Jaime; it was his date night with Sansa, and he hoped that something hadn't gone wrong. Luckily, Bran Stark's name was there.

Bran: You were correct about Brienne. She does not appear to be so happy with Sansa.

Tywin snorted. He would bet a significant portion of his vast fortune that the large producer would be a problem.

Tywin: How is Sansa?
Bran: She didn't come back in. It was more what was said between Jaime's crew and her reluctance to include any Starks in the shows. Jaime handled it.

As much as Tywin loved his son, one of his greatest concerns was the fact that Jaime would be completely focused on Sansa, leaving Brienne to simmer and stew. Tywin had tried to broach the topic with Jaime once, but his son had made it more than clear that he did not believe Brienne had those types of feelings for him. Jaime had seemed almost unwilling even to entertain such an idea. "We are friends, and that is all. We both know that, father. Nothing more." Jaime had shut down after that, and they hadn't discussed it ever again. But now, with Jaime's feelings for Sansa right there, Tywin knew it would all come to ahead.

Tywin: Please keep me informed

Bran: I will.

The next morning Tywin was in his formal dining room, reading the paper and eating his breakfast when once again his phone chimed. This time, an incoming FaceTime message appeared, and he couldn't help but smile when he saw Robb Stark's name. He swiped it open, holding the phone in his hand as he saw Ned's face fill the screen.

"Papa Lion, where are you?" Ned asked, happily.

Tywin rumbled out a laugh. "Good Morning, Ned. How are you?"

"I'm good, Papa Lion," Ned said, grinning, realizing he'd missed a part of the conversation. "How was your plane ride?"

"Good, Ned. How are the chickens?"

Ned laughed. "Good. I didn't get pecked at all this morning. Mama said that Uncle Jaime is taping his show, and I'm not allowed to be there. But maybe tomorrow I can go and see."

Tywin could only imagine what that might be like, and he shook his head. Robb's head was suddenly there. He had a bit of a worried expression on his face and was rubbing the back of his neck. Jeyne had come and grabbed Ned for a moment.

"Daddy needs to talk with Papa, Ned," she told him by way of explanation.

Tywin could see that Robb had something on his mind.

"Ned's interested in Jaime's show, and we've already agreed that I'd be on it. Sansa and Bran as well, and Jon, Arya and Gendry."

Tywin nodded, saying nothing.

Robby coloured a bit and looked away, and then when he turned back, his face was serious. "Fuck, I miss my Dad. He'd have the right advice for me. I'm sorry if I'm overstepping, but I need your honest opinion. Is it wrong if we let Ned be on camera?"

Tywin felt something warm in his chest that Robb Stark was asking him for parenting advice. It had been a long time since that had happened. He cleared his throat.

"I think that Ned is a unique child and that you're going to have to treat each situation with him as it's own. He'll always need your guidance Robb, but containing that child?" Tywin let out an affectionate rumble. "You have a good head on your shoulders, a solid family, and I believe you are
far enough North to protect him should you allow him to go on Jaime's show."

Robb nodded. "Yeah, he's a supernova personality, even I know that. And I trust you and Jaime."

Tywin's face was serious. "I consider you family, including Ned. And I destroy anyone or anything that tries to harm my family, Robb."

Robb nodded and coughed. "He missed you. Talked about you all through dinner- about your plane and going to the Castle of Rocks to visit his Papa. Ummmm, his preschool is having a grandparent's tea in a couple of weeks, and I know that you are back down south right now, but Ned was hoping that…"

Tywin gently interrupted him. "Robb, send me the information. I will be there."

Robb's eyes widened, and he nodded, choked with emotion. Then Ned was back, showing Tywin a picture he'd made and chatting for a few more minutes before they said goodbye. When Tywin was once again alone, he sat there in a bit of a daze.

In truth, he was struggling with the wave of emotion that was threatening to swamp him when he thought of the little boy who wanted him at his grandparent's tea. He'd never done a single thing like that with Jaime's children. Tywin realized what he'd told Robb was the absolute truth; the Starks were now part of his family, and the Old Lion would defend his family to the death.

Later that evening, after a gruelling day back at work, Tywin was still impeccably dressed as he waited for his youngest son and wife to arrive for dinner. He heard them, as was typical before he saw them. Within moments, Tywin watched as his youngest son, Tyrion, entered his dining room, holding his wife's hand. Margaery Tyrell was a stunning woman and one who matched his son in intelligence and wit.

Tywin had been upset when he'd first found out about their relationship; his animosity towards the Tyrell family was legendary. But much as he'd done his entire life, Tyrion had defied his father's expectations and stayed with the beautiful woman from Highgarden. Part of Tywin had been sure that it has been a lark by the Tyrell's- a jape to destroy his youngest son by having Marg pretend to fall for Tyrion.

It had not been- a joke that was. She loved his youngest son much the same way that Tywin had loved Joanna. Now, seven years later, five of those married, they were in love as ever and just as over the top. The biggest disappointment, for everyone, had been the fact that they'd yet to have a child. Tyrion was close to forty, and with Marg closing in on thirty-five, it had become the elephant in the room that no one talked about anymore.

Still, tonight, Tywin knew immediately something was different. They seemed lighter, happier, and Tywin hoped, as he rarely did, that they'd found a path forward to ease their childless home.

"Father," Tyrion said, taking his customary seat. Marg came and brushed her lips across Tywin's cheek, smelling as always of the expensive rose perfume she always wore. They had come to appreciate each other's sharp and biting wit.

"Tyrion, Margaery," Tywin said, once they were both seated. "You both look radiant." They exchanged a small, secret smile, and Tywin knew.

"We have news, father, that I believe will make you happy," Tyrion begun and then, unable to keep it in, blurted out. "We're pregnant."

Tywin gave his youngest a rare smile, full of approval and Tyrion allowed his father's happiness to
"Congratulations to both of you."

He'd known they had struggled, but they'd kept what they'd been through private. Tyrion had access to a large trust fund that Tywin had established for both his sons when Joanna had died, so while he'd never asked his father for money, Tywin had hoped that had they needed his influence, they would have come to him.

"May I ask how this all came about?"

Marg blushed and then reached for Tyrion's hand. "Lots of blood, sweat and tears," she said, clearly emotional.

Tywin and Joanna had never struggled to conceive, although Tyrion's birth had been so hard on her, they'd never tried for another child after he'd been born. Shortly after their youngest son had turned two, she'd been diagnosed with cancer, and within a year she had died. While it had never been confirmed, Tywin had long held the belief that had Tyrion's birth not been so brutal on his wife, and she would have been able to fight her cancer. It had taken years for him to overcome his anger and grief towards his youngest son.

"I'm willing to listen," was all Tywin said, and he saw both the relief and the pride on Tyrion's face.

"Well, in spite of how deliriously happy we make one another, our bodies are quite possibly the two most unsuited for procreation in all of Westeros. Our chances were pegged at less than 10%. "Tyrion's voice shook slightly, and then he continued. "I have a low sperm count and not much mobility. My lovely wife, it seems, has a less than hospitable uterus. Together, we are the worst two possible people to get pregnant on our own."

Marg was glowing. "Thank gods we are rich and live in the 21st century — three rounds of IVF, more needles, drugs and appointments than I even want to contemplate. Fertility drugs, and invasive treatments for months, and more money than we can even say, but," she said, tears in her eyes as she slid a black and white ultrasound picture towards the Great Lion, "we are pregnant. With twins!"

Tywin looked down and indeed saw two peanut looking images on the picture, with Baby A and Baby B, printed there. He felt his throat tighten. Twins! It was almost too much.

"My dear, I am so pleased for the both of you," Tywin choked out, overcome by the emotion of the moment. Tyrion had never seen his father react to anything in such a way and was momentarily speechless. He could see true happiness in his father's face for him, and he had never seen such a look before.

When they had all composed themselves, Tywin was calling for champagne for himself and Tyrion, sparkling water for Marg, when the conversation naturally turned to Jaime and his trip North.

It was now Tyrion's turn to be speechless as he listened to his father wax almost poetic about Sansa Stark and the Stark family. Both Marg and Tyrion wore stunned looks on their faces as Tywin described her home, the ranch and the farm and the Starks themselves. They could see the clear affection that Tywin had for Ned Stark, Robb's son, and this Sansa woman.

"She is perfect for Jaime, and I dare say, they are already in love," Tywin continued, almost
oblivious to how he'd been talking for almost half an hour. Then he took out his phone and shared some of the pictures he'd taken; of the winery, Sansa and Jaime, Ned, the ranch, and even the restaurant.

Tyrion wasn't an idiot; he knew that Jaime had always been his father's favourite and that Tywin had worried incessantly during Jaime's marriage to Cersei. And now, to hear his father speak so highly of Sansa, well, Tyrion knew he had to go North to meet this woman.

Marg was utterly intrigued and quite happy to hear how excited Tywin was to be a grandfather and quizzed him on Ned. And then, as if he'd been conjured from Marg's very words, Tywin's phone rang.

"Would you like to meet young Ned?" Tywin asked Marg and Tyrion. They, of course, said yes.

"Papa Lion!" came Ned's happy voice. He was in his pyjamas and eating an apple.

"Ned. How was your day?"

"Good, Papa Lion. Tomorrow Uncle Jaime is coming to the ranch with Aunty Sansa."

"Uncle Jaime?" Tyrion mouthed, and Tywin grinned.

"Papa Lion?" Marg said at the same time, both of them trying hard to hold in their giggles as Ned told Tywin about the chickens, his piglet, Bacon who was getting fat (according to Ned), how his Aunt Arya was over and owed him almost $20.

"For swears, Papa Lion," Ned said, disappointment ringing his voice as he shook his head. "She was in a baaaaaaaaaad mood. Daddy had to yell at her and tell her that if she couldn't mind herself, she had to stay away. I think she's grumpy because of the baby in her belly. I hope Aunty Sansa isn't that angry when she has Uncle Jaime's baby in her tummy. She's much nicer than Aunt Arya."

Tyrion and Marg couldn't help it, and they collapsed into outright laughter at the little boy and his impressive vocabulary.

"Who's that, Papa Lion?" Ned's curious eyes had widened.

"That is my son, Tyrion and his wife."

Ned's eyes got even bigger. "You have another son?"

"Yes, I do." Tywin turned his phone so that Ned could 'meet' Tyrion and Marg. Marg smiled and waved at him, and he grinned at her. When his eyes landed on Tyrion, Ned's smile widened further.

"Hi Uncle Jaime's brother."

Tyrion cleared his throat. He was seated, so the child couldn't see he was a dwarf. As much as Tyrion wanted children, he worried that he'd been a constant embarrassment to them with his small stature. Marg tried to reassure him they would love him, but it was a deep and ingrained fear. Still, this little boy seemed especially astute, and it would be interesting to see Ned's reaction to him when they finally met.

"When are you coming to visit?" Ned asked. "I bet Uncle Jaime would love to see you. Aunty Sansa has lots of room at her place. Uncle Harry was a … well, a bad word and they never gots married, and he never put a baby in her tummy. So I heard Daddy telling Mama she had this big
house but no kids, so she has lots of room. But now Uncle Jaime lives there, and so that will change."

"Holy shit," Marg said, eyes wide and wondering if all children were like Ned. Suddenly the idea of having two like him seemed almost overwhelming.

"That's a bad word, Aunt Margaery. You'll owe me money for my swear jar when you come up," Ned said solemnly, and Tyrion cackled with laughter.

"Ned, where in seven hells are you?" came Robb's highly irritated voice.

"I'm Facetiming Papa Lion, Daddy," Ned said happily.

Suddenly Robb's exasperated face was there. "How in the hell did you open my phone?"

"I watched you enter your code, Daddy. It's easy. Then I found Papa Lion's name and called him." Ned looked quite pleased with himself while Robb looked stunned.

Tywin rumbled out a laugh. "We'll let you go, Robb. Ned, next time, you must ask your father or mother for permission to call me. Do you understand?"

Ned nodded, his face serious. "I do. I'm sorry, Daddy."

Ned wasn't a bad child, just insanely smart and naturally curious.

When they had hung up, Tywin had a bemused expression on his face. "He is going to give them fits and starts," he said affectionally.

"Not all children are like him, are they?" Marg asked, and Tywin laughed.

"No, although your husband certainly would have given Ned a run for his money. His brain was always too large for his age."

Tyrion was fascinated seeing this different side of his father; the man who clearly adored being a grandfather, and who truly seemed happy with their news. It warmed something deep inside Tyrion to know that his father would be supportive of this new phase in his life.

"So, North and Sansa Stark," Tyrion said, wiggling his eyebrows.

Tywin threw his head back and laughed. "Perhaps the two of you should deliver your news in person; I can only imagine Jaime's joy at your happiness as well as wanting to introduce you to Sansa. I promise you, Tyrion, she is nothing like Cersei."

Tyrion nodded, keeping his father's gaze and then looked to his wife. "What say you? Willing to travel to the wilds of the North, my love?"

Her smile was wide and loving. "I am. I, for one, cannot wait to meet the whole Stark clan."

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Winterfell

Sansa had woken on Wednesday morning, feeling delightfully sore and well-loved. She was sure her entire body would be covered in Jaime's marks. He'd yet to shave, and his whiskers and lips had been relentless in mapping every part of her body last evening when they'd gotten home from the restaurant. Sansa had never had a man so dedicated to her pleasure, it was an amazing feeling.
Wanting more of that feeling, she frowned when she reached out for Jaime and found his pillow cold. Her hand, though, did find a note.

Kitten

As much as I want you, I was worried you'd be too sore. Come and find me in the kitchen when you wake. I know you'll be hungry.

Love Jaime

Her heart melted. Jaime, it seemed, was obsessed with feeding her. It was his number one priority after making sure she was well satisfied in the bedroom. Or the living room. Or the kitchen table. Sansa felt her face heat when she thought about all the places, they'd already made love.

She slipped on a button-down shirt of Jaime's, not bothering with pants and padded downstairs, following her nose into her kitchen where Jaime reigned. It was startling, or perhaps not, just how perfect and comfortable he looked there. He was chatting with his father on his iPad, and she wandered up to him, wrapping her arms around his middle.

"Hi Ty," she said, sleep still in her voice as she peeked around Jaime's middle to see his father there. Tywin's face lit when he saw her. Jaime pulled her to his side, happy the island was stomach height, and her long bare legs were NOT up for his father's viewing pleasure.

"Sansa, my dear. Good morning I take it?" He chuckled when she blushed, and Jaime wiggled his eyebrows. He'd been talking to his father about the taping yesterday, Brienne's overreaction, and their plans for the next few days.

"Jaime, before I forget, your brother and Margaery are planning on coming North this weekend. They have expressed an interest in the North and of course the Starks, and Sansa."

"Would they like to stay here?" Sansa asked immediately, warming Ty's heart. She was such a generous woman, wholly dedicated to her family and now apparently his.

"It wasn't my place to offer, but I'm sure they would like that, Sansa," Tywin said.

Jaime had an excited look on his face.

"Kitten trust me when I say you'll like Tyrion and his wife. Marg is a riot, and they are well suited to one another. You're sure you don't mind if they stay here, do you?"

She shook her head, taking a sip of his coffee, cradling the mug in her hand. "No, baby." She brushed her lips across Jaime's, and they were slightly lost in each other when Tywin coughed and reminded them, he was still there.

Turning back to his father, Jaime promised he'd contact Tyrion immediately.

"Oh, one more thing. I will be back in Winterfell late next week. Apparently, Young Ned had a grandparent's tea, and he's asked me to attend."

Sansa felt the tears come to her eyes, and she clutched at Jaime. "Oh Ty, that's amazing. You have no idea how hard it has been for him to have no grandparents." Sansa could picture her nephew and how pleased he'd be that his Papa Lion was coming to his special day.

Tywin cleared his throat, eyes just a bit shiny and murmured that they were now family. When he and Jaime had finished their original conversation, and the iPad was finally quiet, Jaime turned and
found Sansa munching happily on one of the breakfast quiches that he had made, reading the news headlines on her phone. She had her long legs crossed, still sipping his coffee and was humming, slightly off-key. Jaime thanked the gods that she hadn't heard him ask his father to bring Joanna's ring because he wanted it official and the whole world to know that she was going to be his wife.

His wife. His soulmate. His other half. And they'd fill this house with their children. He could picture it all; the happiness and the joy, the heartbreak and the struggles. But they'd go through it all together. He quickened his stride until he could haul her off the stool and into his arms. She barely had time to react, letting out a small eep! Before he carded his hands through her hair, and kissed her, angling his lips across hers, probing inside with his tongue, until she moaned and pressed back into him.

"Jaime."

"Gods, baby, how you say my name." He was breathing hard and wanted nothing more to put her on the island and sink so deep inside her he had no idea where she ended, and he started, but he glanced at the clock and knew they had to move.

"Tonight. You're mine," he said as if he hadn't made love to her several times last evening.

"I'm yours," she said, grinning at their blatant desire for one another.

Jaime growled an actual grow at not being able to finish what he had started. He nipped at her; "I'm going to be hard all day, kitten."

Sansa's laughter filled the room as she dragged them upstairs to get ready for their day.

When they were finally ready, Sansa had Jaime drop her off at Robb's ranch. She knew that Jaime hadn't spoken to Brienne about his 'plans' for the day, and she figured the fewer Starks' around, the better when that conversation happened. She wasn't an idiot; Sansa knew Brienne didn't like her, and she was pretty sure she knew the reason why. Still, Jaime seemed almost clueless, and she didn't want to upset the proverbial apple cart. She had Tywin's reassurances that she was good for Jaime, and that was enough for her.

An hour later, she watched in amusement as a veritable convoy of dark black SUV's with tinted windows made their way up the dirt road to Winterfell Ranch. Robb was standing beside Sansa, sipping a coffee, cowboy hat low on his head, boots and wranglers on. She eyed him critically and then shook her head when he grinned at her.

"I'm a simple country boy, San. What you see is what you get."

Sansa rolled her eyes as he drawled the words. As if he'd been waiting, the front porch door banged open, and Ned popped out, wiggling his way into Robb's arms, eyes wide with excitement. Sansa had heard all about his 'phone call' to his Papa Lion last night, Robb's pure exasperation with him, and she had tried hard not to laugh at just how smart he was. He'd be giving them all grey hair before long.

"I hear Papa Lion is coming for Grandparents day, Neddy," Sansa said, seeing the happiness in his eyes.

"He is. And I met Uncle Jaime's brother, Aunty San. On the iPad last night, although my ears got blistered by Daddy for that," he whispered to her, voice low even though he was leaning against Robb, watching the SUVs get ever closer.

"Well, bud, you know there are rules. And most of them involve asking Mama or Daddy first."
He heaved a heavy sigh. "I know."

When the line of vehicles finally pulled into the yard, Ned scrambled down from Robb, bolting from the front porch as Jaime popped out of the first SUV.

"Uncle Jaime!" Ned cried, throwing himself into Jaime's waiting arms. Sansa looked at her boyfriend. Someone and she was guessing it was Dany, had found Jaime some proper boots. Finally. They were flashy and probably cost a small fortune, but for once, Jaime had a pair of cowboy boots on his feet, along with his designer jeans and a beautiful leather coat. Sansa shook her head at how dang handsome he was. He lifted Ned, twirled him in his arms, and then hugged him close, all the while, his eyes searching for Sansa. When they spotted her, his face broke out into a wide grin.

"Hey baby," he said, as she walked up to them, kissing her lips as she smiled at them.

"Nice boots, Jai," she said, and then squeezed his ass. "Have I told you how much I love cowboy boots?" she purred into his ear and watched his eyes darken with desire.

"Playing with fire, kitten," he said, nipping at her.

"God, I hope so." Then she shrieked as he swatted her butt.

Ned was laughing at them, and then his eyes widened as Dany was suddenly there.

"You have unicorn hair!" he said to her, looking at her almost white hair in awe.

Dany's face broke into a wide smile. "Oh my, aren't you something. Hello. I'm Dany." She said to him, and Ned grinned. "I'm friends with your Uncle Jaime."

"You're very pretty. I like your eyes," Ned said and was scurrying down Jaime, delighted with this new person.

On the way here, Jaime had pulled Pod aside and told him to roll his camera from the moment he stepped out of the SUV. When Pod gave him a questioning look, Jaime just shook his head. "Trust me- this kid is gold."

As predicted, Ned soon had Dany by the hand and was asking her if she'd ever collected chicken eggs. "Uncle Jaime and Papa Lion weren't very good at it. But I bet you'd be.

Unable to say no, Dany just took his little hand as they walked to the chicken coop, Ned chatting away and giving her instructions. Pod was taping it all.

Thankfully, Dany had on skinny jeans and Hunter boots and was so small that she easily fit inside the chicken coop.

Jaime, Robb and Sansa stood outside, listening to the ongoing commentary.

Well done!

Oh, that was a fast one.

They like you, Dany.

You're good at this. Much better than Papa Lion.

They emerged several minutes later with a basket full of eggs. Dany had a huge grin on her face,
looking proud as could be.

"She was amazing!" Ned cried. "And she didn't swear at all."

Sansa laughed as Jaime shook his head.

"Come on, I'll show you the rest of the ranch. That big barn is where we have some of the animals," Ned was saying. Forgotten in all of this was the ranch itself, although Jaime knew they'd have to do a more formal session. Robb was chatting with Dickon and Bran, explaining how things worked, while Brienne stood there, a scowl on her face.

Sansa tugged Jaime aside and asked how it had gone at the restaurant. He shook his head and gave her a half-grin, scratching his head. "Brienne was pissed, kitten. I've never really seen her this angry. I mean, between what we get here, and then at Jon's place, along with Gendry, we have a really unique set of shows."

"Hmmm," was all Sansa would say wondering how Jaime didn’t see what everyone else did. The rest of the day almost flew by. Ned did indeed show the crew his piglets, and then some of the dairy cows they had. He also introduced them to the ranch dogs and the horses. As predicted, Robb and Jaime had an ‘on camera' discussion about how Robb raised the animals and how important it was for people to trust where their food was coming from.

Jeyne had opted out of appearing on camera, but together with Sansa put out a lunch that rivalled anything Jaime's crew had been served so far, and they praised her cooking until she was blushing and telling them to stop. True to his word, Ned stuck to Dany like glue, who fell in love with the little boy almost immediately. Her son had just turned three, and she asked Sansa if her husband and son came up North for a visit, if they might come back to the ranch.

Robb went one step further and said they could stay at the main house if they wanted, and Dany thanked him. She pulled Sansa aside at one point and told her that her family was lovely. Sansa was glad to see Dany fit in so well at the ranch and it was nice having her new friend here.

At the end of lunch, Jaime ran an idea by Bran that he'd been tossing about. "Have you ever done a meal with a chef's table?" he asked Bran, who frowned and shook his head. "No."

"What's that?" Robb asked, curious.

Jaime got an excited look on his face. "We'd set up a long table, facing the kitchen as Bran's got that great opening where you can see into the back. And we'd seat 10-12 people and then serve them whatever we cook up; 5 courses, and pair it with wine that Sansa selects for each course."

Bran looked quite excited by the prospect, as Jaime continued talking. "I do it each Friday and Saturday night at my restaurant down in King's Landing. Always a major hit and the hardest seat to come by. Generally, I'm booked three months in advance. I'd imagine if we tape an episode like that, the same would be true for you, Bran. Plus, it gives you the chance to flex your culinary muscles. Whatever fresh produce you had delivered, you can make your menu that day."

Both men were excited at the prospect and started talking about making it happen. Once dessert had been served, Robb slapped his thighs and stood, looking down the table.

"Alright y'all," he said, winking at Sansa as he added his ‘country twang,' for her benefit, "who's ready for a ride?"
Started and excited gasps rang the table. Surprisingly, Dickon spent a good amount of time in his life on the horse, and Pod was competent as well. Dany had grown up with horses in Essos, and so it was only really Jaime that looked a bit nervous. Sansa squeezed his hand.

"Don't worry, baby. I won't let Robb put you on a horse you can't handle." He smiled, gratefully at her. As everyone rose to leave, thanking Jeyne for her hospitality, Sansa snuck to the front of the group to help Robb with the horses and get everyone settled. That allowed Brienne to pull Jaime to the side.

"Horseback riding? What on earth are you thinking, Jaime?" she hissed at him. She didn't even know if he knew how to ride a horse.

"It's the only way to see the land, Brienne. We're building this whole series of shows around the Starks, and this is their land. Been in their family for generations. Besides, I'm not going to fall off."

Brienne's eyes narrowed. "And what was with Pod taping Dany and Ned. You're the star, Jaime, not them. This is your show."

Jaime patted her on the back.

"Trust me, Brienne. That kid is worth every moment we spend up here. I mean, come on. He's one of the smartest kids in Westeros I'm sure, and he's adorable. Plus, Bran and I are going to do a whole show on cooking for kids- staring Ned. Oh, and Tyrion and Marg are coming North." Jaime said this quickly- he knew that Marg and Brienne did not get along and saw Brienne frown at that.

"Bran and I were also talking about doing a show with Tyrion and Sansa and recreating some of our worst experiments we put our families through."

Brienne just stood there dumbfounded. She had no idea where all this creativity was coming from in Jaime. For years he'd been content to bump along, letting her plan the shows and the arc of the season. He'd disagreed on occasion, and they'd had a few fights here and there, but he often just gave in to her vision, trusting her to do her job. She hadn't felt like she'd been on solid ground since the moment she'd landed in the North. It was like she was working with an entirely different person than the Jaime Lannister she'd come to know and fall in love with down South.

He was energetic, happy and eager. And almost impossible to control. He suddenly cared about the process of the show, including the editing and how they were framing each episode. She'd thought long and hard yesterday when he'd all but threatened to get his father involved if she didn't go along with what he wanted, and he'd never done that in the entire time she'd known him in King's Landing, preferring to keep Tywin at arm's length when it came to his television career.

The only thing that Brienne could attribute these changes too, changes she hated, was Sansa Stark. Jaime was entirely too wrapped up in her and her family, as evidenced by this day, from the ranch to the animals and now a horseback ride. They were on the freaking Food Network; not lifestyle she thought. This wasn't the Jaime Lannister reality TV show as he fell in love with a woman twenty years his junior. Brienne had a boss as well, and people expected something from when they tuned in to watch Jaime, and she was sure this was NOT IT.

Still, she'd give him enough rope to hang himself, she decided, as she saw that determined glint come into his eye. There would be no dissuading him. So she'd edit his first show the way he wanted, and when the reception was awful because Brienne knew it would be, the power would shift back to her, and she'd call the shots. They'd have to work overtime to tape the remaining nine episodes, but they'd do it her way.
She heard someone call his name, and she stepped back and nodded once at him. "Alright Jaime, but I'm going to head back to town and get started on the editing. You don't need me here.

Brienne saw him let out a breath as if he'd been bracing for another battle, and she knew he'd have to change tactics. Jaime could be stubborn as hell when he dug his heels in on something.

"Where are we taping tomorrow?" she asked, extending the so-called olive branch.

Jaime's eyes lit. "The farm, and butcher shop and if there's time, perhaps even Sansa's winery. Then we'll be back in the restaurant on Friday and Saturday. I want to do the chef's table on Saturday night when the restaurant is busy." That was the one idea Brienne loved, and she nodded.

"I'll work on getting that setup and what we need to make it happen." She gave one last look to the group that had gathered for the horseback ride. "Be careful."

Jaime promised he would, and then she watched him make his way over to Sansa, who smiled and kissed him, handing him the reins to a chestnut gelding who neighed softly at Jaime.

Brienne couldn't believe that this was the life that Jaime Lannister, the man who'd never met a pair of designer shoes he didn't love, wanted. And yet, she had to admit as she watched Sansa and Robb help him settle on his horse, he did seem happier and more carefree up here.

It must be the vacation like atmosphere up here, Brienne decided. This wasn't reality, not Jaime's. His life, his family- they were in King's Landing. This was... a fantasy, she decided. Sansa was a fantasy. A month to flirt and sleep with a woman much younger, before saying goodbye. He'd never last up here. It was too rugged, too wild and too far removed from everything he knew.

Satisfied with her plan, Brienne happily climbed in an SUV and made her way back to Wintertown, not giving a second thought to the possibility that the reason Jaime was happy and carefree was because he'd finally found his other half; that this place called to him on every level, and that he'd rather cut off his right hand that live in King's Landing without Sansa by his side.

Jaime hadn't been on a horse in years, which was clearly not the case for Sansa. As with everything else in the North, she made it look effortless as Robb led them away from the main ranch house, and up a trail. He'd said that the only way to see the land was by horseback, and an hour late, Jaime knew exactly why he had insisted.

They had climbed a hill with the horses, doing gradual switchbacks, until they all sat there, overlooking the entire Stark homestead; ranch, farm and winery. Jaime could see the river where Sansa has built her winery, along with the house he now called a home. Jon's greenhouses and fields were easy to see, along with Arya and Gendry's little cabin. And as far as Jaime could see, in every other direction, were fields and forests; all part of Winterfell ranch, until it butted up against an impressive mountain range.

"Next weekend we go into the high country to bring down any cattle that are lingering up there," Robb said conversationally.

"Like a cattle drive?" Dany asked, having immediately fallen in love with this place. It was so different from King's Landing and she'd already texted her husband to book tickets for him and Rocco to come and visit her. She knew that Kal would love it. His family had bred and raised horses for generations and he'd ridden before he had walked.

"My husband would love this," she murmured and Robb gave her a wry grin.

"The cattle drive's not for city folk, Dany."
Her purple eyes narrowed. “He is Dothraki. He could ride circles around you, Stark.”

Robb’s eyes widened and then he grinned. He’d been trying for ages to get a contact with the notorious secretive horse group in Essos. Their mounts and riding were legendary, and Robb was itching to breed one of his mares to one of their stallions.

“Dothraki, huh.” Robb paused a moment. “If he comes on the cattle drive, I want access to one of their stallions,” he said and Dany’s eyes popped open further. Then she threw her head back and let out a huge laugh for such a small person.

“Oh gods, he’d going to love you, Robb Stark. I won’t speak for him or his family, but I’ll get his ass up here and you two can wrestle it out.”

Robb nodded, excited he might meet one of the famous Dothraki riders in person.

They took a lazy ride back to the ranch and three hours after they’d set out, were back at the barns, dismounting and dealing with the horses, while Jaime asked Robb endless questions, and Pod and Dickon somehow managed to tape the vast majority of the afternoon. They knew Jaime had a plan for how he wanted to cut it all together, and still shook their heads at the change in him. Unlike Brienne, they knew this was permanent; someway, somehow, Jaime would do whatever it took to make this relationship with Sansa work. Anyone could see it, and as they watched Jaime tuck Sansa to his side, they were happy for him.

“Good day kitten?” Jaime asked when he was driving them back to their home.

She smiled and reached for his hand. “They all seem good these days, Jaime. That’s because of you. I’m so in love with you my heart feels like it will burst.”

Jaime’s grin was wide, but his heart was even more affected. He had no idea that the love and acceptance he saw in Sansa’s eyes was what he had needed to heal himself.

“Love you kitten. Forever.” No truer words had ever been spoken from Jaime Lannister’s mouth. Sansa Stark was his present and his future and he’d do whatever it took to make it the best damn future it would be. Now his brother was coming North with his wife, and Jaime knew they’d love Sansa, Robb and Dany had bonded and best of all, little Ned had invited Tywin to his grandparent’s tea. Jaime had everything he’d ever wanted; he’d just had to come North to find it.

Chapter End Notes

Comments are most welcome- it really helps me gauge interest in the story (if there still is interest)!

Also, I’ve been through infertility myself so I hope my writing comes from a place of compassion and not seen as a trope for angst or drama

The reality is, no one is prepared for the emotional journey of infertility and it is a complex part of a couples life when they receive this diagnosis.
Jaime had been ravenous for her from the moment they came home from the ranch. He had barely allowed them to even get into the house before he'd had her jeans down around her ankles and had sunk inside her, taking her up against the doorway. Sansa wasn't quite sure what had come over him, but she willingly went along for the ride, revelling in this raw and needy side of Jaime that he was showing her.

"Love you kitten," he grunted into her ear as she wrapped her long legs around him and dug her nails into his back, urging him on, loving how free she could be with him. It hadn't taken either one of them long, both of them too needy for each other to draw their pleasure out, before they peaked simultaneously, locking eyes in wonder that they were that in sync already. He had touched her all afternoon, watched her laugh and interact with his friends and it drove him wild with lust and love for her. For Sansa. The woman who had come into his life and made him happy again.

After he'd taken her against her bloody front door, they'd cleaned up, and while Sansa had walked, fed and played with Tank, Jaime had made dinner. When she finally came back inside, she sat at the island, and Jaime handed her a glass of wine and told her he'd spoken with Tyrion.

"They'll be here Friday, babe. I hope it's still ok if they stay here," he said. He has a slightly unsure look on his face and Sansa nodded and then pulled out a key from her pocket. She rose and came to wind her arms around his neck.

"Jaime, I love you, and whenever you are here, I want you to think of this place like yours. So, here's your key, and yes, of course, it is ok if Tyrion and Margaery stay here. Tywin, as well as Myrcella and Tommen. Jaime, your entire family, is welcome in our home. Always."

Jaime blew out the breath he had been holding, wondering how it was that Sansa knew he needed that reassurance. With Cersei, he'd often had to get her permission, even in his own home, when inviting his family over for family dinners. She claimed she hated being surprised and having virtual strangers in her home, by Jaime knew it was because his family had never warmed to her. The idea that Sansa was so open to having his family here was strange and new to Jaime, and he was trying his hardest to trust her generous heart.

"Thanks kitten. I know it seems strange that I ask, but I don't want to overstep." He gave her a grim little smile, trying to hide the uncertainty he’d felt, not wanting her to feel like his issues were her concern. Jaime had hidden a lot of himself from Cersei over the years, and it was almost second nature to him to put everyone else’s needs before his own.

Sansa cocked her head, resting a hip against the counter. "Fair enough." She thought there must be more to it than him not wanting to just ‘overstep.’ Jaime came across as very confident, almost cocky, but Sansa was learning there was a lot beneath the surface of him. She wanted to know all
of him; the good, the bad and the ugly. She was in this for life. She loved him with her whole heart, and she hoped he’d open up to her.

She contemplated her next words and then rested a hand on his arm. "We love each other, Jaime, but this happened fast. There are certain things I have no idea about you." She saw his mouth open, and she pressed a finger to his lips, laughing when he nipped at them. "So let's ask each other three questions each night. Each person has to answer whatever question they ask, and then ask a new one."

Jaime's eyes lit in excitement, and he nodded. "I love that idea." He knew his feelings for Sansa were real and true, but this idea of getting to know each other better, to dedicate time to one another, was lovely.

"I'll go first. Do you like cooking each night, or do you find it a chore?"

Jaime's face turned thoughtful. "That's a question that almost no one has ever asked me. Certainly, people expect me to cook because of my profession." He paused and sampled the sauce he had simmering, glancing back at Sansa who was still standing against the island, watching him, her eyes open and kind. "I love cooking for people, Sansa. I love feeding them, seeing their joy and pleasure in what I make. It almost hurts me if I think someone in my family is hungry, and food, well, it's something I can do, something I'm good at."

She nodded, understanding what he was saying. "That makes sense. Still, do you ever want a night off? Or do you feel obligated to cook while you're here? I'm not quite at your level, but I can muddle my way through."

Jaime put down his spoon and pulled her into his arms, rubbing his nose against hers. "Baby, I love that you offer, and I'll honestly tell you if I don’t feel like making food one night. But cooking, it calms me. Makes my head and my thoughts less jumbled. It makes me destress. I love it, and I love cooking for you."

Sansa could see just how true his words were. She wondered at what thoughts in his head were jumbled, but left that statement alone for now.

"Alright. Your turn."

Jaime took a deep breath and then said, "Why did you stay with Harry if you knew he wasn't the one?"

Sansa took a long sip of her wine as she thought of how to answer that. "I liked the idea that my life was moving in a direction I wanted it to go. Get my business degree, start my business, meet appropriate man, get married, have kids. I guess I liked checking the boxes, and he seemed, at least on the surface, like a good choice."

Jaime made a sound of agreement, and then Sansa snorted.

"And that was a lot of bullshit."

Jaime's eyebrows rose, but he said nothing. Sansa waved a hand, her voice getting a bit more animated, and she looked almost angry and embarrassed.

"I knew he wasn't the one for a while. And it didn't bother me when Robb and Jeyne got married, or Jon and Val. They are older than me, and that made sense. In my world view, older siblings get married first." She gave Jaime a look that was so raw and so real, he longed to take her into his arms. But he didn't. Her voice dropped.
"Then Arya came home with Gendry. She was a nomad; never stayed anywhere for more than a month. And he was just so in love with her and wanted to give her the world. She never wanted to be married or have kids, and suddenly, she was doing all these things before me and with a great guy; a guy who loved her, worshiped her. I was so jealous, Jaime. So damn jealous of her and the thought of having no one, not even Harry...."

He was there in a second, pulling her into his arms as she cried a little. "I'm a horrible sister, being jealous of her happiness and staying with a man I knew didn't make me happy all because I didn't want to be alone."

"Ah, kitten, you're not. You're such a good person, Sansa. It's normal to feel these things, even it hurts," he told her, stroking her back.

"I didn't want to be alone, and I was afraid if I got rid of him, I'd never find anyone who loved me," she whispered.

Jaime titled her chin, so their eyes met. "But you did, babe."

She gave him a watery grin. "I did." She let herself be comforted by him for a time before she looked up. "Maybe three questions was a lot. Maybe one emotionally draining question a night is good enough." There was a part of Sansa that hoped he'd share with her why he'd stayed with Cersei but considering that she'd just cried all over him, she understood if he wanted to avoid it.

He laughed and kissed her. "Let's eat, and I'll answer my part of why I was in my marriage." He'd seen the questions in her eyes, and he'd known the moment he'd asked it, he would answer it as honestly as possible. They needed to discuss this.

Once again, Jaime had created a beautiful dinner, and Sansa groaned in appreciation as she took her first few bites.

"You are amazingly talented, Jaime," she told him and watched as he looked almost embarrassed at her praise, which was so dang cute.

"I just like hearing you make those sounds, either because I'm feeding you, or I'm feasting on you," he said, his customary smirk on full smoulder again, which Sansa had to admit, she loved.

Sansa laughed and took a sip of wine, wanting to see if Jaime would broach the subject of his ex-wife.

A few minutes later, he did, setting his fork aside and reaching for her hand. He appreciated the reassuring squeeze she gave him.

"I suppose some of the blame lies with me," he began. When she protested, he shook his head. "It does, Sansa, for not recognizing her for what she was. For expecting her to want the same things out of a relationship that I wanted. For listening to my father talk about his great love with my mother and thinking I could have that as well- at least with her. We were doomed to fail from the start. She saw my name and my money and the influence being a Lannister could get her, and I failed to see the cold, calculating woman she was."

He rubbed at his stubble and looked at Sansa. "I was dumb and in love for the first time. And by the time I knew what she was, she was pregnant with our first son. I couldn't leave then, and before I knew it, we had three children. I was embarrassed to fail at things, and failing at my marriage just seemed so spectacularly cliché."

Sansa felt her heart ache for him. "You must have been very lonely," she told him, and he grunted
"I was, and I admit I was a terrible father. Don't get me wrong, I love my children, but our home was a battleground for years. Days of the silent treatment, followed by passive-aggressive insults, constant chipping away at my self-esteem, only for Cersei to turn warm and loving when we were in public." Jaime let loose a bitter laugh. "It was always about what everyone else saw us as; even my own family had no idea the extent to how unhappy I was for years. I could never bring myself to tell them and I knew if I did, she’d make me pay."

Jaime's eyes took on a distant edge, as he thought back to that time and how emotionally manipulative Cersei had been. It was his greatest shame; how she'd made him feel like the shortcomings in their marriage were somehow his fault. He wasn't smart enough, connected enough, ambitious enough. She always made him feel like he had been at fault, that it was him that was lacking and never good enough.

He'd only ever told his therapist those feelings, and only after two years of weekly appointments. He squeezed Sansa's hand and found her eyes and saw nothing but love and compassion there. Jaime made a split-second decision right then, to fully open himself up to this woman that he loved. She deserved the while ugly truth if they were to have a shot at this. Jaime swallowed hard and then spoke.

"She made me feel small. Somehow, every fight, no matter if she were in the wrong, I'd end up apologizing. I was never good enough- in anything. Not at being a husband or a father. Not in bed, or in public. At first, she said she didn't mind my career, but soon she wondered why I didn't want to be my father's heir. For years she thought that cooking was beneath her and that my profession was a ‘stain against our name’ and that it embarrassed her and our children. It wasn't until I got the TV gig that she could twist it for her gain, Sansa."

Tears tracked down his face, and Sansa pushed back from her seat and wrapped her arms around him.

"Men aren't supposed to feel weak; to be manipulated like that. Men are supposed to be strong and fight back. But I couldn’t. She exhausted me on every level. It was almost a relief when I caught her in bed with my best friend. It was such a violation, and such a clear sign that we were beyond done," he said, his voice ragged.

Sansa's heart broke for Jaime. Harry had been an ass, and cheating bastard, but he’d been mostly indifferent and immature. He'd never abused her like this.

"Oh Jaime, she abused you. Emotionally and psychologically, my love," Sansa cried, holding him as they both wept for what he'd been through. The miracle, Sansa thought, was that he was the most loving and caring man she'd ever met. And that he was open enough to try again with her. That he wasn't an angry, bitter shell of his former self, and she told him that.

"You're so strong, my love, for not allowing her to steal this second chance from you," Sansa said, almost stroking his hair as his breathing slowed to a more normal pace again.

"Sansa, you're everything. Every day I'm with you, I feel more like myself."

She pulled him to his feet, kissing him deeply. "Let me take care of you, Jaime," as she walked them to their bedroom, not caring about the mess that was the kitchen. She turned out the lights downstairs, and when they got to the bedroom, she stood him by the bed, undressing him, kissing him everywhere, telling him over and over again how he made her feel, how he was more than enough for her and just how much she loved him.
"I love that you're so passionate in the kitchen," she said, picking up his hand and kissing his palm. She blushed, adorably, and then said, "It turns me on to watch you cook.

Jaime let a little laugh rumble out, wondering how he'd ever become so lucky to have this woman and her love and acceptance.

"Kitten," he started to say, and she stopped him with a look.

"My turn, Jaime." She pulled his t-shirt off and sucked in a breath, lovingly tracing the hard lines of his chest, liking the smattering of hair that covered his stomach, and that v of muscles that led down to the jeans that were riding low on his slim hips.

"God, I love your body," she muttered, lost in her exploration of him as Jaime stood there, grinning stupidly at her. He got the distinct impression that Sansa had never really taken control like this, and he had to admit, he liked it. Each touch was respectful and showed him just how much she cared for him. She was healing him, one kiss, one stroke, one sigh at a time. It wasn't long until she had his pants off, and she was suddenly on her knees in front of him. She had her hands around his hardened length, touching him as he gritted his teeth.

"Kitten, I'm not going to last with you touching me like that, looking at me with those big blue eyes, love," Jaime growled at her, and she smiled the smile of a woman who had just discovered her power.

Saying nothing, she took him in her mouth, licking and sucking, working him in such a way that had Jaime's eyes almost rolling back in his head.

"Sansa," he warned, wanting to be inside her. "Please, baby, I need to be in you." She must have heard something in his voice, because she let him go with a pop and rose to her feet, kissing him.

"Then be in me Jaime. Make love to me," she whispered against his lips.

It took him mere seconds to strip her down and run a finger through her core to find her ready before he nudged himself against her entrance. His voice was ragged when he spoke. "I can't be gentle baby. I want you too much." The whole night had been so emotionally charged, and he was on edge.

"I trust you, Jaime," Sansa said and arched her hips, so he was suddenly just inside her, and with a groan, he rocked his body, so he was fully seated and then paused for a moment. "Hold on love," and then proceeded to pump insider her, long, sure strokes that went deeper each time, as Sansa wrapped her legs around him.

Everything convalesced into this moment with her, as their eyes met and held, lost in each other.

"Sansa," Jaime breathed, seeing everything he felt for her reflected back to him.

"Jaime," she said back to him. "Touch me. I'm so close, baby."

"Thank god," he muttered, not remembering the last time he was so near to finishing after only a few minutes. He reached down, found her nub and ground his palm against her, feeling her tighten and then watched her fly apart underneath him, dragging him over the top with her as he all but yelled her name into the room and emptied deep inside her.

He collapsed on top of her, and she wiggled and welcomed his weight, stroking his back and kissing his sweaty neck.
He turned his head and caught her lips. "I love you more than I can express, Sansa."

She nodded. "And I love you, Jaime. I've never felt anything even remotely like this. Not ever."

They stayed like that for a time, until Jaime finally withdrew and padded to the bathroom to get a warm washcloth to clean them up. Now Sansa was propped up against the headboard in their bed, watching as Jaime distractedly traced a finger down her slim, smooth stomach.

"What's on your mind?" she asked him, wonderment in her voice at all they had shared tonight.

Jaime's bright green eyes flicked up to her. "You don't think…" he stopped and looked away. Then back to her. "You don't think I'm wrong to be taking such an interest in the show, do you?"

Sansa's eyes widened in surprise, but before she could say anything, Jaime sat up, utterly comfortable in his nudity and started to speak. "I mean, I've never really cared before. But I feel alive up here; I care about what you guys are doing, and I'm excited to share that. Only it seems like Brienne is upset with me, the more I try to offer my ideas."

Sansa sucked in a breath, wondering just what she should say. She knew it was a sensitive subject, and she didn't want to make things awkward or weird between Jaime and Brienne.

"I think it's great how much you've been involved," she said slowly. "I am probably biased because well, it's you and me, and I think you're pretty fantastic, Jaime. But I'd be honest if I thought you were veering off course."

Sansa was quite proud of her answer; honest and diplomatic.

Jaime ran a frustrated hand through his hair. "Then why is Brienne acting like this?"

Sansa's mouth popped into an O, and she clearly didn't hide her disbelief because his eyes narrowed.

"What?"

Sansa said nothing, but he looked agitated.

"What, Sansa?"

"Well, I mean, I think…" she swallowed hard and then sighed. "Jaime, is it possible Brienne likes you?"

He laughed. "Of course she likes me kitten. We're friends. We've worked together for years."

Sansa gave him a look, and his face went through a myriad of emotions; shock, disbelief, and then denial.

"No babe. I mean, that's not possible. I would have known if she had feelings for me." Then he frowned, thinking back to some of Brienne's odd reactions and funny statements. "Fuck," he whispered and looked awful. "Do you think it's possible?"

Sansa shrugged, feeling miserable, while she pulled up the blanket, feeling suddenly exposed and weird. "I mean, I don't know. It's just the way she looks at you and then looks at me."

"Shit," Jaime said, shaking his head. "I don't know, babe. I mean, if she did have feelings for me, why didn't she say anything?"
Sansa shook her head. "Jaime I honestly don't know. I don't even know if she does. Maybe she hates the North. Or maybe she's a complete control freak. Maybe you're making her uncomfortable with all your ideas. I didn't know how you two were down in King's Landing, but I can say, she is NOT a fan of the Stark's." Sansa's mouth turned down when she thought of Brienne's reaction to her.

"Babe, has she done something to you? Made you feel like you don't belong?" Jaime's face was a mixture of anger and almost regret. Before Sansa could even reply, caught up in his head, he spoke again. "Because I want you on my shows, Sansa. You and your family. I love being up here with you."

Sansa could see that Jaime was getting worked up, and she could see that he was utterly confused about Brienne. Sansa didn't KNOW for sure that Brienne liked Jaime like that- it was just a feeling that she had. And Tywin. Maybe Dickon. She sighed and ran a hand through her hair.

"No, Jaime, she hasn't done anything like that. We don't… click. Not like Dany and I did. Not everyone has to get along," she told him, not wanting to create any more drama. For all Sansa knew, Brienne just didn't like her. Perhaps she was looking out for Jaime's best interests; after all, she had been his producer for a long time, and his career was doing well. It was possible, that as a friend, Brienne didn’t like Sansa for Jaime.

Jaime was still frowning when Sansa pulled him up her body, so his face was in front of hers.

"Can we not talk about Brienne anymore, Jaime? I don't want to cause trouble, and honestly, I could be reading the whole situation wrong."

Jaime saw the worry in Sansa's eyes and brushed back a lock of her brilliant her, pressing his lips to hers.

"Alright kitten. No more Brienne or Cersei. Just us," He saw the relief in her eyes, but inside, he had a funny feeling in his stomach as he thought back over the past few years. Had he been so blind that he'd missed one of his closest friends falling for him? Was he that big of an asshole? And if Brienne did like him that way, why hadn't she said anything?

There might have been a moment or two in the past couple of years when he'd been lonely and down, that he might have acted on it.

Of course, he knew now that it would never have worked; Sansa was the woman he had been waiting for, and evidently, had he ever gotten involved with Brienne, it would have been messy as hell, but it still hurt that she might have kept something like this from him.

But he couldn't help but worry that she might take it out on Sansa- which was something he would not, under any circumstances, allow happening. Jaime vowed to pay more attention to every aspect of his life. It wasn't just Brienne- talking about Cersei tonight reminded him of just how manipulative and cunning she was. Once the show aired on Monday night, Jaime was sure that Cersei would be pissed about it. Jaime would talk with his father; he was still in King's Landing, and if anyone could keep an eye on his witch of an ex, it was his Dad.

Then all thoughts of ex-wives and angry producers were driven from Jaime's head as he allowed himself to get lost in Sansa; her love and her acceptance and the sheer desire that he had for her that threatened to overwhelm him each day. He'd just had her twice and was ready again, and as he sunk into her, he leaned down to tell her that she was his entire world and was rewarded with a smile that had become as vital to him as breathing itself.
The next morning, Brienne begged off coming out to the farm, claiming she was still working on the editing for the first show. Jaime had only spoken to her over the phone, so he had no way of seeing if what Sansa had said last night might be true or not. In fact, she sounded like the Brienne from down south, so Jaime pushed it from his mind for now.

Dany, Pod and Dickon glanced around Jon and Val's impressive farm, with eyes wide. Today, of course, the clouds had rolled in, and it was a drizzly late September day, with a chill in the air. It didn't stop Val from inviting everyone inside to start, serving them coffee and tea and warming up before they all went back outside.

Jon and Arya both had scowls on their faces, while Gendry and Val openly welcomed everyone to the farm.

"Wow, could the two of you look more miserable?" Sansa grumbled at them, shaking her head at their expressions.

Jon had the grace to look sheepish and ran a hand through his dark hair. "Sorry, San. Just wasn't expecting so many people."

"Well, they are nice and perfectly normal, Jon. Just give them a chance."

"Even her?" he asked, scowling at Dany, who was speaking animatedly with Val, cooing at his daughter. "She looks … exotic."

Sansa rolled her eyes and punched him on the shoulder. "She's from Essos, Jon. And she's nice. Her name is Dany, and she'd married to a huge man that could snap you in two, so don't be a dick."

Sansa sucked in a breath. "And she’s my friend, so get it together, Jon and don’t ruin this for Jaime. He’s really going out on a limb for us here, and your scowling face is NOT helping matters."

With that, Sansa huffed out an annoyed breath and made her way over to Dany and Val, giving Jaime a chance to speak with Jon. Sansa was done with her cousin and sister’s inherent dislike of everyone who wasn’t from the North. It was reverse snobbery at its worst.

"What's on your mind?" Jaime asked. He'd seen the little fight between Jon and Sansa and didn't want to be the cause of family drama.

Jon said nothing, just glanced around at all the people in his yard, then looked at Jaime. "I'm not comfortable being on camera. And Arya's been in a bit of a mood these past few days. Might all blow-up," Jon told him with brutal honesty.

Jaime nodded and then saw Gendry deep in conversation with Dickon and Pod. "Fair enough. Let's start with Gendry. He's the next logical step, considering we spent all day at the ranch with the animals yesterday."

Jaime felt the nerves run through his body. What Sansa had said was true; he was out on a limb here and not just for the Starks but for himself. He knew, in his gut, that if given the chance, Brienne would use any opportunity she could to shut down this whole other aspect of his show, and that was the last thing Jaime wanted. For the first time in a very long time, Jaime cared about more than just what he was cooking that day. He didn't feel like a puppet being ordered about, and it was an awesome feeling.

Jaime saw Jon's shoulders visibly relax, and he knew he'd made the right call. He hoped this didn't blow up in his face, because he'd gotten the distinct impression from Brienne that she was waiting for him to fail. And since Jaime had spent too much time in his life already feeling like a failure, he
didn't want to add to that in any way.

Soon enough, Dany had both Jaime and Gendry' camera ready,' and the two men got into an enlightening conversation about the history and lore around butchering as they walked towards Gendry's shops. The butcher was at ease talking with Jaime about his passion, and Pod and Dickon were impressed with his skill and his knowledge.

When they entered his shop, he had both a pig and a cow hanging on their respective racks. Like when his father had been here, Jaime eagerly dove in, donning his butcher's apron that Gendry held for him, and palming the knife he'd used. They worked together, cutting the animals into their primal sections before taking off specific cuts of meat. Jaime spoke eloquently about things he made with his favourite cuts, giving out advice for what to look for to his viewers when buying a roast for Sunday dinner, or the perfect sausage for the backyard BBQ.

Jaime and Gendry had an easy way with each other, and hours passed as they worked their way through the animals until finally, they were both broken down entirely, and a vast array of fresh meat was laid out.

Jaime clapped Gendry on the back. "Impressive work, brother," he said, meaning every word. He would definitely be using this meat in Bran's restaurant in the next few days.

Gendry blushed, and Arya, who'd been skeptical that this entire experience was going to be the Jaime Lannister show, was suitably impressed with how easily Jaime had shown off Gendry's knowledge and skill.

Jon, too, had watched the entire time and saw how much Jaime cared for the people he put on camera. This wasn't him exploiting them; he was helping them.

After that, it was easy for Jon to let Jaime put him on camera as the two men toured the farm.

"It's too bad the fields are up, but normally we have rows of vegetables we grow, along with the orchards."

"And the greenhouses?"

Jon launched into an explanation of the geothermal heat they used so they could not only grow year-round but grow a variety of foods that were usually only able to be produced in the south.

"Like what?"

"Well, we have one greenhouse where we have apricot and lemon trees. Sansa's mad about anything lemon, and it was one of the first southern crops we grew. Watermelons and cantaloupe as well. Pepper and cucumbers, and of course tomatoes, all do better indoors," Jon said.

All Jaime heard was that Sansa loved lemons. He could work with that, his mind already racing about the number of dishes he might create for her.

Jaime had woken this morning feeling lighter and freer than he ever had. He'd never really told anyone just how deeply Cersei's treatment had affected him. Sansa's acceptance and support had made him feel like almost a different man. He felt like they could accomplish anything together, and that he never had to hide from her. He'd shared the very lowest parts of himself, and she hadn't mocked him or made him feel like less of a man. The only worrisome spot in his life right now was Brienne.

Jaime wanted to dismiss Sansa's observations about Brienne, but he couldn't. He was also reluctant
to ask someone like Dany or Dickon about Brienne, just in case… well, just in case Sansa's
observations might be true. It would make things very awkward, and he'd feel like an ass and he
knew the moment he had confirmation; everything would change.

He wasn't a coward but he would prefer to get through this taping up North and then deal with it
afterwards. He didn't want anything to jeopardize this opportunity for the Starks, a family that he
was fast coming to love as much as his own.

That night, when it came time to have their question and answer session, Jaime directed the
conversation to safer topics.

"How many children do you want?" He wiggled his eyebrows at Sansa. "Before you answer, you
should know I am very dedicated to the baby-making process my love."

Sansa blushed and ducked her head, but then answered.

"Four."

Jaime's heart swelled as he pictured them. Little girls with red hair, that looked just like her. Maybe
sons who he could be close with, in a way he wasn’t with Joffrey. He and Tommen did alright, but
Cersei made it hard for him to be really close with any of his children.

"What about you? You already have children, Jaime. Does that scare you- that I want four
children?"

He shook his head and cupped her face.

"Nope. Four sounds nice, kitten."

Sansa’s heart swelled at his easy agreement; she could see that he wanted the same type of family
she did and it was a huge relief. As if she knew he didn't want things to be too deep tonight, Sansa's
next question was Jaime's favourite holiday.

"Halloween," he said immediately, and she groaned.

"That's not a holiday. You don’t even get a day off," Sansa said.

He looked offended. "Of course it's a holiday, kitten. Dressing up, pumpkin carving, decorating,
handing out candy. Eating my weight in chocolate" He winked at her. "I always took the kids out
trick or treating, babe. It was a blast."

Sansa could see him, this handsome man and his three kids, walking through a swanky
neighbourhood in King's Landing; Jaime's grin would have been infectious as he watched them
having fun. He might think he had failed as a father, but Sansa knew that wasn’t the case. He had
done the best he had with the wife he'd been married to.

"Your favourite holiday?"

"Christmas," Sansa said immediately. "I start decorating mid-November and trust me, Jaime, this
house looks like Santa puked on it. I make Jon and Robb do all my lights, and the winery as well.
It takes me days to get everything up. And Christmas songs for weeks. Be prepared.” Jaime saw
the slightly maniacal look in her eye, and he thought she looked adorable.

Jaime just went along with it all, having already guessed that Sansa would love that time of year.
"Why do you like it so much, love?"
She shrugged, played with her sweater. "It's all about anticipation and family — good food and slowing down. Long nights curled up with just the tree on and the fireplace going. Nowhere to go but on your own couch, with a book or a Hallmark movie. I've always imagined my children being so excited, waking my husband and me up early and racing downstairs to open presents. I love the food, baking for days and just the spirit of the season, I guess."

Jaime pulled her into his arms. "I can't wait. It sounds amazing, and I bet the house looks stunning."

They hadn't spoken again after Jaime had told her on Monday that he wanted to be with her; forever. Sansa was reluctant to bring it up, in case Jaime had just been saying it in the heat of the moment- that he wanted her forever. And she was just old fashioned enough that she wanted him too to ask her to marry him properly. But she might be able to get a confirmation that he was planning on staying for more than just the month. He'd said so numerous times, but now she wanted to know for sure.

"So you'll be here? For Christmas, I mean," she asked, voice a bit uncertain, and Jaime cursed himself for being a fool and not telling her exactly what his plans were.

He tilted her head, so their eyes met. "Kitten, I plan on going back to King's Landing long enough to sort things out after we're done the taping. And then, well, I guess, I had just expected to come back here. Bran and I are going to work on opening a new restaurant together, and I can't imagine you want to live anywhere but here, in this house. So yeah, baby, I plan on being here for Christmas."

Her eyes filled with tears, and she wrapped her arms around Jaime. "Oh, thank goodness," she whispered into his ear.

"Sansa, you're the love of my life. Just the thought of being away from you… baby, I can't even stand that. I want to be here with you, making a life together."

She looked in his eyes and saw the truth there. "I want that as well, Jaime. Maybe we should invite your family here for Christmas. Myrcella and Tommen, Tyrion and Marg and of course, Ty."

Jaime's entire face lit with that idea, and he kissed her lips. "I love it, but first, let's see how you do with Tyrion and Marg for a weekend. I won't lie- they've got big personalities.

Sansa scoffed. "You've met Ned, right?"

Both of them laughed at that. Sansa had told Jaime all about Ned figuring out how to use Robb's iPhone and how he'd called Tywin all on his own. "Robb was livid with him, but at the same time impressed."

"God, I hope our kids aren't quite as smart as him," Jaime said, turning back to the stove and missing the look of pure adoration on Sansa's face when he said that.

Later that night, curled up in Jaime's arms, Sansa asked him to tell her about Marg and Tyrion. Happily, Jaime talked about his little brother. It was clear that he loved him deeply, and that their all-male household growing up hadn't exactly been the easiest.

"My Dad was anxious when they started dating, about seven years ago. Marg's a couple of years younger than Tyrion and my father hates the Tyrells. He was worried it was all some elaborate ruse to get back at him for some business deal, but I knew they were mad for each other. Tyrion almost screwed it all up. He's quite insecure about… well… about being a little person. He's
brilliant, San, and so funny and caring. But he didn't have an easy life. But Marg, well, damn, she
loves him so freaking much and she never backed down, just busting through all the walls he put
up."

"She sounds amazing," Sansa said, loving listening to Jaime talk. She was stroking his bare chest,
snuggled up beside him.

"I think they've struggled to have children. I know Tyrion always wanted them, but they've been
married for five years and nothing. So I'm hoping that they're coming here to tell us something
good on that front."

Sansa nodded, not even knowing what to say. She couldn't imagine how devastated she'd feel if she
couldn't have children the old fashioned way. "I hope so too, for them."

Jaime pressed a kiss to her forehead. "They're great people kitten, and I'm so excited you're going
to meet them tomorrow. We'll pick them up first thing and then head to Bran's place."

Sansa tilted her head for one more kiss. "Sounds perfect."

Jaime grinned. It did. Soon he'd have his brother and his wife here, in his new home, with the
woman he loved. He just hoped that everyone got along the way he imagined it; Jaime had waited
a lifetime it seemed to have a woman that fit him so well, and he could only hope that the weekend
was spectacular.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next:

Marg and Tyrion arrive!

Thoughts on Sansa's Brienne reveal? Also, any feedback on the Jaime/Cersei stuff is
welcome. I hope I handled it with care!
Jaime watched in amusement as Sansa changed for the fourth time that morning. He was sipping a coffee and leaning against the door to their bedroom as she flung away yet another dress, leaving her standing there in a beautiful lavender lingerie set which had Jaime thinking of ways he might get her out of it, sooner rather than later.

This indecision over what to wear had all started earlier that morning when Sansa had googled Margaery Tyrell and found out the woman was set to inherit a veritable fortune one day; that she was practically modern-day Westeros royalty (Sansa’s words, not Jaime’s. He’d rolled his eyes at the very idea of Margaery being royalty).

Margaery Tyrell Lannister was gorgeous. A dark-haired woman in her mid-thirties that had flawless skin and wore Jenny Packham and Emilia Wickstead every day; dresses Sansa could only dream of owning. Margaery was perfect and stunning and looked like a modern-day duchess (Again, all Sansa’s words. Jaime hardly knew who Jenny and Emilia were, but apparently they were a BIG DEAL to Sansa).

Sansa had never felt so intimidated in her life. She knew how much Jaime loved Tyrion, and she was determined to make the best first impression with Jaime's sister in law. And that included not showing up in a top she'd bought at Target. Because as much as Sansa loved the North, the one thing it did not have was an abundance of designer stores, and having watched both Jaime and Tywin, Sansa knew that the Lannister’s loved their labels.

Margaery's family was in hotels- and not Best Westerns. The Highgarden line of luxury hotels was well known throughout Westeros for their decadence and outrageous prices. Sansa had never even come close to staying at hotel with the Tyrell name on it. While her family was comfortable now, Robb, Sansa and Jon had worked their asses off to make sure things were good for Arya, Bran and Ric. They were, by no means, in even the same category as they Tyrells or Lannisters when it came to wealth.

There were also numerous pictures of Tyrion and Marg on the web attending a wide variety of events. Several of the images were obviously taken at Jaime's restaurant down in King's Landing. They all looked so beautiful and wealthy that Sansa immediately felt inadequate and wondered if she fit in Jaime’s life. Maybe up here, away from the spotlight, but how could she compete down in King’s Landing?

Jaime tried to tell her it didn't matter- that Tyrion and Marg weren't snobby like that. Or if they were, they'd keep it to a minimum, but that seemed to sail directly over Sansa's head. Jaime couldn't wait to take Sansa to King’s Landing and unleash her in all the high-end stores. He would have Myrcella go with her, along with Dany and Marg and she could fill her closet with all the designer clothes she wanted. Jaime honestly loved her style, and it didn't matter to him, but he also wanted her to be comfortable in his world.
But for now, they were going to be late if she didn't hustle her cute ass into something more appropriate than the tiny little scraps of lace that were covering her naughty bits. Bits that Jaime wanted to suck and kiss until they were both out of their minds for each other and they could blow off work and just have sex all day long.

"Kitten, anything. Really." Jaime’s voice held a hint of frustration with her indecision.

She glared at him and shook her head, muttering about men and their complete lack of understanding.

Sensing there might be something more here than just what to wear, Jaime finally went right up to Sansa and pulled her into a hug. “Kitten, what is going on?” When she didn’t meet his eyes, Jaime knew that something was up with her.

Sansa toyed with the buttons on his shirt. “Am I enough for you, Jaime? I mean, Marg is so perfect and they wear clothes I can’t even afford and you all look so glamorous and I’m just me…”.

Jaime’s lips on hers made her stop speaking.

When he finally let them come up for air he looked directly in her eyes. “Sansa, I've been used for my wealth my whole life; first by Cersei and then by any number of women I dated who couldn’t care less about me beyond my name and fame. Baby, in one week I’ve shared more with you than anyone. I love you. And I don’t care what you wear. But if it makes you feel better, I’ll let you shop until you’ve spent an insane amount of my money, because as far as I’m concerned, what’s mine is yours and vice versa.”

He smiled at the end of that very long sentence and Sansa laughed a little, looking into his bright green eyes. Eyes that only looked at her with love and complete acceptance.

“Alright. I get it. I will quit being so self-conscious.”

“Kitten, you are the love of my life. Baby, please don’t ever doubt that, or any part of who you are. You will always fit my life no matter what you are wearing.” Jaime knew he spoke the truth.

It didn’t really matter to him what she wore; he only wanted her to be comfortable in both of their worlds. Nodding and with one last kiss, Sansa pushed Jaime out of the room and he went back downstairs to hang out with Tank until she was ready.

He thanked the gods when she came downstairs fifteen minutes later in a pair of linen slacks and an olive-green blouse that made her pale skin and red hair even more radiant. She paired it all with cute little boots, adding to her already impressive height and then grabbed a favourite leather jacket, managing to look both beautiful and chic. Jaime loved how she never tried to diminish her height and with her boots she often was at eye height with him.

Jaime couldn't help but pull her into his arms and nuzzle at her. He inhaled, the scent that was only Sansa it was almost imprinted on him, and he groaned when he felt his dick stir to life.

"You're so lovely, Sansa," he told her, capturing her lips in his. He couldn't wait until they could go away for a weekend, back down to the capital where they could attend the ballet or the symphony. He would show off his restaurant, and he could imagine her splayed out on his massive bed in his loft. He’d never had a woman there, but the thought of Sansa there, with him, made he have this need to see her there. He just couldn’t stop kissing her, thinking of all the potential their life together had.

"Jaime, we have to go. We're going to be late," she protested lightly against his lips. He threw his
head back and laughed.

"And for once, it is not my fault."

It was one of his most annoying traits, he knew. Jaime had never really understood why he needed to be on time. For the most part, the world seemed to wait for Lannisters, and he'd watched his father, from a very young age, use this to his advantage. Consequently, Jaime grew up believing everyone would wait for him to arrive, and for the most part, that was true and had become even more so after he’d achieved fame on his show.

He grabbed her hand and the keys to the car he still had rented up here, frowning slightly when he walked outside.

"I think I should get a new vehicle for me," he was saying as they slid into the Mercedes. It was a great car, but completely impractical for the North.

"Hmmm, what are you thinking?" Sansa asked, curious as to where his head was at.

He grinned. "Ever seen a Land Rover Defender kitten?"

She shook her head and then pulled out her phone and googled it. "Seriously? That thing is like a tank, Jaime."

His grin only widened, and he asked Siri to call Addam. His friend's cheerful voice filled the car. "Hey Jaime, what can I do for you?" he asked smoothly.

"Addam, can you look into purchasing a Land Rover Defender?"

Addam chuckled. "Alright. I can do that. Planning on staying in the North for a while?"

Jaime reached for Sansa's hand and squeezed it. "Yeah. Like the rest of my life, while."

"Good for you, man. She must be one special lady," Addam said, and Jaime grinned.

"She is. But I need better wheels, so if you can find something for me, that would be great."

Addam promised he'd look into it and then hung up, but not before making Jaime guarantee that he'd meet Sansa when they finally came back down to King's Landing. Sansa shook her head at Jaime. There were moments when he seemed to fit so seamlessly into her life. And then there were moments like this when she was reminded precisely who she was in love with. Jaime Lannister, son and heir to the wealthiest man in the entire country. The son of a billionaire and a man that was wealthy all on his own.

"Don't worry, babe. These things are built like tanks, and plenty of space for baby seats," Jaime told her, completely serious and making Sansa's ovaries almost explode in the process. *How was he just so perfect for her?* Sansa wondered.

When they finally arrived at the airport, Jaime couldn't contain his excitement about seeing his brother up here in this place that he loved. He'd picked his father up a week ago, and that visit had exceeded all his expectations, and he could only hope this one did as well.

Sansa and Jaime were waiting in the main lobby of the airport when they saw Tywin's plane land. Within moments, Tyrion and Margaery disembarked, and were striding across the tarmac, fully decked out in their glamorous clothing and looking just like Tywin had when he'd come North; peacocks among chickens.
When they were through the doors, wide grins broke out on both their faces as they spotted Jaime, and Sansa looked at her boyfriend, and saw the pure joy there at seeing his little brother. Jaime still hadn't let Sansa's hand go and did so only when Tyrion and Marg were right in front of them.

"Tyrion, welcome to the North," Jaime said and then bent down to hug him.

As the brother's embraced, Marg looked at Sansa, her face a bit of a mask, before she turned almost green and then pale and looked frantically around.

Having been around Val, Jeyne and Arya enough to recognize when a pregnant woman was going to puke, Sansa grabbed Marg's arm and almost dragged her to women's bathroom. Sansa opened a stall and held her hair as Marg emptied her stomach into the public toilet. A few minutes later, Sansa handed her a wadded-up piece of toilet paper, a bottle of water and some gum.

Marg gave her a weak smile, and then a shaky laugh. "Hi, Sansa. I'm Marg."

"Hi." Sansa smiled softly at her. "I take it this was your big news."

Marg's hazel eyes filled with tears, and she nodded. "Yup. Twins. Yah!" she said weakly, moaning slightly and taking a small sip of water. She rested against Sansa's legs. "Well, this is a hell of a way to meet."

Sansa couldn't help herself; she stroked Marg's back said nothing, hoping she wasn't overstepping. A few minutes later and Marg finally felt good enough to stand. Both women washed their hands and then grinning at each other, left the washroom to find both Lannister men looking worried, waiting for them right outside the restroom.

Marg reached into her purse and pulled out the ultrasound picture. "This is the worst possible way to tell you, Jaime, after I've just about puked my guts out on your new girlfriend, and in an airport washroom, no less, but seeing as the cat is out of the bag, you're going to be an Uncle!"

She gave him the ultrasound picture and reached for Tyrion's hand, who was asking her if she was alright. She nodded at him and murmured how good Sansa had been to her. Margaery Tyrell Lannister did not like either Cersei Marbrand Lannister or Brienne Tarth. Both women, in her opinion, were no good for Jaime. More than no good; flat out poison for him.

Marg had been reserving judgement on Sansa, but now she watched as Jaime looked on in astonishment at the ultrasound picture and pulled Sansa to his side. Sansa looked at him as if he were her entire world. And no one, in Marg's experience, could fake that lovey-dove smile the two of them had for one another. Plus, any woman who could comfort someone in the midst of puking their guts out deserved a chance in Marg's books.

"I'm going to be an Uncle kitten," he said softly, wonder in his voice.

Sansa's blue eyes danced in amusement. "Don't let Ned hear you say it like that," she scolded him gently as Jaime laughed.

"True. I guess I am already an Uncle. Now we're just adding more kids to the chaos. Congratulations, guys. We can't wait to hear all about it," Jaime said happily. He once again threw his arms around both Tyrion and Marg, and everyone had huge grins on their faces.

When Jaime finally let them go, he tugged Sansa closer.

"Sansa Stark, I'd like you to officially meet my brother, Tyrion and his lovely, pregnant wife, Margaery."
Sansa went to shake both their hands, and Marg threw her hands up in the air.

"Girl, you just held my hair as I exorcist vomited in there. We are past handshakes," and pulled her in for a hug.

"I see how you look at him, and I've been waiting for-freaking-ever for someone to love him the way you do," Marg whispered into Sansa's ear.

Sansa blushed. "I love him so much. Welcome to my home. I hope you're comfortable here in the North."

Marg held her tighter before letting her go. "The only shitty thing is we finally have a winery in the family, and I can't drink for the next seven months."

Sansa laughed and then turned to Tyrion, whose face wasn’t quite the open book his wife’s was.

"Hello, Sansa. Thank you for having us, and on such short notice."

Sansa smiled at Tyrion and bent down to hug him. "Welcome to the North, Tyrion."

Tyrion had also been observing his brother's new girlfriend. He'd never heard his father be so exuberant about a woman and less than half an hour in her company, and he understood utterly why Tywin Lannister loved her. She was stunningly beautiful, well-spoken, and she was madly in love with his brother. She'd also been kind to Marg as she’d been sick and looked at Jaime as if he were everything.

It had been a very long time since Tyrion had seen his brother so happy; he fairly radiated with his feelings for Sansa. Still, Tyrion would take the morning to watch them together. While he didn’t think it was possible that both Jaime and Tywin had been fooled by Sansa, the whole Cersei business had make Tyrion extra cautious when it came to Jaime.

When they were finally in the vehicle, speeding towards Bran's restaurant, the whole infertility story came out. Jaime was a bit hurt that Tyrion hadn't confessed in him that they were going through this.

Sitting in the front seat, Tyrion heaved out a sigh.

"In fairness, brother, you were going through your man whore stage after you'd dumped that vicious bitch. You were in no frame of mind to deal with our shit. And it took a few years before we were really in the trenches of discovering all the problems we were facing trying to conceive. By then, it was easier to rely on each other. No one likes to be told their sperm is defective."

"Or their uterus is hostile. I mean, what the shit is that? Hostile uterus. I'm hostile to it! Two fricking decades of periods. Do you know what shit we put up with each month? And then I ask it to do one thing- one tiny thing. Grow a human, and suddenly it's fucking hostile," Marg piped up, winking at Sansa, who let out a laugh as both men looked at each other.

"She's feisty," was all Tyrion would say, but Jaime could see his brother loved his wife's fire.

Jaime briefly wondered how Sansa was doing; it had been quite the introduction, but when he glanced back at her, she had a smile on her face, and she gave him a little wave.

Jaime finally looked at his brother again. "I understand. I do. I wasn't in a good place for a while. But no more, Tyrion. We are brothers and family, and I want to know things and be there for you."
Tyrion felt something thick in his throat and agreed gruffly. It had been years since Jaime had been in such a clear headspace, and the only thing Tyrion could attribute it to was Sansa herself.

"I'm so happy that the IVF did eventually work out," Sansa said, smiling at Marg.

"Me too, although having two of them in me is making me twice as sick, I think." Then Marg waved a hand. "I know I shouldn't complain. I mean, we've spent tens of thousands of dollars to be pregnant, and now I am, and I'm sick as a dog, and it's miserable."

Sansa snorted. "Marg bitch as much as you want. I mean, yes, you didn't have the most traditional route to becoming pregnant, but wait until you meet my sister. She'll moan for hours if you let her about the devil spawn in her tummy. Just because you had to do IVF does not mean you don't get to complain."

Marg felt her eyes fill again, and she sent Sansa a grateful look. Some of the other women in her infertility group had talked about how 'blessed' they felt during their entire pregnancy and how that knowing how hard they'd tried to get pregnant, they had never complained about any pregnancy symptoms. It had left Marg feeling isolated and alone when her body felt like it was rebelling against her. Like, just because she'd had to use a turkey baster and doctor and hundreds of needles and had to harvest her eggs, meant that she shouldn't bitch about morning (all day sickness), sore nipples and being so tired she could practically fall asleep on command.

"Thanks, Sansa. You don't know what that means to me, to hear you say that. Most people think I'm supposed to be hashtag blessed this whole pregnancy that I feel bad telling anyone I'm miserable sometimes," Marg said quietly, truly grateful for Sansa’s nonjudgement.

Tyrion twisted in his seat and looked at his wife. "My love, you never have to hide what you're feeling from me. I get it if you're feeling awful. I know you want these babies as much as I do, but it doesn't mean there aren't going to be some tough times."

"Thanks, baby," Marg said just as they arrived at the restaurant.

Jaime met Sansa's eyes in the mirror. It had been an emotionally charged morning, and they hadn't even walked inside. He coughed and looked at everyone.

"We were hoping to do segment today on some of our more unique recipes from childhood and how we can improve them," Jaime said, looking at Tyrion and Sansa as they exited the car, wondering if they were up for it.

"Are you sure you want me on camera, brother?" Tyrion quipped, and Jaime frowned.

"Well, yes, of course. We're going to tape two shows actually, and you'll be on both. The second one, we'll have Marg as well."

Marg clapped her hands excitedly and reached for Tyrion's hand. "Don't be so grumpy, Tyrion. I've been itching to get on Jaime's show, and now's my chance. What's this one about?"

Jaime grinned at her as he reached for Sansa's hand. "How to put together a celebratory meal when you've had no warning because your brother has kept his personal life a secret and now has the best news in all of Westeros." Jaime paused.

"Or something like that," as both Sansa and Marg laughed.

Tyrion shook his head, wondering who this man was standing in front of him. He looked like Jaime Lannister. Dressed like Jaime Lannister. Smelled like Jaime Lannister. But he was not the
Jaime that Tyrion knew from the past two decades. No, this was the Jaime Lannister, pre-Cersei. The happy and confident man, who'd loved to cook and had a sureness about himself. Tyrion knew that the reason was the lovely woman that Jaime was currently kissing.

When they walked in Bran's place, it was like an arctic front hit them; the wave of coldness from Brienne so pronounced that Sansa almost stepped back. Until she realized it wasn't, for once, directed at her. Marg and Brienne were glaring daggers at one another. There had to be a story there, and Sansa was itching to know what it was.

Jaime rubbed a hand down the back of his neck; he knew that Brienne and Marg hated one another, but he'd forgotten how bad it was. Then he felt Sansa's hand in his, and her voice, encouraging him and he coughed and straightened his spine. Sansa believed in his ideas and he knew they were good.

"Umm, Brienne, we're going to add Sansa and Tyrion to the first show."

Brienne's eyes narrowed, and she just nodded, and Dany hurried over to get all three of them in makeup and ready for the show.

Jaime was first, and Dany worked her magic quickly until he was ready to go back to the kitchen. "Thanks, Dan," he said to her, his voice low and tight as he glanced at the kitchen.

"Jaime, what you're doing up here, well, it's incredible," Dany told him and reached up to press a soft kiss to his cheek. "We believe in you, Jaime."

Jaime's shoulders relaxed a little bit, and he gave her a half-grin. "That means a lot, Dany. Thanks."

She nodded and then gestured for him to shoo while she worked on Sansa. Before Sansa sat, she pulled Dany into her arms and hugged her.

"Thank you for being such a good friend to him," Sansa whispered into Dany's ear and watched as her new friend blushed.

"As I told you, Sansa, he's a good man."

"He is. The best man," Sansa quickly agreed, and they watched as Jaime slipped into the kitchen. Then Sansa sat and started asking Dany questions about her husband and son.

"I shamelessly bothered your brother to get his agreement, but they are flying in tomorrow, Sansa. Drogo couldn't wait to go on a cattle drive, and Jeyne said it was no problem if Roc hangs with her and Ned and Ben at the ranch when we're working," Dany told her excitedly.

"Dany, that's awesome. And I can help with babysitting if you need it. You guys will have to come over to our house and see the winery as well," Sansa was saying excitedly.

Marg and Tyrion just sat and watched in a kind of stunned awe as Sansa and Dany made their plans. Soon enough, both Pod and Dickon wandered over, chatting easily with Sansa and they watched as she charmed all of Jaime's friends and crew.

She wasn't the least bit jealous of the little kiss Dany had given Jaime, and Tyrion knew she'd have no reason to be; somehow, Jaime looked at Dany like a little sister and always had. There had never been anything between them, but Tyrion remembered one woman that Jaime dated being very insecure around the little platinum blond.

Sansa was more confident than that, which Tyrion though was a very positive sign for their
relationship. Even up here in the wilds of the North, Jaime was a celebrity. He was the most loyal
man Tyrion knew, and he'd never cheat on a woman. But too many women in Jaime's life had been
very insecure about his fame, and it always brought tension to the relationship. Clearly, Sansa was
not like that, which was just another check in the plus column for Tyrion.

When Sansa was finally done, she thanked Dany again and hugged her, before turning and
stunning both Marg and Tyrion with her beauty. She was gorgeous, and Marg pouted.
"Goddammit. You're nice, beautiful, successful and have great skin. What the fuck is there to not
like about you?"

Dany let out a loud laugh and winked at Marg. "She's also tall, skinny, looks like a model, has the
cutest nephew and a super-hot boyfriend who is madly in love with her."

"Bitch," Marg said with no heat, and Sansa shook her head at them and their antics. Somehow, she
knew they'd all be fast friends, and she felt a warmth spread through her.

"Yes, because a woman that looks like every man's sex dream come to life, and another who is so
beautiful she gets compared to mythical creatures have so much to be worried about," Sansa joked
back to the two of them, and both women grinned at her.

Marg cocked a hip and shook her boobs. "I do have a great body, which these two little peanuts are
going to destroy completely. Good thing my husband's cock likes a little jiggle."

Dany and Sansa exchanged shocked looks and then laughed at Marg's antics.

"Oh, I like you a lot," Dany said and held out her hand. "I'm not sure we've ever formally met.
Dany Drogo, makeup artist to the stars," she said, and Marg shook her hand.

"Margaery Tyrell Lannister. Heiress to Highgarden Hotels and a woman who loves to fuck her
husband," Marg said back, and Dany's grin got wider if possible.

Tyrion, well used to his wife's vocabulary and shocking ways, barely reacted as he took Sansa's
elbow and directed her to the kitchen.

"I'd apologize for her, but I just love her too damn much," Tyrion said philosophically.

"Oh gods, don't apologize for her. Not ever, Tyrion. She's amazing. When I grow up, that is who I
want to be."

Tyrion stopped and looked at her and then for the first time, a real smile lit his face. Too many
people had rejected Marg and her larger than life personality. Tyrion knew that she waved it off,
but deep down, it hurt her. She had hardly any female friends because they were intimidated by
her. But not Sansa. He squeezed Sansa's hand.

"One little thing; she's got a heart of gold underneath all that bluster, Sansa."

"Oh Tyrion, of course, she does," Sansa said, beaming at him and Tyrion, like Jaime and Tywin
before him, fell fully and irrevocably in love with Sansa Stark. She would be a welcome addition to
their family.

The first show taped with hardly any problems, and it was packed with laughs.

Spaghetti sauce that had been made with strawberry sauce instead. A genuinely awful chicken pot
pie that was so sweet because Bran had added sugar instead of salt to the crust and the filling.
Yorkshire puddings that looked like hockey pucks because Jaime added baking soda instead of
powder. On and on it went, one bad creation after another, while Bran and Jaime ‘fixed’ them and the four of them laughed at their childhoods.

"Oh gods, one-time Bran decided to make a curry," Sansa was saying, and her brother blushed, leaning against the counter. "Do you remember Bran?"

He nodded. "Oh, ya. Thai green curry and man was that an epic fail."

"It was lumpy, Bran and so gross," Sansa said, shaking her head.

Tyrion remembered Jaime's food ‘experiments,’ shaking his head at some of the more exciting combinations. Fried apricots and eggs. Watermelon and chocolate chip salad on a bed of rice.

"What were you thinking, brother?" Tyrion asked at that one.

Jaime blushed a bit and shook his head, unconsciously reaching for Sansa's hand and pulling her a bit closer as he looked at Tyrion and then to Sansa, who was laughing.

"I don't know. I was trying to be edgy," Jaime said, shrugging.

"Just no edgy in our kitchen, Jaime," Sansa said, grinning and then realized what she said. It was an opening for Jaime and one he couldn't resist.

"Don't worry kitten; I'll make sure we only eat our very favourite flavours in our kitchen." Jaime wiggled his eyebrows. There wasn't a person alive that didn't know precisely what Jaime's favourite flavour was, as Sansa blushed absolutely beet red.

After that, they wrapped that show quickly. Jaime caught the stricken look on Brienne's face, but brushed it off, not feeling the least bit guilty. He was going to marry Sansa; he had no issues with everyone knowing exactly how much he loved her. More, he didn't want to even deal or think about Brienne and her mysterious potential feelings for him right now. He had his brother here, and the woman he loved, and he was happy, and he just wanted to enjoy it.

They all did a change of outfits, along with putting Sansa's hair up and then hustled everyone back into the kitchen to tape the segment on how to prepare an elegant meal when you receive unexpected good news.

Sansa ran her hands over the Emilia Wickham dress Dany had put her in. It was a beautiful ivory white day dress, with tiny roses stitched all over it. Dany slid some sandals onto her feet, and Sansa peeped when she saw the Jimmy Choo label.

"Dany, are you sure?" Sansa almost whispered, unable to believe what she was wearing.

Marg overhead and strolled over.

"Sansa, you look beautiful," Marg said, loving the classic look Dany had crafted for Sansa. "Do you have any pearls with you?" Marg asked the little makeup artist, and Dany shook her head.

"No. Damn. That would have been perfect," Dany said, and Marg agreed.

Sansa blushed under their scrutiny until Jaime came out from the back and caught sight of her and then just stopped in the middle of the restaurant like he'd been hit with a bolt of lightning.

"Jesus kitten, you look amazing," Jaime said, and in four quick strides, he had her in his arms and was nuzzling at her.
"Jaime, if you mess up her makeup, I'll kill you," Dany threatened, but then melted a bit to see them all but sink into each other's arms.

"Gods, they are just delicious together," Marg murmured to Dany, who hummed her agreement.

"They are. Sickening but so so sweet."

Jaime grinned at Sansa as they listened to the two women, his heart swelling that they seemed to love Sansa as much as he did.

The natural chemistry between Jaime, Jojen, Sansa, Tyrion, Marg and Bran was apparent immediately once they began taping.

Jaime embarrassed both Marg and Tyrion by announcing that sometimes family dropped by with 'good news,' and you had to pull something fantastic off. Both Bran and Jaime took turns, adding simple ingredients that you would most likely find in any home to create some truly wonderful dishes that looked much fancier than they were.

It was impossible to miss how Jaime doted on Sansa; he all but fed her from his fork at one point, and forgetting the camera, Sansa, pun fully intended, ate it all up. It was just so easy to be with Jaime, and she couldn't help the heart eyes that were a permanent fixture each time she looked at him.

Marg kept it (mostly) PG... 13.

"I can say hell. Jesus, have you seen what they put on HBO these days?" Tyrion gazed at her in wonder, so much love in his eyes. "Sex, sex and more sex."

"Not to mention incest and lots of violence," Tyrion said, winking at her and holding up his wine glass. "Plus, drinking. Those women in that period piece sure do love their wine." He took a healthy sip and hummed his appreciation. "What am I drinking?"

Sansa coughed and then told Tyrion about the crisp apple white wine that he was drinking and the blends she used.

"Delightful," he said, drinking more. "Please tell me there is more from where this came from."

Sansa laughed. "Tyrion, you're going to be staying at the winery. Trust me when I tell you there is more. Reds, roses, dessert and ice wines as well."

"Just be careful, brother," Jaime said, eyes twinkling. "She has a funny little habit of getting Lannister men to drink with her on Friday afternoons and then publicly claim her man in front of all of Wintertown."

Tyrion chortled in glee and demanded to hear the story.

Sansa rolled her eyes.

"Tywin and I sampled wine one afternoon, and you act as we streaked through Wintertown," Sansa joked back, and Tyrion choked on his wine, trying to imagine his father getting sloshed on a Friday afternoon with Sansa. Somehow, now knowing her, Tyrion could see it. He'd bet good money if his father were just a bit younger, the Old Lion would be giving Jaime a run for his money when it came to Sansa.

When they finally wrapped up the taping, Sansa was stunned to find out that the dress and shoes
were hers; a present from Jaime. Unknown to Sansa, Dany and Marg had both pulled him aside and
told him to get his ass in gear and buy her some proper jewelry. Jaime grinned at them both and
then hustled Tyrion and Marg to their car before Brienne could talk with him.

They pulled up to Sansa's farmhouse a short time later, and both Marg and Tyrion fell just a little
bit more in love with Sansa. It was such a classic home, and they both knew that this was Jaime's
forever place. He might come down to King's Landing for a visit, or spend time at the Rock, but
Jaime was happy here in the North, in Sansa Stark's home, in a way he had never been anywhere
else.

Sansa kissed him on the lips and then said she had to go to the winery for a couple of hours. She'd
been pulling long hours at night, sneaking in time to go over ads and her expansion plan, leaving
the day to day running to Louise for now. Still, she checked in each day, and with the fall season
winding down, they were still quite busy.

Jaime told her they'd come down in an hour or so, and she readily agreed, just as her phone chimed.
She looked down as she walked away, grinning as she thought about Tyrion meeting Ned later that
afternoon. Robb and Jeyne had invited themselves over, and she couldn't wait for them all to spend
time together.

Left with his brother and sister in law, Jaime motioned them inside and eagerly showed them
around, and Tyrion noted how seamlessly his brother had seemed to integrate his life with Sansa's.
His keys on a table, a few jackets hung on pegs in the mudroom, and Jaime's beloved footwear
neatly lined up at the back door.

Tank had come barrelling out of the house and ran past everyone to do his business and then was
quickly back in the house, seeking out Jaime for a cuddle. He scooped the little dog up into his
arms Tank grunted and squirmed, trying to get closer to Jaime.

"That is the ugliest dog I've ever seen, he's almost cute," Marg said in wonder.

Jaime pretended to be offended, but he wasn't. "You're a handsome fella, aren't you Tank?"

Tank's wide mouth opened, and he looked like he was smiling before Jaime put him down. "So
kitchen through here; big family room and dining room," he said, gesturing around. Tyrion
wondered if Sansa had somehow seen into Jaime's brain when she had been updating her home
because the kitchen area was the heart of the house, and Jaime was everywhere here. It was clear
that he ruled this house when it came to preparing food.

Jaime took them upstairs, giving them space and privacy to settle in. When he closed the door, he
heard Marg let out an excited little squeal, and Jaime's heart settled. He knew then that Sansa was
going to be welcomed with open arms into the Lannister clan.

An hour later, Marg, Tyrion and Jaime walked over to the winery, Jaime pointing out various
landmarks and waving in different directions to let them know where the ranch and farm were.

Both were impressed with the sleek modern building which housed Winterfell Winery, and Marg
was especially disappointed that she couldn't partake in the afternoon's activities. Sansa spotted
them immediately and gave them the VIP tour; she laughed as she said that, but it sparked an idea
in Jaime's brain that he decided he would talk with her about later.

When they were finally settled at a table in the little bistro, Sansa ordered a few bottles of wine to
give Tyrion a taste of what she produced and also ordered sparkling water for Marg and some fruit,
cheese and crackers for them to munch on.
When the food came, Jaime had a sour look on his face. While the presentation was acceptable, Jaime frowned at the plate in front of him.

"Kitten, I love you, but this isn't real food. It isn't even good snack food," Jaime said, shaking his head. "Please let me help you," he all but begged her, and she laughed at him when he stuck his bottom lip out in a pout.

She nipped at it. "All part of my business plan, babe. But I have to run it by your father, first."

Tyrion choked on his wine. "Our father?"

Sansa gave Tyrion a big grin. "Yup. He's helping my family and me with our business plans. Sort of like a real-life MBA, only with Tywin as your mentor. I guess I'm the mentee!" Sansa said, already a couple of glasses of wine in.

Jaime beamed at her, thinking she was adorable when she was just a bit tipsy. Well, he thought she was adorable always. Sansa chatted happily with Tyrion and Marg, falling into a comfortable pattern with them, helped by the universal conversation starter: liquor.

At one point, as Tyrion and Sansa were arguing over Tywin's best business deal when Sansa whipped out her phone and Facetimed Tywin.

"Hi!" She said cheerily, just a bit drunk, as Tywin answered her call.

His eyes warmed when he saw her face, and she grinned at him.

"Sansa, my dear, what can I do for you?"

Tyrion was astounded at just how damn happy his father seemed to be, hearing from Sansa. "Tyrion and I are having a debate, and only you can solve it," Sansa said, and Tyrion leaned in.

It was then that, Marg pulled Jaime to the side.

"She's fucking perfect, Jai," Marg said and kissed her cheek. "Congrats, brother. You've finally found the one."

Jaime hugged Marg closer as they watched Tyrion, Tywin and Sansa argue a ten million dollar deal he'd made years ago.

"She's everything, Marg. Fuck, I love her so much," Jaime said, running a hand through his hair as if he still couldn't quite believe his luck.

"She loves you back, just as much," Marg said knowingly.

Jaime had a stupid love-struck expression on his face. "Yeah, she does."

When the winery closed, the foursome made their way back to Sansa's house, and she finally told them that Jeyne and Robb were going to stop by with the boys.

"For dinner, babe?" Jaime asked, and Sansa shrugged.

"Not sure. Robb just said that Neddy wanted to come by."

Jaime pulled out his phone and texted Robb and asked if they wanted to come over for dinner. Robb replied immediately.
"Brother, I'll bring the beer. And the steaks. Everything else is on you. See you in 30."

Jaime grinned and told them what was happening, and Sansa moaned. "God, you guys have never had steak like these."

Marg looked a bit curious. "What do you mean, like these?"

Sansa waved a hand. "Jaime helped Gendry butcher the cow yesterday. So fresh and good," Sansa said and then watched as Marg went almost green and ran to the bathroom.

"Oh god, I feel so bad," Sansa said, covering her mouth.

Tyrion waved a hand. "Honestly, don't worry. Air can set her off."

Sansa worried, hovering at the door while the Lannister men argued about their favourite music; classical and Sansa rolled her eyes. Jaime wanted one of his Italian overtures while Tyrion was arguing for Wagner. Meanwhile, Sansa knocked gently on the bathroom door.

"Marg, sweetie, are you ok?" Sansa asked, and the door opened to a pale Marg.

"I'll be fine," she said and gave a weak smile.

"Come on. You can curl up on the couch while Jaime cooks and these two argue snobby person music," Sansa said, guiding her new friend to the sofa and getting her settled with some ginger ale, crackers and a comfy blanket.

"Do you need anything else?" Sansa asked, and Marg shook her head.

"San, thanks, sweetie."

Sansa smiled at her and then went to see what Jaime needed. As she walked into the kitchen she said, “Siri, play Country Hits 1,” and the sound of a guitar filled the room. When Jaime and Tyrion both protested, Sansa gave Jaime a look and just said, “Robb.”

Jaime grinned and shook his head. “I’ll make you like classical music yet kitten.” He kissed her neck and then whispered, “Might just need some more… persuasion.” Both remembered that last time they’d listened to it on this very island and what Jaime’s very talented tongue and fingers had gotten up to. Sansa blushed and then shook her head at him, but felt the desire rush through her at the thought of him having her again.

Then Jaime was busy in the kitchen, and she asked what he needed. He stole a quick kiss and, seeing that she wanted to help, gave her little tasks, making her his sous chef. Tyrion watched in amusement as they worked in tandem, Jaime stopping to feed Sansa small bites of food and steal sips of each other's wine, along with little touches that clearly showed how much they loved one another.

Marg was snoring lightly on the couch, and the autumn sky had darkened as Sansa lit a bunch of candles, and the atmosphere became even cozier inside the farmhouse.

Closer to forty-five minutes, than the promised thirty, the front door finally opened just as Marg woke up from her impromptu nap. Ned kicked off his boots and was already yelling for Jaime.

"Uncle Jaime, I'm here," he called and then came running around the corner, eyes lighting when they landed on Jamie.
"Hey buddy," Jaime said, picking Ned up and tickling him as he put him on the island.

"Uncle Jaime, we have cow tonight," he said, giving a wicked little smile, and Jaime laughed.

"Did this one have a name?"

Ned shook his head and grinned. "Nope."

Jeyne and Robb then entered the kitchen, case of beer in hand. Sansa was behind them with Ben in her arms, giving him belly kisses and making him giggle.

Marg and Tyrion stood off to the side and watched as Robb embraced Jaime, and Jeyne warned Ned to be good.

"I'm always good, Mama," Ned said, eyes big, and Marg snorted, drawing everyone's attention to them.

"Uncle Jaime, who is that?" Ned whispered.

Jaime picked Ned up in his arms and set him on the ground, holding his hand. "This is my brother, Tyrion and his wife, Margaery."

They both smiled at Ned, who cocked his head, looking at Tyrion, who was holding his breath, almost as if he was waiting for his judgement.

"Papa Lion says you are smart. Like me. Is that true?"

Marg’s eyes widened. She hadn’t been around very many children in her life, so Ned was an eye-opener.

"Holy shit, T," Marg said, "This is bloody amazing."

Ned's eyes met hers. "That's two swears, Aunty Marg. Each swear is a dollar."

Marg snorted and laughed, delighted by him.

Tyrion opened his wallet and held out a hundred dollar bill. "Let's make this easy, Ned. Here is a hundred dollars- to cover us this weekend."

Ned cocked his head and then shook it, not taking the money. "No thanks, Uncle Jaime's brother. I'll count."

Jeyne, Robb, Sansa and Jaime howled in laughter, while Tyrion stood there stunned.

"But it's a hundred dollars," he sputtered.

Ned grinned. "Yeah, but you're here for the whoooooole weekend, and she's already said two swears in one sentence."


"Three dollars."

Jaime leaned down and whispered in Ned's ear. His eyes lit.

"Do you want to collect the eggs with me tomorrow Aunt Marg and Uncle Jaime's brother?"
Marg and Tyrion looked a bit surprised but said yes and Jaime and Ned high-fived. Jaime knew there was no way they could get through that chore without letting out a whole lot of curse words. Ned would be well past his $100 bribe in no time.

Robb laughed as he grabbed his son and swung him upside down. "Quit extorting people for money, Neddy," he told him.

"Papa Lion says I have good business sense," Ned said proudly, and everyone groaned at the thought of Tywin taking a 'keen interest' in little Ned Stark.

Dinner was fantastic; Jeyne and Marg bonded over being pregnant, and Marg even held Ben, who snuggled into her lap and melting her heart.

Sansa eagerly drank their share of wine, but for once, she wasn't jealous of her friend and sister-in-law and their pregnant status. She knew that was because she was sitting beside Jaime and that he kept his arm on her back or thigh. He made sure that was present with her, never leaving her to feel outside the conversation.

Tyrion and Robb snarked back and forth at each other; the city boy and the country boy, but everyone could tell it was in good fun.

Of course, by the end of dinner, Ned was up to $27 from Marg and Tyrion, so he was proud of the decision not to take the hundred dollars.

Tyrion was suitably impressed with the little boy and could see how Tywin was so taken with him. He was also quite relieved that it didn't seem to matter that he was a little person to the boy, just that he'd tried to bribe him.

After dinner, Sansa and Jeyne cleaned up, and Robb put Ben to sleep in his bed upstairs, while Jaime put a movie on for Ned.

"The Lion King, please, Uncle Jaime," Ned said and curled up by Marg, who was back on the couch. She opened her arms and was shocked when he all but crawled into her lap, whispering to her and telling her about watching the movie with his Papa Lion, who as far as Marg could tell, was almost his favourite person on earth.

Back in the kitchen, Sansa put on the kettle, while Jaime made dessert, and the others chatted amicably. Tyrion knew exactly why Jaime loved it here. The Starks accepted him. Robb treated him like a brother and Jeyne was a sweetheart. Their children were adorable and loved Jaime like he was already their Uncle. And then there was Sansa, a woman who loved and adored his brother for him. Not because he was a Lannister or famous or wealthy. Sansa just loved Jaime.

One day in the North and Tyrion knew they'd be making at least a semi-annual pilgrimage to the North to visit Sansa and Jaime because it was clear, Jaime had found his home.

Hours later, when it was just Jaime and Tyrion on the downstairs couch, the younger Lannister asked when Jaime was going to ask Sansa to be his wife.

Jaime grinned and leaned his head back. "Dad's coming up this week. Ned invited him to grandparent's tea. I've asked him to bring Mom's ring," Jaime said.

Both men had always known the ring would go to Jaime since they'd been small. No one had said anything when Jaime had never asked Tywin for it when he'd married Cersei. But now, it was right. The right woman, the right place and the right family.
"I'm happy for you, Jaime."

"And I'm happy for you, Tyrion." Jaime shook his head. "Twins, brother. That's something."

Tyrion shook his head, looking at his drink. "It is. We never thought this was possible. It's been a hell of a couple of years. Nothing like feeling completely inadequate for your wife."

Jaime heard the pain in Tyrion's voice. He let his little brother talk about how brutal and isolating it had been; and how they'd gone through the ups and downs together and were now closer than ever.

"But in the end, here we are," Tyrion said, and Jaime could see the peace in his brother's eyes that they finally had their dreams of being parents in their grasp.

The brothers grinned at each other and clinked glasses of whiskey.

"To the Lannister's and the women we love," Tyrion toasted, and Jaime just smiled at a man that was completely happy with his life, who had found the love of his life after years of darkness. Sansa was his light, and he couldn't wait to explore everything with her.

Chapter End Notes

Feedback and comments are always welcome!

Yes you can be that sick while pregnant!
"What are you looking at?" Sansa asked quietly. It was Saturday morning, and she'd woken to find Jaime beside her in bed, which already felt like the most natural thing in the entire world, gazing at her with those eyes that she loved.

Jaime swallowed and reached a hand out, a single finger tracing over Sansa's features. Her skin, so perfect and pale, always blushing when she was happy, or shy, or embarrassed, was something he just had to touch. She was so expressive, so open with him, never playing games or trying to deceive him. Her nose was straight and perfect with just a few almost impossible to see freckles and those pouty lips that Jaime could kiss for hours. It was a face that Jaime wanted to wake up next to for the rest of his life.

"You."

As if she knew his thoughts, he saw the colour bloom across her cheeks, and it filled him; his heart and soul to see the blue of her eyes reflect everything he felt.

"You're so beautiful that it still stuns me that I'm here in your bed. But it's more than that, Sansa. Your kindness, how selfless you are. I saw you all day yesterday with Margaery, making her feel welcome, opening your home to my family. I watch you with Ben, and I can't help but long to see our child in your arms. And kitten, they are going to be so damn lucky to have you as their mama."

Sansa's eyes teared at Jaime's soft words, shared only between them as they were cocooned in their bed, bright fall sunlight turning everything golden. She reached her hand up to mimic his movements.

"Well, you're no slouch yourself, Jaime. Such a handsome man, but there is so much more to you. You're good, Jaime, right down to your soul. I've seen you with Robb and Bran. You've opened yourself up to my family, and my life in the North. You're so gentle with me. I've never been loved like you do, Jaime. Honestly, fully, wholly."

Sansa rubbed her hands along the slight scruff of his face, knowing he may or may not shave it off, depending on his mood. She liked him both ways, and neither look detracted from his beauty.
Jaime moved fractionally close and captured her lips, uncaring that they'd just woken up. Caught up in the moment, Sansa let herself go into the kiss, arching close to him, seeking his warmth and his love. Jaime's hand snuck under her flimsy tank top, cupping a warm breast and thumbing her nipple that responded immediately, pebbling in his hand. His strokes were steady and sure. Jaime knew they had time; they had nothing but time, him and Sansa. They had forever.

Soon enough, she wiggled a bit, and Jaime smiled as he pulled back. "I love how you respond to me," he told her and again saw that blush he loved stain her cheeks. "I don't ever want you to feel ashamed of it, Sansa- not how much we want each other."

"I don't. I just never knew it could be like this."

"Like what?" Jaime asked head cocked, genuinely interested.

Sansa moved closer so that she was in Jaime's arms, the heat between them temporarily put on hold. Sansa ran her hands through Jaime's hair as she shrugged. "Like I could want someone so much all the time. I can be honest with how much you turn me on, how much I crave your touch."

"Oh, kitten, you can tell me anything."

"I know, Jaime. I've only ever been with one man before, and he didn't exactly make me feel like a rockstar in bed. I wasn't even sure I could get a man to react the way you do," she told him shyly.

"And how do I react, kitten?" Jaime grinned at her, but it was full of love and encouragement.

"Like I drive you wild," Sansa whispered and then bit her lip as if she might still be slightly unsure if that were true.

Jaime groaned and grasped her hand and then put it on his dick. "Kitten, I'm hard all the time around you. You drive me insane. I want you all the time; any way, I can have you."

Sansa grinned and squeezed him, loving it when he moaned and moved against her hand. She never felt so powerful as when Jaime let her explore his body, and it seemed like everything she did, he liked, which was a fantastic feeling. Sansa knew she wasn't a bombshell like Marg, nor did she have the natural confidence of Dany, but she did know that Jaime wanted her.

"I just want to be enough for you, Jaime," she told him, finally voicing one of her biggest fears.

Jaime stilled her hand and brought it to his lips, waiting until her eyes met his. "Sansa, I promise you are always and forever going to be more than enough for me. We will explore whatever you want in and out of the bedroom."

"Alright."

"Sansa, I'm serious when I say I have never felt this way about anyone, my love. Not ever."

Sansa nodded. "I know Jaime. I know that women my age tend to be a lot more experienced and..."

She couldn't even finish when Jaime captured her lips again. "Stop my love. You are who you are, and that is perfect for me." He tilted her chin. "A part of me loves that we can discover so many things together kitten." Sansa held Jaime's gaze and saw nothing but the truth there and released a bit of a pent-up breath.

"OK," she told him, and he grinned again.
"Now, I believe your hand was on my dick, kitten," he said, and she laughed and returned it, delighted to find him still hard and still wanting her.

It wasn't long until Jaime had her out of her thong and tank top, grinding his palm against her core as she got wetter and wetter until he finally hauled her on top of him and settled her on him to ride them both to a morning orgasm. He was delighted when, after some initial shyness, her body naturally took over, helped by Jaime's hands on her hips and his dirty mouth, which kept up a litany of praises and suggestions for her, burning away any lingering embarrassment. Sansa was fast discovering that Jaime loved her in all her many ways, even if she was somewhat clumsy at sex sometimes and still blushed when he whispered something naughty in her ear.

They finally showered, going at it again under the warm water. Jaime demonstrated the delights of her detachable showerhead and all its different settings as he held Sansa's body against his and made her come again. She was all but boneless, sated through and through when she finally emerged from her bedroom and almost glided into the kitchen, Jaime at her side, holding her hand.

"You two are sickeningly cute," Marg said, sipping a cup of tea and munching on dry toast. "And your walls aren't nearly as soundproof as you think, which is great if you're into that kind of thing." She winked at Sansa, delighted when she blushed, while Jaime just threw his head back and laughed, pressing a kiss to his sister-in-law's cheek.

"Don't corrupt my woman, Marg."

"Oh Jaime, you're doing a good enough job of that yourself," she retorted, beyond pleased with the two of them.

They were utterly delightful and having spent last night cuddling both Ben and Ned, Marg was feeling reassured about pregnancy and motherhood. Jeyne had been a godsend, encouraging Marg that what she was feeling was more than normal. Jeyne was quite possibly the least judgmental person that Marg had ever met. Jeyne had also said that Arya would give Marg a run for her money when it came to complaining about being knocked up and that Val had just gone through it all as well.

Tyrion and Marg had spoken last night after her husband had ravaged her, making her come with his tongue and then his wicked dick that was utterly disproportionate to his body to Marg's ever-loving satisfaction. They both agreed that Sansa was an absolute treasure and that she loved Jaime in a way that no one ever had.

"He's never going to leave here, Marg," Tyrion had said, post-coitus as he lazily played with her nipples, delighted at their extra sensitivity and her response.

"No baby, he isn't. This is Jaime's home," Marg agreed and then moaned, wondering how it was possible after all these years that this man could make her body positively sing with pleasure even though he'd already wrung two orgasms from her.

Tyrion swiped a hand over the slightly rounded stomach, pressing a kiss there, before allowing his fingers to sink inside her.

"She loves him, and he loves her. They're going to have beautiful children and rule this wild land," Tyrion stated, watching as his wife's eyes darkened with desire as she arched into his touch. He kept up his ministrations, stroking her exactly how he knew she liked it until she clenched around him and cried out his name.

"They are. And hopefully soon, so A and B have some cousins their age," Marg said when she
finally caught her breath. Tyrion pressed his lips to hers.

"Love you Margy," he said, the only person in the entire world that could call her that.

"Love you too, babe."

Now, as Tyrion watched Jaime and Sansa, he wondered how his wife might feel about developing one of her very exclusive, very high-end hotels in Wintertown. Tyrion had checked and hadn't seen anything on par with what was usually associated with the name Tyrell. He'd have to run the numbers, but he was sensing an opportunity here, and one that they'd be idiots to pass up. And it would allow him and Marg to be in the North. Tyrion hadn't been lying yesterday when he'd said that Marg didn't have a lot of women friends, but so far, up here, she'd bonded with both Jeyne and Sansa almost immediately. The only sour note was Brienne, but Tyrion didn't even want to open that can of worms right now.

This morning they were headed over to Robb's ranch; Ned had insisted they come and collect chicken eggs, and neither Marg nor Tyrion wanted to disappoint him. When the four of them stepped outside Sansa's front door, a brand-new black Range Rover sat outside. It had tinted windows and black chrome wheels to match and looked sinfully expensive; because it was. Jaime's mouth dropped open, and then he grinned and whipped out his phone and called Addam.

"What happened to the defender?" Jaime asked without preamble.

Addam laughed. "They're an older vehicle, and I need to find the right one. I figured you could ride around in that beast I got you until I find something worthwhile for you. The Defender isn't exactly your everyday vehicle Jai."

"I owe you, man," Jaime said, grinning like a loon as Addam gave him the code to the SUV and told him the keys were inside.

When everyone was seated, Sansa looked around, never having been in such an expensive vehicle. "Jaime, are you sure you can afford this? I mean, I know you wanted something new, but even I know how costly these things are. I'm sure Robb or Jon might have an older truck or something for the time being."

Jaime turned and faced her, utterly delighted and undone by her. Sansa knew he had money; she knew that his father had money. But clearly, she didn't have a clue exactly how much Jaime was worth. Marg and Tyrion were grinning at her, and she felt a bit silly, until Jaime leaned over and kissed her softly, then whispered in her ear, "Baby, I have a lot of zeros behind my name in my bank account."

Sansa's eyes widened. "Like… six zeros Jaime?"

He chuckled and tucked a strand of hair behind her ear and nodded.

"Add a 500 and then six zeros kitten," he told her and watched her mouth drop open as she gasped for air.

"Holy crap, Jaime," she said, her mouth almost a perfect O.

Jaime laughed softly and kissed her again. "And before that big, beautiful brain of yours starts going off, I am exactly where I want to be, with the woman I want to be with, in the house, I want to live in. This changes nothing, my love. Nothing."

Sansa held his gaze for a moment and then nodded. "OK." He kissed her again and then started the
SUV, it's throaty engine growling in the morning quiet. As they drove to the ranch, Jaime couldn't help but look over at Sansa, who was deep in thought. He was worried that she might be intimidated by how wealthy he was, or try to use it as an excuse or barrier. Jaime knew she wasn't with him for his money; he just hoped it wouldn't drive her away.

When they pulled up to the ranch, Robb and Ned were waiting, and both their eyes widened at the new vehicle. Marg and Tyrion exited, giving Jaime and Sansa some privacy.

"We OK, kitten?" Jaime asked, uncertainty in his voice.

Sansa turned and looked at him, face very serious, and Jaime braced for the worst.

"So what you're saying is that I can shop all I want?"

He startled a bit and then searched her face, finally seeing the joy and love dance in her eyes. He felt pure relief course through his body.

"Yeah, kitten. Hell, I can't wait to unleash you on the stores of King's Landing."

Sansa was smiling now and tugged him closer. "I don't love you for your money, Jaime, but I won't lie and say it isn't nice to have. It's like a big safety net," she said, and he matched her grin. That was often how he thought of it; Jaime wasn't driven to make it like his father or Tyrion was, but he'd be lying if he said he didn't enjoy the benefits of his more than healthy bank account.

"Can we not tell Robb or Jon just yet," he asked, rubbing the back of his neck. "They'll bug me for days, kitten."

Sansa laughed and agreed. She also could see that Jaime was a bit worried that it might change things between him and her family. "I promise. Your secret is safe with me."

Jaime felt the warmth course through him at her words. He knew they were real. Sansa was here for him; if she said she'd keep something between the two of them, then Jaime knew she would.

"Thanks, kitten. Now let's go watch this unfold."

Jaime was positively gleeful at the thought of Marg and Tyrion having to collect eggs. When Jaime exited the car, Ned was waiting.

"Uncle Jaime, your car is like Batman's," he said reverently, eyes wide. Jaime scooped him up.

"Wanna sit in the front seat?" he asked Ned, who nodded as Jaime opened the door and slid him inside. Ned touched everything: all the buttons and the screen and the steering wheel. When he was finally done, he turned to Jaime. "Maybe I can go for a ride later?"

Jaime laughed and told him he could come with him and Dany to pick up Rocco and Drogo later at the airport, which delighted Ned to no end seeing as he loved going to see Papa Lion's plane. Then Jaime leaned in. "Now remember to count the swear words, Neddy," Jaime told him, and Ned grinned and high fived Jaime.

"I will, Uncle Jaime."

He hopped out and grabbed Marg's hand as well as Tyrion's, not caring that Tyrion was only a bit taller than him, lecturing them on the way to the chicken coop.

When all three ducked inside, Robb, Jaime and Sansa stood outside listening.
"What is that fucking smell?"

"Oh gods, it that shit?"

"Holy hell, that bitch just pecked me."

"I'll have you for fucking dinner, bird."

"This is humiliating."

"God damn bird just bit me."

This continued for some time, as Ned tried to give Marg and Tyrion advice. Finally, all three stumbled out, and Ned ran to Jaime, who picked him up, so they were eye level.

"$32 Uncle Jaime! You were right!" he cried.

"And what's that combined with last night's take?" Jaime asked, watching Ned's brain work.

"$59. And it's only the morning."

He shimmied down Jaime, and everyone looked over to see a slightly dishevelled looking Marg and a scowling Tyrion. Jaime and Sansa were laughing, although Sansa did temper it with, "Tywin had to do it as well. Along with Dany. It's a rite of passage."

Marg shook her head. "Never again, little man." Ned was grinning at her, knowing there was no heat in her voice.

He led them over to the barns, where Marg flat out refused to go in. "Nope. I draw the line," she said, shaking her head. Sansa took pity on her and guided her to the big log house, where Jeyne was waiting, and Marg was happy to settle in with the two of them, sipping more tea and chatting about all things baby related.

When Jaime, Robb, Tyrion and Ned finally came back into the house, Jaime indicated it was time to go and pick Dany up and then go to the airport. They'd decided that they were going to make the 'chef's dinner' tonight, and Jaime had been busy coordinating with Bran for the setup. Right now, the couples attending were; Jeyne and Robb, Marg and Tyrion, Val and Jon, Sansa and Jojen (since their significant others were cooking), and now Dany and Drogo. Arya and Gendry had begged off, deciding to babysit Ned, Rocco and Ben instead.

Jaime was very excited to cook like this for Sansa. He felt he'd shown her some of his skills, but not all of them. There was a part of him that wanted her to be proud of what he did. Jaime knew he was a great chef, but Cersei had steadily chipped away at his confidence.

Robb gave Jaime a crash course in installing a car seat, and they loaded Ned up. Sansa begged off, saying she would stay with Marg and Tyrion at the farmhouse and also duck over the winery to prepare some bottles for dinner tonight. So far, all Jaime had said was to bring a 'variety' to which Sansa rolled her eyes.

"Are you sure you're OK with him by yourself?" Robb asked, looking at Jaime. He knew his son was a handful and didn't want to overwhelm Sansa's boyfriend.
Jaime slapped Robb on the back. "I did help raise three children of my own," he told the rancher, and Robb nodded and then looked at Ned.

"Be good," he said in a stern voice.

Ned's eyes widened. "I will, Daddy. Uncle Jaime's car is the coolest."

Robb shook his head and looked at Jaime. "Somehow, I don't think I'm going to have to ask how you might be able to provide for my sister and all those babies she wants, do I?"

Jaime grinned ruefully. "Nope. Let's say she could have a soccer team full, and we'd be good."

Robb just slapped Jaime on the back. He didn't like him because he had a shit ton of money; Robb liked Jaime for the man he was and how he made Sansa almost glow with happiness.

"Alright, you two. Be good and stay safe," Robb said, and then stepped back, watching Jaime drive away. True to his word, Jaime dropped Sansa, Marg and Tyrion off at the farmhouse, only barely hearing Marg said she had to wash chicken off of herself and then turned to Ned.

"Ready to roll, Robin?"

Ned's eyes widened, and then he grinned and gave Jaime a thumbs up. "Ready, Uncle Batman."

Jaime laughed as they cruised into town. Free from Sansa, he put on some of his favourite classical music and was pleased to see Ned listening to it.

"This music has no words, Uncle Jaime," Ned observed, and Jaime smiled and explained what a symphony was to Ned, who appeared interested.

"I like it. It makes my ears happy," Ned said as they approached the hotel where Dany was staying.

She was outside, waiting for him, a massive suitcase at her feet. Her eyes widened at Jaime's new ride, and he decided even if Addam found him a defender; he wasn't giving this one up. Jaime was vain enough to like people's reactions to it. He helped Dany with her bag; she was moving to the ranch as well, and then explained about the SUV.

Dany turned and grinned at Ned, who looked shy when she took the front seat.

"Hi Ned," Dany said and waved.

"Hi Dany," Ned said back, smiling serenely at her. Jaime shook his head. The kid would be a lady killer one day, that was for sure.

Once they were at the airport, Ned chatted about Papa Lion and his plane. Dany giggled the entire trip, thanking Jaime again and again for picking up Drogo and Roc.

When they finally came striding through the airport, Dany started running, launching herself at the massive tattooed man with his long hair swinging freely. In his arms was a dark-haired boy a little younger than Ned, with bright purple eyes. Jaime had Ned in his arms as they watched the small family reunite. Roc crawled into Dany's arms, happy to see his mama again.

When they finally broke apart, Drogo pulled Jaime into his massive chest for a hug. "Lion," he roared. Drogo loved Jaime and everything he had done for Dany.

"Drogo," Jaime said, grinning back. He'd forgotten just how big a man that Kal Drogo was.
The two boys were eyeing each other warily until Dany knelt with Roc. "I'd like you to meet my special friend Roc. This is Ned. Ned, this is Rocco, but you can call him Roc."

Both boys smiled somewhat shyly at each other. "Roc, we're going to stay at Ned's house, and he has lots of toys and animals to show you, isn't that right, Ned?" Dany said, chatting away happily.

"Do you like Paw Patrol?" Ned asked, and Roc nodded, then grinned, and the two of them started talking about their favourite show. While the boys chatted amongst themselves, Dany, Jaime and Drogo got their luggage. Drogo had a million questions about the ranch, and the cattle drive and Jaime could see how eager he was to be back in the saddle.

"And this is your woman's ranch?" Drogo asked when they had everyone settled in the SUV and were cursing back out to Winterfell.

Jaime nodded. "Well, her brother's now. Sansa owns some adjacent land where she built her winery. Robb, where you're staying, has the ranch. And her sister and cousin have more land for the farm."

"Gods, this is the life, huh babe," Drogo said, twisting to grin at Dany, who'd taken a seat in the back with the boys. He'd followed her to King's Landing, knowing her dream of doing makeup, but in his heart, Kal Drogo would always be a man that was most comfortable under an endless sky with a horse between his legs. When Dany had phoned and offered him this chance, he'd jumped on it. He missed Essos and the Dothraki people and their way of life, even though he could see the advantages for their son in Westeros. But perhaps, being in the North, there was a compromise. Some county and some city life. It was something to consider. Drogo knew they were both getting itchy feet down south.

When they got out of the city and were roaring along the country roads, Drogo let out a whoop of glee. He could feel the shackles of city life, leaving by the minute, and he reached back for his wife's hand.

"Thanks, babe," he told her. She nodded, her eyes filled with nothing but love. It was one of the things Jaime admired most about their relationship- how devoted they were to one another. He'd searched for that himself and finally had it with Sansa.

"I knew you'd love it here. Wait until you see the ranch."

Jaime swung by the farmhouse to grab Sansa. She had said she wanted to meet Dany's husband, and when they pulled up, she was waiting.

Drogo whistled. "Sweet setup, man." He clapped Jaime on the back as they exited the car. Both boys had to pee and wanted to stretch their legs. Of course, Tank was there to greet them, and Ned introduced his new best friend Roc to Tank. Soon it was a tangle of little boys and French bulldog, punctuated by delighted shouts of glee.

Sansa, meanwhile, had never seen a man quite like Kal Drogo. He was huge, muscled and tattooed with long dark hair. And he had the biggest grin on his face that she'd ever seen, turning him into a giant teddy bear, especially when he swung Dany around in his arms.

"I'm already in love with this place, Khaleesi," he murmured to her, and she grinned. She had known he would love it here and she knew her husband. He wasn't happy in King's Landing and perhaps, neither was she. She leaned up and kissed him, moaning as he deepened it. She'd missed him so much in the week she'd been here. When they finally stopped, Dany blushed a bit and turned to introduce him to Sansa.
"This is Sansa Stark, Robb's sister and love of Jaime's life."

Drogo grinned, seeing Jaime holding onto Sansa and looking at her the same way he looked at his wife. Drogo had seen the damage that Jaime's ex-wife had done, and Drogo had long hoped that Jaime would find someone worthy of him.

"Sansa," Drogo said, holding out a large hand to shake hers.

"Welcome to the North, Mr. Drogo," Sansa said and watched him throw his colossal head back and laugh.

"Just Drogo."

"Drogo," Sansa said as Jaime squeezed her around the middle. "Do we have time to show them the winery?" Sansa asked, and Jaime nodded, calling for both boys.

The two couples walked towards the winery, Drogo asking question after question about the North, and Winterfell. Sansa happily answered them, becoming more at ease with him the more they chatted. Dany hung back to walk beside Jaime, linking her arm with his.

"I never thought I'd see this day," she told him

"What day is that?" he asked, fascinated as he watched Drogo pick up both boys, one in each massive arm as they laughed being up high.

"The day we were both happy, Jaime."

He grunted at that thought, thinking to when he'd first met Dany and had been still miserably married to Cersei.

"Neither did I."

Drogo let out another booming laugh as Sansa told him another story about the ranch.

"I have a feeling that my husband is going to be very happy in the North," Dany murmured as they entered the winery. The boys were scooped up by Louise as Sansa and Jaime showed Dany and Drogo the operation Sansa had set up. Dany was impressed and hugged Sansa after the tour, congratulating her. Of course, they all settled in with a bottle of wine, Jaime once again moaning about the lack of food while Sansa rolled her eyes. He was becoming a broken record on this, and he nuzzled her ear.

"I just want it to be perfect, love," he said.

When he glanced back at Dany and Drogo, they were both grinning at him. Eventually, both Ned and Roc were back, and Ned was urging Jaime to hurry up so he could show Roc all the things at the ranch. Promising they could come back whenever they wanted, all six piled in the SUV and drove over to Winterfell Ranch. When they arrived, Robb was coming in from one of the pastures, so he was on his favourite horse, full cowboy on display.

Drogo almost licked his lips as he rubbed his hands. He couldn't wait to get out and ride. He exited the SUV and eyed Robb critically, who stared at him. Sansa and Dany rolled their eyes at the two of them, and their posturing.

"Never thought I'd see the day when I'd have a Dothraki rider on my ranch," Robb said, just as Ned and Roc exited the SUV.
"Daddy, this is my new friend," Ned called running over to Robb, who slid off his horse and picked up his son.

Roc was in Drogo's arms as both boys grinned at each other while Robb and Drogo puffed out their chests, eyeing each other.

"Oh, for god sakes," Sansa muttered at the posturing between the two of them. Jaime laughed and looked between them, hoping that Drogo didn’t pound Robb into dust. They were proud men with their sons in their arms and they were all part of Jaime and Sansa’s rapidly expanding group of friends and family. It would be hell if they couldn’t get along.

"Let's go inside. If I'm not mistaken, Jeyne will be waiting, and we can get you all settled," Sansa said with exasperation in her voice, turning and tugging Jaime behind her, knowing they'd all follow.

Dany quickly caught up to them, leaving the two men to sort things out. Little feet also caught up to them, Ned and Roc being much more interested in toys than their father’s sorting things out, so when they got to the big wrap around porch, they all turned to see Robb and Drogo talking to one another.

Then, as if by magic, Drogo clapped a heavy hand on Robb's back and the two men were laughing and grabbing the luggage from Jaime's SUV, suddenly friends and all the tension between them gone. Sansa and Dany shook their heads at the mystery that was men.

Soon enough, both were inside, Jeyne having taken over to get everyone settled. Ned excitedly took Rocco on a tour of his house, showing him the massive playroom and all the toys.

"There's so much space up here," Dany said wistfully. They lived in a small two-bedroom condo down in Kings Landing. One of the main reasons they'd never had another child was that they had no outdoor space and Dany wanted a backyard. Perhaps though, that dream wasn't so far out of reach, up here in the North, she thought, finding the idea didn’t make her nervous or scared but excited.

"It's one thing we have in abundance- space," Sansa said, watching as Ben ran into the playroom, and all three boys settled in.

When Dany, Jeyne and Sansa came back out to the main room, Drogo had already put their bags away and was chatting excitedly with Robb about horses. The man was passionate about them, that much was more than apparent, and Jeyne and Dany shooed them outside while Jaime and Sansa left to get ready for this evening.

They were all meeting at Bran's restaurant at 7 pm for the Chef's Table episode, and Jaime was buzzing with excitement. He dropped Sansa at the farmhouse, changing his SUV for her truck, kissed her and then was off, needing to prep and get his game face on. He wanted this night to be perfect for everyone; including himself. He knew that if he could pull this off, Brienne might be a little more willing to trust his ideas in the future.

Sansa spent a relaxing afternoon with Marg and Tyrion, getting to know them better. She was fascinated with the hotels that Marg's family owned, and the two women made a plan to have Sansa's wine offered in them exclusively. Between the Lannister restaurants and the Tyrell hotels, Sansa was on track to be the up and coming star when it came to wine in Westeros and she couldn’t believe her good luck.

"Are you planning on coming to King's Landing any time soon?" Tyrion asked, and Sansa nodded.
"Jaime said one of these weekends. He'd like me to meet Myrcella and Tommen, and I get the feeling he wants to show off his flagship restaurant."

Tyrion sipped some wine (Marg was driving) and nodded. "Ah, yes. You're in for a treat tonight, Sansa. When he gets that gleam in his eye, it means he's quite literally, cooked up something special." Sansa blushed and smiled and Tyrion saw, once again, just how much she loved his brother.

Tyrion found himself increasingly delighted by Sansa. She was the exact type of woman that Jaime needed; loving, successful, and warm. She had created a lovely home in the North, had a big and caring family, and more than anything, she looked at Jaime as if he were her everything.

Tyrion had waited his entire life for his brother to find a woman worthy of his heart. His brother was a loyal man, and beneath the incredible good looks and massive success, was a man that loved deeply and had a unique vulnerability to him when it came to trusting women. Tyrion knew that Sansa would never do anything to do hurt him.

The only issues that Tyrion could see were Cersei, Joffrey and potentially Brienne. He wondered what his brother had told Sansa about his ex-wife and his first-born son, beyond what was written in the papers, and made a note to speak to his father about that situation. One thing was more to clear to Tyrion- once Cersei found out about Sansa, she would be enraged, and Joff would be no better. In fact, Tyrion had serious doubts about Jaime ever introducing Sansa to Joffrey. Jaime’s son was, quite simply, an asshole.

Later Sansa excused herself to get ready for the upcoming evening. She spent extra time with her hair and makeup and dressed carefully that night, knowing they would all be on camera. Sansa never wanted to embarrass Jaime.

She briefly wondered what Robb might wear and then realized she didn't mind. It would be good for him to show up in his 'fancy' cowboy gear and she was sure that Jaime would get a kick out of it. Plus, it was just who Robb was.

Dany had sent a text message earlier that they had bonded over the horse, with Robb showing Drogo his large Percheron and the Andalusian mix that was practically unrideable. Of course, the Dothraki man had taken one look and decided then and there that this was his horse, a massive black beast of an animal that harkened back to the destrier horses knights rode in medieval times. Robb just shook his head and grinned, loving that someone finally was capable of taming the big beast.

Dany: They've been out there for hours. My husband is in love with the ranch, and I half suspect your brother.

Sansa: Well, better than the alternative, I guess. How are the boys?

Dany: Thick as thieves. We visited the chickens, the piglets and some of the dairy cows. Roc is the happiest I've ever seen him. I'm serious, Sansa; my family loves the North.

Sansa: LOL. Well, I'm biased, but it's a pretty awesome place to grow up. And raise a family.

Dany: Subtle

Sansa: Send me an SOS if my brother wears something ridiculous tonight.

Dany: You have seen Drogo haven't you? The man will probably wear a t-shirt with no sleeves to
Sansa: I know. I just don't want my family to do anything too embarrassing.

Dany: Sansa, seriously, stop worrying.

Sansa settled on a simple black wrap dress that didn't look like much on the hanger but clung to every curve. It was shorter than she'd remembered, so her long legs were on full display.

Marg let out a whistle when Sansa came down the stairs and then frowned slightly. "Jesus, next life I'm coming back as her."

Sansa stuck her tongue out at Marg. "Well, when I come back, I want your ass."

Marg grinned. "It is a great ass." She wiggled it for Tyrion and Sansa.

Tyrion shook her head at the two of them, more pleased than he cared to admit that they seemed to get along so well. Marg had chosen a light purple gown that complimented her darker hair, and Sansa knew that Dany was wearing something 'sparkly' while Jeyne had opted for dark green and Val with blue. All five women knew they'd be on camera tonight, and no one wanted to compete with the other.

It was rare, but they were five women who only wanted to support and build each other up, and Tyrion knew that it made them almost unstoppable and incredibly attractive.

The North wasn't known for its paparazzi, but when they exited Jaime's ridiculous new SUV, there were a few lingering outside Bran's restaurant. Someone had mentioned that Marg and Tyrion would be here, as well as Jaime doing a show, which made them mobilize. Sansa wasn't used to such aggression and almost retreated inside herself when they started shouting at her, as she was hurried quickly inside by Tyrion.

"They're vultures, but you get used to it," was all he said, and Sansa frowned, wondering if that was true. She'd seen how free Jaime seemed up here in the North and worried that they'd follow him up here and they'd never get any peace. She was so lost in her thoughts, she missed seeing Jaime, and that he was waiting for her.

He'd been busy all afternoon with Bran, Brienne, Pod and Dickon getting everything perfect. Bran had grinned when Jaime had told him the theme for tonight, and they'd worked their asses off to be prepared.

That was why when Sansa walked in, looking stunning, Jaime frowned when he saw that her mind appeared to be a million miles away.

"Kitten?" Jaime asked, finally drawing her attention to him.

Sansa shook her head and then smiled when her eyes took him in. He was wearing a traditional Chef's white jacket, with his name stitched in red over one of the pockets with a lion, a pair of his designer jeans as his bottom, with soft, comfortable leather shoes on his feet.

His dark blond hair was shaggy and artlessly tussled around his face, and since he hadn't shaved this morning, his scruff was even more apparent. Sansa itched to run her hands over it, and then decided she would do just that. Jaime never seemed to mind when she touched him and he smiled when her fingers connected with his face.

"Hi baby," she murmured and tugged him closer to kiss him, not caring who was watching. She
didn't think about Brienne or the paps or anything at that moment, just Jaime.

"What were you thinking about?"

Sansa shook her head. They'd speak about it later. She knew that now was not the time.

"You look so handsome," she told him instead, and he grinned.

"Ya? You like it?" He looked down at his Chef’s uniform.

Sansa heard the thread of uncertainty in his voice and internally cursed his ex-wife.

"Oh yeah," she told him, her voice husky with need. She didn’t just like it; she loved it. He looked hot as could be and she wanted to nibble him. When she told him that, he growled in her ear, and told her she was naughty. Sansa loved it.

Jaime grabbed her hand, and Sansa finally had a chance to look around the restaurant. They had eliminated a fair number of tables nearest to the kitchen to make room for Jaime's ‘chef's table,' where Sansa saw ten elegant seats waiting for their party. Still, even with fewer tables, Bran's restaurant was packed. Those here tonight had been told they were taping a show tonight, and there was a palpable buzz of excitement in the air.

"How are things going?" Sansa asked Jaime.

"Great, love. Just waiting for the rest of them to show up, and then you are in for a treat."

Jaime was nervous and extremely excited to cook for Sansa like this. It was almost as if his entire professional life had been building to this moment where he could show off all his skills to this woman that he loved. He knew it would be an essential step for him- finally letting go of the shame Cersei had made him feel every time she’d criticized his profession. He knew he was talented, but to have the woman he loved fully accept his job was critical for him, and tonight, he planned on leaving it all on the line.

It wasn't long until there was another slight commotion, and Jon and Val were there. The new parents hadn't been out without their baby much, and both thanked Jaime for the invite.

Right on their heels were Robb and Jeyne, along with Dany and Drogo, the last two couples vying for all the attention. Sansa sniggered at Drogo and Robb, who were as opposite as could be, but both wore eye-stopping outfits as if they were competing to see who could be more outrageous.

"Oh for fuck sakes," Jaime said, grinning like a loon as he took them in, shaking his head at the two of them.

True to Dany's prediction, Drogo was wearing tuxedo pants but had ‘altered' the traditional white shirt so that it had no sleeves. He’d kept the black bow tie, but his vast arms were rippling with muscles and the full sleeves of tattoos he had there. He looked like some fierce warrior from times gone by, and flexed and grinned as everyone stared at him.

Not to be outdone, Robb had gone full rhinestone cowboy, wearing his silkiest, brightest cowboy shirt, an electric blue colour with ribbons of orange and yellow throughout. He’d added his tightest wrangler jeans, his fanciest boots, which were white with black swirls and had tamed his reddish-brown curls. He tugged on his bolo tie and winked at Sansa.

"Lion!" Drogo roared and pulled Jaime into his massive arms, thumping him on the back. When he released him, Robb also tugged him close.
"Brother," Robb said, grinning. "Like our outfits?"

"You two are assholes," Jaime said, still grinning. Robb and Drogo laughed uproariously.

Jon and Val had yet to meet Dany and Drogo, so introductions were made, Jon looking a bit stunned at the petite, platinum blond that was wrapped up in the arms of the biggest man he'd ever seen, but soon shook it off.

Jaime led the entire group to their seats, explaining that all they had to do was eat and act natural. He'd worked with Brienne endlessly this afternoon to ensure they had the right atmosphere. Jaime didn't want anything to be stilted or 'planned;' just friends and family out for a lovely dinner.

As everyone took their seats, Jaime took Sansa aside.

"Do you trust me to choose the wine tonight?"

Sansa's heart warmed at Jaime's question. He was the first man that seemed to understand how vital her business was to her; how proud she was of it, and he never tried to take it over and act as if he knew more than her.

"I do," she said, but then gave him a few tips and tricks about the bottles she had chosen and her suggestions, watching as he concentrated on what she was saying.

It was at that moment that Sansa realized that she trusted him completely, with every aspect of her life. She believed him when he said he loved her, when he said he wanted a life with her, and when he said he wanted to stay in the North and build a life with her. She trusted him with her heart, and her body and her life's work because Jaime Lannister cared for her in a way that no man ever had.

With a radiant smile on her face, she leaned in and kissed him. "Kick ass tonight, babe."

Jaime grinned and squeezed her hip, where his hands rested. "Thanks, kitten. I hope you like it."

He brought her back to her seat, in the middle of the table, and no one missed the significance. Jaime might have invited their friends and family tonight, but it was all about Sansa. With one last kiss that Pod captured, Jaime turned and walked back to the kitchen, clapping his hands and gathering everyone around him.

Sansa sat and watched him talk animatedly with Bran's staff; she saw how they all responded to him. He was demanding and exacting in his expectations, but he tempered it all with a smile on his handsome face or a pat on someone's back. Sansa knew that Bran's staff loved him, and when they broke apart, there was a hum of excitement and anticipation in the air.

The first glass of wine was poured, along with some bread. When Sansa broke open the fragrant roll, she knew immediately that Jaime had taken extra care with tonight's dinner. The tangy scent of lemon wafted up to her nose, and she saw flecks of lemon in the buttery roll.

Robb, who was seated on the opposite side of her than Dany, leaned in.

"This man knows you, San," her brother said. “And he takes care.” That was important in Robb’s world. A man’s role was to care for and love his partner, ensuring they were taken happy in all areas; emotionally and physically.

"He does," Sansa agreed and looked towards the kitchen to see Jaime watching her, waiting for her reaction. She gave him a smile that was only for him and saw his shoulders relax before Jaime grinned and turned to start the next course.
What followed was a love letter to Sansa and the Starks with food.

First was a winter fruit salad with lettuce, apples, pears and berries from Jon's farm, all tossed in a sweet lemon dressing. Jaime followed that up with garlic marinated shrimp dipped in lemon butter that all but melted on Sansa's tongue. Of course, he'd also made his beef tongue bruschetta, much to both Robb, Jon and Drogo's delight, although both Dany and Marg declined.

The food just kept coming; garlic-lemon double stuffed chicken, roasted vegetables that Jaime had tossed in garlic-lemon butter and lemony angel hair pasta with a creamy sauce.

Jaime made perfectly grilled steaks in his famous marinade, and even Robb, who'd been eating steak his entire life, claimed it was the best he ever had, along with roasted baby potatoes and carrots drizzled in a maple honey glaze.

There were pitchers of sangria, adorned with lemons, along with endless amounts of gin, with bright lemon wedges in each glass, and finally, when Sansa thought she couldn't eat anymore, a selection of lemon desserts that staggered her- lemon custard, a lemon gelato and a classic lemon meringue pie along with a berry crumble for those that just couldn’t do any more lemon.

Through it all, Jaime made sure to send her heated looks, so much so that Dany giggled and even Margaery made loud comments about the hot chef and his woman.

For Sansa, it was a culmination of her family and friends, along with watching the man she'd fallen in love with, all coming together at the same time.

Jaime's hands worked so fast it was hard to keep up some time, and he commanded the kitchen the way Sansa was sure some men did a boardroom. He was magic to watch, and she soaked it all in, not bothering to guard against the tidal wave of feelings washing over her for him. Sansa had no desire to pretend she wasn't entirely in love with Jaime Lannister; it was clear to anyone who looked at her.

Of course, as promised, Jaime paired her wine perfectly, and Sansa loved him all the more for knowing her and her business so well. On occasion, he would wander out from behind the half-wall that separated the kitchen for the chef's table and ask everyone what they liked. He was charismatic and charming as he spoke to Jon and Val about the fruits they grew; debated the best cut of steak with Robb, and charmed Dany when he got her to taste beef tongue finally.

And then he sat by Sansa, Jojen having risen to find Bran and picked up her fork so he could feed her some of the food he'd made himself. Everyone else faded away at that moment; it was just Jaime and Sansa, two ridiculously beautiful people who were over the moon in love with one another. More, they were good people, and that shone through in everything they did.

Pod knew right away that this was the moment that everyone in all of Westeros would fall head over heels in love with them as a couple; it was impossible not to, and he grinned at Dickon, who knew it as well. They had the makings of a killer show here, and watching Jaime and Sansa with each other made everyone else just a bit more love-struck.

Everyone, it seemed, except for Brienne, who up until Jaime sat down and took Sansa's fork in his hand, thought the entire evening had been one of the best they'd ever taped. Brienne couldn't recall a time when Jaime had seemed as confident and as commanding as he had tonight, and she'd known that would come across to their viewers. It soured something in Brienne to realize that it was because of Sansa that Jaime was this way.

When Sansa had finally finished moaning around the last bite of dessert, Jaime leaned in and
whispered directly into her ear. "Kitten, I'm so fucking hard I could take you on the table and not give a single fuck who sees us."

Sansa blushed, but her eyes lit in delight, and she licked her lips, drawing her tongue around them in a circle, loving it when she heard Jaime moan.

"Not helping, babe."

She grinned. "Hey, it's not my fault you cooked food that is almost as good as an orgasm," Sansa told him, and then clapped her hand over her mouth as if she just realized what she said.

Jaime, however, loved it.

"Oh gods, I love you," he said, kissing her again. Both of them had forgotten about Pod and the camera and were just focused on one another.

When the table was littered with empty glasses and plates, Jaime looked around at the group that had gathered. They seemed well satisfied and happy, talking with one another and mixing groups.

Marg was deep in conversation with Val and Jeyne, while Drogo, Robb and Tyrion discussed the best football teams.

Somehow, Jon and Dany had ended up beside one another, and they were busy talking about their favourite fantasy books; it turned out they were both closet nerds who loved some series Sansa had never heard of that had dragons and zombies in it, clearly both very passionate about it and the characters in it.

Of course, Bran and Jo had taken the time to sit close to one another, whispering softly and smiling at each other.

Sansa leaned against Jaime. "This is our family, babe," she said to him, turning her face for another kiss, which he willingly indulged.

"It is."

Jaime couldn't have been more pleased with how the entire evening went, and when Sansa kissed him again, she murmured something that finally knit the last ragged pieces of his heart back together.

"I'm so proud of you, Jaime. Your skills and your creativity. It was so amazing to see you work, my love."

His heart raced as he looked into the eyes of this woman that meant everything to him. He felt the emotion grip him and squeezed her hand. Sansa had no idea what her words and acceptance of his passion meant to him.

"Thanks, kitten. Love you."

"I love you, Jaime Lannister, the sexiest chef in Westeros and all mine."

Jaime grinned. "All yours babes. All yours," and he knew each and every word was true.

Chapter End Notes
True story when I started this story I thought it might get to 10 chapters.

Now I'm at 17 and have so much more to do and say:
- Cersei and fall out
- Jaime confronting Brienne
- Tywin coming North
- Jaime's kids meeting Sansa
- Jaime and Sansa in KL

And on and on it goes. So... once again.... asking for feedback. Is everyone happy with it? Do you want more because I have lots more planned!

Thanks to all those who comment!
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

Sansa 'meets' Myrcella, Jaime finally tells her about Joff and a huge family BBQ

Chapter Notes

All I will say, is my mind is a funny thing and I hope everyone enjoys the end of this chapter!

Ok- one more thing- endless thanks for all the comments, kudos and love this story is showered with. I read each comment, and I love to incorporate them into my story!

Thanks to LC and SA for their willingness to discuss plots and storylines with me.

Let's keep the fun going! Hope you all enjoy this one.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

Sunday

Sansa heard Jaime's iPad chime and glanced over her shoulder at him, seeing him talking animatedly with Tyrion as he mixed the batter for homemade waffles. He was entirely focused on his brother and only glanced at his iPad.

"Babe, can you get that?" Jaime called out to her, and Sansa nodded, pleased he didn't seem to care who might be on the other end of the call and that she was answering his device.

Jaime often did that, Sansa realized. He left his phone open, not even having a passcode on it, and always had his iPad or laptop lying around. Jaime didn't seem to care at all if Sansa saw his text messages or who was calling him.

It was another glaringly obvious sign she'd missed with Harry; he'd guarded his phone like it held nuclear launch codes. Sansa now knew that he'd acted that way because he was hooking up with other people. It was just one of a million differences between Jaime and Harry.

Sansa swiped to accept the call on Jaime's iPad and saw a pretty blond woman on the other end, whose green eyes widened in surprise and then joy.

"Oh! You must be Sansa. I'm Myrcella," she said, and Sansa smiled warmly and gave her a little wave. "Wow, you are even more beautiful in person than in your photos!" Myrcella gushed and watched as Sansa blushed.
"I am. Sansa, that is. Hi Myrcella. I suppose you're looking for your father," Sansa said, chuckling softly.

"Well, Grandfather did say I should be in touch, and I'm glad he did. I'm so excited to meet you finally. Dad has been sending me text messages and pictures. By the way, you guys should totally put the ones Pod took last night on his Instagram page. People would go nuts to see them. Trust me."

Myrcella talked fast and brightly, and Sansa found herself delighted by Jaime's daughter, who was only a few years younger than her.

"I haven't seen them yet," Sansa murmured, wondering what Pod had captured. He seemed particularly determined to ensure their relationship got as much traction as possible, and Sansa loved him for it.

"What's your number? I'll text them to you," Myr said excitedly, and Sansa gave it to her. Just as Sansa's phone chimed, Jaime was suddenly there, and Sansa watched as his whole face filled with love upon spying his daughter's face.

"Myr, sweetie, what a pleasant surprise," Jaime exclaimed, wrapping an arm around Sansa and tugging her closer. He pressed a kissed to Sansa's head, knowing that his children needed to see him expressing how much he loved Sansa. Myrcella was smiling at him, and Jaime knew she was happy for him, which he was grateful for.

"Hi, Dad. Grandfather said I should call, and I'll admit, I was curious about Sansa. She looked gorgeous last night, and so did you. And holy hell, those pictures were hot." She winked at Jaime, and he laughed, running a hand through his hair.

"Yeah?"

"Yup. Get a couple of them on your social media account, Dad, seriously. You guys are going to blow up the net once they're up." Jaime often asked for Myrcella’s advice when he was unsure on social media; she was plugged in to that scene and had never given him bad advice.

"Alright. We'll discuss it when we're done here. So, how would you and Tom feel about coming North next weekend? Sansa and I were going to come to King's Landing. But," Jaime said, kissing Sansa again, "As I was reminded this morning, it's the opening hockey game for the Wintertown Wolves versus the White Harbour Whales, and since Sansa's brother Ric is on the team, apparently we can't miss it." Sansa pushed Jaime on his chest, and he laughed.

Sansa watched as Myrcella's eyes widened. "Holy shit, Rickon Stark is your brother?" Her voice was high pitched at the end, and Jaime frowned, while Sansa laughed.

"Yup. And he'll be home an extra night. Want to come with us?" Sansa saw the interest in Myrcella’s eyes.

Myrcella clapped her hands. "Ooh yeah, I do. He's so freaking hot."

Sansa laughed. She was used to the attention Ric got for his athleticism. "You can stay here and meet him and all the others." Jaime growled while Sansa hushed him.

"Even little, Ned?" Myr asked, grinning. "I've heard all about Papa Lion." Her green eyes danced, and Sansa knew that she would be good friends with Jaime's daughter. She was a lovely young woman and adored her family.
"Just remember when he asks if you want to collect the chicken eggs, say no," Sansa told her darkly, and Myr let out another laugh.

"Oh, for sure. I've heard about it from both Grandfather and Uncle T." Myrcella was giddy with the idea of coming North. Jaime's daughter saw the kindness in Sansa's eyes, and she allowed herself to relax; she had waited a long time for her father to find someone to love, and she worried about him being alone. Now, by the looks of it, Myr would never have to worry again. The two of them were so clearly made for each other they could hardly stop touching one another.

Sansa kissed Jaime again and then went to get another coffee, giving her boyfriend some time with his daughter while they ran through some more details and talked about things happening in King's Landing. Myr was working on her spring line already (Jaime might love designer clothes, but their seasons never made any sense to him).

Taking a moment, Sansa opened her phone, and her mouth dropped at the pictures Pod had taken last evening and over the past week. Myrcella was correct; they were stunning.

Marg looked up from the couch and asked her what she was looking at, and Sansa texted them to her as well.

There was one with Jaime feeding her bites of pasta; his hand was on her thigh. They were sitting so close to one another, and it looked like there was no one else even around them. Jaime's entire face filled with desire and love for her, and Sansa had a hand resting on his forearm.

Another picture Pod had captured was right before Jaime had pulled her aside to ask her about the wine, and she was gazing at him with such love and trust, while he had one hand on her cheek and the other around her waist and they just looked so happy to be with one another.

The final one was a group shot; endless empty dishes littered the elegant table, and the groups of their friends and family were having a blast. Dany's head was thrown back, her mouth laughing as Jon shook his head at her, a smirk on his handsome face. Val, Jeyne and Marg were all talking with their hands and smiling at each other. Drogo's massive hand was clapping Tyrion on the back, while Robb had a big grin on his face. Jojen and Bran were sitting there holding hands, and Jaime had his arms around Sansa as they gazed at everyone.

Sansa's eyes teared at everything the photo represented.

"It's perfect, isn't it, kitten?" Jaime whispered in her ear, coming up from behind her, having finished his conversation with Myrcella. Sansa turned in his arms and brushed her lips against his.

"Gods Jaime. We are so lucky to have this awesome group of people in our lives," she said, choked with emotion.

"Baby, I know. It's incredible," Jaime said, grinning like a man that had everything he'd ever wanted, finally in his grasp. "We'll ask everyone today about posting this picture, but what about the others? Do you mind?"

Sansa shook her head and brushed her lips across his. "No love, I don't." She wanted the entire world to know just how much she loved Jaime. "You can put whatever you'd like on your page, Jaime. I trust you." Those words meant everything to Jaime and he cupped her cheek, nuzzling at her ear, whispering how much he loved her.

"Holy fuckballs, you two are so hot and so pretty," Marg said, letting out a wolf whistle and fanning her face. "If you're not careful, soon you'll have copycat porn being made of the two of
you." She pointed her finger at them.

Sansa and Jaime stopped kissing and just looked at Margaery, quite frankly stunned absolutely speechless, while Tyrion threw his head back and laughed.

Marg shrugged. "What? It's the highest form of knowing you've made it as a celebrity."

"Oh gods," Sansa said, starting to laugh at the horror of such a thought. She buried her face against Jaime as his chest began to rumble as well.

"We need to feed her to shut her up," Jaime said into Sansa's ear.

She completely agreed. Margaery Tyrell Lannister was in a class all her own, and Sansa loved her for her. It took a bold woman not to censor her mouth, and before Sansa went to the kitchen, she brushed her lips across Marg's forehead.

"Don't ever change, Marg. You're perfect the way you are," Sansa said, turning towards the kitchen.

It was Marg's turn to be speechless, and she lifted her fingers to the spot that Sansa had kissed and rubbed her fingers against it. She had never in her life been so openly and lovingly accepted. The only people who had were Tyrion and Jaime. Marg's eyes filled with tears, and Tyrion squeezed her hand, having seen the moment for what it was.

"I love these people so much, T," Marg whimpered, the emotion swamping her.

"I know, baby, I know." Tyrion did. Marg was his best friend and as beautiful as she was, she'd been as alone in her life as he'd felt in his. They had been two lost souls that had completed one another when they had started dating.

There was something exceptional about these Starks and the North, and even two cynics like Marg and Tyrion could feel it.

While Sansa poured waffle batter, Jaime opened his app, adding the photos of him and Sansa. He'd taken a picture of each dish he'd made and tagged them all.

#ilovethiswoman

#loveletterwithlemons

#bestgirlfriendever

#loveofmylife

#family&friends

#lioninlove

#north

#lionandwolfinlove

#jaimelannisterlovessansastark

He explained each meal and the Chef's Table night, teasing at a sneak peek and reminding everyone that the first episode of the season aired the next night. When he added a picture of him
and Sansa, he'd taken one evening when he'd cooked for her at him, and he added the following
tags:

#datenightepisode
#cookingforthewomanyoulove
#shereallyisthisbeautiful
#newepisodes
#newlife
#newlove
#tuneintoseemore

When he finished tagging, Jaime had added twelve new photos and turned off the notifications
instead of sending a message to Addam, who managed his social media accounts to be on the
lookout and to monitor them for him.

Addam: Thanks for the heads up. Have you thought about a viewing party? You could add some
more pictures as you guys watch tomorrow night.

Jaime: Brilliant idea, mate. I'll speak to Sansa.

Addam: Damn, just checked out the photos. She is stunning, Jai.

Jaime: And you know what? She's as kind and loving as she is beautiful. I've never met anyone
like her.

Addam: Honestly, I'm so happy for you. Seriously- viewing party. You've got the makings of
something special here, Jaime.

When the four of them were eating breakfast, Jaime brought up Addam's idea of a viewing party
for the first episode tomorrow night.

"What do you guys think?"

Margaery clapped in glee. "We should have Pod and Dic tape it, Jaime. Ohhhhh, I wonder if your
father might come up early."

Sansa gave Jaime a look that spoke volumes.

Marg and Tyrion had extended their stay; both said they had things to check out in the North and
had let it slip that they were interested in opening a Tyrell hotel in Wintertown, which had
delighted Sansa.

Now the thought that everyone might gather to watch the first episode they'd tape, the date night
one, made Sansa's heart race in the best possible way. She felt like she was as much a part of the
Lannister family, as Jaime was a part of the Starks. Sansa could easily imagine huge family
gatherings in the future, all their children and the chaos and the love that would follow in this
crazy, wonderful life that was suddenly real.

Jaime had told Sansa he thought it was some of the best work he'd ever done- this first episode, and
Sansa had heard the quiet pride in his voice. Her heart loved this gentle man so much, and she'd been effusive in her praise of him early this morning when they'd been wrapped in each other's arms. Sansa wanted everyone who loved and supported Jaime to share in his success, including his father and her family.

"Sansa?" Jaime asked her directly. She was as featured as he was, and he wanted to ensure that anything he did, she was comfortable with. Jaime was starting to have an idea of just how much attention they were garnering, but he needed to know that Sansa was alright with it all.

"I think it's a wonderful idea, Jaime. Perhaps we could have it at Bran's restaurant. It would be large enough to accommodate all our friends and family, and it's another great link back to the show."

Jaime squeezed her and kissed her soundly, eyes dancing in exhilaration.

"Let me make some calls." His face was eager and excited, and Sansa knew she'd made the right decision.

Jaime slipped from the room, needing privacy for what he had planned. He knew that the combination of Instagram pictures and the episode would make them the new 'it' couple in Westeros, and he needed to prepare. His first call and the most important one was to his father. Tywin picked up immediately, and Jaime quickly explained the social media posts as well as the idea of the viewing party.

"We'd love for you to be here; I know it's last minute and I know you hate things that are public like this," Jaime started to explain to his father.

"Jaime, stop. Of course, I'd love to be there. I've missed the North," was all Tywin said, and Jaime's shoulders sagged in relief. For some reason, having his father and his brother here felt right.

"Ummm, the next thing, well, it's harder to ask you about," Jaime said, stalling a bit, and then heaved out a sigh. He hadn't even been aware that he was pacing he was so worked up.

Tywin waited him out until Jaime blurted, "I'm worried about what Cersei might do." Jaime paused. "When she sees the episodes father. I mean, it's more than just the pictures. When she sees us on camera, how is she going to react?"

Tywin grunted at that statement. Unknown to Jaime, Tywin had not merely allowed his son's first wife to fade into the woodwork with knowing every single thing that she was up to. As far as Tywin was concerned, Cersei had used his son, and Tywin still felt that she was a wild card that would only seek to destroy Jaime when she sensed he was close to finding happiness.

Tywin had kept a close eye on Cersei Marbrand, knowing that she would not let his son go easily. She'd been paid a handsome sum in the divorce settlement, more than enough to keep an average person quite comfortable. Cersei had also been forced to sign a very binding, very rigorous non-disclosure agreement, as well as to stay out of Jaime's life.

But Tywin knew that Cersei was not an average person; she was greedy, cunning and vindictive. Lately, she had been making noise about getting Jaime back and had been seen around Lannisport wearing her wedding ring again. Tywin had ruthlessly quashed all such reports, so they never got back to Jaime, but now, he wondered if that had been the best course of action.

Tywin cleared his throat and then told Jaime what he knew.
His son was livid. Luckily not so much at Tywin, but at the gall of Cersei to wear her rings again. Jaime remembered when he'd come home, six months after they'd married to discover that Cersei had sold her engagement and wedding ring that he had chosen and bought something that she told him was, "more appropriate for a Lannister." It was a flashy set of rings, ostentatious and loud, and Jaime cringed every time he'd looked at them. His heart had been crushed that she hadn't liked what he'd chosen for him; he'd been an idiot thinking elegant and classy was what she would have wanted.

"What about Joffrey?" Tywin asked, stirring Jaime from his current thoughts on his ex-wife. It never failed that when he thought about her, his mood darkened.

"Where is he?" Jaime bit out, refusing to say his son's name. Joffrey had said and done too many cruel things over the years for Jaime even speak of him unless necessary.

Tywin rubbed his eyes, already feeling a headache start. "In Essos from the last reports I have. He's doing nothing more than whoring and drinking, Jaime." The disapproval in Tywin's voice was clear.

"I haven't told her about him," Jaime whispered into the phone and Tywin sighed. He wished more than anything that he had an easy answer for his son, but he did not. Joffrey was not an easy subject matter for anyone.

"What are you afraid of?"

There was a pause, where there was nothing but silence on the phone. Then Jaime spoke.

"That she'll look at me differently. What type of man doesn't love his own son?"

Tywin knew the truth wasn't quite that cut and dry, and he hated the guilt that Jaime heaped on himself when it came to Joffrey. The problem wasn't that Jaime didn't love Joffrey; it was that he loved Joffrey despite the cruel and callous bastard Joffrey was. It would be easier for everyone if Jaime did hate him and no less than he deserved.

For years Jaime had tried with Joffrey, but his son had made it almost impossible for them to have a relationship. During his teenage years, Jaime had chalked it up to a combination of the problems in his marriage, along with the typical teenage hormones and angst. But when Joff had become an adult, and the vitriol and hatred had become even more pronounced, Jaime was no longer able to brush it off. Joffrey hated him- there was no respect and desire on Joff's part to even have a relationship with his father.

Jaime had hours in counselling trying to develop strategies to connect with his son, but nothing worked. At times Jaime wondered if there was something wrong with Joffrey but attributed most of it to Cersei and her vile tongue and total lack of respect for Jaime and their marriage. Joff hated that Jaime hadn't been 'man enough' to prevent Cersei from cheating.

Cersei had spent years telling their firstborn son everything Jaime had been lacking, and it had poisoned Joffrey against Jaime. From the moment Cersei had opened her mouth to speak about Jaime like that, Joff had lost all respect for his father, and it was more than apparent to anyone who was around them. Tyrion and Tywin had both witnessed it, and it was painful.

Years later, Jaime had learned that Cersei had made Joffrey an accomplice in her affairs, effectively ruining their son by swearing him to silence with threats that he'd destroy their family should he let her secret slip. It had been a cruel thing to do to a teenager and had all but destroyed Jaime's chance at a healthy relationship with his son.
"You need to speak with her Jaime," Tywin's low voice came, in what he hoped was a reassuring tone. "Sansa loves you, son. And she is a caring and understanding woman."

Jaime let out a weary sound. He was so happy with Sansa, in the North and in this new life he was building. Talking about Joffrey felt like he was tainted and had to relive his greatest failure, but he knew his father was correct.

For the most part, they'd managed to keep Joffrey from the limelight of Jaime's celebrity, but if Sansa were to somehow find out how fractured his relationship was with his son from anyone but him, Jaime knew Sansa would be hurt- and rightfully so.

"I know. She needs to know. I'll do it after we get off the phone," Jaime said, resigned to a day of pain and misery. It wasn't that he worried about Sansa and her reaction per se, but it was still one of the hardest parts of Jaime's life to open up about.

"I think you underestimate her, Jaime. Be honest and tell the truth. Explain what Cersei did, and Sansa will see the truth." Tywin's voice was low and almost soothing and completely supportive. The Old Lion had seen the spine of steel in Sansa Stark, and he knew she would stand by his son's side. Jaime had never in his life had a woman who was in his corner the way Sansa was.

Jaime thanked his Dad and then hung up; happy he'd be seeing Tywin tomorrow. He knew he needed to phone Bran and make plans for the viewing party, but, like a splinter that was festering, Jaime needed to speak with Sansa first about Joff. Scrubbing a hand down his face, he walked back into the great room and saw her chatting happily with Marg.

Tyrion took one look at his face and shook his head.

"Not alone, Jaime. We're staying," was all Tyrion said. He'd received a text from his father, and both knew that Jaime tended to martyr himself. Neither Lannister man would allow that to happen, not when it was about Joffrey. There was something wrong with Jaime's firstborn son, of that Tyrion was more than convinced.

"Jaime?" came Sansa's worried voice. She had seen immediately that something was upsetting him. Jaime gave one more look at Tyrion, and then let his shoulders fall in defeat.

"Jaime, what is it?" Sansa had risen to come and wrap her arms around him. He gratefully sunk into her embrace, hoping this didn't change things between them. It was hard for him to trust that she would see that he had tried so hard with Joffrey and that she might only see that they were practically enemies now.

"Kitten, there is something I need to share with you. And it's hard and ugly, and I'm afraid that you will think less of me once you hear about it."

Tyrion snorted, happier than ever that he'd decided to stay. Jaime sure liked to take on more than his fair share of the blame when it came to Joffrey.

"Jaime stop," Tyrion told his brother, giving him a look.

Sansa glanced between the two of them, worry creasing her brow. She felt the tension thrumming through Jaime’s body, and she felt her heart start to race that there was something seriously wrong. Jaime turned and sat her on a stool at the island. "You've met Myrcella, and of course, Tommen we've spoken of. But I haven't said much about Joffrey."

Jaime grimaced as memories of his firstborn son washed over him. Jaime heaved a sigh and ran a
hand through his hair and then told Sansa everything; the entire ugly truth that was the Jaime-
Cersei-Joffrey story.

At some point, Sansa reached for his hand and squeezed it, and Jaime sent her a grateful smile,
latching onto her like she was a lifeline. When Jaime tried to take most of the responsibility for
why Joff was how he was, Tyrion jumped in and dissuaded him (and Sansa) of those notions.

"Jaime, that boy was mean from the time he was young," Tyrion said, almost snarling at his
brother. He pointed his finger at him. "And Cersei poisoned him against you. That isn't on you,
Jaime. It is entirely her fault that she made him swear to keep her ugly secrets with the threats that
he'd tear your family apart if he spoke of her affairs."

Tyrion was livid when he thought of the hell Cersei had put Jaime through.

Sansa stayed by Jaime's side the entire side, her horror growing as she realized the depths to which
Cersei would sink to destroy this man that she loved. His strength and perseverance astounded her.

When Jaime tried to protest his brother's assessment of Joffrey, Tyrion pressed on. "How old were
you when he called you weak? Called you a coward? Called you a pussy? What kind of son calls
you those name sat eleven? Where did he learn any of those names at such an age?"

Jaime felt the shame run up his spine, but before he could say anything, Sansa looked outraged.

"He did what?" She turned to Jaime, her eyes stormy and ready to battle for him.

It had been an awful hour, listening to story after story about Joffrey and his abominable behaviour.
Sansa felt ill for Jaime and what he must have gone through with such a child.

"Kitten don't take this on your shoulders," Jaime murmured, humbled by how much Sansa loved
him. He'd never had a woman love him as she did, so ready to be by his side.

"He's a fucking asshole, Jaime, and he has been for years. Since the first moment I met Tyrion, he's
been a dick," Marg added for good measure, popping her head up from the couch. She'd been
shocked at how Joff had treated Tyrion, not to mention his father. Her and Tyrion had many
conversations about Joffrey over the years- none of them good.

"I'm sorry, Sansa. He's an awful person, but he's still my son. I keep trying, every six months or so,
but…"

He saw her nibble her lip and knew something was on her mind.

"What is it?"

Sansa glanced at Jaime and then to Marg and Tyrion.

"Sansa, what?" Jaime asked, wondering what was on her mind.

"Jaime, I don't want to hurt you," Sansa mumbled, and he shook his head, giving her a soft smile.

"Trust me, baby, you are not a source of hurt," Jaime told her. "You are my light, Sansa."

Sansa looked around and saw three sets of eager eyes looking back at her. Taking a deep breath,
she blurted out, "Well, I mean, how sure are you that he's yours?"

Stunned silence met her question, and she rushed to finish her thought.
"You said you thought that Cersei was cheating on you the first year you were together, and I just wonder if Myrcella and Tommen are so different, then maybe there is a reason?" Sansa ended her speech as a question, making a helpless little gesture.

Sansa honestly wondered if she should have said a thing, seeing the dumbfounded looks on all three of their faces. There were three usually very vocal people who were all suddenly speechless in her house, which made Sansa feel extremely awkward until Jaime almost unconsciously started rubbing her back as he was lost in his memories.

"Christ, I never even thought about that as a possibility," he was muttered, and he absently pressed a kiss to her forehead, wrapping his arms around her. "Damn, I mean, could it be?" he almost murmured too himself, before finally shaking his head and titling Sansa's chin up to his.

"If he is mine, Sansa, he's not a nice person. And even if he isn't my DNA, don't I at least have some responsibility because I raised him?"

Sansa could see the devastation in Jaime's eyes and hers filled with tears. This man loved like no one she'd ever met, and his depth and breadth of feelings humbled her. She knew that Joffrey did not deserve to have a father like Jaime; biological or not.

"No, my love. We've already established how manipulative and controlling Cersei was. Joffrey didn't stand a chance, Jaime, and neither did you. And as much as he was a victim of her as a child, he's an adult now. He could have gone to therapy as you did. He's old enough to see Cersei for what she is. Look me in the eye and tell me you didn't try with him Jaime, and I'll condemn you the way you seem to want to be condemned. But we both know that is not what happened." Her speech was infused with righteous anger and love; and all for Jaime.

Jaime's eyes filled with awe. "Gods Sansa, I love you. You are the best thing that has ever happened to me."

Jaime leaned down and captured her lips in a searing kiss, obliterating all the worry and stress that had been pressing down on him. No matter what happened, he knew Sansa would stand beside him for the rest of his life. This woman was grit and loyalty and determination. She didn't tuck tail and run in the face of adversity; she dug in and weathered the storm, and she was precisely what Jaime needed in his life.

"I've said this for years, but apparently I wasn't beautiful enough for him to believe the words," Tyrion quipped. Secretly he was happy that someone, Sansa, had finally made Jaime see reason when it came to Joffrey. It appeared she had gotten through to him and had Tyrion’s brain racing at the implications if Joffrey wasn’t his. It would be almost impossible for Cersei to weasel her way out of such a scandal.

Tyrion had watched his brother try over and over with his son, only to be rejected, mocked and scorned by his eldest. Tyrion thanked the gods for Sansa and her presence in Jaime's life.

She was a godsend, and he told her that.

Jaime promised he’d think on what she had said, and soon enough, the four of them were all put to work in Sansa's kitchen, prepping for family dinner.

Because it was Sunday, dinner was at Robb and Jeyne's. Thankfully today, with the sheer number of people coming and the beautiful, above seasonally warm day, they'd decided on a BBQ. Robb had texted Jaime, challenging the chef to a cookoff. Sansa had to wonder what her brother was thinking as she'd seen the gleam in Jaime's eyes at Robb's dare.
Jaime had made his own ‘secret’ burgers and not your average burger ‘fixings.’ Jaime had truffle mushrooms he’d browned in butter with onions, twice smoked soft cheese that he’d spread on the buns, mixed with fresh chives and dill, along with apple-smoked thick-cut bacon and crisp butter lettuce. He’d also made several of his signature homemade dressings, including spicy ketchup, a smoky BBQ sauce and a garlic aioli sauce.

Sansa knew her brother took pride in his grill, but he didn't stand a snowballs chance in Dorne at winning this competition and Sansa couldn’t wait to see Jaime put Robb in his place. Her man ruled when it came to cooking and she told Jaime that, watching his face break out into his trademark cocky grin that she loved.

Sansa made a warm potato salad, and Jaime made his now-famous Caprese salad, and soon, they loaded up the Range Rover, with several bottles of wine, baskets of food and the little French bulldog.

When they pulled up to the ranch, Jaime saw immediately that Robb had three huge grills under a huge white tent just outside the main house. Another tent held multiple picnic tables, along with an assortment of comfortable outdoor furniture. Much to Marg's delight, Robb had set up a portable hammock, and the pregnant woman claimed it, grinning since Arya hadn't yet arrived.

Of course, as soon as they pulled up, Ned and Roc came to greet them, Jaime bending down to speak with both boys who were almost inseparable now.

Drogo was out in the yard helping Robb, while Jeyne and Dany were inside putting the finishing touches on their contributions. Jaime and Robb hauled over huge coolers, added ice and then enough soda and beer to keep them all well-lubricated well into the evening and late night. There was a celebratory feeling in the air, and Sansa watched as the weight left Jaime's shoulders being around her family. There was no doubt that her man was happy here in the North.

When Jon and Val showed up with Ella, Sansa grabbed the baby in one arm as she strategically placed bottles of her favourite wines on the tables, helping direct her cousin with the placement of plates, cups and cutlery, when Jon asked how he could help.

Bran and Jo arrived, with Pod and Dickon, who were excited about the invite. Bran had made a massive pot of his famous baked beans, along with his homemade hamburger buns. Pod and Dic contributed a few bottles of liquor as well as beer, and Sansa bugged them for being such bachelors. Nobody asked about Brienne, who had been left behind in Wintertown.

Gendry and Arya were the last to arrive, and as much as Sansa felt for her sister, she couldn't help but laugh at the slightly queasy look on her face. This pregnancy was kicking Arya's ass, and gone was any semblance of the cocky young woman whose mouth never stopped.

Somehow, Robb produced another hammock, and Marg and Arya chatted amicably about their shared misery called pregnancy sickness, while Tyrion ferried glasses of sparkling water to the both of them. Sansa heard Arya call for Tyrion more than once, and as much as he grumbled, he never failed to bring both women whatever they wanted.

Ned, Roc and Ben ran gleefully in amongst the adults as platters of food started filling the table, and the grills heated up. Drogo, never one to stand back and watch, had demanded his own, howling in glee as they grilled meat and baked potatoes.

"My husband is ready to build a house with his bare hands so he can live here, Sansa," Dany said, shaking her head as the two of them watched Robb, Jon, Drogo and Jaime debate the best grilling techniques.
Sansa caught the happiness on Dany's face and thought it was more than just Drogo that loved the North. She bumped hips with her friend, which given the height difference, came up around Dany's arm.

"Sure, he's the only one?" Sansa wiggled her eyebrows, and Dany laughed, thinking Sansa had picked up more than a few of Jaime's mannerisms.

"You're going to empty the south if this keeps up, Sansa."

The redhead laughed and drew the attention of Jaime, who gazed over at her, momentarily losing the thread of the conversation as he just stared at Sansa in awe. He was rudely brought back to his current situation when one of Drogo's meaty hands landed on his back.

"Those are some fine women, lion," the Dothraki man said, his voice carrying, so both Dany and Sansa grinned at them. Jaime laughed his agreement as both men turned back to the heated grills.

More of Jaime's crew rolled up; sound techs and associate producers, the wardrobe person and an editor. Robb's three ranch hands along with their girlfriends were there, and Jon had invited his old buddy Grenn and his wife and young son.

It was a happy group of people, and Sansa was delighted to see Jaime let the heaviness of the morning roll off him, as he stood operating 'his' grill, jealously guarding his sauces and toppings and smacking Robb in the process. It warmed Sansa's heart to see how close Jaime and Robb were; almost like brothers as they drank beer and sniped at each other.

Robb was loudly proclaiming that his burgers were the best since they were originals to anyone who would listen, all the while, drinking beer and joking with Jaime.

At one point, Robb put his cowboy hat on Jaime's head, and Sansa swore her panties almost hit the floor. Jaime turned, found her across the crowd of people and winked. She panted and fanned her face.

Then Ned ran up, and Sansa heard him laugh, "Uncle Jaime, you're wearing Daddy's hat."

Sansa watched Jaime pick Ned up, tickled him and then hugged him, whispering to him about the burgers he was cooking. Ned was captivated by Jaime's every word, and Sansa's heart melted as she watched the two of them.

Sansa couldn't believe how Jaime thought he was at all responsible for how his eldest son turned out. She had rarely seen or met a man as comfortable and as good with children as Jaime was.

Old and new country songs blared from the speakers Robb had set out, and Sansa watched more than one person grab their significant other and steal a quick kiss or a hug, and even a pat on the ass, while others sang loudly and off-key. Drogo had Dany upon his shoulders at one point, and the tiny woman had her hands in his long hair, head thrown back in absolute glee as he raced around with her.

Both Ned and Roc thought that was awesome and clapped gleefully.

"Happy baby?" Jaime asked, as Sansa finally made her way over to him. She had a sleeping Ella in her arms, and her perfect little mouth was in a bow, and her little hands fluttered every so often. Sansa wanted to nibble on her fingers, which were so tiny.

"I am," Sansa said, tilting her head for a kiss from Jaime, who happily obliged her.
"Isn't she beautiful, Jai?" Sansa asked him, looking back down at her niece.

"She's perfect, kitten. Just like ours will be," Jaime said, taking another sip of cold beer, wrapping an arm around Sansa's waist. He wanted this with her more than he'd wanted anything in his life.

Sansa, meanwhile, was watching Jaime's neck swallow the cold beer, and she almost moaned; her ovaries and her hormones conspiring to have her wanting this man with every single fibre of her being right now.

Jaime had kept Robb's hat, along with his sinfully expensive designer sunglasses, which made him drool-worthy handsome. Sansa knew that Jaime's wrist held a watch that was more than some of these people made in their entire work year, and yet, here he was. Boots, jeans and a hat on his head, cooking for her family. He was part of this world, and he loved it, that much was clear, and Sansa loved him for how seamlessly he'd fit in here. The tight black t-shirt that showed an outline of his hard abs helped, along with the tight jeans and the dick print Sansa could make out every so often. Between Jaime and the baby in her arms, Sansa was so wet and ready for him, she debated dragging him away to the nearest barn and having her way with him.

He must have caught a look in her eye, because he leaned closer and said, "Kitten, if you keep looking at me like that, I'm going to have you for supper tonight. And trust me when I say, we will both be satisfied."

"Jaime," Sansa moaned, caught up in the moment with him, when Ella stirred. Shaking her head and trying to focus on the baby, Sansa glanced around, seeing Val sitting with Dany and Arya and knew that Ella would want her mama. Sansa gave Jaime a smouldering look before she left. "You'd better deliver later, babe."

Jaime grinned and rumbled something that Sansa was sure was dirty enough to make her blush, but she didn't hear as she walked away towards her sisters.

The late afternoon finally saw the first Stark-Lannister burger contest conclude, and someone had set up an anonymous voting bucket for everyone to write in their vote.

Food was consumed, beer and wine were drunk in enormous quantities and conversation flowed. The mix of people and backgrounds was eclectic but somehow just worked for them, and the Starks were in their element with their friends and family able to share their great year.

When there was a lull in the conversation, Jaime stood and dragged Sansa to her feet, loving it when she blushed adorably. Soon the conversations died down, and everyone turned towards Jaime.

"I want to say a few words," Jaime said, grinning at Sansa, who buried her face against his shoulder.

"First to Bran Stark, for winning my cooking contest." Jaime waited for the cheers for Bran to die down. "And to my new business partner!" Another cheer went up.

Bran smiled and looked around at everyone. He'd had a feeling that winning that contest would be life-changing for his family, and it was.

"I want to thank Robb and Jeyne, for welcoming me to the ranch and for their two amazing boys, Ned and Ben," Jaime said, watching as the family acknowledged his praise.

"Hi, Uncle Batman," came Ned's voice. A huge laugh went up when Ned spoke.
"Hi Robin," Jaime called back, and Ned giggled.

"I'm also thankful that Ned has taught us all the value of a swear word," Jaime said, to howls of laughter. “And that I no longer owe him the most money.”

"He's soaked me for close to $80 so far," Tyrion cried, and others started calling out numbers while Ned giggled on his Daddy's lap.

"I'm up to $134, Uncle Jaime," Ned told the crowd, while Robb shook his head at his son.

"To Val and Jon, and your amazing farm. As a chef, I cannot express how amazing your product is," Jaime said as people clapped for them. "It is an honour to cook the food you grow."

For once, Jon just grinned at Jaime, pulling his wife closer and brushing his lips across hers. It took Jon a while to warm up to a person, but Jaime had more than proven himself, and he was family-even Jon could see that. And once Jon liked you, it was for life.

"To Arya and Gendry; butcher extraordinaire!" Jaime called out. There were enormous cries for that, and Gendry blushed under the attention. Arya was resting in his arms, and she smiled at Jaime silently mouthing a thank you to him.

Then Jaime turned to Sansa, and no one missed the love on his face when he looked at her.

"And finally, my Sansa. I've waited my whole life for you kitten, and I cannot even express how much I love you," Jaime said, unashamed of the depth of feeling he had for her. "I'm so proud of you and the vision you had. Your winery is amazing, baby."

The end of Jaime's sentence was drowned out in cheers from the group. Jaime stole a quick kiss and then grinned, turning back to the group. He still was holding her hand, and she pressed even closer to him.

"Tomorrow night, our first episode of my new seasons airs, and we'd like to invite everyone to a viewing party at Bran's restaurant," Jaime said to hoots and hollers. Gendry, Jon, Robb and Drogo had postponed their cattle drive to come, and Bran had assured Jaime that they were more than able to watch the episode tomorrow night at his place.

"Uncle Jaime, me too?" Ned asked, and Jaime laughed.

"Yeah, buddy." No one was going to tell Ned that Papa Tywin was coming back North as well, but Jaime knew the moment Ned saw him, he'd be glued to his side.

Then Ned, Roc, Ben and Grenn's son, Finn, all ran inside the house, encouraged by the promise of toys inside.

"Now the vote!" someone called, and Jeyne rose to bring the bucket to Sansa, who groaned.

"Honestly? You want me in the middle of this?"

Jeyne laughed and then they both pulled the votes out. In the end, Jaime slaughtered Robb by a three to one margin, which meant Robb lost their bet. Jaime walked up to him and shook his hand, grinning as they hugged.

It also meant that Robb had to spend the rest of the BBQ without a shirt. Slightly drunk and happy, he willingly pulled off his shirt, reveling that hard work did pay off as his six-pack abs rippled. Also on display was Robb's ink. You wouldn't know it to look at the eldest Stark, but he had more
than his fair share done.

There was a huge *STARK* in script along Robb's side, the Stark family crest over one pectoral and a direwolf silhouette on his shoulder.

"Like what you see, Lannister?" Robb said, batting his eyelashes at Jaime, who laughed.

Drogo, once again, not to be left out, soon followed, much to Dany's laughing protests. Drogo's eyes had widened in absolute delight when he saw Robb's ink.

All the women's eyes widened when Drogo's body was revealed.

The man was a beast- both arms with full sleeves of tats, along with ink over his muscular chest and down his sculpted stomach.

"Does he have his...?" Arya asked, eyes wide, didn't finish the sentence. Thankfully, Marg was there.


The women had gathered, watching as more and more men seemed to lose their shirts, each determined to show off their tattoos to one another. Sansa knew the copious amounts of beer consumed made them lose what little inhibitions they might have had.

"That's not all he has pierced," Dany murmured as all the ladies let out shocked gasps and then laughed. Dany's face went red, and she clamped a hand over her mouth.

"Oh, no, no, no, no, no!" Marg said, clapping her hands in glee. "This is too good for you to clam up now. Dick piercing?" Marg said, and wiggled her eyebrows.

Dany laughed and nodded.

"Oh yeah," Dany said, a hearty growl of desire in her voice.

Arya cocked her head. "I wonder if I could convince Gendry to get one?" she murmured, and Sansa let out a shocked gasp and then laughed, hugging her sister close, murmuring good luck into her ear.

"Tyrion's got a huge penis," Marg told everyone, licking her lips as she looked at her husband. Everyone hooted at that statement as Marg held out her hands in demonstration.

Sansa was laughing as she glanced over at the men.

Jon had somehow lost a shirt, along with Gendry, Grenn, Pod and Dic. It seemed everyone had some ink they wanted to show, and it was a man show of abs, tats, piercings and muscles.

Jon and Robb had matching tattoos- they'd gone for the direwolves together a couple of weeks after Ned and Catelyn had passed away. Sansa hadn't known about the other ones that Jon sported; an intricate sword with a wolf pommel as well as some script that Sansa was too far away from to make out. Like Robb, Jon’s ripped stomach and strong arms were on display, although he was a paler version of the oldest Stark, pretty in a manly way.

Gendry had his butcher's guild crest on his pec, along with some intricate designs and a huge stag across one massive forearm. Sansa had never seen Gendry with his shirt off, and she winked at her sister, who was practically panting over her husband. No wonder Arya had dragged him home,
married him and got pregnant. The man was built, that much was sure.

Dic, Pod and Grenn also showed off their assortment of body art. Never in a million years would Sansa have ever guess that Dickon Tarly was packing the kind of guns (arm muscles) that he was; clearly he did more than just lug around a camera all day long.

"Come on, Lannister, lose the shirt, babe!" Sansa called and blushed when Jaime grinned and set his beer down to pull his shirt off. Sansa knew that Jaime also had a tattoo that the public could view. It was the script from his favourite Tennyson poem: *to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield*. It was on the backside of his left shoulder and Sansa had run her fingers over it more than once, tracing the words with her fingers.

There was also another tat, a little lion on his perfect ass, but Sansa had a feeling she would be the only one who knew about that little gem. Her lips had kissed it more than once and it was their secret. Despite the display of gorgeous man-flesh that was currently taking place, Sansa really only had eyes for Jaime. She loved his lean and muscular form; how his height complemented hers, and how his body was just perfect in her eyes.

"That is some fine ass man candy," Val said, shaking her head and bouncing Ella on her hip. "Mmmmmm, mama likes!"

"Hells yeah," Arya agreed, drooling at them all.

"Damn, we have some good-looking men, ladies," Jeyne said to the group, desire clear in her voice.

The men were flexing and wrestling with each other, while the women just stood back and watched. Drogo was gesturing to his penis, enthraling Dic, Pod and Gendry as he seemed to be articulating the benefits of his unusual piercing.

Dany and Arya were giggling with one another, and Sansa didn't even want to know what ideas the little blond was putting in her sister's head.

Finally, Jeyne shook her head and clapped her hands. Someone had to get things under control, and no one else was moving.

"Alright, enough. Robb Stark, I should have known you'd bet Jaime something stupid like this. Put your shirts on before your sons come back," she said, and Sansa watched in wonder as everyone listened to Jeyne. Robb had the decency to grin sheepishly at his wife, who laughed when he dragged her into his arms for a kiss.

Before pulling his shirt back on, Drogo promised to bring all his equipment North when he came back. "Both my guns you assholes- tats and piercings," he called out and then winked at Dany. "I'll pierce something on you, Stark," he said as Robb laughed, shaking his head.

Everyone helped clean up until the burgers, beans and salads had been replaced with pies and ice cream, enticing the boys back outside.

Robb and Jon built a huge bonfire and lanterns on the picnic tables. Someone found cards, and old board games, until there were groups of people gathered around, and the celebration went late into the night. The children roasted marshmallows, and of course, Jeyne, mom extraordinaire, also produced hot dogs and hot chocolate for the littles and the pregnant ones.

"Jeyne, between you and Sansa, this is better than a five-star Tyrell hotel," Marg announced, sitting in a huge lawn chair with a warm blanket wrapped around her. Both Sansa and Jeyne protested;
they'd seen what Marg charged for a night at her hotels, but the pretty Highgarden woman waved a hand. "Trust me, ladies; you two are the epitome of hospitality."

Sansa sat with Ned on her lap, while Roc was on Dany's and both boys sleepily agreed it had been the best day ever. When the boys finally allowed themselves to be put to bed, Robb turned out the lanterns so that those remaining gathered around the fire. Sansa snuggled on Jaime's lap; she saw Arya on Gendry's and Robb sitting holding Jeyne's hand.

Pod and Dickon, happily drunk, were singing along with the country station Robb had going.

"I like the North," Drogo announced, earning a happy sigh from Dany. "I like this ranch and this sense of family and community," the large man said, quite elegantly.

"Not just a pretty face," Dany said to him, kissing him on the lips.

"Happy baby?" Jaime asked into Sansa's ear. For a day that had so much pain, he was feeling like all his millions of dollars tonight with this woman and this family surrounding him.

Sansa turned in his arms, brushing her lips across his. "I'm perfect, Jaime. Absolutely perfect."

And even though there were bumps ahead, Jaime realized he was too. For the first time in his life, Jaime Lannister was perfectly happy, and he marvelled at the feeling, letting it wash over him and warm every part of his body and soul.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next: Cooking with Kids episode (Ned and Roc style), viewing party, Brienne finally makes a big mistake, and Tywin comes back.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Tywin comes North and we see what Brienne was up to!

Chapter Notes

Patient people- thank you for waiting for this next chapter. Life just got busy! As a bonus, this one is extra-long and ... drumroll...

I discovered how to do PIC SETS!!! I made about 5 for this story alone on my tumblr!

As always, if you're a Brienne fan this story is not for you!~

And- to Starlight! No words- you know why!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

Jaime cracked an eye open when he heard his phone chime. He paused for a moment, trying to decide if he was more nervous, excited or just plain hungover this morning. Excited and nervous, was what he settled on as he felt Sansa snuggle deeper into his arms. She was a cuddler, that much had become more than apparent after their first few weeks of living together and Jaime loved it.

Sansa touched him all the time - when they were awake all throughout the day. And then each night, before she fell asleep, she was pressed up against his chest or snuggled deep in his arms. It ensured Jaime that he could, at any point, feel her heartbeat, smell her sweetness or just be comforted by her warmth. Jaime knew he’d never sleep well away from her again, and knew he’d try to convince her to come down with him to King’s Landing to pack up his life there. He couldn’t imagine not having her in his bed each night even if it were only for a few days. Jaime was addicted to Sansa.

Now, as Jaime reached for his phone, he knew that everyone in Westeros would know just how much he loved this woman after tonight. He’d spent some time yesterday viewing the final edited version of the episode with Pod and Brienne, and he loved it. Jaime knew it was his best work ever, and the love he had for Sansa shone through in everything he did.

Jaime wasn’t ashamed about how openly he expressed his feelings for her either. There would be no doubts that he was a man fully committed to his woman; not after tonight.

Jaime opened his phoned and grinned when he read the first text message from Addam

Addam: Check out your Instagram page, buddy
Addam: You two are the IT couple in Westeros

Addam: Buzz I hear around KL is that you might score the highest audience. Ever. In FN history.

Addam: Also, please tell me she has a twin sister

Jaime: Opening it now. And no, no twin. She's all mine.

Jaime opened his app and saw his and Sansa's smiling faces staring back at him. He loved that she was all over his social media page right now.

Sure enough, the photos Pod had taken had blown up; some had over a hundred thousand likes, which was unheard of in Jaime's world.

"What are you grinning at?" Sansa asked, finally opening her eyes.

"Us, kitten. Look."

He gave her his phone loving as she pressed herself closer to him and flicked through the images.

"We look good, babe," she told him, warming Jaime through.

She was such a rarity in his life; she hardly realized what this might do for her career and the winery, clearly only thinking about them as a couple.

He took a moment to bask in the love that was Sansa; its goodness and how pure it was before he couldn't help but nuzzle at her neck, loving when she giggled and tossed his phone aside, honestly not caring about the celebrity status that she was now part of.

After just a week, he'd curbed her habit from jumping from the bed to brush her teeth the moment she woke. Thank gods, Jaime thought. It meant he got warm, willing, sleepy Sansa first thing.

"Mmmm, morning kitten," he murmured into her ear as his hand cupped her warm breast, loving the weight in his hand as he thumbed her nipple.

"Jaime, you're a tease," Sansa pouted prettily as he seemed in no rush to move things along. His big hand hitched her long leg over his hip, so his dick could rub against her core, which was already wet and weepy.

"Not a tease, kitten. Just a man that loves you and wants to make sure you know how much," Jaime said, pressing kisses along her sensitive neck so that she arched back into him, grinding against him and seeking more.

It was always more with Sansa, and always more of him. She soothed every ache, every rough spot, every doubt he had. She was peace and love, all wrapped up in his arms every day. Jaime let out a sigh of contentment as he sunk deep inside her, palming her flat stomach so that she stilled for a moment, and he alone controlled their movement.

"Jaime," came her breathless sigh, and it did something to him, making his stomach clench at the sweetness of how much she wanted him.

"Sansa," he said back, moving slowly, drawing himself along her entire length so that he filled her, again and again, and she felt every single inch of him.
Jaime felt her clasp around him, her warm velvet sheath, unlike anything he'd ever experienced. He loved being inside her without any barrier, loved the feeling of her slickness and how tight and soft she was. But more, he loved it when she turned her head to capture her lips and just before they crashed into his, he saw the love she had for him in her eyes. She never hid it from him.

"Baby," he whispered into her mouth, undone, once again by everything that was Sansa. He wondered if she would ever know just how much she saved him; how much she gave back to him after Cersei had left this life such a wasteland.

"Come back to me, Jaime," she told him softly, canting her hips in such a way that Jaime shuddered at the pure pleasure that rippled through him. Jaime shook off thoughts of his ex. Not here, not now with Sansa in his arms.

"Love you so much," he said, again and again, the words and need tumbling from his mouth as he surged back inside her, letting his hand come down to find her hard little nub that was begging for his touch. He captured each cry as she broke apart on him, and only then when he knew she was sated, did he allow himself to come deep inside her, grunting his release.

Sansa snuggled deeper in his arms, twisting so that Jaime could hold her, as his hand stroked her back in the afterglow. She loved pressing her ear to his chest, to hear his heart thumping wildly and knowing that she had made him feel like this.

"You're mine, Jaime," she said after a time, tilting her head, so their eyes met. She watched how the green warmed, and he smiled with his entire face at those words.

Sansa knew that there were deep-seated issues with regards to his ex-wife. He might have downplayed some of his concerns yesterday but Sansa saw through him. With Tywin coming back, Sansa was determined to get more information and let Tywin know she would do whatever necessary to protect Jaime. Including pursuing the idea that Joffrey might not be Jaime’s.

"And you're mine," he responded, kissing the tip of her nose.

She cupped his cheek, stroking the stubble there.

"Jaime, she can't hurt us."

His eyes slid away, and Sansa swore she saw shame there, which she wanted to curse Cersei for.

Sansa felt him tense, and she gripped him tighter.

"Jaime, look at me."

Sansa waited until his eyes came back to her.

"You don't know what she's capable of..." Jaime began to say, and Sansa pressed her lips to his.

"She can try whatever she wants, Jaime. I won't believe a word she says or anything she does. Right here, now, in this bed, I know down to my soul that you love me. I will always be in your corner."

Jaime let a small sob escape as he dragged her closer, tightening his arms around her. "I don't want her to hurt you, kitten." It was his greatest fear. He didn't care what Cersei might do to him, but it would destroy him if she went after Sansa.

"Jaime, I'm tougher than I look. And my family loves you. We're not some weaklings she can push
around. You have to trust us and what we are made of, my love."

He sobbed into her neck as she held him close, emotion wracking his body. During and after his marriage, he'd felt so alone, even with his father by his side. Jaime had never thought he'd find such unconditional love in his life; Cersei had made it clear that she had only been with him for what his money and his name could do for her. For twenty years, she'd used him; emotionally, financially, even physically to an extent. Now he'd found someone who loved him, even the dark parts and who was offering her support and love with no strings.

"Sansa, you have no idea what your words, what they mean," Jaime choked out, trying to give her some idea of just what she'd given him. He saw those blue eyes he loved so much almost sparkle with unnamed emotions.

"Jaime, I love you. I've never loved anyone like you, and it'll take more than your bitchy ex-wife to make me back down. You are family Jaime, and that is everything to me," Sansa told him, the passion in her voice making it thick and strong.

Jaime carded his hands through her hair and pressed his lips against her. "You're mine as well, Sansa. I'll fight for you, fight for us. I promise you this."

Sansa felt the conviction in his words, and let the relief wash over her. Jaime might be a bit ragged, and there was more healing to do, but together, they could emerge triumphantly, she knew.

They lay together for a good time longer, touching and stroking, kissing and murmuring, moving the conversation to lighter topics, until Jaime nipped at her lip and then said, "So about the show today. I've been thinking…"

He wiggled his eyebrows and Sansa laughed. "What's on your mind, baby?"

"I want to tape the cooking with kids episode here, in our kitchen," Jaime said in a rush, wondering what she might think. To his relief, her grin broadened.

"Jaime, that's a great idea!"

He loved how she was so supportive of him; Sansa never made him feel like his ideas were dumb or silly.

"I think it will play better, and Ned is comfortable here. Your kitchen is perfect, and I'd like you to help out as well," he continued, his enthusiasm making the words spill from his mouth.

Sansa just smiled and listened, loving this side of Jaime.

After he'd made love to her again, he all but bounded out of bed, pulling her along so they could shower together. He then made his phone calls to get his crew out to the farmhouse, while also talking with Dany and Robb about the boys, making sure they were still on for today.

Tyrion said over breakfast that he and Marg would go and pick Tywin up from the airport- no one had told Ned that his Papa Lion was arriving today, and Jaime and Sansa were excited to see his reaction.

With Marg and Tyrion on their way to get Tywin, Jaime's crew finally rolled up. Pod, Dickon and Brienne were first, and while Pod and Dic were excited to see Sansa and Jaime's house finally, Brienne looked as if she'd stepped in cow manure, her face was so pinched and sour-looking.

"It's a lovely house, for a farm," was all she said, making Jaime frown when he saw Sansa's face
fall as Brienne entered their house.

Jaime pulled her close, this woman who had been his friend but now almost felt like a stranger. "It's the first place I've ever felt completely at home; besides the Rock, that is, Brienne. I love it here."

Sansa's heart swelled at his quick defence of her house, and she kissed him, dragging her lips across his.

Brienne looked a bit shocked at Jaime's vehement defence of the farmhouse, and she shook her head, waving a hand.

"I didn't mean anything negative, Jaime. It's just I know you. You like the city life. Can you see yourself here, long term? I mean, it's only been two weeks. That's a vacation, Jaime. You're a city boy."

Without waiting for an answer, Brienne sailed deeper into the house, barking out orders at Pod and Dic to get set up, leaving Jaime and Sansa behind.

"Sorry," Jaime said a bit ruefully, wanting to say more. Sansa was just about to respond when Brienne called for Jaime and Sansa heard her brother pull up.

"It's ok. Go. I'll be fine," Sansa said, patting him on the butt and giving a big smile that didn't quite reach her eyes. She hated how Brienne's words put a kernel of doubt in her mind. Was Brienne right? Was Jaime a city guy? Would he be bored here? After all, Brienne had known Jaime a hell of a lot longer than Sansa had.

Lost in her thoughts, Sansa missed when Jaime grabbed her hand and pulled her close. "Nope. Don't do that kitten. I love it here. I love you, I love this house, I love the North, and I love your family. I want our kids to grow up here, Sansa. On this farm, with their cousins close by. So don't let her do that."

Sansa practically melted at his words, before a sharp, "Jaime!" rang through the house. Jaime rolled his eyes at Brienne's sharp voice.

"You'd better go. She sounds angry," Sansa whispered against his lips, giving him one last kiss.

"Love you kitten."

"Love you as well, Jai."

Then Jaime was gone, off to find Brienne and Sansa turned to welcome Dany, Drogo, and Roc, along with Robb and Ned into her house. Her brother also had Ben in his arms.

"Where's Jeyne?" she asked Robb as they all stomped up the porch.

"Home; sick as a dog, puking her guts out, San."

Sansa wrinkled her nose at that description and then opened her arms and Ben gave her a huge smile as Robb transferred him over. "She hates to miss it, but she didn't think her vomiting while Jaime cooked would be good for the show."

Sansa shook her head at that image. "I hope she feels better for the viewing party later tonight," was all she said. Then she turned to Dany and Drogo. "Welcome to my home! I realize now you guys have never been inside."
Ned and Roc had taken off immediately, to find the toys that Ned had stashed here, as well as Uncle Jaime. Ned's enthusiasm for his newest Uncle had not dimmed in the slightest. Sansa put Ben down, and he ran to find his older brother.

"Sansa, this is gorgeous," Dany was gushing as Sansa gave her the tour. Dany's words washed away some of the lingering doubt that Sansa had from Brienne and her less than pleasant reaction to Sansa’s house. Dany ooh'd and ahhh'd over the different rooms and then winked when Sansa showed her all the bedrooms.

"I can see why Jaime's so excited about this place," Dany said, a massive grin on her face.

Sansa blushed and then bit her lip and Dany sensed something was wrong.

"Sansa, what is it?"

Sansa shook her head until Dany grabbed her hand. "Tell me," she said softly.

Sansa looked into Dany's purple eyes and saw nothing but compassion and understanding there. "You don't think it's all too rustic for Jaime? Too remote?"

Dany's eyes widened almost comically until she saw that Sansa was really anxious. "Hunny, no. Jaime loves it here. I've never seen that man so happy as he is when he is here with you."

Sansa let out a relieved sigh.

"What's this about, San?" Dany asked quietly.

"Oh, nothing," Sansa said, waving a hand, but Dany would not be dissuaded.

"Fine." Sansa huffed out a breath. "Brienne just commented that he was a city guy and that this was him playing at farm life. And I let it get to me."

Sansa swore Dany almost growled in outrage.

"Sansa, she's jealous. We can all see it. She's been pining over Jaime for years, and he's never once looked at her that way. He loves you, and he loves it up here. Trust me."

Sansa felt her eyes fill with tears, and she swiped them away, a bit angry at herself for allowing Brienne's words to create doubt.

"I know. I know, Dany. And he told me the same thing. I don't want to take anything away from him," Sansa explained, and Dany let out a snort.

"Trust me; you're not. That man is a smitten kitten, Sansa and all for you."

Sansa laughed then and felt the last of the tension leave her shoulders. "Gods, I'm so freaking glad we're friends," Sansa said, pulling the small woman into her arms for a hug. Dany squeezed her back.

"And I'm so freaking glad that my friend finally found a woman like you; that loves him for him. You are the best thing for him, Sansa. Don't ever doubt it."

Sansa choked up again and hugged Dany tighter. "Now, let's go find those boys. I'm sure Roc is wreaking havoc downstairs."

Sansa laughed as they descended the stairs and the noise level increased. They found Jaime in the
kitchen, deep in discussion with Brienne about the show. Sansa caught part of the conversation, overhearing Brienne telling Jaime she thought it was the height of idiocy for him to tape this episode in what was essentially his new home.

"You've always jealously guarded your privacy, Jaime. Hell, it took me two years to get an invitation to your new flat after you left Cersei. Why now?"

Jaime scrubbed a hand through his hair, messing it in a way that Sansa loved. "Because this is my life now, Brienne. And when doing an episode about cooking with children, it just makes sense to do it in a home. My home." Sansa’s heart just about burst hearing Jaime talk about the farmhouse that way.

Brienne huffed out an impatient breath. Before she could say anything more, Jaime rushed on. "Ask Dic to stay tight on the kitchen only. Just myself, Sansa and the boys. That should work, right?"

Brienne snarled, "Sansa is going to be in this episode? Jaime, why?" Then without giving him a chance to respond, Brienne leaned in. "Need I remind you, Jaime, that I have the full support of not only the head of the food network but the station head himself. In the end, Jaime, it is me that is the producer, and you're that is the talent. I think things have gotten off track here in the North."

With that barb delivered, Brienne spun and took out her cell phone, stalking towards the front door to find privacy. Sansa watched as Jaime almost deflated in front of her.

"Hey babe," she said, wrapping her arms around him. He gave her a sad little smile.

"Maybe she's right. Maybe I should just stick to cooking," he said.

Sansa cocked her head and cupped his cheek. "I think that you should reserve judgement until after the first episode airs. We have no idea what people are going to think about it. You and Pod liked it, right?"

That seemed to cheer Jaime up. "Yeah. It's a great episode, kitten. Honestly, I think it's some of my best work."

"Good," Sansa said, pasting a smile on her face. "Then stick to your guns, Jaime. You know what you want this show to be, and we're all supportive."

"Thanks, kitten," Jaime told her, kissing her again before Dany pulled them both apart, telling them it was makeup time.

The great room/kitchen area descended into organized chaos as everyone got ready. Jaime felt his phone buzz and smiled when he saw Tyrion's text. Their father had just landed. If the timing worked out, Tywin would enter mid-taping, and Jaime couldn't wait to see Ned's reaction.

Speaking of Ned, he and Roc were suddenly there just as Dany was finishing up with Sansa's makeup. Both Jaime and Sansa were dressed in jeans, with Sansa wearing a creamy pearl grey sweater and Jaime in his traditional black t-shirt, to which Sansa licked her lips at the picture he made.

Dany had curled Sansa hair in loose waves, and the makeup was subtle, soft and feminine. Jaime leaned over and pressed a quick kiss right below her ear. "Showtime kitten."

Sansa had no idea how Jaime did it, but that low, growly voice of his sent desire flooding through her body. She swore her lady parts perked up and did a little happy dance, even though they'd been
well taken care of just a few hours ago.

They started the show with Sansa, Ned and Roc all sitting at the island, while Jaime leaned against it. Sansa had to force herself NOT to think about what they'd gotten up to on their second date, while Jaime asked the boys what their favourite foods were. The typical responses of pizza, skabetti, pancakes, although Ned did throw in crepes were all shouted in glee.

"Uncle Jaime, remember when you made the sauce, and it wasn't like Mama's," Ned said, giving Jaime a perfect transition into discussing some meal ideas.

"I do, buddy," as Jaime said this, he started to prep his ingredients. Today he was going to show everyone how to make easy homemade ravioli, with three different options for what to stuff the pasta with, along with three different homemade sauces.

"It wasn't like Mama's because you put all sorts of other stuff in it," Ned continued, happily munching an apple and kicking his legs.

"I did. Because what makes us grow strong?" Jaime asked.

"Meat!" cried Roc and Sansa laughed and ruffled his hair.

"That's right. And what else?" Jaime asked, looking to Ned, who sighed heavily.

"Vegetables, Uncle Jaime."

Jaime winked at Ned, who giggled and then asked what Jaime was doing.

"Hands washed?" Jaime asked, and they both nodded. Jaime waved them over.

Both boys came to stand beside Jaime on the stools he had procured for today as they mixed the dough for the pasta, laughing and getting their hands dirty and asking a million questions. When they had the pasta dough resting, Jaime pulled out the different ingredients for stuffing them.

"We're going a meat option," and Roc let out a little cheer, to which Jaime high-fived him, "A vegetable option," to which Ned wrinkled his nose, "and a cheese one." That got an enthusiastic response from Ned.

Jaime had them both help him make the stuffing; both boys said eww when Jaime brought out the spinach to which Sansa laughed brightly, helping them stay on task.

They were fascinated when Jaime rolled the sheets of pasta dough and then outlined the shape of the ravioli, and both helped plop the filling down in the right spots. When Jaime laid the other piece of pasta dough over the top, Ned's eyes widened.

"Wow, Uncle Jaime, that is neat!"

Jaime laughed as they cut their pasta and then made three neat little piles of filled pasta. Then Jaime grinned at them.

"What else does pasta need, sous chefs?"

"What's a sous chef?" Roc asked, and Jaime explained the different jobs in a restaurant, and both boys beamed that they were now honorary sous chefs.

"So, what else does pasta need?" Jaime prompted again, looking at the two of them who had their faces scrunched up, thinking.
"Sauce," came a deep voice.

Pod, thank goodness captured the moment perfectly when Ned's eyes widened, and then his entire face broke out into a wide grin.

"PAPA LION!" he all but yelled into the room, scrambling off the chair and all but hurtling himself into Tywin's arms.

Tywin stepped fully into the kitchen and picked him up easily, as Ned snuggled in. "Oh, Papa Lion, I've missed you," Ned said, sighing happily.

Tywin let out a rumbly laugh as his heart clenched and then settled himself on a stool, sitting with Ned still in his arms. The other, dark-haired boy with the distinctive purple eyes was looking at him, something akin to wonder and nervousness on his face.

"Hello," Tywin said, gentling his voice. "I'm Ned's papa."

Roc gave a tentative grin and moved slightly closer until Tywin opened his arm, and the boy scrambled up into his arms, beside his friend.

Dany clutched at Drogo's hand. She had seen Tywin Lannister enter the house and had heard about the bond between Ned and Tywin, but she had no idea how the Great Lion might react to her son. She knew that her father and Tywin had hated each other, and though she'd long ago let go of her anger towards Tywin, they'd never made amends. Dany had wondered if Tywin would have the capacity to be kind to her child, and she'd held her breath when the patriarch of the Lannister clan had entered the kitchen.

Now her eyes filled with tears as she watched Tywin Lannister accept her son, and she heaved out a sob. Roc didn't have any grandparents, and she had felt that loss acutely.

"Why is your name Papa Lion?" Roc asked shyly, and Tywin let another laugh go.

"I'm afraid that's because of Ned. My real name is Tywin, but my house symbol is a lion," Tywin explained. The weight of two little boys in his arms was something foreign to him, but not unwelcome.

"Papa Lion, this is my friend, Roc. He's living at my house. His Daddy and my Daddy love horses," Ned started to explain, words tripping over themselves to come tumbling out.

Jaime grinned at the scene, but then gave a little whistle. "Little sous chefs, Papa Lion said we need sauce for pasta. Who wants to help me?"

With a look of slight reluctance, Ned extracted himself from Tywin's arms, and he and Roc went back to helping Jaime.

"Why is this one green?" Ned asked after a time, and Jaime explained that it was a pesto one. They were making a rose, an alfredo and a pesto sauce.

"Like Hulk," Roc said, grinning up at Jaime, who threw his head back and laughed.

"Yup. Like Hulk. Hulk sauce to go with Hulk pasta," Jaime told both of them, sending them into fits of giggles.

Tywin had risen and taken off his suit jacket and rolled up his sleeves. Sansa brought him a cup of tea and pressed her lips against his cheek.
"Welcome back, Ty," she said softly to him. The Great Lion pulled her in for a quick hug.

"Thank you for having me."

Tyrion, Marg, Dany and Drogo all watched the family scene unfold, quite frankly stunned by how relaxed Tywin appeared with not one but two little boys who seemed enamoured by him. Sansa happily sat beside him, watching as Jaime and Roc and Ned cooked the pasta once the sauces were all done.

When lunch was finally ready, Jaime leaned down to both boys. "Now, we have to serve them."

Jaime had three bowls with the three sauces as well as the three different types of ravioli.

"Papa Lion, what do you want?" Ned asked, voice demanding.

Tywin let out a little chuckle. "What are you having?"

Ned scrunched up his face, thinking, and Roc slid closer to Tywin. "Papa Lion I'm having Hulk pasta and sauce," and Tywin gave him a big grin.

"That sounds perfect for a growing little boy who wants to be strong."

Roc's eyes went wide, and then he grinned. "My Daddy is strong, Papa Lion."

A chuckled broke free from Drogo and Jaime waved him over. "Come on; there is loads."

Grinning, Dany, Drogo and Robb sauntered into the kitchen, also grabbing stools and listening as both boys told them exactly how they'd helped make lunch as if all three of the adults hadn't just watched the entire proceedings.

In the end, Ned went with cheese ravioli and alfredo sauce, while Roc stuck to his choice of Hulk pasta. Of course, Sansa brought out wine, and they all laughed, knowing it was never too early for wine, and the group ate and drank their way through a lunch that had been (partially) prepared by little hands. Before they went 'off air' Tywin gave a subtle nod to Podrick Payne and rose.

Sansa was sitting on a stool, while Jaime had his arms casually wrapped around her standing behind her, laughing at something Drogo was saying when Tywin coughed and drew all attention to him.

"Jaime and Sansa, thank you for welcoming me back to your home in the North. I think we can all attest to what you've both started to build here; and that your family will only continue to grow. I have a gift for the two of you," Tywin stated and slid a slim, elegantly wrapped box in golden paper towards them.

For a brief moment, Jaime had worried that his father was going to give him his mother's ring here, and now, and that would be all kinds of wrong. When Jaime proposed to Sansa, he wanted it to be perfect; and private. He had no qualms sharing parts of their life with millions of viewers, but not that. When he asked Sansa Stark to be his wife, that would be for them only.

Thankfully, the box was not a ring box, but its shape had Jaime baffled. Sansa reached for it, and then in her elegant way, pulled back the tape and delicately opened the box. Inside sat an ornate, antique golden key. Sansa frowned slightly, clearly missing the significance. When she looked at Jaime, he appeared stunned.

Sansa grasped his hand and then turned her eyes back to Tywin.
He cleared his throat. "It is the key to Casterly Rock. For generations, Casterly Rock has passed down from father to eldest child. While that key is symbolic, it is my way of saying that the Rock is yours when I am no longer here."

Jaime swallowed the huge lump that had formed in his throat. He'd known, in theory, that the Rock would be his one day, but the moment he'd married Cersei, his father had never said another word about it. They'd subtly ignored it for years. Now, in two weeks being North, Tywin had given him the golden key to the Lannister kingdom.

"I know you two will love it as much as I have, and I have no doubts it will be in the best possible hands, with you two as it's master and mistress."

"Father," Jaime all but choked out, shocked when Tywin strode over and pulled him into a rough hug.

"Son," Tywin said into Jaime's ear as the two men embraced.

Sansa also rose and was hugged by Tywin, who told her how much he looked forward to seeing them there.

"Thank you. For everything," she said to Tywin, meeting his green-gold eyes.

"Always, my dear."

They wrapped taping shortly afterwards, and once again, Pod knew they'd struck gold. The fact that they now had Tywin Lannister on a show was something no other network could ever claim to have scored. He was notoriously reserved about appearing on camera.

Pod was whistling softly to himself when he happened to look at Brienne's face, which was almost purple, she appeared so angry. Pod followed her gaze to see her watching Jaime and Sansa, who were quietly talking with Tywin, Marg and Tyrion. She was clenching and unclenching her fists, and for the first time, Pod had serious concerns about what might happen with her. Pod loved his job, and Brienne had taught him so many things, but at this point, his loyalty was with Jaime.

Pod, Brienne and Dickon then said their goodbyes, watching as the producer all but stormed out of the house, promising they'd see everyone tonight for the taping.

"It's all ready?" Jaime asked, shaking hands with Pod before he left.

He grinned. "Yup. Ready and cued up. We built a little studio in one of Bran's unused office space. We'll head there now and make sure it's all ready, Jaime." Pod clapped Jaime on the back and said they'd see them later.

A subtle cough altered Tywin to the fact that Daenerys Targaryen was standing behind him, and he turned, taking her in. Of course, he'd seen pictures of her over the years, and he'd investigated when Jaime had phoned him years ago in a rant about his treatment of her when he'd found her waitressing in Essos, but it still startled Tywin to see such a likeness to his old friend Aerys.

Sensing they needed privacy, everyone stepped back to allow Dany to speak with Tywin.

Before Dany could say anything, Tywin held up a hand.

"I won't apologize for what I did to your father. That was business and personal and things between us… well… let's leave it at I fully stand by my actions. However, I do regret the impact they had on you. I didn't realize that your father had not left anything for his children, and had no idea you
Drogo growled at Tywin, stopped only when Dany laid a small hand on his massive chest.

She met the Great Lion's eyes, slightly in awe of him and his behaviour here today. This was not the man she'd heard stories of her entire life.

"Thank you for that explanation. And for paying for my education. I was angry for a long time at you and my father. It was easy to lump the two of you together; both of you disappointed me in different ways, although perhaps some of that was unfair to you. Now, as an adult, I understand that my father created his own mess," Dany said, choking a bit whenever it came to the very rocky topic of Aerys Targaryen.

She shook herself, feeling Drogo's hand on her back, giving her support.

"I admit, when Sansa told me about how you were with Ned Stark, I was shocked — and worried. How would you treat my son? He has no grandparents, and well, I could understand if you hated me still, but for an innocent child to suffer…" Dany was sobbing by now, and Tywin gruffly pulled her into his arms.

"Seven hells woman, I never meant for you to suffer. I was arrogant in thinking it wasn't my concern; that Aerys' children would be taken care of. That my actions against him might not somehow have an impact on you."

Dany sobbed harder, mascara and makeup, making a mess of Tywin's perfect white shirt.

"Still, what you did for Roc," she started to say, and Tywin shushed her again, raising his eyes to meet Drogo's. The big man was grinning at how his tiny wife's tears almost undid this powerful man. Drogo had taken one look at Tywin with his son and known there was a heart buried under that gruff exterior.

"He seems like a smart boy, and lord knows he'll need it to keep up with Ned," Tywin murmured to Dany, who let out a watery laugh, finally stepping back from Tywin.

The Great Lion appeared slightly uncomfortable, as he reached into his pocket and pulled out a card, handing it to Dany. There was the name of a bank and an account number on there.

"Before your father and I had our falling out, we were involved in a deal together. I've kept what would have been his profits from the deal in this account for the past ten years," Tywin said quickly, realizing he'd drawn an audience again. "I think you'll find what's in there a suitable nest egg for your family."

Dany's mouth dropped open, and even Jaime and Tyrion appeared impressed- shocked but impressed.

"I'm not a monster," Tywin muttered and scrubbed at the back of his neck at their looks of astonishment.

"How much?" Tyrion quipped, smirking slightly.

Tywin's mouth slammed shut, but Tyrion wouldn't let up until Jaime stepped in.

"Phone them, Dany and find out," Jaime suggested, winking at his friend, hugging Sansa close. Dany looked around at her friends and saw their open and accepting looks. She wondered how she’d stumbled across such good people that seemed to care so much.
When she pulled out her phone, she dialled the bank and asked to speak to someone in charge of the accounts. She gave the number on the card, and then the access code. And then she almost stumbled when the clerk told her there was just over twenty-five million dollars in the account.

"And the name on the account?" she squeaked, her eyes never leaving Tywin's.

"Daenerys Targaryen Drogo," the woman responded before Dany hung up on her.

"Fucking hells," she said, laughing shakily, before she all but launched herself at Tywin, hugging him tightly.

Jaime and Tyrion were grinning, and when she finally pulled back from Tywin, she had a massive grin on her face. Drogo was beaming at her.

"Enough Khaleesi?" he asked.

He wasn't a wealthy man, and he'd ached never to be able to provide for his wife to the level she had previously known, even though she said it hadn't mattered. He knew she wanted more children, and while they did alright for themselves, there were still times money was tight.

"Oh ya, babe," she said, then revealed Tywin's secret. "Twenty-five million times alright," she said to him, letting out a happy shriek when Drogo picked her up and swung her around.

"We can have another baby, Dany," he said excitedly. "And buy some land up here. I'll build you your dream house, my sun and my stars," he said to her, choking at the thought of what that type of money could mean for them. Family. Home. Stability.

Sansa reached out and grabbed Tywin's hand, squeezing it. When he turned to her, she reached up and whispered in his ear, "You're a good man, Tywin Lannister," to which he grunted. It was no less than what Dany had been owed; she had no other family. Her brothers were both dead, along with her parents and her aunts and uncles.

"Mama, why are you crying?" Roc asked, appearing out of nowhere. Dany picked him up, loving how he snuggled in her arms.

"Happy tears, my love, happy tears." She brushed a kiss over his dark curls, noting how sleepy he was.

"I like Papa Lion, Mama," he said, giving another shy glance towards Tywin.

"So do I, Roc. So do I." Dany's eyes filled again. More than any amount of money, she knew she had found her family. These lions and these wolves; in this northern place. Somehow, at the very edge of Westeros, Dany Drogo had found a home.

Robb offered to drive Dany, Drogo and Roc and Ben back to the ranch. Ned had negotiated to stay with his Papa for the afternoon, and Marg wanted to rest.

Jaime, Sansa, Tyrion and Ty were happy to entertain Ned and spend time together. When it was the five of them, Tywin went to his room and came back with another present, this one for Ned.

The little boy's eyes widened. "Papa Lion, is that for me?"

Tywin smiled and said yes and then handed him the present.

Much to Tywin's delight, Ned ripped enthusiastically at the paper until he reached his prize, eyes
widening almost comically.

"How in the hell?" Jaime asked, baffled when he looked at the LEGO set in front of him.

Tywin grinned. "If you are wealthy enough, you can have the people at LEGO make you a replica of damn near anything," Tywin said, smirking.

Ned was holding in his hands a one of a kind, never before seen, LEGO of Casterly Rock. Of course, Tywin had gotten the people at LEGO to make characters that looked like little Ned, Jaime, Sansa, Robb, Tywin and others in his family, along with horses and different clothing, both modern and medieval.

For once, Ned was stunned speechless. Always advanced, Ned had taken to LEGO this year like a duck to water.

"Papa Lion, this is amazing," he said reverently and then dropped the box and came to hug Tywin. Snuggled on Tywin's lap, refusing to let his Papa go, Ned asked if they could open it and start to build.

Tyrion rubbed his hands together. "Can I help? I loved LEGO as a child." Anyone could see the eagerness in Tyrion's face.

Ned's big brown eyes turned to him. "Sure Uncle Tyrion," he said, almost shyly.

Tyrion startled. So far, he'd always been Uncle Jaime's brother. Now he was Uncle Tyrion.

Sansa left the three lions and one little wolf to their building, heart warmed as the Lannister's talked about Casterly Rock and their memories. She knew things hadn't always been easy for the three men sitting at her big kitchen table, but she could see the changes they were all making. More and more, they were reminding her of her family and the closeness they had.

Sansa picked up the golden key, turning it in her and loving both the weight and symbolism of it. She was so caught up in looking at it, that she hadn't realized Jaime had left the table until his arms were around her, and he rested his head against her neck.

"Happy kitten?"

"Oh yes," she said. "I can't believe your father gave this to us, Jaime. It's incredible. I'm so excited to go and visit the Rock."

Jaime chuckled out a little laugh. "It's quite the place. And I can see all sorts of family gatherings there. As much as you Starks like the North, there has to be a time you will want sand and sun."

Sansa laughingly agreed, and they spent a pleasant afternoon with Jaime's family and Ned.

Ned barely moved from Tywin's lap, refusing to give up any time with his favourite person. He loved the LEGO set and asked an endless amount of questions about the Rock, which Tywin happily answered.

"Papa Lion, this is a big house for one person," Ned said at one point, shaking his head at the size of Casterly Rock, even in LEGO form.

"It is a large house, Ned. Often a place like this would have been considered a castle or a palace even, historically," Tywin said, going into full lecture mode. Luckily, Ned ate up every single word. By the time Jaime was preparing dinner, half of LEGO Casterly Rock had been built.
While Jaime cooked, Ned tugged Margaery to the couch, climbing on her lap and demanding they watch a show together. Marg, more than a little in love with Ned herself, happily held him as they got deep into Paw Patrol.

"I like Marshall, he's my favourite," Ned disclosed at one point to her.

"Well, Skye is pretty awesome since she can fly," Marg said back to Ned, fully invested in the show.

By the time they'd eaten dinner and dressed for the evening, Ned was tiring.

"But why, Aunty Sansa, do I have to go to Uncle Bran's?"

"You know what bud, everyone is going to be there. But the show isn't that long, and I'm sure Mama and Daddy will take you guys home right afterwards."

"Do you think Uncle Bran will have treats?" he said, perking up.

"I'm sure he will," Sansa said, laughing.

When they stepped outside, Ned's eyes lit up at Jaime's black Range Rover.

"Ohhh, we get to take Uncle Jaime's fancy car," Ned yelled with joy. Tywin liked how Jaime had clearly been thinking about a bigger family, given the size of the vehicle.

When they were all seated, Ned clapped his hands. "Put on the music that makes my ears happy, Uncle Jaime," Ned demanded.

Sansa groaned, while both Tyrion and Tywin heartily approved.

Sound of Paganini's violin concerto #1 in d major filled the Range Rover and Ned told Sansa, very seriously, that this music had no words.

"What about my country music, buddy?" Sansa asked, sticking out her bottom lip.

Ned shook his head, solemnly. "I'm sorry, Aunty Sansa, but this music sounds better."

The three lions howled in laughter as Sansa pouted, then tickled Ned, calling him a traitor.

When they got to Bran's, Sansa could see that a good number of their friends and family were already there. Jaime had told her repeatedly that the show was terrific, and that she had nothing to worry about, but still- it was the date night one and when Jaime had announced to everyone that he loved her. She wanted it to be perfect for him. Jaime had told her she was silly to be so worried, but she knew how vital reputation was for people in the spotlight. The last thing Sansa ever wanted was to somehow do something to adversely effect Jaime’s popularity.

They entered the restaurant hand in hand but were soon separated. Pod and Dickon needed Jaime for something, and Tyrion had taken Ned to find Robb and Jeyne.

Standing beside Tywin, Sansa was warmly welcomed, their friends, family and Jaime's crew happy to see everyone.

A short time later, Sansa went to get a glass of wine and found herself cornered by Brienne. The large woman loomed over Sansa, an angry scowl on her face. They were off in a little nook and nearly unnoticeable.
"I can tell you think you love him, but if you did, you'd give him up," Brienne said without preamble.

Sansa's back straightened, and she opened her mouth to protest. Before she could get a word in edgewise, Brienne steamrolled her.

"Do you honestly think Jaime is going to be happy, up here in the North? With you? What about his career? His success is predicated on being the single, hot chef. What is going to happen tonight when everyone hears him declare his love for you? Do you want to be responsible for destroying his career?"

Sansa huffed out a frustrated breath. "I hardly think that this is going to do that to his career Brienne. If anything, Jaime thinks that this might boost ratings."

Brienne scoffed. "Jaime doesn't know that end of things, Sansa. Since he's come North, he's not acting like himself, and that is because of you. People expect a certain …. look from Jaime. They tune in because he's hot and they love to watch him cook- and they like to think he's available. No one wants to watch him making cow eyes at you." Brienne all but snarled the last bit.

Then she leaned closer and drove the knife deeper. "Do you think you're enough? To keep Jaime Lannister? He's a star, and what are you? After tonight, everyone will know exactly what you are-nothing more than an opportunist whore."

Satisfied with the damage she had done and the look of utter devastation on Sansa's face, Brienne turned and melted back into the crowd, quite an accomplishment for someone of her stature.

Sansa was pale, shaking and in shock as she stood by herself in the corner. Her mind was racing. Was Brienne correct? Was she doing more damage than good? And worst, beyond even the implications professionally, was Brienne right about a person like her keeping Jaime's interest? She couldn't keep Harry's and Jaime was in a class far above his.

So lost in her mind, Sansa almost jumped out of her skin when she felt a warm hand on her arm.

"What the fuck was that about?" Tywin said, growling lowly into her ear. Sansa's eyes filled, and she shook her head. Tywin's grip, still gentled, squeezed her arm.

"Sansa, please tell me," he said, trying to be soft, something he wasn't normally. Sansa looked up and saw nothing but compassion in Tywin's eyes and the whole sordid conversation spilled out

"Bitch," Tywin cursed, then his eyes narrowed. "What was the last thing she said to you?"

"Something about after tonight everyone will know what I am," Sansa said, her anger growing. She was angry that she'd been cornered by Brienne, made to feel somehow less than suitable for Jaime and had been accused of tanking his career.

"Sansa, my dear," Tywin said, drawing her attention back to him. "You are the best thing that has ever happened to Jaime. He loves you more than he has loved anyone, save perhaps his children. You are his light and his entire world. Do not think for one second that any of that hateful vitriol had a single ounce of truth to it."

Sansa nodded and then pressed her face against Tywin's chest, who was holding her tightly as she shook.

That was how Jaime found them, with only minutes to go before they were going live on air. The love of his life, clearly devastated, being comforted by his father.
"What's going on?" he asked, concern in his voice.

Sansa, upon hearing Jaime's voice, transferred herself from Tywin's arms to Jaime's, sighing in relief when his arms came around her. Sansa inhaled his spicy cologne and felt something inside her settle. Jaime was here and they would make this right.

"Father?"

Jaime was on edge; he'd missed something, something vital if Sansa's state was anything to go by. Quickly Tywin explained what Brienne had said to Sansa, and all Jaime saw was red. He was so angry he was vibrating and wanted to find Brienne and demand answers.

"We need to think, Jaime. It was more than just upsetting Sansa. It was the last thing she said; something about after tonight everyone would know what Sansa was. What could she mean by that?"

Jaime's eyes widened, and he felt his stomach drop. "The episode. Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck. She could have edited her copy. We need to find Pod now."

Jaime grabbed Sansa's hand and pulled her behind him as he scanned the restaurant where the viewing party had been set up. People happily mingled about, and Jaime couldn't help the sense of dread that filled him when he saw the countdown. Less than five minutes until air.

"There," Tywin said, pointing to the cameraman/junior producer that was chatting with a pretty brunette, nursing a beer.

"Get him Jaime and bring him to the production room. Sansa and I will meet you there."

When Tywin and Sansa entered the converted office, it was empty, and the countdown screen was on here as well. They were running out of time and Sansa’s heart raced. She felt her palms get sweaty and everyone had very concerned looks on their faces.

Moments later, Jaime and Pod pushed inside. Pod sent Sansa a sympathetic look, sat down and began to cue up the videos.

"Fuck," he swore, a minute later. "It's not our edit, Jaime."

"Do you know where ours is?" Jaime asked, almost frantic with worry. He couldn't care less what this might do to his career; all he cared about was if somehow Brienne had done something to make Sansa look bad.

"It's starting, gentlemen," Tywin said, voice tight as he glanced between Pod and Jaime.

"Give me thirty seconds," Pod said, working frantically, glancing up at the screen as the familiar strains of the show came out. "There's a moment where I can upload it; when we go from the normal intro into the new episode," Pod told them, tapping his foot.

They all waited until there was a moment, and Pod clicked two buttons. "Done." Both Jaime and Pod looked up; there had been a slightly than longer delay, but that was it. Jaime felt the relief course through his body as the episode that he'd edited and worked on started to play.

"Jaime?" Sansa asked, and he hauled her against him, shaking.

"It's ok baby. It's the right one. Pod saved us," Jaime crooned to her, cuddling her close.
"Alright." Sansa wrapped herself around Jaime, who was in a state.

"We need to get out there," Tywin stated, voice hard and implacable. "But Pod, please keep the episode Ms. Tarth wanted to play. I believe we'll have a second showing after the first one."

Pod nodded and swallowed hard.

When the four of them entered the main restaurant, they saw that Jaime had just introduced Sansa on screen.

Standing wrapped in Jaime's arms, Sansa tried to push Brienne and her betrayal from her mind and watch the show. She laughed, although it was a bit forced but it was clear how much she and Jaime loved one another.

No one missed when Jaime said those three little words, and sounds of aww filled the restaurant. Of course, Dickon and Dany had been taking pictures and tweeting during the viewing, as well as adding to Jaime's social media account.

Jaime slipped out at one point, Pod on his heels.

"I need to see what she did, kitten. Give me a few minutes."

Within fifteen minutes of the episode starting, #Jaimsa was trending, and Sansa and Jaime were Westeros's newest IT couple. Their photos had been retweeted thousands of times, and the hashtags #hotchef #jaimeandsansa and #gonorthofindlove were all trending as well.

When Jaime came back, he was so angry that he had his fists clenched at his side. It was only Sansa's touch that allowed him to relax and watch the rest of the episode with her and not do something he'd regret to Brienne. He needed to be smart and met his father's eyes.

"Love you kitten," Jaime said, leaning down and kissing Sansa, holding her closer to him. He was dreading watching the tape that Brienne had made. He knew it would devastate Sansa to see what she had done.

At the end, a huge cheer erupted, as the show was an unmitigated success. Never before had a food network star been the number one social media star, and Jaime was. Jaimsa had been born and they were a force.

Of course, all of their happiness was muted by what Brienne attempted to do. It soon became apparent that while the episode had been a success, something was wrong. Very, very wrong and those close to Sansa and Jaime picked up on the tension almost immediately.

Brienne was livid, her plans having been foiled, and Jaime looked ready to kill her. When the cheering died down, Jaime stepped forward and cleared his throat, looking around the room.

"We want to thank everyone who has worked so hard on this project with us. As many of you know, I never expected to come to the North and fall in love," another huge cheer went up, and Jaime had the grace to grin, "but I did. Sansa Stark is the best thing that has ever happened to me, save for the births of my children. Nothing, not even this show, is as important to me as she is."

Jaime paused and looked at Brienne.

"Which is why it pains me to tell you all that someone tried to hurt her. Someone tried to do something that would have so publicly humiliated her; it would have taken years for her reputation to recover."
"Brienne, I trusted you. I trusted you to be honest in your work, and I trusted you when I shared my vision. You were my friend Brienne, more than just my producer and you betrayed me." Jaime paused. "I want to share with you what Brienne almost aired tonight."

Jaime's gaze flicked down to Ned, Ben and Roc, but thankfully they were sleeping. Jaime nodded to Pod, and the doctored episode started to play.

It was immediately clear the tone and intention Brienne had taken. It was almost an expose, painting Jaime as a playboy chef who only wanted to hop from bed to bed, while at the same time, making Sansa seem like a vapid, selfish, vain woman that only wanted Jaime to enhance her own brand and winery.

Brienne had even gone so far as to interview Harry, who described Sansa as a tease and a bitch, and the Starks as some secretive family that controlled the North. Harry claimed that all Sansa ever cared about was her business; never him and that he was sure she was sleeping with someone else when they’d been together.

Somehow Brienne found people that didn't like the Starks; the Bolton family, along with a few of Sansa’s old high school rivals, and the two waitresses, who claimed they walked in on Sansa sleeping with both Lannister men.

It was nothing more than a smear job, meant to tank both Jaime's career and Sansa's reputation, and as Jaime held the woman he loved, the rage built. Sansa was shaking at the nastiness of it all, and almost wanted to be sick, thinking what might have happened to her and her family had that aired.

The mood in the room grew angrier and darker. There wasn't a person there that wasn't on Sansa and Jaime's side. Robb and Jon looked ready to murder Brienne, while Dickon, Pod, Dany and the rest of Jaime's crew looked ill. Arya, Jeyne, and Val were cursing Brienne's name, and Tyrion had to hold Marg back physically, she was so enraged.

Brienne hitched her chin up in defiance. "I had the network head's permission to air it. You are screwed, Jaime. You had no right to pull my episode. I am the one that makes that call."

"We shall see about that," Tywin said and pulled out his phone and dialled his lawyers. There was a reason that he paid them handsomely and even at 9pm, Elia Martell's voice answered. While Tywin was getting legal advice, Jaime shook his head.

"Why, Brienne? Why would you do this to Sansa? To me?"

Brienne scoffed and shook her head.

"You're a playboy, Jaime. That's who you are. I watched as you went through woman after woman after your divorce, never once giving any of them a second glance. And now what? You want me to believe you came North and just fell in love? Instantly? With her?"

Brienne waved a hand in Sansa's direction.

"I'll admit you always liked pretty things, but even this… this is ridiculous. You're throwing away everything and for what? To play house with her? I know you, Jaime. You'll get bored, and it'll end and then where you will be? No one will give a shit about a washed-up former playboy chef that's no longer relevant."

The vile words that spewed forth shocked everyone.
"My lawyers will be here tomorrow. We will deal with this, and you, then," Tywin suddenly announced and Brienne threw her head back and laughed.

"You people are idiots if you think I didn't have all my ducks lined up. I have complete and final control over what goes to air. Jaime broke that when he put on his episode. We will see what happens- but I predict that Jaime will end up fired, and we'll still tank Sansa's reputation. Do you think the head of the network's an idiot? We knew exactly what we were doing. Either way, this ends in ruin for you, Jaime."

With that last comment, Brienne turned and stalked out of the restaurant, leaving an astonished group of people behind, wondering just why the head of the Food Network hated Jaime so much and what might happen next.

Chapter End Notes

Bets on who the network head is???

Tell me, did I do a good job on the Brienne evilness?

Also- LOVING the conversation between Tywin and Dany and that whole vibe.

Comments always welcome and much appreciated!
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Fallout from the viewing party

Chapter Notes

So this chapter is HEAVY on the relationship stuff.

Thanks, as always to SA and her continued support as well as all the readers of this story.

If you can imagine, this was supposed to be a short, fun little fic! Now look at it~

One quick note- I realize that Brienne's actions are NOT compatible with a network such as the Food one- but I'm trying to do something Game of thrones ish in a modern AU so stick with me for a bit. All will be revealed!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

Jaime thought that Sansa would be devastated after that tape aired. He thought she would be reeling about the awful things Brienne had put together about her and her family. As he had stood watching it with Pod, his thoughts weren't about how it might affect him, or his career- everything had been centred around Sansa and how much it would hurt her.

Jaime had been prepared that he would have to try to explain how he’d failed to protect her from someone like Brienne. And that they’d have to work through the pain of her betrayal. Jaime had been prepared at her being angry that he’d exposed her and her family to a woman that sought to harm them because of him.

Instead, he found himself standing there in awe as she took control of the viewing party, calming everyone down and then herding people out of the restaurant, taking complete control of the situation.

He shook his head as he thought to how this had all come about; how he’d watched as the woman he loved put him above everyone else, including her family.

The moment Brienne had left, Sansa had given him a quick kiss on the lips and squeezed his hand.

Sansa hadn’t been worried about consequences or punishments at that moment- it had been Jaime that was her concern. She saw the devastation in his eyes when he had realized what Brienne had tried to do.
Sansa knew that the man she loved was good; he fundamentally believed in people and saw them for the best that they were. Sansa had kissed enough frogs in her day to understand that Jaime was a unicorn amongst a bunch of donkeys. He was kind, caring, sexy, sweet, loving and charming. And he was hers and Sansa defended those that belonged to her like a warrior Queen of days gone by.

More than anything, more than any damage Brienne might have done to Sansa's reputation, what she had done to Jaime with this betrayal was infinitely worse in Sansa's opinion. This was going to gut him, and Sansa couldn't care less about consequences right now. She didn't give a flying fuck about what happened to Brienne, beyond her never working with Jaime again or being in a position so that she could never hurt him ever again.

Right now, all Sansa cared about was Jaime.

That was why the moment Brienne left, Sansa pulled him to the side and cupped his face in her hands.

"What do you need right now?"

He just stared at her and Sansa felt her heart ache for him. His face expressed his anger and disgust at what Brienne had attempted to do tonight.

"Baby, what do you need? Do you want to talk to your staff? Want them to go home and come back early tomorrow? It's your call, Jaime," Sansa kept her voice low and soothing, trying to coax him into talking with her; into letting her help him. He'd always fought his battles alone, and now he needed to understand that she was here by his side.

"Sansa, I'm so sorry..." Jaime started to say, and Sansa wrapped her arms around him and pressed her lips to his, gobbling up whatever words he might say into her mouth and kissing him for all she was worth. When she stopped, she pulled back and saw a bit of the Jaime she loved back in his eyes.

She gave him a soft grin.

"Nope. Not on you, babe. This crap she pulled, it is all on her. Right now, we have a room full of angry people, and I need to know what you want me to do with them."

Jaime just stared at her, wonder and love and disbelief waring on his face.

"Remember, Jai. We're a team; it's always going to be you and me babe-through it all, for the rest of our days. I'm here for you, love."

"Sansa," Jaime said, dragging her close again and kissing her, allowing himself this moment of pure goodness. His friend had tried to hurt her, and all Sansa could do was be there for HIM.

Jaime hoped to hell his father had brought his mother's ring with him because Jaime needed to promise himself to her. He needed her to understand that he loved her more than anything; and that he was as committed to this relationship as she was. She was his life; his soulmate and he wanted her to be his wife.

Jaime had never had anyone in his life that loved him the way Sansa did, that was so willing to be by his side, that would fight with him and love him through all the ups and downs life threw at them. He stroked a hand down her face, giving her a soft smile that was reserved for her only.

"I think it's best if we speak with the crew tonight; I know how they gossip, and if we can get some
of the stories tonight, it'd be best. I mean, if you're ok with that, kitten," Jaime said in a rush.

Sansa flashed him a quick, bright smile.

"I'm good with it, Jaime. Remember, I'm a Stark. We don't break easily, and no one is going to chase me away from you, Jaime. You're mine!"

With another kiss to his lips and a pat on his ass, Sansa danced away from him, making her way to the front of the room.

Jaime just shook his head in wonder at her, feeling the crushing weight of Brienne's actions lift from his shoulders.

It was still a serious matter and needed to be dealt with. Jaime wasn't an idiot- things had very fundamentally changed for him professionally tonight. He knew that. He would never work with or for Brienne again, and they needed to get to the bottom of this shit storm with the network as well.

But no matter what, even if Jaime had to go it alone and release his shows on YouTube, he knew that none of that mattered compared to how strong he and Sansa had emerged from this. Brienne had tried to break them, and in the end, all they were was stronger than ever.

Sansa went to the front of the restaurant to speak to the crowd that was growing angrier and rowdier by the second, and Jaime stood back, beside his father, watching her.

"She is magnificent, son," Tywin said, having taken note of how Sansa's first response had been to be there for Jaime; to protect and support his son. Tywin had never seen anything quite like it, not since he had felt that way about his beloved wife.

"I will never deserve her, but I am going to try to be the best man for her. Every day, for the rest of my days. She deserves no less."

"You will do right by her, Jaime. I know how deeply you love," was all that Tywin said.

Then both lions quieted as Sansa clapped her hands and got everyone's attention. Immediately they calmed and turned to listen to her. She gave him a wink and Jaime felt his heart soar.

Jaime had never been so happy to have someone on his side as he was at that moment. He knew that no matter what happened to them, Sansa would always be there for him.

"Alright, everyone. We love you, and we thank you for being with us tonight. It's been a roller-coaster of a night to say the least. That got a laugh and Sansa smiled at them, disarming the worst of the anger. "But now we need some time to process everything that's happened."

There were some shouts and some calling for retribution and Sansa let out a sharp whistle.

"ENOUGH, guys. If you are part of Jaime's crew, please stay so we can find out what you knew. Everyone else, please give us time to get this all straightened out." She had her hands on her hips and a fire in her eyes that no one wanted to mess with.

Sansa Stark was an absolute force, and the Lannister men stood in complete awe of her.

Robb was almost snarling as he stood, fists clenched at his side. "San, you can't let her get away with this bullshit."

Sansa stepped forward, gave Robb a quick hug and then cupped his cheek.
"Big brother, I love you. And I know you love both of us. But you have to let us deal with this."

Jon was there as well, and he went to open his mouth, and she gave them both a look and held up her hand.

"Guys, I know you want to smash something right now. I know you're pissed; I am as well. But we need to be smarter than her."

Both Robb and Jon's eyes narrowed.

"Trust me, guys. Do you honestly think that Tywin or Jaime will let her get away with this?" Sansa asked, giving them a knowing look.

That had both men turning to look at Jaime, who stood with his father on one side, while Tyrion was on the other.

No one had ever seen Tywin look quite so angry, and it was as if a collective light bulb suddenly went on when they remembered just who Tywin Lannister was. He wasn't only Ned's Papa Lion; he was the Great Lion, and the man had destroyed those he'd viewed as his enemies for years.

Robb and Jon grinned at that thought, although there was nothing gentle or benevolent in those smiles.

Surprisingly, it was Arya who summed things up best.

"Guys, seriously. Papa Lannister is going to fucking destroy Brienne."

Tywin grunted at that statement and let a small, fearsome smile out.

"I wouldn't have put it quite so crassly, but the mouthy one is correct. When I am done with Brienne and her boss, there won't be a place in all of Westeros that they can hide."

"Alright, San. But know I hate leaving right now when all this shit is going down."

"I know, brother. And I love you for it. But you guys need to go on the cattle drive. Tywin is here; he's spoken with his lawyers, and you need to trust us to deal with it." She kissed them both again, hugging them and then shooed them away.

When Sansa finally got her family out the door, they were left with Jaime's core group; Pod, Dickon, Dany and several techs and sound people as well as Tywin, Tyrion and Marg.

Jaime thanked them for staying and then explained what had happened; the whole sordid story came out from Brienne's behaviour since they'd come North, to her anger towards Jaime, and her acerbic comments to Sansa.

"How'd you guys figure it out?" One of the techs asked, and Jaime explained what Brienne had said just before the episode had been set to air.

Everyone appeared upset but not shocked, which was disturbing. Especially to Jaime, who ran his hand through his hair, frustration radiating through his body. He looked at the faces of people that he'd known for years, and saw that they were looking almost... guilty.

"Ok, guys. I'm missing something here. No time for secrets; shit is about to hit the fan. What do you know?"

One of the sound guys gave a slight grimace and then said, "Dude, we love you. But how the hell
did you not know that Brienne had a major crush on you?"

Jaime appeared stunned.

"She did?"

The guy nodded. "Yeah. For like… years. I mean, I've only been here for three years, and even I knew it from day one man. She never stopped talking about you, even though she had like three other shows. Her entire world was Jaime Lannister."

Jaime said nothing, looking like someone had just told him the earth was flat.

Dickon cleared his throat. "I mean, we thought you knew and just let her have her crush. You know, like a pity thing. It's not like she's even in your league, Jai. She's a troll. We just assumed you were cool with it. You know, like the hot dude that feels bad for the ugly chick."

Jaime's mouth dropped open at that statement, and then he felt the anger start to simmer. Much like the situation with Harry, Jaime's fuse was slow to light, but when it did, people felt his wrath.

"Seriously? You thought I'm that much of an asshole?"

Dickon shrugged, missing how his words affected Jaime. "Honestly? It seemed like kind of a nice guy move. We all knew you never felt that way about her, but damn, I mean, the way she spoke about you, it was obvious that she was majorly in love with you."

The person who didn't miss how this was affecting Jaime, was Sansa and she was there by his side, squeezing his hand. She could see him almost grinding his back molars into dust, and his entire body was tense.

"Alright guys, this isn't helping much. Jaime isn't at fault for not knowing how someone feels about him."

"She never said a word," Jaime growled to his crew, keeping his hand firmly in Sansa's. "Not once did she ever indicate to me that she felt like that."

Pod cleared his throat. "Jaime, we know. I mean, we're on your side, man. I've spent loads of time around you guys. I knew you were her friend; hell, you're friends with all of us. I only really clued in when we got here, and she mentioned something about you having to remain single for the network. I've never seen a clause like that in anyone's contract."

Jaime felt himself relax marginally at Pod's support.

"Jaime, Sansa's right. It wasn't your fault if she never expressed her feelings towards you. I think I speak for all of us here that no matter what happens, we're with you, Jaime. Brienne crossed a big line tonight, and I, for one, won't ever work with her again."

A chorus of resounding yeses went along with Dany's statement, as every last person in Jaime's crew pledged to stand by him.

Jaime hadn't even realized how tense he was, until Dany's words of support and the rest of the crew saying they'd stay by him were voiced out loud.

Before Jaime could say anything, Tywin stepped forward.

"My lawyers are on their way; they'll be here tomorrow. For now, they advise that we keep
everything we have taped, and proceed as normal."

"I hate to be a dick, but will we get paid? I love Jaime, but I have a wife and two kids back in King's Landing."

Tywin's green eyes pinned the young man with a look. "Of course you will get paid. As of right now, no one, including Jaime, is fired. We have no idea if what Brienne said is nothing more than bluster, or if there was some greater plot at hand here. Go back to your hotels and continue to work. We will deal with the fallout over the coming days and weeks."

The crew shuffled out of the restaurant then, each person coming up to personally shake Jaime's hand and offer their support.

Finally, Dickon was there, and he ran a hand through his short hair.

"Look, Jaime, I'm sorry, man. I've been, well, kind of an ass. I thought you were a player like the paps and tabloids made you out to be. Then we got here, and you were all over Sansa, and I think, well… I don't know. I guess I thought it might just be a fling. I knew Brienne was livid at you; she's been in a rage since the moment we touched down, but I guess I didn't realize how deeply you cared for Sansa."

Jaime's mouth was a thin line. He liked Dickon and had worked well with him, but it hurt to hear that the man thought him so shallow and vain.

"I told everyone that things with Sansa were different," Jaime responded.

Dickon sighed.

"I know, man. But Jesus, Brienne. Man Jaime, she hates Sansa. She just went off on Sansa all the time, and after a while, I mean, I guess…" Dickon paused. "Fuck, I don't know. It's all fucked up, Jaime. Brienne's nuts, but you have to be careful. I might have been a dick that believed her when she said you were just up to your normal playboy ways, but she honestly hates Sansa."

Jaime saw the truth, at least how Dickon perceived it in his friend's eyes. Jaime wasn't sure how he felt about Dickon right now, but he had bigger issues to worry about. At least he'd been honest with him.

"Noted. We'll deal with her."

Dickon nodded and then said sorry again, before stepping back.

Pod was next, and Jaime hugged him, beyond grateful for what he did.

"I'll never be able to repay you for what you did tonight," Jaime started to say.

"I'm with you 100% Jaime. Whatever you need, you can count on me," Pod said with a smile.

"I know," Jaime told his friend, wondering what he'd done to earn such loyalty.

"You're a good guy, Jaime. All anyone has to do is spend some time with you and its apparent how awesome you are. Don't let her ruin you."

Then Pod and Dick were gone, and Jaime was left with Dany.

She squeezed him hard. "I'm sorry. I should have said something sooner. Honestly, I thought you were a nice guy, just easing her down gently."
"Was it that obvious?" Jaime asked his closest friend softly.

Dany cocked her head. "No, not really. I mean, to an outsider, maybe. But I think it didn't start like that for her. I think her feelings developed over time and the change was so subtle that you wouldn't have noticed. It only became really obvious to me once you fell in love with Sansa."

Jaime sighed and shook his head. "I never meant to hurt any…"

Dany pressed a finger to his lips and shook her head. "No, Jaime. This is on her. She's the adult. If she had feelings for you, real feelings, she should have told you. Rational, normal people do not do this. Brienne is responsible for her actions."

Jaime nodded, thinking about Dany’s words.

Dany threw her arms around Jaime, hugging him tightly. "Jai, you've found your soulmate. You're happier than I've ever seen you. Do not let Brienne ruin any of this for you."

"Thanks, Dan," Jaime said, pressing a kiss to the top of her head. When the tiny blond pulled back, she gave Jaime a cheeky grin.

"Besides, didn't you hear? We're practically going to be neighbours. Drogo found out that a piece of property adjacent to Sansa's winery is for sale." Dany shook her head. "Crazy man already bought it. My husband is never leaving the North."

Sansa overheard and let out a little squeal of happiness. "Seriously? We're going to be neighbors?"

Dany laughed and nodded. "We are. You two will be sick of the Drogo's in a few years, I'm sure."

"Never," Sansa said solemnly, as she hugged Dany, her eyes meeting Jaime's. She could see how happy this news made him, as well.

When it was finally just the Lannister's and Sansa, Tywin let out a deep sigh.

"Well I can't say I saw this coming- that woman was always trouble, but even this was too much for me to guess at," the patriarch of the Lannister clan said.

Margaery snorted, and all eyes went to her. She rolled her eyes. "Come on, you guys. I told you about her and Renly and Loras, right?"

Only Tyrion seemed to know what Marg was talking about. "Ok, well, I'm exhausted, and we are leaving tomorrow, and I haven't finished packing. I'll tell you on the drive home."

When Jaime was finally on the road back to the farmhouse, Marg let the other three know how Brienne had been relentless in her pursuit of Renly.

"I mean, she never stopped. Stalker like; his term, not mine. Anyways, this was before Ren had come out to his family. We all know how judgy Fat Bob is, and Stannis is a cold fish, so I know Ren has said he was really nervous. I don't know everything that happened, but right around when Loras and Ren met, that's when Brienne finally found out about Renly being gay."

Marg paused and then sighed.

"Again, I don't know all the details, but apparently she was threatening to blackmail Renly to his family, unless he dated her or something crazy. Anyways, Loras talked some sense into Ren and he came out, and they've been happy and together ever since. But I know they both hate her and think
she's completely nuts."

Jaime was lost in his own thoughts, thinking back to how often he'd comforted Brienne when she had said her heart had been broken by her first love. She had made it sound like she'd been dumped for another woman; not that the man she had been in love with was gay and had found someone.

Jaime tried to determine what the predominant emotion in him right now was; there were so many that it was hard to pick just one, but if he had to, he'd say that he felt… used. More than anything, he felt used by Brienne. Which was a feeling he hated more than anything in the entire world.

Cersei had used him for years; had used his body, used his name, used his money and connections and used his fame. When he'd finally broken free of her, he'd promised himself to never be in such a position again. Logically he knew, from his therapist and his father, that his string of one night stands was him using women, and he'd quickly put a stop to that. As much as Jaime had hated being used, he didn’t want to be a user either. He’d learned that happiness was not found in a bottle or in the endless parade of women in his life.

He'd remained single for the past couple of years, working on himself, his relationships with Tommen and Myrcella and his career. He hadn't been over the moon happy, but he'd been content. He'd had friends; people like Dany and Addam and yes, even Brienne.

Jaime had thought he'd gotten himself into a good position, which was why when he'd met Sansa, he'd been ready.

He’d been ready for the heart-stopping, life-altering, unending love that came when you found your other half- all of which Sansa promised. He'd dived in headfirst into a relationship with her because he'd done the hard work to get himself into a position to welcome love back into his life.

And now he felt used again, and by his friend. He blindly reached out and found Sansa's hand, and she gripped him back, her warmth spreading through his chilled body. Bringing her hand to his lips, he kissed it and thanked whatever gods that were out there for bringing Sansa Stark into his world. He'd be utterly lost without her.

The closer they got to home, and Jaime had no doubts that the farmhouse was his home, the more his anger built. He'd offered Brienne friendship and she'd twisted that. It wasn't his fault he didn't return her feelings, nor was it his fault that she wasn't mature enough to tell him how she'd felt. Had she told him, perhaps they could have salvaged something between them. But she hadn’t, and now it was all ruined.

When he crested the small hill and saw their home, all the pieces fell into place for Jaime.

This was his life; this house, this place, this woman by his side. He would not be a victim and he would not allow Brienne to steal one moment of happiness he'd found with Sansa. If the network fired him, he didn't care. He didn't need the money, and he'd figure out a way to do the shows he wanted to do with Sansa and her family, and their friends. People could either watch or not; Jaime didn't really care. As long as he was doing what he loved, that was all that mattered.

When they finally parked, Jaime let Tywin, Marg and Tyrion enter the house ahead of them. He tugged Sansa to his side.

"Walk with me?" He asked and she smiled and nodded at him.

"What's on your mind, baby?" she asked as they made their way towards the winery, down by the river.
Jaime looked up, loving how crisp and clear the night air was. He swore he could see every star in the sky this far out of town. He gave himself a brief moment to imagine showing their children the night sky; him and Sansa snuggled on a blanket with the kids between them.

Jaime took a huge breath and then turned so that Sansa was in his arms. Jaime took another moment to just look at her; really look. There was no denying that Sansa was a beautiful woman, but Jaime had been around beautiful women his entire life. It wasn't her beauty that he loved- it was the warmth and love in her eyes. How she felt about him and how she held nothing back. She was fearless in this relationship, and he would be the same.

"Tonight, my first reaction, when all this went down, was one of shame and worry," Jaime started to say. He pressed a soft kiss to Sansa's lips, when he saw her open her mouth to say something. "Let me speak, kitten. Please."

She grumbled a bit but wrapped her arms around him. Jaime gave her a soft smile.

"I was ashamed that my friend had tried to hurt you and worried about what it might do to us. Then as more information came to light, I was ashamed I didn't recognize her feelings. I questioned if I was too self-absorbed to notice a woman I thought was one of my closest friends had been in love with me, and I didn't have a clue."

"But," Jaime said when Sansa opened her mouth to protest, "I realized that it wasn't my fault. These past few years, I've been working on being a better person and being happy with myself. I won't lie, Sansa. I never expected to fall in love again. I'd gotten to a point where I was content being single. Maybe not truly happy, but content. I was alright with my life, and I wasn't willing to risk what happened with Cersei again by getting involved with the wrong person."

Jaime grinned and tucked a lock of her long hair behind her ear. "Then you stepped out on your porch and I was a goner, babe. First moment I saw you, I knew. Deep into my soul, I knew. Every single thing in my life, every shitty decision and every heartache had led me to that exact moment when I met you."

The smile that crossed Sansa's face was so big, Jaime couldn't help but return it.

"I don't know what's going to happen with Brienne. For all I know, she might be correct. I might get fired, and I don't care," Jaime said when Sansa's mouth opened again. "Because I have you, and that's enough. We'll figure something out, no matter what happens, because I know you'll be by my side."

"We will figure it out, Jaime. And yes, I'll be by your side through it all," Sansa said in a rush when he finally let her speak.

"I'm a work in progress, kitten. Cersei did a lot of damage, and now, with all this Brienne shit, well…" Jaime gave a little self-deprecating smile and a shrug. "I hope it doesn't put me a few steps back. But, what I do promise, is that I'll be your work in progress, for as long as you'll have me."

Sansa sniffed, her eyes filling with tears. Jaime had no idea how amazing he was. How self-aware he was, and how amazing it was that he was willing to work on his shortcomings. They all had them, Sansa knew. No one was perfect, but so often, people pretended there was nothing wrong and were unwilling to change. That more than anything, destroyed relationships.

"I'm a work in progress as well as Jaime. I've only had one serious relationship, and it was a disaster. So we'll learn together, my love."
Jaime cupped her cheeks and pulled her closer, fusing their lips, starting the kiss soft and gentle, before he angled his head and parted her lips. When Sansa moaned, his tongue darted inside, and Jaime deepened the kiss, tucking her closer and building the passion between them, washing away the ugliness of the evening.

"Take me home, Jaime," Sansa finally said, panting a bit. Then she winked. "I have a new lingerie set on that you haven't seen."

Sansa loved how Jaime's eyes darkened with desire, laughing when he tugged her hand began to jog back to their house. When they got there, he swung her up into his arms as she put hers around his neck.

"Baby, I love you so much," Jaime told her, and Sansa laughed.

"I love you, as well. Now, ravish me, Jaime," Sansa loved that she could say such a thing to him. There was such freedom in their love; she never had to worry about Jaime mocking her or making her feel stupid.

He wiggled his eyebrows. "What the lady wants, the lady gets," Jaime said, carrying her up the stairs and setting her gently on the bed, toeing off his shoes and pulling off his shirt.

Sansa just sat there for a moment, drinking him in. When Jaime's hands were on his belt, he stilled and smiled.

"See something you like, kitten?"

"Oh, hell, yes," she said, scrambling to get naked as well.

Laughing, they tumbled into one another, lips locked and hands stroking, touching one another until Jaime swiped a finger through her core and found her wet. He sucked his finger and Sansa’s eyes flared in desire, as heat pooled low.

"Mmmm, I love what you taste like," he purred into her ear, as he surged inside her.

"Jaime," Sansa moaned, clutching at him, wrapping her long legs around his middle, fusing then together.

"Hold on, kitten, this is going to go fast," he told her, overwhelmed by Sansa. Her wet heat pulled him in, gripping him again and again as he set a pace that would have them both crashing to their orgasms in no time.

"Jaime, Jaime, Jaime," Sansa kept repeating, and he grunted, loving how his name sounded coming from her lips when he was deep inside her.

He leaned down to suck on her neck, marking and teasing the pale flesh, loving how everyone would see the evidence of their passion tomorrow.

"Jaime, gods, please," Sansa cried, uncaring who might hear them.

Jaime grunted and reached down, finding her clit hard and needy and stroked her, growling out his approval when she screamed his name. She tightened on him so much he had to push harder to finish deep inside her, all but collapsing on top of her in a sweaty mess.

When they finally caught their breath, Sansa let out a small giggle. "I forgot your family was here. Do you think they heard?"
Jaime arched an eyebrow incredulously. "Sansa, I think Robb and Jeyne heard you."

"Oh! You horrible man," Sansa said, blushing deeply. "Because of that, you can go to the kitchen and get me a bottle of water. I won't be able to show my face for days."

Jaime laughed at her, tucking her in and pressing a kiss to her lips. "I'll gladly be your slave, My Lady."

Sansa threw a pillow at him as Jaime tidied the room and pulled on a pair of pyjama pants and nothing else. He slipped out of the master bedroom and padded barefoot downstairs. When he got to the kitchen, he wasn't surprised to find his father waiting for him.

"I take it things are good between the two of you?" Tywin asked, a smirk on his handsome face.

Jaime threw back his head and laughed, taking a long sip of water.

"Things are perfect between us."

"Good."

Tywin pushed the small ring box across the island towards Jaime.

"I've waited a long time to give this to you. I think we both know it wasn't meant for Cersei. But Sansa, she is a different class of woman. I've never seen anyone, besides your mother and perhaps Margaery, that is so willing to defend a Lannister."

Jaime nodded at his father.

"But it is more than just her public defence of you, Jaime. You share the same values and same morals; you want the same things in this life. And you are happier here than I have ever seen you anywhere else."

"I want Myrcella and Tommen to meet her before I ask her to marry me. Myr is coming this weekend, and I'm going to talk to Tom tomorrow. See if he can come up as well."

"I think that is a good idea, although I can't imagine them not loving her. We all do, your brother included."

Jaime grinned at that thought. He wanted his children to be part of this growing family he was creating here in the North. "I take it you're staying?"

Tywin nodded. "Elia and Oberyn Martell will be here late tomorrow morning. We will need time to wade through this mess, and then the grandparents' tea is on Thursday."

Jaime laughed. "Man, Ned sure does love you." Jaime paused. "I'm sorry that things with Cersei didn't allow you the chance to be a more involved grandparent with Myrcella and Tommen."

Tywin cocked his head. "While it is true I missed out on their younger years; there's still time Jaime. I cannot wait to see them this weekend."

Jaime finally reached for the ring box and opened it. He traced a finger over the classic ring, remembering seeing it on his mother's hand. It wasn't the most ostentatious ring, perhaps not something one would expect to find on the hand of a woman that was married to the wealthiest man in the country, but it was elegant and tasteful. Three flawless, emerald cut diamonds on a platinum band.
"I remember mother wearing this," Jaime choked out, overcome with memories.

"It wasn't the first ring I gave her. The first one was smaller," Tywin revealed and Jaime’s eyes widened at that little tidbit of information.

Tywin waved a hand. "When she was pregnant with Tyrion, I gave her this one. It is the three of us, you see."

Jaime looked down at the three stones again.

"She loved it, not because of the price, but what it represented. She told me every time she looked at it, she knew she had the three most precious things in her life with her. She loved her boys- the both of you with her whole heart. She'd have loved Sansa, Jaime."

Jaime walked up to his father and embraced him. It wasn't something they did often, but the moment called for it.

"Thank you. For… everything," Jaime said, voice thick.

"We're Lannister's Jaime. We are a pride, and we take care of our own. You are not alone, not now and not ever. Remember that."

Jaime gulped down some air and nodded. He knew his family loved him. He knew Sansa loved him. He knew Tommen and Myrcella loved him. He had friends, and now he had the Starks. He wasn't alone. This situation with Brienne was nothing like what he'd been through with Cersei.

"I know."

"Now, go back to your woman. I'm sure she's wondering where in the hell you've gone," Tywin said, a smirk on his face.

Jaime laughed and closed the ring box, slipping it in his pocket. He knew he wanted Sansa to be his wife; now, he just needed the perfect time and place to ask her.

When he opened the door to their bedroom, she stirred slightly but didn't wake. Jaime put the ring box in his sock drawer, and slipped under the covers, loving when she fit herself against him.

"Hey, baby," she murmured sleepily.

"Hey, kitten."

"Love you."

Jaime's heart melted. Even in sleep, Sansa was his.

"I love you too, kitten."

Chapter End Notes

Up Next:

The Martells arrive (I am SO excited to add them to the mix)
Grandparents tea

Continued fall out from Brienne's actions

As always, comments always welcome and most appreciated!

T

PS- I love donkeys and goats.
Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

So on Friday, there were some pictures of NCW cooking. In chef's whites. On Instagram.

Thank you to those who tagged and sent them to me. You are the real heroes of this chapter.

I CAN'T EVEN--- YOU ARE WELCOME!!!!!

I MAKE NO APOLOGIES.

Also two picsets because we all need them on a Sunday.

:) 

T

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset 1
Picset 2

Jaime's eye cracked open when Sansa's went off at the time of stupid o'clock.

"What time is it?" he groaned, pulling her closer, rubbing his face into her shoulders blades and inhaling deeply. He loved what Sansa smelled like and felt his dick twitch to life, even though it was dark as could be outside. He was always ready for her.

"Shhh, baby. Early."

"How early?" came Jaime's muffled voice as his hand found her breast and squeezed. Jaime loved warm, soft Sansa first thing in the morning. He could imagine the rest of his life, waking up just like this; Sansa in his arms and a smile on his face.

Sansa gave a soft laugh at his roving hands. She loved how Jaime could never seem to get enough of her.

"4:30 am."

Both Jaime's eyes opened at that.

"Kitten, why in seven hells are we up at 4:30 am? We don't even have a rooster."

Jaime loved it when Sansa laughed again. In truth, he lived to make her happy, and after last night, starting today with her smiling was a vast improvement from the evening before and the mess that was his life.
"Cattle drive. We all meet at the ranch house and have a big family breakfast, and help the guys pack up. Then we see them off." Sansa worried her lower lip. "In all the excitement yesterday, I forgot to tell you. I understand if you want to sleep in."

Jaime shook his head and forced both eyes awake. "Nope, baby. I'm coming."

Jaime knew how important Sansa’s family was to her. They were important to him as well, and he wanted to be part of everything. Including, it seemed, getting up at the crack of dawn.

Sansa’s smile stretched across her face, and she leaned down to capture his lips. "Thank Jaime." It was stunning how happy he could make her by just being there with her.

Jaime gave her a wicked little grin, his hand still on her breast and flicked a nipple, delighted when it hardened immediately and tugged Sansa closer, taking her ear lobe in his mouth. "Do we have time?"

She shook her head, regretfully. "Nope. We have to go." She laughed when Jaime’s face fell. He was the best thing for her confidence; Sansa had never felt so desired in her entire life.

Jaime let out a little groan, as Sansa threw back the covers and all but dragged him out of bed. "Throw any old thing on. We'll be back here by 7 am to get ready for the day." The one thing he wouldn’t get used to was the cold. Even now, in autumn, it was much cooler in the North than it was down south.

Jaime yawned and followed Sansa, grabbing jeans, a t-shirt and an old sweatshirt from his alma mater. When they were ready, they descended the stairs hand in hand, startled to see Tywin standing there waiting for them.

"Tywin," Sansa cried happily. "What are you doing up?"

The Great Lion gave her a rueful smile. "Sansa, do you think Ned would allow this moment to pass without informing me of it?"

Sansa laughed and shook her head at her nephew. He continuously surprised her with his deep affection for his adopted grandfather.

"Alright. Let's go. Jeyne will have coffee and breakfast ready," Sansa told both Lannister men as they went to Jaime's Rover. They were quiet as they made the short drive to the ranch. It was lit up and looked like mid-day with the amount of traffic. It was then that Jaime and Tywin knew that this cattle drive must be a big deal, and they asked Sansa for more context.

"Hmmm, yeah. I mean, it's important to get the cows down from the high pasture. Robb tries to leave them up there for as long as possible. The more they can graze, the less he has to feed, and with several thousand heads, it can be a big feed bill if you add a couple of weeks on."

Sansa glanced at the mountains, her brows drawn. She loved the mountains, but they could be temperamental, and more than one rancher had lost a hell of a lot of money if they miscalculated when to get their herd down from high pastures.

"It's always a bit of a guessing game. Wait too long, and they might get snowed in, and we lose them. Get them too soon, and you literally eat up your profits feeding cattle that could have been grazing for free."

Neither Lannister had fully understood what a delicate balance ranching was, but Tywin was quickly learning. He had made his fortune by making the right decision when others had hesitated.
Tywin's admiration for Robb Stark grew. Robb had been young when he'd had to take over the family business, and by all indicators, he'd continued his family legacy. Not every son could do so. Tywin knew what that took.

They stepped out of the Rover, and Ned's cry filled the air.

"Papa Lion," he said, cowboy boots stomping down off the porch where he had been perched waiting for them.

"You've got him, San?" Jeyne called, and Sansa said she did.

Tywin scooped Ned up into his arms. "I thought we were here for breakfast?" Tywin asked his grandson.

"We are, but first, the barn, Papa Lion. That’s where all the cowboys are, getting ready." Ned had a massive grin on his face, and both Lannister's turned to Sansa.

"That's where the guys will be; they'll saddle up and be ready to go and then come in for breakfast," Sansa said, taking Jaime's hand.

The sun was still an hour or two from rising. Jaime checked his watch, startled to see that it was October 1st today. He'd been North for over two weeks now, and loved it, although he was still adjusting to the shorter days. He remembered how Sansa had debated him that Halloween wasn’t a ‘real’ holiday, but now that Jaime knew he was going to be here for it, he was excited to experience it with the Starks. He couldn’t help but wonder what Ned might dress up as.

Their small group stepped into the barn to see the cowboys working steadily to get themselves ready. Joining Robb were his three hands, along with Jon, Gendry and Drogo. There were two men Jaime didn't recognize.

"Hands from the neighbouring ranch," Sansa explained when Jaime asked who they were. All he knew was that all these people looked like they belonged on a horse, where he’d been so out of his depth. Jaime knew by staying here, he’d need to spend more time in the saddle, but that was a problem for another day.

"Hey buddy," Robb said, grinning at Ned, who asked to be put down. Robb always let Ned sit on his horse before he left, and that was even better than being with Papa Lion. Well, almost. Papa Lion was pretty special, and Ned loved having him back.

"Hi Daddy," Ned said, running towards Robb, who swung him up quickly and sat him on the big chestnut horse. Ned's little legs kicked on either side of the saddle, as he held on. Very few things scared Ned Stark, and being on top of his Daddy’s horse wasn’t one of them. He loved it.

Drogo was pushing Robb to get both boys more time on the back of small mounts. It explained a lot of why the Dothraki were so skilled on the back of the horse; they practically raised their children on them. Drogo thought it was crazy that Ned had only been allowed to ride a pony.

Robb and Drogo had more than one debate on it until the Dothraki man had worn Robb down and Ned had let out a cheerful yell.

As they made their way deeper into the barn Sansa made sure to talk with everyone; she'd known these guys her entire life. She patted each horse, rubbing them down and inhaled the scent of horse, manure, barn and man. It was something she’d grown up with her entire life and to her, it was home.
When she got to Jon, she saw he was frowning, and while that wasn't unusual, it seemed more profound this morning.

"What's up?" she asked him, gesturing to his face. Jon scowled at Sansa’s finger that was pointing at him.

"First time going up into the mountains since Ella," Jon said, running a hand through his curls and giving Sansa a rueful grin. She loved Jon’s longer hair and tugged on a curl.

"Ahhh, yes. I can imagine it'll be tough." Sansa felt her heart melt a bit at how much Jon loved his baby girl.

"Yeah." Jon paused and rolled his eyes. "Of course, Val says she's going to catch up on all her shows and binge on chocolate when I'm gone."

"Ohhh, maybe we can have a Housewives of King's Landing marathon night," Sansa said, eyes excited.

It got the right reaction as Jon laughed. "You never let me sulk for long, San."

Sansa wrapped her arms around him.

"I'll check in on your girls, Jon. You know I love baby snuggles," Sansa said, pressing a kiss to his cheek.

Jon wiggled his eyebrows. "Yeah? When are you going to add to the brood," Jon asked, winking as Sansa blushed.

Both of them turned to see Jaime and Robb having an in-depth discussion, and Ned was pointing out all the different parts of the horse to Papa Lion who was indulging him.

"I love him so much, Jon," Sansa said, sighing happily.

Jon grinned and shook his head. "You always liked the pretty ones," Jon said, tugging on a lock of her hair.

"Oh, stop. He's more than just a handsome face," Sansa protested, squeezing Jon tighter.

"Rich as well." Jon winked at her.

"Ohhh, you're horrible," Sansa said, smacking Jon on the chest.

Jon just laughed as Sansa handed him more gear. They both knew that Sansa didn’t care a bit about Jaime’s money or fame. Jon had worried when his cousin has kept things going with Harry, but now, she’d found a good guy and he was happy for her.

Meanwhile, Jaime had been taken aside by Robb and asked if they could speak privately. Knowing that Tywin would keep a keen eye on Ned, Robb put his hand on Jaime's back and walked them off to the quiet side of the barn.

"How are you doing?" Robb asked, genuine worry in his eyes.

He liked Jaime, and not just because Sansa did. Sure it was true he was good for Sansa, but it was more than that. The guy just fit in with the Starks, which was surprising considering they were a bunch of Northern hicks just trying to keep their heads above water, and Jaime and Tywin were worth more money than they’d ever make. Somehow though, they all just worked and Robb had no
idea how.

The bullshit with Brienne last night had pissed Robb off - and not because he gave a single fuck about what people said about him or his family. It had pissed him off that Brienne had taken a shot at Jaime and Sansa. Robb had watched as Sansa had taken control last night and had rallied around Jaime. Robb knew that Jaime had nothing to do with that shitty episode that Brienne had almost aired and Robb was proud of his sister. She might be beautiful, but she had the heart of a wolf and a spine of steel. No one would push her around, and the Lannister’s had realized that last night.

Personally, Robb thought the big woman was crazy if she thought that she could scare the Starks. They'd always been the subject of gossip and slander; it was part of being a Stark. There had been a time after their parents had died when Robb caught his face in the tabloids more than once. They may not be Lannister wealthy, but they were the Starks of the North and people loved to talk about them. They wouldn’t be scared off by someone like Brienne.

"I'm good. I mean, it wasn't about me last night. That wasn’t what upset me," Jaime said, and Robb saw the truth in his eyes. The man was crazy about Sansa.

"I know. But Jai, it was a hit on both of you." Robb gave him a pointed look.

Jaime ran a hand through his hair and shook his head, letting out a big sigh. "I should have seen it coming."

Robb snorted and shook his head. "How the fuck were you gonna do that, son?" Jaime had some ego on him if he thought he could control everyone and their actions.

The son comment made Jaime's eyebrows rise; he was older by Robb Stark by a good few years. But he took the point Robb was trying to make. Jaime did have a tendency to think everything was his fault; or that he was some type of superman that could prevent ‘all bad things from happening.’ Jaime knew this; he’d been working on it with his therapist for a few years. Some might even call it a martyr complex.

Robb just thought it was dumb, and not worth losing sleep over and told him that, eliciting a grin from Jaime.

Robb clapped him on the back. "That one's crazier than a sack full of cats." Robb gave Jaime a knowing look. "You can't predict crazy, brother. Nor can you control it.” Robb’s look was pointed and very direct and Jaime took the point.

Jaime laughed; now, he was a brother. He'd never be bored marrying into this family, that much was more than apparent. They were, if possible, even more, complicated than the Lannisters.

Jaime had been worried about how the Starks might look at him after he felt like he failed to protect Sansa. But it appeared they laid the blame where it should be- at Brienne's feet.

“I guess not,” Jaime said, agreeing with Robb, finding his shoulders relaxing.

"No, you can't. And you're wasting your time feeling bad about something you didn't do. So lose that fucking shit,” Robb said good-naturedly. Jaime laughed and then searched for Sansa.

Both men looked over and saw Jon and Sansa in deep conversation.

"So when are you going to ask my sister to marry you?"

Jaime's eyebrows rose, and he turned to Robb, who shrugged.
"Our Dad's not here, and I can't imagine your father having any objections. That leaves me."

Jaime realized that Robb Stark was a good man—deep to his bones, a good fucking man. He loved his family, including his very successful and independent sister.

"I need the perfect place," Jaime said, leaning in closer. "I have my mother's ring; my father brought it with him."

Robb's eyes lit. "Yeah?"

Jaime nodded. "I never gave it to my ex," as Jaime explained and Robb grunted at that and nodded again.

"What are you thinking?" Jeyne had been showing Robb Jaime's Instagram page, and while Robb didn't understand all the ins and outs of social media, he knew that Jaime and Sansa had a very public relationship. It wasn't how Robb would do it, but San seemed happy, and that's all Robb cared about.

"I want it to be private. Somewhere it's just us; no WIFI if I could swing it. But," Jaime said, rubbing his neck, "I need a kitchen."

"Course you do," Robb said, shaking his head. The women sure seemed to love watching Jaime cook. Robb had no idea what that was about, but hell, if it didn't work for the lion.

"What about the family cabin?" Robb said suddenly, and Jaime looked interested.

"Family cabin? Is it as rustic as it sounds?"

Robb threw his head back and laughed. "Nope. My mother put up with a lot of shit living on this ranch, but she demanded an escape every once and a while. It's not huge, but it's modernized and had full power and a kitchen that even Bran approves of."

Jaime's eye lit. An entire weekend along with Sansa, where he could cook for her, and they could be together? It sounded perfect.

"You don't mind?"

Robb shook his head and then gave him all the details.

By the time Jeyne came and got them for breakfast, the horses were packed and ready. And Jaime had a plan to ask Sansa to be his wife.

The mood was jovial, even though everyone knew it was one of the tensest times at the ranch. Both Jon and Robb liked that Jaime would be around; an added bonus was that Tywin was staying North.

"Papa Lion, I have to draw a picture for you, for the grandparents' tea," Ned said, scooping up scrambled eggs and bacon as if he had a hollow leg, shovelling it into his mouth.

"A picture? I cannot wait to see it," Tywin replied.

Ned frowned. "I wish I could show you before the tea." He paused. "Do you like tea, Papa Lion?"

"I do."

"I'm having juice. One special helper gets chosen; to help with the juice. I hope it's me, but when I
asked my teacher said she hadn’t chosen yet.”

“Perhaps if you’re very good, and listen well, she might choose you,” Tywin said and Jeyne sent him a silent thank you. Tywin grinned; he could only imagine the handful that Ned would be in a preschool class. He probably should be in grade 1 already, given his intelligence and vocabulary.

Ned sighed and shook his head. “I do try to wait for my turn. But sometimes my brain just gives my mouth the words to say, and I can’t help myself.”

The entire table erupted in laughter at that statement.

Tywin and Jaime were fascinated to learn what was involved in a cattle drive and asked question after question. When breakfast was done and cleaned, those with wives and children grabbed them for goodbye kisses and hugs.

Jaime wrapped Sansa in his arms, happy when she leaned back against him and they watched her family prepare to leave.

“Thanks for coming this morning,” she told him and he smiled at her.

“Always baby.”

As for the goodbyes, Ned clung to Robb, small sobs wracking his little body.

“Daddy’ll be back soon, buddy. In the meantime, you need to take care of Mama and Benny,” Robb said and Ned nodded, trying valiantly to get his tears under control.

“I’ll ask Papa Lion and Uncle Jaime for help,” Ned told bravely and Robb laughed.

“I expect it. Papa Lion is on duty as of now.”

“Ok, Daddy. I’ll tell him.” Ned gave Robb one more hug.

Then Robb grabbed his wife and kissed her deeply. “Take care of yourself. Sansa will help you out; please don’t be too stubborn to ask, woman,” Robb growled at her, grabbing her ass.

Jeyne giggled. “I won’t. Besides, like I can keep Ned from Tywin.” Both of them grinned at that thought. “And Dany’s here with Roc. We’ll be good baby. You be safe, Robb Stark.” Jeyne wagged a finger at her husband, who just have her his biggest shit-eating grin. It made Jeyne swoon, which was half the reason she found herself pregnant with baby number three. Robb Stark was a charming man and looked good enough to eat.

Jon was giving Val and Ella one last kiss, while Gendry was talking softly to Arya’s tiny baby bump. Arya was rolling her eyes, but she had a dopy expression of love on her face, so Sansa knew that she was loving it.

Drogo had both Dany and Roc in his arms, and while they were used to spending time apart, it still tugged at Dany’s heart a bit each time when they had to spend time away from one another.

“When I come back, sun and stars, we start building our house,” Drogo said. Almost nothing had changed in their lives since Tywin had revealed the secret bank account, other than the fact that they were both quite happy to make their life here in the North. Dany knew that with the fallout from Brienne, no matter what happened, she’d follow Jaime.

And they both wanted another baby; more than one if Dany were being honest. She was greedy
and looked at Robb and Jeyne and wanted what they had.

As the women, along with Ella, Ned, Roc, Ben and Jaime and Tywin watched the men mount up and ride from the yard, the sun finally broke over the mountains, bathing the entire ranch yard in golden light. Robb let out a whistle and his three ranch dogs ran to their side, eager to be on their way.

They stood as a group until the line of horses disappeared into the trees and then they all moved. Sansa made both Jeyne and Dany promise they’d let her know if they need anything. The same went for Val and Arya. Then knowing she had a million things to do, Jaime, Sansa and Tywin left for the winery.

Sansa sighed as Jaime drove them back to their house. It never really got easier, but it was still something she loved seeing, as they guys rode out each fall. She loved that her family had been able to continue their way of life, despite the challenges that a modern world presented. It seemed that the world was obsessed with convenient, fast and cheap, and none of that was what the Starks were doing.

They walked into the farmhouse to find Marg and Tyrion up and waiting for them. Tywin was planning on taking them to the airport and also picking up his legal team that was flying in. Since they’d already eaten, Tyrion asked if Tywin would take them in early since they were scouting a few properties they were interested in and wanted his opinion.

Sansa and Marg hugged each other long and hard.

“I’m so fucking glad he found you,” Marg whispered into Sansa’s ear. “Come to King’s Landing and we’ll blow a hole in his bank account, babe.”

Sansa laughed and told Marg she looked forward to it. Then Marg threw herself into Jaime’s arms dramatically while Sansa knelt down to talk with Tyrion. She hugged him tightly.

“You’re so good for him, Sansa,” Tyrion told her.

“He’s so good for me,” Sansa replied.

Tyrion grinned. “Well, that works out nicely for you then.”

Sansa laughed. “It does. Please do not be strangers. As you can see we have more than enough room.”


Her grin was huge. “Oh, I am.”

Tyrion shook his head, still amazed that his brother had found his perfect match.

They were out the door a few minutes later, and Jaime and Sansa stood with Tank, watching them from the porch. Jaime had cancelled all taping today on the advice of the Martells. There was enough that they’d already shot, and there were huge questions now over who ‘owned’ that work. Jaime didn’t even care if he never worked for the Food Network again; he just wanted what they’d done up here. Pod had assured him that he had copies of it all.

“Mind if I take some time to make some calls?” Jaime asked Sansa when they were finally alone.

She shook her head. “Nope. I need to do some chores, and later I need to go into Wintertown for
some groceries.”

“Kitten, your family is barely gone and already your cheating on them at the supermarket?”

Sansa rolled her eyes and laughed. “You’re hilarious. There’s always a few things I need to pick up.”

They had walked back into the kitchen, where Sansa made herself another cup of coffee.

“You know I’ve figured out what we need here babe,” Jaime said stealing the first sip from her cup.

Sansa raised an elegant eyebrow and took her coffee back.

“I’m afraid to ask.”

“Goats, kitten.”

Sansa laughed until she saw that Jaime appeared to be serious.

“Think about it. Goat cheese; goat milk. I mean, there are all those high-end spas that use goats milk to make their products. And they’re cute.”

Jaime could see Sansa waffling. “I mean, they are adorable. Especially when they’re small,” Sansa said, thinking about how cute they were. And Robb didn’t have any, so Ned would love it.

Jaime tugged her closer. “Goats, and maybe another dog. A few kids,” he said, whispering in her ear and Sansa felt the lust roll through her body. She was such a freak, she thought, being seduced by talk of farm animals and babies.

“Make your calls, Jaime,” she said, laughing as she left the kitchen to him.

Jaime watched her walk out of the kitchen.

“And quit looking at my ass, Jaime.”

“But it’s a great ass, kitten.”

“Bet your ass it is,” Sansa said, getting the last word on a laugh.

Jaime was still grinning when he texted Tommen.

Jaime: Have a few minutes to chat with your old man?

Tom: Always Dad

Jaime dialled his son; he’d learned the hard way not to Facetime unless they specially asked. Jaime did not like to think of what he’d seen the last time he’d unexpectedly gotten in touch with Myrcella that way.

“Hi, Dad,” Tommen’s warm, easy voice filled the line.

It was stunning to Jaime when he thought how different Tommen was from Joffrey. Was Sansa’s theory correct? Was it really possible that Joffrey wasn’t even his? Shaking himself from that thought, Jaime responded to Tom.
“Hey. How’s KL?”

“Good. I mean, mostly the same. Classes are good, but I won’t lie and say I don’t learn more when I’m cooking with you.”

It had delighted Jaime when his youngest son had followed in his footsteps. Right now, Tommen was attending the prestigious King’s Landing culinary school, and working at Jaime’s restaurant between classes. It was a gruelling schedule, but Jaime knew he loved it.

“So, about that,” Jaime said and Tommen laughed.

“Is this when you tell me you’ve met the love of your life and you’re moving North?” Tommen’s voice held no censure, for which Jaime was grateful.

“You’ve been talking to Cella,” Jaime accused and Tommen laughed.

“Well, yeah. And I do follow you on Instagram Dad. You two are everywhere.”

Jaime didn’t quite know what to say, so he blurted out the first thing he that came to his mind.

“It’s not a fling, Tom. I mean, Sansa, this whole thing,” Jaime was stumbling through an explanation.

“Oh Dad, even I can see that. She looks awesome and you two look super happy together,” Tommen said, laughing.

Jaime thanked the gods for his easy-going son. Tommen was just good, all the way through, much like Myrcella.

“I want you to meet her. You and Cella. This weekend; Grandfather will send the jet for you,” Jaime said quickly.

“Don’t you mean, Papa Lion?” Tommen asked.

Jaime chuckled. “Wait until you meet little Ned. He’s got the Great Lion wrapped around his little finger.”

“I can come up. I had to admit, I already discussed it with Myrcella. We are both excited to meet Sansa.” Tommen paused. “It’s been a long time since we’ve seen you this happy Dad. Anyone who can make you smile like you did last night on your show is worth meeting in our books.”

Jaime choked up with emotion. He had worked his ass off to have a relationship with his two kids after Cersei had done her best to destroy it all. Jaime would never know what he’d done to deserve a second chance with them, but the three of them were close. Both Tommen and Myrcella barely tolerated Cersei anymore; they’d seen how manipulative she was. Jaime had never made them choose; not like his ex-wife had tried, but the kids had made it clear they were Team Jaime.

“I can’t wait for you all to meet.”

“When are you going to pop the question?” Tommen asked causally, making Jaime choke on the sip of coffee he’d just taken.

“What makes you think I am?”

Tommen laughed. “Come on Dad. You’re that guy.”
“What guy?”

“That guy that falls in love; finds his soulmate and goes all in. These past few years, well that wasn’t you, Dad. You love being in a relationship, and you love kids.”

Jaime was stunned speechless. He wondered when Tommen had grown up and gotten scarily accurate at knowing him.

“Well, yes, I guess I am that guy.” Jaime and Tommen both knew he was. “And that doesn’t bother you? That she might be my wife? That we’d want to have a family?”

If Jaime could have seen Tommen, he would have seen how happy and relaxed his son was. “Nah. It’s neat. I’d love to have more brothers or sisters. Plus I heard the North is super cool.”

“I want you two to meet her first,” Jaime said, getting the conversation back on track. His throat felt thick at how supportive Tommen was and how much he genuinely seemed to want more siblings.

“We’ll be there Dad. Oh and by the way, Cella has been stalking Rickon Stark on social media,” Tommen added before laughing and hanging up.

Jaime just looked at his phone, wondering if Sansa’s brother was a player or if he might actually be a good fit for Myrcella. He seemed like a solid guy the one time Jaime had met him, but he was also a professional hockey player, and Jaime knew the puck bunnies that threw themselves at hockey players all the time. The last thing Jaime wanted was to see his daughter get hurt.

Jaime was just about to go and find Sansa when his phone chimed.

**Tywin**: I’ve spoken with Elia Martell. She has asked, if possible, to have Addam Marbrand at Winterfell so she might have his first-hand account.

**Jaime**: Alright. Let me get in touch with him.

Glancing briefly upstairs, wondering what Sansa was up to, Jaime then dialled Addam, who picked up on the first ring.

“Jaime, that was amazing!” Addam said immediately.

Jaime realized that his friend and manager had no idea about what had happened last night.

“Got a minute?” Jaime asked.

“What’s up? You sound serious.”

“It is.”

Addam made sure his door was closed and then gave his full attention to Jaime, who explained in detail what had happened last evening.

Addam let out a low, long whistle. “Holy shit, Jaime. I had no idea she was so crazy.”

Jaime gave a rueful little chuckle. “Apparently neither did I.”

“Look, Jaime, all I can say is I am for sure certain what I negotiated for you. I mean, it was a big part of your latest contract,” Addam said. “You have full rights to your social media accounts and to content that is set to go to air.”
Jaime let out a breath he’d been holding. He knew Addam had his back; he always had. “Yah, I know man. Look, it’d be easier if you came up here to meet with our lawyers. This just blew up and Brienne is making it sound like I’m on the verge of getting fired.”

“Fired? Jaime, you’re the star. Varys knew it. It’s why he relented when I came at him hard for your last contract.”

“Varys? He’s Brienne’s boss?” Jaime asked, confusion marring his voice. While he’d never been close with the man, Jaime didn’t think that Varys hated him that much to risk his own network airing a show that Brienne had put together.

“No, he’s not. I mean, not anymore. The minute he signed you, they promoted him. He’s head of the whole network now. Food, Home and Garden, Lifestyle. A bunch of them.”

“Then who the hell is Brienne’s boss?” Jaime asked, confusion evident in his voice.

“Some guy named Baelish. He did reality TV programming in the Vale. As far as I know, he’s a total sleaze. I’m surprised you’ve never met him, but from what I hear, he’s a ‘behind the scenes’ kind of guy. Apparently he’s gunning for the top position and he and Varys hate one another.”

Jaime scrubbed a hand down his face, wondering what any of this had to do with him. As far as he knew, he’d never met a man named Baelish in his life. Mostly, Jaime tried to avoid most TV people. It wasn’t that he was a snob, it was just they all seemed so fake and he’d had enough fake with Cersei.

“Why does this Baelish guy hate me enough to let Brienne put together that show?” Jaime asked Addam.

Addam shook his head, not that Jaime could see it. “My guess? There is something going on between Varys and Baelish and you’re just the pawn. I’ll catch a flight up this afternoon. My advice, Jaime? Start thinking about what you want.”

“What does that mean?” Jaime asked, curious.

“You know I’m your friend first, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Then honestly, Jai, do you even want to be on just a cooking show? I mean, I got the impression you did it mostly because of Cersei and her endless demands. From what I’ve seen, you like doing something … bigger. I mean, you’ve told me about these other episodes, right? The whole farm to table thing; the ranch. Sansa’s winery. I mean, it just seems more like the Jaime and Sansa show. The Jaimsa Show, #hashtag, I said it first,” Addam finished in a rush.

Jaime stood there stunned. Was it possible he could do something… more? He loved cooking, of that there was no question. But even doing his show had become routine. What he loved about being in the North was that every episode was just a little bit different. Jaime loved the creativity that came with interacting with all sorts of different people and he had a million more ideas.

They could do a whole set of shows in King’s Landing, some at the Rock. Hell, they could even spend some time at Highgarden. And Jaime wanted Sansa by his side the entire time. It wasn’t about fame or money; he just wanted the opportunity to be creative and she brought it out in him.

“Do you think it’s possible?” Jaime murmured, not even realizing he’d spoken out loud.
“Dude, all the cool kids are on YouTube these days,” Addam said, laughing.

Jaime shook his head, mind going a million miles per hour. “I need to think. Ummm, send me your flight details and we’ll pick you up. You can stay here.”

“You sure man?”

“Of course,” Jaime said, knowing Sansa wouldn’t mind, although he might want to offer to do laundry. Their house had been a revolving door of people.

“Okay. See you in a few hours. Don’t worry Jaime. It’ll all work out.”

With that cheerful prediction, Addam signed off and Jaime texted his father.

Jaime: Addam will catch an afternoon flight.

Tywin: Good. I should be back in a couple of hours.

Jaime grinned. That meant he had Sansa all to himself for the next little while, and he planned on making very good use of the time. Setting his phone down, locking both the front and the back doors, Jaime took the stairs two at a time to the top floor. He found Sansa in their bedroom, folding laundry and singing along to a country song.

We’re a kiss at 2 am that tastes like wine, We’re a ride home in the dark with our fingers intertwined

You and me keep tryna pretend, But you and me, yeah we gotta admit,

We’re an extra set of clothes on the bedroom floor,

Where I see you all the time, but still wanna see you more

She kept singing, but it was then that Jaime realized that she’d washed his chef’s whites. He watched, stunned and utterly fascinated as she traced his name with her long elegant fingers, touching it reverently. And then she brought it up to her lips to press a kiss to it.

Jaime knew that Sansa was proud of him and his profession. She’d told him on more than one occasion that she loved to watch him cook. And there were more than a few heated memories that started with them in the kitchen. But up until this moment, Jaime hadn’t truly, fully believed that she loved his profession. That she saw him as something worthy. He was so used to Cersei’s derision and Brienne’s casual dismissal, that he realized he’d somehow made his talent…less.

But clearly that wasn’t the case in Sansa’s eyes.

He must have made a sound, because she turned, still holding his chef’s jacket in her hands, her mouth popping into a perfect O and her eyes going wide. She blushed, but still her fingers stroked the soft white material. Jaime felt the lust and love for bolt through his body in equal measure, heating his blood as nothing had.

“Hi kitten,” he said, prowling into the room, ensuring the door was closed and locked.

“Hi Jaime.”

He was there in front of her in a few long strides, eating up the distance between them.

“Can I have this?” he asked, tugging at the jacket which Sansa gave him. “Arms up baby,” he
ordered softly and her blue eyes went wide but she said nothing as she lifted them up. Jaime pulled her t-shirt over her head, sucking in a breath at the lacy red bra she wore.

“Gods, you’re beautiful,” Jaime said, tracing creamy swell of her breast. “Pants off kitten.”

Sansa bit her lip, smiling as she shimmied out of the black pants so that her matching red thong and bra, along with her hair were the only colour on her body. Then Jaime wrapped her in his white chef’s jacket, loving the contrast of white and red.

“Fuck me,” he said, sucking in a breath. His dick was so hard seeing her wear his jacket, his name practically leaping out from the white material. Sansa grinned and then did a little twirl, holding the jacket open so the red bra and thong were on full display.

“Jesus kitten, I want you so fucking badly,” Jaime said, voice taut with need.

“Then have me, Jaime.”

He nodded, and still paused for a moment, not wanting to rush things. With Sansa’s fingers still on the white jacket, Jaime let his hands trace over her breasts.

“You have no idea what you do to me.”

He leaned in and kissed her hard, demanding her full attention. When they were so close his lips were against hers, he spoke again.

“My whole adult life, I’ve been made to feel like my profession was somehow less. Less than what a Lannister was supposed to be. But you, Sansa, fuck, baby, you make me feel like I’m the most talented man in the country.”

Sansa smiled against his lips. “That’s because you are Jaime. Trust me, I’ve watched you work. You have no idea what it does to me, to see you cook. To be in control and to create such masterful dishes. It’s amazing, my love.”

Jaime carded his hands through her hair, pinning her against him. She was amazing. Sansa was the miracle.

She moaned and rubbed herself against him and the thought of her wearing nothing but his signature coat, made Jaime lose it. His hands were everywhere, touching her, stroking her, making her wild. Thankfully Sansa was right there with him.

“Jaime, god, what you do to me,” she said, nipping at his lips, before moving on and tugging at his earlobe. Sansa didn’t care if she marked him; nails, teeth, lips. Jaime was hers and it was high time everyone in Westeros knew it.

“Fuck kitten, I want you so much. All the time, everywhere. All fucking day long,” Jaime babbled, finally getting his head together before he sunk to his knees to worship her. That was his new purpose in life. To worship this woman that he loved with his entire being. She deserved no less.

“Let me in baby,” Jaime said, gently spreading her thighs, moving the thong aside so he could feast.

There was nothing that tasted like Sansa, and Jaime would be happy if he could only eat here for the rest of his life.

Sansa, shameless in her need, confident in how much Jaime wanted her and her own sexuality,
willingly spread her legs and carded her hands through Jaime’s hair, pressing herself closer to his
talented tongue.

“Jaime,” she panted as he worked both his tongue and fingers inside her.

“Be as loud as you want, babe. We’re all alone.” Jaime would have given her a wicked grin, but he
was too far gone, lost in her taste and scent. He could feel her flutter around him, and he was
greedy to give her as much pleasure as possible.

“That’s it, baby, come on me,” Jaime told her, delighted when she screamed his name and he had
to catch her as her knees buckled.

He was grinning like a mad man when he settled her on the bed, discarding the soaked thong and
gazing at her spread out, his jacket still on and the red bra holding back her perfect breasts.

“Front clasp,” Sansa said, winking at him, reading his mind. Jaime’s talented fingers made short
work of it, and he leaned down to take a pale pink peak into his mouth, sucking gently at first, until
she bucked and moaned.

“Ahhh, there she is,” he said, grinning as she started to writhe around again.

“Naked, now!” she demanded and he chuckled, pulling himself away long enough to shuck off his
clothes, before he stood, naked at the foot of the bed, drinking her in.

Her long legs were gloriously bare, her red curls at the juncture of her thighs matching those on her
head. Her pretty breasts were still wet from his mouth and she still wore his coat, with his fucking
name on it. She was his, in all the ways that mattered, and Jaime was almost brought to his knees
by how much he felt for this woman.

He prowled up her body, pressing soft kisses along the way; to the arch of her foot, the back of her
knee, her thighs, her pretty core, her slim, soft stomach, both breasts, her neck, until finally, he
arrived at her lips.

“My Sansa,” he murmured reverently to her.

“My Jaime,” she said back.

“I love you,” he told her, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear.

Jaime loved it when she softened more.

“I love you as well, Jaime.”

He kissed her, letting his hips find hers, nudging against her with his hardened length that ached to
be inside her. Her legs fell apart, welcoming inside her body, and as Jaime surged inside her, he
knew he’d never feel like this about anyone else in his entire life. It was as if she had been made
for him as her velvet heat made him groan with how good she felt.

“Sansa, gods, baby, what you do to me,” Jaime whispered in her ear, kissing at her and nuzzling at
her neck. It didn’t seem to matter how often he had her; being inside Sansa was like nothing else.

Then she groaned and started tightening on him, moving her hips in order to angle herself
perfectly, and Jaime was lost. He pounded into her, knowing she was right there with him, and in
the bright morning light, they crashed to their peaks, calling out for one another, and collapsing
into each other’s arms in a sweaty tangled mess.
Jaime was grinning like a fool as he licked at her neck, loving how she tasted right now.

“Sansa, my naughty kitten,” Jaime whispered, loving how she still blushed.

“Oh you incorrigible man,” she huffed out, then turned, twisted in his chef’s jacket. “Oh gods, how will you ever be able to wear this again?” she suddenly asked, her eyes going wide.

Jaime felt the laugh from deep in his stomach. “Baby, I can’t imagine wearing anything but this jacket. In fact, I might never take it off. After all, I tasted the best thing on earth while you were wearing it. Sansa’s sweet---”

Sansa put a finger on Jaime’s lips.

“Do not finish that sentence.”

“Skin,” Jaime said, grinning, nipping at her finger.

Sansa gave him a look. “Still, I’ll have to wash it before you can wear it in public.”

“You’ll do no such thing. It’ll smell like you and that will remind me of you all night long.”

Jaime wiggled his eyebrows and Sansa shook her head at his antics. He was so playful and fun, and she loved it when it seemed like the heavy burdens he carried weren’t weighing him down.

“Did you make your phone calls?” she asked, pleased they had this time together. She loved his family, but it was nice when it was just them as well.

“I did.” He was kissing each finger. “Tommen is really excited to meet you. He and Cella are coming this weekend. Cella is a bit obsessed with Rickon, I’ve learned.”

Sansa laughed. “He’s a good guy, Jaime. Trust me. Not your unusual hockey player.” Sansa knew it was true. She had practically raised Ric and he had a healthy respect for women.

“Good,” Jaime said and Sansa loved seeing him in Dad mode.

“I’ve also invited Addam here. Apparently the lawyers want to speak with him.” Sansa hummed happily, but she could see something was on Jaime’s mind.

“What’s up?”

“Well, he said something to me that’s got me thinking, kitten.”

Sansa arched an eyebrow and snuggled closer.

“He asked if I still wanted to be on the Food Network.” Before Sansa could say something, Jaime rushed on. “It has nothing to do with Brienne, but more what I want in my life. I did the show mostly for Cersei; I’ve told you how she looked down on me being a chef. But once I was on TV, suddenly I was worthy again.” Jaime waved a hand. “Anyways, besides that, Addam just pointed out that I’ve been more inspired since I’ve been North. With you and the Starks and the different types of shows.”

Sansa could see his excitement. “Jaime, whatever pathway you chose, I support you. You know that.”

Jaime wiggled his eyebrows. “So you and me, kitten?”
Sansa laughed and nodded. “Whatever you want, love. We’ll make it work.”

Jaime’s face went serious. “God, I have no idea what I did to deserve you. I love you so much.”

Sansa was just about to respond when Jaime’s phone chimed. He grimaced. “Fun time’s up. Dad’s on his way back and he has Elia and Oberyn.”

Sansa leaned up and kissed Jaime, hugging him tightly. “No matter what, Jaime. You and me, baby.”

“You and me, kitten. Always.”

Sansa smiled at that and then shrieked as Jaime pulled them both off the bed and hauled them into the shower to get ready for the uncomfortable discussion that was sure to take place with Tywin’s lawyers. Still, they both knew they’d be fine; because they had each other. Brienne couldn’t break them and no matter what happened, as long as they had each other, they’d be happy.

Chapter End Notes

Let’s be serious- this is NOT a legal drama story. Brienne and Cersei are vehicles for me to dive into character development. Does that make me a lazy writer? I don't think so- I just care more about characters than plot alot of the time.

I will try to 'resolve' the Brienne crap- but honestly, I most care about how her actions impact the characters than I am about the ins and outs of what her legal battle might be. I hope that makes sense.

As always, thanks for the love and support of this story. I mean, it just keeps going, which I hope people want.
Chapter 22

Chapter Summary

Introducing Elia Martell

Chapter Notes

Happy turkey day American readers!! I hope it's a good one for you all!

One quick note and then right to it - this Addam Marbrand is super OCC but I'm hoping you'll love him as much as I do!

Enjoy

T

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

"So, who are these people coming here?" Sansa asked, curiosity in her voice. She knew, of course, that they were Tywin's legal team, but there had to be more to the story.

Sansa and Jaime were in their room, dressing after showering quickly. Sansa took a moment to revel in the intimacy of what it was like to live with a man whom she loved.

When she compared her life with Jaime, short as it was, with hers with Harry, it wasn't even in the same category. Things were so good, so perfect with Jaime that she couldn't help the small niggle of worry in the back of her mind that it couldn't last. She knew Jaime wasn't perfect, but them together? It was as close to perfection as Sansa had ever achieved. And in her world perfection never lasted.

Jaime glanced down at his phone, seeing that Tywin had said he was only a few minutes away.

"The Martells. There are three of them; all siblings and they are utterly ruthless," Jaime told Sansa, stepping out of the long walk-in closet, pulling on a nicer shirt and some dress pants, forgoing the usual jeans that he found himself wearing more often in the North. His father had drilled it into his head time, and again that appearances mattered. And right now, even though Jaime counted Elia as one of his oldest friends, he wanted to make the right impression.

"And they're good?"

Jaime just smiled, and Sansa saw there was more to the story than these people just being the Lannister's legal team.
"Oh yeah. Elia is the real power. I mean, Doran is smart and quiet, and Oberyn takes a lot of their high profile cases, but Elia, she's brilliant."

Sansa heard the note of respect in Jaime's voice for this woman, and she loved how he seemed to like strong, powerful women. So many men were intimidated by them. But all the men in Sansa's life seemed to thrive when they had a confident woman by their side; Robb with Jeyne, Jon with Val, Gendry with Arya, Drogo with Dany, Tyrion with Marg and now her and Jaime. It warmed something in Sansa to have a group of friends and family that had equal power dynamics in their relationships, and she knew it was a massive key to all their happiness and success.

And she hoped to hell that she didn't feel jealous of this woman that Jaime so clearly held a deep affection for. Sansa knew that Jaime would never cheat on her, and she doubted that he would have started anything with her had he been harbouring a flame for someone else. But they were still so new, and Sansa had such poor experiences with men, that there was always a little bit of worry no matter how amazing Jaime was.

As Sansa watched Jaime take more care with his appearance than he usually did, she followed suit, dressing relatively conservatively in black dress pants and a blue blouse that highlighted her blue eyes and slipping on some low heels. She knew the picture she presented was one of a confident and successful woman, and she was pleased when Jaime's eyes brightened when he took her in.

Jaime brushed a kiss across her lips, squeezing her hand. "You look amazing kitten." Sansa's heart warmed at the love in his green eyes.

"Thanks. So do you, handsome."

Jaime grinned and then added some more information about the Martells.

"Elia and I have been friends since we were kids. She was the one who handled my divorce. She's the only one I trust with this whole mess. I know she would never let me down."

Sansa squashed any little surge of the green-eyed monster she felt, hearing Jaime talk about this Elia woman and instead tried to focus on how grateful he sounded to have someone in his corner that he could count on. Sansa had to wonder at the damage Brienne's betrayal would do to him, especially after the whole Cersei mess.

Sansa reached up and straightened out his collar, and then laid a hand on his chest, inhaling the spicy cologne he wore and the signature scent of Jaime's high-end shampoo that she loved. It was something citrusy. She knew that he hadn't chosen it knowing she loved lemons, but it was just one more little thing that made them seem perfect for one another.

"Good. I like hearing that you have people in your corner."

Jaime stilled and brought her hand that was on his chest to his lips, kissing her fingers, loving the fierce look on her face. Jaime knew his wolf would fight anyone for him, of that he was sure. Just then, he heard the Rover pull into the farmhouse driveway, followed by Tank's barking.

"Showtime, kitten." Jaime wiggled his eyebrows, and they left their bedroom.

Sansa and Jaime were laughing and holding hands as they walked down the stairs just as Tywin entered with Elia Martell.

Sansa stopped on her stairs, stunned by the beautiful woman who was now in her house. She tried not to compare herself to her, but Elia Martell was model gorgeous and looked every inch the high powered, successful attorney Sansa knew her to be. And Jaime had a massive grin on his face.
when he spotted her.

Sansa felt the irrational jealousy of this woman spark in a way it never had with either Dany or Brienne and tried to tamp it down.

As if he knew what she was thinking, Tywin met Sansa's eyes and gave a slight shake of his head, and the almost sick like feeling in her stomach settled. She knew that Tywin would never lead her astray when it came to Jaime and his feelings.

Elia Martell was tall, slender and had gorgeous waist-length dark hair. She took in the farmhouse and then looked up at them and smiled at Sansa. It was a polite smile, Sansa could tell as if Elia were reserving judgement on her, which made Sansa's spine stiffen.

Sansa watched as Elia's eyes warmed as they landed on Jaime and Sansa knew that they cared for one another deeply. How deeply was the real question?

"Jaime!" Elia cried happily, and Jaime bolted down the stairs to his father's attorney and his friend. Sansa followed and she stood beside Tywin.

"It's not like that between them, Sansa," Tywin said, leaning in to whisper into her ear. She turned and looked at him, eyes open and vulnerable. She still had some very real and very open wounds when it came to men and trust after catching Harry with his side piece.

Tywin shook his head again. "Trust me, my dear. They are just friends." Tywin laid a gentle hand on Sansa's back, hoping to reassure her. While he knew Jaime loved Elia almost like a sister, the Old Lion could understand Sansa's reservations about the woman given Sansa and Jaime's short relationship and both of their pasts. But Tywin knew Sansa had nothing to worry about. Jaime was entirely, one hundred percent in love with the stunning redhead.

"Elia," Jaime said warmly, hugging her. Jaime felt something settle at seeing Elia. She had been a literal godsend when things had gone to hell with Cersei, and somehow, he knew she'd handle this situation as well.

"You look happy," Elia said, taking Jaime in critically.

Elia Martell (formally Targaryen) had been with the Lannister's since she was a brand new attorney, almost twenty years ago, and now, at forty-six, was a full partner in her family's law firm. She had also been by Jaime’s side as he'd gone through his hellish divorce and had watched, unable to reach him when he'd seemed ready to self-destruct after said divorce. Elia had more than one late-night phone call with her friend, begging him to stop his partying ways. She thanked the gods when Tywin had finally stepped in and put a stop to it all.

Now, as she looked at her friend, she realized that Jaime looked every inch the Golden Lion he used to be, perhaps even more so. He was happy, relaxed and very obviously in love with the gorgeous woman whose house they were all standing in. And whose hand he had immediately picked up to hold again once he had stopped hugging her.

Elia Martell didn't miss a thing, and what she was getting from Jaime was that he was deeply in love with this woman, this place and this new life he was making for himself. It jived with everything Elia had already been told, but she still wanted to make her judgements. The last thing Elia wanted was to help put together a broken Jaime again.

Tywin had informed her on the drive from the airport who Sansa and Starks were and just how Jaime had come to be in the North. Elia had never heard the patriarch of the Lannister pride talk so
elusive about anyone as he had Sansa. So much so that Elia was eager to meet the woman that had earned Tywin Lannister's approval and Jaime's love.

Elia would admit to being a bit protective of her friend; she thought that she had earned that right. After all, they had both been through awful marriages, and neither one, up until this point, had ever seriously committed to another person. Now Jaime was jumping in, with both feet it seemed, and Elia had wanted to make sure that this Sansa Stark was everything both Lannister men seemed to claim she was.

"Elia, welcome to Winterfell," Jaime said, stepping back and gazing at Sansa. "Allow me to introduce you to Sansa Stark. Owner of Winterfell Wineries. And the love of my life."

No one missed the emotion that Jaime had in his eyes for Sansa. Not Elia and certainly not Sansa, who felt any lingering doubts about Elia vanish like smoke. Jaime loved her, of that Sansa was certain. She was reaching out to shake Elia's hand when Tank was there, first as always.

Jaime was laughing as Tank was sniffing at Elia, who was smiling at the little dog. "And that is the fiercest protector in all the land. Tank." When Jaime said his name, Tank's short stub tail started to wag, and Elia watched in shock as Jaime leaned down to pick up the little dog.

"Ok, buddy. Daddy's got some work to do, but I promise we'll go for a long walk later."

Jaime kissed the dog and then set him back down, and everyone watched him scurry over to his bed as if he knew if he were good, Jaime would come through on his promised walk. Also- no one had missed the Daddy that Jaime used to talk to the dog.

"Oh gods, Rhae would love him. She's been bugging me for a dog for years," Elia said, grinning at the little bat-eared dog. And she didn't even brush the dog hair from her designer pantsuit, earning her considerable points in Sansa's book. Sansa swore it was Prada, and she almost asked to run her hand over the luxurious-looking fabric.

Feeling her world settle and entirely comfortable once again, Sansa smiled at the attorney.

"It's so nice to meet you. Please, let me know if you need anything while you're in the North," Sansa said, extending her hand to Elia and drawing her attention back to the human owner of the house.

Elia laughed and then pulled Sansa close, kissing her on both cheeks.

"My dear, any woman who can make Jaime's eyes sparkle like that, as well as earn the effusive praise of the Great Lion, is someone worth meeting. Not to mention to the undying love of a beloved pet."

Sansa blushed and then embraced Elia back, liking how warm the woman from Dorne was. She was nothing that Sansa was expecting when she'd heard the words 'cutthroat attorney.' And, her and Jaime’s relationship was still new enough, that Sansa did worry about making the best impression on Jaime's friends. Sansa felt her shoulders relax when Elia seemed to like her.

"Where's your brother?" Jaime asked. While he respected Oberyn's legal mind and skills in the courtyard, the two men had never been close; not like Jaime and Elia had been.

Elia waved an elegant hand. "Working on a big case with the Greyjoy's." She rolled her eyes. "I thought the Targs were dysfunctional."

Everyone laughed at that. Sansa knew Theon slightly; he and Robb had been friends when they
were younger, but they'd had a falling out around the time of her parents' accident. She had been too preoccupied with helping raise her siblings she didn’t pay much attention to it.

Once they were in the kitchen, Jaime glanced at his watch. Noon. Doing what was natural, he and Sansa offered Elia beverages and then food, both of which were declined.

"I think it's best if we get right to it," Elia said, quietly looking at Jaime.

Jaime nodded. "Sure. Just so that you know, Addam Marbrand is on his way. He should be here in a few hours."

Sansa, who was watching Elia, didn't miss the flash of awareness in the beautiful woman's eyes. Grinning to herself, Sansa wondered if Jaime knew that his lawyer had some type of interest in his manager.

"Oh? Addam is coming?" Elia said, trying to feign disinterest. "I haven't seen him in years. He's still your manager?" Other than dealing with Jaime's divorce, Elia didn't have a lot of contact with Jaime's professional life. She worked mostly for Tywin and his vast company.

Jaime nodded, leaning on the island, running a hand absently over Sansa's arms as she stood beside him.

Elia did not miss how much of a team they looked like together- and she liked it. It had been years since she’d seen Jaime this happy and carefree, and Elia knew that had a lot to do with Sansa.

"Yup, still my manager. He's been with me for over ten years. He's the one who negotiated all my contracts. I spoke with him today. He assures me that I have the final say on what went to air."

Elia nodded, her mind automatically thinking about their shared history.

Jaime gave Elia a wiggle of his eyebrows. "Bet you can still beat him at quarters."

Elia blushed and looked at Sansa, who had a look of confusion on her face.

"The three of us were friends in the first few years of university. Jaime and Addam thought they could outdrink me one night." Elia shook her head at Jaime. "I proved you both wrong. They were sick as dogs the next day while I felt great."

Sansa laughed, loving learning more about Jaime and his friends.

She leaned over the island. "Tell me more. Are their blackmail worthy pictures?"

Before Elia could rewind, Jaime did.

"This wounds me, El. Deeply." Jaime pouted but secretly loved how well the two women were getting along. If it was at the expense of his reputation, he didn't care.

"Alright, hun. Enough of rehashing our past. Walk me through what happened," Elia said, getting the conversation back on track.

Jaime heaved out a tired sigh, hating to rehash this. He felt Sansa's hand on his back.

Elia folded her hands and gave Jaime a soft look. She also sent Tywin a smile as he had made a pot of tea and put a cup in front of her. It was a wonder how comfortable these two men were here in Sansa's farmhouse, and Elia Martell loved it for them. Despite all the advantages the Lannister’s had, they had always seemed to be missing something- a caring female presence in their lives.
In a quick flurry of words, Jaime told Elia about everything that had been going on with Brienne. From the tension the moment he’d come North and begun his relationship with Sansa, to the berating about including the Starks and then finally the heavily changed episode that almost went to air.

As a friend to Jaime, Elia felt sick at what almost happened.

As an attorney she was angry. And an angry Elia Martell was a formidable opponent.

"What do you want, Jaime?" she asked as she sipped at her tea. She watched how Sansa supported him, resting a hand on his back, and smiled to herself. She loved that Jaime had found a woman so selfless and giving to love. Elia had a brief thought that she wished she could find a love like that, then shook it away. She’d kept herself purposely single since the spectacular disaster of her marriage ending.

He startled a bit, having been asked that question earlier by Addam. He was grateful he had been as he’d had time to think about it.

Jaime grabbed Sansa's hand and gave her a soft smile, not even looking at Elia, who didn't mind in the least.

"I want autonomy. Over my shows and what goes to air- the whole creative process." Sansa gave him an encouraging nod, and Jaime couldn't help but reach up and tuck a strand of hair behind her ear, still talking to her. "I want to do what I've done up here since we landed. I want my show to be about more than just cooking. I like the idea of a lifestyle type show, where I can do all sorts of different things whenever the mood strikes me." Sansa was beaming by now. "I want the people I love to be on my show; whenever I want."

"Oh Jaime," Sansa sighed, and he kissed her then, unable to resist him as she wound herself around him.

A slight cough from Tywin had their lips parting, but not how close they stood to one another. Both Jaime and Sansa looked slightly chagrined, while Elia and Tywin shook their heads at them.

"You two are freaking adorable," Elia said, clapping in glee.

Elia didn't think the legal battle would be as tricky as Jaime was worried about. Elia knew that Addam was one of the best, if not THE best Manager in all of Westeros. If he had negotiated Jaime's contract, it would be airtight. The man had a law degree and a Master's in Communication. Not that Elia had kept up on him and his career; she had just heard things over the years. Namely how he came across as a big, loveable hunk but that he was brilliant and a bulldog for his clients.

Jaime gave a self-deprecating smile to his father and attorney. "Addam says I should go on YouTube."

Elia cocked her head and thought about that. Social media was a whole new frontier, and it would give Jaime such liberty. Once again, Elia knew that Addam had his friend's back, and she thanked the gods that Jaime had him on his side.

Sansa squeezed Jaime's hand in support.

"And I want everything we've taped since we've been here." On that, Jaime would not negotiate.

"I think that sounds wonderful. The biggest factor is whether there was an actual breach of contract." Elia shrugged. "Honestly, if Addam Marbrand says that's what he negotiated for you, I
Jaime heard respect in Elia's voice, and his eyes narrowed.

"What do you mean, if Addam negotiated it, then you have no doubts?" Jaime loved Addam; they'd been friends for years, and he knew he did a good job, but rarely had Jaime ever heard Elia talk about anyone the way she was Addam.

Elia startled a bit and put down her pen and looked between the two lions. "Well, he's Addam Marbrand."

Blank looks met hers. She ran a hand through her hair. "He's … I don't even know how else to put it. He's it."

"He's what?" Jaime asked, confused.

Elia waved a hand impatiently. "It. He's the big dog. The top earner. He is who all the big names in Westeros have representing them. He's just.." Elia let out a breath. "Let me put it to you this way, Jaime. He can pick and choose who he wants to represent- who his clients are. He had a list a mile long of people wanting him to be their manager, and his fees are astronomical. The man is worth millions of dollars, all of it self-made. The guy is a legend."

Jaime said nothing and then threw his head back and laughed.

"Addam? My Addam?"

Elia nodded.

Jaime shook his head. "Seriously?"

Jaime didn't pay attention to any of that shit. When he met with Addam is was often at their favourite pub, which was admittedly a dive, or Jaime's restaurant, or the penthouse. They golfed together sure and played basketball, but Addam always wore a pair of shitty old gym shorts, and always made Jaime foot the bill. And he was the least pretentious person Jaime knew.

"He's got quite the reputation," Elia said primly, and Sansa and Tywin exchanged a look.

"What the hell does that mean?" Jaime asked, confusion marring his handsome features.

Elia blushed and mumbled something.

"What El?" Jaime was like a bulldog himself when he caught the scent of something.

"I just said that he's quite popular with the ladies of King's Landing."

At that, Jaime did grin. His friend was a lover; of that, there was no doubt. There was always some beautiful woman calling him, or that he was taking on a date. But he rarely dated anyone for more than a week or two and hadn't had a serious girlfriend since…

Jaime frowned. Now that he thought about it, Addam had never had a serious girlfriend. Not since he'd been in high school. Jaime recalled how he'd had a crush on Elia in University, but she'd started dating Rhaegar shortly into the first semester in their second year, and that's when Jaime had met Cersei. Then Addam had transferred to Lannisport U and out of King's Landing.

Jaime's scowl deepened, but before he could pursue it, Elia's 'lawyer voice' was back. While Jaime might not be as smart as Tyrion, he wasn’t a complete idiot. He knew there was something going
on in Elia’s mind about Addam. And clearly there was something going on with Addam- he had agreed to come North much to easily now that Jaime thought about it.

"Ok. Well, going off of his interpretation of Jaime's contract, I believe this will be fairly straight forward. The episode that Brienne made sounds like nothing more than slander and defamation. The biggest issue I'm having is who knew at the network. She doesn't strike me as a woman who would do this on her own. I mean, how did she even gain access to the Bolton's or this," Elia looked at her notes, "Harry Harding."

Jaime scrubbed a hand down his face. "Addam thinks it might have something to do with her new boss."

"New boss?" Even Tywin's ears perked up at that.

"My contract was negotiated with Varys. But Addam said that once Varys secured me, it was the boost he needed to move to the head of the network. There's a new guy that is Brienne's boss. I've never even met him, so why he hates me is beyond me."

"Name?" Elia asked, interested.


"Kitten, what is it?"

"Petyr Baelish?" she all but hissed, her face pale.

"I have no idea," Jaime said, bringing her into his arms. "What is it, Sansa? Who is he to you?"

Sansa shuddered and let herself feel Jaime, his breath in her ear, his strong arms around her. When she finally got a hold of herself, she looked only at him, even though she knew the others were listening.

"He's my mother's best friend. He is just… creepy." Sansa looked a bit helpless, and Jaime rubbed his hands down her back.

"Baby, I'm here," he told her. "You're safe."

"He never did anything, but my father never liked him, and when my parents died, he tried to impose himself on our family."

"How Sansa?" Tywin's voice held nothing but concern for the woman he already viewed as a beloved daughter.

"It was just little things. He didn't leave after the funeral, insisting we needed help. Robb hates him. He just kept saying it might be best if he moved here and helped me raise Bran and Ric." Sansa gave another small shudder. "He offered me his protection- said a woman of my beauty could easily be led astray."

"Astray from what?" Jaime asked, voice low and filled with fury.

Sansa shrugged. "Petyr has firm opinions on which families are worthy of a Stark." She snorted. "Needless to say, he did not approve of Jeyne or Val. He told both Robb and Jon they were sullying the noble Stark and Tully history by marrying 'beneath' them."
Tywin had straightened to his full, impressive height. He knew some families were still obsessed with lineage in Westeros. The Baratheons, Lannisters, Starks and Tullys were some of the oldest ones in the country. But rarely did anyone act on it anymore. Cotillion hadn't been practiced in decades; there were no more debutants and arranged marriages.

"What did your brother do?"

For the first time since Petyr's name had been mentioned, Sansa smiled. "He got out his gun and chased him from the ranch. We haven't seen or heard from him in a couple of years."

Both Tywin and Jaime cheered when they heard this news, which had Elia shaking her head at the two of them. She had no idea what had gotten into the usually very circumspect Tywin Lannister, but clearly, he was happy here in the North.

"Kitten, I'm so sorry that you had to deal with him," Jaime said. He'd put his arms around her again, not wanting to let her go. It angered him in a way that Jaime had never felt, to think that some older man had been trying to push himself on her during her time of grief.

Sansa gave him a soft smile. "I told you, babe. We're Starks- we're tough and we're a pack. Mess with one of us and you have to deal with all of us." She winked at him again, and Jaime stole a quick kiss loving how close Sansa was with her family and how they looked out for one another.

"Is it possible this Baelish found out about your relationship with Jaime?" Tywin asked, trying to fit together to pieces of why this man had gone after Jaime and Sansa. It would make sense if he were trying to break them apart, but even that seemed extreme.

Sansa shook her head. "I mean, I have no idea how. I hardly know anyone from the…" Sansa's mouth clamped shut, and her eyes went murderous. Knowing it wasn't directed at him, Jaime thought she looked hot. Pissed, but hot.

"Harry," Sansa hissed through clenched teeth. She turned to Elia. "Harry Harding, my sleaze bag of an ex whom I found balls deep in his mistress inside our bed, is from the Vale. Like Petyr."

Elia's warm brown eyes widened as she witnessed the transformation of Sansa Stark from a beautiful winery owner that was in love with her best childhood friend to scorned woman out for vengeance.

"And Harry was one that Brienne interviewed?"

Jaime nodded, looking at Sansa as if she was a bomb that might explode. A cute, sexy bomb, but a bomb none the less.

"Uhmmm, maybe it's best if we watch the tape," Jaime suggested, wondering what he could do to diffuse the situation.

"I'm going to kill him," Sansa was muttering.

"La, la, la," Elia said, covering her ears. She winked at Sansa. "Didn't hear a thing, babe."

That had Sansa laughing, breaking the tension, just as Jaime's phone chimed. He looked down and then grinned.

Addam: Hey there, handsome stud. Shit, dude. Forgot you're all but married, don't tell your hottie I called you that. I'm here. Be at the farmhouse in 30.
Jaime: LOL. Sansa’s prettier than you, but just barely. I thought your flight wasn't coming in until late?

Addam: Caught an earlier one.

Jaime: And that has nothing to do with the fact that a particular attorney is here?

Addam: No comment.

Jaime: Hell no to the no comment. We need to talk, bro.

Addam: I plead the 5th

Jaime: Damn, boy. Since uni?

Addam: …

Addam: …

Addam: Fuck, Jai, it's always been her. Just about killed me when she dated and then married that fuckface.

Jaime: I love you. You know this. And I love her. Just tell me, are you serious about her?

Addam: I'd marry her yesterday if she'd have me.

Jaime: Huh. I always thought you were having too much fun to settle down. Wait, how are you getting here if I'm not there to pick you up?

Addam: I have my ways, son. See ya in 30.

Addam: And Jai, don't say anything. El and I have to hash this out. It's been a long time coming.

Jaime: I won't. Just.. fuck, I love you two. Don't fuck this up

Addam: Not planning on it. I plan to worship that woman for the rest of her bloody life.

Jaime shook his head, a grin on his face knowing another big change was coming in his life. And damn if it didn't make him happy as hell. A bit nervous since he didn't want them to hurt each other, but still good.

"Elia, why don't we show you your room and then I'm going to make a late lunch. That was Addam. He should be here in half an hour, and then we can eat and watch the video and continue this discussion."

Elia looked pleased if a bit surprised. "I'm staying here?"

Sansa nodded. "I mean if that's ok with you. I know it's not that fancy," she started to say, but Elia waved a hand.

"Gods, no. It's perfect. This is like my dream house. I'm so jealous that Jaime gets to live here." Her eyes lighted. "Oh man, do you guys have goats? I love goats. Tell her, Jai."

Jaime was laughing as he and Sansa took Elia out of the kitchen to show her the guest room in which Sansa had prepared for her.
"What on earth is this obsession with goats?" Tywin heard Sansa ask, tone slightly bewildered.

The Great Lion felt better now that Elia was here. She was a first-rate attorney and an excellent friend to his son. And Tywin had not missed her reaction to name Addam Marbrand. Tywin remembered when the three of them, Elia, Jaime and Addam, had been best friends in university. Tywin didn't know the entire story, but something had happened that first semester of their second year, and it fractured something with their group.

Shaking himself from his memories, Tywin rose and dealt with the teacups, as comfortable here as he was in his home in King's Landing. Then he checked his watch and smirked. The afternoon was sure to prove entertaining.

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Addam palmed the keys and flashed his trademark smirk to the guy he'd been negotiating with for the past few days. He paused and took one look at Jaime's new ride and had to give his best friend credit- the man had taste. The Land Rover Defender Double cab was almost a replica of the one Bond drove in Skyfall. It was a sweet ride and so much cooler than the new 2020 Defender that they'd just released.

This one was silver, with four doors and the box in the back, and as Addam sucked in the clean Northern air, he knew Jaime had made the right choice. He grinned, and fit his large frame into the driver's side, tossing his bag in the back, loving the room the vehicle gave him.

There was nothing small about Addam Marbrand; not his height (6'5) his muscles (eight pack and massive arms), his IQ, which was well into Mensa levels, his bank account (he was creeping ever closer to that elusive billionaire status) or his personality.

Addam Marbrand lived life large and had ever since Elia Martell had crushed his heart in second-year university.

As he gunned the engine and pulled out of the airport parking lot, Addam let his mind go back over to that time when they'd all been so young, and he'd thought he'd have all the time in the world to romance the woman he'd fallen for hard.

Addam and Jaime had been friends since grade school, and while Addam had heard Jaime talk about his friend Elia, it wasn't until they were all in University in King's Landing, rooming together in off-campus housing when they'd finally all become friends. Jaime was what had brought them together, but one look at Elia Martell and Addam was a goner. Of course, he was also nineteen and an idiot. His family didn't have either Lannister or Martell money or prestige, and he hadn't made anything for himself- not yet having just started University. He'd been content, and he'd thought Elia had as well, to have fun, hang out, be friends and focus on school.

All three of them hadn't been too into dating; they'd been having too much fun studying, partying and just living life to be serious about anything- even though Addam knew he was full stop in love with Elia. He went on one or two casual dates, but there wasn't another woman that held a candle to her. Elia was everything; smart, sassy, bold, brilliant. And Addam wanted her with every fibre of his being. He hadn't stood a chance against her. Still, Addam hadn't wanted to ruin their friendship and he wasn't a hundred percent sure she'd liked him back.

And then she'd met that douche bag Rhaegar Targaryen in their second year, and Addam knew he'd missed his chance. She'd crushed his entire world that night as he watched her return to their house, and he had to watch Rhaegar kiss his girl goodnight. Addam had felt like puking, but instead plastered a smile on his face and listened to the woman he loved, and one of his best god damn
friends talk about how she thought she could fall in love with that asshole fast. Things only got worse when Addam's cousin Cersei had come to visit, and Jaime had fallen hard and fast for her, despite Addam's many, many warnings.

Heartbroken and sick at watching the two people he loved more than anything fall for such horrible people, Addam had transferred to Lannisport University and vowed to stay single. When Jaime and Addam had received invitations to Elia's wedding, Addam had politely declined and planned a trip cliff diving in the Vale, so he didn't have to think about her with him.

He poured himself into his studies, graduating first with a Business degree and then going on to get his law degree as well as a Master in Communications. He'd moved back to King's Landing when he'd heard Elia and Rhaegar had moved to Sunspear and had hustled his ass off to represent the best clients in the entertainment and sports industry. When he and Jaime had reconnected, it had been nothing to take him on as a client, and together, they had both benefitted from their relationship.

Jaime didn't say much about Elia over the years. He'd shared when she'd had her first kid, a son she'd named Aegon when they were thirty-two. Another child, this one a daughter named Rhae, came right around Addam's thirty-fourth birthday. He'd spent it drunk, getting a new tattoo in Mereen.

Addam knew something terrible had gone down right before Rhaegar died. It was just over ten years ago, when Elia was thirty-six, and her kids were four and two. That's when Jaime had called and said that Rhaegar had crashed his car on Dragonstone and left Elia a widow with two small kids. Addam had been a mess thinking about what she must be feeling.

Addam had thought about reaching out to her then, but something in Jaime's voice stopped him. "She's a fucking wreck man. She'd been at the Rock for a couple of months. Things were fucking bad in her marriage," Jaime had said. "She just needs space and to be with her family in Sunspear."

Addam knew that meant he needed to stay away, so he had. He'd just taken Jaime on as a client, and his career had skyrocketed. And Elia was clearly going through her own personal hell.

Addam poured his time and energy into working out, building his business and reputation and dating women. Nothing had ever been more than casual for him, and at forty-six, he'd all but given up any hope that he'd ever had a chance with Elia. He'd heard she'd moved back to King's Landing a few years ago, but even in their rarefied circle, they'd never run into each other. Addam didn't know if that had been a blessing or a curse.

Addam had watched as a few years after Elia's marriage had ended in a fiery crash by her husband, Jaime's marriage imploded as well. Addam had spent more than a few nights hauling his friend out a bar; women plastered all over the two of them. It was all empty as fuck and meant nothing, and he cringed a bit when he thought of how they had used those women. Not that they hadn't been willing- they had, but Addam didn't like to think that was who they were. He and Jaime were better than that.

Then Tywin had stepped in, gotten Jaime's head on right and Addam had gotten his friend back, slowly. They'd bonded again, over beer and sports and golf and just usual guy shit. They'd both ditched the endless one night stands. So much so that Addam could hardly recall the last time he'd slept with a woman. It had been that long.

When Jaime had told Addam he'd agreed to go North, to Wintertown, Addam had thought he was nuts. And then he saw the picture of Jaime and Sansa, and his heart almost stopped.
He’d been in his penthouse, alone, and was managing Jaime's social media, when it had been posted. Addam swore he stopped breathing. He could see how in love Jaime was with the stunning redhead, but more, Addam could see she loved Jaime back.

It had never been like that with Cersei (despite how his cousin liked to rewrite history), and Addam ached for what his friend had with the one woman he’d never stopped loving. Addam knew Elia was still single; she had been since the moment her husband died, and Addam still wanted her like he first did when they were nineteen.

He was so focused on his memories, lost in what he might do now that he was here with her, that he barely paid attention to his surroundings, only turning when he did because Siri was giving him directions. He knew that land was probably beautiful and that he should be paying more attention, but all Addam could think was that in a few minutes, he'd see her again- the love of his fucking life.

She was single; he was single. And he hoped to god that she would give him a chance. It didn't bother him that she had two teenagers even though he'd barely been around kids. He'd learn. Addam just wanted a chance with Elia Martell, and he was willing to do whatever it took to get it.

He crested the small hill and saw Sansa, and he supposed Jaime's farmhouse, and he grinned. His woman was there, and he was going to have her finally.

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Jaime left Sansa and Elia to get settled, knowing that women had this weird need to go over stuff that men couldn't have cared less about. He heard giggling as he went downstairs, loving how they had bonded so quickly. For a moment, Jaime could have sworn Sansa was jealous, but that was ridiculous, and he shook his head at that thought.

When Jaime was finally gone, Sansa closed the door and then gave Elia a look. "So?"

Elia looked confused. "So what?"

"Addam Marbrand?" and Sansa was rewarded with a blush staining the pretty woman's cheeks.

"Oh, we're just old friends that haven't seen each other in an age," Elia said, waving a hand, deflecting the question.

Sansa took out her phone and googled Addam Marbrand and let her jaw drop. "Holy seven fucking hells. That is Addam Marbrand?"

Sansa knew that she was in love with one of the most gorgeous men in the county, but Addam would give Jaime a run for his money.

The first picture that came up he was carrying a surfboard, board shorts riding low on his lean hips as his eight pack dripped water and his arms fairly rippled with muscle. He had light brown hair, blue eyes and a great smile. He was drool-worthy good looking, and Sansa had to check that she wasn't leaking spit out her mouth.

Elia grabbed Sansa's phone, and her eyes popped open. "Holy shit."

"How in the hell have you not jumped on that?" Sansa asked the attorney, noting that Elia flicked through more pictures of Addam, unable to draw her eyes away.

Finally, handing Sansa back her phone, Elia sighed and sat on the bed. "Gods, it's been so long since a man, any man, made my lady parts stand up and take notice."
Sansa sat beside her new friend and gave her a shoulder bump. "What's the deal with you two?"

El blushed a bit and then waved a hand.

"Gods, Sansa, you should have seen the two of them when they were younger. I'll be the first to admit it- at forty-six they are some good looking men. But young and carefree and not yet so broken? Irresistible. Jaime and I, of course, had been friends since childhood, and when he said they needed a third roommate, it was a no brainer. I was unpacking, and Addam walked in, and I just… Man, did I fall heard for him. Of course, we were young and dumb, and I downplayed any attraction."

Elia gave Sansa a shrug.

"I was his friend, and I kept hoping he'd ask me out. I think he almost did, once in the first year, near the end. But for whatever reason, he never did."

Sansa gave a sympathetic sigh.

Elia had a sad little smile on her face.

"Next year, I decided I'd give him a month and then if he didn't ask me, I'd go on a date with the first guy who asked, even if I didn't find him attractive. I mean, I lived with Jaime and Addam; most other guys were like a five if they were lucky."

Sansa laughed at that. She understood completely. "So, what happened?"

"He didn't ask, and I was in the library, studying one night. It was late, and this handsome, elegant master's student asked if I was working on a history of the Targaryen's for my second-year history class. Of course, I knew immediately he was one of them. Rhaegar had the silver blond hair and purple eyes they were known for. We chatted for a time; he was intense, focused and quite unlike any of the second-year students I was around. I was swept up. I thought I'd found someone more mature, someone, who would make me their whole world. When he asked me out, I remembered my promise to myself, and I said yes."

Sansa reached over and took Elia's hand. She had a sad, haunted look in her eyes.

"I think that was the beginning of the end for the three of us. I fell hard and fast for Rhaegar, missing all the signs that he wasn't quite who I thought he was. Jaime met Cersei, and we all know what happened there. Addam transferred after the second year, and within a year, both Jaime and I were married."

She shook her head, unable to keep the bitterness from her voice. "Gods, we were such fucking fools."

Sansa stroked a hand down her back. "You were young and in love. It's ok to make mistakes."

Elia gave a sad laugh. "I love my children; they are my whole world, but that man was more than a mistake." There was more than just the shame of broken marriage in Elia's eyes, but Sansa knew that was a story for another day.

"And now?" Sansa asked.

"Now?" Elia looked confused, and Sansa blushed a bit.

"Well, with Addam."
Elia's eyes widened. "Sansa, look at him."

"I have. Yum!" Sansa winked at her.

"But... Sansa. I'm a forty-six-year-old widower with two teenage children. I have stretch marks. And cellulite. And I watch crappy reality TV while eating ice cream straight from the carton when I finally get a Friday night alone. I am not even in his league."

"I think you're about to be surprised. And," Sansa said, wagging a finger at Elia, "Quit talking about yourself like that. You are probably one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen. For two seconds, when you hugged Jaime, I wanted to scratch your eyes out."

Elia laughed. "I knew it," wrapping her arms around Sansa.

"But once I got over myself," Sansa said pointedly, "I realized that you are amazing. Smart, kind, beautiful, intelligent and successful. Any man should be begging you for a chance. Including Addam Marbrand."

Elia cocked her head, tears in her eyes. "You're the best sort of woman, Sansa Stark. Loyal to other women and fierce. I'm half in love with you myself. And you are so good for Jaime."

Sansa hugged Elia. "I'd rather straighten your crown than stab you in the back." It was the absolute truth. Sansa loved her tribe of strong women; they were better together than hating on one another.

Elia let the tears spillover. After Rhaegar and her awful marriage, she had moved back to Sunspear and immersed herself in her family and career. She'd let no one but her brothers and their wives and children in and only now did she realize how much she missed female friendship that wasn't just family.

"I get why both those lions love you so much," Elia murmured, just as they heard a throaty engine pull up to the farmhouse.

Sansa wiggled her eyebrows, much like Jaime. "Showtime, babe. Let's go see if there's still a spark, shall we?"

Laughing, Elia took Sansa's hand, descending the stairs together, just as Jaime opened the door to his friend. Elia stopped, all breath leaving her.

He was just there; big, manly and smiling at Jaime, hugging him. When they parted, Addam turned, finding her immediately, and that smile he wore got even bigger and warmer. His brown eyes lit up when they landed on her.

"Hey, El. It's been a long time."

His voice sent bolts of lust through Elia. Lust and love and longing all wrapped up in a messy package. It was going to be a hell of a ride for a woman who'd taken no chances this past decade.

"Hi, Addam. It has been."

It should have been awkward; it should have been impossible. But it wasn't. Elia found her feet moving down the stairs quicker than she thought possible, and then she was in Addam's massive arms as he opened them to her, only to crush her to his chest, picking her up and holding her close.

"Oh fuck, honey, I've been waiting my whole life for this," he whispered into her ear, and she sobbed into his neck.
"Me too, babe. Me too."

"Now that I got you, I'm never letting you go, honey," Addam told her softly, finally putting her down and cupping her cheeks in his big hands.

"Fuck, you're so goddamn beautiful, El."

Then he ducked down and captured his lips with hers, and he was home. This was it. It had always been Elia Martell, and it always would be. He’d never leave her now. She was his.

Sansa had also come down the stairs and went to Jaime, loving how he grabbed her hand and pulled her close. He had a massive grin on his face as he watched his two best friends kiss.

"Happy babe?" Sansa leaned in and whispered in his ear.

"Oh yeah, kitten. So happy." Then Jaime followed Addam's lead and captured Sansa's lips, loving everything about his life at that moment. Brienne and her bullshit didn't matter; they'd deal with it and then forge their path forward. All that mattered in this life were the people you loved, and that loved you back.

"Love you," Jaime said, kissing Sansa again.

"Love you back, babe."

Tywin watched the two couples who wore matching expressions of happiness on their faces. He wondered how long before Sansa and Jaime might think to give him some more grandchildren and hoped it was soon, and then turned to give them a modicum of privacy and allow them this moment. Soon enough, they'd get back to the business at hand. Tywin had lived long enough to know genuine moments of pure joy were rare enough, and he wasn't that cold-hearted to spoil this one.

Chapter End Notes

Well?? Thoughts???

Mine were - OMG he is delicious and he's been pining for Elia for YEARS!!!

Just so we are clear- Dany and Jon are NOT related in this story.

Dany and Elia, though, are SIL and we will have some fallout, fence mending.

AND there WILL be legal stuff to deal with - Brienne, Baelish and Varys.

Trust me when I really do love all the comments.

As always, much love

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Jaime couldn't help the grin that seemed to permanently rest on his face now that Addam and Elia were both here. Here, in the North, in Sansa's fantastic home, now his home, were his two best friends. Two best friend who apparently had been in love for over twenty years. It was incredible really when he thought about what they had both been through. What they had all been through and now they all seemed to have this second chance at happiness.

Elia blushed when she finally stopped kissing Addam, and Jaime noticed she did not let his hand go. That made Jaime’s grin even wider. When Addam wiggled his eyebrows and asked Sansa for a room, the two women shared a secret laugh, and Elia dragged Addam upstairs.

“I’ll take care of it,” Elia called over her shoulder.

Jaime had a feeling he wouldn’t be the only man wrapped around the woman he loved tonight, and it was terrific. After they disappeared, Jaime turned his attention back to the great room.

Sansa and his father were chatting together, Tywin having dragged out his laptop to go over business plans with her. It seemed that Sansa had taken the lead on both the expansion of the winery, as well as the new Stark shop that they were moving forward with.

Jaime was looking through the fridge and planning meals for the next few weeks, sneaking a glance at his father and Sansa every so often. Jaime couldn’t believe how well his father got along with Sansa and he knew that Tywin would do whatever necessary to help the Stark’s and Jaime with all their new business adventures.

Jaime loved how close they were. He'd never seen anyone take to his father quite like Sansa had, except perhaps little Ned Stark.

Come to think of it; all these Stark's seemed to enjoy his father, which was decidedly strange as Tywin Lannister was not typically a man that people got along with. His reputation in the South and the West was positively scary.

It made Jaime wonder about how much time his father might want to spend here, in the North, if he and Sansa were blessed enough to have children. The idea that a baby of theirs could have Papa Lion the way that Ned did, well, that whole idea made Jaime's heart thump. Cersei had stolen so much from their family, and Jaime had allowed her to. It was one more layer of guilt for his failure as a father and as a son.
"Hey kitten, think maybe we could take a break when Elia and Addam come back down and show them the winery?"

Jaime knew that they needed to watch the horrible tape that Brienne had created, but damn if he didn't want to ruin things just yet.

Sansa turned, and Jaime just stood in awe for a moment that no matter what was going on, she seemed to give him her full attention- as if he mattered. He always mattered to Sansa.

She had a beautiful smile on her face, and Jaime couldn't wait to have this evening with her, his father and his two best friends. It was the perfect antidote to the ugliness of the past days.

"I think that's a wonderful idea, Jaime. Tank could use the walk, and I'm sure your father would appreciate the peace and quiet."

As if she couldn't stand not to touch him, Sansa rose from the table where she was seated with Tywin and walked towards Jaime. She never failed to make his stomach clench with need, and she grinned as she walked up to him, kissing him and winding her arms around his neck. This need of hers to touch him made Jaime wild. He loved it.

Sansa dug her fingers into his neck a little bit, putting the correct amount of pressure there and eliciting a little moan of pleasure from Jaime.

Tywin scoffed lightly and winked at Jaime. The Golden Lion knew his father adored his soon to be fiancé. Jaime couldn't wait for Tommen and Myrcella to meet Sansa, and then, he was planning a proposal to knock her socks off. He pulled her closer and cupped her butt, loving when she wiggled against him.

"Naughty," Jaime whispered to her and she pressed closer, feeling his hard dick through his pants.

"Only because you make me that way," Sansa said back.

Jaime groaned and kissed her back until he finally pulled back.

"Oh love, tonight I am going to feast on you," he said, grinning wide and then titled his head to retake her lips, loving how she made a little moan when he deepened the kiss. When they finally broke apart, Sansa tucked herself against Jaime and his whole world settled.

Jaime had an itch to cook something fabulous for them all.

"After we get back from the winery, I'm going to cook," Jaime told them both.

Sansa's groan and Tywin's grin of appreciation were enough to make Jaime realize that for the first time in his life, he was proud of what he did- proud of his skills and proud that the people he loved and that loved him and seemed to enjoy his efforts in the kitchen. Here, he didn't feel emasculated that he loved to provide for the people in his family; he felt valued and treasured. And that was worth more than any of the money in his sizable bank account.

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Elia kept her hand in Addam's liking how big and warm it was in hers. It was strong and tanned, and as she threaded their fingers, she felt him give her a little squeeze. As if they were a team.

Elia almost stumbled at that thought. A team! She had never been part of a team.
She hadn't even been part of a team when she'd been married to Rhaegar.

In fact, her marriage had been more or less a battlefield from day one with a moody, petulant man child that was passive-aggressive in his treatment of her and their marriage. He had chipped away at the confident and purposeful woman she had been until she had been nothing more than a shell trying to survive his emotional abuse.

They had been separated when his father had died, and Rhaegar had gotten drunk and crashed his car on one of the many winding roads on Dragonstone. Jaime had given her and her children refuge at Casterly Rock, where the influence of the Targaryen’s couldn’t reach.

Not only had Elia had to deal with the horror of his death, but she also had the added guilt that perhaps had she stayed, that if she had tried, again, to get Rhaegar to go to therapy, to at least try for their children, he might still be alive. Jaime and Tywin had both told her repeatedly that she had done nothing wrong; that leaving him had been the only option given the level of abuse she had suffered. But still, it had been a truly awful time in her life.

And now, one of the people she loved and trusted most in the entire world was holding her hand and had said that he had wanted her for over twenty years. That he had been waiting for her!

Addam was different. Elia knew Addam; she trusted him. She knew he had always had feelings for her, but she'd never known he'd like her like that back then.

His friendship had been so precious and unique until she'd messed it all up by agreeing to go on a date with Rhaegar. Elia thought back to that day in the library, wishing not for the first time, that she could somehow have the children she loved more than life herself and not the marriage that had almost destroyed her.

Some may think she was an idiot to trust him. He was, after all, Addam Marbrand, but Elia knew him. She knew this man like she knew her own heart, and he'd never hurt her on purpose.

And it had been so damn long since she even felt any spark with a man. This wasn’t a spark, but an inferno.

Still, when she entered the lovely guest room Sansa had given her, she bit her lip, worried. Perhaps she'd been too presumptuous. She was just about to open her mouth and say something when Addam was there.

His big hands cupped her cheeks, brushing gently along her cheekbones, holding her eyes to his.

"Nope, love. Don't do that. I am exactly where I want to be. I'll even wear my pyjamas in bed if you're not ready for more, but I'm not taking my own room El. I've waited years to have you in my arms, baby, and if you need some time to catch up, that's fine. I'll wait. But you won't push me away."

"Addam," she sighed, laying her hands over his. "I'm not some young woman with no baggage," she said ruefully. "I come with a 747 plane full of baggage. Two children. Teenagers," she added pointedly. "And it's been years since I've been with a man."

Elia watched as he grinned at that, and it was a bit wolfish and territorial. It sent a bolt of lust straight through her loins and to her center.

"Fuck El. I'm sorry, but I love that. And if that makes me the biggest bastard, well…” Addam shrugged, unconcerned.
Her eyes narrowed.

"I haven't been with a man since my husband. And even then, the last few years of my marriage, it was sporadic at best. Our… intimacy."

Addam’s grin only got wider.

"Babe, nothing you are saying is turning me off." He brushed his lips against hers. “Quite the opposite in fact.”

Elia’s mouth popped into a little O that had Addam groaning.

Addam took a chance and pressed closer to her, and Elia felt his stiff dick through his pants.

Holy hell, it had been forever since she had been with a man. A decade. A decade without sexual intercourse that didn't come from her own hand or battery operated toy in the dead of the night, alone in her bed.

Since her husband had died, she had suppressed all parts of herself that didn't fit into neat little boxes: mother, lawyer, aunt, sister.

Not since Rhaegar had she let the box ‘woman' be an option until now. Still, she knew exactly who she was and it was time Addam did as well.

"I have stretch marks. Two kids, Addam. I'm not one of your flavour of the week bimbos," Elia said, tilling her chin, almost in defiance. She had seen the women that graced the arm of Addam Marbrand. The very well muscled and strong arms of this man in front of her.

Addam's eyes narrowed, and Elia saw the tiny spark of hurt and annoyance there.

Still, she didn't take back her words. Addam needed to have his eyes opened about precisely who and what she was. She wasn't the twenty-year-old co-ed anymore with the body that wouldn't stop.

"No, you're the woman who ruined me for anyone else, El. None of these women meant a thing, which yeah, I know, that makes me sound like an asshole. And maybe I was. But fuck it. You went and married that prick and I had to try to pick up the pieces of my life."

His jaw tightened and it was funny because as much as Elia knew he was a bit annoyed with her, he didn’t scare her. Not the way Rhaegar did. She knew that he would never hurt her. Before she could say anything though, Addam barreled on, working up a full head of steam. Elia bit the inside of her cheek, thinking he was the most adorable thing she’d ever seen.

“'I don't give a fuck if your stomach isn't as tight as some twenty-two-year-old wannabe model. I don't care if you haven't had a wax in six months. I don't even care if your stomach is crossed with stretch marks, because all that means is that you're a warrior. I know you're a mom, El. I love how much you love your kids. And none of that turns me off. None of that is going to make me turn away from you.'"

Addam grabbed her hand and pressed it against his dick. Her eyes widened, and she licked her lips, and Addam saw the heat in her eyes.

"Babe, I fucked up when I was a dumb college kid. Now I've got you, and nothing you say or do will make me leave you again. So fine, you're insecure. I'll just spend more time worshipping you until I convince you that you're perfect, baby. Perfect for me.”
Elia's eyes teared. "Addam." No man had ever spoken to her like this; had made her feel like this-as if she were everything.

Addam stroked his thumb across her cheeks, loving that he finally allowed to touch her. She was everything he'd ever wanted in his life. And he would never give her up again. He'd fight for her forever.

"I'm here, El. I'm here, and I'm not going anywhere. Never again, babe." Addam was smiling softly at her.

Elia broke down then, sobbing into his chest as his strong arms wrapped her up securely, and he stroked her back softly.

Was it possible that what he said was true? Had she finally found a man that could appreciate her brains, her career and her love of family? Was he really this good?

"I can't have my kids get hurt, Addam," Elia told him when she pulled back slightly, sure her face was messed up, running with mascara. What was it that made her make such a fool of herself in front of this gorgeous man?

"We won't love. We'll take it slow. Ease them into it. But El, I'm serious. From now on, I'm the guy in your life."

Elia hated herself, but she had to ask the next question. "And I'm the only woman?"

Addam's mouth dropped open, and he looked stunned. He tilted her head, so her eyes met his.

"Elia Martell, I have loved you since the moment you walked into that crappy student housing rental Jaime found for us. I wanted to ask you out that first night, but I didn't want to ruin things. Baby, you have always been the only woman for me. I've never ever said those words to anyone else. El, I love you."

"Oh gods, I could fall in love with you so easily. You could destroy me, Addam."

He kissed her then, soft and sure. "Trust me, babe. I'm not going anywhere."

Elia held his gaze, meeting this grey-green eyes that she had loved so long ago. She saw her entire future there- this huge man who was holding her so gently but firmly as if he didn't ever mean to let her go. She knew in her heart he'd never hurt her.

"I don't mean to be insecure; it's just, my marriage wasn't good, Addam," Elia said quietly, wanting to open up to him. So few people knew just how bad it had been.

"We'll work through it all, babe. I promise."

El nodded. She knew there was still loads to work through but for now, she had a choice to make. Was she willing to take a chance again? To open herself up, again? To let someone in, again?

She nodded and Addam grinned.

Elia then gestured to the room.

"So, if I haven't scared you off with my roller-coaster of emotions, you're more than welcome to share my room." Then she flashed him a saucy smile and a wink. "We'll discuss clothing options later. It depends if you're a good boy or not."
Addam threw his head back and laughed, and Elia loved the deep, rich sound. This was a man that didn't hold anything back. He lived life large, including his emotions. He was so open, with her, with his feelings and with his praise. It was like water for a person who had been wandering the desert for the past ten years, dying of thirst.

"Come on, babe. Let's go bug, Jaime. He's gotten off way too lightly, and I need to make fun of him in front of Sansa if I'm going to make the most of my time here."

Elia shook her head, unable to keep the huge grin off her face. She could feel the happiness in this house, not just hers, but Addam and Jaime's as well. It was hard to believe what they had been through, and that now, finally, they were all here, and they were all happy.

"She really is an amazing person," Elia said to Addam as they walked out of the room hand in hand.

Addam winked. "I know that. But still, I wouldn't be me if I didn't get a few shots in on our boy."

Elia shook her head at their antics and hoped that Sansa had enough wine for Jaime Lannister and Addam Marbrand. There was a whole lot of handsome, confident male when they were in a room together.

They walked into the kitchen to see Sansa wrapped up in Jaime's arms while Tywin smirked and worked on his laptop, and Sansa's funny little dog paced through the kitchen.

Addam clapped a hand down on Jaime's shoulder.

"Give her time to breath, son," he said, winking when Jaime growled at him.

"Mind your own business, Marbrand," Jaime sniped back, stealing another kiss from Sansa, who thankfully hadn't let him go.

Elia rolled her eyes as she bent down to pet Tank.

"Don't mind them. They act like idiots when they are together."

Sansa laughed, happy to see that Addam looked like he'd just won the lottery, while Elia kept shooting the big man a little grin.

"Alright. We thought it might be nice to show you two the winery in the light of the day. Plenty of time for the other ... less pleasant stuff later."

"Oh, I'd love that, Sansa," Elia said excitedly. Jaime had talked at length about how great Sansa’s business was and Elia was excited to see it.

Soon the four of them were bundled up to walk to the winery. As lovely as the weather had been on Sunday, real autumn had seemed to arrive in the North almost overnight.

Jaime was holding Sansa's hand, and Addam, Elia's as they walked along the river towards the winery. Once again, Jaime's pride in her accomplishments came through, and he was proudly telling both his friends about what Sansa had built.

When the building came into view, Addam let out a low whistle.

"Well done, Sansa." Then he grinned at Jaime. "Man, do I love strong, powerful, successful women." He winked at Elia who blushed again.
"You're impossible!" she told him, swatting at him and then shrieking like a teenager as he picked her up and put her over his shoulder.

"Yup. A lovable, impossible man, that's all yours."

Even as Elia protested, weakly, Jaime could see how happy she was.

Jaime couldn't help but grin at the two of them. He had never, ever seen Addam so into a woman before in his life. In fact, most times his friend was almost cold and closed off with them. Jaime now knew that was because he'd lost his heart to Elia some time ago, and there had been nothing left to give to anyone else.

As for Elia, Jaime couldn't remember seeing her smile so much, not since they'd been in their first-year university together.

"They are freaking adorable," Sansa said, laughing at the two of them. She shook her head. "And to think I was jealous of her."

Jaime stopped and tugged Sansa, so she turned towards him. "Kitten, you were jealous? Of Elia?" Jaime's face looked both bewildered and slightly wounded.

Sansa blushed and nodded.

"Why?" Jaime's brows had furrowed, and he had a worried look on his face. He tried to think if his behaviour had been off; or if he had done something to cause her to feel this way. He'd learned with both Cersei and Brienne if they were upset, he was most likely to blame.

"Baby, no," Sansa said and pressed her lips to his, waiting until he responded and then cupped his cheeks. "Jaime, it was my own insecurities. Nothing you did. Never anything you did. Harry just spun me a bit, and Elia is so beautiful and successful, and she has known you for so long."

Sansa gave a little shrug.

"But Sansa, you're all those things too. Look what you've done here. This is all you, my darling," Jaime said, the endearment slipping in naturally. "You built all of this yourself. Do you have any idea how impressive that is? You raised both Bran and Ric and finished your degree. Your home is amazing; everyone who stays there loves it. Your family is awesome. Fuck Sansa, you're incredible." 

Sansa couldn't help it. She felt the tears come at Jaime's praise of her and her accomplishments. So many people saw that Robb had continued and expanded the Stark family ranch, and of course, Jon had branched out with the farm, and Bran with his restaurant.

But she had never been with a man that truly cared for her, and saw her hard work for what it was—part of her soul.

"Jaime," she said, her breath catching in her throat. This man was everything to her; her rock, her heart, her future.

"It's true, Sansa. Don't undervalue what you've accomplished." He gave a snort as he looked at his friends. "Like we're any great examples. Two of us divorced, and the third too heartbroken to have a real relationship for the past twenty-five years. You're years ahead of us babe."

Sansa looked at Jaime and saw how proud he was of her. It was so lovely to have a partner that seemed to love this life that she had created for herself.
"I love my life here so much. Family is so important to me, Jaime and I couldn't imagine living anywhere else." She paused and looked around, squeezing Jaime's hand and giving him a brilliant smile. "I could never imagine anyone wanting to build a life with me here in the North. I know it’s not for everyone."

Jaime leaned in and rubbed his nose against hers, making her giggle, which Jaime loved.

"Come on, you two, stop making out!" Addam yelled, having finally put Elia down, still holding her hand.

"Calm your man tits, Ad!" Jaime yelled back, rolling his eyes but grinning none the less. "Just for the record, I love the North. But let's go. He's impossible and he won’t stop until we take him inside."

Sansa loved giving Addam and Elia the tour; they seemed to be impressed, and her staff was warm, welcoming and knowledgeable. This was a shoulder season for them, and things were slightly less hectic now than they were during the summer months.

When they sat at the little table and ordered some food, Sansa saw the look on Jaime’s face.

She wagged a finger at Jaime and narrowed her eyes.

"Don't start with me. I know. I've heard it all before Jaime. Tell me when in seven hells I'd be able to get something done in the crazy past few days like organizing a whole new menu for this place."

Jaime grabbed Sansa's finger and sucked. He saw her eyes flare with desire even as she still looked put out.

"Kitten, you wound me." Jaime gave her the patented puppy dog eyes, which she was not falling for today.

Sansa rolled her eyes. "Oh, please."

She turned to Elia and Addam, who were laughing at them.

"Mr. Three Stars Michelin here thinks my tapas is sub-par."

"That's because it is."

Sansa growled at him. An honest to god growl! Jaime loved it. His grin grew, and he watched as Sansa ran an exasperated hand through her beautiful hair. God he loved when he woke up with her body next to his and his face buried in her glorious mane.

"Jaime, I know. But honestly, when have we had a single moment to do anything? Between my family, Bran's stuff, taping, your family visiting and now this Brienne drama when on earth have I had a single moment to do more than check-in and make sure the winery is still even functional."

Jaime grinned. He loved seeing Sansa fired up. Addam shook his head at his friend, knowing that Jaime was living for this. Sansa just kept on going, lost in the overwhelming amount of things that had happened in a short amount of time.

"Added to that, we've added several private parties in October. As well as the fact that Jon and Arya are doing a pumpkin patch event at the farm along with tours of the winery, and this month is already insane. I’ve barely even decorated for Halloween, your favourite holiday, and I need to start to think about how to expand not only this business, but a store for my family.”
Her voice had risen exponentially, and unlike when she blushed when she was shy, or Jaime paid her a compliment, the fire sparkling in her blue eyes and the slight colour in her cheeks was different.

Jaime kept grinning.

"So yes, Mr. Lannister, I have taken your criticisms under advisement, and when I have more than five minutes to concentrate on my business, I will be making changes." Sansa drilled her finger into Jaime’s chest.

Elia and Addam were looking at Sansa with astonished eyes, full and round. Even frustrated they could see the spark and care between the two of them.

Jaime knew he had to do a bit of damage control; she'd taken his whining about the food at the winery a little bit too much to heart. But that was Sansa; she cared about everyone and everything she did. And Jaime only mentioned it because he knew with the right food the winery would be one of the best places in all of Westeros to hold an event. He knew she’d had next to no time.

He’d blown into her world like a hurricane, and upended it and she’d taken all of it with grace.

Jaime dragged her onto his lap, not caring when she made a small peep and blushed- this time, he knew it was in slight embarrassment, and he wondered if it was more being on his lap or her outburst.

"Kitten, I know. The winery is amazing and I know I blew in and took over your life. Let me help babe. I love planning menus. It's kind of my thing."

Jaime wiggled his eyebrows, and Sansa laughed, which he knew meant he’d been forgiven.

"It's just been busy, Jaime,” she said, lowering her voice.

"It has, babe." He kissed her. "But, partners, remember?"

Sansa's eyes went warm and melty.

"I remember."

"So I'm good at this kind of thing. And I know you're more than capable, and I won't take over. But let me help."

"Jaime, are you sure?"

Sure, Sansa had told Jaime she wanted a partner, a husband if she were being completely honest, that loved her business as much as she did. But she'd never really expected him to want to work at it the way she did.

"One hundred percent, my love." Jaime had brought his face closer to hers, so they were almost inhaling the same air.

Sansa held Jaime's eyes, looking straight into the green that were so beautiful it was almost as if he wore contacts. There was nothing there but love for her and dedication to this life they were building.

"I'd like that."

"Me too."
They were silent for a moment, lost in each other until Elia clapped her hands.

"Oh my god, you two are so adorable!" She practically squealed, a few glasses of wine and Addams hand on her back lowering her inhibitions.

Somehow, everything had clicked into place the moment Elia had walked into Sansa’s house. Sure she knew she and Addam had logistics to work out. Aegon was fourteen and moody and Rhae, at twelve, was demanding. But overall, Elia couldn't remember a time when everything seemed so right.

Jaime laughed softly, drinking his wine, loving how Sansa snuggled in closer. They talked for a few hours, and Jaime understood exactly how Sansa and his father had gotten drunk here a couple of weeks ago. It had to be one of the most relaxing places Jaime had ever been to. Sansa’s excellent wine also helped immensely.

Both Elia and Sansa were giggling and holding onto each other as Jaime finally put a stop to the wine, thanking the lovely Louise for taking care of them and walking back towards the farmhouse.

"Come on, ladies, let your men cook for you," Jaime said, winking at Addam.

"You cook?" Elia's eyes had gone impossibly full and round.

Addam's laugh was deep and infectious. "Of course. Single guy for my whole life and my best friend is the best chef in the country."

"He was pathetic- could barely boil water," Jaime added as Sansa looked between the two of them.

"Hey, I learned," Addam retorted. When Elia still looked a bit stunned, Addam added, “I got sick of eating out all the time. I’m no Jaime Lannister, but I can hold my own.”

When they got home, they took off their outdoor gear and piled into the kitchen, finding Tywin at the island with his iPad open.

"And she picked me, Papa Lion, to help with the juice tomorrow," Ned was saying excitedly.

Tywin rumbled out a laugh. "That is excellent news, Ned."

"I'm so excited for Grandparents tea Papa Lion. Mama said I have to wear my best clothes. So she helped me pick out a shirt as you wear."

Ned held up a blue dress shirt, and Sansa swore her ovaries almost exploded, and she looked at Jaime, who was grinning. God, she wanted a baby.

"Who is Papa Lion?" Elia asked, coming up and giving Tywin a quick squeeze around the shoulders.

Ned's eyes went large. "Who is that Papa Lion?"

"This is Uncle Jaime's friend, Miss Elia."

Ned gave her a little wave and then a smile, two dimples popping out. "Hello. I'm Ned. That's my Papa Lion."

Elia Martell almost melted on the spot. Little Ned Stark was adorable, and she wondered if she was crazy to think that maybe, just maybe, she and Addam could have a baby. She was forty-six for god sakes but still… She looked up and saw Addam had the same slightly stunned expression
as her as they met the now infamous Ned Stark.

"Holy hell, Jai, that kid is killer," Addam said, walking up and putting his arms around Elia. He loved having free range to touch her and smiled when she pulled him even closer, leaning over Elia's shoulder and giving Ned a run for his money when it came to killer smiles and dimples.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Addam, Uncle Jaime's best friend. I picked out his Batman car."

Ned's eyes went wide, absolutely delighted. He was almost bouncing in his seat. "Oh, I wish Mama would let me come over." Uncle Jaime had a friend over, and they were talking with him. Ned was beyond excited.

Sansa laughed, knowing his tricks and how susceptible people were to his ways.

"Mama will bring you by tomorrow, and you and Papa Lion can take Uncle Jaime's car into town, Neddy," Sansa said, snagging a glass of water and talking in her best auntie voice.

Ned rolled his eyes dramatically. "Alright, Auntie Sansa." They all heard Jeyne calling for him, and he said his goodbyes clearly wishing he was with them tonight. He'd given them all one last look of longing.

"Papa Lion?" El asked delightedly when Tywin had the grace to blush slightly.

"He has an affinity for me," Tywin said a bit stiffly, although the affection he had for the child was evident. "He has no other grandparents, you see." As if everyone couldn't see that the Great Lion wasn't completely gone over for his adopted grandson.

Elia pressed her lips to Tywin's cheek and squeezed his shoulders. "I think it's fantastic."

"He's quite a character," Tywin told her and arched an elegant towards Addam, looking between the two of them.

Elia waved a hand. "I'm forty-six Ty. I think that ship has sailed."

Then she frowned and wondered if that would be a problem for Addam. It was more than obviously to Elia that Jaime and Sansa were meant for one another and if Sansa wanted a family, Jaime could give that to her. But at her age? A baby would be a considerable risk, even if she wanted it. And was that fair to Addam? She tucked that thought aside, knowing they'd have to discuss it at some point.

"Shut that big brain down, babe. We have time to discuss that later," Addam whispered in her ear, his face open and warm. She felt the stress leave her; whatever the outcome, she knew that Addam would be by her side. She wondered at this man that seemed to be able to read her so quickly and calm her down when her brain started to turn on her.

Elia settled on a stool beside Tywin as Jaime and Addam argued about dinner. It was ridiculous, but so them, and it reminded her of when they were all roommates, and this happened nightly.

Elia watched as Sansa helped, pulling things out for Jaime, touching him softly, brushing her hands across his arms or giving him a little kiss on the cheek. Jaime leaned into every touch and reciprocated her love freely, and even though he was talking with Addam, he never made Sansa feel like she wasn't important.
They were comfortable here, together, in this beautifully appointment kitchen. And yet there was such heat between them; desire and love and want and tenderness. Elia had never quite seen anything like it.

"It's like they've been together for years," Elia said, whispering to Tywin.

He grunted his agreement.

"I brought Joanna's ring for him," and watched as Elia's eyes widened, knowing the significance of such a grand gesture.

"He didn't even ask for it when he married Cersei," Tywin said, almost smugly.

Elia grinned widely. "They are so perfect for one another."

Again Tywin hummed his agreement, sipping at his wine. "They are." He took a considerable amount of pleasure, seeing his beloved son finally so happy and settled.

"She reminds me so much of my Joanna. We loved each other so much. I've waited my entire life for Jaime to find such a love."

Elia rested a hand on Tywin's arm, feeling the same for her friend.

While Addam and Jaime argued good-naturedly about dinner, Sansa came and leaned against Tywin. They had a natural ease with one another, and he gave her a little squeeze. Sansa absently rested a hand on Tywin's back.

"Are you missing anything, Ty?" Sansa asked, making the Great Lion's heart warm.

"No, my dear. I feel quite comfortable here in your home."

She smiled at him. "I'm so glad. It bodes well that you'll say yes when you get your Christmas invite."

Tywin laughed. "Oh, I can imagine Christmas up here is quite a sight to behold."

Sansa hummed out her agreement. "I love it." Then she shook her head. "Jaime has no idea what he's in for."

Both Elia and Tywin laughed at her, and then the three of them watched Jaime and Addam prepare a beautiful prime rib roast for dinner and some sides. They did work well together, and it was something to see.

Sansa sighed, though, knowing they had one last unpleasant task today. She knew she'd break the easy-going spell that had been woven in her kitchen, but she couldn't help it.

"I think we should cue up the video on the TV. Did Pod give you a copy?"

Tywin grimaced but produced a small jump drive. "It's on here." Then he squeezed Sansa's hand.

Sighing, Sansa took it and plugged it into her smart TV and got things ready. She was reluctant to interrupt the fun that Jaime and Addam were having, but she also knew this had to happen.

As if sensing the change in mood, Jaime quieted and rubbed his hands on his pants, his entire body going taut. He laid down his knife and met Sansa's eyes.
What he hated most was how Brienne had gone after Sansa. Not him but the woman he had fallen in love with. Jaime was used to people coming after him, and in large part, that was part of the celebrity game. But this had been a direct hit against Sansa and Jaime would never stand for that. He’d allowed Cersei to hurt him in order to stay with his children for years, but now that he had Sansa? Never again would he be a victim.

Not for the first time did he wonder if she was too good for him. Maybe if he were a better man, he’d walk away and leave his shit history out of her life. But then she smiled at him and reached for his hand and he knew he’d never give her up. What he’d do was fight instead; for them and their happiness.

As if sensing the mood change, El and Addam took a seat quietly, each with a notepad.

"It's brutal," was all Jaime said, pulling Sansa close to him. "I'm so fucking sorry, Sansa."

"Jaime, stop. We both know this is not on you."

Jaime gave a tight nod and then pressed play and sat, tense and focused. He'd been so stunned the first time he'd seen the tape; fuming the second and now he was in a rage. His entire body was practically vibrating with anger. He couldn't even look at his friends, feeling like he'd let Sansa down so monumentally. He was the one who had exposed her to Brienne and her vitriol.

When the tape stopped, there was silence.

"Jaime, I don't even have words," Elia said, finally finding her voice and slipping in lawyer mode. She could feel Addam almost vibrating beside her and knew she needed to manage this situation professionally.

She saw the anger, guilt and shame on Jaime's face but also saw Sansa there beside him. Supporting him and loving him through this nastiness.

Sighing, she started to speak. "First, even if this was some random person that made and posted this video, you'd most likely have grounds for a libel and slander suit. The fact that this was a person in authority and trust? Well, I cannot imagine the network defending her. I also cannot conceptualize who would have approved this tape to go to air. Not on a network like the one you work for Jaime."

Elia looked to Addam. "Do you have a copy of Jaime's contract?"

He nodded, hopped up from the couch and pressed his lips to hers before he darted upstairs to grab it.

He came back to the tail end of Elia telling Jaime that she was confident she could get everything he wanted, including giving his crew the option to stay with the network, to come with him or to be paid a generous severance.

"And everything you've already taped," she added and then looked at Addam.

He gave her the contact, knowing she wouldn't be happy unless she looked it over herself and then grabbed a bottle of water.

"Jaime, I may do more manager duties that lawyer ones, but your contract is airtight. You have final creative say. The network wanted you and they trusted you. I think it's pretty black and white, to be honest."
Jaime visibly relaxed at Addams's words, knowing he would always have his back.

“The bigger question is, who else at the Network knew? I can’t imagine Varys would have approved such a tape. He wanted you bad, Jaime. Hell, half the reason he was given his promotion was that you stayed. They knew you were the star, not Brienne.”

Addam had never had a problem with the large woman, although he too had sensed that her interest in Jaime had been more than just friendly professionalism.

Elia finished reading the contract and her face had taken on an almost predatorial edge.

“Jaime you are going to be happy with every penny you’ve ever paid Addam. This contract is airtight. There is no wiggle room; what you say goes.”

Addam gave his love a wink and she grinned. “We’ve got them, Jaime. There is no way she had any right to tamper with that episode after you had approved it.”

Sansa felt the tension go from Jaime’s shoulders. “You’re sure?”

Elia nodded. “Oh yeah. That’s why you pay me the big bucks. Next step, I want to reach out to the Network. I need to figure out what they are saying, and we need to move fast and hard. If this ever got out, it could destroy them, not you. Also, we need a non-disclosure for Brienne and whoever else was involved. Also, we should make sure that those two women are no longer employees for your brother Sansa. The next few days might be busy; I know the head of the network and this Petyr Baelish are mostly based in King’s Landing, but I’d like to force them and their attorneys here to deal with this on our territory.”

Jaime gave her a relieved grin.

Then Elia’s face turned serious. “Now the big question. What do you want to happen to Brienne? We could really push this, Jaime. This is slander and defamation, pure and simple. She jeopardized both your and Sansa’s careers. We could really go hard after her.”

And just like that, Sansa felt the tension back in him. She squeezed his hand. Jaime glanced at his father; he had no doubts what Tywin Lannister would do. He would destroy anyone who had harmed him and the woman he loved. But Jaime was so sick of the darkness and bitterness in his life. He didn’t want to destroy Brienne; just make it so she left him and Sansa alone, and perhaps got some help. Professional help.

He was afraid of saying that out loud, though, worried he’s be perceived as weak.

“Jaime, whatever you decided you have my support,” Sansa said, leaning in to speak softly to him. She saw the war in his eyes.

“I don’t want more vengeance in my life, kitten. I fought with Cersei for so long and now this Brienne shit. I just want her out of my life.”

Sansa’s smile was radiant as she kissed him deeply. “Then be true to what you want Jaime.”

He smiled and scrubbed a hand through his hair, messing it up and making Sansa’s heart race. “You’re sure?”

God, he couldn’t’ even imagine if someone had done this to him and Cersei. She would be calling for blood. The two women couldn’t be more different.
When they turned back to the group, it was together, as a team. Because that is what they were.

Both Jaime and Sansa could see that Tywin wasn’t exactly satisfied with Jaime’s decision, but he respected it. Elia understood Jaime’s perspective and she brushed a kiss across his cheek and hugged Sansa.

“Trust me guys. We’ll get this sorted as quickly as possible.”

After that, the five adults pushed the debacle of Brienne from their minds. Jaime disappeared for a few minutes, while Addam poured everyone wine.

Sansa put on some music and as the darkness fell, the farmhouse kitchen was filled with laughter and light.

“Oh fuck off Lannister,” Addam said, throwing his head back and laughing when Jaime came back in wearing one of his chef whites.

He winked at Sansa. “My girl loves it, so piss off Marbrand.”

Addam grabbed Jaime and wrested him for a few minutes until Tank’s defence of Jaime was too much and Sansa broke them up.

She sat back and watched the show. Once they got back to cooking, it was like watching kitchen porn.

Addam was wearing one of Sansa’s aprons that said “Kiss the Cook” which Elia did multiple times, and they worked in tandem, with Addam acting as Jaime’s sous chef until a few hours later, a beautiful dinner of prime rib, balsamic glazed roasted baby potatoes and a creamy spinach dish and Yorkshire puddings that Jaime had done to a golden crisp and perfectly smooth gravy.

“Guys this is amazing,” Sansa said, impressed with their skills and clear enjoyment with each other and cooking.

Of course, talk turned to the antics of the three of them in university and Sansa sat back and learned more about the man she loved as he laughed his way through the evening with his two closest friends.

It was clear that both Elia and Addam had fully accepted Sansa and as Jaime sat back, happily drunk he could imagine a lifetime of evenings such as this.

Later still, when things had been cleaned up, Jaime took Sansa’s hand and led her upstairs.

“Thank you for welcoming them into our home,” Jaime told Sansa as they saw the door to Elia and Addam’s room close.

“Oh course. I love them, Jaime,” Sansa said, meaning it.

When they got to their bedroom, they went through their normal bedtime routine. Jaime finished first and slipped into bed, loving how he heard Sansa humming inside their ensuite. Today had every single emotion, from watching the men in Sansa’s family ride out to the high country, to having his two best friends here and in love, to knowing that Elia could get him out from working for Brienne while saving his crew’s jobs.

Jaime was sitting in bed, waiting for Sansa. One of his favourite parts of the day was this quiet time when it was just them. He couldn’t imagine being apart from her for any length of time, and his
heart thumped harder the moment she emerged.

She was wearing little sleep shorts and a tank top and had wound her hair into a messy braid down her back.

Jaime’s breath hitched and he felt everything inside him settle and right itself again like it did each time he saw her.

Sansa saw Jaime’s smile when she emerged from the bathroom and smiled. She loved how he waited for her each evening. Today had been such an emotional day, that she knew more than anything, what she needed was just to be held by him. Jaime had awoken her sexuality, and Sansa always felt the low hum of desire, but tonight, she knew that wasn’t what he needed.

As she settled in bed, he clicked off his light and Sansa settled in his arms. It felt like this was where she was meant to be as if her entire life had been waiting for this man.

She tilted her head for a kiss loved it when Jaime brushed his lips across hers.

“Love you, Jaime.”

“Love you, Sansa.”

Chapter End Notes

Up Next:

Elia puts things in motion, Grandparents tea (where perhaps Ned and Papa Lion find something in their travels), and Elia and Dany finally have a long-overdue talk
Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

The long-awaited Grandparents tea, Elia and Dany chat and some romance!

Chapter Notes

I love this chapter. There is smut, romance, bonding, tears.

BUT- I will give a slight warning. Elia talking about her abuse is NOT graphic because I don't do that. But it could be a trigger. So be gentle if this might apply.

Also, I DID not see THAT coming up in the GP tea!

Hit me up in the comments if you'd like to chat about it.

Enjoy

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

Sansa giggled as Jaime kissed his way down her body. He had woken up in a playful mood, content and confident now that Elia and Addam were here, knowing this mess with Brienne would be sorted soon. He'd known as well as Sansa had last night that what they'd needed from one another was comfort. And comfort they had given one another.

But this morning, waking up with her perky ass pushing against his dick, the need for her had roared through Jaime, and he wasn't letting her go until she was well and truly satisfied.

Jaime hadn't shaved yesterday, so his stubble left little reddish marks on her delicate skin, which he was more than happy to kiss away. Jaime tugged at her tank top, pleased when it vanished, and she was only in a lacy pair of panties. He sucked his breath in, perched above her, marvelling that this woman was his.

She was art, he was sure, and no one on this earth had been created quite as she had; to drive him mad with love and desire. And she was all his. From the top of her amazing hair, down to her toes which, when he last checked were painted a delicate coral colour – all of this remarkable woman was his and his alone. If he had his way, no other man would ever touch her the way he was allowed to; no other man would worship her the way he planned to for the rest of their lives. He pulled off the panties knowing she would have no use for them right now.

Jaime cupped a breast, loving the feel and weight of it in his hand, watching as the nipple pebbled
and hardened, begging for his mouth. He leaned down, taking the pale pink tip between his lips, tugging and sucking until she felt Sansa moan and buck, and then he bit gently, feeling her hands card themselves through his hair, pinning him to her chest.

"Jaime," she said, breathless with need. "Oh gods, your mouth on me."

He lived for that tone in her voice. For her little cues and signals that she loved what he was doing. He knew she wasn’t very experienced in the bedroom, and each time they made love, he wanted to know, without a doubt, that she was comfortable and happy in their love.

"Kitten," he responded, lifting his head from one breast, only to transfer it to the other. He'd hate to be considered neglectful but not paying attention to it.

By the time he was done there, both her breasts were wet from his mouth and hard and needy. Her chest was heaving and that sight alone made Jaime’s dick pulse.

Not stopping, Jaime kissed his way down her slim stomach, laving at her belly button and making her giggle before he parted her thighs gently.

He inhaled her; honey and musk and sweetness and Sansa. Just Sansa. Jaime would know her taste and scent everywhere. It was as if it had been imprinted on him.

"Fuck, I love this pussy," he muttered, almost to himself, so lost in her beauty that he missed the blush staining her cheeks.

When parted her folds, he found her creamy and ready, and he sunk one finger inside her, stroking her lightly while his thumb petted her clit. She arched for him, digging her heels into the bed and giving him better access.

"That's it, baby, open up for me," Jaime said, dividing his attention between her face and her entrance, not wanting to miss a single thing.

"Jaime, please," Sansa begged, and he slipped another finger in.

"Come for me, baby," and Jaime watched as she broke apart, flooding his hand with her juices. Wasting no time, Jaime lowered his mouth and licked, long and deep, gathering everything that was Sansa in his mouth and eating her like she was the best thing he'd ever tasted. For a man with his career, that was saying something indeed.

When he finally took pity on her, as she was near incoherent with need, and latched on to her clit, Sansa all but screamed his name again, flooding his mouth with even more of her cream, before collapsing bonelessly on the bed.

Smug, happy and hard a rock, Jaime prowled back up her body. He grinned at her, and she smiled back.

"God, you're good at that."

"I could live there, babe," he said, winking at her.

She laughed and then wrapped her arms around his neck, pulling him down and fusing his lips to hers. She believed him. She’d never met a man that loved oral sex the way that Jaime did. She wouldn’t complain as she was the lucky recipient of his attentions.

"I love tasting me on you," she said, almost shyly.
Jaime adored how she was still discovering all these things she loved when it came to making love. A part of him could admit that it fed his ego that she was quite inexperienced and that they would discover what she wanted together.

Then all thoughts fled as she flipped them quickly, grinning at his slightly stunned expression.

"You had your turn, now it's mine," Sansa said. Jaime saw the determination and the sheer want on her face, and he settled into the bed.

Where once Jaime might have protested that he didn't need any special attention, he'd come to understand that love was reciprocal – even in the bedroom. Cersei had demanded and took from him, whereas Sansa wanted to be an equal partner. She had told him, shyly, that she got pleasure when she could pleasure him, and it had startled Jaime to realize that he felt the same way.

Still, it was a particular type of torture that Sansa seemed determined to dole out this morning. She was clearly in no hurry as she licked and nibbled her way down his body, starting with his neck and ears, and then down his impressive chest that was hardened with muscles.

Jaime might not be quite at the level of Addam Marbrand, but he was still an incredibly handsome man; long and lean and sleek almost whereas Addam was bigger.

Jaime loved watching Sansa when she was lost in her explorations of him. She muttered cute little things he wasn't even sure she was aware of.

"God, I love this stomach," she was saying, tracing each defined muscular line with her tongue and fingers, until she found the defined V of muscles that lead lower.

"You are so built."

Jaime smiled.

"Perfect."

Jaime's cock was rock hard and weeping, having been ready since the moment he'd woken up. When Sansa's hand wrapped around him, Jaime's eyes almost rolled back in his head. Then she licked her lips and delicately took the head into her mouth, licking him up.

"Yum," she said, looking directly at him and, if possible, he went even harder.

"Fuck, baby, put your mouth on me," Jaime all but begged her.

She grinned and then sucked him down, taking him deep and working her tongue, hands and lips in tandem, until he was a mess, bucking into her mouth and trying to hold off the orgasm that he felt roaring through his blood.

"I want to taste you, Jaime. Drink you down, baby."

Jaime's eyes went dark green, and he growled, an almost feral sound of want.

He moved then, grabbing her by the hips and swinging her so that her pretty little pussy settled right over his face and then dove in, parting her lips and swiping his tongue in deep.

Sansa had no time to be scandalized, as red hot lust shot through her body, and she took Jaime in deep, wiggling and grinding on him as she sucked and stroked him. They were wild, out of control for one another, but Jaime edged her out, feeling her tighten and flutter on his hands and tongue.
until she flooded his face with her wetness, and then he bucked into her mouth, emptying jet after jet of hot seed down her throat. Sansa took it all, swallowing it down and loving every single moment.

When they finally got themselves back under control, Jaime tucked her to his side, tilted her head so he could kiss her again.

Their essences mingled between them, and it was dirty and hot. And something Sansa had never imagined she would ever like.

"You were amazing," Jaime said, lovingly stroking her back.

She giggled. "I love discovering all of these new things."

Jaime winked. "Anything you want, kitten, I'm your man."

Sansa cocked her head and looked at him.

"Handcuffs?"

Jaime's eyes widened, but he saw how serious she was and a little insecure.

"Sure, as long as that's what we both want."

"Toys?"

Grinning now, Jaime nodded, fondling a breast, feeling his dick start to rally. He silently cheered him on. His dick, that was.

"Of course. We can even order online." He wiggled his eyebrows.

She went red. "Ummm, what about back there?" she all but whispered, and Jaime smiled softly.

"Sansa, we will never do more than you want or are comfortable with. Sex with you is the best I've ever had. And it doesn't have to be freaky or kinky or wild. Just whatever we both desire."

She relaxed in his arms then, and Jaime knew she knew his words were real. He would never pressure her for anything she wasn't willing to give.

Sansa had heard that men liked that; that it was something they would all ask for. Certainly, Harry had made it seem like she should be willing to have sex like that with him if she wanted to keep him. Thank gods she'd never given in.

With Jaime, she might. Someday, because she knew if they did, it would be because they both wanted to and were comfortable with one another. Not because it was something he demanded from her. And if they never did, she knew Jaime would be just as happy.

"I like the idea of doing it somewhere in public," she whispered after a time and Sansa felt the rumble in Jaime's chest.

"Oh baby, I could have you screaming my name in some little closet in Bran's restaurant, while everyone was eating their dinner and I ate you." Sansa moaned at that image; Jaime on his knees in front of her, while no one knew what they were doing.

Jaime pressed a kiss to her neck and felt her shudder and then rolled his body on top of hers. He was hard again, and her thighs fell apart so he could surge inside her.
"Maybe when I take you to the ballet in King's Landing, I'll have you there. It's dark, and we have a private booth. I could eat you for hours while you had to watch the dancers," Jaime whispered in her ear. "You wouldn't even be able to scream my name, kitten."

Sansa whimpered as he dragged his cock through her sensitive folds, making her all but pant for him.

"Or maybe at my restaurant. Imagine everyone's surprise if the menu was Sansa."

Sansa blushed but she loved it. She loved having the freedom to talk with him like this. It was delicious.

Jaime had a massive smile on his face. "God, I'd love to have you there. Or in my penthouse. I have an entire wall of windows, kitten. I could fuck you against them, and if anyone saw, they'd be so damn jealous that you were mine."

"Jaime," Sansa said, moaning his name. "Fuck me harder," she demanded, and he leaned down and kissed her.

"Oh baby, you started this," he said, keeping his maddeningly slow pace.

She wiggled and then her eyes narrowed, and she tightened her Kegel muscles and watched as Jaime's eyes rolled back into his head, and he swore.

"Holy hell, Sansa, do that again," Jaime pleaded, and she grinned as they ground themselves on one another, fast and hard until they were a mess of sweat and come as they both shouted out their shared pleasure that they wrung from each other. Jaime laid over her, too spent to move, and Sansa's arms cradled him gently.

"Gods, I love you so much, Sansa," Jaime said, kissing her again.

Her eyes filled. This is what she had always wanted. Passion. Love. Wildness. But safety and a sense of fulfillment. She had found it all with Jaime.

"I love you so much, Jaime Lannister."

Jaime almost asked her, right then and there. He wanted her to be Sansa Stark Lannister more than he wanted anything in the entire world.

But he also wanted it to be perfect, and he wanted Tom and Cella to meet Sansa first.

He kissed the tip of her nose. "And I love you, Sansa Stark." He gave a wiggle of his eyebrows. "Alright, lazy, let's shower."

Sansa groaned at the mess they were, blushing adorably as Jaime smacked her butt and got her moving. She felt happy and confident after their talk, sure that she could please him in the bedroom and that he wouldn't get bored with her and demand things she didn't want to give. Their life seemed just about perfect and Sansa had to pinch herself that this was real.

The five adults were just finishing breakfast when Tank barked, and the door opened, and the tornado known as Ned Stark blew into the farmhouse.

Jaime and Sansa grinned at Elia and Addam, who had been 'briefed' on Ned and his pure love for
Tywin. They loved to watch people’s reactions to Ned.

He came, as always, rocketing around the corner.

"Papa Lion, you have to see what I am wearing," Ned called, making sure they heard him before they saw him.

All five turned to see him enter the kitchen, wearing a blue dress shirt with a matching tie and black dress pants.

"Look at my shoes, Papa Lion, they match yours."

Jeyne had contacted Tywin to let him know what they had found for Ned, so Tywin wore a similar outfit, including his black shiny Louboutin dress shoes.

Ned skidded to a stop, seeing Tywin in a blue dress shirt, black pants and a tie that matched his.

"Oh, Papa Lion, look at us!" he cried and then scrambled into Tywin's open arms, snuggling closer.

"We look quite presentable, young Ned, if I do say so myself."

Ned giggled. "I like it when you speak like that, Papa Lion."

Elia almost swooned at the scene the two of them made, and she reached for Addam's hand. Last night he had done nothing more than hold her in his arms while they slept, telling her the first time he made love to her it would not be in someone's borrowed bed, but in either hers or his. Addam had felt her relax and knew he'd made the right call. He could also read every emotion in her beautiful face, and watching the woman he loved, watch Tywin cuddle his grandchild, Addam knew he'd move heaven and earth to give Elia another child. The need was blatant and obvious on her face.

"Ned, wherein seven hells did you get to?" came an exasperated woman’s voice and Sansa jumped up.

"Oh, that must be Dany," Sansa said, smiling and hurrying out of the room.

Elia looked to Jaime, who appeared almost stricken.

"Dany?" It wasn't a common name, and her voice sounded familiar. Then a dark-haired boy, with purple eyes, came around the corner, also calling for Tywin and El felt her stomach drop.

"Jaime?" she asked, looking at her friend.

"Fuck, El. Shit. I'm sorry. I forgot. Dany came here with me, as my make-up artist. She and Sansa bonded, and then Drogo came and fuck. Shit."

Jaime appeared distraught, and Elia pulled herself together. Addam watched as she straightened her spine and knew if he didn't intervene, things might go sideways. He could almost see her build her walls, and he knew that was not what she needed. It was time Elia dealt with all this shit in her past.

Addam pulled her onto his lap and whispered into her ear, "You're not alone, babe. I'm here." She turned, brown eyes hurt and confused, and Addam wondered what was going on.

"Jaime?" he looked to his best friend. He loved Jaime like a brother, but right now, his priority was Elia. His tone clearly conveyed that message.
"Dany is Rhaegar's sister," Jaime said, face full of guilt.

Addam looked back to Elia, hearing two women talking in the background.

"I walked away from her and Viserys after Rhaegar died. Just... cut off all contact. I was reeling, Addam. And I was so torn up; I had nothing left. And she was only nineteen, and I knew she needed me, but I just couldn't. We'd never been close. Rhaegar kept us very separate from his family, but still..."

Both Elia and Jaime looked so upset that Addam knew he needed to take control.

"So? Fix it now. You're both adults. If she and Sansa are friends, I'm sure she's got some redeeming qualities."

Elia swallowed hard. "I never told anyone in his family what he did to me, Addam. What if she blames me for his death?"

Addam growled and kissed her hard. "He was an abusive asshole, El. And yeah, it's going to suck to hear that about your big brother, assuming she doesn't already know. But she's family El. That little boy that just ran in here, he's your nephew. He's cousins with Aeg and Rhae."

"Oh, gods. I didn't even think of that."

Elia turned then and saw the dark-haired little boy in Tywin's other arm. Both boys seemed fascinated with the Lannister patriarch, and Elia's heart clenched when Dany's son, her nephew, pressed a kiss to Tywin's stubbled cheek. This was family and Elia knew this was everything.

When Dany and Sansa came around the corner, Elia knew that Sansa must have told Dany she was here.

There was no mistaking Dany for anything but a Targaryen with her bright silver hair and purple eyes. She appeared guarded and wary, but Elia saw her clutching Sansa's hand so hard that the redhead was trying not to wince.

"Dany, I think you know both Elia and Addam," Sansa said softly, hugging her friend.

Dany nodded and gave a tentative smile. "Hi. I'm sorry," she said, waving a hand. "I wasn't aware you were here or else I would have ..."

"Stop," Elia said, rising from the stool and making her way to Dany. Elia had forgotten how small Rhaegar's sister was. "No need to apologize, sister. It is me who owes you an apology for how I have treated you all these years."

Dany's purple eyes filled with tears.

"I'm going to be a mess about this, you know," Dany said, voice shaking.

Elia grinned, allowing the bittersweet emotions to wash over her. "Me as well." Her husband had stolen so much from her, and Elia had allowed him to do so long after he was gone.

Sansa smiled at the two of them. "Well, you both have me, and I have wine. Lots and lots of wine."

All three women laughed, cutting the tension slightly.

"But I want to go as well," came a whiny cry and Dany's eyes whipped around to find her son.
"He doesn't understand why this is just a Papa Lion and Ned thing. He starts pre-school next week, but for now," Dany said, sighing.

Elia laid a hand on Dany's shoulder. "What is his name?"

"Rocco."

Elia nodded. "It is a good name. Strong."

Dany nodded. "My husband picked it. I didn't want him to have something from... my side." There was a wealth of meaning behind those words, and Elia's heart broke for Dany. She'd lost so much; mother, father and brother. And her brother's family, when Elia had run back to Sunspear and severed all contact with Rhaeger's two remaining siblings.

"May I?" Elia asked Dany, and the small, silver-haired woman nodded.

Elia strode confidently towards Tywin and the two boys. Both Ned and Rocco appeared put out, and she knew that she needed to do some quick thinking.

She dropped to her knees to be at their height, and her breath hitched at how beautiful her nephew was.

"Hello, my name is Elia," she told the two boys who had competing pouts going.

"I know it is difficult not to be able to do something we want, but perhaps you could have a special day with me, and Uncle Addam, Uncle Jaime and Auntie Sansa," Elia continued and saw the purple eyes spark with interest.

"Special day?"

Elia nodded and smiled. "I think so. Uncle Jaime loves to cook, and maybe we could talk him into making some treats."

Ned's eyes darted to his Uncle Jaime, who winked at him, and being a little bit older than Rocco, Ned magnanimously didn't say anything, still clinging to Tywin.

"And when Ned comes back, I've heard there are lots of farm animals at the ranch. Perhaps you could show me."

Ned grinned and leaned over. "We could show her the chickens Roc," and the little boy smiled back.

"And the piglets!" he cried and launched himself at Elia, who scooped him up, holding him tightly.

Her eyes teared, and they fell, spilling down her cheeks. She had denied herself and her children this connection for too long, and she no longer would. When she rose, Rocco still in her arms; she met Dany's gaze. The woman jerked her head once as if to say, let's talk, and Elia knew she was in for another emotional day. But it would all be worth it because, in the end, it all came down to those you loved and those you let in. And Elia was done running from her past.

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Once Elia had distracted Rocco, Tywin knew that was his cue to leave. He and Ned were due at his pre-school in Wintertown within half an hour, and he knew that they needed to go. Tywin gathered his young charge, delighted when he chattered happily and got him into Jaime's big black Rover.
"Can we have good music, Papa Lion?" Ned asked, secured into his car seat.

Tywin laughed. "Of course," he told him, picking out Beethoven for Ned. After all, it was best to ensure his education to classical music was well rounded and thorough.

When they arrived at the small school, which was attached to a private elementary school, Ned took Tywin's hand in his.

"You have to listen to what Ms. Wyn says or else she gets cross," Ned said, frowning a bit at that.

"I will," Tywin assured Ned.

"And there are rules, Papa Lion. You have to follow them. We have to wash our hands before snack and ask permission to use the bathroom. And we have to sit on the carpet for story time and be very quiet. And if we have a question, we have to raise our hand."

"Seems reasonable," Tywin said, trying not to chuckle as he imagined how many rules Young Ned had broken.

As if knowing what he was thinking, Ned sighed dramatically. "It can be quite hard to follow them all."

Tywin chuckled again, wondering at the pure energy needed to keep up after this little dynamo.

They entered the classroom to see other children with their grandparents. There was a mixture; some children had two, some had three, and some had four, but only Ned had one. Tywin's heart almost broke for the little boy, understanding the impact that Ned and Catelyn's death had on more than just their children.

Ned went a little quiet, clearly overwhelmed with all the new people, so Tywin knelt.

"I'm here, Ned."

He nodded and then pointed. "That's my seat. I've taken out some of my work. Want to see?"

"I'd love to," Tywin said, and Ned led him to his little desk where he showed him all his drawings, his letters and the books he had read. As Tywin had suspected, Ned was exceeding all expectations of a four-year old.

"Hello," came a sweet voice and Tywin turned to see a beautiful dark-haired woman holding out her hand. "I'm Ms. Wyn."

Tywin cleared his throat and shook her hand, which was warm and soft. "Tywin Lannister."

Her blue eyes danced with mirth, but before she could say anything, Ned interrupted. "This is my Papa Lion, Ms. Wyn. I told you he'd come."

Wynfryd Manderly Tallhart smiled gently at Ned. "You did, and here he is. That's quite exciting, isn't it Ned?"

He nodded. "I miss him when he goes home."

Wyn's eyes met Tywin's. "Oh, you don't live here?"

He shook his head and cleared his throat. "No, I live in the south, but my son came North and well..."
Wyn laughed, and it sounded magical, and Tywin was quite captivated.

"Well, I am glad you could make the tea today. Feel free to look around the classroom; Ned can show you all the stations. We'll get started in a little while."

Then she was off, to talk to her next student, and Tywin's attention was back on Ned, who showed him the painting station, the sandbox, the library, the rug where they napped along with some of his favourite toys.

A short time later, Wyn clapped and sang a little song, which all the children repeated, and they scrambled to sit on the big rug.

Wyn knelt and spoke to them, her voice commanding yet, gentle, and Tywin couldn't tear his eyes away from her.

"Today is a special day because everyone has brought a special person with them." The children almost vibrated with excitement.

"When I call your name, you will come and introduce your special person to all your friends," Wyn said.

Ned sat still, enthralled as each person presented their grandparents until finally, it was his turn. He shot up like a rocket and grabbed Tywin's hand, and they stood at the front of the classroom.

"This is my Papa Lion. He is from the south and lives in a big castle called Castle of the Rocks. And he has a private jet, and he loves chickens."

Tywin scoffed at the chicken part, and Wyn winked at him, and for the first time in years, Tywin realized that a woman was flirting with him.

"Papa Lion and I talk on Facetime, and he helps me make money when people use swears," Ned continued, and Wyn had to bite her lip to keep from laughing. She had a soft spot for Ned Stark, even though he was a handful, and he'd been talking about his Papa Lion for weeks.

Little did Wyn know that 'Papa Lion' would be a handsome older man that made her tummy clench and her blood hum.

Wyn had been married and was now widowed. Her husband had been in the military and had been killed three years ago in a training accident. She had been thirty-two, and they'd held off having children because they both wanted to be a bit more stable. Then her entire world had imploded with her husband's sudden death, and not until this elegantly suited man had walked into her classroom had Wyn even felt a stir of desire for another man.

"Thank you, Ned, for sharing your Papa Lion with us," Wyn said, laying a hand gently on his back.

"Children, please find your spot at the table for your special person. My helpers for today, it is time to do your jobs."

Tywin admired the way she commanded the children, including them and getting them to listen without being hard or heavy-handed.

Wyn had assigned a few children to put out plastic cups, along with little plates. Others were in charge of the cookies and then Ned would pour the juice. Wyn had two moms who had volunteered to make the tea and put out the cups, and then the little tea party would start.
Wyn took a seat beside Tywin and Ned because it was the only open one. And, she could admit, she was drawn to the man.

They both watched as Ned went to each table, filling the glasses with juice and not spilling a drop. Tywin's eyes never left his grandson, and Wyn was fascinated that such a powerful man could be so protective and gentle with the little boy. Wyn knew that Ned Stark had a mind unlike any other, and she had a feeling this man knew it is well. Ned Stark would need people to nurture his talent.

"He's special," Wyn said softly, finally drawing Tywin's eyes from Ned and to her.

Tywin nodded, and Wyn wondered just how many people had ever seen this man sitting a little table, eating store-bought cookies and drinking lukewarm tea.

"His mind is amazing," Tywin acknowledged. "But it's his family that will ensure he accomplishes whatever he sets his mind to. They are so grounded and loving that he can't help but feel confident."

Wyn laid a hand on Tywin's arm. "He's quite taken with you. It was one aspect of his life that was missing. A grandparent figure."

Tywin swallowed hard. "I have three other grandchildren, but I was never close to them. Not like him."

Wyn nodded sagely as Ned finished with the others and then came to their table.

"That was careful pouring, Ned," Tywin praised him.

Ned beamed. "I practiced at home with Mama," he told Tywin.

"That was a good idea."

"I'm excited for Roc to start here, Papa Lion, but for today, I'm glad it is just you and me."

Tywin's heart clenched with how much he loved his grandson.

The children had made a special handprint in clay for their grandparents, and once the tea was done, they presented it to them. Wyn caught the sheen of tears in Tywin's eyes, and she knew that despite his gruff and somewhat cold demeanour, this man had the capacity for love. Deep, emotional love.

"Thanks, Ms. Wyn," Ned told her at the end of class.

"Yes, thank you, Ms. Wyn," Tywin's gravelly voice said, low and full of …. Something. Wyn blushed. "Thank you, Ned, for all your help. I hope you enjoyed yourself today."

"I did," he said enthusiastically and bolted for the outside to play for a few minutes, leaving Wyn and Tywin alone.

"You're very good with the children," Tywin said, trying to find some common ground with this woman who had spun him in a way that hadn't happened in quite some time.

Wyn shrugged. "After my husband died, I threw myself into my career. It was, quite frankly, the only thing that kept me going."

"You're a widower?" Tywin asked quietly, that connection he felt with her deepening.
"I am," she said, giving him a soft smile. "Three years. Military accident."

They were quiet for a time, watching the children play, as Tywin clutched at the clay handprint Ned had made him.

"My wife died, as well. Years ago," Tywin finally said.

Wyn hummed in sympathy. "It's a special kind of club that no one wants to join, isn't it."

Tywin agreed with that.

Then Ned was racing back over. "I'm ready to go, Papa Lion," tugging at his hand.

"One moment, Ned." Tywin turned back to Wynfryd and coughed.

"Perhaps you'd like to get a coffee sometime when I'm in the North. As friends," he added, and she smiled.

"I'd like that, Tywin. Jeyne has my contact information."

Tywin's eyes narrowed, wondering if she were politely blowing him off.

Wyn shrugged. "In case you get home and change your mind. There is no pressure, but coffee would be lovely."

He nodded once more and then turned, hearing Ned yell for him. They would need to discuss manners, but this tea had been quite the morning for Tywin, and he allowed himself to feel contentment as he made his way towards Jaime's Rover.

"Ned, what did we discuss about yelling at me when I am talking with someone?"

Ned had the grace to look chagrined, at least. "That is rude."

Tywin arched an eyebrow.

"Sorry, Papa Lion."

"That's better. Come on, let's go home."

Tywin buckled Ned into the car seat and then pulled out of the lot, but not before taking one last glance at Ms. Wyn, who gave him a little wave. Where before Tywin had been doubting, he'd call her, now he knew he'd at least follow up with a cup of coffee. If nothing else, perhaps they could be friends.

After Tywin and Ned left, the house settled down. Jaime came over to Elia and Dany and tried to apologize to both women.

"Oh, Jaime, stop. It happens. I'm surprised we haven't run into each other before," Dany said, the first to forgive.

She still had big butterflies in her stomach. She had been young when Elia and her brother had first started dating and then married, and Rhaegar had kept his new wife from his father and siblings. But Dany wasn't an idiot, and she knew in the end, something terrible had to have happened.
Right before their father killed himself, Rhaegar had come to Essos to visit them. He'd been in a rage, cursing that his traitorous wife had left him and taken his two young children. Even at nineteen, Dany had known both her brothers had vicious tempers, although Rhaegar's was colder where Viserys' was hot.

Her father, lost in his madness, had only fanned the flames of Rhaegar's rage, bellowing that no woman could be trusted and that they were all whores. The way Rhaegar talked about Elia as if she were a possession instead of a person as if he could control her, had made Dany's stomach churn. She'd said nothing, but her opinion of her eldest brother had changed dramatically that day. When he'd left a few days later, they had barely spoken, and Dany vowed she'd never be like that if she were ever to marry. She'd love and treasure her husband and make sure he did the same to her.

When her father died, Dany made that awful call to Rhaegar on Dragonstone and had been met with stony silence. The only words he'd uttered was that women always drove men to extremes. A week later, it had been Dany that had received word that Rhaegar had crashed his car on the windy roads of their family's island. When the toxicology report had come in, Dany wasn't surprised that there were both drugs and alcohol in his system. Her family suffered from addiction issues and Dany knew that Rhaegar had been no different.

After Rhaegar’s death, Dany had waited for Elia to contact her; they were family after all, and Rhae and Aeg were her niece and nephews. But after the funeral, Elia had all but disappeared, and Dany reeling from the deaths of both her father and her brother didn't have the strength to pursue her brother's widow and try to have a relationship.

Elia was crying, great heaving sobs now as Addam sat with her, wrapped in his big arms, as Dany shared her story. "I'm so sorry, Dany," Elia was repeating, guilt eating at her soul. Rocco was on his little iPad, watching a movie, and Dany felt herself settle as she looked at her son. "It's ok, Elia. I mean, you had to have your reasons."

"What good are the reasons when I abandoned you in Essos? I should have demanded you come with me to Sunspear," Elia all but growled, and Dany tried not to smile. This woman was amazing, and Dany was so happy to finally have her back in her life. "So, what were they?" Dany asked quietly. When Elia's eyes met hers, Dany added, "Your reasons."

She saw Elia stiffen and try to pull away, and Addam brushed his lips across her cheek. They were adorable, and Dany loved this man for her sister in law already. "No, El. She deserves to know. Dany can handle it."

Elia turned to face Addam. "He was her brother, and no matter what he did, I will not put that on her. She deserves her good memories of him."

Dany felt her belly clench and knew it had been bad, as she had suspected. As if sensing her distress, Sansa was there, wrapping an arm around her. "I can handle it, Elia. I need to know," Dany told her and watched the war in Elia Martell's eyes.
"It was years ago, Dany. What good would it do now? To drag up such bad history?" Elia all but pleaded.

"Please. I need to know why it all fell apart," Dany said, unsure why it mattered, only knowing that it did. It was like poison that they needed to get out of their system.

Elia sighed and rubbed at her temple, feeling a headache build. She hated going back to that time in her life. She raised her eyes and looked at Dany.

"I won't tell you everything. Some things are too private. Some things were just between us."

Dany nodded, saying nothing. That was fair. Still... she needed to understand and she hoped that Elia could respect that.

Elia sighed again.

"I met your brother in my second year at university." Elia paused. "You know that. What you don't know is I was in love with someone else." Elia elbowed Addam. "Some big idiot who wouldn't make a move. I had waited a year for him, and when nothing happened, I promised myself the next man that showed an interest, I would say yes. That was Rhaegar."

Addam let out a disgruntled sound, and Elia gave him a look, which quieted him down.

Elia told Dany quickly about their courtship and how Addam left, and Jaime met Cersei. "We all sort of fell apart, and I relied on Rhaegar more and more. He liked it, I think. That my friends had moved on, found their own lives and I was basically alone."

Addam snarled at that and Elia laid a hand on his chest. "Calm down, love. I know now. We both made mistakes. But it's the truth." She shrugged. "I was isolated and came to rely on Rhaegar only. When he moved us to Dragonstone, I thought it was romantic. Until we never left. Finally, I put my foot down, and he consented to go between King's Landing and the island."

Elia's mind drifted back, and everyone waited. It was a painful story. "I didn't notice it at first. The put-downs, the constant criticism. I wasn't smart enough, pretty enough, sexy enough, according to him. He chipped away at my confidence, wearing me down, isolating me. I know now, after years of therapy, they have a name for that type of behaviour. But at the time, I just thought I was a failure as a wife, as a woman."

Addam was vibrating in rage, and Elia felt her heartbreak for the man. She knew he loved her, only her, for his entire life. She couldn't imagine hearing that some woman had abused him for over a decade and being powerless to stop it.

Elia gave a sad smile to Dany. "I thought if we had a child, it might bring us back together; reignite some of the sparks. I was sure he was cheating on me, but I couldn't even care because the less he touched me, the better. But I forced myself to become intimate with him again. I figured if nothing else, I'd have a child. I always wanted to be a mother."

"But it didn't, did it? He didn't change," Dany said, her heart aching for what her brother had done to this woman and his children.

Elia shook her head. "No, it didn't. Still, once I had Aegon, he wanted another, and so did I, so we tried again, and we were blessed with Rhae." Elia reached out and grasped Dany's hand. "No matter what your brother and I were, I love my children Dany, and I believe he loved them as much as he could."
"Why did you leave him?" Dany asked quietly, dreading the answer but needing to know.

Elia's brown eyes met purple. Purple eyes that were her children's and Rocco's. Targaryen eyes. But never had such eyes looked at Elia with such compassion.

"He hit me," Elia said, and Addam finally snapped and pushed to his feet, stalking through the great room. Elia's heart broke for him.

Dany looked devastated, but not surprised.

"It was only once, but I knew then that we were done. He crossed a line. I could handle the emotional and verbal abuse, but not the physical. I worried when he might turn it on our children. So I packed a bag and waited until he was back at Dragonstone, and then fled to the Rock where Jaime and Tywin gave me protection. They were the only people in Westeros that were capable of standing up to him."

"Fuck, El, you could have called me. I would have been there. You had to have known that," Addam said, his eyes filled with hurt and confusion, his voice loud and accusatory.

"Oh Addam, I barely could function, and I knew you would fly into a rage. I couldn't have you harm yourself to save me," Elia told him, and he spun and continued his pacing, unsatisfied with her answer.

"A week later, I heard about your father and then another week, the crash, with Rhaegar," Elia said, continuing her story.

Jamie was there then, and he hugged her close. "Finish it, El."

"I was a mess, Dany. Broken. All I wanted was my family and the sun. I went to Sunspear and tried to heal. A few months later, Jaime said he found you and berated his father. I worked with Tywin to establish your trust fund, and well, that's that."

Elia was all but wringing her hands now in worry, looking at Dany, who appeared devastated.

"I'm so sorry, that my family, my brother did that," Dany whispered and looked ashamed and horrified.

"Oh gods, no, Dany, no. His behaviour had nothing to do with you, or me, or anyone but himself. He was an adult, and he was responsible for his actions."

Elia rose and knelt in front of Dany, taking her face in her hands. "It is me, darling, that should apologize. I should never have cut off contact with you. I knew you were barely an adult and had just lost two of your family members. Perhaps had I been stronger, I would have fought for you."

Dany collapsed into Elia's arms, her body wracked with sobs, and the two women cried out years of hurt.

Jaime rose and glanced around the room and didn't see Addam.

"He's out back love, wearing a hole in our porch," Sansa said.

Jaime kissed her quickly and then went to find his friend.

Addam was where Sansa said, pacing on the porch, although now his knuckles were bleeding, and Jaime saw a sizable dent in one of the wooden columns.
"Done acting like an idiot?" Jaime asked, customary smirk in place.

Addam snarled and turned on Jaime, stalking back towards him. "He hit her, Jaime. That fucking bastard hit her. El. The sweetest woman in the entire world."

Jaime scrubbed a hand down his face and sighed. "He did, and the moment he laid a hand on her, she got out Ad. She left him."

"How could she love someone like that? Someone that treated her like garbage?"

Jaime looked off into the distance, recalling his awful marriage. "You feel trapped. You feel small. You feel like you should stay for your kids, make it work. You think that if you're better, or smarter, or less confrontational, that maybe it might work out."

Addam turned and looked at Jaime, seeing the expression on his face.

"Fuck, I'm an ass. I forgot for a moment you know what she went through."

Jaime shrugged. "Some. I mean, no marriage, good or bad, is the same. She trusted me Addam because my marriage was a fucking disaster. She knew I'd get it, and she knew that my father would protect her."

They were silent for a time.

"She's loved you, I think, from that first moment, Addam. But you can't understand the shame. She wasn't ready for you back then. She had to get strong on her own. She had to find her way out of the darkness by herself. Just like I wasn't ready for Sansa a few years ago. Now I am. Now I can be the man that Sansa deserves. I can love her like she deserves to be loved. I can be the husband I want to be; that she needs me to be. I can support her and love her and build a future with her."

Addam's eyes bore into Jaime's.

"I can be that for Elia. All of that, Jaime. Whatever she wants or needs."

Jaime walked up to Addam and clapped him on the back. "I know that, and so does she. So get over yourself and go back in there and be there for your woman. Stop acting like you're the injured party and be there. For her. Because none of this is about you or your ego Addam. She didn't need you to save her; she did that herself. Be proud of her."

Addam swallowed hard and nodded. "I am. Thanks."

"Anytime."

The men walked back into the house and found Dany, Elia and Sansa, making tea and talking about Elia's kids in the kitchen. Roc was snuggled in Dany's lap, loving his new Aunty and asking questions that Elia was happily answering while showing him pictures of his cousins.

Addam came right up to her and pulled her into his arms.

"I'm sorry for being an ass. It's not about me, and I was an idiot. I'm here, babe. And I love you," Addam said to Elia, whose breath caught and she let out a little sob.

"I wish I could have reached out to you then, Addam, but I…"

Addam pressed his lips to her. "No babe. You survived. You got out when you need to. You don't owe me anything. My ego was checked, El. We're good."
"You sure?"

Elia searched Addam's eyes. "I'm sure, babe."

Addam felt her relax, and then he kissed her again, knowing Jaime had been right. It wasn't about him; it was about her and what she had done to survive her awful marriage.

Then Dany coughed and gave Addam a look. "So, you're the man who is in love with my sister, huh."

Addam grinned.

"I am."

"You'd better be good to her," Dany said, small but threatening.

Addam threw his head back and laughed. "Oh, darling, I plan on being the best."

Jaime and Sansa laughed at Dany's fierce defence of Elia, and they knew then that things had turned a corner.

When Jaime clapped his hands and asked who was ready for lunch, a happy chorus rang out. Tywin had texted, and he was on his way back with Ned, and he said they had a surprise. Jaime knew his father would be pleased with how the morning had turned out and rubbed his hands together to start cooking for the people he loved.

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Ned chatted the entire drive home, more than pleased with how the morning had gone, while Tywin was lost in his thoughts. He'd never once, not in the entire time since Joanna had died, asked a woman out on a date.

He had brief, emotionless affairs that only lasted for a few nights with other women in his social class that understood it was nothing more than a physical release for him. He had never taken any of those women on a date, and there were less than a dozen in the thirty years since his wife had died.

So what was it about this Wynfryd that made Tywin say he'd go for coffee? He'd met other widowers and never felt drawn to them. He'd known more beautiful women than her, and certainly more powerful ones. Women in all forms, shapes and sizes had tried to tempt him over the years since Joanna had died and not once had Tywin felt a flicker of interest. Not until now.

Lost in his thoughts, he was idly on a country road at a four-way stop, when Ned's voice broke through.

"What's that, Papa Lion?"

Tywin startled a bit and looked where Ned was pointing to see a sack that was wiggling. Intrigued and needing the distraction, Tywin pulled the big SUV off to the side of the road.

"Shall we investigate?" Tywin asked, and Ned looked excited.

"Oh yes, Papa Lion."

Soon they were out of the vehicle and walking towards the sack. As they got closer, they heard the tiny mewing and meows and Tywin had a feeling what they might find.
"Let me, Ned," he said, crouching down and opening the sack.

Four pairs of kitten eyes stared back at him. They were dirty, matted, cold and hungry. But alive.

"Kittens, Papa Lion!" Ned said excitedly.

"Don't touch, Ned. We need to be careful. They will need to be examined," Tywin said, although he had a grin on his face.

There were two tabby's, a ginger coloured one and a black one with white paws.

"Can we keep them?" Ned asked softly.

Tywin grunted. "We will take them home to Aunty Sansa and Uncle Jaime and clean them up. Perhaps someone is looking for them," Tywin said, although he couldn't imagine who. They had clearly been abandoned.

"Ohhhhh, this is exciting," Ned practically squealed. Then the little ginger kitten yawned and Ned let out an excited cry. "He's like a little lion."

Tywin chuckled and got both kittens and Ned back into the Rover.

The drive back to the farmhouse was done quickly, and as they pulled up, Jaime and Sansa met them on the porch.

Sansa's eyes narrowed when Tywin pulled the sack from the vehicle.

"What is that?" she asked, Tank sniffing and wiggling his butt excitedly.

"Kittens, my dear."

"Kittens?" she asked as if Tywin had just announced he'd brought home an alien.

"We found them, Aunty Sansa. Abandoned. And Papa Lion says we can keep them."

An elegant red eyebrow arched up. "He did?" Sansa said, pinning Tywin with a look.

He had the grace to appear slightly chastised. "I said we'd bring them here and assess the situation."

Ned had already hollered for Rocco, who was now there, oohing over the dirty kittens, and Sansa drilled Tywin with a look.

"You know they won't ever give them up, right?"

Tywin shrugged. "You live on a farm. Cats kill mice. I fail to see the problem."

"Tywin Lannister do not saddle me with four kittens when you don't even live here," Sansa said, working up a head of steam. Jaime laughed and winked at his father.

"She doesn't get angry often, but when she does, watch out," Jaime said. He loved how Sansa was not intimidated by his father in the least.

"And you," Sansa said, turning on him, about to say more, when she felt a little pull at her pant leg. She looked down to see the black and white one tugging on her, and her eyes melted.
"Uhh, babe?" Jaime said, wondering where she had gone. She scooped up the dirty kitten and pressed him to her chest.

"Oh Jaime, look at his little paws. They're all white."

Jaime frowned. "Yeah, but we have Tank, Sansa. I mean, do you even want a cat?"

"Jaime, they were abandoned. And he is so skinny. Oh come on, bring them in. We'll clean them up and phone the vet and get him out here."

Sansa, Ned, Rocco, Dany and Elia brought the sack of kittens inside, while Tywin stood beside Jaime and Addam.

"Well, that worked out well," the Great Lion said, looking quite pleased with himself as if this had been his plan all along.

Jaime snarled out a curse that had Tywin turning towards him.

“What is your problem?” Tywin asked.

"My problem?" Jaime sputtered, looking at his father. “My problem is I think I've seen my future, and it includes cleaning endless litter boxes."

Tywin clapped Jaime on the back. "It's good for your son. Humbling."

Then Tywin followed the women and children and kittens inside the house.

Addam was doubled over with laughter at the look on Jaime's face.

"Shit, son, you just got played by your old man."

Jaime growled and said nothing, pushing inside the house and wondering what else the North would throw at him. And wondering when his father had become so happy. It was weird, and decidedly un-Tywin Lannister-like.

Shaking his head when he heard Sansa making a list of supplies, Jaime resigned himself to cleaning cat litter for the foreseeable future.

There was no way the woman he loved would do anything less than nurture those four vicious little killers until they could find proper homes for them. All of them. Her heart was too big to just dump them on the SPCA.

With that thought in mind, Jaime gave one last look at his favourite t-shirt and kissed it goodbye, knowing that cats and water didn't go together and that he'd most likely be tasked with holding them while Sansa cleaned them up.

Shaking his head, he gave himself a rueful laugh and shook his head. One thing about the North, there was never a dull moment.

Chapter End Notes

WHAT?? what.
Yeah, so did NOT see that coming w/ Ty and Wyn. Not sure what I might do about it, if anything, but I liked how it worked.

KITTENS!! BABY LIONS!!!!!
Jaime entered the kitchen of the farmhouse, to thankfully find that Sansa had the sense to take the kittens into the laundry room just down the hallway. He might have gotten upset had he seen the four little killers in his precious domain. But they weren't there, so he could only hold his tongue and brood.

His father, of course, was standing there giving direction, as both Ned and Roc stood eagerly on little stools, craning their necks to look at the animals.

Elia, Dany and Addam were all grinning like fools at his put-out expression when he came back to the kitchen.

"I don't know why you're laughing, Dany. If you think Rocco is leaving here without one of those little beasts, well, then you're slower than I thought," Jaime sniped at her, welcoming misery to his company.

Dany's grin instantly disappeared as she hopped down off the stool. "We don't even have a home yet, Jaime. We just bought the land. Surely your father can't think to…" She let her words trail off as they all heard Tywin extoll the virtues of owning a cat.

"They also kill mice, boys, making them a most useful pet," Tywin was saying, as Sansa giggled and the boys ohhh'd and aww'd.

"Shit," Dany said, hurrying towards the laundry room.

Jaime's gaze swung to El and Addam, who were holding hands and laughing at the entire sequence of events.

"I've never seen your father like this Jaime," Elia said, shaking her head as they all heard Tywin saying how cats were quite clean and self-sufficient.
"What's self-sufficient, Papa Lion?" asked little Ned, voice curious.

All three listened as Tywin patiently explained how cats could take care of themselves.

"That kid, Jaime. He's amazing," Addam said, wonder in his voice and Elia knew she'd do whatever necessary to ensure they had a chance to have a baby. Addam would be an amazing Dad, that she knew.

"Yeah, he's great," Jaime muttered, his mind occupied with the little meows he heard coming from the laundry room and Sansa's happy little gasps of joy. Jaime knew that there was no way in hell that a cat wasn't joining their household. Not with the happiness that was coming from the other room.

As Jaime pattered around the kitchen, he thought about the kittens. It wasn't that Jaime didn't like cats, or had anything against them in particular as a pet. It was the memories that cats evoked — one particular cat.

Cersei had given Tommen a kitten for his fifth birthday, and his son had fallen instantly in love. He'd name the damn thing Ser Pounce and had carried it around with him everywhere. Of course, years later, when they had been battling and going through their divorce, Cersei had the nerve to keep the damn cat, even though she hated it and had complained about its hair daily. When Tommen had decided to stay with Jaime and not his mother, Cersei hadn't let the cat come with him. Even though Tom had been a teenager, it had still devastated him. A few weeks later, a mysterious 'accident' occurred, and the cat was dead. Tommen had been near inconsolable for months.

Rationally, logically, Jaime knew this wasn't the same thing. But still. Hearing boys fall instantly in love with kittens the same age as Tommen had been, brought the memories rushing back. As if sensing there was something more to his mood than just annoyance, Jaime felt Sansa's arms wrap around him from behind. She'd left the laundry room to find some milk for the kittens.

"Come on, babe, talk to me," she said, tugging his hand and pulling him into the formal sitting room they hardly ever used.

Thankfully, Sansa gave him space, allowing him to pace the spacious room as the story of Tommen and Ser Pounce came pouring out.

Once it was purged from his soul, Jaime collapsed onto a stuffed chair and heaved out a sigh, running a hand through his hair. Sansa was momentarily distracted by how handsome he was. Shaking her head she focused back on Jaime.

"Fuck, San, I hate how something so mundane can wind me up," Jaime said, looking slightly forlorn and a little bit lost.

"I understand, and if you'd like, I'm sure once I get them checked, Jeyne would take them. If nothing else, they can live in the barn," Sansa said, her tone warm but to the point. Jaime looked horrified at that thought.

"Gods, no, Sansa, that wasn't what I meant."

Sansa smiled to herself. She loved this man so much, and he was so good, and tried so hard, that she wondered if he even knew how rare he was. Even when the kittens brought up uncomfortable memories he didn't want them to be out of their home. No wonder she loved him.

"Ok, well, then maybe we keep them here for a little while. They're young, Jaime and not quite
ready for their forever homes. I'm sure Dr. Luwin will agree once he gets here."

Jaime nodded. "Yeah, that sounds good. I'd hate for them to be back out in the cold," he muttered, almost to himself.

"And just think how excited Tommen will be to have four kittens when he comes this weekend," Sansa continued, thinking it would be good for both father and son to heal from another one of Cersei's manipulations.

A smile broke out over Jaime's face. "Yeah, babe. He'd love that. I mean, he'll like all the animals, but he loves cats."

Sansa rose and came to sit in Jaime's lap, brushing her lips against his and running her hands through his hair. "Then it's settled. They stay for now, and we will see as they get older."

Jaime gave her a look, which had her batting her eyes at him. "Jesus woman, I wasn't born yesterday. You might as well just say that the little black and white one is staying," Jaime told her, squeezing her butt and making her squeal in delight.

Sansa shrugged and didn't even bother to look guilty. "He's so cute, Jaime, with his four little white paws. And he's the tiniest."

Jaime's heart just about damn near burst with how adorable she was. Really, was it any wonder he'd fallen so hard for her?

"Ok, love. What's first?" he asked, and Sansa's brilliant smile chased away the last of the bad memories.

"Bath time!" she exclaimed and pulled him to his feet.

When they wandered back through the kitchen, Elia reached out and stopped him, looking up to see Tywin there as well.

"Tomorrow at 10 am, we have a meeting in Wintertown with Varys and some other network executives and their lawyers," she told both Lannister men.

"I'm going to push hard for all material already taped to remain your intellectual property Jaime as stated in the contract. As well, I think you should finish the ten episodes in the North, mostly because it was part of a larger contest that involved Bran Stark." Before Jaime could protest, Elia gave him a look. "Of course, no Brienne. Podrick Payne can be your producer and the rest of your crew stays. Then, after the ten, you're done, Jaime. A free man."

Jaime could only nod and felt Sansa squeeze his hand. He knew this was what had to happen, but a part of him was still in shock that it had come down to this. Years of friendship and support and working together all destroyed. And for what? Just because he didn't feel the same about Brienne as she did him? It made Jaime's head hurt to think about it. More, the way that Brienne had gone after Sansa had crossed such a big line for Jaime that he knew there was no coming back from for them.

"Thanks, El," was all he said, frustrated with everything. When push came to shove, he'd be there at the meeting and then he'd do what he'd first set out to when he'd come north. He'd tape the ten episodes, and then he was done with the network. They'd owned him for over ten years, and he wanted his freedom. Sansa didn't give a shit about his celebratory status, just him.

"I want out, guys," Jaime said, voice quiet but intense. "I don't know what my future is, but it's not
with them. I'll do the ten, and then I'm fucking done." Sansa slid closer to him, her support meaning everything to Jaime.

"Are you sure?" Addam asked, no judgement in his voice.

Jaime nodded. "I am. There is no going back from this, and quite honestly, that's no longer my life."

Addam stood and held out his hand, shaking Jaime's and then pulling him into a hug. "Good choice, brother. She's way more important than this shit."

Jaime felt his shoulders relax, and some of the tension released. He'd been worried he would have been letting Addam down, but apparently not.

"Besides, Jai, YouTube. I swear, that's where it's really at," Addam said, grinning at his friend. Then Addam turned to Sansa and pulled her into his massive arms for a hug. "I'm so damn glad he found you. You are his miracle," Addam said and kissed her on the cheek, making Jaime scowl as Sansa blushed under Addam's attention.

"Back off, Marbrand," Jaime joked, but all in good fun. Everyone knew the man was mad for Elia.

"So, where are the little beasts?" Jaime asked his father. Everyone took the change of topic in stride and allowed Jaime to push the Brienne stuff aside for now. Tomorrow would come soon enough.

As predicted, bathing four kittens, four foul-smelling, abandoned kittens, did not go as smoothly as planned. They hissed and scratched, and Jaime's beloved t-shirt bore the brunt, along with the marks on his hands and arms. They had the kittens wrapped in warm towels when there was knock on the door, and Sansa opened the door to an elderly country vet, Dr. Luwin, who shook his head that someone had done such a thing.

"Never understood why people didn't just put them out of their misery and drown them in a bucket if they didn't want them," he muttered. "It would be kinder than letting them freeze to death."

Ned and Roc's eyes had gone wide.

"Papa Lion, what does he mean?" Ned whispered, horrified at the vet's words. Tywin's jaw had tightened, and he was practically vibrating with rage.

"Good god, man, there are young children here. Mind yourself," Tywin snarled at the man, who looked taken aback as if he'd forgotten the two boys.

"Right, right," he said, bustling along and pulling out the medicine to deworm them and give them their first shots. Luwin was an old school vet, and the sooner these boys learned that not all animals had the perfect life as seen on TV, the better. Still, Tywin glared at the man the entire time, all but slamming the door when he finished and left.

As Sansa had thought, the kittens were approximately three weeks old; which meant that they needed to be fed. Thankfully, they were just big enough to go on formula and semi-solid food, thus saving those in the farmhouse from having to bottle feed them. They were slightly underweight, and Doc Luwin was concerned about the back paws of the little black and white one. He'd muttered frostbite more than once.

Sansa had texted Jeyne and Arya about Tywin's find, and soon both women showed up with two litter boxes, food and litter. Of course, both women were pregnant, and the idea that someone had callously disposed of the kittens like little more than rubbish had Arya swearing and Jeyne cooing
"Want them?" Jaime asked, a note of hope in his voice until Sansa glared at him.

"Mama," Ned had said, taking Jeyne by the hand, leaning down over the little bed where all four kittens were curled around each other. "They are like little lions." His voice was filled with excitement, even as he whispered. "Papa Lion said one of them could be mine."

At that proclamation, Jeyne's eyebrow arched, to which Tywin simply shrugged.

"Cats are perfect for a farm," was all he said.

"Papa Lion, when mine is bigger, can we take him for show and tell? I'm sure Ms. Wyn would say yes." Those big brown eyes would be more than one person's undoing of that Tywin was sure.

"I'm sure Ms. Wyn would say yes, Ned, but they need to grow," Tywin replied.

Satisfied with that answer, Ned gave a sly smile. "Ms. Wyn likes Papa Lion. And Papa Lion likes Ms. Wyn. I saw him smiling at her and not the smile he uses for me," Ned said, then went back to petting the kittens softly, leaving a flabbergasted Tywin standing there staring at his grandson, and seven adults with mouths gaping.

Jaime was the first to recover.

"Ms. Wyn, is it?" Jaime said, smirk in place as he wiggled his eyebrows at his father who had clamped his mouth shut.

"She's a lovely woman," Sansa said, always the peacemaker, shooting Jaime a glare, who hadn't stopped grinning.

"Oh, she lost her husband a few years ago. Gods, she was so devastated when that call came through," Jeyne added.

"It is nothing," Tywin said, feeling decidedly uncomfortable. He had no idea that Ned had been paying much attention to him.

"Ty, it's fine," said Elia, coming up to his side and leaning against him. She lowered her voice. "From one widower to another, trust me when I say, you can't live in the past forever."

Tywin sighed and scrubbed a hand down his face, looking around the great room to see seven people with equal looks of encouragement, sympathy and excitement on their faces.

"You're not bad looking for an old guy," Arya said, breaking the tension. "If I were a hot widower, I'd consider sleeping with you." She shrugged as everyone turned and looked at her.

"What? He's hot in a hot, sexy, rich old guy way," Arya said defensively.

Addam snorted, and Jaime looked slightly horrified, but all the women seemed to agree with the outspoken Stark sister, which further spun Jaime's head. Who on earth thought his father was 'hot'? Jaime risked a look at Sansa who thankfully, didn't have quite the same look like the others.

"Oh my god, sister. Do you even hear the words before they leave your mouth?" Sansa said, mortified, face red.

Dany gave Tywin a shy smile. "I think it's nice. Even if it's nothing more than friendship."
Tywin muttered, "It was just a cup of coffee." Sensing his unease, Sansa clapped her hands and turned to her sister in law.

"We'd love to show Addam and Elia the ranch, Jeyne if that's not too big an imposition," she said brightly, and Jeyne gratefully agreed.

Ned was less excited to go, reluctant to leave the kittens for even a moment. "But Mama, they'll be by themselves," he said, refusing to move from their side.

Jeyne ran a hand through his brown curls. "They are going to be here for a while, Ned, and I'm sure since Papa Lion said one of them is yours," she gave Tywin a look, "he will expect you here to help take care of them."

Ned gave one last look of longing to the kittens and allowed his Mama to lead him away. Right before the other's got their boots and coats on, Sansa laid a hand on Tywin's arm.

"I'm sorry about all of that," she told him, and he had the grace to cough.

"It is nothing, Sansa. Do not fuss yourself, my dear," he told her.

Sansa nodded, then paused. "Still, Wynfryd is one of the most genuine and nicest people I know, Tywin. You could do worse." With that, Sansa brushed a kiss across his cheek. "Just don't close yourself off from the possibility, Tywin."

With that, Sansa hustled the group out into the two Rovers, along with Jeyne's SUV, that was waiting in the yard. Ned, free from the lure of the kittens, was happily telling Elia and Addam all about his piglets and the chickens, leaving Addam laughing so hard he was crying.

"Papa Lion said lots of swears, Uncle Addam," Ned said, startling Jaime's best friend before a huge grin spread across Addam’s face.

"Yeah, well, you know how it is. Not everyone is as amazing as me," Addam said, full of confidence and swagger.

Ned cocked his head. "Are you going to come and get the eggs?"

"Sure," Addam said, shrugging. "How hard can it be?"

Tywin snorted at that. "Hellish," he muttered.

The afternoon at the ranch passed quickly, with Addam indeed gathering the eggs with little to no problems, while Elia allowed both Roc and Ned to introduce her to all the animals. Since discovering his Auntie, Roc had barely left Elia's side, which made Dany's heart happy.

When they finally said goodbye, Elia promised to stop by the ranch before she left tomorrow and to stay in touch with Dany. There were more than a few tears between the two women, who realized how lucky they were to have this second chance.

Back at the farmhouse, Jaime announced that they were going into Wintertown for dinner.

"Bran's?" Sansa asked, and he nodded.

"You bet, kitten," Jaime said, grabbing her and kissing her, making Sansa giggle. Jaime wasn't sure there was a better sound on earth, except perhaps her breathy little moans when he was making her come.
"Speaking of kittens," she said, and Jaime groaned. Once the little beasts were fed, Sansa brought them all to the litter box, showing them, with infinite patience how to use the potty. Jaime couldn't help but grin at the picture she made as she cuddled them in her arms, and they played with her long hair.

"Jaime, they are such darlings," she said, looking up at him.

He just shook his head and then slid down and sat beside her on the floor of the laundry room. The black and white one, which Sansa had taken to calling Spike, given the little blaze of white that he had on the back of his neck that looked like, you guessed it, a small spike, had taken a particular interest in Jaime.

"Besides, he needs a tough name. He's the littlest," Sansa said, cooing at him.

Tank had been introduced and then promptly locked out of the laundry room via the baby gate that Sansa had procured and put up to keep them separate.

"You know they can jump, right, love?" Jaime asked, arching an eyebrow.

She rolled her eyes at him. "I know, Jaime. But for now, they're safer if Tank can't get to them. I'm sure that in time they'll all love each other."

Jaime snorted and felt Sansa whack him.

Then Spike batted at Jaime, launching himself at Jaime's chest and attaching himself to him. Jaime had to admit, he was cute, with his little white moustache on his otherwise black fur face. He batted at an invisible enemy, making Jaime laugh as Sansa had the other two tabbies in her lap.

"Where is the ginger one?" Jaime suddenly asked, realizing they were down a kitten.

They looked at one another and then grinned. "Your father," Sansa said. They both knew that the little orange kitten was Ned's absolute favourite. He had already named him Simba after the lion from the movie and Tywin had promised Ned to look after him 'extra special.'

Sure enough, when Jaime and Sansa emerged from the laundry room, they found both Tywin and Simba asleep on the couch, the little kitten curled up on the Great Lion's chest.

"OMG!" Sansa mouthed to Jaime and then snapped a picture on her iPhone before sending it to Tyrion as she and Jaime made their way upstairs to their bedroom. Sansa heard the shower start and sat on the bed to text Tyrion.

Tyrion: Good god, that might actually make me believe he has a heart

Sansa: Oh, god, stop! They are both darlings

Tyrion: If you say so. Between you and little Ned, you're quite the lion tamers

Sansa: Oh, he's more bark than bite. How's Marg?

Tyrion: Throwing up morning, noon and night, but the bump is starting to show.

Sansa could practically hear the pride in Tyrion's voice, and she was so happy for them. She quickly pressed call, and soon Tyrion and Marg's voices filled her ear as she told them all about Elia and Addam, the grandparents' tea, and then Tywin's apparent fascination with Ned's preschool teacher.
"A preschool teacher?" Tyrion said, incredulous just as Jaime walked out of the bathroom, having showered, a towel slung low on his hips and water dripping down his well-defined stomach.

Sansa just stared and licked her lips, temporarily distracted, desire racing through her body as her pussy clenching with need. Gods, she loved this man. Her man. There was no one as handsome as him, she was convinced, in all of Westeros. Jaime Lannister was one fine-looking man, and Sansa couldn't wait to play.

"Sansa?" came Tyrion's voice, a bit worried.

"Ummm, yeah. She's gorgeous and also a widower," Sansa said. "Hey, guys, I have to go and ummmm, get ready for dinner."

Marg's bawdy laughter-filled Sansa's ear. "Sure. Dinner. Don't choke on that big"

Sansa pressed end to the call before Marg could complete that sentence.

Sansa threw her phone away and waved Jaime over.

"Good lord, you're a delicious man, aren't you?" Sansa all but muttered to herself, rising on the bed as Jaime swaggered closer.

"You did that on purpose, didn't you?" she accused as he dropped the towel and wiggled his…

Sansa's eyes widened as his cock bobbed, coming straight for her.

“Did what?” Jaime said grinning at her.

"Holy shit, does it ever rest?"

Jaime reached for her, dragging her closer, digging his fingers into her hair and tilting her head, so he had her lips on his. "Nope. Not around you, kitten."

Then Jaime's lips captured hers and Sansa melted into the kiss, moaning and pressing closer to him. He smelled so good; clean and spicy and delicious, and Sansa tore her lips away from his so she could lick and nip and suck her way down his body.

"Stay there," she said, taking control, missing the delighted smirk that crossed Jaime's face, as her hand ran up and down his firm abs, followed by her lips.

"God, your edible," Sansa said, almost to herself, focused on his body in front of her.

"Stealing my lines, kitten," Jaime said, laughing, and then sucking in a deep breath as her mouth went lower. She'd already sucked him off once today, and yet here she was again with her mouth hovering near his dick. Jaime could smell her arousal and itched to touch her. It was odd, him completely naked and her dress.

"Too many clothes, babe," Jaime said just as Sansa grasped his cock and stroked.

"Maybe, but you're so yummy," Sansa responded as she took the head of his cock in her mouth, licking at the bead of pre-come that had leaked out. She moaned, and it sounded the same as when Jaime cooked something delicious, and he knew she loved doing this as much as he loved doing it to her.

Jaime let her have her fun, working him deeper and deeper until he was a mess of need, and then he hauled her up and slammed his lips back on hers. He tasted himself in her mouth and he growled at
how damn much he loved that.

"My turn, baby," Jaime commanded, waiting to feast on her for hours. He didn’t care one bit about
dinner, or his friends or anything that was outside this room, but Sansa. She was everything.

"I need you, Jaime," she all but whined into his mouth, and together they divested her of her
clothing. Jaime started to kiss his way down her body until Sansa jerked his hair and looked him in
the eyes.

"In me now, Jaime," Sansa demanded. They locked eyes, and he saw the desire; raw and real.

He nodded. "Hold on, babe," Jaime said, notching his cock at her entrance, feeling how wet she
was.

"Fuck baby, every time, it just gets better and better," Jaime groaned as he sunk inside her. She was
tight and wet and warm and home. Sansa was home. Everywhere, everything about Sansa called to
him.

"Oh god, Jaime, that feels so good," Sansa said, bucking her hips into his steady thrusts. "Harder,
"she panted after a time, meeting him, movement for movement until he was all but slamming into
her. Then he slowed down for a stroke, searching for something… waiting until her eyes flew open
and questioned him. Jaime loved how she never held anything back; so open and honest and
willing to let him see everything she was feeling.

“What is that?” she asked, a tremble to her voice and body as she all but shook in his arms.

Jaime grinned. “That is mind-blowing pleasure, kitten.” Jaime loved that she’d never experienced
having her g-spot found before. It was yet another first he could claim, and Jaime wanted to claim
all parts of Sansa.

Then he stroked his cock, reaching the sensitive patch of nerves against her entrance wall again,
and Sansa let out an honest to go wail, which went straight to his cock. Jaime had never been so
hard in his entire life, focused solely on giving the woman he loved the orgasm of her life. She
tightened on him, a velvet glove of heat and wet that sucked him back in, as he pumped inside her,
again and again, until they were both slicked with sweet and unaware of anything beyond the two
of them, together in this moment.

"I'm so close, sweetheart," Jaime said, leaning down to whisper into her ear. "Come, baby," he
pleaded, his palm rubbing against her nub and sending her spiralling into one of the most intense
orgasms of her life as she screamed his name. He grunted and emptied deep inside her, bumping
against her womb as jet after jet of hot seed coated her womb.

"Jaime," Sansa keened into his ear, relaxed and sated in a way she couldn't even imagine.

Jaime chuckled into her ear, licking at her, loving the salty taste of her skin. "I need another
shower." They both did; Sansa had made a mess of the two of them, which Jaime loved.

"We're awful for the environment," Sansa said, giggling. Then she remember how she had all but
hung up on Tyrion and Marg and she colored. "Oh god, what will they think?" she said,
embarrassed.

Jaime laughed. "They'll think you were well-loved, Sansa. Which you are."

Sansa melted. "Jaime," she said, breathing his name, stroking a hand over his face. She had never
been loved the way she was by this man.
Later, once Jaime had made them both dirty and then clean again, they wandered into the kitchen, dressed for a night out. Sansa had on a short black dress that hugged her figure and emphasized her slim waist leaving her back all but bare. She had paired it with impressive stiletto heels that put her almost eye level with Jaime. He was wearing black slacks and a blue dress shirt, a skinny black tie with a distressed jacket, all of which somehow only brought out the green of his eyes. And emphasized his good looks.

Of course, Jaime’s mouth hung open with the sheer amount of skin that Sansa had on displace.

“Christ, baby, you’re so gorgeous,” Jaime murmured, drawing her into his arms, loving when she blushed and kissing her softly. Sansa’s beauty was so natural and effortless, that it drew him in, again and again.

“You clean up pretty well yourself, handsome,” Sansa told him back, pleased with the easy grin on his face.

Elia, Addam and Tywin were waiting for them, also dressed nicely, and Jaime smirked as he looked at them, a bit of wonder that they were all here together.

"We clean up nicely," Addam said, hugging Jaime. "I'm guessing tonight won't be some cheap noodle place," reminding the three of them of some truly awful places they had frequented when they’d been students.


As a concession to Sansa, Jaime let her pick the music as they drove into Wintertown in the big black Rover. When he glanced back, he saw Addam singing badly, off-key, making Elia and Sansa laugh with his antics. Apparently Addam Marbrand knew country music.

"It's good to see you happy," came Tywin's quiet voice. He'd taken a seat in the front with Jaime. Jaime glanced at his father. "It's good to be happy."

They were quiet for a time; both lost in their thoughts.

"I never thought I'd see you take a chance with another woman," Tywin said after a time.

"I never thought I'd meet someone like her," Jaime answered honestly. Then he shot his father a grin. "And you?"

Tywin snorted. "Nothing. It is nothing, Jaime."

"And that wouldn't bother you?" Tywin asked, slightly bewildered.


With that, Jaime let his father think about what he said. No matter what, Jaime knew that they had gained a family in the North, whether that included love for Tywin or not. His father had been given a second chance at grandchild and loved Sansa as if she were his own daughter.

When they arrived at Bran's place, spirits were high as the two couples and Tywin entered the most popular resultant in the North.
Jojen welcomed them, allowing them to bypass the massive line that had formed outside the restaurant, and leading them to the best table in the place. When her baby brother showed up in his chef's whites, Sansa smiled and hugged him close. She loved seeing him like this; in his element, successful and happy.

"Bran, it's so good to see you," she said, introducing him to Elia and Addam.

"This is such a great place," Elia said, loving the atmosphere; all the dark wood and industrial accents and open concept.

Bran, his usual stoic self, simply smiled and told them all the specials. Jaime excused himself, brushing his lips across Sansa's when Bran asked him for a few minutes.

"Are you cooking tonight?" Bran asked, and Jaime shook his head. Bran actually looked slightly nervous.

"Nope, brother. Tonight, it's all you. I'm just here to eat," Jaime said, clapping Bran on the back. "You've got this, Bran. Trust yourself."

Bran swallowed hard, his only show of emotion. "Ok, Jaime. Thanks." He glanced back at the table where Sansa sat with the others. Then he gave a small smile. "Tell Sansa she'll love dessert."

Jaime nodded and then went back to the table.

"Everything, alright?" Sansa asked, and Jaime said it was. It warmed something in Jaime that Bran had asked for his reassurance, and Jaime allowed the pleasure of the evening settle over him, sipping at Sansa’s wine, as his closest friends, the woman he loved and his father spoke with each other.

Jaime had to admit he loved sitting back and just enjoying the evening. It was something he had rarely done, preferring to cook when he was in a restaurant or eat at home. But Bran outdid himself, with dish after dish more delicious than the last.

"God, if I lived up here, I'd gain thirty pounds," Elia moaned, finally pushing her plate away. "Your brother is one talented man, Sansa."

Sansa beamed with pride. She knew that this was Bran's dream, and it was so amazing to see him achieve the success he had hoped for. She still remembered wondering how she could possibly hope to help her younger siblings after her parents died. But here they all were.

Arya, married and pregnant and happy. Well, as happy as Arya could be.

Bran in a committed relationship, doing what he loved.

Rickon, a professional hockey player and a burgeoning star in his own right.

Sansa couldn’t help but hope that her parents were proud of all of their children.

"Wait until you eat at Jaime's restaurant, Sansa," Addam said, winking at his friend.

Sansa looked at her lover. "He's cooked for me a time or two, Addam," Sansa said, thinking she understood. She knew that Jaime was ridiculously talented.

Addam shook his head. "Yeah, sure, at home. Nut I'm telling you, Sansa, it's unlike anything you've ever experienced. His food is like art, Sansa," Addam said and pulled out his phone, even as
Jaime protested it was nothing special. Addam gave him a look, that said, *shut up.* Flicking through his photos, Addam showed Sansa one of Jaime's famous tasting menus.

Sansa was stunned; Addam was right. It looked like art. Edible art. She'd seen pictures like this, but only in magazines and at truly high-end restaurants. She had no idea that this was the level of Jaime’s talent and she gasped at each new picture.

"He does these themes. Sometimes one ingredient and he features it in ten courses, and you just have no idea how he's going to pull it off," Addam was saying.

Both Elia and Sansa were fascinated, while Jaime was almost embarrassed at Addam’s high praise. As he’d always said, he was just following his passion. He never stopped to really think what it looked like to others. And not a man like Addam, who Jaime, up until tonight, had no clue held his talent in such esteem.

"Jaime, this is so impressive," Sansa said, reaching for hand and squeezing it. She knew he was talented, but this was beyond anything she'd imagined.

Jaime picked up her hand and kissed it. "Anytime you want, kitten. You're more than welcome."

Sansa swallowed hard and looked between the pictures Addam showed her and where they were currently sitting. "Are you sure you want to give that up, Jaime? I mean, this is incredible," Sansa said. "I don't want you to give that up…" Jaime stopped her by pressing his lips to hers.

"Stop, baby. I love the restaurant, and I'm proud of what I accomplished. But Sansa, you're my future. Tommen is getting ready to step into my chef whites, and I have plans up here in the North." Jaime shrugged when Sansa still looked unconvinced. "Baby, I'm rich. We can fly to King's Landing once a month for me to cook if I miss it that much."

At that, Sansa laughed, believing him. "Alright. If you're sure," she said.

"I am kitten. Believe me. You are everything I've ever wanted."

"Jaime, you're everything to me," Sansa said, leaning forward so that they could kiss. They only broke apart when Addam let out a little whistle, and Bran appeared with dessert.

"Not sure I can compete, San," Bran said, smirking and setting down an elegant lemon pastry, with layers of buttery crust and the smoothest custard Sansa had ever tasted.

"Oh my god, Bran, that is so good," she moaned, and Jaime leaned in.

"Careful kitten. My dick might get jealous," Jaime whispered into her ear.

She hit him lightly and then offered him a bite. "Now, you know how much I love you, sharing this with you."

While they flirted back and forth, Tywin sat back and watched them, amusement on his face. They reminded him so much of him and Joanna, and he had such hope for Jaime, watching them together. This is what he had always wanted for his son.

As he sipped Sansa's excellent wine and tasted Bran's dessert, Tywin Lannister allowed himself to think what it might mean to settle here more permanently. Surely Sansa and Jaime would tire of him in their home eventually, and he found he liked it here, in the North. It wasn't hard to see that this was the future of his family, and if Tywin wanted any real relationship with the grandchildren, that they would surely give him, here was where he had to be.
Of course, the delightful Wynfryd was also on his mind, although he was quite unsure what might come of that if anything.

Later that night, as Sansa snuggled deeper into Jaime's arms, he pressed a kiss to the sensitive spot just below her ear, a place he knew would make her shiver. She didn’t disappoint and Jaime loved that little shudder.

"Love you kitten."

"Love you, Jaime."

Tomorrow he would deal with another part of his past; he'd comfort the network and the people that had betrayed him and earn his freedom. Then he'd be truly ready to start the next part of his life, with Sansa. His children were arriving in a day, and his mother's ring was waiting for Sansa's finger. As he drifted off to sleep, Jaime wondered if a winter wedding was out of the question.

Chapter End Notes

Up Next:

Confrontation w/ the Network, El and Addam go home to King's Landing and Jaime's kids come.

Also- will Brienne let things go?

NOTE- someone asked for more Addam and Elia, so I'm going to do a companion story to this one for them. It'll feature them in KL, meeting Elia's kids, a potential pregnancy (surrogacy), meeting Elia's family and their life.

As always, comments are wonderful.
Chapter 26

Chapter Summary

Meeting with Varys and Jaime's children arrive in the North

Chapter Notes

I just wanted to take a moment to thank those who continue to comment on this story. I can't really express how much it means. Sometimes, with longer stories, its hard to determine interest levels- so thank you so very much.

I hope you enjoy this chapter.

I sometimes feel this story is my love letter to Jaimsa and how much I love them!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Winterfell Winery – The Farmhouse

Sansa had to bite her lip as Jaime came out of their large walk-in closet, wearing a suit that fit him to a t, mumbling and tugging at his tie. She knew that he was nervous about today. That he was wracked with a million different emotions, one of the most predominant ones being guilt that Brienne had somehow done lasting damage to her. Sansa had tried to reassure him, multiple times, that even if that tape had aired, they would have survived it. But somehow, he put all of Brienne’s actions on his shoulders and Sansa hated how it weighed him down when it was all on Brienne.

Now he was one meeting away from having his freedom, and she knew he just wanted it to be done.

"Let me, love," Sansa said gently, brushing her lips across a jaw that was so tense she thought he might grind his teeth into dust.

He sighed and lowered his hands, allowing her to adjust his tie and tuck it into his suit coat.

"You look so handsome," she told him, giving him a soft smile, and loved it when his eyes lost a bit of the haunted look they had. He was always so ready to take the blame, even for things that were out of his control.

"I hate this, Sansa. Hate it," he emphasized.

She nodded. "I know. But it's one meeting, with Elia, Addam and your father there. And then it's done, Jaime and your life is yours."

"Ours. My life is ours, babe."

Sansa's smiled widened. "Ours. Tommen and Cella will be here tomorrow, along with Rickon. It's hockey weekend, and Robb, Drogo, Jon and Gendry will be back. Your brother and his wife are
pregnant, your best friends are in love, you have a kitten that loves you, and you have me, Jaime. Not bad," Sansa said, winking at him.

He furrowed his brow. "Are you saying I'm being dramatic?"

She laughed. "No, love. I'm saying you have a lot in your life that is good. Focus on that today, when it gets hard. If it gets hard." She brushed her lips across his again, loving when he dragged her closer to him. "But I'm here, Jaime. You're not alone anymore."

He rested his forehead against hers, and the simple gesture sent such a surge of love through Sansa. This man was strength personified, Sansa thought. Somehow able to protect those he loved, while not becoming bitter and angry. He had no idea what an incredible person he was.

"I have no idea what my life was like without out you, Sansa. You are my everything," he whispered raggedly into her ear.

"And you are my everything, Jaime."

A discreet knock on the door meant it was time to go. There was one last private kiss, and then Sansa took Jaime's hand as they walked downstairs.

Elia and Addam looked professional and confident, and Sansa knew that Jaime was safe in their hands. As the three of them walked outside, Tywin hung back, closing the front door and turning towards Sansa.

The Lannister patriarch was also dressed in a suit that cost more than some people made in a month, but his face was grim.

"You cannot know what it means that he has you in his life, Sansa."

She blushed and waved a hand, trying to dismiss it. "Don't," Tywin commanded softly.

"You didn't see what she did to him, Sansa. She broke him down, piece by piece. And then Brienne almost finished the job. My son, he cares so much and gives of himself, even to those who do not deserve it."

"I know, Tywin. He's a good man; the best man."

Tywin glanced around the farmhouse. "This life up here, it would never have been something I could have conceived for him, but it suits him perfectly. You suit him perfectly."

Sansa nodded. "Take care of him today, Tywin." She bit her lip, wanting to say more.

Tywin arched an eyebrow at her. "What is it?"

"Listen to him," she said in a rush and watched as Tywin's eyes widened. "Just… listen to him- to what Jaime needs. Not what you feel is necessary, but what he is comfortable with."

Tywin said nothing, his green eyes, darker than Jaime's boring into hers. "You are always going to be in his corner, aren't you? Even with me," the older man said, shaking his head in wonder at her.

Sansa crossed his arms. "He is everything to me, Tywin. My loyalty is to Jaime first, beyond anyone else. Remember that."

Tywin said nothing, just taking her in. "Gods, you really do remind me of my late wife. She was a fierce thing, just like you."
Sansa cocked her head. "I'm taking that as the compliment I think it's meant to be. Take care of him, Tywin and bring him back in one piece."

With that final warning, Sansa let one of the most powerful men in Westeros leave her house and turned to go and deal with the kittens. She would worry until Jaime was back, and she knew he was ok with what happened this morning.

Wintertown – Bran's Restaurant

It wasn't the most professional place to hold a meeting like the one Elia was walking into, but when Jaime had suggested the restaurant, she could see that it made him comfortable, and that was key. One of Jaime's best qualities was that he was essentially a peacemaker. Elia knew that he'd done this for years in his marriage and that he'd continued to do so in his professional life.

It was why, despite being ridiculously talented, Jaime had an excellent reputation as a chef. He was known throughout the world as being one of the best in his field, but more than that, an easy man to work for and someone who lived to teach others. He had none of the diva attitude that came to so many when they had achieved the peak in their career, and even as his fame built, he'd never lost his drive to inspire others.

Which was why, Elia knew, this betrayal by Brienne had cut him so deeply. As his friend and as his lawyer, she was here to make sure that no one at the Network thought that they might take advantage of Jaime ever again. A line had been crossed, and Elia had her game face on.

It was odd walking inside the restaurant that was empty save for a long couple of tables that Bran had set up for their meeting, with Addam by her side. She knew he also had his law degree, although he didn't practice like her. He used his degree to finagle the best possible deals for his clients; deals like the one he'd worked out for Jaime and that were airtight and such a thing of beauty that Elia knew her torts professor would weep at it. It made her job that much easier, and she had praised Addam more than once on his contract writing and negotiating skills.

Elia was happy to see there was a recorder, along with a few pitchers of water, some legal paper and pens. At least it looked like a proper meeting setting. These Starks were an impressive bunch, and from what Elia had seen, they'd closed ranks on Jaime as if he were one of their own. She couldn't be happier for her friend that he'd found his second family and that they loved him.

By the time that Varys entered the building with his two lawyers, as well as a member for the Board for the Network, Elia was sure that Jaime would have paced a hole in the restaurant floor. There was no denying that nothing about this made him comfortable, although Addam appeared to be taking everything in stride.

She had laid down the law, so to speak, and told all three men that this was her show, and they'd all promised to be on their best behaviour.

Of course, the look that both Tywin and Jaime gave Varys was enough to give someone frostbite, and Elia let her inner bitch come out. The Lannister men were not here to play, and neither was she.

Once the niceties were out of the way, Elia spoke.

"Mr. Varys, an event happened this past Monday that has brought to light the serious issues that is facing your networking internally."
The man went to open his mouth to speak, and was stopped with a single look from Elia.

"My client, Jaime Lannister, who has a contract explicitly stating his sole ownership over the material he tapers, had both his trust and his professional reputation violated this week. Episode one was discussed and agreed upon between Mr. Lannister, Ms. Tarth and Mr. Payne."

Varys squirmed in his seat.

"Shall we watched what Ms. Tarth almost put to air?" Elia said. Not waiting for a response, she cued up the offensive video, watching the two lawyers, Varys and the Board member, the entire time. Clearly, the Board member had been unaware of the extent of the tape and appeared suitably horrified, shooting looks at both Jaime and Tywin. Varys only appeared slightly paler and not the least bit ashamed at what he had just watched, leading Elia to believe he had some type of hand in this entire mess.

"Mr. Varys, the issue is quite simple. Ms. Tarth actively targeted my client, his girlfriend and her family, to destroy them. Had Mr. Payne not acted quickly, irreversible damage would have been done to all their reputations. Even worse, Mr. Varys," Elia said, voice hard as steel, "Was the indication by Ms. Tarth to a roomful of witnesses, most of whom work for your network, that this tape was approved by her superiors at the Network."

Varys coughed and looked at his lawyer, who nodded his head.

"Ms. Martell," Varys began, again, looking around the room and fidgeting, "An internal investigation is now underway to determine how this might have happened. Certainly, no one at the Network would approve the airing of any such episode. It goes against everything we stand for; wholesome family programming."

Elia wanted to snort and roll her eyes. Any idiot could see that Varys had a hand in this.

"Not good enough, Mr. Varys. My clients' trust had been grossly violated. His contract," Elia said, sliding the paper across the table, "Explicitly states in no uncertain terms, his ownership of his work, his final approval on what is to air, and his ability to veto any edits he does not approve of."

"Well yes, Ms. Tarth was acting out of her purview," Varys started to say, and Elia snorted then.

"Don't lie, Varys. We know that Ms. Tarth reports to Mr. Baelish and Baelish to you." Elia leaned forward and made her voice strong. "Tell me, would you have destroyed Jaime Lannister's and Sansa Stark's reputations simply to get even with Mr. Baelish? Or was it to lay the blame solely on him and have him fired?"

Varys went red and started to sweat, and both his lawyers were shooting daggers at him. The Board member looked like he might be ill.

"Let's not be coy. Jaime Lannister is the star, Mr. Varys. Jaime Lannister is the person who took your network from eighth to first in its time slot. Jaime Lannister is who has brought in millions in endorsements. Without my client, you lose millions."

Varys began to fidget while the Board member was shooting angry looks at the bald man.

"What does your client want, Ms. Martell?" one of the lawyers finally said.

Elia would have smiled if she hadn't been so angry. She knew that Varys had allowed Petyr and Brienne to play their little game to try and get rid of them. The problem was, had that tape aired, both Jaime and Sansa would have suffered. Varys was cold and calculating and gave no indication
that he would have spared any consideration for the fall out that his actions had.

"An apology from the heads of the network, Ms. Tarth removed from her position, a reiteration that Jaime owns everything that has been taped and a full investigation into Ms. Tarth, Mr. Baelish and Mr. Varys. We, of course, will be apprised of the entire investigation."

"This is preposterous. I had no hand in this," Varys sputtered. "And what about the ten episodes?" Clearly, the man was worried what an uproar it would cause if Jaime Lannister were to walk away from their network.

Elia smiled, and both Addam and Jaime sat back in awe of her. "Oh, I'm not done, Mr. Varys. Jaime Lannister will continue to work with his crew to finish the ten episodes. Each episode will ONLY air with Jaime's full approval. After that, Mr. Lannister is done. His contract is over."

Varys paled. "You can't." His gaze swung to Jaime. "You cannot walk away. We made you a star."

Jaime scowled, saying nothing, his fist clenched tight. He hadn't missed how Varys had used him – how it appeared they had all used him. Varys, Cersei, Brienne.

All Jaime knew was that he was one hundred present done with all of this bullshit.

"Mr. Varys, not only will you agree to these terms, all three parties in this 'investigation' will sign binding non-disclosure agreements. Pending the outcome of said investigation, if any misconduct was found, all parties will be fired. Starting today, all three will be put on indefinite leave without pay. All of Jaime's crew will retain positions with the network, even if Mr. Lannister leaves."

The two lawyers looked at Elia and nodded. "Give us some time with our client."

"One hour," was all Elia said as they scurried to leave the restaurant. When they were gone, Addam let out a whoop and leaned over to kiss Elia.

"Gods baby, that was the hottest thing I've ever seen. You're a shark!" he said, loving seeing her in action. Elia blushed, feeling the adrenaline drain out of her.

"Jaime? How are you feeling?"

Her friend said nothing, a faraway look on his face. "He knew. Varys. Even though he wanted me, knows I'm a star, he was willing to use both Sansa and me to get what he wanted. I'm fucking done, El. Ten episodes and I'm fucking done."

Jaime was practically vibrating with rage and pushed back his chair, needing space and air. When he was gone, Tywin looked at Elia and Addam.

"I don't care what you have to do – my son will never work for them again. Not once he's done what he came North to do. I'll buy the goddamn network if need be and dismantle it piece by piece. No one uses Lannisters." Then the Great Lion stood and left the room to find Jaime, leaving Elia and Addam alone.

Jaime was out back in the little garden space that Bran and Jojen had created for their restaurant, pacing and looking like a caged lion. He barely spared his father a glance when Tywin joined him, saying nothing for a time.

"How will you propose to her?" Tywin asked, downright startling Jaime and making him stop and look at his father, wondering if it were some type of joke. Seeing nothing but sincerity on his father's face, Jaime ran a hand through his hair.
"Umm, there is a family cabin, Robb told me about. I am going to take her there next weekend. After she meets Myrcella and Tommen."

Tywin smiled. "That's good. Private and gives you plenty of space to woo her."

"Woo?" Jaime said, smirking in spite of himself. He came closer, sitting next to his father on a planter. He'd never had this type of discussion with his father when he'd asked Cersei to marry him. Somehow, he'd known that Tywin wouldn't have approved.

"All women need wooing Jaime," Tywin said as if he were particularly slow.

Jaime grinned and shook his head. "She already loves me."

Tywin nodded. "She does. She is the best type of woman; passionate in her defence of you, Jaime. She is dedicated to your love. Strong and yet feminine. Family means everything to her. More than money, or power or fame."

Jaime nodded. "She is all of that."

They were quiet for a time, the fall air cooling some of the more potent rage that both men from the West felt. "She told me that no matter what, I was to do as you bid today. She almost threatened me," Tywin said, snorting a bit at the end. "I never thought I'd ever see the day where you found someone who loved you so deeply that she was willing to take me on."

Jaime sat there, stunned. No one went up against his father – not even Cersei. His ex-wife had backed down on more than one occasion when Tywin had stepped in to deal with their crumbling marriage and her increasingly ridiculous demands.

"I've never been loved as she loves me," Jaime choked out, and Tywin grunted his agreement.

"Jaime," came Elia's voice. "They're back."

The next half an hour passed in a mindless battle of legal jargon, but in the end, Elia got everything that Jaime wanted and a little bit more. Full creative control had been reassured, an apology was forthcoming, and all three conspirators, Baelish, Varys and Brienne, would be facing some serious questions from the network.

There was a moment where Jaime felt sorry for Brienne. He knew how much she loved her job, and now all of them were in jeopardy. As if sensing where his mind was at, Addam laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Dude, she had it coming. Remember what she would have done to you and Sansa, Jai."

Jaime could only swallow hard and nod.

It was only as everyone was leaving that Tywin cornered Varys.

"You used my son," the Great Lion said, his voice low but no less menacing because of it.

The bald man stuttered, barely able to form a coherent reply. "I was entirely honest when I said that Jaime was the future of our network. He is the star."

"And this is how you treat your stars?" Tywin hissed.

Varys shrugged. "I never would have allowed them actually to air the network. If Mr. Payne hadn't pulled the plug, I was fully prepared to do so myself."
Tywin's eyes narrowed. "You are playing a dangerous game, Varys."

"Life can be a dangerous game, Mr. Lannister," was all he said before he slipped out, leaving Tywin frustrated and without a place to vent his fury.

"Leave it, Dad," Jaime said, suddenly beside him.

"He needs to pay," Tywin snarled, and Jaime nodded.

"He does. And he will. He'll screw up, if not this time, then next. I just want to tape the last few episodes and be done."

"And Brienne? What about her Jaime? What if she tries to make more trouble for you and Sansa? We should go after her hard, now."

The look on Tywin's face was one Jaime had seen often in his life. His father was not a man that allowed his 'enemies' to get away with anything. Tywin Lannister had a reputation in Westeros for being a man that you didn't cross unless you were willing to bait the lion. And very few people were willing. But that wasn't Jaime.

"Leave it, for now, Dad," Jaime responded softly.

When his father went to protest, Jaime shook his head. "She lived for her career; if that is taken from her, it is punishment enough. I learned from Cersei that the best path for me is to cut toxic people from my life."

Tywin didn't like it, and Jaime could see that, but for once, his father respected his wishes.

When Jaime finally loosened the tie that Sansa had helped him knot earlier, he felt the tension drain from his body. For now, the dark cloud that had been hanging over him and his crew were lifted. They were free to go about their business, and no one would lose their job except possibly those responsible.

When Jaime met Addam's eyes, he finally allowed himself to grin.

"You're soon to be a free man, Jaime," his friend said, clapping him on the back and then picking him up and hugging him. Jaime felt the laugh break free from his chest, and it was a sweet sound indeed.

"Let's get you back to your woman. I'm sure she's dying for an update."

Never one to argue with someone when they suggested that he spend more time with Sansa, Jaime hugged Elia and then thanked all three of them, before they finally piled in the Rover to get Elia and Addam packed and on their way. It had been a whirlwind of a few days, but ultimately, Jaime could see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it had never looked so bright.

Winterfell Winery – The Farmhouse

Sansa had only been alone for half an hour when the text from Dany arrived.

Dany: The boys are MISSING the kittens. Can we pop by?

Sansa: LOL. I'm sure they are. Yes, for sure.
Dany: Any word about BTB?

Sansa: ???

Dany: Brienne The Bitch

Sansa: LOL. Nope. Nothing yet, but it hasn't been that long

Dany: Elia's brilliant, so I'm sure she'll have things sorted in no time. The crew is eager for an update and to get back to taping

Sansa: I'm sure they are. See you soon.

Sansa had puttered around her house, doing laundry and tidying up. She loved people, and it was so beautiful to have her house full. For so long, she had scolded herself for buying such a large place, but now, she was so grateful for space. She wondered what it would be like to see Jaime here with his children. It was a bit awkward since there were only four years between her and Myrcella, but there wasn't anything Sansa could do about it except hope that Jaime’s daughter accepted her.

Lost in her thoughts, hoping that Jaime's children would like her and welcome her into their family, Sansa heard her phone chime. She grinned when she saw who it was from.

Ric: Sissy!!!! T-28 hrs and I'm HOME!!!!!

Sansa laughed. She loved her little brother, fiercely. She was close with Robb, the two of them taken on the majority of the parenting roles after their parents had died, but there was a particular spot in Sansa's heart for Rickon. He was the baby. Her baby. He was just twenty, and they remained close to this day, even with him playing professional hockey.

Sansa: I can't wait to see you

Ric: Where am I staying? With you or Robb?

Sansa frowned. She had a full house with Tywin, Cella and Tom here, but there was one spare bedroom left.

Sansa: I have one spare room. Tywin is here; along with Jaime's kids

Ric: Cool. How old are they?

Sansa: Tommen is your age, at twenty and Myrcella, is twenty-two

Ric: Is she hot?

Sansa: Don't be a pig- and don't treat her like a puck bunny Ric or I'll kick your ass

Ric: Wait? Does she know who I am? Who is she?

Sansa: Myrcella Lannister. She's a designer in KL

Ric: THE Myrcella Lannister?

Sansa: What do you mean, THE Myrcella Lannister?
Ric: The super-hot, super famous designer to the stars, Cella L? Oh man, that's Jaime's daughter?

Sansa: Rickon Stark, you will treat her with the respect she is due! And you will NOT be a pig about this!!!

Ric: Chill San. Still, this is awesome. The guys won't believe that she's staying with you.

Sansa: Oh god, the last thing I need is a bunch of your teammates to know she's here. Put a lock on it, Ric.

Ric: Awww, San. Do you know how cool I would look if I could say I know her?

Sansa: Well, you don't, rookie, so shut your mouth.

Ric: But… I can still stay with you, right?

Sansa: Yes. BUT- best behaviour, Ric. I'm serious. DO NOT do anything to mess things up with Jaime and me, or I will kill you, despite how much I love you.

Ric: Thanks, San. You're the best! See you tomorrow night for dinner.

Sansa shook her head, wondering what in the world she had agreed to, allowing Rickon to stay here. But she knew her baby brother and he a good guy, so she would just have to see how things panned out.

Another quick buzz of her phone and Sansa glanced down to see Jaime state that they were on their way home. His thumbs-up warmed her heart, and she knew that Elia must have worked her magic at the meeting.

When Jaime stepped into the farmhouse, he felt freer than he had in a good long while. He'd taken some time to reflect on the drive and realized that there had always been tension between him and Brienne. It wasn't obvious, but now as he looked back over their relationship, she was always judging or passing comments on some aspect of his life. It was only being around Elia and Sansa that Jaime had realized that real friends didn't act like that.

A part of Jaime wanted nothing more than to sit down and have it out with Brienne. To dig deep into why things had gone so off the rails with them, but he was confident he wouldn't like the answers, and he wasn't sure that she would be willing to talk to him rationally. A cooling-off period was needed and a focus on what was important to him.

And what was important to him was in this house right now, and would be here tomorrow. He heard Sansa laughing with the boys as Dany sat on one of the stools, working on her laptop. She was pushing ahead with building a house adjacent to Sansa's in the North, and Jaime knew that Sansa was over the moon happy to have her friend stay in the North.

"Papa Lion and Uncle Jaime, come see the kitties," came Ned's excited voice just as they stepped inside. All four exchanged wry grins and went into the kitchen where the kittens were busy playing with the boys.

Sansa was laughing as she cuddled Spike close to her chest, immediately seeking out Jaime.

"How'd it go, babe?" she said, loving how Jaime's strong arms wrapped around her, and he inhaled her scent when she was close. He rested his chin on her head, and Sansa felt his entire body relax.
"Great kitten. Elia was brilliant, and Addam's contract was as advertised," Jaime said, and then told her and Dany everything.

Both women congratulated Elia, who blushed and waved a hand. "It's nothing. I mean, not nothing, it's my job, but these guys made it easy."

"So we're taping the last few episodes?" Dany asked, and Jaime nodded.

"Yup."

"Want me to call Pod?"

"Nah, I'll do it, Dan. Thanks, though," Jaime said and pressed a kiss to her forehead while squeezing her shoulder. She had been a rock through this whole thing, and he knew he was lucky to have her as his friend. Just as he was about to grab a bottle of water, Jaime felt the little claws dig into his shirt and looked down to see that Spike had attached himself to Jaime's chest.

"Damn, he has good taste," Sansa said, her eyes sparkling.

Jaime grumbled while his hand cupped the kitten's little butt, and he held him more firmly to him.

"You're lucky I'm loaded darling because your baby is digging holes into my Brioni suit," Jaime said, a slight scowl to his face.

"Uncle Jaime, do you not like kittens?" came Ned's voice. He was suddenly just there, at Jaime's feet, holding Simba, who was curled up in his arms. Roc was lying on the rug in the great room with the two others.

"I don't mind them, Ned, but they can be a bit of a pain in the butt," Jaime said.

Ned's eyes narrowed. "That's almost a swear, Uncle Jaime, but I'll let it go."

Addam howled in laughter, as Elia sat down to have one last play with Rocco.

Ned scrambled up onto a stool to sit by Dany, eyes still trained on Jaime.

"Papa Lion says kittens are great for where we live. They kill mice, and they can even be potty trained," Ned added, shooting a glance at Tywin who was doing his level best not to laugh.

"And who cleans their potty, Ned?" Jaime fired back, sipping at his water and standing next to Sansa.

Ned's brow furrowed. "I hadn't thought of that."

Sansa laughed as she plated some cheese and crackers for the boys. "I have some exciting news, Ned," she said to try and distract him.

When he finally looked at her, she told him how Jaime's children were coming to stay tomorrow, and that Uncle Rickon would also be here.

"Uncle Ric is back?"

"Yup. He'll be staying here since your Daddy is just getting home tomorrow, and will most likely not want to put up with him."

"That means it's opening night, Aunty Sansa," Ned said, almost bouncing in his seat.
Sansa laughed. "It is. Excited?"

"Oh, yes. I love hockey almost as much as I love Simba," Ned said quietly. Jaime handed Sansa back the kitten and kissed her quickly.

"Just going to go, change babe, then I'll make lunch," he said, noting that Elia and Dany had struck up a conversation, and Tywin was chatting to Addam about something.

Looking around, Jaime felt a pang that his two best friends were leaving, but that was followed quickly by the excitement of Tommen and Cella arriving. He wasn't quite sure what he thought of Sansa's handsome, professional hockey player brother and his daughter occupying the same space, but figured there were enough eyes to keep any funny business from happening. Jaime knew that Myrcella rarely dated, so even though she had seemed eager to meet Ric, it wouldn't amount to much. Jaime hoped.

When Jaime cruised back into the kitchen, much happier in a soft t-shirt and jeans, Sansa and Ned were still talking hockey.

"Is Uncle Ric on the powerplay yet?" Ned asked, eyes wide.

"I don't know, buddy. I know he said he had a great pre-season, and he's not a rookie anymore, so maybe," she responded.

"Maybe we can go skating after the game," Ned said wistfully, and Sansa ruffled his hair.

"I'm sure we can arrange that. Or even Sunday morning buddy," she told him, and he was practically vibrating in excitement.

"Skating? He's what, four?" Addam asked, clearly intrigued. He represented a few hockey players down south, but he knew up in the North the sport was second to none. The lived for hockey here. Addam wondered who was representing Rickon Stark.

Sansa laughed. "Yup. Ned practically skated before he could walk."

"Will you come as well, Uncle Jaime?" Ned asked, and Jaime had the grace to look a bit stunned. Stuttering, he searched for the right words not to let Ned down.

"Oh my god, you can't skate!" Sansa cried in delight, wrapping her arms around him and hugging him as he reddened.

"Can't is such a strong word. I would say, it is not my strongest athletic pursuit," Jaime quipped back, patting her on the butt.

"Jeez, that's so cute. Don't worry, babe, you can hold my hand. I won't let you fall."

Jaime groaned. "Sansa, your brothers will never let me live this down," he all but whined to her, and she shook her head, kissing him soundly on the lips.

"Jaime, you're living in the North. We eat, breath and bleed hockey. Man up," she said, patting him on the chest and leading the boys and the kittens to the litter box to have them do their business.

Jaime was scowling after her when Addam clapped him on the back. "Dude, she owns your balls."

Jaime laughed and shook his head. "She sure fucking does."

The rest of the afternoon passed quickly until finally Jaime and Addam loaded the bags into the
Rover. Tywin was going to drive them into Wintertown, where they were taking Tywin's plane back to King's Landing.

There were plenty of tears; tears between the three women, who had become close in a short period, tears from Rocco who already missed his aunty, and a tear or two from Jaime who was more grateful than he could express at what the two of them had done for him.

"Always Jaime," Elia said, kissing him on the cheek. "I am so happy you found her," Elia whispered to him.

"Me too, El. Don't be a stranger," Jaime said, his tone serious. He gave both her and Addam a look.

"Oh, we won't. First, I have to break it to my kids that Mom's got a boyfriend, and we'll see how that goes over, but we will be back," Elia said, holding Addam's hand.

When all the goodbyes had been said, Dany, Jaime, Sansa and the boys stood on the porch and waved goodbye to the little group pulling out of the long gravel driveway.

"God, I already miss her," Dany said, stifling a sob as she clutched at Roc.

Sansa wrapped her in a hug. "I know, Dan."

"My brother was a first-rate asshole to his family, but somehow, I've been given this second chance with her, and I just don't want to mess it up Sansa," Dany was saying, full-on ugly crying now as Jaime took both boys for a walk, calling for Tank and giving the women space.

"You won't, Dany. I don't think any of us will lose these connections," Sansa said as the two women curled up on the rocker on the front porch, Sansa draping a blanket over their legs as they watched Jaime play with Ned and Roc.

Dany gripped Sansa's hand as she got her emotions under control. "Please tell me you're going to have babies with that man," Dany said after a while, making Sansa laugh.

"God, I hope so."

"They'd be beautiful and kind and smart," Dany said, sniffling a bit.

"Hopefully not too smart," Sansa said, looking as Jaime threw his head back and laughed and then picked both Roc and Ned up, swinging them around in his arms. "I love him so much, Dany. It consumes me."

Dany squeezed her hand. "I think grand love is supposed to do that, my friend. He so deserves it, and you and this whole life that you two are building."

"Do you think he's happy here?" Sansa asked, voice quiet.

Dany gave her an incredulous look, her eyebrows doing that wiggling thing that only she could pull off.

"It's just something Brienne said. About him being from the south and the west – that the North wouldn't be enough for him."

"Sansa, that man has never been that happy, save perhaps when his children were born. There is nowhere else he wants to be. And he's rich as can be, so really, you guys can go wherever you want. Like for a vacation," Dany added, shrugging.
She shuffled closer to Sansa, loving this unexpected friendship that had sprung up between them.

"That's true. I always forgot how wealthy the Lannister's are," Sansa said, and Dany snorted.

"We really need to go to King's Landing and do a massive shop. And for you to see Jaime's restaurant. And his loft."

Sansa smiled, thinking of a mini-vacation in King's Landing, with Jaime as her tour guide.

"I'm glad you're here, Dany."

"I'm glad I'm here as well, Sansa."

When Jaime turned, his eyes found Sansa, and he grinned, and the woman from the North who had always wanted a great love, felt like her entire world was in perfect accord. She couldn't wait until tomorrow when they would welcome Jaime's family into their new home, and hopefully, build something stronger than either one had ever had.

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"You're fussing, love," Jaime said, leaning against the doorway to their bedroom, watching Sansa hop around as she tried to pull on a low heeled boot.

"Well, it's a big deal, Jaime. I'm meeting your children for the first time, officially, and Myrcella is one of the most stylish women in all of Westeros," Sansa all but snarled back at him, making Jaime's grin even more full.

He didn't know why, but a flustered Sansa got his blood roaring.

"No," she said, shooting him a look. "Do not look at me like that, Jaime. I just got my makeup perfect, and I don't need you messing it up. And I'd be mortified to meet your children looking like we just..." Sansa blushed and didn't finish the sentence.

"Fucked."

She rolled her eyes at him as he stalked into the room.

"Shagged."

"Jaime," Sansa said, a warning note in her voice.

"Made love," he whispered, dropping a kiss to the back of her neck and watching a shiver overtake her body. "Gods, kitten, what you do to me," Jaime purred into her ear, loving it when she giggled.

"Jaime, what will they think? You need to tone it down when they are here," Sansa admonished him.

He reared back. "I will not. I love you, Sansa. And they can bloody well get used to it."

Sansa had to bite her lip to keep from laughing at the put-out look on his face. He was adorable. Still, she thought it needed to be said.

"Jaime, just give them a chance to adjust to me. I don't want them to think I'm some..."

His eyes narrowed as Sansa struggled to finish the sentence.
"Some what? Someone cheap? Some young thing that I'm just having a fling with? Something not long term?" Jaime all but snarled those words. "You're none of those things, Sansa."

She cupped his cheek. "I know, Jaime. I do. But let's give them time."

Jaime shook his head. "Sansa, I know my kids. They will love you. And they will love you," he continued to speak when she opened her mouth to argue, "Because they will see how amazing you are, and how happy I am."

Sansa pursed her lips.

"Baby, I was unhappy for so long, and they saw that. They lived it. Let's be happy, love. Let them see how happy we are."

"Jaime, you know I can't win when you say things like that," Sansa replied, pouting a bit.

Jaime leaned in and nipped at her lip. "Good. Now let's go, or else we'll be late, and you're anal about that shit," Jaime muttered, earning an outraged hey from Sansa.

Jaime rushed them out the door, eager to drive the Defender that Addam had somehow found for him. He knew Tom would get a kick out of it, and Cella couldn't care less. For a woman who had grown up in the wealthiest family in Westeros, Cella was shockingly down to earth when it came to material things. It drove Cersei mad, Jaime recalled, that her daughter did not crave the same things she did. Jaime knew it was because both his youngest children were more like him than their mother.

That brought Jaime back to the uncomfortable thought that Sansa had brought up a short time ago. Joffrey.

Was it possible that his firstborn son wasn't even his? Jaime thought, lost in his head as Sansa answered emails on her phone. How did he even approach something like that?

Soon enough, they were at the airport, and since the kids were flying in on the Lannister private jet, Jaime slid easily into a short term parking stall.

"Ready babe?" he asked. He could practically feel the nerve radiating off of Sansa.

"I am," she said, giving him a grin.

When they exited the vehicle, Jaime took her hand and shook his head when she tried to pull free. "Sansa, no. I want them to see us like this; together. Trust me, please?" His green eyes were almost pleading with her.

Her entire body relaxed, and she nodded.

Sansa let Jaime lead her through the airport, the boyish grin on his face infectious. Sansa wanted to believe that his children would be happy to meet her, but she just didn't know.

They watched, both quiet as the plane landed and then two beautiful, tall, towheaded young adults emerged, looking around and then linking arms. Sansa liked how close they appeared, as she was with her siblings and thought that had to be a good sign.

When they were through the gate, Jaime somehow hung onto Sansa's hand, all while propelling them forward towards Myrcella and Tommen.
Jaime had a massive grin on his face, and then Myrcella was hugging her Dad, Jaime, only dropping Sansa's hand to hug his daughter.

"Dad," she cried.

"Cella, love," Jaime said, holding her close. "I'm so happy you're here."

When Myrcella stepped back, it was Tommen's turn, and Sansa was happy to see that the young man didn't hesitate at all to hug his father. While Sansa was watching Jaime and Tommen, Myrcella was watching Sansa.

Cella had gotten a good vibe from talking with Sansa via facetime the other day. Still, after the trials that her mother put them all through, she was slow to trust another woman with her Dad's heart, which was, in Cella's opinion, much too open and much too giving. Still, both her grandfather and Uncle Tyrion and Aunt Marg said that Sansa was terrific and that she truly loved her father. That was all Myrcella wanted; for her Dad to be loved.

Cella watched as Sansa practically melted on the spot, watching Tom and Jaime hug each other, and then jostle one another the way men were wont to do. If her father was smitten, then Sansa was practically radiating how much she cared for her Dad.

"You love him," Myrcella said softly, sidling up to Sansa.

Sansa blushed and nodded. "I do. So very, very much."

"I'm Myrcella," she said, holding out her hand, which Sansa shook. "Nice to meet you in person."

Sansa gave her a soft smile, and Cella knew immediately that this woman was nothing like her mother. "Hi, Myrcella. I'm Sansa. It's nice to meet you."

Jaime, as if suddenly realizing he'd totally dropped the ball on introducing his kids to Sansa, grinned and ran a hand through his hair. He still had one arm draped around Tommen and a massive grin on his face. Sansa shook her head at him.

"Tommen, this lady is the woman I love. Sansa Stark, please meet my son, Tommen Lannister," Jaime said.

Sansa gave Tommen a quick hug, which he returned shyly and then Jaime was making small talk, asking how things were going in King's Landing, their jobs and friends. It was clear he was a devoted and interested father, and Sansa melted a bit more with each exchange until they had their bags and were walking back to the Defender.

"Woah, Dad. This is sweet," Tommen said, eyes going wide. "It's like Bond's car."

"Yeah, but I'm better looking," Jaime quipped, patting Tom on the back as Tommen groaned.

"Oh god, that is the last thing I want to think about," Tommen grumbled, but Sansa could see how happy Jaime's son was to be here with them.

Myrcella, to Sansa's delight, had linked arms with her. "I've never seen my Dad so happy, Sansa. Thank you," the young woman said softly.

"He makes me just as happy," Sansa responded, and Myrcella's face broke out into a big grin.

"Come on, show me the North!" Cella cried, drawing both Jaime and Tommen's attention. Seeing
Myrcella linked arms with Sansa, Jaime's green eyes warmed.

"Alright, kitten?" Jaime asked, and Sansa nodded, looking around the little family.

"Perfect, babe."

When they were cruising over the country roads towards Sansa's house, Tommen was in the front, while Sansa and Myrcella were deep in conversation in the back seat.

"She seems great, Dad," Tommen said to his father, who grinned. Tommen couldn't remember a time when he'd ever seen his father so happy; he was practically beaming. Tommen missed him these past few weeks down in King's Landing, but now, seeing his father like this? Tommen knew this was where his Dad belonged.

They crested the little hill, and Sansa's house and winery came into view, and both Myrcella and Tommen's mouths dropped open. Autumn had come full bore to the North, and the rolling hills were a riot of oranges, reds, and yellows. Far in the distance, the mountains already had a smattering of snow, and the fall sunlight draped the entire landscape in a golden hue.

"Sansa, it's beautiful," Myrcella cried excitedly, reaching for Sansa's hand.

"Wow," was all that Tommen said. He glanced at his father, who looked equal parts proud and excited. He stopped the Defender at the top of the hill.

"Just over that way, that's where Winterfell Ranch is. Robb runs it. That's Sansa's brother." Then Jaime pointed down to where Jon and Val's farm could be seen, explaining who they were.

"And you guys own all of this land?" Myrcella asked, impressed.

"We do," Sansa nodded. "I mean, it started with my parents' ranch, and we've added on to it. The winery is my baby."

"A woman after my own heart," Myrcella said, laughing when Jaime growled.

"And Grandfather is here?" Tommen asked, slightly incredulous. He had only ever seen his grandfather in very formal settings – family dinners at his mansion in King's Landing or on the rare occasion when they visited their ancestral home Casterly Rock.

"He is," Jaime said, getting a funny look on his face. "You should know that he's different up here, Tom. He's more relaxed."

"You mean he's Papa Lion?" Tom asked, smirking, and Jaime's mouth dropped open.

"Dad, Uncle Tyrion, was at my loft telling me almost the day he got home. He said it's wild."

Jaime rubbed the back of his neck. "Look, you guys got robbed of a lot growing up," Jaime paused. There was a wealth of unsaid words that he didn't get into right now. "But one of the things I regret the most, now, is how you didn't have a great relationship with your grandfather. And that's on me," he finished, the guilt eating at him.

Sansa's heart ached for the man she loved. She knew that he had tried so hard when he had been living with a woman that cheated on him, abused him and belittled him.

"Dad, stop. We all know who was responsible for our childhood," Cella said, her voice taking on a commanding tone.
"But, Cella, I should have done…"

"No, Dad. Cella's right. We all know what happened in our home. You can't own everything Mom did. We can only move forward," Tommen added, and Jaime choked back the emotion that was threatening to drown him. Sansa laid a hand on his shoulder, giving him the support he needed.

"Alright, guys. But just be prepared for Ned," Jaime said, nodding at the two of them.

"And kittens," Sansa chimed in.

Tommend swivelled in his seat to look at her.

"Kittens?" His voice was hopeful and eager.

Sansa laughed and explained that Tywin and Ned had found them in a sack. Both Myrcella and Tommen looked appropriately horrified.

When they pulled up to the farmhouse, Myrcella declared that it was one of the best houses she had ever seen. The door opened, and then Tywin was standing there, Tank at his feet.

"What is that?" Tom asked.

"Oh my god, you have a Frenchie!?" Cella cried.

Sansa laughed. "Yup. That's Tank."

"Ohhhh, he's adorable!"

Jaime's two children were out of the Defender and bounding up the steps, stopping before Tywin, who stood there awkwardly.

"Myrcella, Tommen," he said, voice low and gravelly.

"Myrcella, Tommen," he said, voice low and gravelly.

"Hello, Grandfather," they chimed.

"Why are you calling him that? Papa Lion, why do they call you that?" a small voice asked, and both Cella and Tom looked down to see a little boy with big brown eyes and a mop of curly brown hair, holding a ginger kitten, looking up at them.

Tywin rumbled out a laugh, stunning both Tom and Cella, and then scooped Ned up in his arms.

"These are my grandchildren, Ned."

Ned looked between Myrcella, Tommen and Tywin. "Why don't they call you Papa Lion? That's your name."

Jaime and Sansa were grinning, watching this play out.

"I have no problem calling him Papa Lion," Tommen said, earning a nod from Ned and a stunned look from Tywin. "What is your kitten's name?"

"Simba, after the Lion King. I make Papa Lion watch is when he's here. He sometimes yells at the television, and then he owes me money for my swear jar. Papa Lion says that kittens are like little lions, and he's a big lion. Uncle Jaime is also a lion, but I'm a wolf. I like dogs, but I love my kitten. Do you like kittens?"

Tommend and Myrcella both looked slightly shocked at the sheer amount of information that had
come tumbling out of the little boy's mouth.

"I love kittens," Tommen said, recovering first.

Ned scrambled down Tywin's lean body and then grabbed Tommen by the hand. "Come on. I'll show you the rest. Aunty Sansa loves Spike. He's the littlest. Uncle Jaime grumbles, but secretly I think he likes him. There are two others. One is going home with Rocco, but there is one more that needs a home."

Everyone saw Tommen's eyes light in utter delight, while Jaime groaned.

"I had a cat when I was your age. His name was Ser Pounce."

Ned stopped and looked at Tommen. "That's a fantastic name. Come on; you can see them all." The two of them disappeared into the farmhouse.

"He's quite something," Myrcella said, her green eyes dancing. She pressed a kiss to Tywin's cheek. "And I have no problem with calling you, Papa Lion. It suits you," she said shyly, and Tywin dragged her back for a long hug.

"Myrcella, my light," Tywin whispered into her ear, as she wound herself tighter into his embrace and gave a little sob.

"Please don't give up on us just because Mother kept us from you," she cried into Tywin's chest.

He cupped her cheeks. "Oh my dear girl, I would never," Tywin told her, shaking his head and cursing at Cersei once again.

Sansa slipped her hand into Jaime's and squeezed, noting his eyes were bright.

"How are you doing, babe?" she asked quietly.

He turned and tugged her closer and pressed his lips against hers. "Right now, Sansa? I feel like I have everything that I've ever wanted. You, my children, my father. Your family and our friends. It's all right here, San. And it's all thanks to you."

They stood there, hand in hand, watching Tywin usher Myrcella inside the house, the Great Lion asking his granddaughter questions about work and life in King's Landing. Sansa laid her head on Jaime's shoulder.

"Life is pretty good, Jaime," Sansa said. Then she grinned. "Just wait until Ric shows up in a few hours!"

Jaime groaned.

"Buckle up, Daddio! They are hot for one another." Sansa winked at Jaime and then howled as he reached for her as she darted into their house.

"I'll get you back for that Sansa," Jaime yelled, and then let the joy of the moment wash over him, finally knowing he had everything he ever wanted.

Chapter End Notes
Up Next:

More bonding with Jaime and the kids, Ric arrives, Robb and the crew are home, hockey weekend.

And a confrontation with Brienne

Also this is where I will start an Addam and Elia story- but I will link it to the universe!
Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

More bonding with the kids and two Stark's arrive at Sansa's

Chapter Notes

Hi All!

Thanks again to all those still reading this story. I know it is really, really long. And yes, it takes me forever to get to some of the main plot points. Still, I really love this world I've created.

This entire chapter is inspired by the Dierks Bentley's song - Women, Amen

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Picset

Sansa was laughing as she came into her home with Jaime muttering behind her. She was greeted by the excited sounds of Ned's chatter as he had an apparent ally in Tommen that floated through the house.

Myrcella was seated on the couch in the main room, cuddling Tank, who was snorting at her, in love and arching in for more scratches as Tywin was talking to her.

Sansa loved how Jaime's children seemed to feel at home here instantly, and she thought it boded well for the future. Their future. Not everyone was prepared for a blended family, but Sansa thought the bigger the family, the better.

Soon enough, she heard Jaime murmuring as he came through the front door, something about hockey players keeping their sticks to themselves, and Sansa snorted.

Jaime Lannister was hardly one to talk about keeping his 'stick' to himself, she thought. He was a self-admitted manwhore after his divorce from Cersei, only slowing down on the endless stream of women in his bed in the past few years.

Sansa knew that Ric was a great guy, so even if there were sparks between Myrcella and him, Jaime didn't have that much to worry about. Still, it was kind of adorable to see him acting all protective and growly. It shot heat straight through Sansa when he was like this.

"Tom! Cella! Get over here," Jaime yelled from the entrance, and both kids popped up to see what he wanted. Sansa just shrugged at them as they rushed by her as she stood in the kitchen.
"Guys, I love that you feel at home here, but for god sakes, can we try to show Sansa that I at least tried to raise you with a few manners? Pick up your stuff, and I'll show you your rooms," Jaime said, and then their voices faded as they wandered up the stairs.

Sansa grinned at how much a Dad Jaime was. She absolutely loved it.

"Cousin Tommen looooooooves kittens, Aunty Sansa," Ned said, suddenly there at her feet. She glanced down at him as she lifted him onto a stool at the island.

"Does he?" Sansa asked and watched as his little head bobbed.

"He knows so much about them," Ned said, chatting happily as he sat at the island, and Sansa made him a sandwich and cut an apple. When she slid his milk across the table, he grinned, peanut butter smeared on his face.

"Uncle Ric is coming home, and soon Daddy will be here, and now I have new cousins. This is the best day, Aunty Sansa," he told her, content and happy in his world.

"It is pretty special, buddy," Sansa agreed, hearing footsteps coming down the stairs. Sansa loved nothing more than a full house, and right now, hers was bursting at the seams.

"Sorry, Sansa," Myrcella said, blushing slightly when she came into the kitchen. "We're not animals; we were just excited."

Sansa waved a hand, not caring about it. She was far more concerned with them feeling like this was their home. "Cella, I want you and Tommen to be comfortable and happy here," Sansa said truthfully.

"It is such a great house. I can see why you love it," Cella said, grabbing her laptop and a chair beside Ned at the island, eager to get to know her father's new girlfriend better. So far, Sansa was awesome and Myrcella could see why everyone loved her so much.

Tommen was next in, and even shyer than his sister, he mumbled an apology to Sansa.

"Tommen, please don't. I know where your father was coming from, but when you guys are here, this is your home as well."

Tommen brightened considerably at Sansa's kind words and loving touch.

Tywin, who had been observing the entire scene, knew Tommen's first reaction was another unwanted by-product from Cersei's destructive parenting style. Tywin was pleased to see how gentle Sansa was with Jaime's youngest son. The young man, while already twenty, still desperately needed people in his corner, and Tywin was more determined than ever to be there. He realized he had failed his grandchildren by not being more involved in their lives and he would rectify that situation immediately.

Tommen too snagged a seat at the island, just as Jaime came back in.

As was his habit, Jaime brushed his lips against Sansa's cheek that she offered to him.

Tywin was watching the children and saw they were pleased rather than uncomfortable with Jaime's display towards Sansa, another excellent sign that things were on the right track.

"It's a great place. Ned was saying that there are all sorts of animals at the ranch?" Tommen said, trying to make conversation. For some reason, Sansa put him at ease and Ned was a riot, so
Tommen was feeling pretty good about things. Myrcella was always the more outgoing personality between them; she made friends quickly and easily, where it took Tommen considerably longer.

"Yup. Pigs, cows, horses, dogs and chickens. You name it, we've got it." Sansa’s smile was so genuine and warm, that Tommen gave her one back.

"No goats, though my love," Jaime said distractedly as he was digging in the fridge to make lunch. He knew that Myrcella loved his chicken stir-fry, and now that he had her here, he wanted to spoil her. Tommen, training to be a chef like Jaime, would eat almost anything.

Sansa rolled her eyes.

"No, we don't have goats. Or sheep. Or even bees," she retorted when Jaime's head popped out of the fridge. "You do know they poop everywhere and eat everything, right, Jaime?" Sansa added, but he'd clearly moved on or was pointedly ignoring her when it came to the topic of goats. Somehow, Sansa figured they'd end up with one or two sooner or later.

"Bees, babe!" he cried excitedly, and Sansa just looked confused but the sudden change of topic.

"Mead and honey wine," Jaime said, winking as he pulled out fresh vegetables from the fridge. "Next winery expansion," Jaime said, pleased when Sansa started biting her lip, meaning she was thinking about it.

"Uncle Jaime, what are you doing with those?" Ned asked, somewhat suspiciously as more and more vegetables appeared on the island.

Jaime laughed. "Making a stir-fry buddy."

"Does that have vegetables?"

Jaime nodded as Ned groaned. "Can I have grilled cheese?" he asked a hopeful note in his tone.

Jaime glanced at Sansa, who shrugged.

"I know Jeyne is planning a huge meal at the ranch tonight - a welcome home for Rickon and the guys. It'll be lasagna with salad and bread, so he'll eat that."

Ned nodded and gave Jaime his biggest, most pleading eyes until Jaime nodded.

"Oh my god, how does he do it?" Tommen cried, ruffling Ned's hair. "My Dad made us eat every single vegetable until we liked them all," Tommen told Ned, who was grinning widely.

"I use my big brown eyes that Mama says no one can say no to."

All the adults snorted at that statement.

"Wanna help, Tom?" Jaime asked, seeing his son's eyes light up.

"Yeah, Dad. That would be great," Tommen said, loving when he had a chance to cook with his Dad.

It was hard being the son of Jaime Lannister, chef extraordinaire and going to culinary school. Everyone knew that Tommen was in no position, at least not yet, to take over at Jaime's restaurant as head chef. They hadn't discussed it, but if Tommen had to guess, that would go to his Dad's main sous chef, a woman named Arianne Martell, Elia's niece. She was a few years older than Tommen and had been with his Dad since she'd graduated and was well poised to take a more
prominent role in his restaurant. Even Tommen could see that his Dad’s life was now in the North.

Sansa slid in beside Myrcella, interested in what she was working on.

"Jaime tells me you're a designer?" Sansa asked, loving all things fashion and quite excited to have someone to talk to about such things.

Myrcella blushed. "Well, I hope to be a designer one day. Right now, I'm more a glorified assistant and personal shopper. Dad's best friend Addam put me in touch with some of his more fashionably challenged clients, and now I spend a lot of time shopping for their wardrobes, helping them look good."

"That's exciting, though," Sansa said, voice full of encouragement and Myrcella straightened under the positive attention.

Her mother had deemed her little more than a servant and wanted to push for Myrcella to intern under Ashara Dayne, one of the leading designers in the country. While that would be Myrcella's dream job, she wanted to earn it. So for now, she worked for a competing and less well known design house, House Arryn and hoped one day that House Dayne would see her designs and offer her a job.

That was key for Myrcella – she wanted to earn it on her own and Sansa saw how important that was to her.

"I can respect that," Sansa said, nodding at the young woman. "My brother was always going to take over the ranch, and lord knows there was more than enough work there. But I had a dream, and I wanted my winery," Sansa told her, loving how Cella had opened up to her and shared her struggles and dreams.

"That's exactly it. I know that my family is rich and famous, but if I don't do it on my own, how will I ever know if my work was good enough?" Myrcella said, unaware that both Tywin and Jaime were listening. Both men were immensely proud of her, knowing she had to have a spine of steel to withstand the constant barrage that Cersei would put her under in order to get her way. The woman was relentless, but so far, Myrcella was fighting the good fight against her mother and her controlling ways.

"Tell me, do you help your father with his clothing choices?" Sansa said, lowering her voice.

"Sansa love, I can still hear you," Jaime called from where he and Tommen were chopping vegetables and starting on a creamy risotto to go with the stir-fry. Ned, despite his dislike of all things veggie, had been drawn in by their banter and quick knife skills and was fascinated watching Jaime and Tommen work together. He kept laughing when Tommen popped raw veggies in his mouth and winked at Ned.

"Well, for god sakes Jaime, you wear the most ridiculous boots up here in the North," Sansa shot back, watching Myrcella smile at them.

“They’re not ridiculous, they’re fashionable.” Jaime waved a knife. “Tell her Cella. Fashionable.”

"You two are adorable. And yes, I've helped Dad with his fashion choices for years," Cella told Sansa. "Want to see what I'm working on?" Cella asked tentatively, and Sansa nodded and soon they were lost in a world of fashion of Myrcella Lannister’s making and Sansa made all the right noises of encouragement.
When one of Sansa's favourite country songs came on, she barely noticed, deep in conversation with Cella, until Jaime's voice started singing.

*I'd lost my way, and I'd lost my mind*
*If I faced one day on my own*
*I know I was saved*
*The night that she gave this drifter's heart a home*

Sansa grinned, bumping Myrcella as Jaime sang. Both his children were smiling at the picture their Dad made, at home in this kitchen, singing and cooking for them. He was relaxed, happy and in love. And they, in turn, loved it. It had been years since they'd truly seen him this happy. Jaime had grabbed a wooden spoon and was using it as a microphone. It was totally ridiculous, embarrassing and amazingly awesome.

*Every night I should be on my knees*
*Lord knows how lucky I am*
*I'll never say it near enough*
*Thank God for this woman, Amen*

When Jaime winked at her, Sansa wondered if it was possible to become pregnant by looks alone. Because what Jaime was doing to her ovaries as he sang a country song to her, in front of his father and his children, was serious testing all laws of nature. And where in the hell had Jaime been hiding a voice like that? Sansa wondered.

*This world has a way of shaking your faith*
*I've been broken again and again*
*But I need all the cracks in my shattered heart*
*’Cause that's where her love gets in*

By this point, Jaime had made his way to Sansa and pulled her into his arms, dancing with her as he sang along to her country playlist that Alexa pumped through the kitchen. Ned was giggling, and while Tommen looked slightly embarrassed, he was all but beaming at his Dad who swung Sansa around. Sansa had no shame, happy to dance with Jaime in their kitchen.

*Every night I should be on my knees*
*Lord knows how lucky I am*
I'll never say it near enough

Thank God for this woman, Amen

Just as Jaime was about to keep going, another voice suddenly joined in, and Sansa turned in Jaime's arms to see Robb standing there, grinning. Then he joined Jaime, singing loudly and on key. The two of them made quite the pair, both shameless and totally in their element.

She gives me faith
She gives me grace
She gives me hope
She gives me strength
She gives me love
Love without end
Thank God for this woman, Amen

"Daddy!" Ned cried as Robb sauntered into the kitchen and Robb picked him up, swaying with him as the song continued. Robb winked at Jaime, and the two of them finished it off, singing in perfect harmony.

Thanks for the moon and the stars up above
Forgiveness' a sin and your undying love
Every twist every turn for the way you made sure
All my roads led to her

Jaime gave her a quick kiss, his eyes conveying that every lyric applied to his life. He truly believed that everything in his life had led him here, to Sansa and this life they were building together.

So tonight I will fall down on my knees
'Cause Lord knows how lucky I am
I'm gonna shout at the top of my lungs
Thank God for this woman, Amen
And thank God for this woman, Amen

She gives me faith
She gives me grace
She gives me hope
She gives me straight
She gives me love
Love without end

Thank God for this woman, Amen

At the end of the song, Jaime's lips crashed down on hers, and Sansa wrapped herself around him, loving how unreserved he was with his affection. The loud wolf whistle let Sansa know, though, that her brother was back.

"Hot damn that is some fine loving you two have going on," Robb cried out, clapping a hand down on Jaime's shoulder, grinning like an idiot at them. Sansa blushed but was thrilled that Robb was back.

"Welcome home, brother," Jaime said, only giving Sansa up to hug Robb. The two men embraced warmly, having grown close in Jaime's time North.

"It's good to be back."

"Who the hell is that?" Myrcella whispered to Sansa, looking at the handsome cowboy standing in the kitchen.

"My oldest brother who is happily married and with baby number three on the way," Sansa told Jaime's daughter, who just kept ogling Robb. Sansa could admit her brother was a handsome man.

"Can't blame a girl for asking," Cella muttered, still a bit stunned by Robb, in his wranglers and tight black t-shirt and low slung cowboy hat.

"Daddy, you'll never guess what Papa Lion and I found!" Ned exclaimed excitedly, practically bouncing on his heels since Robb put him down.

"Hmmm, a sack full of watermelons?" Robb asked, and Ned giggled.

"No." Ned shook his head, emphatically.

"A sack full of puppies?"

"Noooooo," Ned said, giggling even harder.

Robb crouched down and put his cowboy hat on Ned's head. "Could it be a sack full of kittens?"

"Yes, Daddy!" Ned cried happily, tugging on Robb's hand. "Come and see Simba. Papa Lion says he is mine, but only if you say yes."
Robb gave Tywin a stare, who simply arched an eyebrow. "The boy loves him, and cats are useful. Even you cannot argue with that."

Robb snorted.

"Besides, it's what I like to call Grandfather's privilege," Tywin add, smirking at Robb, who rolled his eyes.

"Daddy, did I tell you that Papa Lion has a date with Ms. Wyn? It happened at Grandparents tea, and then all the adults were talking about it, and I heard Uncle Jaime tell Papa Lion that it was good if he went on a date and Papa Lion said in his growly voice that it was only coffee. But sometimes I see you kiss Mama when you bring her coffee, and Uncle Jaime is always kissing Aunty Sansa, so I'm not sure what is so special about coffee."

Robb was howling in laughter, his son's commentary more than making up for the fact that Tywin had foisted an unwanted, indoor cat on Robb.

"Wyn's good people, Ty," Robb said, passing by Tywin on the way to the laundry room where the kittens were currently passed out in a pile of fluff. As their voices disappeared, Myrcella turned back to Sansa.

"Just tell me if Rickon is still as good looking as Robb?"

Sansa laughed. She had seen Ric's latest promo shoots and her baby brother was ripped and sporting a shorter, sleeker haircut for the start of the season. His curls had been tamed and his eight pack was in. He was as handsome as he'd ever been, and Sansa knew that Myrcella would be swept away.

Of course, Jaime overheard and was scowling appropriately.

"Myrcella, you didn't come to the North to find a boyfriend," Jaime said, sending both Sansa and Myrcella a pointed look, which they both ignored to Jaime's chagrin.

"Want to see Ric's latest promo shots?" Sansa asked and Myrcella nodded eagerly.

"Heck yeah," she said, earning another groan from Jaime, while Sansa opened her phone and turned it so that Cella could see.

"Oh my god, he looks so good," Myrcella said, practically swooning over his latest shot of Rickon wearing nothing but hockey pants and holding his stick across the back of his neck, pecs and abs on full display.

Jaime's eyebrows winged up. "Babe, you're killing me," Jaime said, concentrating more on the two giggling women then he was the lunch he was cooking.

Tommen was shaking his head at his father. "Cella's had boyfriends, Dad," he told Jaime, who swung back around to look at his son, a pained expression on his handsome face.

"Well, yes, I assume so since she is twenty-two, but this is different. I prefer to live in a world of denial son."

"How?" Sansa asked, arching one elegant eyebrow.

Jaime stumbled over his words, looking around for help. His father just shook his head at Jaime, offering nothing, wondering how he might get out of this little mess. "Well, because it just is,"
Jaime said with a huff.

"Really, Dad. It just is?" Cella said, snorting at him, clearly seeing where this was coming from.

"He's a hockey player," Jaime retorted as if that was answer enough.

"You're damn right I am, and a hell of a good one at that, Lannister," came Ric's cocky voice as he strolled into Sansa's kitchen.

Sansa squealed and launched herself off her chair and into her baby brother's arm, who towered over her. Riccon picked Sansa up and swung her around and around again. No matter what, Sansa was his rock. She'd been there for him from the moment their parents died, his biggest advocate and cheerleader. He closed his eyes, just savouring having Sansa in his arms.

"Hi, sissy, I'm home," Riccon whispered into Sansa's ear, and she sobbed into his.

There was nothing like coming home and no matter how famous, how popular, how good he was, this place and these people were the keys to Riccon's heart.

"Brother!" came Robb's booming voice just as Ric finally let Sansa go. The eldest Stark pulled Riccon in for a hug, and Riccon loved how his older brother was so free with his affection. It took nothing away from the man that Robb was. He cried, loved, yelled, shouted and fought hard and didn't give a damn who saw him do it. Riccon had learned that being open emotionally to nothing away from the man you were, and all of that came from Robb.

"Brother," Riccon said back, clapping him on the back. "It's good to be home.”

"Uncle RICKON!!!!!" came Ned's high pitched voice.

The little boy was overwhelmed. First new cousins, then his Daddy and now his very favourite hockey-playing Uncle were all here.

Riccon swooped the little boy up into his arms and tickled his tummy, as Ned giggled, wiggling in Riccon’s strong arms that held him easily.

Myrcella and Tommen had gone to stand by Jaime, giving the Starks a bit of space for this impromptu reunion.

"So San," Ric said when he put his nephew down, "Which room is mine?"

"You're staying here?" Robb asked, a bit surprised. Riccon always stayed with them, at least in the past. Then Robb saw Myrcella trying not to look at Riccon and Riccon in turn trying not to look at her and it all clicked.

"Heard you were just back today from the High Country. Wanted to give you and Jeyne some space," Riccon smirked and watched a huge grin spread across Robb's face.

"That's kind of you, Riccon. My wife is as horny as a…"

Sansa clamped her hand on Robb's mouth. "Do not finish that sentence Robb Stark," she said, murder in her eyes as his danced with mirth.

"Riccon, welcome back," Jaime finally said, hugging Sansa's youngest brother.

In truth, Jaime knew that he was a great guy, and the last time he'd been home, they'd talked about Riccon's career. And how close Riccon was with Sansa. Jaime had heard the level of respect that
Sansa’s youngest brother had for his oldest sister. Sansa had done an excellent job in raising him, and much like Jaime in his career, Rickon wasn't in hockey for the fame; it was his passion.

"Jaime, still making my sister smile, I see," Rickon said, looking around the room, eyes lighting when they landed on Myrcella.

"I am. Rickon, these are my children, Myrcella and Tommen," Jaime said, reluctantly stepping back. Sansa slipped in beside him and squeezed his hand, and Jaime sighed when he saw Myrcella's face light up when Rickon stepped up to press a kiss to her cheek and introduce himself.

"Seven fucking hells, San," Jaime muttered and heard her laugh.

"He's a good guy, Jaime."

Jaime growled, which only made Sansa laugh harder.

"Think of it this way. Would you rather know who she is dating, or not?"

Jaime turned his head and looked in her eyes, contemplating the question. "Honestly, I trust Ric. He's a good guy, San. I know this. It's just; I remember being barely older than her, and I already had Joff and Cersei was pregnant with her. You know how that turned out."

Sansa stroked Jaime's cheek. "I know, babe. But not all young love is destined for the dumpster fire that was your first marriage."

Jaime snorted. "You've got an edge when you want; you know that, right?" Sansa wiggled her eyebrows at him. "That's still sexy kitten," Jaime whispered into her ear, sending a delightful shiver of desire coursing through her body.

"And an evil side. But don't worry. Rickon’s room is beside us, and Cella is by Tywin, with Tommen in the middle."

Jaime's shoulder relaxed. "Thank gods."

"Besides, if you do it right, I'll be loud enough to scar them all," Sansa said evilly, making Jaime throw his head back in laughter and drag her into his arms as he nuzzled at her neck.

"Challenge fully accepted kitten."

"They're always like this," Ned was saying about Jaime and Sansa, as he was now holding court after he'd convinced Robb to bring out all four kittens.

Of course, this is when Robb announced it was time to go home, and Ned looked longingly around the room.

Papa Lion.

Uncle Jaime.

Uncle Rickon.

Cousin Tommen.

And four kittens.

How was he supposed to leave all of this?
"I hear you want to skate, buddy," Rickon said, drawing Ned's attention away from the kittens and the others and the pouty expression on his face.

"I do, Uncle Ric." His whole face had lit up with that statement.

"Well, better listen to Daddy. You know he's been gone, and I think Aunty Sansa is going to want to show Myrcella and Tommen the winery after lunch," Rickon said, and Ned heaved out a sigh.

"That's bargaining Uncle Ric."

"Damn right it is!" Rickon said, laughing at his nephew.

With another dramatic sigh, Ned hopped off the stool at the island. "You promise you're all coming to the house later for supper?" he asked.

"Of course, Ned, we will be there. I'm sure that Cella and Tommen would love to see all the animals," Tywin said, opening his arms as Ned scrambled in.

"Will you show them the chickens with me?" he asked, and Tywin snorted.

"Absolutely not," Tywin stated as Robb and Jaime laughed. Cella and Tommen just looked confused.

"Fine," Ned said reluctantly, giving his Papa one last hug. "I'll see you soon," he whispered into Tywin's ear. He then gave Myrcella a hug and told her she smelled pretty, which made her laugh. And he told Tommen he'd have to come back to visit the kittens. Finally, he hugged Jaime and Sansa before finally going to Robb.

"I'd almost think you didn't want to see the surprise I have for you and Roc waiting at the ranch," Robb told his son, shaking his head at how much Ned loved these lions.

"A surprise?" Ned said, voice now eager, wondering what his Daddy could have brought him.

Robb patted his butt. "Go get your boots on, little man, and we'll head home."

Ned scurried to do as asked, and Robb pulled Rickon away from Myrcella, whom he was charming with stories of the team.

When they were in the hallway that led to the front door, Robb gave Ric a look and had the youngest Stark shuffling his feet.

"Don't be an ass when it comes to that woman in there, Rickon Stark." Before Rickon could protest, Robb laid a hand on his shoulder and gave him a slight shake. "I know you're not a dog. Hell, I'm just a rancher and even I know how much easy pussy you hockey players can get. But two things. First, she's Jaime's daughter, and Sansa loves that man. She's waited forever for Jaime, Ric, and you messing with Myrcella could fuck that up. Second, I like Jaime. And I'm pretty sure when I get a chance, I'm going to like his kids. He's been through a lot of shit- they all have. So be fucking certain if you start something," Robb said, and Rickon nodded.

"I'm not a dog, Robb. Not like some of my teammates."

Robb's eyebrows raised.

"You still a virgin, Rickon Stark?"

Rickon had the grace to blush. He went to run his hand through his curls and cursed when he
realized they were gone.

"No. I'm not. You know that. You know when it happened in senior year high school with Wylla who was my girlfriend at the time. Hell, we'd been dating for months before anything happened. But since then, there's only been a couple, Robb. Even with the 'easy pussy' as you claim. It just feels… wrong."

Robb threw his head back and laughed. "Gods, you really are a Stark. Me and Jon thought we were such hot shit when we finally got our dicks wet. It turns out; we were just suckers for the women we love."

"Well, I never said anything about love," Ric protested slightly, but couldn't help but look back towards the kitchen.

"Sure, son. You're not going to fall in love with that pretty woman in there that is looking at you like you're some conquering hero."

Rickon blushed deeper but said nothing and Robb just shook his head. He knew that his baby brother's head was on straight. Starks were like that. They fell hard and fast and then they were done for. Robb wouldn't be surprised to hear that Ric was in love with Cella Lannister by the time the weekend came to a close. And he knew his brother would be as loyal as the day was long. Starks did not cheat.

Still, it would fun to bug the ever-loving shit out of Jaime, especially knowing that Ric's intentions were honourable towards the man's daughter.

"Catch you at the ranch later," Robb said, as Ned was hollering for him to hurry up.

Luckily, Robb was excited to show Ned the horses that he and Drogo had decided to start the boys on. Four days in the high country with the Dothraki man and Robb had a new respect for their prowess on a horse, and a new partnership for his ranch. He thanked the old gods that Drogo and Dany were staying in the North. With the man's skills, work ethic and access to the Dothraki horse bloodline, Winterfell Ranch would be the leading ranch in all of Westeros inside five years. Drogo was going to take over all the horse breeding, and Robb couldn't wait to see the results.

Robb shook his head when he heard Myrcella cry happily as Rickon sauntered back into the kitchen and Jaime's corresponding growl. Sansa was sure to have her hands full, and the weekend hadn't even started.

Hockey, family, love and prosperity. Robb rubbed his hands with glee, knowing things were about to get very interesting at Sansa's farmhouse over the next few days. He was just glad he was back from the mountains so he could take it all in.

Chapter End Notes

It really is hard to state just how lovely comments are. I mean- lifeblood, inspirationally good!
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

Some more bonding with Jaime's kids and a BIG blowout

Chapter Notes

Some of you more observant people may have noticed the added Part 1 to the title of this story. That's because this first part is winding down (just one more chapter after this).

What's next? Well, a part of me feels like interest in this story is waning, so I wanted to give it an ending of a sort- before I start on Part 2.

Part 2, if there is enough interest, will move faster than Part 1 and include: a proposal, an unexpected pregnancy, a winter wedding, fallout w/ Cersei, a visit to King's Landing and more Stark-Lannister family drama.

BUT- as I said, I'm not sure the interest level anymore in this story.

Also major props to Starlight and LC for working me out of my funk- the two of you deserve gold

So for now, enjoy chapter 28 and I'll try to get chapter 29 up tomorrow.

T

If there was one thing Jaime could say about Rickon Stark, it was that he could eat. And holy seven hells was he appreciative of the food that Jaime and Tommen turned out.

"This is so good," he said between mouthfuls, shovelling it down, as Tommen and Jaime looked on, both shocked and impressed with how much he could put away.

"I know our nutritionist would love the recipe," he said again at one point, drinking a massive amount of water to go with thethree helpings of stir-fry and one of risotto.

"I like this creamy rice, but I'll catch hell from the coach if I eat more than one helping," he said, grinning at Jaime.

Jaime shook his head, wondering when the last time it was that someone had been so effusive of his food.

"Are they fairly strict with what you can eat?" Jaime asked, curious despite the way that his daughter was looking at the hockey player she was sitting beside.

While Myrcella might have had a boyfriend of two in the past, it was clear she was not well-
schooled in the art of dating if the huge doe eyes she kept giving Rickon were any indication.

Jaime thanked gods for that small mercy, along with the fact that Rickon seemed determined to keep the flirting down to a low simmer while Jaime was around. It seemed the young man had a sense of self-preservation after all as he answers Jaime’s question.

After lunch, as promised, they all donned their boots and coats and made the walk down the Winery. Jaime was grateful all his children were of legal drinking age, as once they were inside, Sansa brought out several bottles for them to try.

"Ahh yes, quite the selection I do recall," Tywin said pleasantly, settling back in his chair, crossing his legs and sipping at a tart white wine. "I'd forgotten just how delicious your wine is, Sansa. We must make plans to get it into our restaurants in King’s Landing sooner rather than later."

"Grandpa, we're going to carry Winterfell wine?" Tommen asked excitedly, leaning closer to Tywin and engaging Sansa and Jaime in a conversation about menu items and wine pairings, leaving Rickon and Myrcella to themselves.

"Want to go for a walk?" Rickon asked, and Myrcella nodded eagerly.

"I'd love that." Myrcella was excited to spend time with just Rickon. She knew there was a spark there- but was there more?

Rickon held out his hand for Cella, who gladly took it, beaming up at the handsome hockey player; both of them pointedly ignoring Jaime's warning growl.

"Where do you think they are going?" Jaime asked, craning his neck to try and see as they hurried out of the winery.

Sansa shook her head and laughed at him and his antics. "Jaime, what on earth do you think is going to happen as they go for a walk by the river?" Sansa asked incredulously.

He heaved out a sigh and ran his hand through his hair, refusing the meet the bemused looks of his father and his son. "Nothing. I mean, I know he's a good kid, San. I just worry about her."

Sansa cocked her head. "I know Jaime, but she's an adult, and they are both single and unattached."

Jaime took one last look at Myrcella and Rickon and then finally turned his attention back to the three people at the table before him. "I know," he mumbled and then sighed, sipping at his wine.

"Well, I know how to cheer you up," Sansa said, winking at him, and Jaime inwardly cursed himself. While he was acting like an overprotective ass, the love of his life was entertaining his family. He needed to get his shit together. And fast.

"What's that kitten?"

"A new menu for the winery!" Sansa cried, and Jaime threw his head back in laughter before he pulled her close to kiss her.

"Thanks, babe," he murmured into her ear.

When they parted, Sansa cleared her throat and then looked at Tommen. "Perhaps you'd like to take a stab at it, Tommen. Your father has been bugging me for weeks now about the menu here. You're young and hip and know what's happening in King's Landing. What would you suggest?"
Tommenn looked absolutely gobsmacked that Sansa would ask his opinion on something so important, and he coughed a bit, looking between his father and grandfather.

Jaime squeezed Sansa's thigh, hoping to convey just how much her asking Tommen's opinion meant to him.

"Well," Tommen began, a bit nervously until he saw Sansa's open and encouraging expression. "If I were you I would have four to five staple items that you know pair well with your wines at all times. Things like a good tapas menu and a charcuterie board. Then I would make monthly specials. Given the link between Winterfell Ranch and the farm, you should offer food here that is seasonal. For example, in October you could do all things with a pumpkin or apple theme. It wouldn't take that much to put in a proper kitchen, and if the things your offering are mostly appetizers and hor d'eouvre type food, which means any halfway competent chef could run your kitchen."

Jaime was grinning at his son, so proud of him at that moment.

"Too bad you're in King's Landing, or I'd offer you the job and the chance to build your own menu," Sansa said, thinking about who she might recruit to do this. Jaime and Bran were too busy with their own projects, but maybe Tommen had a friend or a lead on someone down in King's Landing that was interested in coming North.

"You're serious?" Tommen asked, drawing Sansa's attention back to him.

"Hmm, what was that Tom?" she said, sipping her wine.

His green eyes were lit with intensity. "Were you serious before? When you said if I lived here, you'd give me this job?" It was the perfect first job for a new chef, not too overwhelming, but with plenty of room to be creative and make their own mark.

Sansa cocked her head and met Tommen’s eyes.

"I was. Jaime speaks highly of your skills, and I know you're done school this semester. It would be perfect, except you don't live here," Sansa said, regretfully.

"What if I did?" Tommen asked in a rush, making both Jaime and Sansa's mouths drop open. "Live here, I mean. Not at your house, of course, but what if I lived in the North?"

"Tommen, is that something you want?" Jaime asked softly. His son knew there was always a place for him at his restaurant down in King's Landing, but there was a spark of excitement in Tommen's eyes that Jaime had rarely ever seen.

He nodded. "Mom pops in and out of my life just to make me miserable, I'm sure. I love your restaurant Dad, but we both know I'm not ready to take over as head chef. And quite frankly, it's all I've ever known. I have a few friends down in King's Landing, but I'm not close to anyone."

Tommenn paused. "And you're going to be here, Dad. And I think I'd like to be close to you. I mean, if you'd like that," Tommen finished quietly as Jaime felt the emotion well up in him. His son wanted to be close to him. It meant everything to Jaime.

Jaime pushed his chair back and rose, walking around the table to pull Tommen into his arms, hugging his son. "Fuck Tom. I'd love for you to be here, but I never thought this would be what you'd want."

Tywin met Sansa's eyes and the sheer respect and love he had for this woman grew exceptionally. She had just given Jaime back his youngest son, whether that had been her intention or not.
"Thank you," Tywin mouthed to her, and Sansa waved a hand, tears coursing down her cheeks watching Jaime and his son. When Jaime and Tommen parted, they looked at her crying, and Jaime laughed, tugging her into his arms.

"Come now, kitten. This is a good thing."

"I know you jackass. I'm just so happy," Sansa cried, and Jaime held her closer, laughing at how adorable she was. When Sansa finally got herself together, she held her hand out to Tommen.

"So, Tommen Lannister, do we have a deal? New job, a new position, a new home starting in January?"

Tommen looked slightly shocked as he grinned and shook her hand. "We do, Sansa. I promise I won't let you down."

"I know," Sansa said. Then much to everyone's surprise, Tommen hugged her. Hard. "Thank you for this opportunity," he whispered in Sansa's ear.

Sansa hugged him back. "And forget about not staying with us, Tommen. At least to start. Where the hell else would family stay? Unless, of course, we're way too embarrassing for you, and then feel free to move out."

Tommen laughed and hugged Sansa again. "I think you're the best thing that has happened to our family in a really long time, Sansa."

Sansa blushed and then looked slightly embarrassed as she settled in and listened to Jaime and Tommen talk about what they would do for the Winery. Tywin laid a hand on her shoulder.

"You are an exceptional woman," Tywin told her softly, gazing fondly at the two men who also bore the Lannister name. It wouldn't be too long now, in Tywin's opinion, when Jaime asked Sansa to marry him. She was remarkable and would be an asset to the Lannister family.

"It's nothing when they are so easy to love," Sansa replied, looking at Tommen.

"Funny how their own mother does not," Tywin retorted, and Sansa's blue eyes met his green-gold ones.

"What do you mean?"

"Tell me what type of mother makes it so that those children do not even want to be around her? What type of mother belittles them and berates them and tried her very best to destroy her own family? They suffered as much as Jaime and what you did for Tommen is nothing short of a miracle Sansa."

Sansa swallowed hard. "Why didn't you do more?" she asked, having been curious for ages on why Tywin hadn’t intervened. He was certainly powerful enough.

Tywin sighed, and it was weary and filled with regret. "Jaime never let on how bad things were and to my regret, I didn't push. Cersei was a master at manipulating everyone, myself included so that I thought it was normal marriage woes between them, nothing more. I had no idea the extent to which she damaged them all." Tywin was quiet for a time. "No one expects the man to be abused, but make no mistake, that is what Cersei did to him."

Sansa nodded, tears once again pricking her eyes. She knew it was true. Jaime was such a miracle to her. The fact that he was so open and loving, so willing to try again with her and their
relationship. He was everything, her entire world.

"I love him so much, and I promise you, I won't ever hurt him as she did."

Tywin rumbled out a laugh. "Gods Sansa, you couldn't be like her if you tried. She's black to her very soul, poison and darkness where you are light and love."

Jaime was laughing as he signalled for more wine, wanting Tommen to taste a few more options so he could think about his upcoming menu. There was a part of Jaime that still couldn't believe what Sansa had done, but he knew her. Once she made her mind up about something, it was set. And he also knew how much she loved her Winery. She wouldn't have offered Tommen this opportunity if she didn't think he could handle it. The mere thought of having his son close, in the North, had Jaime practically bouncing in his seat.

He was so happy that when Myrcella and Rickon walked back in, holding hands, cheeks flushed, and looks of stupid young love on their pretty faces, Jaime barely even rolled his eyes.

"Cella, guess what?" Tommen cried excitedly as his sister took a seat beside him and poured a new glass of wine.

"What Tom?"

"Sansa offered me a job! Here at the Winery. I get to design her new menu and prepare all the food once I graduate," Tommen told her, the words rushing out of him.

Myrcella grinned, having never seen her brother so happy or confident. When her gaze swung to Sansa, she gave her a nod. No one had ever done something so awesome for Tommen ever, and Myrcella knew that Sansa had more than earned Tommen's approval.

Her Dad's girlfriend was amazing, and Cella already loved it here in the North and this Stark family. Of course, having the attention of Rickon Stark helped that as well. He had been so sweet when they'd went for a walk, confessing he knew who she was because she'd dressed both Logan and Callum on his team, and he followed her Instagram page.

When he'd shyly asked if she had a boyfriend, Cella had boldly told him no, and that she knew who he was and that she thought he was so handsome. Of course, she'd blushed afterwards, and he'd grinned, and then held her hand.

He told her all about being a professional hockey player, leaving nothing out, including the scores of women that threw themselves at the guys after each game and practice. He'd stopped them then, by the river and looked into her eyes.

"But I'm not like that," he said solemnly.

"You're not? Surely that's what every guy wants? Endless women, no strings?" Cella said, thinking about her older brother and how he was always bragging about the number of women he'd slept with. Cella didn't believe him half the time, but still. It was what men their age did.

Rickon shook his head and then shrugged. "I won't lie to you, Myrcella. I've hooked up with a couple of them, but it was meaningless. They're looking for a paycheque, someone to latch on to so they don't have to work or go to school. Most of them are shallow and superficial. After the third time, I was done. I've been single since last March."

He looked a bit embarrassed when he'd confessed that, but that was when Myrcella knew he was telling the truth.
It took a tremendous amount of pressure off the situation, because despite what her Dad thought, Myrcella had only ever slept with one guy, and that had been her high school boyfriend. She'd dated a bit, on and off over the past few years, but since she'd started design school and working, and looking after both her Dad and Tommen, she'd pushed dating to the back burner. Which was why as much as she thought Rickon Stark was the hottest guy she'd ever seen, she'd been wary. She didn't just want to be another notch in his hockey stick.

"I've been single for a while as well," Myrcella said and saw Rickon grin.

"Yeah? You?"

She frowned. "What does that mean? Me?"

"Ummmm, you're like the hottest woman I've ever met. And you're nice and smart and funny. And you love your family. How are you single?" Rickon said in a rush.

Myrcella gaped at him and then threw her arms around him, going up on her tippy toes to brush her nose against him. "Because nice guys don't want the nice girl, Rickon Stark. So, the real question is, are you a nice guy?" Cella asked him, eyes dancing.

Rickon tightened his arms around her and rubbed her nose back. "Do you think Sansa would raise me to be anything but a nice guy? Or not kick my ass if I wasn't?" Rickon said back, loving it when she laughed.

"So," she said.

"So, Myrcella Lannister, do you want to see if this is something?" Rickon asked. He had no idea how they might work things out, with him being based out of White Harbour and her living in King's Landing, but hell, they were young and could make it work he was sure.

"Something exclusive?" she asked smirking.

"Fucking hell it better be exclusive," Ric snapped, drawing her closer as she laughed and thumped his chest.

"I meant you, silly. No puck bunnies?"

Rickon shuddered. "No babe, no puck bunnies."

"Good."

"Good."

They stood there, slightly awkward with one another, until Rickon said, "I'm going to kiss you now."

"Thank god," Cella said and then thought of nothing else but this man that was kissing her in the fall air, beside a gurgling river as her family found happiness in the North.

Now, Cella was sitting beside Tommen as he went on and on about his new job, and Cella couldn't help but think this place must be magic, because it seemed like everyone who came here ended up happy.

It was sometime later when the six of them made their way back to Sansa and Jaime's farmhouse. Sansa had linked arms with Rickon and Tommen, while Myrcella did so with her Dad and
Grandfather. They might all be a bit tipsy from a few too many bottles of wine at the Winery, but they had an hour or so before they had to go to the Ranch.

Sansa and Rickon had them all howling in laughter as they told Tom and Myrcella about both Jaime and Tywin trying to collect the eggs. And how Ned named his piglets.

"Oh my god, Bacon?" Cella cried, wiping the tears from her eyes as Rickon winked at her.

"And he charges you a dollar for every swear word," Sansa warned.

Tommen's eyes went wide. "Oh, no. How much money did he make of Uncle Tyrion and Aunty Marg?" he asked, and Jaime cackled with glee.

"Tyrion tried to pay him off with a hundred…" Jaime's voice trailed off as they turned the corner to the farmhouse to see Brienne Tarth leaning against an expensive-looking car, glaring at the six of them.

Immediately the mood changed, with Jaime stepping up to confront the woman who had made his life hell and almost ruined Sansa's reputation.

Of course, Sansa and Tywin were at his back, with the other three looking on, curious.

"Brienne."

"Jaime."

There was an awkward silence, and then Brienne spat, "Wasn't enough just to get your way. Now you had to go and get me put on leave? You know how much I loved my job, Jaime. It was everything to me, and I was good at it. I was good for you."

Jaime sighed as he tucked his hands in his pockets. By all rights, Brienne shouldn't even be here. She was on leave from the Network and Elia had put a binding non-disclosure order on her and ordered the network to tell her to stay away from any of the Lannister's or Starks.

"What are you doing here, Brienne? We have nothing to say to one another." Jaime was trying to be diplomatic, but he could see immediately that his chosen tactic failed. He should know better; he'd worked to be a peacemaker in his marriage for years and had never gotten anywhere with that. Except yelled at.

Her face went red, and she rose to her impressive height. Jaime was 6'3, and she almost matched him as she stalked closer.

"Nothing to say? You're a coward, Jaime. A coward and a shit friend."

Jaime snorted. "That's rich coming from you. Friends are supposed to support one another Brienne, be happy for each other. Tell me since you've come North, when have you done any of those things?"

Brienne reeled back, and then her eyes narrowed.

"You weren't like this before you met her."

Eyes filled with hatred landed on Sansa, just as Jaime shifted to protect the woman he loved.

"You can't see what a pathetic fool you've been since you came North. Panting after a woman twenty years younger than you." Brienne snorted. "How do you possibly think you'll keep her
interest, Jaime? They are using you, all of these Starks. Just like Cersei did."

Jaime wanted to howl in rage at what Brienne was saying but knew he had to keep a level head.

"Like you did? You used me Brienne. From the moment you became my producer. You weren't my friend. You were just like everyone else. You just took and took and took. I wonder if you ever really cared for me at all."

"That is a lie, Jaime. I was your friend. Your only friend. Where was Addam when you were crying over what Cersei did to you? Where was anyone when you went on a bender after a bender, barely able to drag your ass into work. I covered for you Jaime when you were shit at your job."

Jaime shook his head. It was true that Brienne had been there for him, especially when he hadn't wanted to let anyone else in. Not his father, not Elia and not Addam. He'd felt like such a failure after his divorce, and being with Brienne had been comfortable with her acceptance of what he was going through. Or so he thought.

"Does she know, Jaime? How many times you had me to your place, cooked for me? How many nights did I listen to you crying about Cersei? Comforting you?" Brienne was closer now to him than ever, and Jaime saw something in her eyes that stunned him - feelings that went deeper than friendship.

Jaime looked dumbfounded. Did Brienne mean to imply that Jaime led her on? That he had feelings for her when he had her to his loft? He knew from his perspective he'd never thought of her as anything but his friend.

Before Jaime could say anything, Brienne continued, twisting the narrative of their friendship, and leaving Jaime reeling.

"Have you ever asked him how many women he's had in his loft, Sansa?" Before Jaime could answer, Brienne did. "None. Just me. You claim to know him, to love him. Tell me, what does it mean when Jaime Lannister only allows one woman to see where he lives? To see beyond the carefully cultivated image."

Jaime wanted to be sick. He couldn't even look at Sansa, or his father or his children, loath to see their reactions to having all of his dirty laundry aired so publicly. He had thought that he and Brienne were friends, hanging out and both recovering from heartbreak. Jaime remembered belatedly what Margaery had said about Renly.

"We were friends, Brienne, that is all. And really, who are you to cast any stones?" Jaime sneered, lashing out and needing to clear the air once and for all.

"What do you mean?"

"Renly," Jaime spat, taking a step closer to her and saw a wary look come into Brienne's eyes. "I thought that the man you loved dumped you and broke your heart. But it turns out, you threatened him, didn't you Brienne?"

Brienne shook her head. "You don't know what you are talking about."

"Oh, I think I have some idea. Funny, when Brienne doesn't get her way, the lengths she will go to. Did you or did you not threaten to tell Renly's brothers that he was gay when he refused your advances?"

Brienne's lips clamped shut, and she looked ready to murder Jaime. "You have no idea what you
are talking about. I was there for him, just like I was there for you and you both betrayed me. You don't know what it means to be a friend, Jaime. You are just like Cersei."

Sansa was vibrating with fury, having had to stand here and listen to this woman spew her hatred and vitriol all over Jaime for the past ten minutes. She was done, and so was Brienne.

Sansa stepped up, grabbing Jaime's hand and linking them together.

"Friends help each other, Brienne, not use one another. If Jaime was going through a difficult time, you should have been there for him. No matter what you felt for him, or the choices he was making."

Sansa would never say she loved that Jaime had slept around so much in the years after his divorce, but given what he'd been through, she understood how much pain he'd been in and how he'd been trying to find anything to numb it.

Brienne scoffed and shook her head. "Don't you even care how many women he fucked? Don't you have some sense of self-respect? What type of woman wants to be with a man that has had headline after headline was written about him?"

Sansa let out a shocked gasp, stunned that Brienne could be so cruel when she knew what Jaime had been going through. She squeezed his hand, grateful when he held on tighter. Nothing Brienne was saying here today would make Sansa change her mind about Jaime and her feelings for him.

Brienne didn't even notice Jaime cringe, nor the wide-eyed stares of his children behind him.

But Tywin did. Tywin saw that Jaime was reeling from the shame of his past being so cavalierly thrown in his face, and Sansa was ghost white.

"Enough!" the Great Lion roared, pulling out his phone. "You will leave this property immediately. You will not contact my son, his children, his friends or Sansa again. We will be in contact with our lawyers to report you, Brienne. And make no mistake, I will destroy you."

Brienne snorted. "You don't scare me," she snarled at Tywin. "I know Jaime. I know him better than any of you. He's not so golden when you peel back the ugly layers." Brienne went to turn when Sansa's voice stopped her.

"I don't care."

"What?" Brienne said, turning back, eyes confused.

Sansa shrugged, stepping away from Jaime, her voice and confidence growing. Because she knew her truth, and Jaime's truth, and she knew what between them was real and good and she wouldn't let this woman destroy him or her, or them.

"I don't care what Jaime did in those years after he divorced Cersei. That is between him and his conscience. I don't care. I don't care how many women he slept with. That's none of my business. He survived. He survived both her and you. Two women who claimed to love him, but instead just used him, hurt him, and belittled him. So I don't care, Brienne. That is his past, and it isn't who Jaime is. Not deep down; not who he is today."

Sansa glanced back at Jaime, who was standing there, looking at her with such love, that she smiled. Sansa turned back to Brienne.

"Jaime is a good man. He loves deeply and cares for those in his family. He has good and true
my cousin. He's a good man, Brienne. Is he perfect? No. But no one is. And he works hard to be
better every single day. And I'm going to be by his side. Together through it all."

Everyone was just standing there looking at Sansa and Brienne, stunned by Sansa's outburst. She
stepped closer to the big woman.

"I think I fell in love with Jaime the moment he stepped out of Robb's truck, which is utterly
ridiculous, because who falls in love at first sight?" Sansa laughed and the sound was cathartic
after so much ugliness as it washed over everyone standing there. She looked back at Jaime again,
who hadn't lost his slightly stunned expression and winked at him.

"But I'm pretty sure I did. I mean, he was the most handsome man I'd ever seen. But that wasn't all
it was. He was kind and funny and caring. And I think, maybe, Jaime did as well. Fall in love at
first sight with me that is."

"Bet your ass I did, kitten," Jaime called, and Sansa grinned.

When she turned back to Brienne, she had a look of compassion on her face.

"Nothing we did was to hurt you, Brienne. We were just two people who finally found our way to
one another – two broken people who were searching for love, or not searching and it found us. So
it doesn't matter what his past is. Jaime has never hidden it from me, never made any excuses for
it, and I'll never hold it against him. That's not what true love is."

Jaime was utterly blown away by Sansa and how much she loved him.

"You trust him? Jaime fucking Lannister?" Brienne said, scoffing at Sansa as if she were
particularly slow. Or an idiot. Sansa was neither. She just knew Jaime, and he's never hurt her.

Sansa nodded immediately. "I do. I'll always trust Jaime."

Jaime sucked in a deep breath, in awe of this woman. His woman.

Brienne shook her head. "Then, you deserve him, and whatever comes from that blind trust."
Brienne turned again, trying to leave.

"Tell me, is it because he didn't love you back, or because he loves me, that you have so much
hatred for the two of us?" Sansa said, and even Tywin's jaw dropped at the pure boldness of Sansa
Stark.

Brienne went white and then turned an ugly shade of purple. "I don't love Jaime Lannister. He is
not worthy of such feelings."

Sansa threw her head back and laughed. "You're a terrible liar, Brienne. But don't worry, I'll love
him enough for ten of you."

With that last insult, Brienne opened her car door, slammed it and gunned the engine, before
speeding away. Sansa finally let her shoulders relax, and huffed out a breath, before Jaime's arms
were around her, his hands carding through her hair and his lips on hers.

"Sansa, fuck, baby. Jesus Christ, woman, you are something else," Jaime said, shaking his head in
awe at her. Sansa was just shaking, not quite sure what came over her, only that she couldn't stand
to see Brienne tear Jaime down like that for one more moment.
"I have no idea what came over me," Sansa said, still in awe of herself. Then she looked in Jaime's eyes and saw the war between pride and guilt. "Don't you dare, Jaime. Don't apologize for your past or how you survived it. You are NOT that man." Her voice was low and fierce and demanding, and Jaime grinned at her, shaking his head in wonder.

Both Jaime and Sansa were so caught up in each other that they missed the reaction of Tommen and Myrcella.

Myrcella had started to shake the moment Brienne had raised her voice to Jaime. Thankfully, Rickon had been there, and he'd pulled her into a tight hug, stroking her back and telling her that Stark's took care of their family. When it was over, Cella buried her face in Rickon's chest and murmured, "My mom used to yell at my Dad all the time like that. And I know he took so much of it so that she wouldn't escalate it towards us. It just brings back awful memories."

"Shhhh, Cella. I have you and you are safe. And your Dad isn't that guy anymore. He stood up to Brienne and then Sansa was there as well."

Cella raised her eyes to Rickon's. "She was amazing."

Rickon grinned. "She's a mama wolf when someone is threatening someone she loves. You should have seen her when these two older boys were bullying me in high school. I thought she might tear them apart."

Rickon and Cella turned to see Jaime holding Sansa close, kissing her and whispering into her ear. "I'm so glad my Dad has her. And you guys. All of you guys."

"You guys have us as well, Cella," Rickon told her and watched as her eyes widened with that realization. "When you're family, you're family," Rickon said, shrugging. "Not that you and I are family..." he started to say, making Cella laugh before she kissed him.

"Myrcella, I can see you," Jaime suddenly called, making Myrcella giggle again, dissipating the last of the tension from the Brienne conflict.

Tommen had gone perfectly still, and Tywin had moved closer to him once he'd seen that Sansa had things under control. Once it was over, Tywin pulled him aside.

"Are you alright?" he asked his grandson, who finally nodded and took a shuddering breath.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm ok," Tom said, eyes still a bit unfocused. "Just brings back memories; that's all."

Tywin silently cursed Cersei. Tommen had only been fourteen when his parents divorced, and Tywin knew the boy had borne the brunt of the disintegration of their marriage. He had to have been around for more than one fight like the one that had just happened.

"Sansa is not like that, Tommen," Tywin said quietly to his son.

Tommen gave a shaky smile. "No, she isn't. She couldn't be less like Mother if she tried. Thank god." Tywin laid a hand on his grandson’s back.

“What she said...” Tywin started to say and Tommen gave his grandfather another smile.

“Trust me, that is tame compared to how Mom went on about Dad,” Tommen said and Tywin all but snarled in fury. He should have intervened long ago when Cersei had been acting up. For too long he’d allowed Jaime to do things his way, and only now, could Tywin see how much damage had been done to this family. Tywin was never more grateful for Sansa and her generous heart and
loving family than he was today. Tommen coming North would only be beneficial for him.

A rueful cough alerted Tywin to the fact that Jaime and Sansa had come back to stand before them. Jaime looked embarrassed and saddened at what just happened, although thankfully he was still holding Sansa’s hands.

“I’m sorry for all that,” Jaime started to say, not able to finish before Myrcella flung herself into her father’s arms.

“Daddy, stop,” she said, calling him by a name she hadn’t used in years. “She’s a vile woman and we all know how much you were hurting after the divorce. Just don’t be a manwhore ever again,” Cella whispered into his ear and heard Jaime’s rumbly laughter, which meant she’d done her part to make him smile. “I love you Dad,” Myrcella said and Jaime saw the truth in her eyes. “Now, I know how much you did to protect us from Mother and I will never be able to thank you enough.”

Jaime had tears in his eyes as he cupped her face. “I love you as well, Cella. So much.”

“Good,” she said, a cheeky smile on her face. “Because I want to introduce you to my new boyfriend. Rickon Stark.”

Jaime groaned and shook his head, but all he said was separate bedrooms, and both of them looked appropriately chastised that Jaime figured there was a 50/50 chance they listened to him.

“Tom, I’m sorry about that,” Jaime said when his son stepped up.

“Dad, what Cella said was true. I know what you did to protect us from Mom. And yeah, after the divorce sucked for a few years, but I have a feeling things are going to be better from now on,” Tommen said and grinned when Jaime pulled him in for a rough hug.

“Well that was unexpectedly shitty,” Sansa said brightly, making everyone laugh. “Who wants to go to the Ranch? I’m sure Ned is dying to see everyone and hey, baby animals!” she said with false cheer, breaking the last of the tension.

“Thirty minutes,” Jaime called when Rickon and Cella swore they had to change and Tommen wanted to check the kittens. Even Tywin muttered something about taking care of business, leaving Sansa and Jaime standing alone on the porch to their home.

Jaime tugged Sansa closer. “Never a dull moment with me, kitten,” he said, still feeling awful about the scene that Brienne had created and all the shit she aired in front of his family.

Sansa laughed softly, tucking her head against Jaime’s neck and wrapping her arms around him. “Nope. Never a dull moment with you.”

They were quiet for a time, both content with one another, until Jaime titled his head, pressing a kiss to her forehead.

“Love you, Sansa,” he said, voice thick and full of emotion. Both of them knew that they’d discuss this later, privately, when they were alone in their bedroom. But for now, the declaration of love was enough. Sansa tilted her head for a kiss, just as she heard the front door open.

“Love you too, Jaime. Always and forever,” and Sansa saw her words chased the last of the guilt from Jaime’s eyes, as they bore into hers.

“Always and forever kitten. You have my word.”
Chapter 29

Chapter Summary

Rickon and Cella bond, a hockey game and Jaime hears from his past

Chapter Notes

A couple things to note:

First, thank you for the amazing feedback. I'm quite excited to continue this story into Part 2. My goal is to move quickly now with the relationships mostly established and get to some fun plot points and to get Jaime and Sansa out of the North for a bit of time.

Second. I think that this story gets the reputation of being fluffy, but I'm dealing with a woman that abused her children and husband and I think that the fallout and repercussions from that are fairly big and challenging and life-altering. This story is much less on the 'big dramatic moments,' and much more about what such behaviour does to those caught up in it.

Third- It really helped to hear that people like secondary relationships as well. Sometimes I'm not sure if people just want the main pairing or the others so feedback helps me as a writer.

Hope you enjoy this!

T

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Rickon could practically feel the nerves vibrating off of Myrcella as Jaime drove them over to the Ranch.

He definitely got where she was coming from. They'd done their entire relationship, if what you could call something that was only a few hours old a relationship, backwards.

First, Rickon had met Jaime, Cella's Dad.

It didn't make things easier for Rickon, to know that Jaime and Sansa were in love and building a life together and that if something did go sideways between him and Cella, they'd have to see each other on holidays and family events in the future. Rickon knew how long Sansa had waited to find 'the one' and there were no doubts that was Jaime Lannister. So the last thing that Rickon wanted to do was mess anything up for the sister he loved best of all.

But Ric was young enough to brush that worry off his shoulders and just see the possibilities. The possibility that Myrcella Lannister had agreed to date him and was currently sitting beside him as
they made their way to his childhood home. A woman he’d admired for the past year, and now she was his.

Rickon could never express to Sansa and Robb just how much he appreciated how they’d held their family together when their parents had died several years ago. The idea of not calling Winterfell Ranch home was such a foreign concept to Rickon and one that made his stomach ache if he thought about it too long, that he rarely did.

This place was just always here, and now that Robb was married and had kids of his own, Rickon knew it would stay in the Stark family for another generation. No matter where Ric went, where hockey took him, this place would always be home and Rickon knew how lucky he was to be able to say that.

Getting through his rookie season last year had been brutal. Ric had been homesick way more than he’d told either Sansa or Robb, despite his sisters flying in often to watch his games, or Jon and Robb making sure they were at every home game played in Wintertown. It still hurt to be away from his family, even though he was chasing his dream.

The Stark siblings (and yes, Rickon counted Jon as a brother) were close. Closer than close. They were everything to one another, and just because everyone had paired up, married and started producing little Starks didn't mean those bonds were any less tight. His family was everything to Rickon, and it had grounded him in a way that others in his position were not.

It was why he could sit here and hold Myrcella's hand, smile at her, and know he'd do anything in his power to make her happy. He'd be loyal and kind to her, and he'd never cheat on her or make her feel any sort of insecurity when it came to the female fans that chased hockey players. She had nothing to worry about. Rickon Stark had been raised better than that and when he committed to something, he committed all the way.

"They won't bite, babe," Ric said, giving her a grin, trying to calm her down.

They were in the very back of the black Range Rover that Jaime drove. Ric knew that Ned thought Jaime was like Batman, and it was a pretty sweet ride. Rickon had been trying to decide what to get in White Harbour now that he was in the second year of his contract and not making a rookie wage anymore. Perhaps he'd ask Jaime. The man certainly seemed to know his vehicles.

"I know, Ric. It's just, your whole family will be there," Cella said as if that explained her nerves.

"So?" He was frowning a bit.

His family was awesome. Loud, noisy and totally in everyone's business, but awesome. They would stick by you through anything and always had your back.

Cella sighed and brushed back a lock of blond hair and Ric was momentarily distracted. Rickon loved her hair.

"My family isn't quite as large as yours, and when we did have family dinners, it was always a very formal affair," she said quietly, lost in her memories.

Myrcella got a worried look on her face thinking about Christmas dinners where her mother had dressed them up to the nines, employing staff to decorate their large home in King's Landing and then having to sit through eight or ten courses of food. Food which her father had not been allowed to prepare, as their mother deemed it 'beneath' their station to have him cook for them. The conversations had been pointed and cutting, and by the end, everyone had either been seething in
rage or drunk.

Myrcella dearly hoped that Sansa was planning on inviting them all up for Christmas because Cella could already see her Dad cooking a huge dinner and so much happiness in the farmhouse. And there would be snow, for sure. Myrcella had never had a snowy Christmas.

"Well, if any of the nosy buggers bothers you, just tell me, and I'll kick their ass," Rickon said.

Sansa turned then and arched an eyebrow at him.

"Oh, you think so, Ricrock," she said, using his nickname.

Rickon grinned. "Hell yeah, Sansa. I'm as big as I've ever been, I have several inches on Jon and Robb, and you should see my arms these days."

Sansa snorted. "You haven't met Drogo," was all she said, making Ric's eyes narrow.

"Is it true Dany is staying in the North?" Myrcella asked, and Sansa nodded and then told Tommen and her what Tywin had done for her, setting up the account with money for the past decade.

"Oh my god, Grandpa, that's amazing," Cella cried, as Tywin blushed and tried to brush it off.

"It was hers by rights," was all he said, mumbling, even as Jaime grinned at him.

"God, if you keep hanging around all these grandkids, you're going to ruin your reputation as the meanest man in Westeros," Jaime said, gently teasing his father.

Tywin said nothing, but Jaime swore a look of contentment came into his eyes that Jaime rarely had, if ever seen. There were no doubts as to how much Tywin Lannister loved the North.

When they pulled up to the Ranch, Jaime saw immediately that they were the last to arrive.

He, too, had thought back to the awful family dinners Cersei had subjected them also and hoped this wasn't too much for his children.

They had to still be raw from the Brienne confrontation, even though Elia assured Jaime, Tywin and Sansa that Brienne had all but destroyed any chance of staying on at the Network with her display outside the farmhouse. Even as they spoke, Elia was filing paperwork for a restraining order and told Jaime he might want to think about actually suing her for slander.

It had changed the mood of the evening, but now that they were here, Jaime was determined to push those thoughts from his head and enjoy himself.

"Wow, this is amazing," Myrcella said and saw how Sansa and Rickon beamed. It was clear that this was the heart of the Stark family, and she was invited in. Not just invited but welcomed by this family. Cella squeezed Rickon's hand tighter.

As they exited the vehicle, two little boys came running down from the porch.

"Papa Lion!" they cried, and Tywin smirked, still the favourite.

"I'll never get used to it," Tommen said, shaking his head at Ned and Rocco, who were now in his grandfather's arms, telling them all about the rest of their day.

"It's wild, right?" Jaime said, standing beside his son, watching Tywin put the boys down.
"Uncle Rickon, why are you holding Cella's hand?" Ned asked, as frown on his face.

"Because I like her, Ned," Rickon replied.

"Like Daddy likes Mama?"

Jaime coughed and sputtered as Sansa laughed.

Rickon grinned.

"Yeah, buddy. Like Daddy likes Mama."

That was enough to satisfy Ned, who grabbed Cella's other hand and then looked at Tommen. "Come on, let's go visit the chickens," he said, grinning at them.

Tywin backed away and hurried into the house, wanting nothing to do with those beasts, while Sansa and Jaime laughed, trailing after Rocco, Ned, Ric, Cella and Tommen.

Jaime held Sansa's hand as they watched them all duck into the chicken coop, delighted cries coming from within as Ned gave his signature lesson on collecting eggs.

"It's good to see them happy," Jaime said after a time, hearing Tommen bug Cella that he was better at this than her.

"It is." Sansa paused. "Were family dinners really that awful?"

Jaime snorted and gave Sansa a look, and then a brief, unpleasant description of them, leaving her shaking her head. Who the hell did that to their family? And especially a family-like Jaime's? Sansa thought, hoping she never met Cersei Lannister. Jaime would have to hold her back from hurting the woman for all the damage she did to these people that Sansa loved.

When the eggs had been collected, the two little boys hurried everyone over to the barns, eager to show them their surprises from their fathers, who were, unsurprisingly, standing there waiting for them.

"Lion!" Drogo called, seeing Jaime. The man was a monster and quickly picked Jaime up, hugging him tightly. Even Rickon’s eyes had widened at the sheer size of Drogo.

When Jaime was back down on the ground, Drogo laid a large hand on Jaime's shoulder.

"Thank you for giving my wife part of her family back. What you did, helping her and Elia mend fences is beyond words, Jaime."

Jaime nodded, too choked up. Drogo never failed to surprise him. The man was wholly dedicated to Dany and her happiness and surprisingly insightful and gentle when called for.

"It was long overdue," was all Jaime said.

Robb, who had long ago figured out that Jaime Lannister was a good man despite some bad decisions, just nodded at him. "Ready to show them what your surprises are?" he asked the boys.

Both boys were bouncing with excitement, as Tywin approached, having been told by Jeyne that he didn't want to miss this.

When Robb and Drogo opened the doors to the barn, Sansa saw immediately that there were two new horses in the stalls in the middle of the barn. There weren't Robb's horses, not the highly
training workhorses that were critical for the ranch's success. No, these were two horses for two little boys who had hearts in their eyes just looking at them.

"A horse, Papa Lion! That's my surprise!" Ned cried excitedly, tugging Tywin deeper into the barn. "Uncle Drogo says that where he is from kids my age learned to ride. Even younger sometimes. So Daddy finally agreed to let him teach us."

Ned's horse was a beautiful bay with a black man who leaned down to softly bump his nose against the little boy's head, who giggled and stroked him.

Rocco's was all black, matching the beast of a horse that Drogo had tamed, but gentle and sweet, and if possible, just a bit smaller than Ned's. Sansa knew it was a mare, and Roc was looking at her like she was his entire world.

Sansa sniffed, feeling the tears prick her eyes. She loved that Robb and Drogo had bonded so quickly, and she could see just how much this man from across the sea would add to their ranch. Both boys asked to be put on top, and Robb and Drogo obliged, sitting them there without saddles.

"No, saddles?" Jaime commented, interested in the technique the Dothraki man would use.

Drogo shook his head. "They do not need them at first when they are learning. This is the best way for them to bond with their horse, to get a feel for them, to learn to become one."

Everyone knew that the Dothraki were the best riders in the world, legendary in their mastery of horses, and no one dared argue with the huge, tattooed man that was the authority on such things.

"Boys, I am quite proud of you," Tywin said, earning huge smiles from both of them. "I suppose now you'll be busy cleaning not only cat little but horse manure."

Robb threw his head back and laughed, and clapped Tywin on the back, as both boys' scowled at that thought.

"I told you I'm not a complete asshole," Tywin said, sotto voice to Robb.

"Oh, you're an asshole. You're just my kind of an asshole," Robb chortled back as Sansa and Jaime shook their heads at the two of them.

Of course, convincing Roc and Ned to dismount to come in for supper was difficult, but finally with promises they'd see their horses again soon, they were all headed into the house.

Myrcella was clinging to Rickon, knowing that his sister and his cousin and his brother were all inside.

"Babe, they'll love you," Rickon said, trying to reassure her.

When they stepped inside, Myrcella saw another man so handsome he made her jaw drop, holding a baby that he was singing to. The picture was one of utter contentment on the man’s handsome face.

"Rickon, welcome home!" the man said, his whole face lighting up in joy when he spotted Rickon.

"Jon, good to be here," Ric said, hugging his cousin before tugging Cella forward. "Jon, please meet Myrcella Lannister, Jaime's daughter and my girlfriend. Cella, this is my cousin Jon."

Much to Ric's relief, Jon said nothing bad, just smiled at her and welcomed her, then introduced
Cella to his daughter Ella.

"My wife Val is the little blond one in the kitchen. Pop in a say hi, Ric. You know she misses mothering you when you're away."

Ric grinned and pulled Cella deeper into the vast house, through a hallway and then into a great room that had a kitchen, the biggest dining room table that Myrcella had ever seen and a massive stone fireplace, along with enough couches and furniture to seat at least thirty people. Along one side, the room had floor to ceiling windows, so the spectacular view of the ranch and the mountains was the landscape to which these people lived.

Cella had never seen anything so beautiful, and she cried out in joy as she stood in the room.

"It's fantastic, isn't it," a pretty dark-haired woman said, coming up to them. She pulled Ric in for a hug, laughing as he swung her around.

"Jeyne, this is Cella, Cella, Jeyne, Robb's wife."

Cella blushed when she thought about how she'd been ogling this woman's husband just a few hours ago.

"Myrcella, welcome to our home," Jeyne said and hugged her tight. "Ric looks so happy!" she whispered into her ear, making Myrcella feel instantly welcome.

Next in line was Val, Jon's wife, who also hugged her and told her she was beautiful.

There were still more people. The dark-haired woman who was arguing with her brothers turned out to be Ric's other sister Arya. Arya took one look at her and snorted.

"Gods, you're a pretty one," she all but snapped, and Rickon went ramrod straight.

"Watch it, Arry," he said, a growl in his voice and a warning note there as well. Rickon laid a protective hand on Cella’s back. He wasn’t going to put up with any of Arya’s shit today.

Arya rubbed at her eyes and sighed. "Sorry. I'm in a foul mood. Gendry was supposed to be here, but some hunters called him away last minute, and he couldn't say no. I've just missed him this week, and I'm a bitch."

Myrcella laughed and then held out her hand. "I like it honestly. Hi. I'm Myrcella, and your family scares the shit out of me."

Arya laughed and gave her a second glance, seeing the steel in her eyes and how she moved closer to her baby brother. Lord knew the woman wasn't after him for his money. She was a fucking Lannister for god sakes. So that meant she must actually like Ric. Arya could make an effort for someone who cared for her family.

"Hi, I'm Arya. I'm pregnant and horny, and my husband has been gone for a week," Arya said, making Rickon curse and Cella laugh.

"Fair enough. If he looks like any of these other men, I don't blame you at all."

Arya's eye lit, and she laughed. "I like you, Myrcella Lannister."

When they hugged, Myrcella leaned down and whispered, "He's only my second boyfriend, and I promise I won't hurt him." That earned her a tighter hug from Arya and Rickon's second sister's
everlasting devotion.

When Dany suddenly popped up beside them, Myrcella laughed happily, hugging her Dad's friend. Cella was dragged away from Rickon, scooped up by the women in the house, a glass of wine thrust in her hand, and a baby handed to her. She watched as they puttered and stirred and gossiped, blushing only slightly when a few of them described how happy they were to have their husbands home. In detail. Myrcella loved it.

"Not like Sansa had to deal with that. Jaime's been home all week. I bet they’ve been going at it like rabbits," Dany griped and then covered her mouth and looked awkwardly at Myrcella.

Myrcella laughed. "Please. As if I can't tell that Sansa and my Dad are mad for one another."

Sansa's shoulder bumped Cella. "Thanks for not making it weird."

"Just no details, ok," Cella said, her smile huge.

"You as well," Sansa shot back and laughed when Cella blushed but agreed. It was a bit weird, but somehow, Cella knew they’d navigate this new relationship without too many major bumps.

Then they all listened as Arya was once again moaning about the lack of her husband's presence, and Val said that she and Jon were finally able to resume having sex next week once the baby came. At the same time, Jeyne just muttered it was a good thing Robb was home because being knocked up made her horny as hell.

“That man better not complain he’s too tired from being in the high country, because let me tell you ladies, I have plans for him. Big, big plans,” Jeyne said, shooting a heated look to her husband who just grinned.

“Any time babe. I’m good to go,” Robb called back and Jeyne snorted.

Myrcella had never been around such loving, kind and supportive women, who were so open with their love lives, and she lost herself in their chatter and their evident bond with one another. Dany and Sansa giggled the most, since they were the only other two able to drink, and every so often shot heated glances the men that had a hockey game on in the great room.

Myrcella noticed that her Dad, while engaged with the others, seldom took his eyes off Sansa, and Sansa kept looking at him. They were ridiculously cute and fooling no one, Cella thought, with just how much they loved one another.

Little Ned and Rocco had both curled up on Tywin, and Myrcella kept sneaking looks at her grandfather, seeing how he talked quietly to the boys. She loved seeing this different side of him and knew her family was stronger than ever before. Rickon, bless him, kept wandering back into the kitchen, sneaking appetizers that Jeyne and Val had brought to the men in a steady stream, before the others got ahold of them.

Of course, Jon sat there holding his daughter until she got fussy and then came and found his wife, kissing her. "Your daughter is hungry, love," he said, pinching Val's butt and earning himself a heated glance.

Cella loved how open and caring these men were, not only with their wives but their children. They didn’t seem to care at all who knew how much they loved their women. It was refreshing.

Ned and Roc had moved onto to Jaime and Tommen, peppering them with questions about the
kittens, and Cella swore her heart melted seeing her Dad with them. She desperately hoped that he
was planning on babies with Sansa because he deserved a second chance and more children.

Cella watched as the women fawned over Ric, asking if he was eating properly, sleeping well, and
how he was doing being away from home. It was more than evident that Rickon loved the
attention and spent nearly as much time with the women as the men. It took a while for Cella to
realize that they were all like surrogate mothers for him, although he was closest to Sansa. She
loved it that he was so supported.

At one point, Jeyne handed Cella little Ben, who babbled happily to her and told Cella that Ric
hadn't brought a girl home since high school. That earned a round of snickers from the others, but
secretly, Cella was pleased. *It had to mean something that she was here, in his family’s home,
right?*

When Bran and Jojen finally walked into the house, Myrcella learned that everyone was here, and
suddenly a tremendous amount of lasagna, salad and garlic bread appeared.

Bran immediately found Tommen, and something clicked for Cella as she watched her younger
brother open up to Bran Stark. *It was more than just being chefs,* Cella realized suddenly.

She thought that Tommen might be gay, and it seemed that he felt comfortable with Bran and Jojen
in a way she had rarely seen. If Tommen was gay, Cella hoped more than ever that he came North
to be with their Dad and Sansa. No one seemed to bat an eye with Jojen kissed Bran, nor when the
two of them sat side by side on the love seat, holding hands. It was clear that this was a home that
accepted love in any and all forms.

"Did you know?" came Sansa's quiet voice, looking at Bran and Jo take Tommen under their wing.
The compassion in Sansa’s eyes almost brought Cella to her knees.

"No. I didn't. Mother will flip if he ever comes out," Cella all but shivered and watched as Sansa’s
eyes fired, ready to defend Tommen. Since Cella had seen first-hand how Sansa defended those
she cared about, Cella knew that if anything did happen with Tom, Sansa would protect him like he
was her own.

It was at that moment that Myrcella Lannister fell entirely in love with her Dad's girlfriend. She
knew that Sansa would protect Tommen from the worst of their mother's rage, and the tears flowed
down her face. Sansa drew Cella in for a hug.

"We'll protect him, Cella. All of us. You are both family now, and Stark's protect family."

Jaime was suddenly there and had two weepy women in his arms. When they explained their
suspicions, both women were pleased to see Jaime look thoughtful and happy for Tommen, instead
of angry.

"Whatever makes Tom happy, well, that's all I care about," Jaime said and pressed a kiss to Sansa's
lips. His only concern was Cersei and the thought of Tommen being alone in King’s Landing
should she find out, was enough to turn Jaime's stomach. No matter what, Tommen needed to be in
the North, with him and Sansa.

When dinner was finally served, Myrcella found herself seated between Ned and Rickon.

"Aunty Cella, can you help me with my lasagna and cutting the noodles. Daddy says I can't use a
knife," Ned said, disappointment clear in his voice.

Myrcella startled a bit at the Aunty part, but everyone else took it in stride, and she happily cut his
noodles for him.

"You're very pretty," he told her shyly, batting his eyes at her. "You're like that princess from the movie Tangled. I haven't made Papa Lion watch that one yet."

Myrcella happily listened as Ned explained the movie, having found a captive audience. Later, after dinner had been cleared, pies of every sort were put on the table, and Myrcella watched as Ric packed away the food.

"Gods, the coach is going to kill me tomorrow," he said, groaning and leaning back in his chair.

Myrcella shook her head. "It's your fault. I never knew one person could eat so much," she told him, giving him a look.

He swooped in and kissed her, earning wolf whistles and catcalls from the others there, but Myrcella didn't mind. She loved this family – all of them and their loud, noisy, loving ways.

"What's the plan for tomorrow, Ric?" Robb asked, and everyone quieted.

"Skating only practice in the morning, then a nap. Need to be back at the rink by 5 pm for warm-ups and then puck drop at 7 pm. You all will be there, right?" Rickon asked, suddenly looking down the table towards his oldest brother.

"Of course, we'll all be there," Sansa said. "And if you want, one of us can run you into practice tomorrow, and you can come back and sleep at the farmhouse in the afternoon."

Years of hockey had made Sansa wise to what Ric needed on game day.

"Thanks, San. Cella, if you want to come and watch practice tomorrow, I can introduce you to the team," Rickon said, and she nodded eagerly.

"I'd love that."

Sansa and Robb exchanged a knowing look. Not only had Rickon introduced Cella to his family, but he was also now officially making her a WAG for the team (wife and girlfriend). In the hockey world, that was a big deal, and Robb was proud of his baby brother and how mature he was acting.

That night, back at the farmhouse, Myrcella hugged Sansa hard. "Your family is amazing, Sansa. Thank you for having us."

Sansa hugged her back. "Try to not sneak into Ric's room tonight. Give your Dad a little bit of denial."

Myrcella laughed. "I'm not ready for that yet, Sansa."

Sansa nodded, a bit relieved and thankful at least one of them their head on straight.

Later still, when Sansa curled up in Jaime's arms, after being very quiet through the three orgasms he seemed determined for her to have, she pressed a kiss to his chest as he played with her hair. They rarely slept apart, curling around one another as if being parted even in sleep was too much for them.

"Do you want to discuss it tonight?" Sansa asked, giving Jaime the lead on this thing with Brienne.

"Not really. I need you to know I never did anything to lead her on," Jaime said, and Sansa nodded.
"I know."

They were quiet for a time.

"I wish I could take back how I acted after the divorce. I never want that to reflect badly on you, Sansa," Jaime said, voice taut and tight with shame and regret.

She titled her head. "I know, Jaime. But there isn't anything you can do to change that, and you're not that guy. I don't think you were ever really that guy; you were just hurting so much."

"Still, I have my regrets," he told her softly.

"I know, babe."

"I love you, Sansa."

Sansa smiled. It always came back to their love for one another.

"I love you too, Jaime."

The next morning Rickon eagerly ate the special breakfast that Jaime prepared for the game day, according to the team nutritionist.

Jaime had to admit that watching Rickon so openly welcome Cella into his family's home last evening had done a lot to assuage the trepidation he felt that Myrcella was dating a hockey player. It was clear for anyone to see just how much Rickon loved his family and that they were his touchstone.

Then, Rickon asked Jaime's opinion about vehicles and the two of them got into an animated discussion.

"I want something safe, but slick, you know?" Ric said, eyes warming when Cella walked into the kitchen and grabbed a cup of coffee.

There was no contest, Jaime knew then. The young man before him was utterly smitten with his daughter and even now was talking to Jaime about safe vehicles, so when she came to visit, he wouldn't be putting her in any danger. Sansa had done a hell of a job raising her youngest brother to be a stand-up guy and Jaime couldn't stand in the way of them and their burgeoning relationship.

"Take the black Rover and see if you like it," Jaime said, tossing Ric the keys, loving how his eyes widened.

"Are you serious?" he asked, swallowing hard, while Cella tried to hide a smile. She knew this meant her Dad had accepted Rickon as her boyfriend.

"I am. No better way to test a vehicle than to drive it for a bit," Jaime said.

"Holy shi… crap," Rickon said, eyes wide. He stood and took the keys and then held his hand out to Jaime. "I promise I'll keep her safe," and both men knew he wasn't talking about Jaime's stupid expensive SUV.

"I know, Rickon. You're a good man," Jaime said and then laughed as he dashed out of the kitchen, needing to get ready for practice.
Myrcella pressed a kiss to Jaime's cheek. "Thanks, Daddy," she said, resting her head on his shoulder as Jaime hugged her closer.

"Just have fun together, Cella. Move slowly. If it's meant to be, it won't matter how long things take to develop," Jaime told her. It was more than just a physical relationship that worried Jaime. It was things like moving in together, saying I love you, and then marriage. Jaime had been burned so bad when he'd been Rickon's age, that he wanted to spare them that heartache.

"We will, Dad."

Jaime sighed, knowing she was growing up and all he could do was pray she made the correct decisions and learned from him.

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"Nervous?" Ric asked Cella as they drove into Wintertown.

"A little," she said, picking at a thread on her sweater. Rickon grabbed her hand and kissing the back of it.

"There is nothing to worry about, babe," he said, grinning at her. "I mean, some of the guys are dicks, but I'll keep you away from them."

When they got to the rink, Rickon took Cella's hand as they made their way inside the arena. Most people never saw anything more than the stands and the concession levels, and so Ric knew that she was enjoying herself as they made their way down to the change rooms in the basement.

"We're the visitors here, so our chageroom is shit," he said by way of explanation. "But when you come to White Harbour, I'll show you are arena. It's brand new, and it's amazing," he continued.

Thankfully, just outside the dressing room, Ric spotted Todd and Brad Tallhart, two twins from the North who played on his team. They were a couple of years older than Ric but had married young, and their wives were two of the nicest women that Rickon had ever met.

"Come on, babe; I'll introduce you to Kara and Findley, they're married to the Tallhart twins and are super nice."

Myrcella smiled, but it was a bit pinched, worried about what the reception to her might be. She really shouldn't have, because within minutes the two women, one from the North and one from the Vale had welcomed her openly, asking all sorts of questions about her and Rickon and her job back down in King's Landing. They took Myrcella up to ice level, where they sat with the other WAGs and watched practice, and Myrcella saw immediately how fast Rickon was.

"He's super good," Kara said, her dark her curling prettily around her face.

"I can see that," Cella said, unable to take her eyes off of Rickon as he skated around the ice.

Both women were more interested in watching Myrcella than their husbands, and by the time practice was over, they knew that Rickon had found someone special.

As Myrcella waited for Ric after practice, she talked to some of the other wives. A few of the older ones had kids with their husbands, but they reminded Myrcella so much of Jeyne and Val that she instantly felt at ease. They were friendly, until a group of giggling women, all wearing ridiculous heels and tight jeans came stumbling down the hallway.
"How the hell did they get in here?" an older woman named Becca snarled. Her husband was captain of the team, and she had just been telling Myrcella the ins and outs of being a hockey WAG.

"Who are they?"

"Bunnies," another one said with disgust in her tone.

Myrcella knew then that these were the women that tried to hook a hockey player as they saw them as an easy meal ticket. She moved closer to Kara and Findley, who was also glaring at the group of women.

When the team finally emerged, Rickon was one of the first out. Before Cella could even get to him, one of the bolder bunnies was there, big fake boobs on full display as she simpered and preened for him, touching his arm.

Rickon looked at her with barely concealed disgust before he brushed past her.

"Sorry, my girlfriend is waiting for me," he said, sending a whole lot of the bunnies into snarls of anger. No one knew that Rickon Stark was off the market. Cella couldn't help but grin.

"Sorry, ladies, he's mine," she said and then tugged Rickon closer, inhaling his clean soap scent. She leaned up and wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him down for a kiss. Rickon couldn't help himself as he cupped her ass and drew her even closer.

"Mine," she said when he finally pulled back. "I don't share."

Rickon was grinning.

"All yours, babe. And I don't share either."

Then Rickon grasped her hand, and without a backward glance, walked them out of the rink. The coach had been adamant he nap this afternoon, but he'd never said anything about doing it alone.

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Five hours later, Rickon was waiting for Cella to finish getting ready for the game. She was going to come early and hang with the WAGS while he was with the team. He did have a nap, and Cella thankfully slept beside him, and now Rickon was looking at his watch.

Jaime and Sansa were there, along with Tywin and Tommen, amused at their antics.

"Cella, we've got to go. I'll be benched if I'm late, babe," Ric called up to her, shaking his head.

"I'm coming," she said, suddenly appearing.

Rickon's mouth dropped open.

Cella came bouncing down the stairs, wearing a tight black turtleneck sweater, dark skinny jeans and cute black boots that added to her impressive height. Her long blond hair bounced as she descended, having worked it into soft, touchable waves.

"Gods, babe, you look amazing," Rickon said, standing there in his suit.

"You look good as well," Cella said, eyeing his suit. "But, in the future, let me dress you, babe."
Rickon grinned and then handed her a gift bag. Celle's eyes widened, and she opened it and took out a White Harbour jersey with Ric's name and number on the back.

"Uhm, lots of the WAGs wear them," he started to say, before Cella launched herself into his arms, kissing him soundly on the lips.

Rickon laughed. "I take it you like it?"

"Like it?" Cella clutched the jersey tighter. "I love it."

Rickon's eyes lighted when she pulled it on over the turtleneck. It did something to him to see his name on her back, and he tugged her closer and kissed her deeper. "Fuck babe, I like seeing you wearing my jersey," he whispered into her ear as she giggled.

"Ok, you two, get going," Sansa said, knowing how strict they were about being on time. "We'll see you after the game, Ric." They nodded at them, and they were out the door, both of them excited for the evening to come.

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Ned was bouncing in his seat in the box that the Stark family had at the arena, waiting for the teams to take to the ice for warm-up. Sansa had texted Cella when they arrived, and she'd left the group of WAGs to come and sit with Rickon's family. She knew there would be plenty of games where she'd sit with her new friends, but for tonight, she wanted to be around those that she was closest too.

When Ned spotted her jersey, his eyes widened.

"Aunty Cella, that is an awesome jersey," he said, scrambling into her arms for a hug and a closer inspection.

"Thanks, bud. Uncle Ric got it for me," she said, and he nodded.

"Then it's special," he told her as she laughed.

"It is."

When the players hit the ice, both Ned and Cella had their eyes glued on Ric. Jon and Robb, always more critical, stood back and watched him for a bit.

"Looks stronger this year," Jon said after a few minutes.

"Bigger and faster as well. Might get some time on the second power-play unit if he keeps up his pre-season pace," Robb agreed.

Both Sansa and Arya knew as much about hockey as Robb and Jon, as they had all spent countless hours in rinks and at games. Jaime, Tywin and Tommen knew decidedly less and were content to sit back and watch the Starks.

When the Zamboni came out to clean the ice between warm-up and the start of the game, Ned bounced from person to person. Ben was too little to bring, and Jeyne felt sick, so there were a few less of them tonight.

Finally, it was time to announce the starters, and everyone in the Stark box cheered when Ric's name was announced. Sansa knew the coach was an old friend of their Dad's, and he must have
known how important this game was to Ric. Once anthems were done, the puck was dropped, and Jaime watched in utter fascination as his girlfriend turned into a yelling, raving, mad hockey mom.

Jaime was grinning like a loon as Sansa yelled at everyone; refs, players, even members of Ric's team.

When Rickon scored the opening goal, all the Starks hollered like idiots, wildly cheering their baby brother on.

Of course, Rickon glance up to their box and somehow, the camera found Myrcella, who looked like she'd just won the lottery as she blew a kiss down to ice level. Rickon grinned wider.

Jaime had to hand it to him, Rickon Stark sure made an impression.

In the end, Rickon's team won 5-3, the Starks and the Lannisters were the only happy people in the arena. Rickon had another goal and did, Jaime learned, spend some time on the powerplay.

Robb, Jon, Arya, Sansa and Bran all debated the game heatedly, as they finally filed down to the lower level to wait for Rickon.

Tywin had enjoyed himself, having never been to a live hockey game before, and Tommen had spent the night learning the game from Bran, who he was fast developing a strong friendship with.

While the Starks and Lannisters were waiting for the team, a different group of women came down the tunnel and Cella, well versed now in the ways of the bunnies, rolled her eyes at them and their antics. After Rickon's display tonight, Cella had no doubts about their relationship. Everyone in the rink knew he was off the market.

Rickon emerged third, his face lighting when he saw his family. His suit was the same one he'd worn to the rink, and more than one Lannister made a note to get him better quality ones. Tywin was almost offended by the garment the young man wore.

"He needs a new suit," Tywin muttered, and both Jaime and Cella heartily agreed. Then there was no more talk of suits as Rickon swept Cella up into his arms and kissed her, twirling her around.

"How'd you like your first hockey game, babe?" he asked when he'd set her back down.

"It was awesome," she replied, and something in Rickon settled. Holding her hand, Ric turned his attention to his family, who gave them their brutally honest opinions.

Robb thought he could have ground it out in the corners more. Jon thought he looked a little slow on the backcheck. Arya pointed out that one of the goals scored on his team was his fault, while Sansa said he looked a bit tired in the third.

Rickon grinned.

Fuck, he thought, he loved his family. They were awesome, and now he had the girlfriend to boot. Life for Rickon Stark was pretty damn good, and he basked in the success of the evening as Jaime drove them home to the farmhouse, Cella by his side and his family finally happy and whole.

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As promised, Rickon arranged for a family skate at a practice rink early Sunday morning. The team was leaving at noon for a game the next night in the Riverlands, and Ned had begged Ric for a skate.
Jaime, as advertised, could not skate well at all, but Rickon gave the man props for trying. Of course, he mostly just hung onto Sansa and kissed and groped her, but hey, whatever got him around the rink.

Cella also couldn't skate well, so Rickon had no problems taking her in his arms and helping her. Jon and Val showed up, along with Arya and Gendry, and Robb and Jeyne with little Ben. They strapped tiny little skates to his feet, and he was soon zooming in and out, along with Ned.

Rocco had never even seen ice, along with both Dany and Drogo, who passed. Robb took Roc and was patiently teaching him how to skate, as Bran worked with Ben. All the Starks had skated almost as soon as they had walked.

Afterwards, they went for family brunch, before reluctantly, Jaime and crew drove everyone to the airport. Since Ric was leaving at noon, Tywin, Cella and Tommen had decided to fly home as well, taking the Lannister family jet back down to King's Landing.

Ned and Rocco had both been upset that Papa Lion was leaving, but Tywin would be back soon, he promised both boys. They were content with that and promised to look after the kittens. No one asked Tywin what his plans were for Ms. Wyn, but everyone hoped he would keep his coffee date with her the next time he was in the North.

Jaime tried not to listen as Ric and Cella promised they'd talk each day and night, and as they made plans for when Ric played in King's Landing in two weeks.

Jaime said they'd be there as well, surprising both Sansa and Rickon, who looked excited.

"Oh and Ric, Addam Marbrand phoned earlier. He's wondering who your agent is?" Jaime asked and watched as Rickon looked startled by the news.

"The Addam Marbrand? What does he want? Does he want to represent me?" Rickon asked excitedly. Addam Marbrand was a legend and frequently worked with athletes in the south and those already well established. He almost never took on rookies or guys in their second year.

Jaime grinned. "He is. When you're in King's Landing in two weeks, we'll get you a proper suit and a proper agent."

Rickon grinned. "Thanks, Jaime. That's awesome."

Then he pulled Jaime in for a hug, and the man from the West couldn't help but hug him back, even as he knew this was the man his daughter was going to fall in love with. Rickon Stark was a good guy, and that was all that Jaime wanted for his daughter.

When Sansa and Ric hugged, they were both teary-eyed, and Sansa told him to be good, and she'd see him in a couple of weeks. Rickon gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Thanks, San. For everything," he told her, sending her tears into overdrive and right into Jaime's waiting arms.

Everyone gave Rickon and Cella privacy to say goodbye, as Tommen spoke with Jaime and Sansa, telling them he'd be in touch with ideas for the new menu at the winery.

Finally, everyone was gone, and Jaime and Sansa stood hand in hand, watching their planes fly away.

Sansa sighed, leaning against the man she loved.
"Take me home, Jaime," she told him, and he grinned.

"Gladly, babe. Gladly." After the week they had, no words sounded better to Jaime than those.

Home.

The North.

Sansa.

Jaime was tucked into bed, listening to the blessed quiet of their home and waiting for Sansa to finish whatever evening routine she put herself through, when his phone buzzed.

He'd been distracted by the fact that the house was almost silent, having no one here but them for the first time in well over a week, that he didn't even bother to check who was calling him, just swiping it open and pressing the speaker button as he had no secrets from Sansa.

He was momentarily distracted as Sansa appeared in their bedroom, wearing nothing more than a tiny red negligee, that it took him a moment to register who was calling him.

"Jaime, are you there?"

Cersei. It was Cersei on the phone. Something must have shown in his face, because Sansa was suddenly there, by his side, as dread knotted in his stomach.

He coughed and then said, "Yes. What do you want?"

Her laughter was like ice in his veins, making him feel cold and small and useless again in its ability to inflict such damage and cruelty so easily.

"What do I want? Oh, that's rich coming from you," she snarled into the phone. "Imagine my surprise when my darling children arrived home to tell me all about their wonderful trip North."

Sansa reached for her phone and pressed record, a feeling of trepidation coming over her.

"They are adults, Cersei. They can come and go as they please," Jaime responded weariness in his tone, thinking of the many, many, many fights they'd had over the best practices for their children. It has been a constant battle and one he had long grown weary of.

Cersei snorted. "If you think I'll allow my daughter to date some mongrel hockey player dog from the North, then you don't know me at all. And like hell, Tommen is moving in with you and your whore."

"Don't do this, Cersei. You know you won't win. They can make their own choices, and you'll just push them away even more," Jaime said, pleading with her for the sakes of his children. "And don't ever call the woman I love a whore again, or I'll make you..."

"You'll make me what, Jaime? You don't have the balls or the spine to come after me," she taunted into the phone, her voice low and filled with cunning.

Jaime felt Sansa squeeze his hand, and he nodded at her.

"Maybe not in the past. But things have changed Cersei. You have no part of my life anymore."
Her bitter laugh filled the space between them, and her words sent a ball of dread straight to Jaime's stomach.

"Oh Jaime, you're such an idiot if you think I'll ever let you be happy. Be careful, darling husband of mine. Just when you think you have it all; I'll be sure to take it away."

Before Jaime could respond, she hung up on him, leaving two stunned people sitting on the bed staring at one another.

Jaime felt sick, awash in shame and impotent fury and helplessness. He should have known that he could never be free of her. From the moment he'd met Cersei Marbrand, his life had been fucked. He could see that now, and worse, Sansa was now stuck in the middle of her crazy, vindictive rage.

Jaime knew Cersei would never stop, never allow him or the children to be happy. This was what she did – she stole everything from him, breaking him down until he was a shell of a man, and Jaime wasn't even sure that Sansa's love was enough to stop it.

He vaguely felt Sansa wrap her arms around him, telling him how much she loved him, but her words were dim and distant, as Jaime Lannister was lost in the horror of his past, and unsure if he could ever escape.

END OF PART I

Chapter End Notes

For those who celebrate, Merry Christmas. I hope your night and day is merry and blessed. To all those who have stuck by this story, my many, many, many thanks.

Have a great one

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End Notes

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