But all your flaws and scars are mine
by Mrsblackdixon89

Summary

Modern/AU SanSan story. Sandor gets a new tenant on his floor in his London apartment building. Our big, surly man doesn’t like new people. Until he meets Sansa is an expected way. Will their relationship grow? What could get in the way? Have a read to find out. I suck at summaries, just give it a chance! Lemons to come. Fluff too. Xoxo :)

Notes

Hey guys!

I don’t know what to say. Sigh. Lol!

This story would not leave me alone, it’s writing itself.

I have not at all given up on “And this love came back to me” for those of you who have read it. I love that story so much and am still working on it but these two are glued to my thoughts and wanted to join us in 2019.

Please let me know what you think, I’m a new modern setting fan in general and brand spanking new to writing it.

Love you all!! ♥
Trapped. I felt fucking trapped.

How the buggering hells is it the first of March already? I knew months ago, the very minute that someone had signed a lease to move into the vacant apartment on my floor. Usually I am on top of that shit. I have countdowns on, prepared to avoid new people.

However, thanks to my great reputation, which I’m cursing today, I was so bloody busy with work that clocks and calendars meant nothing on a personal level. Now, here I am, in my flat, my fucking empty flat. No beer or food to be seen and I can’t even leave.

It’s not that I mind going out. I enjoy it really. But on my own damn terms. I go where I want, when I want, with who I want and for as long as I want. And today was one of those days, well I had planned it to be.

I was going to get a roast and a pint with Bronn, do some grocery shopping and then deal with dinner. Tomorrow was an office day and the rest of my week was also sorted. Until this bump in the fucking road came along.

I sit and wait out the sounds of the elevator dinging, of voices and movement for what feels like days. It really doesn’t go on as long as I thought it would but the move did begin later in the day, perhaps this will start up again tomorrow. Bloody wonderful. At least I won’t be here.

After hearing nothing but silence coming from the hallway for over an hour I attempt my escape. It’s pitch black outside, save for the moon, and almost nine o’clock by the time I finally make it back to my building, bag of groceries and an obscene amount of take out in tow.

The elevator is waiting when I approach and I lean against the wall, after swiping my fob and pressing the second-floor button. I’m about to release a sigh of relief that instead turns into a gruff of frustration. Just as the doors start to shut I hear a muffled, delicate, female voice ring out.

“Wait! Can you hold the lift please!”

I’ll be honest, I’m usually one of those button pushers in this instance. The button in question being the “close the fucking door button”. Honestly, if I was to do nothing right now, she never would
make it in time to slip through the metal doors.

But fuck me. Something about that voice, I’ve never been affected by the very sound of someone before, yet the simple request and barely veiled tiredness behind it have me launching forward to hold down the “open door button” as well as slinging my free arm across one side of the moving metal, keeping it in place.

I can’t see anything of the woman as she scurries along the floor and over the threshold into the lift with me. She has at least three bags spread out between her two shoulders and a big box firmly in her grasp. Her face is leaning around the opposite side of the box from me so she can see where she’s going and not fall flat or walk into a wall.

As soon as she’s safely through the doors, she places her belongings down in the far corner, digging through one of the smaller bags and I see her whip out her own security tag and then she makes her way to the keypad as I had just done.

That’s when I stop watching what she’s doing and instead take her in, well the back of her.

And it’s the hottest back I’ve ever fucking seen.

She’s tall for a woman but still small compared to me. Her long, lean legs go on for miles, they’re sheathed in a pair of deep blue, pants? No they can’t be, it looks as if they’re painted on, gods. Especially around her round, perky ass. Its a dead ringer for that stupid peach emoji Tormund would send me describing his latest conquest. None of that since Brienne stole his heart...

Then up to her supple hips that flare out in contrast to her tiny waist, even that’s obvious through her oversized grey sweater. Not far up from her lower back her hair ends. Long, shiny waves of burning auburn. The only fire I’ve ever wanted to get close to.

What the fuck? Where did that come from?

When’s she’s successfully chosen her floor, she turns towards me. And holy shit, it feels as if all the air is knocked out of my body. She is the most beautiful creature I’ve ever seen in my bloody life.

Her pale skin almost glows, her hair and plump pink lips only make that more prominent. And her
eyes. They’re crystal blue and looking straight into my own. Ah fuck, I guess I was staring.

The woman isn’t repulsed, offended or even seemingly affected by my scars that cover the right side of my face. She just gives me a once over and a small smile.

“Hi! I’m Sansa.” She holds out a delicate hand towards me as the doors shut.

“Sandor.” I huff out and return her strong handshake. It’s all I can manage, when our skin touches I can feel the heat blaze through me, starting at my fingertips all the way down to my boots. Yes, including my cock.

She opens her mouth to speak again when the elevator suddenly stops. I brace my feet on the ground but Sansa is taken off guard and starts hurtling forwards. Right into me. Her hands land on my chest and my free one grabs her elbow to steady her.

I worry she’ll feel my heart racing or worse, I’ll have a stroke. Her body almost flush against my own, her sweet, fruity smell invading my senses, it takes all my strength to not crash my mouth to hers.

That’s it, I’m losing my mind. I never think or feel these types of things.

Before either of us can react the lights go out and the lift falls silent.

“Fuck.” I growl as Sansa sucks in a sharp breath.

The emergency lighting and air comes on in the next moment and then I finally have enough sense to gently release the girl.

She pulls back and picks up her belongings that fell out of her bag while I open the box on the key pad to press the alarm button. Perks of living in a modern, and let’s be honest, rich building, everything is of the highest and best quality. Even in what seems like a power outage, the lift company will still receive the alarm and be able to help as soon as possible.

“You’re saving me left right and center tonight. Thank you.” Sansa says to me, her voice full of
sincerity.

I wave her off and make a, hopefully, appreciative sound in my throat. I’m not used to or any good with praise.

“It’s not just the lift that’s the issue is it?” She asks, sounding tinier than she looks.

I shake my head. “No, unfortunately not. I’m thinking the electricity has gone out.”

Sansa buries her face in her hands.

“Not claustrophobic are you?” I ask, hoping like hell shes not.

“No. I mean, after enough hours I’m sure anyone could be...” She trails off, looking around our enclosed space.

“I’m just tired, and sore from moving, and hungry and, and you didn’t ask about any of that, sorry to unload.” Sansa looks at me sheepishly.

“It’s alright. It’s shit getting stuck in one of these.” I really didn’t mind her speaking what’s on her mind. This wasn’t ideal and I also had this odd feeling of wishing I could help her.

Maybe there was a chemical leak, it would explain the power issue and my strange thoughts.

Sansa just gives me one of those small smiles I’m already becoming accustomed to and then slides down to sit on the floor, her back against her box of stuff.

I mimic her and sit next to the open control panel in case anything happens, as I take my cell phone out and almost curse in relief at the sight of my one bar of data.

My browser automatically takes me to our local paper’s front webpage and there it is, “BREAKING NEWS: GREATER LONDON IN DARKNESS.” Under the ominous headline it goes on to explain there was a small fire and subsequent grid issue. They expect everyone to have
restored electricity within three hours.

Well, fuck me again.

“Do you have any service?” She asks.

I look over to Sansa and see her hands are empty. “Just data. The papers are reporting the power outage and it looks like it will be a couple of hours before we’ll get out of here.” She nods and sighs. “Don’t you have a cell?”

“Of course, but it’s dead. Hence the late night trek to my car for the last of my things. I packed it in the wrong bag.” She looks over to her belongings as if it were their fault.

“Right. If you want to uh, email or Facebook or whatever, anyone you can use mine.” I offer.

Forget those little smirks from before, Sansa’s entire face lights up at my gesture. “Thank you Sandor. I shouldn’t need to, I just spoke to my siblings before the stupid thing shut off so they’re expecting me to be asleep I’m sure.”

“Aye, well if you change your mind you know where to find me.” I joke. Something I’m not good at but she laughs immediately and I wonder if I should start doing stand-up at the sound of it.

We sit in silence for a few minutes. If I was alone I would be cursing and stomping like the oaf I am. If it had been anyone else in here with me I can bloody say for certain I wouldn’t have been half as talkative with them. I also would’ve been wishing and praying to gods I don’t believe in that I were on my own.

Not with her though. My mind is currently spinning, actually trying to think of something to say, how I can start a conversation. And I also take a second to be bloody grateful I had just showered and then decided to wear my good jeans and jacket out.

“How long have you lived in the building? Or are you visiting?” She puts me out of my misery and breaks the silence.
“No, I live here, bought my place five years ago.”

“Wow, I hope I still love the city years from now.” She smiles at me. “Day one isn’t going great I suppose.” Sansa admits with a sigh and a shake of her head. “I’m only renting though, trying it out for a few months and then I’ll go from there. My manager suggested urban life would be easiest for me.” A roll of the eyes this time.

I can’t focus on her reasons for moving because my slow as shit, awestruck by this woman brain just put the pieces together. Sansa is the new tenant on my floor. Holly hells. This is going to be either torture or paradise.

“You moved into the flat on second?” I practically croak.

Thank fuck she continues happily, not noticing my tone. “That’s me! I guess we’re floor mates.” She goes on to explain before I can try and force my stupid brain to catch up. “I saw you had pressed two before the power went out.”

I’m like a fucking bobble head and just nod. “Welcome.” I manage with my weak attempt at a smile, I’m sure it’s probably more of a grimace. That’s what happens when part of your face doesn’t work right.

But Sansa doesn’t miss a beat, appreciating my one word and crooked grin like it was gold. I have to keep this going between us or I’ll just sit here and stare at her, drooling.

“You said a manager suggested you move, what do you do?” Idiot idiot idiot. She’s a model of course, what else could she be? But I know the second the thought enters my mind that I’m just being an ass. Spending fifteen minutes with this woman I can already tell she could take on the world and conquer it with grace. I’m now highly doubting I’ll get the answer I was expecting.

She blushes and ducks her chin down for a moment, somehow looking more beautiful. “I’m an author.”

“Shit, good for you. No easy task.”

Sansa’s face lights up once again, brighter than it has so far and she sits up straight, looking proud and beyond happy at my praise. Thank you. You’re right it really isn’t.”
"What’s your book called?” I bloody love reading, always have, but I don’t go around telling people. I’ve turned to fiction books since moving here, needing the escape the stories offer.

My sour thoughts want to tell me right away that I never would’ve read something this girl wrote. I might like fiction but I don’t sit around reading sappy romance novels. My subconscious pipes up next, telling me that’s nothing like what she’s written.

Sansa clears her throat, looking shy again. “Escaping the lion’s den.”

Holy fuck I have read her novel. In one sitting too. And it was bloody fantastic.

It was listed under fiction but there was no sci-fi or supernatural tones to it and, in all honesty, some of the writing made me feel as if it was someone’s true story, not one conjured from imagination.

If my memory really does serve me correctly, it was an adult novel also and some of the erotic scenes she depicted had my hand slipping into my boxers. There weren’t many of them, the book was far from a love story, but there was an air of it thrown in towards the end and those scenes came as a very welcome surprise.

She speaks again, I must’ve been lost in thought too long. “Have you read it? It’s not brand new, it was actually released last year but it’s started making it on to some of the charts recently, which is why I moved now.”

Another fact I was aware of. That was why I had read it not long ago, after I saw it on the up and coming authors list. “I’ve heard of it, I read quite a bit, but I haven’t had a chance to pick it up yet. I’m sure I will soon.” I lie, I’m not ready to sit here and think, let alone talk about how talented she is and how well she writes “smut”, as they call it, not when we’re stuck in a box together. No, no, hells no.

I will tell her the next time I see her, maybe that will ensure there even is a next time.

More blushing and another pulse racing smile. “You have? Wow! That made my whole night! If you do end up reading it please tell me what you think. I feel as though you would be honest and seeing as I’m in the process of writing my fourth book I could really do with any constructive criticism.”
“Fourth?” Crap, she’s doing well.

“I say fourth but I have so many works either half started or simply just in my mind that the number is much higher.” Sansa laughs. “But if you were to speak to my publisher they would say I’m working on my fourth. My second novel is coming out at the end of summer, my third one is with my editor for review and that leaves me on number four.”

“Bloody hells, you’re busy.”

Sansa huffs out a breath, the tiredness from when I first met her returning. “You can say that again. It’s not an easy dream, being a writer. Plus, I refused to be the girl that used daddy’s name to get her everything she wanted.”

She hasn’t told me her last name and I can’t remember it from the cover of her book, so her words don’t make much sense. I quirk my good eyebrow at her, silently asking if she wants to elaborate.

“I’m a Stark. My father is Eddard.”

“Shit, you are full of surprises aren’t you?” I say to her in a half joking tone. I don’t give a fuck who anyone is or the power they hold. Who you are and how you treat others are the only things that matter to me.

However, in saying that, I understand why she was practically bracing herself for my reaction. Her father is one of the most successful businessmen, I would say in the world. He was also avid in politics but one of those rare good ones. There has only ever been positive headlines about the man and he’s kept his family private and hidden.

I recently read in the paper that he retired from politics after the death of his life long friend and the Prime Minister Robert Baratheon. Eddard was now back in the North focusing on his businesses and personal life.

Sansa is surprised by my blasé response but relaxes slightly. “I guess for a stranger in a lift I am.” We both chuckle at that. “I didn’t want anyone to sign me to their company simply because they know who my father is. If I was going to be a published author it was going to be because I wrote a damn good novel that someone thought was worth sharing with world”
Sansa’s personality is as firey as her hair and I can feel myself getting fucking hooked.

This is so unlike me that I’m beginning to think I passed out from hunger and this is a starvation dream. I have a real hard time with new people. I hate the staring and the questions, two things she didn’t do. And even worse, I despise having to decide when and how to tell them about what happened to my face. That’s why I like my small, strong group of friends. They’re all bloody amazing people that give me the space I need and deal with my asshole tendencies.

“How did you get past that hurdle?” I ask, truly intrigued.

“I used a fake name and my manager used one of hers.” A sneaky smirk pulls at her lips. “I’m not a total idiot, I did get some help from my father, just to find out who the editors or CEOs of the companies were and went from there. All of the five publishers we sent my book, to begin with, wanted to take me and my story on board. We decided to meet with “Godswood and Co.” and when the two of us showed up for our first meeting, the look on their faces was priceless!” Sansa is lost in the happy memory.

“We had done all of the correspondence by email and phone up to that point, and my manager also has a friend that works at the company who confirmed they were clueless about who I really was. They truly thought they would be meeting Miss J Tully when the time finally came.”

If I don’t like many people you can guess I admire even less. Then this woman stumbles into my life and I’m fucking awestruck. It would’ve been so easy to throw around daddy’s name and get exactly what she wanted. But other than using a slight stepping stone she did it all by herself. And if she hadn’t used a little bit of his pull that would’ve been more stupid than anyone could imagine.

“Gendry Black is the owner and editor and he’s great to work with. We haven’t had any issues in the two years we’ve worked together.”

“Isn’t that Robert Baratheon’s illegitimate son?” I ask.

That information hadn’t come out in the wash until the man died suddenly last summer. He never took a wife and until his will was probated, a child hadn’t been mentioned. Robert’s younger brother Renley was also in the party and is now Prime Minister.

Months later when this Gendry was named, the country went wild. Everyone thought he would
want to take over or at least try to, even though he hadn’t been in politics or even associated with it once in his life. He does seem like a good man, he only made one statement to say that he wished he had known his father but he was glad to be recognized by him as his son. He went on to say that he didn’t want anything from him, besides the private letter that was given to Gendry, along with his large inheritance.

The rumor was that almost all of the money had been spread throughout charities. It seemed that he did have a relationship with his uncle now and both of them didn’t need anything else. Must be nice to have family like that.

“Yes that’s him. He’s truly as down to earth as the headlines make him out to be. It was strange to learn of his lineage though, seeing that I grew up with his father. We lived in the north of England almost my entire life, my father supporting Robert’s political run until the day he died. And now I work with his son. What a small world.”

Maybe the nice editor boy is the “light at the end of the tunnel” in her book. And if he is why the fuck do I care? Why is my stomach rolling at the thought and my anger threatening to simmer over? the book might truly be total fiction.

“What do you do Sandor?” Sansa asks, breaking me out of my insane thoughts. My name falling from her mouth again making my dick pulse.

“I’m in security.” Why can’t words come to me as easily as they do for her?

I swear she looks over my arms and chest before replying. “Are you security personnel or is it for buildings and homes?”

“I used to be a body guard a while back and when I got tired of everyone staring at my ugly mug I opened my own company.” I try and fail to keep the irritation out of my voice. No matter how long ago it was, I still feel the stares.

“You’re definitely not ugly.” Sansa says with a quick lick of her lips before her eyes widen, seeming shocked she said that.

I had to have heard her wrong. I’m frozen for a second, my heart racing at her admission. “We uh, suggest the best alarm systems, cameras and lighting for homes and businesses. We have a sister company as well that does the installations. I also have a team who can be hired for short or long
term contracts as security for individuals or groups.” I explain, trying to ignore her comment.

“That’s amazing and a huge accomplishment. I have to say, I’d trust you to keep me safe.”

My jeans are uncomfortable at this point. I’d keep her safe. In my bed. Get a grip you old dog!

I cough, trying to regain my composure. “Yeah, business is doing well. Been very busy lately.” Gods, I’m such a loser.

Before, what I can only expect to be an awkward silence falls over us, both of our stomachs groan. I have no time to feel embarrassed because Sansa’s soft laughter fills the elevator immediately.

“Oh, sorry. I lost track of time and missed dinner.”

“Don’t be. I have loads of Chinese here, we shouldn’t let it go cold. Got a chilled bottle of wine too. It’s a screw top but no glasses, I was going to use my own.” I roll my eyes.

“I couldn’t take away from your dinner.” She politely protests.

“You’re not, I’m offering.”

Sansa doesn’t fight me anymore. Instead she walks over and sits next to me, the food and wine between us. “I really can’t thank you enough Sandor, for everything. I’m famished after unloading my car. It almost makes me regret telling my family not come down for the move.”

“Why did you ask them not to?” I inquire after eating a whole dumpling.

“I needed to do this on my own. I’m definitely the biggest homebody of all my siblings and after some...things I have worked through and gotten over I felt as if this was a time for me to shine, on my own, for me.” She shakes her head and picks up an egg roll. “Sounds silly I guess.”

“No, it doesn’t. It’s a big deal when you make the strides you have, for your career and personally.”
She looks straight into my eyes and just smiles before munching on her meal. I decide then is the perfect time to open the wine and take a long gulp before passing it to Sansa who also takes a decent sip, not caring that I drank from it first.

We eat in a companionable silence and after downing about a quarter of the bottle to myself, and on an empty stomach, the food not doing it’s job yet, I get an unusual burst of liquid courage.

“You didn’t even want your boyfriend to come help? That’s a lot of things for anyone to tackle alone.” I nod towards to her box and bags.

Sansa coughs and takes another swig of wine. “I don’t have a boyfriend, I’ve been single for a while.” She emphasizes the while. “Why were you so sure one existed?”

Ah fuck. Well, she said I wasn’t ugly so here’s go nothing. “Besides the fact I talk to hardly anyfuckingone and I’ve been here with you for over an hour now enjoying myself. Just fucking look at you.” I wave a hand towards her perfect frame.

Sansa blushes and laughs. “How sweet.” She teases sarcastically.

“What about you?” She asks. I tilt my head not following. “When I bring dinner and wine to yours to thank you for tonight, is some lovely lady going to chase me out the building?”

I don’t know what shocks me more. That she thinks I could possibly have a woman or that she is coming over for dinner. I’ll get to see her again. Why am I so damn excited?

I bark out a harsh laugh. “No fucking way. And you don’t have to pay me back, I wasn’t going to let you go hungry as I sat here with food.”

“I know I don’t have to but I want to. Unless you wouldn’t want the company.” Sansa rushes out the last part, losing her confidence.

“Of course I do.” I practically interrupt her.
We finish our meal and the wine over talk of the apartment building.

I tell her about all the tenants. Ms. Tyrell is in one flat on the first floor and her niece Margaery stays there when she’s not traveling for work. She’s a fashion designer and can be gone for months at a time. Like she presently. The other flat on that floor is occupied by Davos, a nice old man with a wicked sense of humor. He’s one of few people who have showed me utter kindness. Both of them have actually, I enjoy visiting them or helping out where I can.

The third floor is empty and under intense construction by the fourth floor, a.k.a. the penthouse owners, Ellaria and Oberyn Martell. I think they’re redoing the floor below for her three sisters. Ellaria, Ob and their children aren’t here full time hardly part time really. He travels frequently for work and they love to spend their fortune on several vacations a year.

All in all it’s a quiet place to live and I’ve been content here during my five years.

Sansa seems relived to know the goings on of her new home and thanks me once again. After that she talks about her family. There’s a fucking lot of them. So many I actually made her clarify their names and connection to her.

Sansa is snorting with laughter at my shocked face, her home is large and busy, so much so I can’t even wrap my mind around it.

“Okay, okay I’ll list everyone out, maybe that’ll help. My mom and dad have Rob, me, Arya, Brandon and Rick. We also grew-up with my cousin Jon as his mum passed away in childbirth and his dad died in combat. My uncle Ben adopted our family friend’s daughter Shireen, who’s Arya’s age, after her mom and dad died in a car crash. Since he’s a single man he needed some help and she spent loads of time at ours. See, not *that many people!”

“They’d need name tags if I was part of your family.” Sansa falls into a fit of giggles at that.

“I’ll suggest it at our next family gathering.” Her face still bright from our joking, Sansa asks me the simplest seeming question. I know there’s no malice or ill will behind it but I can’t control the way it makes my blood boil.

“What about your family?”
I’m seeing red, the horrific memories and pain still eat away at me. Even after all this time. My reaction is irrational and over the top but I can’t stop it. No matter how much I want to.

“That’s none of your business. Not everyone is as goddamn talkative as you.” I growl.

Sansa flinches and regret colors her face. “I’m sorry I asked. I meant nothing by it.” There’s some venom in her tone by the time she’s done speaking. Good, I’m glad she’s not putting up with my shit. She didn’t deserve my attitude.

“Fuck. You have nothing to be sorry for.” I say as I attempt to slow my harsh breathing. “I have no family, it’s a shit topic for me, you wouldn’t have known.”

Sansa listens intently, and her face softens at my depressing truths “I’m still sorry, for the fact you have no family. No one should feel as you do when that subject comes up. You deserve better.” She tells me, full of ferocity of a different sort now.

“Why on earth would you bloody say that?” She doesn’t even know me! Yet I can say I believe the same for her. Sansa deserves the utmost from life. Hypocrite.

“I’ve dealt with some awful people and experiences. The silver lining, besides escaping them, is that I can tell the good from the bad, pretty damn well now.” There’s a hint of sadness in her voice and it makes me wonder again if her book is based somewhat on her life.

If it is, then I’ll be asking Bronn to “take care” of the lead character “James” and his mother “Ciara” as they made life a living hell for the lead heroine, “Savannah”.

“Well, thanks. I’m an ugly, old grouch but I try my best to be good”

“Again, you’re not ugly.” She reiterates, looking at me from head to toe. “You also don’t seem old and yeah okay, you can be a grump sometimes, but I think it feeds into your charm.” Her cheeky smile directly affects my cock.

Before I can respond and try to compliment her, even though I don’t know where to start, the lights in the lift come back on a second before it starts moving again.
“Has it really been that long?” Sansa asks herself mostly, while looking at her watch with wide eyes.

I do the same and see it’s just past midnight. Shit that flew by, and I could’ve done with longer, longer with her.

We clean up from our meal and before she can even react I collect all her things from the corner of the lift.

“Sandor you don’t—“ Sansa tries to protest but I cut her off.

“I know, I want to.” I use her same words from earlier.

She looks at me, her features glowing from her smile and sneaks my two bags out of my grasp.

“Hello! Are you alright in there?” A voice booms from the box inside the keypad.

“Aye, we’re fine. Both going to the second floor.” I respond.

“That’s great news. I am in the lobby and will need to speak to at least one of you for my report. I’m sorry to bother you but can I pop up and meet you outside the lift?”

“Yes fine. I’ll meet you there in a few minutes.” I confirm.

“Thank you, see you soon.” The man says as the doors open and we exit.

“Let’s get you home.” I tell Sansa and lead the way to her flat.

She overtakes me when I approach her door and unlocks, opens and holds it for me.

“You can leave them next to the sofa please.”
I place her belongings down, scanning her mostly empty living room before facing her.

“Sandor I can’t thank you enough, for tonight. I think I would’ve gone crazy stuck in there without you.”

“No need, glad I could help. It was surprisingly nice to not be on my own.” I make my way to the door and I hear her follow me.

“Before you go, here.” She holds out her cell phone, the page open to a new contact with my name already entered. “Put your number in and I’ll WhatsApp you about dinner.” I make to reassure her it’s not necessary and she can tell, stopping me before I even begin. “I insist and I want to.” She says determinedly.

I take her iPhone, our fingers grazing and the tingling sensation is instant and has my stomach flopping. After quickly adding my number I hand it back and avoid her skin.

“Awesome! I’ll message you so you have my number also.”

“Alright then. Good night Sansa, it was nice meeting you.” I sound like such a fool, I want to slap my hand to my forehead.

“It was really good meeting you too.” She moves so quick I don’t realize her intention until it’s too late to worry or overthink my reaction.

Her small arms reach around my middle and give me a tight hug. My arm, sans bags, lightly holds her around the shoulders and my face is dangerously close to her bare shoulder. An obvious fact I’d been trying my damnest to avoid all night. The smooth, uncovered skin was practically calling out to me and now it’s right in front of my face. I can’t stop the hopefully silent inhale I take of her.

I could die happy just from this embrace. I’m not good or accustomed to much human contact but my reflex to reciprocate her hug was instant.

It’s over too soon and Sansa is looking shy again when she meets my eyes with a sweet smirk that I
try to return before I leave and head back to the lift.

I deal with the elevator technician and make my way back to my flat in a daze. What the fuck happened tonight? I’ve never connected with another person, let alone been that bloody attracted to anyone my entire life.

When my phone dings from next to me in bed, I can hardly believe what I read. No matter what she told me, I thought she was simply being polite.

Sansa  : Hey Sandor 😊 it’s Sansa. I just wanted to give you my number and say good night. Again. Lol

I know in that moment, I can feel it in my gut, that my life will truly never be the same.
Hello my absolutely lovely friends! I am blown away by the feedback on the first chapter. Thank you all so much!

Now, this was a long one, which I personally don’t mind, I actually enjoy them better. However, I know it might not be up everyone’s alley. I reread this so many times trying to find somewhere to end it and I don’t know if I’m happy where it cuts off but didn’t feel right being as long as it was originally.

Anyhoo, I hope you enjoy and let me know what you think.

After replying a quick “you’re welcome” and “night” back to Sansa I fell into a deep sleep.

My alarm wakes me too early and it’s only then I remember my plan of going into the office. Fuck that shit. I’m still drained and quickly call Bronn to tell him about the elevator (minus Sansa for now) and let him know I’ll try to be there around lunch time.

After laughing at my expense over the lift debacle, my best friend and business partner tells me not to worry and he’ll see me when he sees me. The man drives me bonkers sometimes but I wouldn’t be here without him.

Thankfully I’m able to resume my slumber for a couple more hours before my stomach and bladder demand I get up. A long piss later, I hop in the shower and instantly I’m bombarded with images of Sansa.

After not dreaming of her last night, I thought maybe I could escape the hold I could feel her taking on me. No such fucking luck apparently.

I hate myself for it but my hand instantly grasps my cock and starts stroking. The memories from last night are so vivid it’s like I’m with her. I can smell her hair, feel her body against mine during our hug. Sansa’s laugh and voice drift through my mind as if she’s next to me and it’s so bloody real I cum quickly, coating the glass wall of my shower in streaks of white.
Taking my time I scrub myself red, still feeling dirty by the end of it, before drying and dressing for the day and it’s still only ten, I’m shit at sleeping.

Between the long, late night and my emotions over Sansa running wild, I feel reminiscent of a zombie.

I pull my grey long sleeved polo over my head when there’s a knock at my front door. My first instinct is to be on the defensive. I don’t often have company and if do, I’m aware they’re coming ahead of time. Deciding against grabbing my hand gun from the nightstand, I tread barefoot across my flat to see who’s bothering me.

As soon as I open the door I realize I’m about to be the bloody opposite of bothered.

Standing on my threshold, looking more beautiful than I remember, is Sansa Stark and I can’t stop myself from soaking her in.

Her hair is on top of her head, looking damp, the black leather jacket she’s wearing over a white shirt has her skin glowing in contrast. Those legs that I would kill to have wrapped around my waist, or face, are covered in skin tight ripped jeans and the heels on her boots still don’t have her passing my chin.

“Good morning! I’m so glad you’re still home.”

“Uh, you are?” I’m honestly puzzled.

“Of course! Otherwise I would be drinking and eating all of this alone.” Sansa nods towards her tray of coffee cup and bags of treats.

She doesn’t let me reply before she’s rambling on. Gods, how could I have missed her voice already?

“I couldn’t wait until our dinner to show you how much I appreciate you for last night. And I remembered you said something about not making it to work on time today so I thought I’d push my luck and see if you had left yet.”
I had mumbled to myself at one point last night that my “fucking schedule was going to be fucked thanks to the fucking electricity going out” and Sansa’s face had immediately looked stressed for me. She can’t be real.

“One topic we didn’t cover however was coffee, so I just got you my order, it’s simple and I’m hoping it can’t go wrong. And seeing as my cupboards and fridge are empty I wasn’t able to bake you my homemade lemon shortbread cookies but the lemon cake at Starbucks is a good stand-in. Oh! And they have Easter cake pops, I couldn’t resist.”

“You’re just like a little bird aren’t you?”

Sansa’s happy face turns slightly lost. “Am I?”

Shit, that should’ve stayed in my brain. “Fuck, sorry. Didn’t mean anything by it, I’m no good with words and they come to you fast and furious is all. Like chirping.”

To my immense relief she laughs and looks at me with that bright, happy face she wears so damn well. “Little bird? I like that much better than “chatterbox” or “verbal diarrhea” as my family and Arya call me.”

I chuckle at the latter nickname. “Aye, suppose it is.”

A brief silence falls between us and I realize she’s still in the bloody hallway. Clegane you fool, invite her in!

“Crap, sorry again. Come in.” I stand aside so she can slip past me.

“I don’t want to bother you Sandor.” That veil of insecurity and shyness falls over her, like last night.

“You’re not, come on now.” I work on my smile once more.

“Thank you. I won’t be in your way for long. The building manager is coming by to hang my art and photos this morning.”
“You don’t waste any time.”

“If I hadn’t organized it for today they’d all be leaning against a wall three months from now.” She jokes.

“Do you know if it’s Bolton Senior or Junior coming to install your things?” I’m hoping like hells she knows and that it’s the former Bolton family member.

The old man is a gruff person but good at the end of the day and does his job well. His bastard son is an issue. His father is attempting to train him to take over his job once he retires but Ramsey doesn’t have it in him. Mostly because I’m sure he’s a psychopath. And I’m not exaggerating. His own dad has casts him some scared and concerned looks, even while in the company of the residents.

“Senior. He told me his son is in college and he may help him with tasks come summer.”

I nod, relieved, as Sansa removes her jacket and purse, laying them on a dining chair. She comes back to where I’m placing plates on the island, and she begins unpacking her goodies for us. It hits me, as we move around my kitchen, that we’re like a team, as if we’ve done this many times before. My stomach does that damn squeezing. I refuse to use butterflies in a sentence to describe myself.

“There’s sugar and sweetener as well.”

“Will I need it for my pumpkin spice latte?” I tease.

Sansa looks at me in disgust before chuckling. “You’re in luck. I have a severe caffeine addiction and that wouldn’t do for my first coffee of the day. Or ever. I don’t like PSLs.”

“And what is in my cup then?”

“A flat white. Only those, americanos or good old filtered coffee will do the job in the morning.
Especially after such an eventful evening.” She looks at me cheekily.

And gods it does things to me. I have to clear my throat and go about stirring my drink to center myself.

Sansa is still smiling but I think she senses I need a minute. “I don’t mind fluffy drinks sometimes but they’re more like dessert, lets be honest.”

“All of those would’ve been fine. You shouldn’t have gone to all this trouble. Like I said I’m glad I was there, that I could help. But thank you.”

“You’re welcome! I was happy to and it’s nice to have company to start off my first day of city life.”

“What else are you doing today?” I wish she was going to be with me.

**Down boy!**

“All of Mr. Bolton leaves I’ll call my manager and then head out into the great unknown and try to find a grocery store or market. My empty kitchen is depressing.”

“I’m not working a full day, I could show you where I go shopping.” Did I really just say that?

If I thought she was in a good mood before, my seemingly simple offer has her looking at me as though I told her she won the lotto. “Really? I don’t want to put you out. Plus, I know you had some things with you last night.”

“Aye but I just got essentials from the off license. I’m due for a big haul.”

“Wine is an essential?” She smirks at me. “I’m glad we agree on that.”

We stand at the counter, and eat cake while we finish off our coffee in silence. It’s not awkward as I continue expecting it to be. I’m more comfortable and happy than I’ve been, well, ever.
“Your shortbread is better than this you say?” I ask before popping the last bite of my lemon slice into my mouth. I’ve never had it before but it was bloody delicious.

“Oh yes. If I hadn’t become a writer I would’ve been a baker.”

“Holy hells, you’ve got more talent in your pinky finger than I do in my whole body.”

She goes slightly pink and laughs. “I doubt that, but I have two passions that I’m lucky enough to be good at as well.” Sansa says, looking me over covertly, well trying.

I’m about to say something further, who knows what exactly, but I want to commend her more, she deserves it. However, I’m interrupted by a dinging sound.

“Oh! That’s my alarm, I have to head back and wait for Mr. Bolton.”

“Right. Well, thanks again.”

“No problem. I’ll leave your cake pop here, they’re my guilty pleasure.” Sansa tells me and her tongue pops out to wet her lower lip. Meanwhile, my dick weeps onto my boxers.

I rub my hand along the back of my neck trying to calm down. “Uh, yeah, great.”

Sansa picks up her things and walks to the door and I watch her hips and ass the entire time. I can’t even bring myself to feel bad, it’s the best fucking view.

She spins around just short of grabbing the knob and I worry I’ve been caught. “Message me later about grocery shopping, and let me know when to be ready.”

My heart starts racing in excitement. I’ll get to see her again. “I will.” I reach around her to open the door, attempting to be chivalrous. Instead, I force her to press her back flush to my chest to allow enough room for the door to open and then she wriggles past me to leave.
I worry she’ll be offended or even upset about being so close to me. To my scars. But I swear she actually takes her time making her way out the doorway, lingering against my body.

Sansa makes her way to her flat, walking backwards with a face like heaven. “I’ll see you later Sandor.”

Sandor Bobblehead is back and I can’t force myself to do more than nod and wave. This afternoon can’t come soon enough.

I stomp into our office a short while later, after gunning my Audi here in record time. Bronn and I bought the building as a real estate investment at first but quickly decided to utilize the basement through to the fourth floor for the security firm, Tormund’s London division of his “Wildling Construction” company and then last year we opened our gym to the public.

Much to my chagrin.

I had competed in a few high profile charity boxing matches when I was a bodyguard for a cheesy celeb. The reality stars decided it was better for the help to partake in the fundraiser as it was too risky for them to fight, even for a laugh, since they spend so much money on their bloody plastic faces.

Once set up in London, Bronn and I flew slightly under the radar for a bit but one high profile client boasts about us to the papers and we were a household name overnight. “Kingsguard Security” took on more clients than we could handle at first.

My reputation has followed me all these years no matter if I want it to or not. Add in the fact Bronn was a top solider for the better part of a decade and people were begging us to open the gym beyond our staff, to add personal trainers and a boxing ring. My annoying best friends (Tormund has shares in our company and vice versa) were so bloody excited I couldn’t deny them.

Bonn indulges the masses and will walk around and help the patrons work out sometimes, but I down right fucking refused to teach boxing. We both hand chose driven, straight laced fitness freaks who run a good, tight ship.

“Osha.” I greet our assistant and office manager. She’s more than that really. Her and her wife Roz are good friends. Bronn and I never spend a holiday or birthday alone. They open their home to us both like we’re family. It’s closest I’ve ever had.
“Hey Bossman. You alright? Heard where you were during that lovely power outage.” She can’t stifle a laugh.

I groan, thanks Bronn. “I’m fine. Had just been to the shop and Chopstix for supper, wasn’t a bad few hours.” That’s the understatement of the year. “You and the family were okay?”

“The girls were asleep already so Roz and I ate all the ice cream in the freezer. Couldn’t let it go to waste.” She winks at me.

I chuckle at her excitement over alone time with her wife. Lucky, those two are. “Good.”

I sit at my desk and start going through any emails I didn’t reply to on my phone over the weekend, getting lost in my duties. Immersed in correspondence and final models for some rich fucker’s mansion in Mallorca, (we go international for certain clients) an hour disappears and I’m only aware of the time when Bronn barges into my office.

“What’s up motherfucker?” He bellows as he tosses a sandwich my way, already digging into his own.

“Thanks for knocking.”

“Ha! Don’t you mean, oy mate, thanks for lunch?”

I just flip him the bird and start eating.

“You here all day? Didn’t think I’d even see you after your lovely evening.” Bronn smiles around a mouthful of food.

I chug some water, deciding if I should tell him about Sansa or not. She feels like more than a neighbor already but after today it could all fizzle out.

I’m not concerned he’ll say a word to anyone else. If I ask to talk in confidence he would chop off a
finger before speaking about the topic to another soul.

And let’s be honest, I need the advice.

“Uh, well, it actually was... lovely.” I throw his word back at him, lacking the sarcasm he used.

“Jerk off in a lift did you?” He erupts in laughter.

“Fuck off. Forget it.” I know he’s only joking but it’s taking a lot of fucking balls to tell him this and I’m easily discouraged on a good day.

“Wait, you’re not kidding? Sorry big man, I didn’t realize. Tell me what happened then.” Bronn goes to close my office door, sitting back down completely serious now. He can switch to whatever is needed from him in an instant.

I run my hands down my face, feeling like a damn teenager with a crush. Guess that statement is half right. “I wasn’t alone when the power went out.”

Bronn just stares at me, not speaking, a rarity for him. “You were bringing someone home?”

“Gods no. The new tenant on my floor moved in yesterday and we got stuck together.”

His face is lighting up now, turning mischievous. “Please say it was a hot lass.”

I don’t want to describe Sansa that way, even if it’s true. My pause answers for me.

Bronn fist pumps the air and woots a noise of glee. “I already know you didn’t shag her, not your style. But you, locked in a confined place with a female should be enough to “keep you going” for a while. I’m happy you were pushed out of that small comfortable box you keep yourself in.”

“I am too actually.” His eyebrows meet his hairline. I heave a great sigh and tell him everything, giving Sansa a run for her money with how easily the story flows from me.
Bronn leans his head back, soaking in my tale it seems. “Holy fucking shit. Can I see her?”

“What?”

“You said how bloody gorgeous she was, in detail, about twenty times just now, I want to see what all the fuss is about.”

I’m shocked he hasn’t said anything else about well, any of it, but I pull up her WhatsApp picture and give him my phone.

The photo she has on her profile is a candid shot. Sansa is looking to the side, laughing happily, the background makes me think she’s abroad and celebrating with a glass of wine.

She looks like utter fucking perfection.

Bronn’s eyes go as wide as his mouth and he stares at the screen for a solid minute.

“Alright, enough of your gawking, give it back.” I hold out my hand impatiently.

He blinks a few times but finally hands it over. “You lucky piece of shit!” The trance he was in disappears as quickly as it came on. “She’s the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen. What’s her body like?” Bronn is leaning forward, jiggling his knee in excitement.

“None of your fucking business!” I roar. The reaction erupts from me before I even realize how pissed his question made me feel.

“Ah-ha! You really do like her. Fuck mate, we’ve never had a conversation like this in all our years of friendship.”

He’s right. I’ve been completely alone since moving to London and honestly, it started before then. Fine, my whole life. It’s obviously not easy for me to meet people, let alone date them.
“I know. I’m out of my depth here.” I admit, burying my face in my hands.

“Clegane look at me.” Bronn demands and doesn’t speak until I meet his gaze. “You’re ace mate. The only family I have and I wouldn’t want it any other way. This might be different for you, but don’t forget that she’s lucky to have met you as well.” He pins me with a hard stare, daring me to argue.

When he trusts I’ll stay quiet he continues. “I won’t sugar coat it, women are difficult. This may be your first time asking for advice but it won’t be your last. Even if you were a ladies man like me.” He pretends to flick his short back and grins.

“Are you going to babble on like an idiot or help me out?” I bark.

“I do love a good babble but seeing as you’re pressed for time I’ll get to the good stuff.” Bronn leans his forearms on his thighs, coming as close to me as possible with my desk between us.

“Be yourself.”

He’s got to be fucking kidding me. “That’s your oh so insightful advice, for me to be myself?” I practically spit, waving a hand in my own general direction.

“This isn’t a hit it and quit it situation. Your ginger girl needs to know who she is dealing with here. You’re a good man. Fun too when you allow that side out. But you’re a gruff and rough dog too. Push yourself a bit. Be chatty and flirty, give her compliments. Birds fawn over that shit. But acting like someone you’re not and saying things you usually wouldn’t, is a waste of time.”

We sit in silence for a while. He’s right. If we’re to make anything of this connection between us (and hopefully it’s not one sided) then Sansa has to get to know me for who I am. Scars, flaws, damages, the lot.

Sighing, I give in and nod. “Asshole. Hate it when you’re right.” Bronn bellows out a laugh.

“And I love it! Now, what time are you meeting her for your domesticated afternoon?”
“I haven’t said anything yet...” I trail off, feeling stupid. Why have I waited this long?

“Clegane! Get on it you fucking fool.”

I pick up my cell from my desk and stare at our messages from last night, drawing a blank at what to type.

“Stop overthinking. Just say something nice, ask her a question, what the fuck ever, and then tell her when you’re picking her up.” Bronn says plainly, as if telling me what time it is and slips out the door, closing it behind him.

Rolling my eyes I say the first thing that comes to mind.

**Sandor** : All your pieces where you want them?

Sansa reads it immediately and starts typing almost as fast.

**Sansa** : They actually are! Mr. Bolton was great. My flat is starting to feel homey.

**Sandor** : I’m glad to hear it.

**Sandor** : Can I pick you up at 3:00pm for your grocery store tour? If that doesn’t work just tell me when.

**Sansa** : That’s perfect. You’re a life saver. Are we walking or driving?

My cheeks heat at her words. And I want to slap myself for my reaction. Pussy.

**Sandor** : Driving would be best. We can take my car?
Sansa: Sounds great! 😊 See you then and yes I’m saying it again, thank you!!

I grin at my phone for longer than necessary, reading our back and forth several times.

Attempting to distract my nerves and excitement proves impossible. I can’t even forward an email to Tormund from a client looking for an estimate.

My palms are sweaty, my stomach feels like it’s full of cement and my pulse is quicker than normal.

I leave earlier than I need to, throwing in the towel and heading home to freshen up before getting Sansa.

Who the hells am I, “freshen up”, I’m losing my mind.

After brushing my teeth and hair, swiping on more deodorant and even opening the cologne Osha got me for Christmas, (she was right, it smells bloody amazing) I make the short journey to Sansa’s flat.

I knock on her door and my shirt must be vibrating with how hard my heart is beating.

It feels simultaneously like an eternity and yet a millisecond while I wait for her to open up.

And when she does, even though I saw her only hours ago, my breath gets stuck in my throat from just the sight of her.
“Hi!” She beams at me. She looks exactly the same as this morning but I appreciate every inch of her once more.

It takes me a moment to blink myself out of my stupor and unstick my tongue from the roof of my mouth. “Hey.” I finally manage.

We stand there staring at each other for a beat longer than what is polite. Maybe she feels this pull between us too...

“You ready?” I finally ask.

“Yep! Let’s go.” Sansa is grinning so big her face must hurt.

After locking her door we head to the lift and our usual silence falls between us. When we enter the elevator and when the doors close, it all shifts.

It feels as though there’s no air, the space around the two of us is almost physically crackling with something intoxicating and I have to clench my fists to stop myself from grabbing Sansa and pulling her against me.

I sneak a glance at her, out the corner of my eye, to see if I’m standing there, suffocating alone in my pull for this woman.
I’m relieved when I see color in Sansa’s cheeks and notice her chest moving a bit quicker than usual.

We both exhale a sigh when we exit the lift into the parking garage. I decided we should take my G Wagon so we’re not cramped. Making sure to reach her door first, I press the fob to unlock it and open it for her.

She looks tickled fucking pink. “What a gentleman. Thank you.” Sansa says, brushing closer to me than she needed, to get into her seat.

Shaking some sense back into myself, I stride around to my side, hopping in and get us on the road.

“How was work?” Sansa asks me as soon as we hit daylight. And she’s genuinely interested. When’s the last time someone gave a shit about my day? Besides my “family.”

I can’t admit that the mere thought of doing this with her kept me from finishing my tasks. “Not bad. I do a lot on weekends and from home, wasn’t much to catch up on.”

“We have something in common there. I like working from home but you definitely have to learn to push yourself since the environment is different.”

How I thought this woman was some rookie romance novelist or simply a model makes me feel like a total fool now. She’s bright, mature and insightful.

And I’m fucking whipped.

“Have you been able to work on your new book since you moved in?” I find myself asking, surprising myself. I really shouldn’t be, I’m desperate to know everything about her.

Sansa sighs. “Not yet and I’m having a bit of trouble with it anyway. I actually got the first set of revised edits for my third novel and I need to knock those out first.”

Our easy chatter follows us all the way until we reach the grocery store. Sansa unloads, like the night before, about her current writers block and I don’t give her a chance to apologize. Just like
when I first met her, she could talk endlessly about everything or nothing and I want to hear it all.

Sansa admits that this is the first time her and her editor aren’t seeing eye to eye on some changes for her book and she knows it will be a long couple of weeks ahead.

I don’t know what the fuck to say, what was right, what was wrong. Instead, I speak my mind, remembering that she seems to like the fact I’m an honest son of a bitch.

“Don’t compromise your hard work and what you think is right simply to please someone behind a desk. You have one novel that’s about to be a best seller and another on the way, you know what the hell you are doing and the stories are yours, not theirs.”

I park the car as I finish talking and turn to see Sansa staring at me in apparent awe. She opens and closes her mouth a few times before a brilliant smile covers her face. “Thank you Sandor. I need that reminder sometimes. I can give in too easily.” She squeezes my hand where it rests on the middle console and then gets out the wagon.

I meet Sansa at the back of my car, still half dazed at her reaction to my words, where she’s grabbing her reusable shopping bags that honestly look too fancy to even use. She gives me a soft smile as I lock up and we make our way over to grab our grocery carts.

It had been raining earlier and other than the puny little waste of space carts, there’s only one large one that’s dry enough to even put your hands on. Sansa doesn’t miss a beat, pulling it out of its spot in the back, placing her bags and purse in the small child seat at the front.

“Looks like we’ll have to share.” She grins at me. “I promise not to sneak all my wine and chocolate in with your things.” Her tinkling laughter makes my heart flip flop.

How is she so comfortable around me? Not just a person that’s brand new in her life but my scarred, old self? The question that is really bothering me though and demanding to be answered, is how I’m the bloody hells do I feel the same about her?

I catch up easily, having been lost in my own thoughts for a second too long, and we set off on our trek to fill our empty cabinets.

I refuse to allow my mind to use the word that Bronn had thrown around so easily earlier today,
domestic. Because that is exactly what the fuck this is. Sansa lets me know the things she’s looking for and we go down every aisle, taking turns putting our belongings on our sides of the cart.

In between talk of food and other necessary items, Sansa shares memories and stories that are triggered by something she sees or she simply wants to make me laugh, I swear. It takes me about thirty times longer than normal to look around and see who might be staring at me. But I notice right away they’re not staring at me, they’re staring at us.

I can’t put together if Sansa truly is this touchy-feely of a person or if she’s just finding excuses to touch me. Every time she wants my attention she glides her hand along my knuckles or pats my forearm. If I’m looking for something on a shelf, she’ll slide up right next to me, on her tippy toes to grab gods knows what, her position ensuring I see the sliver of her stomach that’s exposed by her raised shirt. The perfect skin making my mouth water and jeans tighten.

I know that we’ve been talking and joking the entire time, even if she is leading the way. But she brings something out of me, something better, and I find myself telling her my better memories. There aren’t many, none of them spectacular, but there has been a positive air to my life thanks to certain people that came into it.

The other patrons seem to notice this, and us, and to my absolute, utter bewilderment, most of them just shoot happy looking glances our way and an older couple even smiles at us.

A snotty looking woman takes in my face and her own pales as she pushes her cart quickly away. Then there’s a group of young bachelors, probably college boys, who appreciate Sansa way too fucking much. However, they quickly stop their oogling when they see me standing next to her.

Especially since I have my body directly behind hers, my chest touching her back, reminiscent of this morning. I reach above and around her to grab the olive oil she was struggling to grasp, and I hear breath hitch.

“Here you go little bird.” I say close to her ear before I go back to the front of our cart.

It Sansa a few seconds to catch up with me.

I would’ve helped her regardless, but the looks of shock and disappointment on the boys’ stupid faces will keep me smiling for days. Two negative experiences in a crowded store, on a busy day? That’s unheard of for me and it feels bloody fantastic to not be hunched over, trying to race out of
the place.

We make our way to the perishables and produce next and Sansa’s face falls farther than I’ve seen in the short time I’ve known her and she lets out a huge sigh.

“I already miss our local farmers market. Selfishly, because everything is so fresh and so much better than a grocery store. Even though this one is lovely and beyond any expectation I had for the city.” She rushes out and looks at me with a concerned tug of her eyes, worried she’s upset me.

I shake my head and wave her off, making sure she knows I don’t care what she thinks about this fucking store. I’ll take her to a thousand more as long as she’s happy and I get to spend time with her.

Sansa looks relieved. “But it’s nice to help the farmers and their families too. I can’t imagine how hard they work and let’s be honest, we know they don’t get as much income from these places.”

_Don’t say it, don’t you dare_!

“There’s a good farmers market in the city. A bit of a drive but it’s worth it.”

What the fuck did I just do?

“Oh really!” Sansa’s face transforms back to happiness in the blink of an eye and I feel my chest almost puff out in pride at being the reason why.

_At least don’t dig the hole deeper you idiot!_

Going against my subconscious, or perhaps it’s the bitter old dog who lives in my mind as well, I can’t always tell them apart, I continue speaking.

“It’s open every Saturday afternoon. We could go this weekend?”

Sansa literally gives a little clap of her hands and her smile threatens to blind me.
“That would be wonderful Sandor! But I feel like I’m taking up all of your time, I don’t want to be a burden.” She says to me and I can tell right away that she’s truly worried.

Is it the fact that she can’t tell at all what she does to me? I doubt I’m that good of an actor. Or did someone make her feel this way and cause her to be insecure in a flash, almost on instinct? If it’s the latter, I best enjoy my time with her before I go to jail for murder.

”I don’t think you’ve ever been a burden in your life.” I tell her, adding some heat to my voice in an attempt to try and flirt with her. It’s one talent I definitely have not fucking mastered.

Perhaps I’m getting better at it though, Sansa bites her bottom lip as her cheekbones are tinged pink.

“I haven’t been in too long, just bloody lazy to make the drive, but it’s a nice place for an afternoon out.” I continue.

“I would love to go. Thank you.” Sansa gives me a sweet smile and keeps walking.

When she sees the reason I like this store so much she’s almost as excited as she was about the farmers market.

There is an actual wine bar and cellar in the place and it’s fucking awesome.

We make our way into the section and ware immediately greeted by their chipper sommelier. I come here often and the young man greets me without even looking at my scars. He does give Sansa a once over and then a raised eyebrow to me. I say nothing and bark at him to put my usual order in for delivery and ask for a couple of single bottles to keep me going while I wait for the case to arrive at my house.

Ordering wine by the case is so much easier.

He and I walk Sansa through the ordering process and then her and I even sample a few different types. Standing there having good wine and cheese with her is more fun than I’ve had in my whole life. Gods I’m lame.
After Sansa has made her own selection and also grabbed some vino for the interim, we finally make our way to the cashier. As we’re waiting in line she starts grabbing an assortment of their earth friendly bags.

“Since I don’t think you simply forgot your own at home I insist on getting these for you. We all have to do our part in saving the planet, it’s the only one we have.” She tells me, her chin up in the air leaving no room for argument.

I stare at her long enough that she actually has to tug the end of the cart to move us up as it’s almost our turn.

“If you insist.” I reply, raising my hands in mock surrender.

Sansa just laughs and goes through her choices, making sure she’s picked the best bags for me.

She looks positively smug and I almost want to tell her that she could get me to agree to anything. I don’t though, mostly because it’s beyond forward for me and also, I’d miss her fire and spunk when she tries to convince me to do something.

We pay for and pack up our purchases and then I load them all into my trunk, not allowing her to help. I’m shocked she hasn’t even tried to protest and I see why when I turn to grab the last bag. Sansa is watching me, mostly my arms as I empty the cart.

She only snaps out of her appraising, once I close the door, clearing her throat and rushing to return the car to its spot. I get into my car trying not to dwell on what just happened, and turn it on, waiting for her to join me. Sansa is still seemingly a little flustered and hardly makes eye contact while she’s buckling her seatbelt.

It doesn’t take her long though to relax once again and start up that steady stream of conversation she’s so bloody good at. I can tell she’s had quite enough of spilling her guts while I simply listen and ask questions.

Sansa begins almost drilling me, but it could never be taken that way from her, it’s too warm and gentle. She is eager to know all about Bronn and I’s company.
It takes the entire car ride home and the walk to her flat to give her a still pretty condensed version of that part of my life.

She didn’t ask about Bronn and our friendship specifically, so I don’t share our story just yet. Instead, I tell her that it all began back home in the north.

I can’t help but feel disappointed every time I think about the fact that her and I were in the same region of the country for so many years but not close enough to cross paths.

Bronn and I decided almost simultaneously we had endured enough of life up there wanted to move to the city. We had already started a small business a couple of years prior but only contracting out security guards.

We are and were more than comfortable, financially, both of us doing the bodyguard shit for a few years, him longer than me. When I had enough money and enough of the gawking at my face, I quit and that’s how the business began.

It took off like a bullet and surprised Bronn and myself. My reputation preceded me apparently. As soon it started making real money, and we were getting requests almost faster than we could fill them, he quit his security job to work with me full time. Less than three years later we were signing the papers to buy the building we now work out of.

Sansa looks completely impressed and congratulates me on the accomplishment. I mumble a thanks, still trying to get used to her praise. Meanwhile, the whole time this is going on we move like that team again, a well oiled machine.

The internal war I had going on with myself, between making that forbidden second trip back to the car for the grocery bags or let Sansa carry the lighter ones, finally ended with the latter winning out.

We make it up to her apartment in one heavy trip. Between the two of us, I swear we bought half the fucking store. Then, without even thinking about it, I move all her bags to the counter, leaving my own by the door, and we begin putting everything away and organizing her new kitchen.

We don’t say much, other than my asking where things go and her instructing me. Even then, we don’t always need words, I can follow her lead and she watches what I’m doing, simply nodding and smiling toward the appropriate cupboard.
Everything is neatly put away and she’s folding her empty grocery bags way too fucking soon.

I don’t want to leave her yet.

We both pause, silently looking at each other. I’m at a loss of what to say but thankfully, Sansa does what she does best and saves me.

Her face lights up like a fucking Christmas tree, as if she’s just discovered life on another planet or something equally as important. "Do you want to stay for dinner?"

Maybe she wants to be around me as well. No, no, she said she owed me for the take-out, that’s all this is. Right? “You sure? Making me a meal is much more than a few containers of rice and dumplings.”

Sansa looks at me and I swear her eyes turn molten. “You’re right. That’s why tonight we’re instead celebrating my first dinner in my new place. I’ll still owe you pizza or something else just as greasy another time.” She promises.

I go to argue and tell her she doesn’t owe me fucks. Allowing me to be in her presence is damn thanks enough. Somehow, I hold that in. “If you’re sure...”

“Of course I am. It would be sad to eat alone during the christening meal of my kitchen.” Does she know how her words bloody affect me? One look at that still heated glint in her eyes and I might actually have to go with yes.

“Only if I can help.” I compromise.

“Deal!” She beams. “Did you want to put your things away and then come back? What I’m thinking of making may take a while so we can get started as soon as you’re ready.”

We could grow the fucking plants and raise the animals needed to make the meal and it wouldn’t be long enough.
I keep that to myself as well. “Aye. I’ll be right back then.” I say as I grab my own bags on my way out the door and then head across the floor to my flat.

Once I’m safely behind my own door, I try to control my breathing as I practically throw my groceries, still in the bag, into the fridge. I almost forgot to open the door. Once everything’s pretty much where they should be, I go to my wine fridge and grab a bottle of Veuve Clicquot.

In all honesty, I’m not trying to wine and dine Sansa or even impress her. If it happens, that’s just an added extra. I’ve been gifted so many bottles like this over the years, and I do give away some but I forget about them really, they just sit there, chilled and ready to be poured into glasses. I never have a reason to celebrate or anyone to do it with.

And now, I finally do.

I’m back at hers in record time. Sansa left the door ajar so I knock once before slipping inside and closing the door behind me.

Sansa looks over from her position at her kitchen island, tons of ingredients in front of her. “Sandor you shouldn’t have.” She chastises, looking at the bottle of champagne, but a warm smile tugs at her mouth.

“For many bottles and not enough reasons to pop them. Where are you flutes?”

She stares at my face trying to read my thoughts through my features alone, she must see something there because she doesn’t push and instead grabs the glasses and place them in front of me.

I give her the Veuve and her eyes go wide. “I’m terrible at opening champagne! You do it.” She says putting her hands behind her back.

I chuckle, fuck she’s cute. “No chance. Your new flat, you do the honors.” My fingertips reach out without thought and and tap on her arm, willing her to take the bottle.

The second my skin touches hers, I hear her breath catch in her throat, as it did earlier and my hand freezes before I can snatch it back.
Sansa clears her throat and gives me a mock glare. “Fine.” And with that she takes the bubbly from my grasp and starts tearing and untying the seals. She wraps a small towel around the top and holds it away from us both and her face looks like she’s about to wrestle an alligator.

I have to hide my grin as I don’t want to stop her progress now. A few seconds later the cork finally releases with a loud pop. Sansa squeals and jumps back even though she knew it was coming. Between her trepidation, excitement and the proud look on her face, my laugh finally escapes me. Sansa narrows her eyes at the sound before joining me at her own expense while pouring the cool liquid into two glasses.

I raise my own in a cheers. “To your new flat.”

Sansa mimics my action. “And to new neighbors.” She counters, holding my gaze while she takes a long sip.

When she pulls the glass away and licks her lips while never breaking eye contact, I finally take my own gulp. I hope it’s enough distraction to help stop me from throwing her over the counter or simply ruining my pants.

Sansa breaks the spell between us first. “So, I was thinking we could have Italian. How does that sound?”

She could’ve offered to feed meland mines and I would be panting like a fucking dog. “Aye, just tell what I can do.”

After putting on one of her more “upbeat playlists” as she described it to me, we start making dinner.

Sansa began getting out every utensil in the kitchen I swear and then preheating, greasing and who’s knows what else, before joining me at the island so can chop what feels like an entire herb garden.

We don’t say much for a while, other than Sansa telling me about what we’re making and how she learned to cook it and why carbonara is her favorite. She could’ve read off the ingredient list of the pasta box and I would’ve been hanging on to every damn word.
When she leaves me to finish the prep and to start the garlic bread while she browns the pancetta over the stove, her distance affects me in a way I wasn’t expecting.

At first I stop what I’m doing and just watch Sansa move her hips to the music, happily lost in her task at hand.

And then then I’m hit with a slap of irritation and confusion.

What the fuck am I doing here? Why does this amazing woman want me in her home, why is she making me dinner and spending, so far, all of her time with me?

Is it a joke, maybe a bet? As soon as the thought crosses my mind I feel sick, I know Sansa would never do that to me.

It doesn’t answer any of my questions though, I’m still at a total loss as to why she wants to be in my presence and how she can practically overlook my scars.

I place the knife I had been using down on the counter a little too harshly, making Sansa turn to look at me.

“Are you alright?” She’s instantly worried, truly concerned for me. “You didn’t cut yourself did you?” She rushes over to me looking like she wants to grab both of my hands in her own, but stops herself.

I take a step back from her and curse myself immediately when her face falls.

“I’m fine, and no I didn’t hurt myself.” I bite out. I can’t calm down, I want to, but I can’t.

Before Sansa can ask what’s really wrong, the questions rush out of me, sounding more like accusations.

“Why haven’t you asked about my face? How can you act like if they’re not fucking there?” I
growl, pointing to the ruined right side of my head.

To her credit, shock colors her face and I’m glad that I’ve gotten a real reaction out of her and that she’s allowed it. Quickly it turns to heat however, and not the lust filled kind I want to see. No, this is that firey defiance and slight anger she let me glimpse the first night we met.

“It’s not my place and it’s not my story to tell.” She tells me in a voice so eerily calm yet forceful that I couldn’t have spoken even if she expected me to. Thankfully, she’s not done. “And what would it do for either of us for me to stare?”

Sansa has her hands on her hips, her eyes never leaving my own.

Nothing. The staring, the gawking, it doesn’t help anyone, or bring happiness. Sure as fuck doesn’t heal my face. All it’s done is make me me hard and bitter, to the point that when this beautiful woman treats me like I’m not broken, I can’t even let her, without questioning it, probably fucking everything up.

I don’t know what she takes my silence as. Cowardice, anger, indifference but knowing her, I’m sure she sees right through me. She probably knows that I’m just lost. No one’s ever treated me the way she has or asked such a blunt question.

“Your scars don’t bother me. Well, not their physical presence. The only part of them that affects me is the story behind how they came to be. One that you never have to share if you don’t want to.” Sansa fixes me with a glare that tells me she means that.

“The thought of you suffering, of being in such pain. And the emotional scars that act also left behind, that’s what eats me up inside.”

“You don’t even know me.” I whisper.

“I know enough.” Those three word carry more weight than anything ever spoken to me.

“I’m a scarred, old, miserable man. I don’t understand why you want my company.”
Sansa has the nerve to smile, a sweet smirk that calms my nerves. “How old are you?” Of all the things I expected to come out of her mouth in this tense moment, that wasn’t one of them.

“Seriously?”

“Yes, you go about your age enough, I might as well find out what it is.”

“Thirty-two.”

“Sandor, that’s not old.” She chastises me.

“Old compared to you. What are you, eighteen?” My insecurity over her age seeps out. It’s nothing to do with her or her maturity, it’s about the fact that the younger she is the less likely it is that she’ll want to waste her time on an ancient dog.

“Twenty-one. That’s only eleven years. Plus, age is just a number.” Gods, she is really young but still wiser than me. I drop it, knowing this won’t go anywhere. She’s put her foot down.

Sansa keeps going, not discouraged or missing a beat. “You’re tall and you, um, work out.” She’s blushing and stumbling over her words, while she looks over my body. I’m glad I seem to have an effect on her, it’s only fair.

“Your eyes and the left side of your face are rugged and handsome. And I’m guessing the right would’ve matched so I’m allowed to say, You’re. Not. Ugly.” She says, not mincing her meaning.

“And Sandor.” She sighs looking up at me, and I want to slap myself for putting this distance between us. “I don’t trust people easily or have that “click” with them as I did with you. Sure you can be an ass, aren’t we all sometimes? But you’re a good man who I find myself feeling comfortable and safe with, two things I’ve been missing in my life for a while.”

We just stare at each other for a few seconds before I manage to nod and soften my face. Sansa accepts my meek acknowledgement and goes back to the frying pan.

I finish chopping the ingredients she had given me and moved onto grating the cheese, needing the
time to decide what I want to say.

I’m not ready to tell her my whole sad life story yet but I want to share something with Sansa, let her know I trust her as well and can never express to her how much her words mean to me.

“When you asked about my family and I snapped, in the lift.” I pause, making sure she remembers. When all I hear is the sound of the gas being turned off I continue. “It’s because they go hand in hand.” I murmur, pointing again to my scars, I can feel Sansa watching me.

I don’t need to look at her to know she understands that’s all I can manage tonight. She exudes it. Instead I keep my head down, watching the grater.

That’s why I almost jump when Sansa’s delicate arms wrap around me from behind. Her hands are on my ribs and her cheek is flat against my back. She doesn’t say a word, we simply stay that way for a minute or so, and I even move a large hand to cover both of hers.

Sansa gives me a tight squeeze that clenches my heart, and then goes back to finishing our meal. I worry the atmosphere will turn awkward but once she’s organized, the meal in progress once again, Sansa starts chirping like none of it happened. Except my back is tingling from her touch.

“Should only be another five minutes until it’s all ready. Shall we sit at the island?”

We can sit on the roof. “Aye, fine by me.”

“You want to pick the wine?”

I nod and put away the remaining champagne before choosing a bottle from her wine fridge.

When I go to place down the glasses and vino, I see Sansa has laid out plates and cutlery at two stools right next to each other. I was silently thankful she chose the island over her dining table, I didn’t want to be that far apart. Maybe she had the same thought.

“Sit, sit.” Sansa shoos me toward my seat. “I’ll bring the food over.” One look at her face and I know there’s no use arguing.
Minutes later I take a bite of the most delicious meal I’ve ever had, and a small groan leaves my mouth unconsciously. Out the corner of my eye, I see Sansa bite her lip. “This is fucking amazing.” I commend her.

She finally looks away, blushing. “I’m glad you like it.”

“So what do your hundreds of siblings do?” I’m a sponge soaking up every drop of information she’ll give me.

Her face always brightens when she speaks of her family. I hope they all know how bloody lucky they are to have her.

“Robb plays football for the Direwolves, he’s a striker. Jon is a detective back in Scotland, he made his way through the ranks quickly, he’s very passionate. Brandon and Rick are both in school, university and college. As for Arya.” Sansa pauses sounding exasperated. “She told us she had to go “find herself” almost a year ago.” Sansa uses air quotations and rolls her eyes.

“What the hell does that mean?” I laugh.

“Who knows. We haven’t seen her in person since then but she checks in a lot and hasn’t been arrested, not much my parents can do.” She shakes her head smiling. “Arya is happy though and that’s all I want for her. Even if I’m certain she’s learning some rare form of karate or other intense fighting techniques.”

“She’s a fighter then?” Sansa hasn’t been exaggerating how different she is from her little sister. No wonder a lot of her stories end with them screaming at each other.

“Yes, she was always getting into scuffles and even brawls in school. She always came out unscathed.”

Sansa looks down at her lap, our plates empty, she seems to be deciding to share her next thought with me or not. “Usually she was sticking up for Shireen, I used my words and Arya used her fists.”
I turn to face her, staying quiet and letting her continue at her own pace.

“I know what it’s like to live with scars. Some of us have only physical, or only emotional and then there’s the rest of us who suffer with both.”

Her depths may always surprise me.

“And I have watched those I love be treated differently simply because of how they look. That’s the other reason I see past your scars.”

Taking a deep breath Sansa goes on. “Shireen was badly injured in the crash that took her parents. Everything healed in time, besides her burns.”

My stomach drops, I would never wish the worst part of me on anyone.

“They’re on her face too but not as much. Her left hand and arm are the worst. She never let the accident, her loss or her permanent reminders of both change who she is. I’ve never met anyone kinder or more down to earth. Yet, she was forced to deal with stares, bullying, questions and being treated differently overall just because she looks a little different.”

Sansa is getting mad, as if reliving those memories. It must be a burden to be so empathetic, I admire her.

“And then I was treated better because of my looks? It’s unfair and cruel and I vowed to never treat anyone based on physical appearance. Ever.”

I place my hand over her own one that is resting on the counter. “I’m sorry she went through that, I can say I understand her struggles. But what I would’ve given to have two wolves in my corner growing up.” I try to smile.

It seems to work, Sansa begins breathing more evenly and her face loses some fury. “She always thanks us. I just wish we could’ve done more, for her and Bran.”

I furrow my brow at her. “He’s a paraplegic. When he was younger he had a fall and that was it. It
changed him, he was so active and outgoing, it’s been hard for him to figure out who he’s meant to be now.”

Gods, what a hand at life this bright girl has been dealt. Yet she sits here, warm and welcoming to me, eager to experience life no matter the curves balls she’s experienced.

“Obviously he receives stares and queries too, as well as being treated differently than Rick. I think it’s why he’s become closed off in a way.”

She looks back up from where she had been staring at our hands and meets my eyes. “I’m so fortunate to know them, love them. What happened to them, who they are because of it and how they look doesn’t take away from that.”

“Thank you. For telling me.”

I get a real smile then. “Thank you for being someone I can tell. And sorry for being a bit of a downer.”

“Never apologize for telling me about your life.”

Sansa’s eyes drift to my mouth and I find myself doing the same to hers. We both move at the same time towards each other and -

“You coulda had a bad bitch, non-committal
Help you with your career just a little
You’re ’posed to hold me down, but you’re holding me back
And that’s the sound of me not calling you back!”

“What the fuck?” I jump and look around for the loud source of music, knowing it’s not the iPod.

Sansa covers her face with her hands. “Oh my gosh, I’m going to kill Shireen.” She peeks at me through her fingers. “She changed her iMessage tone before I left and wouldn’t tell me what it was. I was wondering why she insisted on calling me everyday. Shock factor.”
I burst out laughing. The tune was catchy but didn’t suit Sansa, well not if she was out in public or forgot to silence her phone before a work meeting at least.

She laughs with me while she crosses the room to grab her phone from the couch.

“Everything alright?”

“Oh yes. She had nothing of sustenance to say and now is sending hundreds of laughing emojis before even hearing about my reaction. Wait until she finds out I wasn’t alone.” She says as she flicks the button on the side of her iPhone and begins clearing our mess.

“She knows about me?” I’m shocked.

“Of course. My whole family does. I meant to mention earlier, my father will probably be sending you a token of appreciation for helping me last night.”

The Starks and their bloody thanks. “Suppose there’s no point in saying he doesn’t have to?”

“Nope, none.” She beams at me.

“Here, let me help.”

We rinse everything and stack her dishwasher and then there’s no reason for me to stay any longer.

“Guess I should head home.” I know my voice sounds disappointed.

“Yeah, it’s a long journey.” She teases, making me chuckle.

Its déjà vu when Sansa follows me to her door and I turn around almost expecting a hug. Never one to be predictable, she instead places a hand on my right shoulder as she lifts up on her toes and places a kiss to my ruined cheek.
I don’t have much feeling left on my scarred side but her kiss made my skin heat and I know her lips brushed the corner of my mouth.

If I hadn’t been frozen in shock and pleasure my resolve finally would’ve caved and I would be devouring Sansa right now.

Pulling back and leaning on her door, Sansa gives me the sexiest grin I’ve ever seen. “Good night Sandor.”

“Good night little bird.” My nickname for her gives me my intended reaction, a deep blush.

That night I sleep better than I have in years.
Hello you amazing humans! 😊

I cannot thank you all enough for loving and supporting this story, you’re all just awesome.

Couple things. I don’t know anything about sports so humor me whenever those aspects come up. Tom’s Kitchen in London is soo nice, I was there this time last year and had to mention it. Also, totally aware farmer markets are morning excursions but that didn’t fit with my timeline so guess what? This one is open in the afternoon. #rebel

Last, I snuck in a reference to another show I LOVE! Tell me if you caught it and if you watch too.

Keep the comments and feedback coming!

❤️

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Four days. Four fucking days.

That’s how long it’s been since I’ve seen Sansa and I’m fucking miserable.

Fuck.

I haven’t spoken to her either. No matter what Bronn said, I couldn’t bring myself to reach out. Any confidence that had been trying to grow within me dissipated more every day that I wasn’t with Sansa, until it vanished completely.

Add in no sleep since Monday night and I know I’m meaner and grumpier than ever. How the hells has this girl taken such a hold on me already? I feel as if I’m wandering aimlessly without her.

It’s only five in the morning but I get up and grab my shit for the day and head to the gym. Perks of owning the place, I can open it when I bloody want.
I work out until the ushers come in for their pre-work sessions and crowd me. At least showering here means I have no desire to jerk off. Unlike every other day this week, sometimes twice, at home, when Sansa would commandeered all my thoughts.

Stomping into my office, after getting coffee and breakfast, I’m relieved Osha nor Bronn are in yet. I’ve been shite company this week and even if I feel like crap for it, I can’t drag myself out of this hole.

And I’ve been here more than usual. I found any and every excuse to leave my flat everyday, at all times of day, in the hopes I would bump into her. Too bad I’m not that bloody lucky.

Today I’ll get to speak to Sansa at least. I have to. I promised to take her to Notting Hill to the market tomorrow. She may not want to go anymore and that’s fin-...it is what it is, but I won’t let her down.

As soon as it’s an acceptable time of day, I rub my sweaty palms along my jeans and then pick up my phone, that squeezing nonsense going on in my gut again. Damn butterflies....

Sandor: Hi Sansa. How was your week?

Can I shoot myself? “How was your week?” Why is writing a simple message so fucking difficult when it comes to her?

Those thoughts are chased away when I hear my phone vibrate.

Sansa : Hey you! 😊 It’s been okay, lots of editing and strongly worded emails. I thought of what you said to me and stood my ground.

The first smile in four days crosses my face as I read and reread her message.

Sansa : How about yours?

Shit, utter and total shit without you. That’s what I want to say.
Sandor: Good, glad I could help.

Sandor: Same shit different day. Happy to see the weekend.

That’s all I end up saying. She can take the last part as she wants...

Sandor: Did you still want to go to Notting Hill tomorrow afternoon?

Sansa: Yes please! I’m looking forward to it 😊

I’m too far gone to let her words sink in and cheer me up completely, but they take the edge off. I want to tell her that I can’t fucking wait to see her. She writes again before I can grow the balls to.

Sansa: We should go to brunch first! What do you think?

I’m not huge on eating out. I do enjoy it and get over myself but I wouldn’t want to eat in front of a mirror and that weighs on my mind about the other patrons.

Everyone else can fuck off tomorrow though.

Sandor: Sounds good. I can come get you at 10:30?

Sansa: Perfect! I’ve heard good things about Tom’s Kitchen.

Thankfully, I have eaten there before and I know there’s places I’m comfortable sitting.

Sandor: Aye, it’s good there.
If I wasn’t such an idiot I’d make conversation but I’m drawing a blank.

Sansa: Awesome! See you tomorrow.

Sandor: Until tomorrow little bird

I exhale a large breath, tension and misery leaving me simply from talking to her. Feeling relaxed for the first time in days I feel another grin tug at my mouth.

“Fucking finally!” Bronn exclaims as he swaggers into my office.

“What are you on about?” My good mood is slipping.

“You don’t look as though you’re about to murder everyone in sight. Guessing you saw your girl then?”

“She’s not my girl.” I grumble, the fact making my stomach turn. “We were just messaging.”

“Not yet.” He wags his eyebrows. “And you’re this chuffed? I can’t wait to see how you act once you actually kiss her.” He laughs.

I hate that he has a point. Maybe I’ll just drop dead when, I mean if, the time comes, from being overwhelmed and happy.

“Did you have a reason for bothering me?” I bark.

“Osha and I have been the only ones brave enough to check on and ask things of you this week, and it’s my turn.” Bronn smirks like the ass he is. “Here, sign these.” He pushes a pile of papers my way.

I snatch them and begin scribbling. Of course he’s not done with me yet.
“Seeing as you’re all rainbows and kittens again, we’re going for dinner tonight.”

Sighing I look up at him, my crazy best friend who has never given up on me. “Fine.”

We go over some pending contracts and finalize the notice for our upcoming AGM and then I’m blissfully alone for the rest of the day.

I did make an effort to go and get Osha her favorite coffee and offer her a meek smile along with it. She put up with my bad attitude everyday without complaint.

“Feeling better you big pup?”

“I am. Shouldn’t have been miserable to you.” It’s the best apology I can give her.

“This was your “get out of jail free card” for the year.” She winks at me knowingly. Bronn wouldn’t have said a word, Osha is just like Sansa and can read me like an open book.

I actually get my work done, even if I do find myself glancing at my cell repeatedly, hoping to hear from Sansa and then willing myself to message her. Neither happen.

By the time Bronn comes to get me for dinner I’m looking forward to it. Maybe the food, beer and company will keep my mind occupied. Probably not, but here’s to trying.

When I look at my watch on the walk home several hours later, not even tipsy but at least one over the limit, I’m surprised it’s pretty late. Suppose Bronn succeeded in distracting me somewhat, I hadn’t been itching to rush home, hoping to see Sansa. Even if that’s all I wanted.

As I reach the door to our building, I spot a flash of red walking towards me and wonder if maybe I am drunk. After planning, wishing and repeating it on a loop for days, am I really bumping into her when I had given up any hope of seeing her until the morning?

She looks up from digging in her bag and I know it’s her. The dazzling smile she flashes me is the first hint. Her excited shout from down the street and her now hurried steps, confirm this is really happening. “Sandor!”
I stay where I am, holding the door open and wave to her, smiling, hoping it’s not too frightening. When she reaches me I don’t manage to respond before her empty arm wraps around my side and gives me a quick squeeze.

“Hi.” I say, my voice more like gravel than usual as I rest my hand on her lower back.

Sansa pulls back with a flushed face and coy smile. “Finally, our paths cross.” She walks ahead of me to the lift. “You must’ve been busy this week.”

Busy looking for you and being a coward. “You could say that, I’ve been at the office everyday.”

“Ah, that’s the problem right there. You were out and about while I was locked in my flat, glued to my computer. If it wasn’t for late night coffee runs I wouldn’t see anyone.” She tells me, holding up her take-out cup for emphasis.

I feel slightly better knowing I couldn’t have seen her, unless I was a stalker living in her air vents.

“What were you doing out late on a Friday night? Hot date?” Sansa asks, almost rambling now.

We’re walking into the lift and she tries to hide her face, swiping her fob and pressing two, but I can hear in her tone and saw it in her features before she turned away, she’s apprehensive. Of what? My answer?

“Fuck no.” I respond immediately with a laugh. “Brons wishes.” I joke, trying to lighten the mood.

Sansa’s shoulders literally sag and her face softens. “This the only break you’ve been getting?” I ask, with a nod to her cup of caffeine, concerned about her well being.

“Pretty much, but I’m sending off my final draft in the morning so I’ll be back to normal after that. At least my strange routine had me see not only you but I met Margaery too. She’s lovely.”

The young woman is feisty, like her gran, and also very nice. She’s only ever shown me kindness,
even if I hardly ever see her. She’s been abroad, for her fashion line, for about eighteen months.
Previous to this stint in Los Angeles, she was living here three months out of the year, tops.

“She’s finally back?”

“Yes, she only landed earlier this week and she said she’s here to stay. Whatever that means, we
only spoke for a short while. We’re actually going for drinks tomorrow, after you and I get back.”
She’s excited, and it makes me happy. Like the love sick dog that I am.

“Olenna will be pleased at having her home for good. She’s been gone a while.”

We’ve already made it to Sansa’s door, my feet taking me with her without my mind even
knowing.

“Thanks for walking with me.” Sansa says, while unlocking her deadbolt.

“Anytime.”

We linger as usual, neither of us wanting to leave first it’s seems, and I shock us both by breaking
the silence.

“So, uh, I know we’re seeing each other tomorrow, but what are you doing on Sunday?”

Sansa pulls her plump bottom lip between her teeth. “Nothing at all. Why?”

“Would you like to spend the day with me? Not running errands.” I clarify.

Her smile takes my breath away. “I’d love to. It’s a date.”

*Gods*, I hope so.
“Right, good.” I clear my throat, excitement threatening to drown me.

“I’ll see you in the morning and you can tell me the plan for Sunday.” She’s still beaming.

“Aye. Good night little bird.”

“Night.” Sansa says to me from under her lashes before slipping into her flat.

I lean my weight on my hands, rested on the walls beside her door, willing myself to not knock, knowing when she opened up my resolve would snap and I might take her right here.

When I finally make it to bed, it only takes a handful of firm strokes of my aching cock before I cum hard enough to see stars.

I sleep well. But not for long. My body must be on some sort of auto pilot after this past week of restless nights and I am up at dawn.

I’m pretty sure my nerves are playing a part in this as well. I’m realizing that when I see Sansa in a few hours, I have no idea what the fuck to tell her about our date. I still can’t believe I’m even going on a date with Sansa fucking Stark.

I have to stop that train of thought or I’ll sit here hyperventilating with excitement and nerves.

I decide to order an Uber and do a quick workout at the gym at the office, instead of the small one I have inside my home, seeing as I need to get my car.

After sweating out some of my anxiety I start the drive home and give in, calling in reinforcements. It’s still pretty early but I know that Osha will be up with the kids.

“Bossman, everything alright?” I never call her on weekends so she’s instantly concerned.

“Yes all fine don’t worry. I’m calling because, well, fuck, I need your help.”
“Name it, anything at all.”

“I have a date tomorrow....” I know she’ll have a reaction, everyone close to me will, I pause allowing time for my admission to sink in.

“I KNEW IT!” Osha shouts, her voice echoing in my car since she’s on speaker. “You have your moods but never like last week. Who is she?” She’s excited for me and it makes me feel good.

My heart clenches like when Sansa talks to me, touches me or you know breathes. This is only a shadow compared to what that little bird does to me though.

“My new neighbor. Sansa Stark.”

“Holy shit! Ned’s eldest daughter, the author?”

“Aye.” Of course she knows of her. The woman is in deep with all gossip and news.

“That’s one hot redhead, good on you big man! Now, how can I help?” Osha is all business now.

“Well, I didn’t even know what the fuck to do at first but I need to be comfortable or it will be a disaster.” I feel the nerves over ruining tomorrow start to eat away at me again.

“That’s why I decided to take her to Berkshire. We’ll be alone on the drives to and from which is all I want. And then I thought a hike and a picnic?” I surprise myself with how honest I’m being.

I had gone over every date possible the entire time I worked out. In the end, I knew doing something that I would normally plan on the weekend would be the best idea.

I hope it’s not selfish, but if I’m too out of my element then my focus won’t be on her and that’s what’s most important. I go a few times a month to different places outside of the city, not too far, to blow off steam.
Obviously, with her, I won’t stick my earphones in and ignore her while I listen to music and stomp my way through the off the beaten trail paths. I’ll take her on the more scenic routes with their easier walks, that way we can keep up conversation.

I’ll also forgo a bottle of water and a protein bar shoved in my backpack for a whole meal. That’s where Osha comes in, I wouldn’t know where the fuck to start (plus, I don’t have time) and I’m hoping she can pack a basket of surprises.

“It sounds like she’s a lucky lady. What time do you want to pick up the basket?” She reads my mind.

We go over a couple of details, thoughts I had of what she could pack, her offering to supply blankets too and deciding it’s easiest for me to grab the things from the office in the morning.

Before hanging up, Osha reminds me that it’s a two-way street and tells me to be confident going into tomorrow because I’m a catch.

Her words fill my eyes with emotion. Not tears.

I take my time showering and dressing for the day. I wouldn’t call myself a fashionista but I do take pride in my wardrobe. I might not be able to control my scars but I can do so with the other aspects of my looks and I try my best.

I put on my favorite pair of dark jeans, my good boots and a dark green polo. Roz sent me a message shortly after I hung up from talking to her wife, congratulating me on my date tomorrow and saying to definitely wear green at some point because it brings out my gray eyes.

Not sure what the fuck that’ll do for me but I follow orders because she’s the one that fills my wardrobe. The perks of being a buyer for Selfridge’s.

I’m jittery by the time I reach her door and her presence is like salve to my wrought nerves. And apparently I’m a bloody poet now.

When Sansa opens the door I have to stifle a groan at the sight of her.
Her hair is back in those waves, making me want to run my fingers through them. She’s wearing a dark purple sweater that comes down her legs, more of a dress. The color makes her skin glow but what has my pants becoming suddenly uncomfortable is the slip of skin between her hem and the top of her thigh high black boots. And they have heels.

I decide right then, that I can die happy if I ever get to slip inside of Sansa while she’s wearing nothing but those damn boots.

“Fuck, you look good.” My eyes widen when I realize what I just said. “I, uh, mean, you’re beautiful.”

I could feel myself checking her out and obviously so, slowly dragging my gaze from the crown of her head down to her feet.

When I dare to meet her gaze after my oogling and crass words, I don’t know what I am expecting but I didn’t think it was going to be good. That’s why I almost stumble while standing in place when I notice Sansa doing her own appraisal of me.

She looks positively chuffed at both compliments too. “Why thank you. You look ho- handsome.” There’s that fucking tongue peeking out and licking away my resolve.

We swiftly break the spell threatening to consume us and head to the lift. A construction worker from level three is in the elevator and his presence halts any tension between us. Fine, maybe not any tension, I don’t believe that’s even possible.

I find myself silently thanking the man for needing to collect something from his van in the basement. Because if we had been alone, this would probably have been the time when I snapped and took Sansa in the bloody elevator.

Not how I want to begin a relationship with her.

Opening her car door once again brings that beaming smile to her face and I vow to always be chivalrous with her.

Sansa sings and dances along with the radio and asks me about music the whole ride there. I’m shocked we didn’t get in an accident seeing as I watched her more than the road.
Unsurprisingly, she can sing. But it was more than that. They lightness of her face when she was bouncing about and laughing at her own moves were moments I never wanted to forget.

We sit upstairs, next to the window, my scars getting the view and I feel fucking over the moon to be out with Sansa. This might not be our planned “date” but others don’t know that. I want to stand up and tell the room “she’s with me, chose to spend her weekend with me.” Somehow I’m able to hold it in.

We enjoy hours of good food and Buck’s Fizz. Sansa wants to hear all about my days as a bodyguard to the celebs and any of my horror or funny stories. I’ve never shared things like that about my life and I find that I do have a whole book of them.

She guides me through her university years, and I can tell she’s leaving out certain parts. However, I still feel as if I’m truly getting to know her and I can’t get enough.

The bubbles and her company have my guard down, making me tell her something I’m unsure if I was ready to or not.

“I wanted to be honest with you before our date.”

Sansa’s champagne smile fades. “Dumping me before we even go out?” She tries to joke.

“No, fuck no. I’m not that stupid.” My honest burst seems to calm her a bit. “It’s just, I lied to you.” I suck in a deep breath. “I have read your book.”

Her worried face completely relaxes. “I would call it a fib not a lie.” Sansa isn’t the least bit mad or irritated. “Are you going to tell me what you thought?”

“ Fucking loved it, read it in a day.”

Her mouth pops open into a perfect “o” before splitting her face in a radiant smile. “Are you serious? I can handle criticism.”
“I know you can, but I have none to give.” Besides the fact I want to reenact the, hot as fuck scenes, from Chapter 40 with you.

Blushing and fiddling with her glass she goes on. “That means more than you know Sandor. Thank you for reading my book and for liking it. It wasn’t easy to write but it demanded to be told.” A flash of sadness passes through her eyes.

“And you told it bloody well.” More and more, my original suspicion that the novel holds some truth to it, is seemingly being confirmed. And the fact it’s most likely about Sansa turns my vision red.

We talk a bit longer about the book, she tells me about the publishing process and asks my opinion on certain chapters or scenes. None from Chapter 40...

We leave a while after the market would’ve opened, time just disappears when we’re together. Sansa huffs at me when we stand to go, still mad at me for paying before she could even reach for her purse. Her glare holds no real upset.

It’s not until we’re parking that my stomach is in knots. These places are always overrun with people and triple the stares I’ll get in a day. My apprehension is nothing like usual, not with Sansa humming next to me. I can get through this for her, because of her.

Honestly, she’s so fucking gorgeous the other shoppers might not even spare me a glance when she’s present. I wouldn’t.

We decide to do a loop, taste all the samples and window shop before coming back for our purchases last, not wanting them to spoil.

“Holy shit there’s so many people.” Sansa says into my ear, after tugging my arm telling me she wanted me to lean down. Her curse causing my dick to pulse.

“Aye, it’s always a bloody zoo.”

Sansa links her arm with my right, making me warm all over. “I don’t want to lose you.” She tells me and looks down at where we’re joined. I want to tell her she could never lose me. Instead I just nod and squeeze her arm with my own.
She guides us from vendor to vendor, taking in everything as if it’s her first day on Earth. We could’ve been walking past dragons for sale and I wouldn’t have noticed, I just watch Sansa the entire time, trying not to get caught.

It doesn’t take long for her to hand me a drink, Pimms, as she sips her own. Strawberries are next, followed by cheese, a Prosecco something or other and lastly we share ice cream.

Being focused on Sansa, the way her face lights up at certain stalls and her nose crinkles at others. How she stops to pet every dog and wave or speak to every baby and child. The ease with which she chats to the vendors and even other patrons. All of this distracts me from any possible looks or murmurs about me.

I did realize, after a while, Sansa would tug me closer or pull me down to tell me something every so often. And I think it was when my scars or height, hell maybe both, were noticed and she wanted to keep me occupied. I almost kiss her, while waiting for our packages of homemade pasta, once it dawns on me what she’s doing.

Sansa doesn’t seem perturbed at our close proximity and interactions. She also definitely touches me, a lot, when no one is looking.

We’re exhausted and full when we finally sit down in my car. Happy, we’re really bloody happy too. Laughing over the sights and people we just encountered and going over our favorite parts, fills my car with more joy than it’s ever seen.

My construction friend ruins our imaginary bromance when we return to the building and three vans are blocking the garage entrance. A grumbled cuss later, I pull my Audi into a spot on the street and rush to open Sansa’s door and carry all our things.

“Sandor, today was beautiful. Thank you so much.” Sansa tells me, her face glowing as she walks right next to me.

“I should be thanking you. I never get out and have this much fun.”

Her brow creases. “Well, we will be changing that.”
Before she can elaborate or I can respond we’re interrupted from behind, by a loud, cheery voice. “Yoo hoo!”

We turn to see Margaery teetering on her heels as she power walks to catch up with us.

“Sansa, Sandor!” She greets, giving us both a hug and I swear I see Sansa clenching her teeth when I pull away from the other woman.

“Where have you two been?” She asks.

“Sandor took me to the farmer’s market.” Sansa answers, looking up at me as if we just returned from a week in the Caribbean.

“How lovely! You’re a busy bee today.”

“I know I love it!” Sansa laughs. “What about you?”

“Gran has her oldies over for tea and I volunteered to pop out for more scones. I needed an escape, there’s only so much talk of, “how the world used to be, a girl can take.” She rolls her eyes, good heartedly.

I open the door for the girls and they both smile at me as they chatter between themselves. Before I can follow, yet another person yells out to me. What the fuck is going on today?

“Hey big boy!” Bronn shouts.

Fuck, I forgot he invited himself over to watch the football playback tonight.

“Be good.” I mutter to him when he’s standing next to me.

He looks up at me confused and then he hears the happy laughter from inside the lobby and turns to see who it is.
“Oh shit.” He grins like the Cheshire Cat.

We walk towards the new friends, together, and I have no bloody idea how this is going to go.

“Well well well, you must be Sansa.” Bronn drawls.

She turns around to face him and in turn unblocks Margaery from his view. And I shit you not the man trips over his own two feet. I swear they had met but maybe not officially.

“I am and you are?” Sansa doesn’t miss a beat or Bronn’s facial expression, which is one of awe.

My friend recovers in record time, speaking to and even keeping eye contact with Sansa. “Bonn. I’ve heard all about you lass.”

She arches a perfect eyebrow at him and smiles. “Have you now? Good. Because I know of you as well.”

I didn’t think seeing the two of them get along immediately would have my heart soaring.

“And who is this angel?” Bronn sets his sights on Margaery now.

“I’m Margaery, Sandor and Sansa’s neighbor.” She holds out her hand to him.

He grasps it in both of his and kisses her skin. What an ass.

“We’ve met, once, years ago. How I ever let you out of my sights is beyond me.” He lays the charm on thick.

“Maybe I ran.” Margaery counters with a grin. They’re still holding hands.
“Oh my, what are we witnessing?” Sansa pops up on her toes to whisper in my ear, sending shivers along my spine.

“I don’t know but it’ll turn into porn if we don’t keep moving.”

Sansa bursts into laughter, taking me with her and successfully distracting the lovebirds.

“Margaery, should we drop our things off and meet back here in ten?”

“That sounds perfect!”

We all finally end up in the lift. “Where are you two beauties off to?” Bronn asks.

“I was invited to the opening of a new bar and lounge, Sansa is my plus one.” Margaery replies.

“I hope everyone there knows how bloody lucky they are that you’ll both be in the room.” Gods, that man.

Margaery is no fool but she’s still eating up every word. Meanwhile, Sansa is leaning into me trying to stifle her giggles, I look down at her, shaking my head.

The doors opens to the first floor and Margaery flounces out, turning back to talk. “Let’s hope so.” She eyes Bronn obviously and it looks like his teeth will crack from smiling.

“Sansa, see you in a few. Gentlemen, have a good evening.” And then there were three.

“Holy shit man, you need to be a nosy neighbor or something! How could she have been hiding all these years?”

“She’s barely lived in London, you missed nothing.” I grumble, wishing I was alone with Sansa.
The lift dings, alerting us we’ve reached floor two and I put my arm across the doors allowing Sansa to leave first.

“Here.” I thrust my food at Bronn. “I’ll meet you in a minute.”

“Bossy.” He rolls his eyes before they land on Sansa. “It was a pleasure to meet you, finally. Gods, does he go on about you! Now I have a face to put with the name. And-“

“She has plans, that’s enough.” I try not to bark at him but I can feel my cheeks heating up at his rambling.

Sansa just smiles and looks up at me for a moment and then turns to my ex best friend. “It was good to meet you as well. I hope to see you again, maybe with Margaery?”

“Definitely, put in a good word for me!” Bronn calls out to her, my steely gaze had him retreating when Sansa was still mid sentence.

“Sorry about him.” I tell her as we walk to her flat.

“Don’t be, he seems fun. They might actually be a good fit.”

I nod and hum an affirmative sound, she has a point. Bronn has calmed down considerably in the last two years and Margaery doesn’t look as if she takes any shit, a necessary quality for any woman who wants to shack up with him.

Sansa is mid turn of her key when she suddenly faces me again. “Oh Sandor! We didn’t talk about tomorrow. The day went by so fast.”

Crap. She’s right. After all my planning, we got lost on other topics. “That’s alright, I can tell you now.” I scratch my neck, feeling as if I’m in the spotlight.” I wanted to leave early, it’s a bit of a drive where I want to take us.”

“I’m on board already.”
Her quick response has my heart beating erratically. “Dress comfortably, I thought we could go on a walking trail and have a picnic.” Now my pulse is threatening to deafen me I’m so nervous about her reaction.

Sansa is never one to disappoint. She throws her arms around my neck for a tight hug, before pulling back. “That sounds wonderful. I’m so excited!” She looks at her watch, sighing. “I better drop off these things and go, but message me a time to be ready.”

“Aye, I will.”

After throwing her goodies into her fridge, she walks towards my apartment with me and I stop to wait with her for the lift. “Have fun tonight.”

“Thanks. I don’t think it will live up to our afternoon but I’ll try to enjoy myself.” She tells me as she walks into the elevator. “Bye Sandor.”

“Bye little bird.” I manage to reply before the doors close.

Bronn and I must look like tools, sitting side by side on my couch, both of us smiling and getting lost in thought every few minutes. The TV isn’t even on the right channel.

“Shit mate, forgot to tell you, there was a package outside your door, I put it on the counter.” Bronn seems to have come back to himself a bit.

I get up to see what the fuck he’s talking about. A decent sized shipping box is sitting upright, a large fragile sticker on the front. I open it carefully and inside is a black box with a gold unicorn and the same colored words “Sassenach Whiskey” on the cover.

Grabbing the card before opening the bottle I’m not surprised to see who sent it.

”Dear Sandor,

Please accept this as a small token of my family’s appreciation of your care of Sansa.”
It’s no easy task being far away from your bairns but knowing they’re not alone in times of need is comforting.

My wife and I are hopeful to meet you on our next trip South.

Warmest regards,

Ned and Cat Stark"

My little bird wasn’t kidding when she said her family knew about me and were grateful for my presence her first night in the city. I make a mental note to respond to her father, his physical address and email address were included, and thank him for thanking me.

I pour Bronn and I each a glass and we both cuss at how good it is.

“Who the fuck sent you this?” He asks.

“Sansa’s father.”

“No shit! You lucky bastard, seems like a good family to be welcomed into.”

All I can do is nod, he’s right.

We finally settle down and watch the match, having another shot of the whiskey and Bronn orders Thai. I decide I should message Sansa, not wanting to bother her but she did ask.

Sandor: Having fun?

Sansa : I am a bit, but I haven’t partied in a while and I feel ready for bed 😌
Sansa : How’s boys night?

Sandor: I’ve had better company today but I received your dad’s gift. A bottle of whiskey so that cheered us both up.

Sansa : I told you something was coming! I’m so happy you like it.

Sandor: Aye, very much. So tomorrow, how’s 9:30?

Sansa : Perfect! I’m really looking forward to it.

Sandor: Me too.

Something hits me on the arm. Bronn is using the take-out menu he ordered from earlier as a sword. “Oi, ask her what her friend thinks of me.”

I pinch the bridge of my nose in exasperation but before I can force myself to say something to Sansa about her new friend, my phone buzzes.

Sansa : I think we were right. Margaery is asking about Bronn. Is he really interested or is he always that flirtatious?

I show him the message. “I really am Sandor. You know I’ve changed, finally grown-up, a bit. Put in a good word, maybe see if I can have her number?”

He’s pleading and excited, I’ve never seen him this way. And I played his wingman for a long time, he always went home with a woman while I was stuck with my hand.

I growl out a sound that resembles “fine.”

Sandor: If you had asked me this a couple of years ago I would’ve said he’s just a player. But he’s been acting more mature than a twelve-year-old recently and the way he’s begging me with his
eyes right now to say something nice, I think he’s pretty damn interested.

**Sandor:** Is she? I don’t think he’d ever be bloody happier to see numbers in his life than if they made up her phone number.

**Sansa:** That’s good to hear...lol. Well, Marg has been peeking over my shoulder every time I got a message from my family group chat tonight seeing if it was you, in case Bronn was asking about her. Are we back in high school? 😊 It’s cute though, and she’s read the message and is nodding her head.

**Sansa:** Here’s her information

*Attached contact: Margaery*

**Sandor:** Bronn snatched my phone before I could reply. Thanks and sorry to bother you on your night out.

**Sansa:** You’re never a bother. We’re leaving anyway. I need my beauty rest for a big day tomorrow. 😊

**Sandor:** You sure as fuck don’t need more beauty, doubt that’s even possible, but the rest I can agree with, I don’t want you falling asleep on me mid walk.

**Sansa:** ☺ good night

**Sandor:** Night little bird

After practically teasing me for struggling to write every message to Sansa, Bronn is breaking a sweat thinking about when he should send the first message to Margaery, what to say, when can to ask her out. Blah, blah, blah.

I have to laugh at his expense and relish in the daggers he shoots my way but then try to help the best I can. It’s not as if I know what the fuck I’m doing either. He finally stops pacing and decides to wait until the morning, not wanting to come across like this is a booty-call.
He finally leaves about an hour later, after I tell him to fucking leave or sleep on the couch, but I need to go to bed.

“Don’t fuck up tomorrow. And try to have fun.” He claps me on the back.

“Wow thanks.” I grumble.

“I’m kidding you oaf! I saw the way you two are together, it’s going to be great and I’ll be an uncle in no time.”

I cough on my next breath. “Alright, night.” I push him out the door but squeeze his shoulder. “Thanks.”

Even with my heart racing in excitement, sleep takes me quickly and I dream of red hair, good whiskey and pink lips.

Chapter End Notes

Their first date is next, eek!!
Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Hello hello! 😊😊

I almost don’t have words for how happy and appreciative I am to every single one of you.

Every chapter seems to get more and more love and attention, you guys rock my socks!

Well, here’s their first date, dun dun dun!

I love you all, please enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When I awake the next day I’m less anxious than I thought I would be. I suppose the hard part for me is over, for now, I actually got the date.

I go and pick up the care package from Osha early, she insured me everything inside would remain hot or cold, whatever was needed, for a good twelve hours.

She truly out did herself. Osha put the picnic in a large backpack that I can wear easily, and a quick look inside shows me a thermos that she says is filled with coffee, a bottle of champagne, waters and a lunch big and fancy enough to feed the royal family.

On top of it are blankets and she even fit in some small pillows. They’re even nice looking. I would’ve just picked up the first towel or throw I could find in my apartment. Not because I don’t care, but I’m a man and we miss out on details, a lot.

On the way home I stop by the small flower shop near our building and get Sansa flowers. Red and yellow tulips catch my eye from the window and I picked them immediately. The florist put the bottoms in a tube of water and wrapped them in simple brown paper and tied it with twine.

My stomach starts somersaulting when I’m showering and adds in some roundoffs while I put my clothes on. I keep it practical with my olive green hiking pants, a simple black long sleeved tee and my hiking boots. I hear my phone just as I grab my outdoor coat on my way to the kitchen.
When I see its a message from Sansa my heart stops, dread hitting me like a literal slap. That evil old dog in my mind tells me she’s canceling, she has to be.

Sansa  : Good morning! Slight change of plans, I’ll meet you at your car, I have to pick up something. I can’t wait to start our day 😊

A whoosh of air leaves my lungs in relief and I also feel a little stupid. I know her better than to have allowed the thought that she would ditch me to even cross my mind. Really, it was more my own insecurities and nothing Sansa did.

Sandor: Morning little bird. Alright, I’ll meet you there. Me too, can’t wait to see you

I press send before I can chicken out of being honest with her. There’s not much left to do now and shortly after, with one last pat of my pockets and a glance around my living room, I leave for the garage.

My hope was to get to the car first but leaving the lift to the sight of Sansa leaning against my trunk is one image I’ve ingrained to my memory.

“Hey.” She says to me with a bright smile as I approach her.

I’m glad now that I placed the flowers in an extra tote Osha suggested I bring with some additional napkins and shite. I want to give them to Sansa during the date, not in a dingy parking garage.

“Hey yourself.” I smirk. Remembering how she seemed to appreciate my attention the day prior, I check her out before unlocking the wagon.

Funnily enough, she’s also wearing olive green pants and I chuckle when I see them. She didn’t use a paint brush to put these on but it’s close, they’re at least a little sturdier looking than the blue ones from the lift. Thank god.

I didn’t think combat boots could rival the thigh high ones from yesterday but alas, I was wrong. Her white, long sleeved turtle neck and black puffer vest are alarmingly sexy. Her hair is pulled up, high and away from her face, leaving all her features in plain view for me to see.
“Nice pants.” I comment.

Sansa looks down and then at my own before giggling. “Great minds.” She winks. “I grabbed us coffee and cake for the drive.” She’s chuffed at her own effort.

“Thank you. No point in saying you shouldn’t have.” She shakes her head. “Well then, let’s put our things away and get going.”

I place my bags in the trunk, along with my jacket and Sansa does the same with hers and her purse, just grabbing her phone and our morning treats.

“Where are we going?” She asks once we’re on the road.

“Berkshire. There’s an old house with a large property and walking trails. That sound okay?” I just want her to have a good time.

Sansa holds my free hand where my arm is resting on the center console. “It’s more than okay Sandor. I’d be happy doing anything with you, but the effort you put into today makes it even better.”

I wrap my fingers around hers and squeeze. What she’s said, has my voice locked in my heart. We hold hands in our comfortable silence until I need both to make a turn.

“Here, I’ll hold your cake so you can pick at it while you drive.” Sansa tells me as she holds my slice out to me, already nibbling on hers.

“Thanks little bird.”

We eat and drink and simply enjoy each other’s company for the first bit of the drive. It’s for the best, driving out of London is a pain. Luckily, it’s relatively quiet for a Sunday morning.

“Oh! Can we listen to your music?” Sansa holds up my iPod that she found in some compartment.
“Sure, it’s your ear drums on the line.” I joke. She knows from our conversation yesterday that my taste in music is vast. We’ll have some songs or perhaps many in common.

“80s and 90s hits. We are so listening to this playlist!” She’s excited now, looking for the cable to connect it to my car.

Sansa knows every song and even grabs her phone wanting to download some and thanking me for reminding her of the “oldies but goodies.”

“Like you.” She teases with a cheeky smile.

I reach over and poke her ribs causing her to erupt into laughter. “Ticklish are we, young one? Better watch out then, this old dog still has some spunk left in him.”

“I surrender!” She huffs out between chuckles.

Once she recovers, Sansa sings or at least bops along with every tune she’s put on shuffle. Some she’s really into, “Dancing in the Dark” and “No Scrubs” offer me my very own concert in my car.

The invisible microphone, the dramatic facial expressions and her goading me into doing duets with her have my chest bursting and a smile permanently glued to my face.

Sansa tells me of a lip syncing competition she was in once. The song her and some friend chose was “I Want it that Way” by the Backstreet Boys. Figures she’s obsessed with the band. And fine, I admit, they have some catchy tunes.

She excitedly plugs in her phone to play the song and reenact it for me, as best she can when I can’t watch fully and she can’t fall to the ground and slide on her knees like she did in the competition.

It’s the best bloody thing I’ve ever seen in my life. Funniest too, I have to wipe tears from eyes from laughing so hard.
“Please tell me this was recorded?”

“Unfortunately, yes. I’ll get Arya to find it and I’ll show you.”

“Thank gods, I can’t wait.”

The rest of the drive Sansa looks out the window enamored with the fields and hills of rolling green scenery. “I’ve missed this.”

“It’s beautiful. I love the city but I need the break sometimes.” I tell her.

A short while later, we pull into the drive for Welford Park.

After parking the car and grabbing the bag, we forgo our jackets since it’s a sunny and mild day and we head out.

Sansa is looking around as if I took her to Narnia. I know how this is just how she takes things in, as if she’s never been outside before and may never see it again. She appreciates every detail. I have to remind myself to not stare at her.

“Sandor this place is amazing.” She breathes.

“Aye, it is. And peaceful.”

Sansa snaps lots of pictures, some on her phone and the rest on a fancy looking camera.

It’s not nice enough outside for there to be too many other people here and I’m glad. At some points, it feels as if we’re the only ones.

Instead of following the heavily signed “tourist” trail as I call it, I lead us up a longer and slightly tougher path. Totally worth the effort and Sansa just smiles and takes the hand I offer to help her up a small ledge.
About an hour after we left the car, I see the spot I’d been aiming for. It’s at the top of a hill adjacent to the house on the grounds and there’s a nook near an old Elm that’s hidden from the trail.

“Over here.” I tell Sansa as I make my way to the soft grass.

She sucks in a breath at the view. “Wow.”

While she’s distracted and taking her camera out from its bag, I set up the picnic. I’m able to lay the blankets and pillows out and put our drinks and glasses on the tray Osha somehow squeezed in, before Sansa turns around.

“Oh Sandor.” She almost whispers, sounding emotional.

“What is it?” I look up worried and see her glassy eyes.

“I’m so silly and emotional. Ugh.” She shakes her head. “It’s just, no one has ever done something this nice, and romantic and thoughtful, for me.”

“You deserve more than this.” How can I be the first man to take her on a special date? Fucking fools who came before me.

“This is perfect.” She tells me as she sits down.

I smile at her and finish unpacking. Baguettes, cheeses, deli meat, strawberries, raspberries and two chocolate cupcakes. Osha needs a raise. All the food is spread out, champagne and water poured, just the flowers are left.

“Before we eat.” I say to Sansa and she turns her attention back to me. “These are for you.” I tell her as I reach into the bag and pull out her tulips.

Sansa’s mouth pops open in surprise and then she takes them from me, smelling and examining the
bouquet. “I don’t know what to say. I didn’t think today could be any more amazing. Thank you, they’re beautiful.” She places the flowers down gently next to the tray and then rises up on her knees to hug me, hard.

“You’re welcome little bird.” Her emotion must be contagious. “Let’s eat, yeah?”

Sansa just nods and smiles. We both grab a plate and load them up before picking up our glasses for a cheers. We sit side by side, over looking the fields. My legs are stretched out in front of me, while Sansa’s are curled around her to the side.

“That was delicious!”

“I did have some help.” I admit.

“From who?”

“My assistant, well she’s Bronn’s too, Osha. Her and her wife Roz are our closest friends.”

“You’ll have to thank her for me.”

“Aye, of course.”

“Strawberry?” Sansa asks.

I shake my head no. My stomach is back doing gymnastics. This moment, just the two of us, so close, has my heart racing.

Sansa grabs a strawberry and sits back down in her same spot to slowly, so bloody slowly, eat the red, juicy fruit.

When she’s done she looks at me, catching me staring and I can’t bring myself to worry. We just look at each other for several seconds, the only sounds to be heard are the wild life around us and our breathing.
I tentatively reach a hand out to caress my thumb along her cheekbone as my palm cradles her cheek and my fingers touch her neck. Sansa relaxes into me immediately and gives me courage.

Leaning in slowly I see Sansa do the same, our eyes only breaking contact to close when we’re separated by just a breath.

And then it finally happens, I press my lips against hers in a short, soft kiss. It sets my body on fire, a warmth I welcome. My heart stops racing and instead skips a beat, the butterflies attack my gut and my mouth tingles. Her lips are soft and feel as plump as they look.

We break the kiss enough to stare into each other’s eyes for a moment and then Sansa is closing the distance, and her eyelids, kissing me this time. This kiss is full of longing, from both of us, it’s harder and open mouthed and hot, so fucking hot.

Sansa slips one hand into my hair and the other rests on my chest. I follow her lead and my free one finds her waist as I lick her bottom lip making her quietly moan. Sansa’s tongue meets mine and they lick and dance together in a way that has my cock hardening.

And she tastes like strawberries.

Sansa moves but doesn’t break our kiss, she rises back up on her knees, for once taller than me. The hand on my chest glides up my body to hold my scarred cheek and I can’t hold in a groan. Tilting her head above me, we’re now all teeth, and tongues, harsh breaths and small noises of pleasure.

Sansa sucks on my bottom lip and I almost lose it. I have to cool this down, while we’re in public at least. Which is no easy task, I’ve never been this turned on in my fucking life. I bring my other hand up to hold her face as well and slow our kisses.

We finally break apart and rest our foreheads together. “Oh my gods.” Sansa breathes through swollen, red lips. That, I did that. It’s almost enough to break my resolve.

I press one more gentle kiss to her mouth. “I know. I’ve never felt anything like it.” I tell her truthfully.
“Neither have I.” She’s being honest, I can see it in her gaze and hear it in her voice.

Sansa sits back down after a moment and we both sigh at the distance. “Cupcake?” I ask, trying to break the sexual tension, it’s so thick I can barely think.

She laughs and nods. I can tell it worked a bit but Sansa appreciates my trying even more. We eat our treats and enjoy the view. More so, I calm my pulse and will away my erection.

“Let’s take a picture.” Sansa says, beyond giddy.

Can anyone guess how much I love having my photo taken? Fucking hate it, is the correct answer. But watching how she tries to capture every sight and moment she encounters, I know I’ll have to get over it.

“Alright.” I sigh but smile.

The selfies are no easy task with our height difference, I swear we take a million of them. Sitting, kneeling, Sansa standing on a rock to attempt and be taller and then slipping off said rock and I catch her immediately. Almost every picture is us laughing or the phone moving, making us blurry.

Suddenly, I’m not so against taking the damn things.

We repeat the process all afternoon, I even take out my own cell our to have some keepsakes and sneak some shots of Sansa along the way. The best one is a cheesy one of us pointing to our matching pants. She’s bloody ridiculous and perfect.

“Can we help?” A soft voice carries our way during one of our photo shoots.

We turn to see a young couple, the woman with dark curly hair is smiling and reaching towards Sansa’s phone in offer of taking our photo. Her partner, a tall bald man is as stoic as I can be and stands quietly behind her.

“That would be great thank you!” Sansa beams and looks at me. “I doubt an army of photographers could help with this height difference though.” She laughs.
“You don’t need an army.” I whisper into her ear. “Up you go.” I wrap an arm around her middle. Sansa looks confused for a minute before it clicks and she hops up at the same time I lift her. Sansa is on my side, her legs around my hips and her arms around my neck.

“You’re right, I just need you.” She murmurs, just for me to hear, once she’s done laughing.

The young woman and her man are both grinning now. “Ready?” She asks.

Sansa just nods and smiles before posing. I follow her lead as best I can. The kind stranger takes as many pictures as Sansa usually does. When I go to set her down, she instead slowly lowers herself along my body until her feet touch the ground. Minx.

She goes to get her phone and chat to the other girl for a few minutes. I decide to introduce myself to her partner, so we’re not standing there like two mutes.

“Hey man. Sorry to hold up your day but thanks for stopping. I’m Sandor.” I extend my hand to the younger man.

“Greyson.” He replies with an accent I can’t place and a firm shake. “Don’t apologize, we’re in no rush.” He looks over to his girl with almost as much adoration I must have in my gaze for Sansa.

We all talk for a while longer and Sansa and Missandei exchange numbers after learning the couple also lives in London. Parting ways at the next fork in the path I realize how easy and just, nice, that interaction was. I like this side of me that Sansa brings out.

We decide to have a look around the the home that sits on the grounds and then Sansa drags me to the gift shop. She’s all about keepsakes as is her mother and she ends up buying them each a small token. A little watercolor painting of the grounds is for her mother and a homemade jam is for Sansa.

After we load up the car and sit down I realize how late in the day it is and have an idea. “I was thinking, we would have to drive a bit farther away from the city but there’s a good place for dinner we could head to.”
“That sounds great, let’s go!” Sansa answers, sounding over the moon.

How does this work now that we’ve kissed? Can I kiss her whenever I want? Well, not whenever, because then I would be attached to her 24/7 but in moderation, is that how we proceed from here?

I’ve never had a relationship, never even saw the allure to kissing someone. Probably because no one wanted to kiss me, be that close to my face.

One touch of her lips though, and I fucking get it, I’m addicted.

I decide to grow some real balls and gently push her chin up with my fingertips. Apparently a nanosecond is too long to wait and Sansa leans forward the rest of the way and presses her lips to mine. She holds my forearm that’s keeping her to me and I open my mouth to deepen the kiss. When our breathing turns into practical panting, I slowly pull away and see the windows have fogged slightly.

Sansa is flushed and her mouth is extra plump and pinker again. My hands twitch, wanting to drag her onto my lap. Her laugh at the state of my windshield snaps me back to reality enough to not devour her here and now.

“Well, look at that.” She giggles.

“We should go before they think we’re up to something and call the cops.” I half joke, it does look suspicious. One day maybe, she will ride me in the front seat....stop, stop, stop thinking now.

We leave our first date spot behind and I know I’ll always love the place.

I tell her all about where we’re going on the drive. It’s a pub that feels more like someone’s home called the Riverlands. It is actually attached to the owner’s house so it makes sense that it’s a comforting place.

No two plates or cups match and other than a few staple items, the menu can change daily. What is served depends on what they’ve caught or grown or what the locals can sell them.
The older couple who has run the place for half of their lives is slowly handing it over to their grandson, Hot Pie. Don’t know his real name, don’t think he wants anyone to. He’s a master pie maker, the nickname feeds into it.

We park outside the decent sized building about half an hour later, it’s ancient, with its thatched roof and wooden windows. They’ve updated it to keep it safe and to add a touch of modern to the setting. One side faces the road with a parking lot and the other looks out onto their grounds and then slopes into endless green fields.

“Gods, I missed a good pub, this is so quaint, I love it.” Sansa says as she takes it in while we walk towards the entrance.

I open and hold the door for her and she rushes into the warmth, the evening turning cold. It’s busy but not crowded inside, families, locals and couples filling the space. We wait to be seated and I see Sansa rubbing her hands together, warming them, neither of us thought to grab our coats.

Taking a step forward, I’m right behind her now and run my hands along her arms. “Cold, little bird?”

Leaning into me she hums her response. “I was.”

“Is that the Hound? Thought you might’ve forgotten how to get here!” Hot Pie calls out to me as he makes his way over.

“I’ll have to if you don’t seat us soon.” I joke.

“Of course! Best seat in the house for you and oh, wow. Um, good evening Miss.” It took him a minute but his eyes finally land on Sansa and he’s spluttering and blushing. I feel you, kid.

“Hi! I’m Sansa.” She extends her hand and gives him one of her killer smiles.

He almost turns into a puddle. “Pleasure to meet you.” Hot Pie shakes her hand. “Come this way.” He instructs, grabbing our menus and then leading us to the back of the pub.
It’s quieter back here and has a wall of books that wouldn’t fit in the house. I know this because I always ask to sit here, I have more privacy and you can read the novels while you eat.

I go to pull out Sansa’s chair but she shakes her head while removing her vest and purse. “I’m going to pop to the loo. Which is...?”

“Take the stairs just there and then your first left.”

“Thanks!” She beams and leaves the two of us watching her go.

I slap the young man upside the head. “Keep your eyes to yourfuckingself.”

Coughing and moving to place down our menus the boy looks like a wounded puppy. “Sorry mate, but holy shit, she’s stunning.”

“I know.” I grumble. Better get used to men looking at her in my presence.

“Wait. Are you on a date?” He whisper yells.

“What does it fucking look like?”

“It’s just, you always come alone, I’m surprised you even want company. But I’m happy for you, really happy. Don’t let her get away.”

I growl something affirmative but truly appreciate his words. More people care for me than I ever thought.

“Did you want to order drinks or wait for Sansa to return?”

“Get us a bottle of the Marlborough, sauvignon blanc and some water please.”
“Got it! I’ll give her sometime to look at the menu and specials.” He taps the small chalkboard on our table.

I give him and nod and wait for Sansa to come back. When she does I decide to do the same and wash up for our meal.

She’s typing on her phone when I sit down and our wine has been poured.

“Hope you don’t mind I ordered for us.”

“Of course not, it’s delicious. Thank you.” She takes a sip and makes a “mmm” sound that has me gripping my glass too tight.

I open my mouth to tell her about the food but Sansa let’s out a long sigh and drops her phone on her lap. “What’s wrong?”

She meets my concerned gaze and relaxes. “I’m sorry Sandor. I shouldn’t have been on my phone, let alone getting upset on our date. I’ve had a little shock is all.”

Nodding and staying silent I wait for her to elaborate.

“Arya messaged me while you were in the restroom. She’s moving to London next week.” Sansa closes her eyes for a moment.

“You’re not happy?” I know they’re very different people but she adores the girl and I thought she would be a bit excited.

“I don’t know.” Sansa takes a longer gulp of the sauv. “I’m not unhappy but it’s so sudden and right after I moved. I haven’t even settled in yet and she’ll be down the road. The independence seemed nice but now I’m right back with family.”

I hold her hand closest to me. “I understand what you’re saying. But don’t take away from what you’ve done and what you can and will continue to do. London is a big place, it can feel as if you’re on your own even when you’re surrounded by people.”
Sansa studies my face for a few seconds. “You don’t feel that way with me, do you?” She’s serious and worried now.

This took a turn.

“No, not at fucking all. You’re the first person I haven’t felt that way with.” I tell her honestly.

Her face softens but also takes on a hint of sadness. “I never want you to feel that way again.”

I squeeze her hand but remain silent not trusting my voice.

“Well, Arya will be my first family member you get to meet. She’s staying with me for a week or so while she closes the lease on her flat.”

“Hope she doesn’t kick my ass, being the fighter you’ve alluded to.”

Sansa bursts into laughter. “She’s five feet tall, I would pay to see her try to take you on.”

Hot Pie comes back then and we order our dinner. Sansa went for the pie special and I’m a creature of habit and chose the half chicken.

Sansa pushes her chair right next to mine. “Look at these.” She is shining she is so happy as she puts her phone between us. “They’re so funny but really good too.” She points to the copious amounts photos we took today.

Sansa is right, they’re bloody hilarious and some are just awful, can’t even make out what’s what. Others show my scars and I want to ask her to delete them.

“This is my favorite.” She stops swiping on one of the pictures the curly haired girl took. Sansa is wrapped around me and we’re looking right at the camera, both of us smiling.
I wouldn’t call it my favorite. I like the ones when my right side is turned away. But if it wasn’t for that one obvious issue, I would probably frame this shot.

“Aye, that’s a good one.”

We go through her and my galleries, laughing and talking about not just the photos but our day. Before we know it our food arrives.

Sansa takes a bite of her meal and moans. “This might be the best pie I’ve ever had. He’s lived up to the nickname.”

We dig into our dinner in silence for a while before Sansa wants to know how I came to be on such good terms with the owners.

I tell her how I need to escape the urban life every so often and go on different hikes and explorations of castles and the like. This area is good for both and I ended up here a lot.

The older couple never even blinked at my scars and after seeing me eye the books they both joined me for a meal and told me the tale of their marriage and buying the place. I started coming just to see them and have dinner or a roast. We built a good friendship.

After they got broken into I had Bronn do his own investigation and he eventually found the fuckers and got them their cash back. The next day I had Tormund install our best security alarms, cameras and lights, on the house.

“And “The Hound” is my boxing name. Hot Pie had seen my fights and was glued to my side the first few times he saw me, asking questions, talking about my matches. Annoying boy.” I roll my eyes.

“You boxed?” Sansa is shocked.

I forgot she didn’t know but I was mid story and thought this might be the easiest way to tell her about that part of my life.
“Only did a few charity fights. But my face and size earned me an instant reputation and nickname. They said it looked as if I sniffed out my opponent’s next move and blocked or countered it before they could even act.” I drain my glass. These old memories aren’t fond ones.

“I had no idea. It doesn’t seem like you enjoyed it?” I shake my head. “I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be, it was a long time ago.” I smile trying to ease the frown on her beautiful face. “Life got better after that and continues to do so.” I stare at her making sure she understands what I’m saying.

Hot Pie interrupts us to ask about dessert. We share a sticky toffee pudding and add in two coffees.

Sansa lightens the mood once again, telling me of one failed summer vacation from her childhood. Ned thought it would be great to rent a RV for the family and drive through the highlands of Scotland.

Midges, one toilet and not enough food made for an unhappy bunch and the stories and fights she recounted were disastrously funny.

Sometime later when we’re both full and warm, we decide to head home before we don’t make it to London until the early hours of Monday.

“Thanks Hot Pie. Tell your Grands to enjoy their trip and I’ll be back soon to see them.” I shake the boy’s hand on our way out.

“Always good to see you. I will, and make sure Sansa comes too.” He says while cheesing at her.

“Sounds like a plan to me.” She answers right away.

Wrapping one arm around Sansa’s shoulders I open the door with the other and hurry us to the car. As soon as it’s unlocked I lift her inside quickly, trying to keep her warm.

The motorway and roads are dead quiet, with the music, Sansa’s playlist this time, playing softly in the background and the two of us making small conversations here and there, we’re pulling into our parking garage way too fucking soon.
We grab all of our things, Sansa holding her flowers as if they were a newborn and make our way to our floor.

Thankfully her hands are full and I’m wearing this damn bag, because we haven’t been alone in the place we met since our kiss and who knows what could’ve happened. To take the edge off even more Sansa breaks the silence.

“So, tomorrow night, can I finally come over with some takeout?”

“Aye, I’d like that.”

“It’s a plan then. How’s seven? We can order together.”

“You can come whenever, I’ll be home by lunch. I don’t go into the office full time.”

Sansa looks back over her shoulder as we walk towards her flat. “Even better.”

She places her items on the counter and then comes back to where I stayed in her doorway.

“Sandor, I cant even begin to thank you for today. A part of me was scared I’d never been happy again, not in someone else’s company. And then you came along and happy is an understatement.”

“Sansa.” My voice cracks a moment before I take a step to put our bodies flush against one another. Our hands instantly reach for each other.

Sansa holds my cheek, my ruined cheek with one palm and the her other grips onto the material of my shirt over my chest. I want to keep this sweet, I really do but I fucking can’t.

I manage to gently, more gently than I thought possible for me, cradle her face but my other hand automatically grasps one hip somehow pulling her tighter to me.
Sansa doesn’t seem to mind the roughness, possessiveness of our kiss. She’s up on her toes meeting my bent head, nibbling on my bottom until my tongue finds hers. Without even realizing I was doing so, I walk her backwards until Sansa’s back is against her open door.

She breaks the kiss to let out a shocked, excited breath and I take the opportunity to trail my lips to her cheek, graze my teeth along her jaw and then leave wet, open mouthed kisses down her neck.

Sansa is wriggling against me and moans when my lips meet her collarbone. Somehow, the sound breaks and strengthens my will to take this part of us slow or at least slower.

Making my way back to her mouth, taking my time and adding in some chasteness I reach her pink lips and kiss her soundly and softly for a few more seconds.

When I finally drag myself away there’s only enough room for me to speak. “Thank you for coming with me. I’ve never had anything this good in my life and knowing I can make you feel that way too, it’s all I want to do, for you.”

Sansa’s eyes are still almost black with pupils blown in lust but they turn emotional at my words. She leans up and kisses my scarred cheek. “We’ll be good for each other.”

I manage a nod and a smile before I feel my face fall with disappointment at pulling away from her. She grabs my hand and follows me to the hallway, I guess neither of us want me to leave. If I don’t, we won’t stop and I don’t want to rush the physical side of things.

“See you tomorrow Sandor.” She tells me as we let go of one another.

“Good night little bird.”

Tomorrow can’t come soon enough.

Chapter End Notes

I don’t know if it was too anticipated or I just put too much pressure on myself but
can’t say exactly how I feel about it. I hope you all love it though and do let me know your honest opinions. Maybe it’s simply time for things to heat up more and faster.

Also, if we can play along with dragons and the Lord of Light, then humor me with Welford Park. The Great British Bake Off was filmed there for at least one season and it’s so beautiful they had to go. Can you go into the house? Are there walking trails? Maybe lol. Their mobile site wasn’t great and even if they said no to my questions, oh well, these two were going. Lol!

Greyworm was a little too eccentric lol
Missendai was close too! 😊

And the lip sync reference, is a real life story of mine 😊
Hello my beautiful people! Ugh, I missed you, I’m soo sorry this chapter is past overdue. Real life and tough times just get in the way, ya know?

It didn’t help that this is a heavy-ish chapter as well. And on that note....

WARNING:

There is mention of abuse and violence that could trigger or upset some, please keep that in mind before reading the whole chapter.

Good times and fluff are mixed in as well, of course and now that I’m feeling more like myself I’m ready to continue to share this SanSan journey.

As always, let me know what you think as I love hearing from each and every one of you. Lastly, I want to thank you guys once again for your love and support on this story.

♥

PS this bitch is looooong

I don’t go into the office at all. Sleeping in is too fucking good and I don’t feel like the third degree from Osha and Bronn. Part of me wants a parade to celebrate my date yesterday but more than that, I want to protect my time with Sansa.

It feels as if this is all a dream, and what if I share as much about our day as I’m comfortable doing so, and then wake up? If Sansa disappears, I think I will too.

They both reply to the email about my absence immediately. Osha shows some sign of concern but Bronn just wants to know all about my day with Sansa.

I tell them both we had a fucking fantastic time and I’d see them tomorrow. I then compose a, new and separate, message to Osha thanking her for the basket and telling her how much Sansa enjoyed it as well. She comes back with a smiley face and says you’re welcome, that she understands and to enjoy my day off.

Bronn messages me incessantly. Most of it’s funny and teasing, the man is like my brother and I shouldn’t of expected any less. I go back with a few middle finger emojis and then ignore him.

Luckily, my cleaner comes on Fridays meaning there’s not much to do around the house. I still tidy the place up before working out and getting myself ready for Sansa, who messaged to say she would be over in the late afternoon.

I’ve never cared about what my flat looked like for anyone, besides me. But with Sansa coming
over, I find myself wishing it had more of a homey feel attached to it. I have a few framed photos and canvas prints that Osha, Roz and even Tormund gifted me over the years. There’s a bit of artwork as well. I go to auctions that benefit certain charities and I keep the ones I like and gift the rest.

I don’t know why I am so bloody worried, she would never judge me or look at me differently because of my place. The one time she’s been here, Sansa was completely comfortable and at home. Let’s hope that repeats itself today.

I plug in my iPod, putting it on shuffle and keeping the volume low before I place two glasses to chill and begin pacing my living room. I’m like a teenage girl waiting for her prom date, what the fuck is happening to me? I doubt I’ll ever have the answer to that question, but at the end of the day, it doesn’t matter, I like the change. Anticipation of something good, it’s rare and new and fucking wonderful.

Finally, I hear a soft knock at the door and have to count to three so I don’t look like some loser or freak who was standing at my peep hole all day. I really wasn’t, I only looked through it a handful of times.

It’s such a strange sensation, whenever I first lay eyes on Sansa after not seeing her for a period time. I feel as if any tension or concern drains from my body in an instant but in the same moment, my pulse races and my heart skips a beat. It’s fucking thrilling.

Sansa is, as always, her beautiful and happy self, her bright face splits into a dazzling smile when she sees me. Maybe the girl is crazy.

Her shoulders are bare again but instead of one, like the first time we met, they’re both staring me in the face, taunting me. Her soft, beige sweater and black jeans couldn’t be more simple and comfortable but she might as well be a model in the middle of a photo shoot she looks so damn good.

I’ve never seen Sansa’s feet, and a small chuckle escapes me when I see she’s wearing flip-flops, something I didn’t think she would own. Her toes are painted a bright orangey, red color and it’s very, her.

“Nice toes.” I comment.

Sansa peeks down at them before looking back to me and then laughs. “Thank you. It’s nice to be cozy and let’s be honest, you can’t wear these kind of shoes outside in London yet.”

I just nod and move to the side to let her in. That’s when I notice she has something in her hands, a plate of food?

“What do you have there?” I ask her.

“I made you my famous cookies I was bragging about, let’s hope they’re as good as I said they are.” She laughs.

Sansa removes their cover once she’s set them on my kitchen counter and my mouth waters. These biscuits are going to be better than she boasted about, I can already tell.

“Well, I can’t wait for dessert.” I tell her and realize how it might have come across. Sansa just bites her lip as a small blush appears on her cheeks.

After an extra beat of silence she speaks again. “Are you going to give me a tour?”
I blink a couple of times, eventually snapping out of my Sansa haze and start walking towards the living room.

“Sure. So, this my kitchen and living room.” I spin around in a dramatic circle making her giggle. “But you already knew that. Let’s keep going.”

We proceed to go through the whole place. All of the flats are deceptively large for being apartments in the city.

We begin with my office, which is almost identical to my one at work. I need it fully functioning for the days I don’t feel like going in and dealing with people. I have a vast personal library in here too, it takes up an entire wall and Sansa trails her fingertips over every spine she can reach.

“It’s lovely in here. I don’t know if I’d get any work done though, not with all these in front of me.” She nods towards my novels.

“Perks of being my own boss, I can do that if I want.” I half joke. Sometimes I do choose to get lost in someone else’s story instead of living my own.

We pass by the guest and half baths, poke our heads into my gym (nothing exciting there) and end up in my bedroom. Sansa is in my room. Oh gods, if she only knew the thoughts I’ve had of her while I lay in bed. She’d run for the hills. Good thing she’s not a mind reader.

Once we finish looking at my flat, and she’s complimented everything multiple times, in detail, Sansa pops onto a bar stool at the kitchen island while I pour our wine.

“Sandor…” The way she says my name is unlike I’ve ever heard and the hairs on my neck stand-up immediately.

I walk over with our drinks and sit on the stool besides Sansa and turn to face her. I force myself to remain calm. “Yes little bird?”

She takes a generous sip of vino before placing it back down and fidgeting her hands in her lap, watching them intently. “I want to be honest with you.” Sansa says quietly.

Here it comes. She’s going to let me down, gently, as only she could. The minute she begins speaking I wish that had been her original intention, that I could suffer and take away any of her own.

“You can tell me anything.” I try to make her look at me to no avail.

Sansa sucks in a long, deep breath and then begins to break my heart. I never thought I’d feel emotional pain equivalent to what happened to me as a child but I also never thought I’d feel so strongly about another person in my entire life as I do for her.

“It’s about my book. It isn’t really fiction.” She closes her eyes, looking as if she’s in pain. “Enough details of the situations and of course all names were changed for safety and legal reasons, but it’s not made-up.” Her tone makes my stomach roll.

I was right. I never wanted to be, I would’ve done anything to be wrong.

Slowly, I reach over and hold one of her hands. Sansa finally snaps her head up to meet my eyes again. “I’m here. When you’re ready.” I tell her, trying to exude strength through our touch.

Sansa looks terrified. I know it’s not of me, but if it’s of her story or telling the truth to another
person, I’m unsure.

She squeezes my hand, tight, and continues. “I’m sure you’ve heard of the Lannisters.”

Of course I fucking have, who hasn’t? They’ve been tangled in politics longer than I’ve been alive. Old man Lannister, Tywin, ran for office when he was young and failed miserably.

After that, he immersed himself in being the foundation of his political party and, surprisingly, did a bloody good job. The papers, the people, all thought that was it for him. Anyone who suffered through such a defeat and subsequent tabloid hells would find a steady career and live their life out quietly.

Not this man, nor his family.

As soon as the eldest of his two children was considered an “adult” he tried his damnedest to make a campaign for his daughter, Cersei. (Tyrion, her younger brother, is another story, the poor sod was disowned. He might be the lucky one really.) The broad however, was too busy fawning over, her now husband, Jamie and taking risqué photos that were leaked to the paps. Her priorities weren’t straight and she was quickly another Lannister fail.

I’m not huge into the political world, they’re all pretty much fuckers and I know my rights. I vote, then help where and when I can but I’m not paying a pence for gossip on it all. However, even I could tell we would be stuck with this family for a long damn time to come once the Cersei bullshit hit the fan.

I was right.

Tywin did what he did best, slinking slightly into the background but still being ever present in the support of his party’s leader. Like a real lion, laying in wait for his next opportune time to pounce.

Cersei quickly left behind any motions her father may have had for her and married her golden boy Jamie. (I did read something on the Internet the other day, that old records have been released and the two are actually first cousins. The rumor is, Tywin paid to have his son-in-law’s birth certificate changed so they could pretend he was only a family friend. Gross fuckers.) They popped out three glowing, bronze kids and then they waited, waited for Joffrey, the eldest grandchild to turn eighteen and shove him down all our throats.

It lasted longer than I thought it would. He was painted as a sweetheart. Photos of him at old folks homes and primary schools were all over the internet and the papers. He spoke eloquently and never ruffled feathers when in the public eye. Some of the country even began falling for him. Honestly, his pretty boy looks probably took him farther than any scheme Tywin had planned.

To no one’s real shock, his Prince Charming mask fell off in a drastic way. Last I heard, he was locked up. Something about hookers and cocaine.

Sansa doesn’t even need to say his name. I know it’s him that hurt her. The mere thought of that scum near her makes my blood boil. I know I need to calm the fuck down, for Sansa, she deserves my attention and support.

I can tell she wants to look away as she continues to talk, but she doesn’t, not yet.

“Well, I dated Joffrey for a while. For almost two years actually, and those were the worst months of my life.” She laughs, but it holds not an ounce of humor.

Sansa goes on to tell me their entire sordid tale. The two met at a tea party held for families in their
“circle” to celebrate the new year, back in the first weeks of 2016. Ned didn’t usually like his family attending any events, he wanted them protected from the press and other party members. However, this was small, intimate and held by Robert. They had to join him.

Joffrey set his sights on Sansa immediately, even brining his grandfather into the mix. Over the next several months, between Tywin and himself, he would visit Sansa whenever he could. Apparently, the young cunt was important enough to travel the country for events and such.

By spring they were in a committed relationship and he spent most of the summer with her in York. Joffrey even invited Sansa on their end of summer family vacation to celebrate her entering her final year of school before university.

That’s when the abuse began.

At first it was only verbal. A snide comment here, a cruel joke lacking any humor there. Joffrey always apologized or made it up to Sansa in some way. She was honest with me and said she was so infatuated with him she allowed more than she should’ve for far too long.

Between his traveling with his grandfather and their party, as well as the fact they were stationed far enough away that it made day impossible, plus Sansa was finishing school, they had a mostly long distance relationship for the first year and then some.

Even so, by that Christmas he started laying hands on her and fucking with her mind. He began by subtly reminding her and pointing out how good and honest her father was. And how his family was the polar opposite. This meant they each held different “connections” and she wouldn’t want to upset Tywin. What would Ned even be able to do?

Whenever Joffrey got her alone he made sure Sansa saw something illegal or disturbing, driving home the fact he would retaliate if he didn’t get what he wanted.

Sansa said she found herself dreading graduation. Not only was the University she’d been accepted to closer to the Lannister compound, but being away from her family and having a more open schedule, meant she’d have to suffer at his hand even more.

Sansa admitted that she almost told her family multiple times about what was going on. Not the pretty picture Joffrey and his family painted and made Sansa fake as well. But it was as if the blonde cunt knew what she was planning and would, without fail, say or do something a little darker and more corrupt in her presence as if to scare her deeper.

Sansa immersed herself in studying during her final months of high school and found that subconsciously she was drifting away from her friends. Joffrey was getting her all on her own, just where he wanted her.

Over that summer, Joffrey started asking Sansa to go away with him, just the two of them. Sometimes just to the country and other times they even went on short jaunts overseas. Initially, she was petrified of what could happen during days upon days of being alone with him. Thank fuck, the trips were simply alibis.

Joffrey had many illegal activities going on in his life and needed to get away from the questioning ears and eyes of his family. What better excuse than a “romantic” weekend with your girlfriend.

To not only Sansa’s relief, but my own presently, he also stopped sleeping with her as much during those months. Apparently, Joffrey is the stupidest, idiot and is also blind because he told her she was not desirable and “sucked” in bed. Sansa whispered to me that even though she’s working
through those cruel lies, it did and sometimes still does affect her.

It broke her own heart when she realized he just wanted to do semi-non-consensual things as it got him off and those acts are better suited to hookers, in his sick opinion. People he can pay to be quiet.

Sansa’s friendships were already strained, and she began to not even reply to her friends’ messages. She also started to see the distance as a blessing, the less people who were close to her, the less innocents that could be hurt because of her decisions. I wanted to stop Sansa right there and tell her to stop blaming herself but I know that she has to do this in her time and in her way.

Joffrey might have left her alone intimately, for the most part, but during that same period of time, his violent outbursts and physical abuse increased at an alarming rate. It was so bad that she almost didn’t see her family for the entire summer. She had to stay with him, behind closed doors to allow herself to heal.

Sansa was worried her family would guess what had been going on in her relationship. None of them are naïve, especially Jon being a cop. She noticed their glances turn worried and caught them having more than one hushed conversation when she wasn’t in the room.

Sansa did finally look away from me then, hanging her head and squeezing her eyes shut. “I suppose, I had just become that good of an actress. Pretending that everything was fine.”

It took every ounce of strength in my body to not pull Sansa into my arms and comfort her. To ensure she knows none of this was her fault and she never deserved any of this fucking shit that happened. But I can see myself reflected in how she’s acting right now, like a scared animal who’s skittish and one wrong move would send her running.

Instead, I hold the hand that she’s allowed me to keep within my grasp, this entire time, even harder and stroke her knuckles with my thumb, giving her my silent support.

It takes a few minutes for her to seemingly gather the strength and energy to finish retelling her real life nightmare.

Sansa remembers that she had actually become a bit more like her old self in the month before starting university, when he had allowed her to leave his sight. She smiled as she recounted those days, just her and her family when she could almost taste what life could be like without Joffrey.

Then he showed up at her dorm, with flowers and a fake smile, telling her and the rest of the Starks that he was surprising them as he wanted to help her move in. Sansa said everything went dark in an instant.

The next three months weren’t as bad as she had anticipated. Tywin had shortened Joffrey’s leash and he was spending most of his time at the family home in Birmingham doing actual work. He did find a handful of excuses and pockets of time to visit her or take her away on one of their hellish getaways.

From then on, whenever Joffrey spoke to Sansa there were no jokes or nice conversations and there sure as fuck were no make up gifts or long drawn out fake apologies.

He did what he did to Sansa and took what he wanted and honestly thought he had scared her so badly, that she would never tell a soul. Sansa said to me that she believed that part of her life would last forever.

Sansa didn’t know anyone at her new school and wouldn’t dare to try and make friends, a fact
Joffrey was well aware of. This made it not only easy for him to get her on her own, but it gave Sansa no one to hide behind, no plans to keep her busy. She was at his beck and call.

“And then something changed.” Sansa says with more conviction.

“Joffrey, he- he stopped caring about anything that he couldn’t snort, drink or fuck. He was getting too high, too drunk and doing too much dirt on the side. I could tell he wasn’t keeping up with it at all.” Sansa shakes her head, as if still wrapping her head around it.

“And since he liked to scare me so badly, I knew these people he was tangled up with were not to be forgotten or screwed over.”

“I think what ended us came from a last ditch effort to make his own problems disappear.” Sansa’s face loses a bit of pain at the memory.

“Joffrey told our families, before even asking me, that I would be stopping at the Lannister estate on my long drive north to be back with my family for Christmas. His mother and grandfather replied to the message with over the top happy words of, I love you both, and told us to enjoy our few days together before we were separated for the holidays.”

“My own parents and siblings reached out to me separately to make sure I was alright with the plan. I clearly remember typing out so many responses, telling them, no I wasn’t fine it and that it was all a ruse and to please help me.” Sansa hasn’t shed a tear but I see emotion behind her eyes that’s verging on them now.

“But then I remembered the phone call I had with Joff the night before. He detailed what was going wrong in his life, he told me it had to be it fixed because if it wasn’t they wouldn’t stop at him. These people would come for everyone he cares about, or who they believed him to give a damn about. Joff made sure to tell me he didn’t give a shit about me but they were none the wiser of that fact.”

“So, instead, I told my family everything was great and that I was excited to see them in a week or so. I had no idea it would be a lot sooner than that.” More color drains from her beautiful face.

“When I began the long drive down the winding private road that lead to the Lannister grounds, I could tell immediately something was off. The main house was in darkness, save for the servant quarters. The only cars, lights and life to be seen were from the two guest homes, the ostentatiously large one for Joffrey and the other for his team of security and so called friends.” I can see this is taking a lot of out Sansa to share this part of her life, the worst moment it seems. I feel my stomach clench with nerves and hate.

“Joff was off his head when I finally gathered the courage to let myself in. He was on the phone, cursing and yelling, his eyes were wild and I sensed immediately he was overdue for a hit of his drug of choice for the day.” Her voice shakes slightly, but otherwise she’s a fortress, stronger than I’ll ever be.

“I had started to feel numb around him. The hate was always there, and the resentment, but it was as if it they were limbs, always with me but they didn’t alter how I was day to day. But that night was the first time I had felt true fear in months.”

“As soon as I knew it was only us, and his most trusted companions, alone on that huge piece of land, my heart sank and then raced too fast. For a moment, it crossed my mind that this could be the night he would kill me. A large group of alibis were just a few minutes walk away and they would cover up anything he did.” Sansa scoffs
“I didn’t know if I should feel relief or more terror at the fact he was not only stressed and trying to keep his head on his shoulders, but on top of all of that, he was going through early withdrawals. I clearly remember being surprised he let his personal stash at home run out.”

Sansa closes her eyes as if she’s standing back in the room with him all that time ago. “I can see him in front of me still. The moment Joff registered I arrived, he hung up and threw his phone down as his face turned from simple irritation and rage to disgust.”

“He stomped over and gripped my arms so hard I could almost feel the bruises appearing as he cursed and scolded me like a child for being late. Never asking why, not caring either, it was just a reason to be mad at me. Not that he needed one.” A pained smile tugs at Sansa’s mouth.

“He switched quickly and told me how desperate he was for a release that I would have to do for the night. I was so distracted and concentrated on not throwing up everywhere, because I knew that might be the straw that finally broke him and then he would therefore break me, I wasn’t paying attention and I didn’t see him reach for his best friend and favorite “tool” as he called it. Pocket Killer, was the nickname for Joff’s illegal, sick, take on a Swiss Army knife.”

“He used it for anything and everything, another way to make my skin crawl, keep me on edge and at his mercy. He would cut fruit with it, clean his nails and even skin animals he caught and killed while hunting, all in front of me.” Sansa cringes.

“I didn’t know what was going on until I heard the first tear of my shirt. Joff had b-bent me over and was too lazy to even remove my clothing, that’s what he said at least, I think he just liked a half assed excuse to put a knife that close to me.”

“It wasn’t the first time he had cut my clothes off, but between whatever he was going through and the need to quell his addiction, he wasn’t paying attention. Or, worse, maybe he was. Maybe the lack of drugs in his system allowed him to really see what he was doing.” Sansa gulps and squeezes my hand so tight it almost hurts.

“I guess I’ll never know why he cut me so badly. Instead of just taking half of my shirt off, he also dug the short, sharp blade deep into my skin. It was so fast and sudden that I almost immediately went into shock. I did feel pain, searing, blinding pain for a few moments but by the time Joff realized exactly how bad he had stabbed me, I was already having an out of body experience.”

“I remember him jumping away from me so fast, completely horrified and outraged that I dare bleed on his bed covers. He told me that he was going out for a while and I better be cleaned up and patched up by the time he returned.” Sansa shakes her head.

“I didn’t move, not even when I heard Joffrey on the phone, screaming at his maid to get over here and fix this mess, immediately. As soon as his car was driving over the gravel, screeching and speeding away I finally stood up and saw, for the first time what he had done to me.” Shaky breaths leave her mouth and I vibrate with need to hold her.

“I couldn’t really see the damage he had inflicted because where he stuck me was at an awkward angle. What I did see though, was blood, blood everywhere. It covered the tattered remains of my shirt, the jeans I still wore, his bed and even the floor were red. The shock put me on auto pilot and I somehow found anything and everything I had left there, which wasn’t much, and I then grabbed a clean shirt of his and began applying pressure to my side.”

“Everything else happened so fast it was a blur. Joffrey’s staff were all good and kind people who are too terrified of him to ever report the goings on at that place of horrors. The maid however, did help me make sure I had all my belongings and got me out to my car so I could start the drive to
the hospital. And that’s when I finally told someone.” A bit of lightness returns to Sansa’s frame then.

“I called Jon, and he said later I sounded like a robot but there was no emotion left inside of me, Joffrey had sucked it all out. Anyway, I can still remember hearing Jon slamming his door, grabbing his keys and the feeling of being soothed by the purr of his engine as he began the almost day long trip to get to me.”

“We hung up for a while so he could call the local authorities and have someone meet me at the emergency room. Jon then got in touch with my parents and Robb and they all came to me. Thankfully, Robb was playing in Sheffield and him and his fiancé, Talisa, reached me first.”

“Luckily, Joff didn’t really know what he was doing and where he stabbed me missed any organs or arteries. The area was full of blood vessels, plus he nicked a vein that’s why the outpour of blood was so intense. I ended losing about five percent of my blood supply and needed transfusions and oxygen. Who knew how good shock could be, I didn’t register how dire it was at the time.”

My throat constricts at the thought that I almost lost her. Before I even knew Sansa and she was able to make my life a better place to live. In that moment, I realize I won’t rest until that cunt is dead.

“The nurses, doctors and police officers that saved and protected me, I swear they had halos and wings for how well they treated me and how safe I felt. “

“Before Robb could even get to me, the local authorities had found Joffrey in one of his many hotel penthouses that the family always has rented. He was unconscious, due to how much cocaine he’d been snorting, it covered the tables, his hookers and his face. They arrested him on the drug charges and when the cocaine was out of his system, they charged him for what he did to me.”

It’s as if Sansa had been in a trance and as soon as those words left her mouth she loosened the grip she had on my hand before meeting my eyes once again. Her own looked warmer and her shoulders seemed as if they cared a little less weight on them.

“It’s an ongoing battle. I honestly don’t know if it’ll ever end, they obviously want to settle out of court but this has nothing to do with money. I want him to do time for what he did to me and I want him to hopefully be held accountable for other illegal and disgusting actions he’s committed.”

“And more than anything I want it to be public knowledge how he truly acts. I don’t want another girl to go through what I did. My family and I are not giving up and the fact that he is on house arrest, cannot leave the estate, is subjected to random drug testing frequently and has a parole officer practically glued to his ass is a decent start.” A grin tug at her mouth.

“The photographs that somehow got leaked to the press of him naked and halfway to overdosing in that hotel room is just a bonus.” Sansa says with a raised eyebrow.

“Since then, it also seems as though I’ve empowered others to be honest, brave and to come forward. Did you see that headline about who Jamie really is? I doubt it will stop there, that family has many skeletons in their closet.” I simply nod in response to her question, I don’t think my voice can be trusted just yet.

Sansa is quiet for a few moments, her brow furrowed, seemingly lost in thought again.

“I’ve always been a writer. English was my best and favorite subject in school. I entered in competitions and was always looking over my friends’ essays and homework to help them. I also already had some rough and final drafts of novels written prior to that hellish time in my life. But
no matter how hard I tried to finish the incomplete ones or push for the finished versions of others to be published, I couldn’t do it.”

“The story of what I went through demanded to be written and shared. I warred with myself about it, not for long though. I quickly realized how much time I had lost and wasted on him and his family and I refused to let them own another moment in my life.”

After a big sigh and small smile she continues. “And now here we are. I’ve grown and learned from what happened and I’m becoming who I am truly meant to be. I don’t always like the fact that he helped bring my dream career to fruition but I can’t bring myself to regret it either. I wouldn’t have the life that I do and I would have never met you.” There’s the blush I love so much.

I finally cave, standing up and wrapping my arms around Sansa’s body, she holds me back. “You’re so godsdamn brave little bird. And strong.”

I pull away enough to look into her eyes.

“Thank you for telling me.”

“Thank you for being someone I could tell.” She smiles at up me but it crumbles quickly and tears suddenly fill her blue eyes. “I don’t know about being brave. That would’ve been leaving him as soon as the abuse began, not being weak and afraid, allowing him to treat me like that for so long.” Sansa tells me through her soft crying.

I grasp her chin gently with my fingers, and wait until she picks her head up again before speaking. “I know my words can’t fix what’s been done or instantly make you see what I do. But that means I’ll just have to tell you, all the bloody time. You are here, fighting for yourself and others. You survived that piece of trash and you’re in front of me, full of life and light. You’ve made my life a happier place, no easy task that was, and you were open to me from the moment we met. You suffered at the hands of a coward, a shit excuse for a human and you did not deserve any of it.” Sansa’s tears have stopped flowing but her perfect pink bottom lip is still pouting.

“You did not let your past break you or change who you are and that Sansa, is strength.” I finish firmly.

She studies my face for a few seconds and her own morphs from slight leftover sadness to heat quickly. And then Sansa is grabbing my neck and pulling me down into a long, sensual kiss full of tongues and lust.

I wasn’t expecting this at all, let alone for it to be so fucking hot but I reciprocate her eagerness immediately. The hand on her chin weaves into her auburn hair, bringing her impossibly closer to me and tilting her head so I can deepen our kiss further.

We stay pressed flush against one another, our kiss just a tangle of tongues for a long time. It still feels as if it’s over too soon however, when Sansa slowly pulls back to kiss the scarred side of my face and flash me a real little bird grin.

“Shall we order some pizza?” She asks? Her voice rough and low and sexy.

I must look like an idiot, staring at her a beat too long with my mouth open, barely understanding her question. “Uh, yeah, sure.” Her responding giggle confirms my fool status.

Sansa moves to my couch with my iPad while I get us a refill. For such a slim woman she sure can eat, which I fucking love. I add my favorite to our order and then she takes over, doing the same and even adding in extra sides.
I know she wanted to pay because of our elevator meal but I was hoping to one up her, she never needs to pay me back for a damn thing. Sansa is too quick and smart for me and before I know it, the order is complete, paid for and being prepared.

“You didn’t need to do that little bird.”

“And you know what I’m going to say Sandor.” She quirks back cheekily.

“Then next time is on me.”

“This could go on forever.” She smiles, bright.

“Sounds good to me.”

I hardly realize what I’m doing, it’s like instinct when I lean toward where Sansa is next to me in the sofa and kiss her again. When I break our embrace, she’s having none of it and climbs onto my lap, straddling me.

“Is this okay?” Sansa asks quietly, her hands tangling in my hair.

“Fuck yes.” I growl against her lips a millisecond before kissing her hard.

My response pulls a moan from Sansa and I tighten the grip on her waist with one hand and stroke her cheek with the other that’s cradling her face.

When Sansa nibbles and sucks on my bottom lip I press her down on my crotch and I know she can feel what she’s doing to me when a shocked, aroused breath escapes her.

Sansa recovers quickly, circling her hips over the bulge in my jeans and sucking on my tongue making me groan, long and low. I can feel her smile against my mouth. Minx.

I run my fingertips along her waist and hips until I reach her ass, grabbing it almost roughly, I bring her down onto me harder as I push up. Rubbing my erection over her hot core, causing Sansa to rip her mouth from mine to moan loudly. I repeat the motion a few times and then trail said hand away from her rear, back up and this time under her sweater.

As soon as I touch bare skin, I pause, allowing Sansa to stop me. She does the opposite, leaning into my touch and kissing me again, her tongue finding my own as her nails scratch my scalp, making me shudder.

I caress the softness of Sansa’s taut belly, trace the length of her delicate spine and finally end mapping her torso, just under her bra. We’re both panting at this point and in that moment, I’ve never been harder or wanted someone so fucking much in my entire life.

And then my intercom rings. The food is here. Ah, fuck.

We both jump apart at the sound, pressing our foreheads together and laughing. Sansa gives me another soft kiss before standing up on shaky legs.

Her gaze lands on my crotch and her eyes widen as she licks her lips. How I resist throwing her over my shoulder and taking her to bed is beyond me.

“I, um, better go get dinner.” She says.

Obviously, we both know why but since she’s still staring I look down too. Yup, even in boxers and jeans my cock looks threatening when I’m this hard. I hope it doesn’t scared her away. I’d
never fucking hurt her.

I have to clear my throat to make words even possible, and my voice is still like gravel. “Yeah, thanks, sorry.”

My apology brings Sansa back to the present and she looks at my face again. “Oh gods no, don’t be.” She bits that damn lip and smiles at me and then she’s slipping on her shoes, grabbing her keys and slipping out the door.

Throwing my head back against the couch, I take deep breaths and think about Bronn in the shower. I’m able to calm my raging hard on by at least half and I know in Sansa’s company that’s as good as it’ll get.

I busy myself getting plates and napkins and Sansa returns before I can make my way back to the coffee table. She’s laden down with boxes and bags and I feel like shit for making her go alone.

I must’ve made a face because she’s putting me in my place before I even speak. “Stop that, I’m fine!” Her fake angry glare holds no heat and her dazzling smile stops my heart.

“Alright, alright.” I throw my hands up in mock surrender as I cross the kitchen to take everything from her.

“Want to eat in the living room?” I ask, hoping she’ll say yes. I want to be close to her again and in the spot where we were entwined just minutes ago.

“Sounds good.” Sansa replies from where she’s picking up the items I had forgotten for us in the kitchen.

We spread our meal out on the table and even I couldn’t finish it all. “We could feed an army.” I laugh.

Sansa chuckles too. “Or be greedy and have leftovers.”

I turn the television on to some reality show that neither of us really watches, and we eat and chat happily. These simple moments with Sansa feel life changing and blissful.

Once we eat our fill of pizza and fried goods and somehow squeeze in the free ice cream they gave us I know I want to be honest with Sansa as well.

We clear our mess in silence and once we’re back on the sofa with the remainder of our wine I decide it’s time. I’ve never told anyone this quickly about my past and my stomach is churning my dinner around with nerves.

“Sansa.”

She looks away from the television and her soft smile fades when she takes in my expression. “What’s wrong?” Concern etches itself onto her features.

“I want to be honest with you as well. I don’t want to come across as if I’m overshadowing what you told me. I don’t take it lightly that you opened up to me but I feel like I need to be just as transparent with you. I want to be.” Tonight may as well be “talk about your past” evening.”

Sansa’s eyes lose some worry and soften, as she mimics my earlier action and holds one of my large calloused hands with both of her delicate ones. “If you’re ready for that, then I’m here for you.” She tells me honestly.
That simple touch makes me feel stronger than I ever have. I suck in a breath and get on with it.

“My brother, Greg, was five years older than me and was always mean. I learned at a young age to avoid him whenever possible. Not easy when he’s your bloody family.” I scoff at how ridiculous my shit life is sounding already.

“I had a little sister too, Eleanor. I loved her so fucking much and worried about her every second of everyday, knowing Greg couldn’t be trusted.” The rage is still there, just under the surface and I don’t think it will ever fully leave me.

“It was the beginning of February, the days short and the nights long and cold. I would be six in a few short months meaning I was bored out of mind not being allowed outside much due to the weather.” My heart starts picking up pace.

“I had left anything Greg had been given for Christmas alone for well over a month, even though he hadn’t been interested in any of his gifts at all. But that night, while he went out against our mother’s orders, I picked up an action figure he had opened and promptly threw under an end table in the living room. It was dusty and never used and I was excited.” I still feel stupid to this day and wonder what could’ve been if I had left it be.

“Greg came storming back in, our father had gone searching for him when mother began fretting. He saw me sitting there playing with his unwanted toy and his usually blank stare turned sinister.” We both tighten our joined grasp.

“I don’t know and will never know exactly why he did it. Maybe because he was unwell, crazy, was it the pure hatred he held for me, or hells, all of the above? Whatever it was snapped within him so fast no one could’ve reacted in time.”

“In one fluid movement, Greg pushed the fireplace guard aside, chucked the toy away and then gripped the collar of my shirt and shoved my face into logs and flames.” I swear I can still smell my burning flesh.

I hadn’t realized my eyes were shut, lost in that horrific night until I hear Sansa make a strange sound. When I open them, I see tears falling down her cheeks and heartbreak and anger in her features.

“Sandor.” She chokes out. “I’m so sorry. No one, especially a child should suffer through something so awful.” She’s full fledged crying now.

I hate pity but I know this runs deeper than that. She is feeling for me, on my behalf as I did for her. We reach for each other at the same moment and sit there, just hugging for several minutes.

Keeping an arm around her shoulders, I maneuver us so I can finish my depressing tale while keeping her close, we both need it. Resting my cheek on top of her head, her repeating her earlier grasp of both of her hands holding one of mine, I go on.

“My mom heard my screams and came running. My brother left the house and went on a long walkabout, avoiding the aftermath of what he’d done.” I have to take a steadying breath, rage and hate threatening to consume me.

“I don’t remember anything, not until almost a week later. The hospital kept me sedated which made the initial operations and efforts to keep infection away easier.” Thank fuck our local hospital had a good burn unit, they were able to do much more than most places would’ve back then.
“The skin grafts took months. I had to be fully stable for those procedures and it was touch and go several times in the beginning. I was so young. I wasn’t allowed to go home at all and only my parents were able to visit for weeks when I was in quarantine.” I forget how hard this part is and I feel emotion trying to claw at my throat.

“The severity of my condition and the measures it took to save my life and then try and fix my face are what kept me alive, in the end.” I see confusion cross Sansa’s face, poking out through her steady stream of tears.

“My house burnt down while I was living on the burn ward. My mother, father and sister were all inside, dead from smoke inhalation and Greg was found on the lawn. He died of a heart attack from the smoke but had inhaled slightly less, that’s why he made it out.”

“The worst part of all of it was the fact my father covered up what happened to me, practically allowing that to then occur. An officer on the case told me our living room rug had caught fire while I played on it and that’s how I was burnt. I was a child, a terrified child who played along.” Sansa had sucked in a shocked breath at my admission of what one of my parents had done. I don’t blame my mother, she had to protect Eleanor.

“That same Officer came to tell me what had happened to them all. And to give me the heads up as to how they believed the fire had started. Arson.” Sansa nuzzles deeper into my side.

“I was distraught and lost for years. I was so relieved and happy Greg was gone forever but I mourned the rest of my family. Even my father.” I still miss them.

“My godfather, Raymond, was a bachelor up until recently and became my guardian immediately, he was the only family I had left. Raymond and my mother were best friends their entire lives. He won’t confirm nor deny he loved her as more than that but she chose another man.” If only she hadn’t....

“Anyway, I went to live with him in Liverpool, once I was fully recovered, and had the best life possible after what I had endured.”

We sit quietly for a couple of minutes, letting my words soak into us both. Sansa moves to face me before speaking.

“Where’s Raymond now?”

“The old man is finally married and living by the ocean in Brighton. His wife is a nice lady called Mary and the two of them travel as much as possible, making memories they tell me.” I smile, thinking of two of my favorite people.

“That’s lovely. Maybe I can meet them one day?” Sansa seems insecure about her request.

“Aye, I’d like that. So would they.” I reassure her.

Cupping my ruined cheek, Sansa leans in to me. “Thank you for telling me.”

“Thank you for being someone I could tell.” I repeat her words from earlier.

“You’re strong too, and so so brave.” Sansa says and I scoff but stop any further protests at her hard glare.

“Sandor you truly are. You could’ve gone down many paths, horrible ones after what you suffered but you didn’t. You’re a successful businessman who helps others. And no matter how hard you’ll
deny it, you’re kind and good. I told you already, I can read people very well now and you’re one of the best I’ve ever met. I count myself lucky to have gotten stuck in an elevator with you.” She tells me, proud and defiant. I can’t even fight what’s she said, hells, I almost believe her.

Instead, I close the gap between us for a kiss full of affection and appreciation. I need Sansa to know how much she means to me, even if I’m too mentally drained to find the words tonight.

We finish off our wine over talk about her week of preparations for Arya’s arrival. The irritation is still lingering but Sansa is slowly becoming excited as well, she’s missed her sister.

After deciding to have coffee in the morning, with her somehow forgotten lemon cookies, since we both have not only a busy day ahead, but an entire week, I walk Sansa home.

“Tonight was one of the best nights I’ve had in a long time.” She tells me when we reach her flat.

I raise an eyebrow at her admission.

Sansa rolls her eyes and laughs. “I know it wasn’t conventionally perfect but it was needed and meaningful. That’s a good time to me.”

I step towards where she’s leaning against her closed door and rest one hand above her on the wood and hold her face with the other. “It is for me as well little bird.” I tell her before pressing my mouth to hers.

Sansa responds immediately, popping up on her toes to meet my eager kiss, her hands grab fistfuls of my shirt to hold me close. Our bodies flush against one another, our lips and tongues licking, kissing, sucking and biting through harsh breaths is almost too much.

I have to force myself to slow down and painfully break away from her.

“Good night little bird.” I murmurs against her swollen lips.

“Good night Sandor.” Sansa’s breath becomes my own.

And one day, I hope all of her will be mine.
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone!

Here’s another chapter (omg it’s ridiculously long) and it’s, again, kind of a filler, giving us information and plot. Boring I know, but the sexy times are on the horizon, I promise!

Thank you as always for the love and support, it makes me so happy. And please let me know what you think of this new chapter!

P.S. I started sharing collages of outfits, inspiration etc for a visual effect on my Tumblr (mrsblackdixon) in case anyone is interested. Do you like those sorts of things or do you prefer to make up your own mental images?

Love you guys!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sansa opens her door the next morning looking like the esteemed, professional author she is. Well, from the waist up at least. Her long legs are sheathed in pajama pants covered in lightning bolts and glasses.

“Harry Potter?” I ask, with a wide grin and raised eyebrow, nodding down her body.

“Good morning to you too.” She teases as I walk past her to put our coffees and the cookies on the counter.

Spinning around quickly I close the distance between us in two steps, sweeping her into my arms for a tight hug.

“Sorry little bird, I got distracted.” I murmur against her ear, making her breaths come slightly faster. “Good morning.” I say to her as I place her back on the ground and kiss her cheek.

“You’re forgiven.” Sansa smiles while I lay out the food. “And yes, they are Harry Potter.” She models her night wear as she makes her way to where I’m standing at the kitchen island.

“I like them. Are you not ready for your meetings yet?” The black blouse she’s got on, and the pale
pink blazer I spotted on one of her barstools, paired with her curls and the slightly heavier make up she has on, compared to what usually does, (I only notice because she doesn’t need a fucking drop of the stuff) don’t add up with the cozy looking bottom half of her.

Sansa laughs at me. “I only have a phone call with my manager and then a Skype meeting with Gendry. Seeing as none are in person, and I can stay seated the entire time during the second, I only have to be half professional.” She looks chuffed at her decision.

All I can do is smile and shake my head at her, how can one person be so fucking cute? And also make me use the word cute, I don’t think I ever have until I met her.

“Your brain works in wonderful ways.” I tell Sansa and then finally shove one of her famous cookies, whole, into my mouth.

The minute it touches my tongue I know there’s nothing in the world that tastes better, besides Sansa herself. The groan that escapes me from the burst of flavors is edging on sexual. This is confirmed when I look at Sansa. Her hand is frozen halfway to her mouth, which is hanging open, her cookie seemingly forgotten in mid air.

“Good?” She asks once she’s taken her own bite.

I nod eating another. “Fucking out of this world. You’ve ruined me for life, I hope you make them often.”

Sansa looks ecstatic at my reaction. “For you, I can.”

I stay for a little while after that. I have to get to work myself, needing to complete some last minute tasks for our AGM next Thursday. We talk about the week ahead and make plans for Sansa to come and tour the gym tomorrow. She wants to have somewhere to work out and if I get to see her even more, that’s a plus for me too.

“Good luck with your meetings.” I tell her as I open the door.

“Thanks. I hope they go well, it’s been odd recently when I’ve dealt with some of the newer editors.” Sansa furrows her brow.
“I’m sure it’ll all be sorted. Message me when you’re done.” She’s been pretty stressed about it all and I hope she will be feeling better after these calls.

Sansa nods and smiles up at me. I want to kiss her so fucking badly but she’s got some sort of colorful make-up on her plump lips and I don’t want to ruin it.

Well, I do but what I really don’t want is to upset or inconvenience her.

Wrapping my arms around her waist for a long, tight hug will have to do. Or so I thought.

When I begin to let go, Sansa’s eyes turn wicked. Keeping her arms around my neck, she tugs and meets me halfway, pressing her lips to mine, opening her mouth and licking her way inside my own, finding my tongue.

“Have a good day Sandor.” She tells me with a cheeky grin once we’ve parted.

“Mmm, I will now.” We wave just as she closes her door and I will the blood to travel back to my northern head the entire journey to work.

Osha is on a call when I reach our floor, shooting me one of her bright smiles and a wink. I sigh a breath of relief when I find my office empty, I half expected Bronn to be laying in wait for me.

Two emails and half a cup of coffee later he’s barging through my door, closing it swiftly behind him.

“There’s my big boy! What the fuck man? You left me hanging yesterday.” He plops down in one of the chairs across from me.

“Look -“ I barely utter the word and he’s cutting me off, practically laying across my desk to reach for me.

“You slippery bastard!” He half yells as his finger swipes at my face.
“Oi, what the fuck!” I slap him away.

The fool is grinning like he’s the Cheshire Cat. “Nice shade.” Bronn says more to his thumb than to me.

I grab my phone, open the camera and instantly see traces of Sansa’s pink lipstick on and around my lips. I smile without even realizing it and wipe the rest off.

“So that’s why you stayed home yesterday.” He wags his eyebrows at me.

“Don’t.” I warn. Bronn looks shocked at the growl in my voice and sits back, his face losing a little of its mischief.

“Alright alright. I’ll stop, for now.” He gives me one of his best smizes, as he calls them. “I am your best friend and just want to know how your date went. Not a crazy notion.”

Bronn is right. He’s the closest person I have in my life and I’ve always been invested in his dates and girlfriends.

I allow some warmth into my expression. “Like I said, it was amazing. Best day I have ever had. We just had dinner and then talked last night.” The man knows me too well and hears the shift in my voice towards the end.

“You told her?” Bronn’s eyes are wide, I’ve never opened up about my scars so quickly.

“Yeah, I did. Sansa has her own skeletons that she trusted me with, the timing felt right.” I shrug.

“This really is serious.” Bronn still looks surprised but his face has softened, I can tell he’s happy for me.

“I hope so. Never wanted to be with anyone before her.”
“She looked smitten the other day. You might just have to you know, talk about your feelings and all that shit.” Bronn cringes a bit, even though I’m sure he’ll be doing the same with Margaery.

“Yeah, I don’t mind, at all. What about you and Marg?”

He’s instantly lost in thought. “Fuckin hells, what a woman! I like this one San.”

“Have you seen her yet?”

“No.” Bronn grumbles. “She’s been fixing her flat, making it her home too she says. Plus, setting up her business to be run from London. Margaery is bloody fantastic but busy.” He sighs. “She might have time over the weekend.” The playful glint is back in his eyes.

“Let’s hope so. You’ve never chased a bird this long without, well anything, happening.” I half joke.

“Right!” Bronn slaps his hands on his legs, shaking his head.

We agree to go out for a pint and dinner, I only offer because Sansa predicted a long day and night ahead for her and Ygritte, her manager.

Osha knocks a few hours later with lunch in hand for us both and takes up residence in Bronn’s previous seat.

“Here you go boss man, I know you’ll work through if I don’t stop you.” She smiles at me, completely right.

“Thanks Osha. I’d wither away without you.” I tell her sincerely.

We both start eating our our pad thai for a bit before she breaks the silence.

“So, are you going to give me the details?” Osha peeks up at me from her meal.
I tell her everything, every detail. Well, I just said we kissed, not how hot under the collar it got us both. She’s a smiling puddle of Osha by the end of it.

“I’m so bloody happy for you, truly.”

“Thanks. You and Roz were life savers. Sansa wants to meet you.”

“That would be lovely, a double date! Let’s plan it soon yes?” She’s ecstatic now, clearing our empty containers.

“Aye, I’ll talk to her.” I’ve never been on a date, period, until this past weekend, so adding in more people will be a brand fucking new experience. And shockingly, I’m excited about it.

The rest of the day passes by in a blur of phone calls, emails and signatures. Before I know it, my phone buzzes with an incoming call and a shit eating grin spreads across my face when I read the caller ID.

“Hey little bird. How was your day?”

Sansa breathes out a sigh of relief. “Better talking to you. It’s been never ending, I swear.”

Not the tone I was hoping for. “What’s happened?”

Sansa goes on to tell me about her chaotic day. A Skype interview with Gendry ended up in a huge apology to my little bird and then a brainstorming afternoon, that turned into evening, at her manager’s.

Apparently one of the new editors at the publishing house was using her power and bad attitude against certain authors, mostly Sansa, in Gendry’s absence. That’s why there was so much back and forth recently with her third novel.

This bitch, named *Miranda*, immediately disliked Sansa and gave her shit, forced her to change her
work. I’m fuming.

“Sansa, I’m so fucking sorry. What’s going on now?” I try to reign in my anger.

“Well, my schedule for my second book’s release and the timeline for sending in chapters for the third is verging on ruined.” It’s the first time I have heard her annoyed.

“Ygritte just popped out to get us some supper and then we’ll keep working, going back over what changes I was asked to do, which ones I pushed back on and the few this editor forced me to make. Then, we’ll decide how to best deal with Gendry and the emergency meetings we have this week and next. Ugh.” I swear I can see Sansa hanging her head in her hands.

“Little bird you did not deserve any of this, none of it. But you can do it, you are strong, smart and fucking talented. Don’t let them get away with anything you’re not on board with. I don’t know what I can do but if you need me...uh, need help, I’m here.” How would she ever need me?

“Oh Sandor, thank you. You’re helping me right now. Listening, boosting my ego.” She laughs. “How was your day? Hopefully better than mine.”

I don’t feel as though I should change the subject so quickly but I can tell she wants me to. When I get to Osha and the double date Sansa finally sounds happier and is over the moon at the idea.

“Ygritte is back. Time to eat and lay out war plans.” She jokes but I know there’s an ounce of truth to her statement.

“Good luck. And don’t stress, it will all work out. Call or message me whenever.”

“I might take you up on that offer. Thank you Sandor. Can’t wait to see you tomorrow. Does ten am still work?”

“Aye, of course. Looking forward to it. Bye Sansa.”

“Bye!” Her sweet voice has me smiling so big it hurts.
When Bronn comes to get me half an hour later I’m still grinning.

“Sexting your girlfriend?” He teases when he sees my face.

“Fuck off.” I wish, I almost say. “And she’s not my girlfriend.”

“Broken record here but, not yet. Can we go now?” He whines.

Bronn and I actually have a really fucking good time and I find myself thanking him when we part ways at the end of the night for keeping my mind occupied. I’m really bloody worried about Sansa and what she’s going through. Her not being home and not being able to see her is making me antsy too.

I doubt I’ll get much sleep tonight but nevertheless, I climb into bed and at least try to relax. Not long after doing so, I hear my phone vibrate on my nightstand.

Sansa: And finally, we feel prepared! Thank you for being there for me. Decided to sleep at Ygritte’s since it’s so late but I’ll still see you bright and early tomorrow. Goodnight Sandor. 😊

Sandor: Glad to hear it. See you in the morning little bird.

The moment I read she wouldn’t be sleeping here, for the first time since she moved in, my stomach twists. I swear the building feels strange and empty without her in it. I toss and turn for a good hour and then somehow sleep claims me.

I wake up with those fucking insects everyone calls butterflies yet again, fluttering around until my head spins. I shower and scrub extra long, tidy up my beard and even put effort into my hair. I can’t really fancy up sweats and a tee but since we’re going to the gym there’s not much I can do about my attire.

I want to show off Sansa in my own way and on my own terms. That means I don’t need an ambush of our tour of the facility. To keep things seemingly as normal as usual, I don’t say a word to either of my best friends and instead just updated my calendar with my schedule for the day. Seeing as next week will be beyond hectic with our meetings, neither will find it shocking I’m not
doing full days in the office when I don’t have to.

Making it to our building early, I do a once around the gym area and check with the receptionist to ensure that the locker rooms are as clean as I expect them to be. After I see that everything looks up to my standard, I talk to a couple of our regulars, attempting to kill time and seem natural. I doubt it’s working.

By five to ten it must look as if I’m at a tennis match, my head bouncing back and forth between what I’m trying to do and the door to the gym. Sansa is right on time and when I see bright red walking past our windows, I feel my body relax.

I rush over to open the door for her and am rewarded with a bright Sansa smile.

“Good morning!” She greets me and throws her arms around my waist.

“Morning.” I wrap my own around her shoulders.

“What an amazing building! Your security firm is here too right?”

“Aye, it’s upstairs, as is my office. We can go on a tour after this if you’d like?”

“I’d love to.” She beams.

“Well, let’s get started.” I force myself to stop staring at Sansa.

Her long red hair is pulled back from her beautiful face, tied low at the nape of her neck. I watch as she takes off her coat, grabbing it and her purse to leave at the front, and I swear this woman is trying to kill me. Yet again, she has both of her milky shoulders bare, her long sleeved black top making her skin glow.

Her tight jeans show off exactly what she’s been doing in the gym in the past, molding perfectly over her round ass and holding on tight to her long legs. Sansa moves her arms up and her shirt rises with them, just enough to give me a view of a perfect sliver of her belly. And if she can make sneakers look sexy then I guess I’m ruined for life, because anything near her must be hot.
When we reach the check-in desk I place her things safely behind it before coming back to stand next to Sansa. Our usual receptionist must be on a break and instead Pod is sitting behind the desk.

“Pod, this is Sansa. Sansa this is our gym manager and head trainer, Pod.”

“Nice to meet you.” She smiles and extends a hand towards him.

Pod’s eyes are wider than usual and it takes him a moment to compose his face and return her handshake. “Hi. Yes you too. Are you with...uh, here for a tour?”

“I am.” Sansa looks up at me. “Thanks to Sandor.” She says, never looking away from my face as her hand rests on my forearm. “I only moved to the city a couple of weeks ago and I’m in need of a new gym.”

Pod silently takes in how Sansa has tucked herself into my bicep and the fact that she’s still touching me. The young man who, I honestly like and respect, but want to punch in the face at the moment, hasn’t been able to stop shooting fleeting glances her way. But a grin did cross his face when he saw how comfortable we are with one another.

“You couldn’t be in better hands.” He says to her.

“I know.” Sansa responds immediately.

I cough and stop their conversation there. “Right then. Pod, keep Sansa’s things safe, we’ll be back in a bit.”

“Sure thing boss.” He waves to us as we make our way to the double doors that lead to the main gym floor.

I take my time showing her every inch of our space, every machine, nook and cranny. Once I know the locker room is empty I put up the “Closed for cleaning” sign so I can take her for a tour of that as well.
Sansa is like a pre-recorded soundtrack, “wow” and “amazing” are the two words she uses the most. I’ve always been as proud as I can be of myself for this business, but seeing the awe on her face and hearing her congratulate me for building something as outstanding as this has my cheeks heating.

When we reach the boxing ring, which is in a separate room, I hadn’t even consciously decided to show it to her. Sansa effortlessly jumps up and gets in the ring, walking around and feeling the ropes.

Yep I was right, everything she’s near is erotic. I’ve never thought about having sex in a boxing ring until today.

“So you have a boxing ring and you don’t use it?” Sansa asks not looking at me, her tone ensuring I know there’s no need to even acknowledge, let alone answer her question.

“Sometimes I might drag the dummy in there and practice alone, simply to build certain muscles. But no, not with anyone else and I don’t train others.” I follow her around the outside of the ropes.

“Pod does and one of our other trainers, they’re great and they enjoy it which is important.” I tell her.

Sansa just nods and hops down out of the ring. It’s nice to open up to someone when there’s no pressure or awkwardness.

“Where do I sign?” she asks once she’s standing in front of me again.

I can feel how big my smile is, on half of my face anyway, as I tilt my head in the direction of where we first started. When we get back to the desk, Pod is still there typing away on the computer.

I walk around his side of the counter again, picking up Sansa’s belongings as well as a new member sign up pack.

“Should we go see my office?” I ask her.
“Yes let’s!” She answers excitedly, before turning back to Pod. “Have a good day and I suppose I’ll see you around the gym.”

“You decided to sign up? Awesome. Bye boss!”

I simply wave in his direction as we head to the elevators and I swipe my pass and press the button that will take us to my floor.

We’re almost there when I break the silence that, as always is comfortable between as but still holds a good amount of tension.

“Bronn might be here just to warn you.” We both laugh. “And unless somethings come up that I’m not aware of, Osha should be in so you can meet her.”

Sansa is positively giddy now. “Oh really? I can thank her in person now.”

How someone so warm, thoughtful and kind wants to give me the time of day boggles my mind, but I’m just going to go along with it because I’m one lucky son of a bitch.

When the doors open I usher Sansa out first, attempting to be chivalrous but also wanting to watch her walk away. I overtake her easily and point out different things on our floor. There isn’t much, we like our privacy, something Bronn and I have in common.

Once we turn the corner I see Osha sitting at her desk, thankfully not on the phone, and when she hears us approach, she lifts her head. Her always cheerful demeanor turns positively buzzing.

“Morning Osha. This is -” Before I can finish introducing them, my best friend and assistant is on her feet meeting us, her arms already extended towards Sansa.

“You don’t have to tell me who this is, big man! Sansa, it’s so nice to meet you.”

Sansa is just as happy and they embrace as if they’re long time friends.
“You must be Osha? I’m so glad to meet you too!”

“This is a lovely surprise. What are you two doing here?”

“Sansa is signing up for the gym. I was just giving her a tour so she knew she wasn’t wasting her time coming here.” I joke.

“I can’t say I’m someone who loves running on treadmills and lifting weights, but downstairs is a good gym. Whenever I feel like being fit and healthy even I’ll pop down.” She’s definitely not of my and Bronn’s mentality, but I have seen her and Roz working out as a couple sometimes and she doesn’t look too miserable.

Sansa chuckles. “I don’t like working out either and I’ll definitely get outside when I can but it’s always good to have a gym to come to. I’m so happy I’m here because it means I get to thank you for everything you did for us on Sunday. It was delicious and beautiful. Sandor better watch out, you have a second career that you can go into easily.”

I swear I’ve never seen Osha speechless until she hears Sansa’s praises. “Wow, I just wanted to help but what a compliment. I’m tickled pink that you both enjoyed yourselves.”

Sansa looks over her shoulder at me and licks her lips, I’m only one who can see of course. “Oh yes, we had the best time.” She’s going to be the death of me.

The three of us chat a bit more and then I drag Sansa to my office, only after the two exchange numbers and go over double date ideas.

“Woah, what a view.” Sansa breathes as she looks out my window.

“Yeah, it is.” I reply, only watching her.

We somehow miss Bronn on our way out and settle down at a nearby cafe for lunch. Hours pass us by in what feel like minutes, eating, talking and laughing until I feel full in multiple ways.

Sansa walks with me to the office, I agreed to close up tonight, something I’m regretting now.
She’s heading back home to check over the agenda for her meeting tomorrow and double check the revisions that were forced on her.

“I’m not sure how long it will all take tomorrow but maybe we can have a night cap?” Sansa suggests when we reach the building door.

“Aye, sounds good. Let me know when you’re home and I’ll come over.” I take a step towards her, embracing her first this time.

Sansa hugs me back tightly and presses a kiss to my scarred cheek when we pull away.

“See you tomorrow Sandor.” She smiles at me.

“Until then little bird.” I swear she’s taking a piece of me with her.

Not my new fucking poetic side apparently.

Surprisingly the evening and night pass by quickly. I send Sansa a goodnight message and receive one back, which helps me sleep.

The following day is bloody frantic and I barely remember to send Sansa a message of good luck and remind her to stand her ground. She responds immediately thanking me and saying she would see me later.

Neither of us have the time to check our phones it seems until I get home at eight, and I let Sansa know before inhaling a dinner, that could feed two but I didn’t even get have my damn lunch. I decide to shower and change into joggers and a tee then settle in with a beer while I wait to hear from Sansa.

Sansa : Sorry, I know it’s late, can I come over?

It’s ten thirty, not exactly late but I know she worries. It could’ve been four in the damn morning and I’d be at my door waiting for her.
Sandor: Not past my bedtime yet. Of course you can.

Less than half an hour later she’s knocking at my door.

I open it and that fucking deliriously amazing feeling of seeing her in the flesh courses through me.

“Hey little bird.”

It’s her turn to not greet me with words, instead she buries herself into my chest. The breath leaves Sansa’s body and takes the tension with it.

“Hey.” She mumbles against my shirt.

I reach down and scoop her into my arms, I try not to think the words *bridal style*. Fuck, the things that term does to me. I need to end those thoughts and fast.

Sansa let’s out a small giggle when her feet leave the ground and a small tug of her mouth is forcing its way out when I place her on the sofa.

“Wine?” I ask, already half way to the kitchen.

“In an IV preferably.”

I watch Sansa from the island and see her remove her coat and hear her shoes hit the floor. She looks like a dream as per fucking usual.

I don’t know if I’ve seen her in blue since the night we met but it really does things to her eyes and hair, somehow making them stand out even more. Her long skirt flowed around both of us when I picked her up and her dress shirt makes her look the perfect mix of casual yet professional.

Sansa doesn’t wear much jewelry, mostly just a couple of small items she always has on, that
knowing her have some sentimental meaning, but she’s dressed up a bit more than usual, with a sparkly necklace on.

I never knew I had a thing for shoes but apparently every pair she puts on her feet have new fantasies running through my mind. This pair sure as hells don’t look comfortable but they are only a few shades darker than her skin and the bottoms are red and fucking sexy on her.

When we’re sitting facing each other, chilled wine in our glasses, I prod a bit.

“What happened?”

“I’m just tired now. Meetings, and back-and-forth discussions turned into a celebratory dinner because thankfully it all actually worked out.” Sansa says.

She continues, telling me how apologetic and honestly, terrified they were that they would lose her. Apparently this Miranda bitch is a scorned author, or once-upon-a-time author. She never made a career writing for herself and somehow ended up as an editor.

Piece of shit must be crazy or a good actress, hells maybe both, because the entire team agreed that for the first year she worked there they suspected nothing.

Recently, Gendry had felt comfortable handing over some responsibility so he was able to take personal time and has been off with his uncle quite a bit. Miranda took these trips as an opportunity to sabotage anyone she could, and they’re not sure why, but her number one target was Sansa.

“Holy shit little bird. I don’t know what to say besides I’m sorry.”

“That’s enough.” She smiles at me. “I trust Gendry and know this was out of his control. As soon as it was made aware they handled it and are doing their best to fix the issues she’s caused.”

Sansa looks exhausted but slightly less stressed. “Next week is going to be chaotic playing catch-up but I’m glad I won’t be off schedule for my novels at least.”

“Yes me too, especially seeing as this shouldn’t have happened at all. If I can lighten the load, with
Arya coming, plus all of this, tell me what to do.”

Sansa leans her head on my shoulder. “Actually, I was hoping you could come by on Saturday and look at the furniture in my spare room. I swear the moving company didn’t put it together properly.”

“Sounds like a plan. Can’t have your little warrior sister falling out of bed and attacking you, can we?” We both laugh at my attempted joke that’s more truthful than humorous.

It’s too soon when I hear Sansa sigh and feel her look at her watch. “I better go. I have some appointments in the morning.”

“Hopefully they’re more fun than your previous ones from this week.”

“Oh yes, a morning and afternoon of pampering and ignoring any emails that pertain to work.”

I chuckle and am relieved to hear she’s taking time for herself. “Good plan.” I say as we reach her door, I suppose my subconscious will always walk her home.

“Thanks for letting me vent and helping me with this. It’s the first time I started to feel as if I couldn’t handle this career.” Sansa says, looking up me with a furrowed brow.

I smooth the concern from her forehead with my finger tips, trailing them down to her neck to hold her face. “You can fucking do this. We all have to deal with bumps in the road, it didn’t derail you, that’s what matters.”

Sansa lights up at my words before running her free hand up my chest and leaning up for a kiss. I press her back against the wall as I tangle my other hand into her hair.

It’s not as if I needed yet another reminder, but I know this resolve we both have at the moment is going to break and soon. I can feel it in this kiss, every time they get more frantic, we somehow are always closer and in all honesty, I’m surprised we’ve only gone this far all this time.

I’m hard enough that’s it’s verging on uncomfortable and when Sansa presses against me my cock
pushes on her belly. I almost pull away but I somehow hear her soft moan over the sound of my own and it makes me rub my length on purpose this time.

I can only stand it for another minute, any longer and we’ll be in her bed. Breaking the kiss makes Sansa whine and I can’t hold back a grin.

“This.” I say, motioning a hand in the non-existent space between us. “I don’t want to ruin it.”

Sansa’s hooded eyes lose some of their heat as it’s replaced with a different kind of warmth. “I doubt anything in the realm of what we’re doing can even be used in the same sentence as the word ruin, but I know what you mean.” She says, her gaze never leaving mine.

Slowly and reluctantly we let go of one another and Sansa opens her door.

“I’ll talk to you tomorrow.” She says through swollen lips, her face and neck still flushed.

“Yes. Good night, little bird.” My voice is deeper than usual.

Flashes of pink lips and sounds of wanton moans make me cum in an embarrassingly short amount of time once I’m in bed. At least the release gives me another night of slumber.

The next morning I head into work early so I can hit the gym and get ready for the day in my office. A friend of a friend of Bronn’s wants to meet us in person to go over the security needs they’re currently looking for.

This happens more often than not, its a competitive market when you’re looking for the level and standard of protection that we offer. Usually, people Google us and the firm ahead of time so hopefully a rare press photo of me will pop up, because I hate this part of in person sessions with clients. The first time they see my face.

I know my mug could’ve ended up being a lot worse. The scars really only cover my right cheek, the outer areas of my eyebrow, down my temple to my mouth and stop at my chin. My right ear and eye, plus their functions, were not affected. I was also blessed with a good head of hair, that even though I should pull back for such meetings, I’m more comfortable keeping it down, almost like a curtain.
I make sure to pack my good jeans a button up and my dress shoes, I’m not going to wear a suit and have them think I’m someone I’m not. If they want to use us they need to see what they’re going to get.

I begin typing a message to Sansa as I’m about to head out the door but one look at the time and I know it would be unfair and instead save it to send later. It’s the one day this week we haven’t made plans and even though I know I’m seeing her tomorrow, I still want to see her today.

After I push myself extra hard in the gym, even slipping into the boxing ring after ensuring I was the only person around, I shower and dress before popping out for breakfast.

It’s still obnoxiously early by the time I sit at my desk to eat and leisurely go through social media. I could do work, and probably should, but I have a long day of deadlines ahead of me after this meeting and I decide to do something a little less intense to start my day.

I obviously never post about myself on Facebook or Instagram but I still have both. I had also given in last week and added Sansa to the former and then she followed me on the latter, which I eagerly reciprocated.

I usually post once in a blue moon of one of my weekend outings or promoting the gym. Tormund took my phone a few months back and posted a throwback something photo of him, Bronn and I. Thank fuck my head was turned, hiding my scarred cheek.

Of course, Sansa is the polar opposite of me. She seems to favor Instagram, she has lots of photos on her account and posts to her story almost every day. She also has a lot of followers since she just has one account for personal use and for her book supporters to follow.

Sansa told me she considered splitting them up but she honestly didn’t think that many people would be interested enough in her life to find her on these platforms. The ever modest, beautiful girl who has come into my life was of course wrong. She’s had diehard fans from the beginning and now that her career is growing so is her following.

When I pull up Sansa’s page I see that she also posts about this #TBT and yesterday it was about us. Sort of. She has a slideshow of sorts of about ten pictures from our date in the country.

They’re mostly of the view, then one of the bookshelf in the pub and another of our picnic. The
I literally feel my heart jump in my chest, my palms are sweaty and I can’t stop smiling. I look at the comments, even though you’re never supposed to, and I recognize a couple of names of her friends and family and the rest are from fans it seems.

And they’re all asking about her romantic day.

They’ve spotted the two champagne glasses and the view. Most of them also say how over the moon they are for her and that she deserves this.

I start panicking about how to even wrap my head around this seemingly simple post on social media, but before I can spiral I hear, versus see, someone lean both hands on my desk.

“Can you not watch porn at work?” Bronn says to me his eyes looking towards my phone that he thankfully can’t see the screen of.

“I’ll try to cut back if you do.” I counter.

He barks out a laugh. “No promises. Shall we go over the information we have so far about the clients that are coming in this morning?”

I nod and bring up the file on my iPad, and we sit down debriefing on what is to come. We stay that way until Osha knocks on the door to let us know they’ve arrived.

The guy seems like a nice enough person, as does his team. He’s a hard worker who’s built himself up from nothing and doesn’t want any part of his empire to be fucked with. I understand and respect him right away.

He started creating his night clubs in the north where he’s from and this is his first time venturing into the city. Sounds like our story a bit. Cost is not an issue and he does not want to cut any corners. We talk for hours and even though we supply the room with cold and hot drinks and some snacks we offer to order lunch for everyone so we can get to know him on a personal level as well and not make him feel rushed.
We even ended up emailing Tormund early into our discussion (we know he is busy completing a job at the moment though). Bronn and I hope he can give us an installation timeframe while we have them in the office.

I had used the initial email as an excuse to be on my phone as well because I wanted to say good morning to Sansa. When our ginger best friend replies sometime later, Bronn jumps at the chance to do the same it seems.

No one else in the room can tell, besides me, that the first message he reads is not from Tormund. He’s as good as I am at controlling his emotions from showing on his face but I still see a small twinkle in his eye and tug of his lips, which telling me he’s very happy about something.

Finally, an hour and a half after we’ve eaten, contracts are signed and estimated time frames and costs have already been given. We walk them to the elevator where Pod is waiting to take them on a tour of the gym. They’ll all be moving down here, and like Sansa, the men will need somewhere to work out.

The metal doors have barely closed and Bronn is gripping my upper arms as strong as he probably can.

“What the fuck, why are you attacking me?” I say to him as I struggle free.

“We’re going out tonight!” He says, his eyes wide and excited.

“The fuck we are, how do you know I don’t have plans?”

His whole demeanor turns smug then. “Because, these plans include Sansa and she’s the only other person you’d be busy with.”

Shit, he’s got me there. Even if it doesn’t make complete sense to me yet. “Why are you telling me I have plans with Sansa when I haven’t even checked my phone to see if she’s gotten in touch with me today?” I say to him and start walking back to the board room before he can even answer, as I realize I’ve left my phone behind.

Brons keeps up with me talking as we go. “Marg wants to see me but her and Sansa were supposed to have plans this week and between the two of them being the busiest fucking women we’ve ever
met, they kept rescheduling until tonight. So, two birds one stone, we double date.” He says to me as if he’s just discovered the answer to world peace.

“I’ll see.” I grumble to him, even though I know one positive confirmation that Sansa is going means I’ll be there too.

“What the fuck do you mean you’ll see? All you want to do is be with the girl and she’s going to be where I’m asking you to go, it’s not rocket science San!” Bronn is frustrated now.

I turn to look at my best friend and for the first time in a long time he looks at me pleadingly.

“Just let me talk to her alright? As soon as I know she wants to go, and wants me there more importantly, then I’ll put you in my calendar.” I try to lighten the mood.

I never want him to think I don’t have his back in any situation because I always will.

“You’re not dumb but you sure as hells act like it.” He says, making me second guess my last thought.

Bronn sighs and continues. “Your beautiful redhead wants to spend as much time with you as you do with her, just trust me on that.” I try to say anything the opposite of what he’s done but Bronn is having none of it, simply putting his hand up to stop me.

“Come to my office once you’ve spoken to her.” He says with a cheesy smile in my direction. And with that, he heads to his end of the floor.

I can’t even wait to get to my own office to check my phone. Besides a disgusting amount of work emails I also have several messages and even a missed call from Sansa.

Sansa : Good morning ☺ TGIF! Do you have a busy day ahead?

Sansa : Soo Marg wants us to double date with her and Bronn tonight…what do you think?

Sansa : I know it might not be your thing and we already have a potential DD coming up so we
Sansa: I want to, if it means I get to see you, I should’ve said that first.

Sansa: Shit, sorry if I called while you’re in a meeting or something. Just message me when you’re free. Okay I’ll stop being that annoying girl now. 😊

I laugh to myself. Sansa gets worked up easily and I only ever want to calm her concerns but the fact she thinks she could ever annoy me is bloody hilarious.

Sandor: Little bird, you could never be annoying. Now that’s out the way, I just saw your messages, it’s been a long day and it’s only twelve thirty. Let’s go tonight, our two friends deserve a date and so do we.

She must’ve been waiting for my reply her own comes back so fast.

Sansa: I wouldn’t say that to Arya when you meet her, pretty sure I drive her nuts all the time, even long distance! Okay yay, I think it’ll be a good time. We’ll meet you two at Sophie’s for seven?

Sandor: Can’t wait.

I pick up my work phone and dial Bronn’s extension. He’s as eager as Sansa and answers after one ring.

“You better not be calling to break my small, cold heart.” He says.

“I can still arrange that.” I grumble. “So, should we leave here at six forty-five to meet the girls then?”

I doubt it was for my benefit but I can tell that Bronn moved the handset away from his face before yelling out a large “woop”.

Sansa: I don’t have to go...
“Sounds perfect San. And thank you, I mean it.”

“Aye there’s no need for that. See you later.” I tell him and hang up

There’s a clawing at my stomach that doesn’t feel as good as the fluttering I have become used to, this is more nerves than excitement. Even though this is my normal -apprehension- I haven’t felt this with Sansa yet and no matter how busy I am with estimate after proposal after phone call after email, it still nags at the back of my mind all afternoon.

Osha pops in before leaving for the day to wish me a good weekend and can tell by my face something is up.

“Are you extra, brooding, standoffish Sandor because of your date?” She asks me, leaning against the door to my office.

“However did you guess?” I ask sarcastically with a bark of humorless laughter.

“You know Bronn has been skipping around this entire building throwing rose petals around in excitement.” We both can’t help but smile at that, he has never been like this over a woman before.

“You should be that excited as well. You know everyone who’s going, you’re dressed up and look dashingly handsome today and don’t fight me on that.” She pins me with what can only be described as a mother’s glare and I honestly couldn’t fight her if I tried after that.

“You’ll get to sit next to the amazing girl that you’re falling for.” She must see the fear and question in my eyes and elaborates. “I love love and I know you well, I can see it happening. Enjoy this time, the early days the butterflies.” She says with emphasis like she’s been able to read my mind about the damn things. “Now, stop that fretting and start getting excited. You never know, maybe you’ll get lucky tonight!” She laughs and so do I, because it’s genuinely funny.

Even though I’ve never wanted to sleep with anyone more than I want to with Sansa, it’s so much more than that and I have to make sure she knows that before we take the next step. Of course the Mount Everest sized hurdle there is the whole, sitting down and talking about our feelings and finding out if we’re on the same page part.

Not the train of thought I need to be on right now when I’m supposed to stop worrying and instead
be excited.

“Thanks. You’re right and I’ll try to get my head out of my ass now.”

A very proud smile crosses her face. “Good! Well, my work for the day is done here, in more ways than one. Have a wonderful weekend and I expect to hear all about it on Monday.”

“Say hi to Roz and the kids for me.”

“Will do!” she calls out over her shoulder as she heads towards the elevators.

Her honest approach and peptalk seem to have done the trick. The excitement over seeing Sansa overtakes the dread and worry, even if it doesn’t erase them completely.

By six thirty Bronn gives up the act and sits in my office staring at me asking if we can leave now, sounding like a petulant child. I can only handle about five minutes of his shit before giving in. I also realize it’s best to be there first to ensure I am comfortable with the table and even more so because I’ll get to watch Sansa walk in.

We get an Uber to Covent Garden even though we didn’t need to. Bronn could’ve flown us there with his eagerness that is shooting in rocket flames out his ass. I can’t begrudge him or even tease him for it. I might not show it on the outside but I’m looking forward to this more than he is on the inside.

I’ve never been to this bar and grill before but it smells fantastic and the bustling atmosphere should ensure less stares for me than usual.

We get a booth towards the back of the restaurant that’s got a window on one side and the kitchen in front of us. And then we wait. Bronn and I pass the time by looking at the wine list and chatting a bit about the northern nightclub owner again, his business could be huge for us.

At only a couple of minutes past seven I know Sansa is here. It sounds like the plot of a cheesy movie but I literally feel it in my bones when the maître d’ turns the corner, her and Marg in tow, heading towards us.
When they’re a few tables away, Bronn and I stand to greet them. Sansa quickly thanks for the gentleman who was seating them without even looking at him, instead her eyes are fixed on me, a smile breaking her face in half.

“Hey.” she says just as her arms reach for me.

“Hi little bird.” I whisper against her ear once I’ve pulled her flush against my body.

Bronn and Margaery are both looking beyond elated, only having just broken apart from their own embrace. The girls squeeze into the booth first so they can sit next to one another and I’m fucking delighted when Sansa moves closer to me after I sit down.

After ordering a couple bottles of wine and water we all begin looking at the menu. I try to be sly with glances at Sansa out the corner of my eye and the only reason she doesn’t notice is because she’s checking me out more than she is the entrées. It still blows my bloody mind that she looks at me that way.

Meanwhile, the entire restaurant looked at her when she entered it, well almost everyone. Sansa is wearing a white T-shirt with the French Tres Chic on it and that’s where any sort of casual air to her outfit ends. She has on those fucking boots again, the ones that come all the way up to her thighs and they’re making my mouth water more than the smells permeating from the kitchen.

To top it off, and also to put another nail in my coffin, she’s got on a short black skirt that I noticed when she sat down is leather. Suddenly I’m interested in BDSM.

I remember she said that today was a pampering day for her and I try and soak in anything that looks different. Not only for my enjoyment but so I can tell her how beautiful she looks, as always.

Her hair looks more like silk than usual, if that’s possible and I can’t see her toes obviously, but her fingernails are painted a shiny black.

Finally, our two friends are huddled talking and laughing between them and it gives me the chance to do the same with Sansa.

“How was your day to yourself?” I ask her.
She looks dramatically off into the distance and sighs before giggling. “It was spectacular, just what I needed. But I feel as though it was my preparation for next week. I’ll have to repeat it many times to ensure I stay this relaxed.”

“I think you’ve earned as many spa days as you need.” I tell her honestly. “Did you do something to your hair? You look gorgeous. I even like the nails.” I say looking down at them.

Sansa beams even brighter at my compliments. “Why thank you.” She says and waggles her fingernails in between us. “I did get my hair done, it’s so much to deal with but I can’t bring myself to cut it. I went crazy and got a manicure, a pedicure, a facial, wax- uh and even a steam! I’ll stop, I’m sure I’m boring you to death.”

“I work with Bronn every day, no one is boring compared to him.” I joke.

My best friend he hears me and throws a breadstick at my head. We all break out in laughter and we had only just stopped when the waiter comes to take our orders.

From there, the four of us go on to have one of the best nights of my life. We’re there for hours, practically shutting the place down. We eat until our stomachs ache and the wine pours freely. The same goes for our conversations and jokes.

Bronn announces after dessert that he’ll be spending the night at my place, poor me, so we all decide to go back together.

I grab Sansa’s coat and help her slip it on her shoulders when we’re at the door ready to leave. She looks up at me through her lashes giving me a soft smile and once she’s tied the sash closed she reaches for my hand. Bronn and Margaery walk ahead, his arm around her shoulders.

“He’s not usually like this, is he?” Sansa asks me.

“Not a bit.” I grin. “It’s a nice change.” I tell her, squeezing her hand.

We black cab back to our apartment building and I can see how badly Bronn wants to get off on floor one with Marg.
“Goodnight everyone. Tonight was fabulous.” Margaery leans into the elevator, holding the doors open. She gives us all a tipsy, warm smile but her eyes linger on Bronn.

“Night beautiful, I’ll talk to you soon.” He promises, making her flush.

“I’ll message you about Arya’s plans tomorrow.” Sansa says to her.

“Night Marg.” I nod.

She stands back to allow the doors to close and waves one last time.

“You two can make out you know. Pretend I’m not here.” Bronn says from the corner.

I slap the side of his head while Sansa just laughs. “I’ll kick you out onto the street.” I fake threaten.

Thank fuck it’s a short ride and we all exit onto the second floor a moment later. “I’m already going.” Bronn says as he holds his hands up in surrender on his way to my flat. “Good night Sansa, was lovely as always.” He bows to her.

“It really was. Night!” She responds, too kindly, in my opinion at least.

We walk to her apartment side by side.

Sansa unlocks her door and turns to me. “I’ll see you in the morning?” She confirms.

“Aye. Maybe with a headache.” I joke, we’re all a tad buzzed.

“Ugh, don’t remind me.” She laughs.
“Tonight was great.” I tell her honestly, tucking some wayward hair behind her ear.

Sansa sucks in a sharp breath and takes another step towards me. “It really was.”

The alcohol, the tension that’s been brewing all goddamn night boils over and we crash into each other.

No matter how good it feels to have her hands in my hair, scratching my scalp, the way her soft, warm body is molded against mine and the things Sansa’s plump lips and wet, prodding tongue are doing to me I know I have to keep a handle on this especially tight tonight. There’s not a lot of strength in my resolve at the moment.

Gliding my hands slowly from her waist to cradle either side of her face, I slow our kisses in attempt to do the same for our breathing. Giving her three slow, chaste pecks, I pull back enough to rest our foreheads together.

“I better go before I can’t make myself.” I murmur.

Sansa pouts but meets my gaze and nods. We seem to be on the same page about waiting for the right time.

The right time better hurry the fuck up.

“Fine.” She bumps my nose. “Goodnight.” She kisses me once more before pulling away.

“Sweet dreams little bird.” I tell her and head back home.

Bronn is already snoring on the pull out in my office and I force myself to fall asleep, needing to not be ruined with a shit hangover in the morning.

I wake up, no I am woken-up by a strange sound in my room. I roll over to the sight of Bronn next to me in bed, under the covers watching videos on his phone. The fucker is cackling away at whatever is happening on the screen and when he turns to find me looking at him, he has the nerve to move closer, trying to show me what he’s watching.
“Good morning sweetheart! He coos. “Check out this video of a goat and a cat, fucking golden!”

I push him away before responding. “Why the fuck are you in my bed?”

“Well, no matter how comfortable the pull out sofa might be, your bed is better, first of all. Second, I was lonely.” He gives me fake puppy dog eyes and I just roll my own. “Third, I’m hungry and I ordered us food to be delivered so, you’re welcome. And last, I know you have to be up to play handyman.”

I groan and cover my face with the duvet for a moment. “Fine, thank you, you annoying motherfucker.” I tell him but with a smile.

Bronn checks his phone and tracks our food seeing they’re almost here and jumps up excitedly. “I’ll go meet the delivery man, you get up and ready. Hurry though, because I can’t promise I won’t eat your portion too!” He calls out to me as he runs down the hallway.

I can’t stop my mind from thinking how lucky I am to have Bronn, I’ll never tell him though. I decide to shower later, honestly not trusting him to keep my meal safe.

We sit at my kitchen island inhaling our food in silence and then we both reminisce on how fantastic last night was. Bronn grabs his stuff when he’s finished breakfast and gets ready to leave.

“I think we might’ve found the ones San. We’re two lucky bastards!” He claps me on the back. “Let me know how today goes and I’ll keep you posted on when my first solo date with Margaery is.”

“I will and you better.” I say to him and give him a slight squeeze around the shoulders.

I had heard from Sansa when we were eating and we thankfully both agreed to start on her spare room a little later because of our fun night. She told me Marg was doing the same for her, popping upstairs with breakfast. Looking at my phone now I see I have just over an hour before she’ll be expecting me.

I shower and dress quickly before I get an Uber to the office so I can grab my car and then two Americanos for her and I. Apparently Margaery brought them good food but paired it with kombucha green tea to help with the hangover. The gesture was appreciated but regretted by both,
as she told me it didn’t help their headaches.

Sansa let’s me in, looking a little tired but somehow still fresh and beautiful. Her hair is on top of her head, her blue shirt brings out her eyes and I see it’s a Direwolves tee with Robb’s number on it of course. It’s tied in a knot on her hip and apparently those painted-on pants come in many colors and Sansa has a greyish color on today. Her feet are bare and I smile when I see her toenails match her fingers.

“Good morning.” I greet her.

“Morning.” She replies. “Oh my, you brought coffee, you’re the best!” She pulls me inside.

“I thought we could start with a tour, you haven’t had one yet.” Sansa takes a sip and smiles over her cup at me.

“Sounds good to me.”

Sansa mimics my dramatics from the tour I gave her of my own place, swinging round her kitchen into her living room. We then look at her office and bedroom. In addition to her artwork and other photos she had hung when she moved in, I can tell she’s into decorating.

The entire place is light grey and white with hints of purple. It’s cozy and homey throughout, photos of her with family and friends cover most walls and table tops.

“And here is my room of problems.” She says opening the door to her spare room that she utilizes as a bedroom unlike me who made mine a gym. She’ll have family stay. I never will.

The bedroom set is seemingly “together” but one real look and I can see it would crumble under any pressure.

“Sorry for the mess. I haven’t gone through all my things yet, when they’re in here it’s out of sight out of mind.” Sansa says looking at the tubs of her things on the floor.

“Don’t apologize little bird, you haven’t been here long.”
“How does the furniture look? There’s some screws and things in a bag in the nightstand too.”

I heave out a sigh. “They rushed the bed and side tables for sure but the dresser seems fine. I’ll take the instructions to mine and grab my tools.”

“Here.” She hands me the bag of “extra” pieces and the pamphlets that go with the set. “Thank you so much for this.”

I grasp the hand that held the papers and press a kiss to her palm. “Happy to help. I’ll be back soon.”

Once I’m in the corridor leading to mine, I message Osha. I recognized the company name who fucked up Sansa’s things and want to get the owner’s name and number.

I’m back at Sansa’s in half an hour, tools in hand and already having sorted her refund. The bloke who runs the company appreciated my honesty and admitted she wasn’t the first to complain. He reassured me she would have a full refund by Monday.

Sansa is in the spare when I find her and I see some of her things have been moved out already. I told her I needed space and the boxes would have to go in her office or room.

“I just got an email apologizing for the issue and confirming I’ll get my money back.” She eyes me.

I rub my neck. I’m not used to checking with people before acting on my instincts. Shit. “Uh, yeah about that. I knew the guy, made a call. I should’ve talked to you first, I’m sorry.”

Sansa stands up from her spot on the floor next to a storage tub of books and comes to stand in front of me. “Don’t apologize silly.” She lightly slaps my chest. “It’s nice to have help, I was just about to thank you.”

I bend down to meet her eager mouth. Sansa presses her lips against mine but breaks the kiss before I can use my tongue. Probably for the best, seeing as we’re in a bedroom, it could’ve lead to me using my tongue in other ways. Ah shit, stop those thoughts you oaf, you’re wearing sweats!
It only takes a couple of trips to move her unpacked belongings into her own bedroom. Every time I go in there I swear the temperature goes up by five degrees. Sansa’s bed is as big as mine but has a lot more colorful pillows and blankets on it. Even though it looks like the cover of a home decor magazine, it is also welcoming and seems comfortable.

She gave me a quick tour of her walk in closet and I can’t get the images of some of the dresses I saw and her open underwear drawer out of my mind. I can just imagine her sitting at the little table in between her closet and bedroom, it’s got bright lights and a huge mirror, I’m sure she does her hair or make up or some shit there, straight out of the shower, looking as beautiful as ever and I just wish I could see it for myself.

When the spare was almost empty, besides the items that needed fixing, I just picked up the mattress and moved it where I needed without a second thought. Sansa was looking at me with wide eyes when I was done. She said something about always being shocked at how strong I was but also ensuring I knew she wanted to help as much as possible.

We spend the next couple of hours taking apart the bed frame, fixing the mess they made and then making up the bed just how she wants it. We take a break for lunch when part one is complete, ordering yet another pizza. When the food is gone, Sansa asks if I’m alright to start on the nightstands on my own as she has something to prepare for both of us, and won’t even hint at what it is.

Sansa joins me some time later and acts as my assistant for the final touches on the second table. No furniture is shaking and there’s no extra pieces hidden in a drawer by early evening. It didn’t take long for me to figure out what she was doing earlier, the amazing aroma from the kitchen wafted down the hallway in no time.

Once we’ve closed the door on our handiwork, Sansa finally asks what I hope is a rhetorical question.

“So you’ll stay for dinner?” She peeks up at me.

“Of course I fucking will.” I answer right away, my tone soft and warm despite the curse. “Although, I won’t take this as a thank you meal, it’s just dinner. I was happy to help you and I mean that, anytime.”

Sansa stares at me for a few moments, before smiling softly and making her way into the kitchen.
“I hope you like stew, it was a staple in the north, especially when you have as many siblings as I do. I put my own twist on it and I use a crockpot because I swear it’s a magic machine.”

“I love most any food and if it tastes like the last meal you cooked me then I’m already enjoying it.”

Sansa chuckles. “Good. Did you want to cut green beans or peel potatoes? If only I had a machine to do those for us, we could sit down and relax.”

I make my way over to stand next to her and grab the potatoes. I begin peeling and she begins chopping, in our usual companionable silence.

“Next time you’ll have to let me cook for you.” I say.

“You can cook?” She jokes.

I gently poke her ribs with one of my elbows making her squirm and giggle.

“I’m just joking!” She exclaims. “Did your godfather teach you?” She asks.

And from there I take over her usual role of storyteller, all my fond or funny memories from cooking to camping with Raymond spill out of me without a second thought. By the time I’m done, the potatoes are boiling, the green beans are in water and we’re sitting at her kitchen island listening to music while she asks me more questions and I do the same to her.

Sansa doesn’t let me help after that though, she mashes our starch and sautées the green beans before adding a heaping portion, obviously mine more so, to both of our plates of delicious smelling stew. I somehow control my reaction, not wanting to repeat the lemon cookie incident but it’s a close call.

“Well little bird, maybe I should take back my offer of cooking because yours is just so damn good.”
Sansa pretends to curtsy while sitting. “I thank you kind sir. Most of the things my mother taught me were batch recipes so I had tweak them for one person and add a bit of of my own touch, it wasn’t too hard.”

We end the night on her couch, sipping wine after eating ice cream, not sure it’s a classic choice but we enjoyed it nonetheless. It’s well after midnight when Sansa yawns.

I squeeze her calves that are resting across my lap. “I should let you get to bed, you have a big day tomorrow with your sister coming.”

“Don’t remind me.” Sansa says, covering her face. “I love her and I’ve missed her but it’s going to be an interesting transition having Arya stay here and then live in the city. After I pick her up I’ll message you to see when you can meet her?” She queries and I know again she’s not pressuring me.

Surprisingly, I can’t wait to meet the little fiery sibling of Sansa’s. I feel lucky she wants to include in regards to her family that way.

“Aye, sounds good.” I respond right away.

It feels as though we’ve been on a conveyor belt night after night, day after day, following one another to this damn door of hers. After things have settled with her sister and her book issues, I have decided to grow a pair and talk to her about how I’m feeling. And hopefully she feels the same.

Until then, I tide myself over with running my hands along her arms, grazing her palms and then grasping her waist, molding us together, chest to chest.

We pick up right where we left off earlier but this time I lick Sansa’s bottom lip until she opens for me. Our tongues glide together and when I drag my teeth along that same lip we both react immediately. I reach down for her thighs and Sansa jumps up and wraps her legs around my waist.

I push her, roughly, against her door, keeping one hand on her ass and holding her face with the other. Sansa begins moving against my erection and I swear I her her whisper oh gods.

Kissing across her cheek and jaw, grazing my teeth on her earlobe before sucking gently on her
neck almost pushes me over the edge. Sansa is panting and murmuring my name, erasing my resolve with her wandering hands.

When I feel my cockhead leak into my boxers I begin kissing my way back to her lips, the feel of the liquid bringing me back to the present.

“It gets harder to leave every time I see you.” I say against her mouth.

“I’d say.” She responds as she pushes down on my dick again.

I moan and lean my forehead on hers. “You’ll be the death of me little bird.”

“I’ll stop then. We can’t have that happening.” She says, verging on serious.

I lower Sansa to the ground and down the length of my body, one last bit of torture for the road.

“Try to have fun tomorrow, I mean today.” I tell her.

“I will and I’ll message you later. Goodnight” She says with a hand caressing my ruined cheek, making my heart stop. I press another kiss to her palm and head home.

Sunday sucks.

I had gotten used to seeing Sansa everyday this week and knowing I wasn’t going to today makes me extra grumpy.

If I don’t go out I will go nuts in my flat. I decide to go for a run and then finish off some security plans at the office. That long meeting Friday had me behind a bit anyway.

Sansa and I have been messaging on and off all day. Arya’s flight got in mid afternoon and the last I heard, both were safely back at Sansa’s flat, cleaning up to go out for dinner.
It’s well past dark when I finally get home myself. Sansa had sent me home last night with leftovers and I’m fucking starving. After devoring every bit of food she gave me and showering off my earlier work out, I lay down in an attempt to sleep.

Not likely.

My mind starts circling around how much my life has changed and in such a short period of time, simply from Sansa’s presence. Without her around today, it became apparent how deep I’m in this already and I’m fucking terrified. It’s all so new and different and I’m used to her being here already.

I somehow fall asleep a long while later but it’s restless and I’m more exhausted come morning than I was the night before.

Sansa and Arya had a late night of catching up and talking to their family. I don’t want to disturb her so early and instead wait to hear from her first. Meaning I check my phone way too fucking much as I try to get some work done.

Not long before lunch, Osha calls me to say there’s a Miss Stark downstairs at reception. My mood skyrockets instantly and I tell her to send her up to my office.

When there’s a knock on my half closed door I jump up to meet her.

“Well this is a nice sur-“ I’m cut off by my own shock. The woman who enters my office is not Sansa. She’s barely five foot, has short light pink hair and a decent tan.

“Sorry to disappoint you with the wrong Miss Stark. I’m Arya.” She shoves her hand towards me.

What the hells am I in for with this family?

Chapter End Notes

Sophie’s Bar and Grill is a great chain and even though their Covent Garden location
has shut down, I have the best memories from that spot!
Sorry sorry sorry! I know this took a while, even though I started it when chapter 7 was published.

Life’s been rough, still is, for the last week or so which makes writing hard.

And honestly, I’m still not happy with my witting for this chapter. But I had to stop editing or it’d never make it to you guys.

Don’t get me wrong, I LOVE the interactions, memories, sweet times, serious times and especially the lemony times. This is probably my favorite chapter so far but the way I’ve portrayed it, I couldn’t get it where I wanted.

Anyhoo, I just hope you all love it for the reasons I do and also for my writing. Definitely send advice and constructive criticism my way if you see fit though!

Thank you as always for the love and support, thinking of this fandom cheers me up, a lot.

Oh! Picture inspiration will my on my Tumblr 😊

PS this is another long ass motherfer, sorrynotsorry 😒

“So you’re the little ninja?” I ask as I return her firm shake.

It’s Arya’s turn to look surprised before throwing her head back in laughter. “Is that what you’ve heard, huh?”

“You’re small enough to be sneaky.”

Her eyes narrow. “And you’re big and hairy enough to be Hagrid.” They all must like the series about the wizard boy.


Arya sighs. “Then don’t.” A grin tugs at her mouth though. “Look, I came here to talk shop.”

I lean back against my desk, crossing my arms. “With me?” I’m lost.

Arya rolls her eyes, exasperated. For some reason I’m warming to the little spitfire. “Duh. There’s no point beating around the bush here. I’m totally using your dating my sister to pull strings.”

“Man you’re ballsy.” I shake my head, grinning. She’s nothing like my little bird. “You didn’t want to wait and meet me with Sansa?”
“No, she would tackle me to the ground if I was asking favors of you. Gods forbid anyone unsettles whatever it is you two are doing.” She scrunches up her nose.

Shit, Sansa really does talk about me, and it sounds like our, as Arya so eloquently put it, “whatever it is” means something to her. My mood is picking back up after the disappointment of the wrong Miss Stark incident.

“Aye, she does fret your sister. I wouldn’t have minded. You barging into my office, well that’s another story.” I tease.

Arya studies me then. She looks me up and down, before staring at the right side of my face. For some odd reason I don’t feel any anger or embarrassment. I’m sure Sansa has told Arya about my ruined cheek since her expression doesn’t change at all, it’s as if she’s looking at non-melted skin.

“Well, you sure as hells are the opposite of her last boyfriend. So thank fuck for that.” I try to interrupt her, to say something about not being Sansa’s boyfriend but she continues before I can. “I mean I knew of you before she even met you.” I quirk an eyebrow at that.

“Your boxing career. No matter how short lived it was you really made a name for yourself, Hound.” She watches my face for a reaction. I only slightly flinch, her saying that name doesn’t bother me as much as it usually does.

“I want to study and master every form of fighting there is. I’ve dabbled in boxing but no one truly knows what they’re doing. That’s why I’m here to ask you to train me.” She states firmly.

“I don’t train.” I half growl at her.

“I’m aware. But I also know your main goal is to help people. It’s mine as well. I take this seriously and would be happy to share what I’ve learnt so far, you’d be the first to hear it.” She holds my stare.

I look at to the ground for a second. “And you’re using your sister as well.” I grumble at her.

Arya smiles proudly. “Yep! Whichever is your softest spot, and I can see my answer to that.” Another roll of her eyes.

I always thought myself difficult to read until today. “Don’t tell me things before your family and friends. Inform me of what they do know and give your fucking best in the ring. I won’t take it easy on you.”

Arya’s cheeks must hurt from smiling. “Would be pissed off if you did.”

“We’ll have to meet before and after hours or somewhere else.” I can’t have the other patrons seeing my favoritism.

“Thought as much.” Arya says.

We both sit then and she goes on to tell me as much of her travels, training and future plans as her family knows about too. Arya looked at a spot to lease this morning that will house her martial arts and self defense school.

“Well, shit. Sounds like you’ve got a solid plan there. You’re in the right market at the moment as well.”

“Thanks. And for your help.”
“You’re welcome. One request though.”

“Shoot.”

“Tell Sansa about this little meeting and what we’ve agreed to.”

Arya groans. “Seriously?” I simply stare at her. “Fine! I should’ve expected that part.”

I stand up and walk to my door, opening and holding it for her. “I’ll get your number from Sansa, once she’s aware of the situation.”

“Fair enough.” Arya extends her hand to me again.

“Good to meet you.” I return the gesture.

“You too.” Arya gets one step out my entryway before turning around. “You’re good for her, you know.” Before I can react, let alone respond, she’s disappeared.

The rest of the day flies by, especially after an emergency security detail request comes in. Still not as exciting as my morning with the mini Stark though.

I get back to my office in time to knock off and see my phone has died. I haven’t spoken to Sansa since my encounter with her sister. She was in a meeting and then mine popped up before she was finished. Cursing, I rush out the building, wanting to get home and speak to her.

When I exit the elevator onto our floor, I barely make it through the doors before Sansa is in front of me.

“You’re alright.” She rushes out.

I pull her to me immediately. “I am and I’m sorry. My phone died while I was in a meeting.” I hold up the useless thing for her to see.

Sansa lets out a deep breath. “I thought you were upset about Arya ambushing you. And then I got worried something else happened and-“

I cradle her face. “Hey, hey.” I interject. “I’m good. We’re good.”

Finally, she smiles. “Okay. Can you come over?”

Kissing the corner of her mouth and grabbing her hand to lead her home is my only answer.

Sansa closes the door behind us and pushes me towards her kitchen counter. She backs me up until my arse hits the edge and apparently that’s exactly where she wants me, because she lets go of my hand and takes a step back, looking serious.

“Sandor, I am so sorry about Arya. That is just who she is, no boundaries and no filter. Easy to appreciate it sometimes, but on days like today.” Sansa closes her eyes and rubs her temples as if willing away a headache. “I want to disown her. Please do not feel that you have to do anything extra for her, that you wouldn’t for others, just because of me. Arya will be fine. I had no idea of her plan, I would’ve warned you and tried to stop her if I did.”

Before Sansa can pull a muscle from her rambling and worrying, I grab her hands again and pull her between my open legs so we’re pressed front to front.

“Little bird, stop your chirping.” I say to her with the best smile I can offer. “It’s true, your sister is
something else, but I don’t mind. She seems to have a real passion and I’m happy to help her. And yes, it is a bit because she’s your sister. Anyone connected to you deserves special treatment.” I trail my fingertips under jaw and into her hair.

“You’ll tell me if she becomes too much or you get sick of training her?”

I bark out a laugh. “That ankle biter won’t get the best of me.” Sansa eyes me as if I’ll eat my words one day. “I’ll let you know if that changes.” I compromise.

“Thank you.” Sansa smiles, looking relieved. “Will you join us for dinner? Arya is cooking one of my favorites from home. My first hint she did something annoying was the smell of lemon chicken when I walked in the door.” Sansa rolls her eyes.

I chuckle at the two sisters, fighting and bribing one another already. “Aye, I’d like that. Where is she?” I’m surprised she hasn’t walked in and complained about our close proximity.

“She ran out of something and huffed and puffed all the way to the store.” Sansa replies.

“Mmm, good.” I murmur against her lips before kissing her slow and deep.

We’re both lost in the kiss. Sansa is all I can see, hear, feel and taste. Our teeth knock together from eagerness, our tongues tangle, our breaths are growing harsher, to the point we don’t hear the door opening and closing.

“Oh my gods, enough!” Arya yelps. “I’d say get a room, but sound carries. Can you just stop and let me cook?” She whines.

Sansa breaks our kiss and we both fall into a fit of laughter, still in our embrace. We finally give her sister space when she picks up a frying pan and heads our way.

The evening goes better than I ever could’ve imagined. Nothing is awkward, Arya opens up a bit more about her travels and even though Sansa and I only share a brief kiss before we hear the little fighter chanting “my eyes!” I still leave happy.

And that’s the last time I feel anything positive for the rest of the week.

I wake-up Friday morning and rival the Beast from Beauty and the Beast with my foul mood. Sansa and I have both been run ragged and haven’t even bumped into one another since Monday.

We message every chance we get and have spoken on the phone as well but it’s not enough. At least our AGM went smoothly and Sansa is back on track for both of her new novels.

Tonight she’s having a girls night with Marg and Arya because Gendry got a celebratory table at some club in Chelsea. Another evening I won’t see her. I can’t even be upset, well not more upset, because I’m truly happy she’s going to enjoy herself.

I apparently had given in to Tormund and Bronn coming to my place this evening. I really don’t even mind when it comes to Bronn and as for Tormund, him and Brienne were away on a long vacation and have only been back a couple of weeks. This is the longest the three of us haven’t seen each other so I’m looking forward to spending time with the big, ginger fool.

Do I wish I was in a better mood for this get together? Hells yes, but I suppose it’s better than being alone for yet another night. I might’ve gotten even grumpier if that’s possible.

Just like the last time I hadn’t seen Sansa for a while, everyone besides Osha and Bronn is avoiding
me. Thank fuck. Those two are not phased at all by my bad attitude, I know they feel for me and wish they could help but I don’t scare or even irritate them.

Bronn will spend most of his day in the gym training and he called me after lunch to say I didn’t have to do anything for tonight, besides look pretty. I gave him a good curse for that. Tormund was bringing the beer and he was bringing the food.

I decide to leave early under the guise of getting ready for my boys night in, I couldn’t even say it to Osha without rolling my eyes. As I sit in my apartment waiting for my two best friends to come over I decide to message Sansa.

**Sandor**: Have fun tonight.

**Sansa**: 😊 thanks. You too. What you are you guys getting up to?

**Sandor**: Beer, food, shit action film, male bonding

**Sansa**: I’m not sure I want to know what that bonding entails LOL!

**Sandor**: Me either...

**Sandor**: I miss you little bird

Fuck, did I really just say that? She’s making me lose my mind. And I’m fucking loving it.

**Sansa**: 😞 I miss you too. I hope we can see each other this weekend.

**Sandor**: Yes me too, we can talk tomorrow, make plans?

**Sansa**: Please! Time to start getting ready, I’m at Marg’s and she’s filling wine glasses already, talk soon! 😊

I reread our messages until my door opens, giving me half of a heart attack. Why did I give the two of them keys? Emergencies and those “I’ve fallen and I can’t get up” commercials haunting me, right.

Sighing, I get up off the couch and cross my flat to meet the two of them.
“Well hello gorgeous, I see you took my advice and got all dolled up for us.” Bronn says with a clap to my back, winking at me.

“I’ll throw you out the window.” I growl. The man just laughs and heads to my kitchen with the food.

”You do look exceptionally pretty this evening.” Tormund drawls to me in his Norwegian accent.

“Not you too.” I groan. “I was just going to admit that I had missed your crazy ass.”

The ginger throws his head back cackling. “I don’t want to miss out on that, so I’ll stop teasing you.” He wraps his arms around my middle, he’s taller than Bronn, but neither of them give me any competition in the height department. My own wrap around his shoulders in a tight embrace.

“Can’t go this long without seeing each other again.” I say to him.

He pulls back to look me in the face. “I agree.” And then he kisses my cheek and skips into the kitchen.

“We can go longer!” I shout after him.

The three of us bring the food to the living room along with the beer and somehow eat it all. After we’ve cleaned up and settle down to watch some film Bronn wanted to see, I finally can’t stop myself from dwelling on thoughts of Sansa.

Apparently I’m not alone in the sentiment, as Bronn takes out his phone and immediately his face lights up.

“Don’t you love technology and social media? We get to see the girls’ entire night from the comfort of San’s couch.” He says while patting the cushions of my sofa.

Love, hate, I don’t know which way to feel about the inevitable pictures and videos we will see of their night out. I’ve been trying not to imagine how bloody amazing Sansa looks. I’ve never seen her dressed up for this sort of outing but, if our double date is any indication, then she’s going to be looking worship-worthy.

Bronn moves from his lounging position at the end of my couch to squeeze in between me and Tormund.

“Now, let’s watch the good stuff.” He says while pausing the TV and holding up his phone for both of us to see.

Opening up Instagram, he starts watching Margaery’s story. She has videos and pictures starting from before Sansa even made it to her’s this afternoon.

No matter how much I try not to show too much emotion in front of my friends, I know my face is split in half with a wide grin. The photos of them getting ready are funny and cute and I wish I could’ve been there to see it.

They sing along to music, hairbrushes as microphones, they also eat dinner together and I’m sure Sansa won’t be happy to see the one of her mid bite, even though she still looks deliriously beautiful.

The most recent post is from only a few minutes ago in the night club. The video starts with Margaery doing a scan of the room, I recognize the place, they use us for their bouncers. The club
is seventy-five percent tables with bottle service and of course Gendry paid for at least two of them with their own waitresses.

When she turns the camera around to face her, and the group they’re with, my heart stops. Sansa is standing next to her, with Arya on the opposite side, the two sisters seemingly lost in conversation even in the loud nightclub. What has me almost holding my chest is how fucking fantastic she looks.

Sansa’s hair is long, silky straight and coming down to her mid back, she has on a tight black dress and, as always, the color does amazing things for her skin. She’s wearing another pair of shoes to add to my fantasy list and the only disappointment is, I can’t see her face.

That is the last bit of insight Marg has for us so I take out my phone, giving in and decide to watch Sansa’s. She has up an assortment of snapshots, and seems like she somehow put up the same ones as Marg too. I can barely view these damn things let alone work them like that.

Sansa has some selfie’s with her sister as well and that’s when I finally see her face. I’ve never seen her with this type of make up on and, again she doesn’t need any of it, but the way it changes her face, how it makes her eyes more intense and her lips plumper, has me wishing I was home alone right now.

This is why I was going to take a stand against bloody social media for the night and just watch it in the morning, because now I’m opening our messages and typing one to her when she’s supposed to be having a girls night, celebrating her success.

**Sandor:** Having fun?

I half expect her to not reply or at the very least take a while. As always, Sansa shocks me and replies almost as soon as my message is sent.

**Sansa:** So far so good. I haven’t been out like this in so long, I was starting to feel like a grandma! I’m glad we all decided to come. What about you and the boys?

**Sandor:** They’re here, doubt we’re enjoying ourselves as much as you are but I can’t lie, it’s good to see them, especially Tormund.

**Sansa:** I have written proof and I will use it against you if I must, in the future LOL!

**Sansa:** Do you want to see my outfit?

Well, that was a change in topic. I could be honest, tell her about watching the videos and that I already had a glimpse, but a picture of her, maybe even taken just for me? I’d be the biggest idiot in the fucking world to pass up on that.

**Sandor:** Aye little bird, I do.

I literally have to bite my tongue until it hurts to stop myself from making some sort of inappropriate noise in front of my friends. Who thankfully, are paying attention to the movie, at least for the moment.
Sansa looks to be in the bathroom or somewhere brightly lit. She’s standing against the wall, one leg bent with the foot resting behind her. Of course she chose the leg with the slit up the side of the dress. This pose and angle is giving me the perfect view of a lot of milky thigh and I know my eyes roll back in my head for a second. The dress comes up high on her neck and even though it’s seemingly modest, it’s the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen.

I also get a good look at the makeup she’s wearing. The dark color around her eyes makes the blue almost blinding, especially since she’s staring “innocently” at the camera. And all I want right now is to have the dark purple on her pouty lips all over my face, and maybe other places.

**Sandor**: Gods, little bird you look fucking amazing.

**Sansa**: I’m glad you like it.

**Sandor**: That’s an understatement. But I should let you get back to your night.

We finish the movie and I pour us all a glass of the whiskey from Ned. Of course Tormund asks where I got it as he wants to buy a bottle. Once he hears who sent it to me, it’s no surprise he is eager to hear more. And it all pours out of me, easily.

From the moment I met Sansa, up until this week of not seeing her and how fucking difficult it’s been. Bronn knows almost all of what’s already happened but he still listens intently and they both commiserate with missing someone as I am. It’s the first normal conversation about women we three have been able to participate in together.

My story ends and then has Tormund inquiring about Bronn and Margaery. He’s bouncing up and down in his seat, ready to share all the sordid details. Even though there aren’t many. They have been on dates now and speak every day. Bronn again, tells both of us that this might be it for him. Tormund and I look at each other shocked, we never thought this day would come.

Tormund gives us the details about the trip he and Brienne had, as well as the plans for their fall wedding. He was dropped as a baby and picked me to be the best man. Of course Bronn still offered to plan the stag party. We both told him hells no. We didn’t need to recreate “The Hangover.”

The boys go into the kitchen for another round but I pass and stay on the sofa. I’m surprised when my phone vibrates, I know it has to be Sansa but I didn’t think I’d hear from her again.

**Sansa**: Sandor what’s wrong with me

**Sansa**: ?

My stomach tries to fall out of my ass when I read her message. What is she going on about? Why would she say that? How the fuck do I respond? I don’t have to, not for now at least, as she messages me again before I can gather my thoughts.

**Sansa**: We hang out, we go on dates but that’s it. We haven’t talked about this thing between us.
Sansa: Ooh and we kiss, a lot. But you won’t go past first base either. It’s a total bummer.

Sansa: Gods is it because I’m a bad kisser? How do you know if you suck at it?

Sansa: You are definitely a good kisser. Like I think about kissing you, all the time. I even forget to write sometimes.

Sansa: Shit. Did I just send that? I wonder if you can delete sent messages. Or maybe you haven’t read it yet.

Sansa: Two blue ticks. Shit, you’ve read it.

I don’t mean to smile but these are fueled by liquid courage, plus, I’m an ass and it feels good to know she wants this between us to be more.

Sandor: Little bird can I come to you?

Her response takes longer than usual to come through, my own must’ve thrown her off guard.

Sansa: Yes. We’re at Dragonstone in Chelsea.

I knew that of course but don’t say so, I simply tell Sansa I’ll see her soon. Thankfully, when I look up from my phone Tormund is stretching.

“Alright lover boys, I’m going home to my blonde goddess. Thanks for tonight.” He walks over to the door, slipping on his boots and jacket.

“Let’s do this again soon.” Bronn says seriously.

Tormund’s face lights up. “And we can invite our women next time, yes? I want to meet the ones who have stolen your hearts. They must be magicians or you’re making them up.” He jokes.

When I reach my two best friends, the ginger grabs Bronn and me around our waists, and pulls us to either side of him. He explains we have made a Tormund sandwich with this weird group hug.

“Alright, alright get your hands off and go put them on your fiancé.” I tell him teasingly as he opens the door.
“Oh I plan to.” He winks and leaves, closing my door behind him.

Bronn and I turn to each other as if we synchronized it and speak at the exact same moment.

“We’re going to the club.” I tell him.

“Let’s go meet the girls.” He says.

“What?” I ask him?

Bronn looks at me, eyes glinting. “You tell me what you’re talking about.” I roll my eyes. I know he won’t let this go.

“Sansa messaged me and I told her I’d meet her at Dragonstone. Now, you.” I poke him in the chest.

Bronn’s face is already looking as if he’s too pleased with himself. “This is new and strange, us being on the same page about chicks but I fucking love it!” He cheers. “Marg messaged me earlier today telling me her gran is out of town for a few days at some old lady spa.” He waggles his eyebrows.

“I finally got the go ahead to spend the night when she asked me to meet at the club and then come home with her.” He hadn’t even finished his story before hopping on one foot at a time, shoving the opposite into his shoes. “What are you waiting for you big oaf?! Get your shit, let’s go.” He demands.

Thank fuck it takes a hells of a lot of planning and alcohol to get me even tipsy, meaning I’m safe to drive. We’re downstairs in my wagon in record time and pulling up to Dragonstone in mere minutes.

I toss my keys to the valet with a quick thanks, meanwhile our guys at the door already recognize my car. They’re waving us over, smiling and telling us it’s good to see both of the bosses having fun.

I’ve never really been a club goer, maybe starting my career as a bouncer ruined the allure for me. However, this is one of the nicest places I’ve ever been to. I know they’re on the up and up too because we do background checks on all of our clients. You’re not paying me with dirty fucking money. It’s clean, always up to code and since it’s in Chelsea, it’s bloody fancy too.

It wouldn’t take me long to find Sansa in the large room, no matter how vast and crowded it is. Even though the majority of the space is tables that are partitioned off around the edge of the dance floor, it’s still like a mosh pit everywhere else. As soon as we pass the coat check and enter the main bar area it’s as if I’m tethered to Sansa, I turn my head and spot her immediately

I tug Bronn in the direction of the girls and take off without seeing if he’s keeping up. Margaery notices us first, she moves to stand at the railing around their table and smiles bradly at my best friend.

Sansa is still seated on the couch behind Marg, it looks as if everyone else has dispersed, leaving the two of them alone at this table. Sansa was checking her phone and slips it back into her bag as I walk up the stairs towards her.

Bronn marches straight to Margaery and they begin talking and dancing. Sansa finally looks up and her face morphs, a soft smile tugs at her mouth, her eyes brighten and then she’s standing, wetting her lips.
I only stop once we’re chest to chest and lean down to speak against her ear. Her chest is rising and falling quickly.

“Hi little bird.”

“Hi.” She bites her lip, looking up at me.

I hold her hands and take a step back, obviously checking her out.

“How is it possible for you look even more beautiful in person?”

Sansa just laughs in response and closes the distance between us again.

“Did you want to go or stay longer?” I ask her.

“Let’s go.” She answers immediately.

I keep one of her hands tight in my own and lead us over to our loved-up friends.

“We’re leaving. Are you two?” I shout to Bronn once we’re next to them.

“Hells yes.” He mouths back, looking like he’ll explode from glee.

Rolling my eyes I nod and turn to Sansa.

“I need to tell Arya.” She tells me.

“She’s still here? Where?” I scan our immediate area.

Sansa points to the table next to the one she was at. And low and behold, her little sister is in Sansa’s boss’s lap. Gendry is whispering in Arya’s ear and she is bloody beaming. Well, damn.

I tell Bronn to wait a minute and we walk over to interrupt the practical make-out session. Sansa never lets go of me as she taps Arya on the shoulder, half yelling that we’re going home. Her sister eyes me up again and simply raises an eyebrow as a greeting. I return the warm hello. Apparently she’s staying, so the sisters wave to one another and then I lead us back into the crowd.

There’s too many fucking people in here, it’s setting my teeth on edge. I pull Sansa in front of me now, moving my hands to her hips, keeping her close and weaving us to the door.

We stop and start several times and it’s torture. Bloody fantastic torture. Sansa pushes back against my front to avoid people, to wait while others shove past and she even sways her hips a couple of times, if we pause during a good song. It must take us over ten minutes to reach the exit but it isn’t enough. I’m panting, and not from the walk, by the time we make it outside.

Sansa squeezes my hand before letting go and linking arms with Margaery while we wait for the valet. Bronn and I both go to open the back door for them. I end up giving him the chivalrous glory.

They sing, giggle and try to tell us about their evening, mostly about the shocking pairing of Arya and Gendry. They don’t get far, their tipsyness getting the better of them.

I felt instant relief and happiness, along with my surprise, when I saw the odd couple. Sansa never made it seem as if there was more between her and the Baratheon boy, but it’s still hard to believe and I’m glad his hands are full now.
We help the girls to the lift, they’re not drunk but close enough and probably tired as well, they just need a little support. Bronn keeps his arm around Marg’s waist when the elevator opens on her floor. There’s a lot of laughs, air kisses and hugs before the doors close.

The loss of her friend seems to have drained Sansa even more and she leans heavily on my side. When we reach second and she doesn’t move, I decide to pick her up as I did last week. Sansa only hums an appreciative sound when her feet leave the ground.

I feel her digging around for her keys before we reach her door and she has them ready for me when we do. She still hasn’t lifted her head from my chest though. I stride straight to her bedroom, flicking on a couple of lights on the way.

I place Sansa gently on her pillows and somehow work my giant fingers to carefully remove her shoes. I cover her with the fuzzy blanket draped at the foot of her bed, not wanting to disturb her, she hasn’t opened her eyes since we were in the living room.

Padding quietly back to the kitchen, I pour her a glass of water and place it next to the ibuprofen I found in her en suite. I make sure to leave on the bathroom light, even though I doubt she’ll take a trip to Europe, as well as the hallway one.

And then I stare at her like a creep. Not for long at least. I’ve never seen her sleep before and somehow she’s more stunning. To see her so peaceful, no worries creasing her brow or pulling down her plump lips, the sight makes me happy.

Now what?

I know she isn’t that drunk, but it still doesn’t feel right to leave. So I don’t. Instead, I remove my shoes and jacket, empty my pockets and lay down on her couch. Which, thankfully is comfortable. At first I’m unsure if I’ll be able to sleep, with Sansa so close and not knowing I’m here, but the soft blanket and cushions have me drifting off quickly.

When I open my eyes again, the sun is shining but not brightly, it’s still early, I can make my escape! Well, I thought I could. That is until I realize the reason I woke-up was because of a noise and not my alarm, but a door closing.

I shouldn’t have even thought about running out of here without speaking to Sansa about sleeping over, at the very least. We obviously have an elephant in the room we need to discuss.

I rub my eyes as I sit up and stretch. When I look towards the doorway leading to the hall, Sansa is leaning against the wall, and you’d never think she had been out until after one in the morning.

The only evidence of her girls night is the black dress she still has on. Her face has been washed of any make-up and only her eyes look a little tired. She’s even brushed her hair and piled it on top of her head.

“Good morning.” She says when our eyes meet.

“Morning.”

“You stayed.” It’s not a question.

I clear my throat. “Uh, yeah, I did. In case you needed anything I thought it best.” I rub the back of my neck, feeling like that vampire guy who sparkled and watched a girl sleep.

Sansa gives me a really bloody happy smile. “Thank you Sandor. I’m glad you’re here.” She starts
walking towards me.

“You are?” My heart finally stops racing in concern that she would think I’m a freak.

“Yes.” Sansa sits down next to me but keeps a gap between us that I hate. “You got my messages last night?” She’s avoiding my gaze and her cheeks are red.

Ah, she wants to dive right in. Good.

“I did. That’s why I came to you.”

Sansa nods and doesn’t say a word for several seconds. “Do you want to talk about what I said or forget I ever sent them?” I can hear the apprehension in her voice.

I don’t move closer but I do lift her chin with my fingertips, grey orbs meeting blue. “I really want to talk about them little bird.”

Her shoulders relax at my words. “Okay, good, me too.”

“Can I start?” I surprise myself with the request but I know I need to get this out before I’m too chicken shit.

Sansa looks shocked as well but reigns in her reaction quickly and nods. I let go of her face and hold both of her hands in my own.

“I’m no bloody good at any of this. Talking, let alone feelings, and I’ve never even dated before so I’m in brand new territory here.” I admit. Sansa is watching my face and her own holds not an ounce of judgement.

I am as honest with Sansa as possible, without including too many unnecessary details. My past history with women is short and even though I want to know if there was anyone else before or after that blonde cunt, I don’t need a play by play. I’ve never been jealous before and feeling that way over her past seems stupid, but I can’t help it.

I’ve only ever spent time with one other woman. It happened not long after I finished high school. I was doing business courses at one of the local universities and also got my first job as a bouncer. The place was always full of regulars, as well as my fellow college aged students.

One of the almost daily visitors was a woman named Meera. She was a few years my senior and from my first night was surprisingly kind to me. She always said hello, gave me insight on some of the regulars who were terrible at holding their liquor or just liked a reason to fight. Meera would even chat to me during the quiet times and bring me drinks when I was too busy to leave my post.

I honestly thought nothing of it, I had experienced random bouts of nice people throughout my life and because she started off on the right foot with me, she also never saw my asshole side. Well, not to her at least, just to the patrons that got kicked out.

It began the night after I passed my probation. My first three months at the bar had flown by and I felt proud and accomplished to have secured a real job. They worked around my class and exam schedules and the money was great. The manager surprised me that same evening by telling me to knock off a couple of hours early to have some fun for once.

I didn’t really drink and no matter my age it’s never been easy for me to get drunk so I guess everyone thought I was a loser. It also could’ve been my lack of friends. If you ever saw me out in the town center, I was with my godfather. And I wouldn’t change that for the world. Raymond and
I have the best memories and never once did we not have fun together.

When they finally pried me from the door, two hours after I should’ve finished for the night, I was shoved to the bar and given a pint of my favorite lager and three shots. I had been studying all day and fell asleep before I could eat anything, so I actually did feel the slightest buzz to my brain, for a while.

When Meera sat next to me, her thigh resting along length of mine, leaning in to talk directly talk against my ear lobe and even putting her hand on my knee I thought that I must completely shitfaced and just not know how it feels. I had never even kissed a female at that point nor had I been flirted with.

Meera however, enjoyed life and men. I have never use the word slut and I never would, and she honestly wasn’t one. She was tapped into her sexuality and enjoyed herself. Why the hells not? Life’s too short.

She didn’t mince her words or sugarcoat anything, ever, so after a while of celebrating, when we were left alone at the end of the bar, she just came out with it and told me she knew I was a virgin and that I shouldn’t be.

Meera said I might look scary on the outside, and not because of my scars, but my height and the fact that I never smile. She went on to say I was handsome, regardless of what had happened to me as a child, and that she had liked me from the minute she met me. She could tell I was a good man, apparently.

I distinctly remember my throat getting thick with emotion at her words. Sometimes, even to this day, I’m terrified that I’ll turn out like my father or my brother who were the farthest things from good men.

Meera then proceeded to slide off of her stool and pulled me behind her, announcing to me that we were going to her place for the night.

Obviously, everything that happened behind closed doors that night blew my fucking teenage mind and I did whatever I could to make sure it didn’t end. Even after only sleeping together once, I knew she wasn’t lying when Meera told me I was a fast learner and it was one of the best nights she ever had.

We continued our “friends with benefits”, as she called it, for several months. I never pushed or questioned it, besides checking with her that we were exclusive. Since it was my first, anything with a woman I wasn’t comfortable sharing, and I’m still not. Kudos to those who can do it, but I’m a selfish and jealous bastard

Meera reassured me that our “relationship” was simply between the two of us and she didn’t have the energy to deal with more than one sexual partner at a time. Even though it was almost all about the sex, she still continued to visit the bar for herself but to also keep me company and we maintained our sort of friendship we had become used to.

Sometimes I stayed the night at hers and we would talk into the early hours of the morning. We even began going for breakfast and lunch, or Meera would invite me to hang out with her friends if I had a rare night off. It was several months later when all of that gave me a false sense of confidence and I ruined it.

I had realized pretty quickly that I was going to be a relationship man. I hadn’t really had friends growing up, not until Bronn, who at this point I hadn’t met yet. And I only had my godfather as my
chosen family. All the horrors I had suffered didn’t get the best of me and I still yearned for the unknown of what it was like to have someone all to yourself.

Raymond was also still a long-term bachelor so other than TV and movies I had no idea what my relationship with Meera truly was. We had chemistry, we got along, we held up conversations, we went out and we had sex. My naïve brain thought that was it, it had to be enough of a foundation to give a relationship a try.

One night after our usual romp, I said something less eloquent than all of that and, a lot shorter too, to Meera, hoping she would agree. I was very wrong.

She was as kind as anyone can be in that situation, but she let me down nevertheless. Meera explained that she would probably never be ready for a relationship, she was beyond happy with her life at the moment and didn’t want that to change. It was the typical, it’s not you it’s me, but she was telling the truth, I knew her well enough by then.

There was some unspoken agreement after that and we stopped our little affair. She also had a rapidly approaching vacation. There was my silver lining. Relief that I wouldn’t have to see her for at least six months. She was taking a backpack, all her money and seeing how far around the world she could get. See, I was blind about the whole thing.

I immersed myself even more so in my studies and took on extra shifts whenever I could. That’s why I graduated early and was able to start a business so young. I heard through the gossip mill one day, that Meera wasn’t coming back anytime soon, apparently six months gallivanting across the globe wasn’t going to be enough.

On or about her would’ve been return date, I finally gave in and tried to see if I would ever get laid again in my life. I chose one of the other regular girls from the bar who treated me like a human and talked to her. Lisa was as nice as she usually was to me every other night and seemed more than eager to come back to mine. Thankfully, Raymond was on some retreat.

We repeated that evening a couple times over before my self-imposed celibacy kicked in. A few weeks later, when we were laying in bed before I got up to go home, she said something that I almost didn’t catch but I’ll always be glad I pressed her on it.

Lisa had just finished a cigarette, she was so fucking cliché I don’t know why I ever chose her, and she stretched while commenting on how she couldn’t wait to thank Meera when she finally came back home. I made her repeat what she said and stared at her, maybe even a bit scarily, until she broke like a dam and told me everything.

Meera had always said that I wasn’t as mean as I looked and ensured people were respectful, if not kind to me. That part I appreciated, it was the rest that made me feel sick to my stomach.

Before she had flown out on the first leg of her worldwide adventure, Meera told her closest friends (all twelve of them) that if they wanted a good lay to pursue me or take me up on the offer, if I ever grew enough confidence to present it myself.

The color drained from her face and she looked as if she felt like shit for pretty much helping make me into the town bicycle. It didn’t make me feel better but I’m still glad she might’ve felt some remorse. I stormed out of her home and never spoke to her again.

I did put on the act of taking one of the other girls home but before we even left the bar I asked if Meera had any help in her decision to allow the night to progress, and she sheepishly nodded her head and apologized. She then begged me to still go through with it.
I knew if I did, that it would never stop. I already had a reputation I didn’t want and I had only slept with two people, ever, in my life. I would simply go through all of the females around, if I continued, like some piece of shit that I didn’t want to be. Since then, it’s just been me and my hand.

“We get along, but we’re lonely.” I attempt to end on a lighter note, making a joke.

Sansa’s face has gone through many emotions during my little tale, from shock, to sadness and now I can see she’s filled with anger.

“It’s really too bad for them that I know where you grew up because I feel an impromptu trip north coming about. Arya would be in tow by the way.” The serious look on her face and the frustration in her tone tell me this might not be an empty threat.

“Little bird, it was long ago. And if it helped me get here, sitting on this couch with you, I don’t regret a second of any of it.”

She loses little of her wolf ferocity at that.

“Look Sansa, I’ve wanted to have this conversation with you for a while. But you know now that I was just out of my depth.” She has completely softened now, squeezing my hands and looking at me with total understanding.

“I never wanted you to think this was merely physical. Don’t get me wrong, that’s been on my mind a whole hells of a lot since the first time we kissed, but in no way is that all I want.” I tell her firmly, holding her gaze and ensuring she knows I mean every word.

Sansa bites her lip as though holding back a large smile and nods.

“You are one of a kind. I have never wanted to spend time with anyone as much as I do with you, not even my closest friends. Your strength, your unfailing kindness and your endless warm heart, those are things I’m not used to but you have me addicted in a very short period of time.” I say with a grin tugging at my own lips now.

“I want more than anything in the fucking world to see where this can go between us and I’m in, one hundred and ten percent.” I try to sound gentle yet serious next, I know this is important.

“I promise you, I will never hurt you. I might be grumpy and get too caught up in my negative emotions but I know that you can help me pull my head out of my ass.” We both chuckle at that.

“I’ll always respect you, listen to you and I just want to keep spending time with you and making memories that I’ve never made before. I might need you to put me in my place with the whole relationship thing because I’ll get it wrong but I will learn from my mistakes, I just might need help.”

Sansa looks like she’s almost vibrating. “I really want to throw myself at you right now.” She says with a smirk. “But I think we would get distracted and I haven’t even said anything yet.”

“Aye little bird, I sure as fuck would be more distracted than I already am, as I always am when I’m with you.”

Sansa seems to be breathing a bit more heavily and is still fidgeting but stays put. “I’ve never wanted to help anyone more than I want to help you navigate this newness we have. As long as you’ll help me as well?” She asks.
“Doubt you’ll need it but if so, of bloody course.” I meant what I said, I’m in this for the long run.

“I’m not perfect Sandor. And I don’t have much relationship experience either. Plus, what I do have, well, it sucks.” Sansa shakes her head looking sad but sits tall and strong.

“I haven’t been with anyone since Joff.” She looks at me deadpan.

I try not to react but I feel my eyes widen as I nod slowly in acknowledgement.

Sansa goes on to tell me about her past. She dated another boy in high school before Joffrey and said it was your typical first relationship. They were more infatuated with each other versus loving one another. Sansa explains he is a kind boy but very vanilla, this Harry she speaks of. They’re still in contact on Facebook and she’s happy to see him doing well and he tells her the same.

Sansa is honest and admits to me that she’s glad he was her first because she’s not sure anyone could ever come back from such a negative first and only sexual experience, if Joff had been it for her.

Harry and her were a couple in high school and dated for about six months. One night a simple conversation ended up with them agreeing to go their separate ways.

“And after Joffrey, I went through a lot of emotions about the future and love. I was angry first and swore off of men, I vowed to be alone forever.” Sansa rolls her eyes and laughs at herself. “That was never going to happen though. You don’t grow up with my parents as your example of marriage and not want it at least a bit.”

“All my siblings are different. Jon will give up his top priority spot of work for love one day but he’s so good at what he does, I understand why he’s pushing forward. Rob had to get his wild side out in his twenties, but now he’s completely in love and committed to Talisa. The boys are too young but they’re good kids. And Arya, who knows? I doubt if she’s even aware of what she wants.” Sansa smiles and shakes her head.

“Meanwhile, I have been and always will be proud to believe in love. I was that little girl who loved love, I wanted to find someone as good as my father and make my own life with them. Even as a kid though, I pushed myself with my writing, practicing, entering competitions, it’s always taken precedent in my life. I wanted my own accomplishments as well.” She looks determined simply talking about her passion.

“I know life isn’t sunshine and fairytales all the time. How could I grown-up with Shireen and Jon, seeing how they’ve suffered and how it’s affected their lives and not realize that? I still do believe we all have our own light at the end of the tunnel, something good and wonderful waiting for us. But Joff put out that flame for me for a while.” Sansa’s eyes begin to turn glassy.

“And I hated him for it and I hated myself too. How could I let someone so worthless change who I am? I had to sit in those feelings though. I’m not an angry or negative person but I had to get it out of my system.” My heart is hurting for her.

“Unfortunately, after the hate and anger came the sadness and the worry. What if it wasn’t in the cards for me, a great love? I had escaped with my life and I know to this day how lucky I am so what if that was it?” Sansa closes her eyes for a few moments and takes a deep breath.

“I also worried that my love was out there and even worse, I wouldn’t see it. Maybe I built my walls too high. Could I walk right into them and somehow ruin it or miss the opportunity?” A small smile tugs at her lips as she looks at me fondly, reminiscing on the first night we met.
“So, I understand completely Sandor. This conversation was hard for me to bring up as well. I thought you might only want something physical and even though I really really want that between us, I also don’t want it to be the only part of our relationship that we explore.”

“I have been wracking my brain wondering if I could do that, be “neighbors with benefits.” We both chuckle.

“I decided I could, because at least I would get some part of you, but I have to say, this is going a lot better than I had hoped.”

Sansa moves then to stand in between my open legs resting her hands on either side of my face.

“You are a good man and you’ve made me feel happier and safer than I ever thought possible. I’ll put you in your place only because I know you can do the same for me and we will be learning together. I’ve never had a normal and healthy adult relationship, but I can’t wait for what’s to come.” And then she leans in and kisses me.

I pull away after a moment so I can look into her eyes as I speak. “Thank you for being honest with me, I’m glad you trust me, because you can, with anything.”

“And I want to thank you for last night.” Sansa looks at me with a very confused expression.

“For what?” She asks.

I grab both her hips, pulling her towards me and she gets the hint. Sansa straddles my lap, her legs on either side of me.

“For having that extra drink or shot. We needed a little fuel, a push to get us here.”

Sansa turns pink in the cheeks but bursts out laughing. “It was a gin and tonic.” She tells me.

I can’t help my shit eating grin. “Well, I have a new favorite drink.”

I initiate our kiss this time, pressing my lips firmly to hers. Sansa sucks in a quick, sharp breath before tangling her hands in my hair and dragging her teeth across my bottom lip. I pull her body down harder and closer on top of my crotch as my tongue licks into her mouth, tangling with hers immediately.

Sansa’s already short dress had no hope of staying anywhere near a respectable level once she was straddling me. The more we kiss, the more she moves over my tented jeans and, at this point, the dress is up around her hips. I slide both my hands slowly up her thighs, following her silky skin up to her round ass.

I groan against her lips when there’s no panties in my way, not until her lower back and I almost ask her to stand up so I can see how Sansa Stark looks in a thong.

That would entail taking my hands off of her body, so instead I squeeze her supple cheeks while flexing my hips up to meet her own. Sansa breaks our kiss throwing her head back moaning and I take the opportunity to start sucking and kissing her jaw and ear.

I’m about to pull down the neck of her dress to uncover the skin there and give it attention when my phone rings. I don’t usually answer weekend calls so I continue the journey to move the black dress out of my way. Sansa pauses her gyrating for a beat but moves again when I don’t let the annoying sound stop me.
As I’m licking up the hollow of her throat my stupid fucking cell goes off again. I growl in frustration but still don’t stop what I’m doing. If they really need me, they’ll know how to find me. It’s rare we have emergencies after hours that can’t be handled without my input.

“You can answer that. I won’t forget where we left off.” Sansa jokes, her voice thick.

“No way in hells.” I say against her skin.

And then there’s a knock at the door. I rest my forehead on her chest and sigh. “Guess I really was needed.” I mumble.

Sansa laughs but looks disappointed as she detangles herself from me, fixing her dress before opening the door.

“Well good morning.” Bronn drawls. He then takes her in, from head to toe. “Sorry to interrupt.” He says, looking between us and winking.

“Why the fuck are you here?” I bark at him, fully frustrated now.

“Wow, so glad you’re my best friend, you sweet, gentle man, you.” He says holding his heart. “I really am sorry but I need my stuff and it’s in your place.”

“Use your key. You don’t usually have a problem doing so without asking.”

“I would if I had it. We ran out of yours so fast last night I only took my phone and shoes.”

Sansa is taking in our back-and-forth and covers her mouth stifling a giggle.

“Fuck. Fine. Let’s go.” I get off the couch and grab my things before heading over to Sansa. I pull her flush against me. “Let’s get you fed. I’ll clean up, grab some food and be back in a bit?”

Sansa just stares at my face smiling for a second before responding. “Sounds good but I’ll meet you at yours.” She stands on her tippy toes to speak so only I hear. “I don’t know when Arya will be home and I want to avoid any more interruptions.” She whispers against my ear making me shiver.

“The sooner you leave the sooner you can get back to playing Scrabble or whatever it is you two were doing.” Bronn pipes in and he is standing way too bloody close now.

I shove him towards the door and turn back giving Sansa one more kiss, this one full of promise.

“An hour, just give me an hour.”

She bites her bottom lip, her bright smile still splitting her face in half, and nods.

“Mate look-“ Bronn begins in the hall.

I hold up a hand cutting him off. “Don’t apologize, it’s fine.” I reassure him, and mean it, somehow.

“How was your night?” I change the subject as we enter my flat.

“Bloody fantastic.” He sighs and smiles. “We talked for hours, Marg wanted to sober up, and then we fell asleep.”
“Very unlike you.” I tease.

Bronn laughs. “Right! Anyway, we just woke-up and she asked to spend the day with me. I’m going to go home and come back as soon as fucking possible.” The man is bouncing in place with excitement.

“Well, enjoy, I know you really like her.”

“Thanks mate. What about you?” Bronn is chomping at the bit for details.

“I slept on the couch. The girls were a little worse for wear last night, just glad they had fun.” I shrug.

Bronn pulls me down to wrap an arm around my neck. “Looks like it’s afternoon delights for us San.”

I bark out a laugh and embrace him quickly before showing him to the door. “I’ll talk to you later.”

“Bye bestie!” He tells me before prancing to the lift.

Even though I’m starving, my stomach rolls with nerves. Today could be huge for me and Sansa. Well, it already has been but physically I think things will change for us.

And I’m shitting myself.

I make sure to get extra clean, close shaved and dress comfortably. We could kiss all day and bloody night and I won’t complain. I’ll be in some pain, but still lucky as fuck. Hopefully I have put on real clothes and not pajamas, because I blindly fumble around in my drawers for whatever I can grab first.

Opting for greasy fast food is the best option for a hangover plus, it’s time friendly and I need to get back to Sansa quickly.

I’ve only just returned and plated breakfast when she knocks at my door. My heart races on the short journey to let Sansa in.

“Hey.” She greets me.

“Little bird.” I breathe.

Ripped jeans and a short blue top look as good on Sansa as that devilish black dress.

“Something smells good.” She says on her way past me into the kitchen.

We settle down on the couch and start inhaling food and drinking water as if we’ve been in the Sahara. Sansa looks a lot better than me, being young really cuts a hangover in half. And I wasn’t even drunk.

I’m not usually a gossip but there’s one thought I can’t get out of my mind. “I have to ask.” I start, grabbing Sansa’s attention away from her meal. “How the hells did your sister end up with your boss?”

Sansa buries her face in her hands, making a groaning sound at the back of her throat. “That wasn’t made up in my gin soaked thoughts, was it?” She asks, already knowing the answer.

“I honestly have no idea. If you had asked me yesterday for two people who I thought had no
chance of ever getting together it would’ve been them!” She looks as awkward as this must feel the morning after.

“It was instant though. The three of us arrived at the table and they just stared at each other. Gendry was by our side or Arya kept slipping over to him for hours and then bam, they’re necking.” Sansa scrunches her nose up.

I laugh at her reaction. “Might calm her? It’s just better done behind closed doors.”

“Exactly! But it will be interesting to see where this goes.”

When we’re finished eating I follow Sansa to the kitchen, my blood pumping so fast I can hear it in my ears. She turns to me to snake her arms around my neck and I lift her onto the counter, moving my hands to cradle her face when she’s seated.

“How.” Sansa smiles up at me as she wraps her legs around my waist.

“Hi.” I murmurmur against her lips a breath before kissing her full mouth.

We stay wrapped around each other for a while, our kisses turning heated, our breathing becoming more labored, until Sansa pulls away enough to speak.

“Bed.” She says and then licks along my bottom lip.

I’ve never moved as fast as I do in that moment. I lift her off the island, my large hands firmly under her ass, taking long strides all the way to my room. Sansa sucks in a breath and then giggles at my eagerness.

My heart is in my throat when my shins hit the foot of the bed. I place Sansa down gently and she moves back to lay on my pillows, looking like heaven’s on earth.

I must stare at her for a second too long because Sansa begins to sit up. “Are you alright?” She asks.

It takes me a few blinks and a literal shake of my head to pull my mind back to the present. ”Yes little bird. I just can’t fucking believe you’re in my bed.”

Sansa looks pleased at my admission and rises on her knees to crawl to me. When we’re chest to chest, she reaches for the hem of my tee, pulling it up and over my head.

“Holy shit.” Sansa all but whispers as she takes in my chest and torso. “You’re beautiful.” She tells me, her compliment totally honest.

Before I can react to her words, Sansa is running her hands over my pecs, dragging her fingertips through the hair there, making me groan. I hold her hips tightly, willing myself to allow her to explore my body, no matter how new and scary it feels.

Sansa presses her lips above my heart and then starts a trail of wet, open mouthed kisses, licks and nips across the expanse of my chest. When she reaches my base of my throat Sansa continues her assault north until I can finally slip my tongue into her mouth.

I glide my hands to her sides, slowly taking her shirt with me until it’s over her heading, landing somewhere on my bedroom floor.

“Fuck.” That’s the only word I can manage when I get my first glimpse of Sansa, sans shirt.
She’s wearing a navy lace bra and I immediately lean her back in my arms to softly trail my lips up from between her breasts to her sternum. I can feel her breathing escalate under my touch.

“How are you real?” I whisper against her ear before claiming her mouth and laying her back down.

Sansa’s hands tangle in my hair and my own reach for the button and zipper of her jeans, opening them both and pulling the cloth off of her legs.

Sitting back on my heels I soak in every inch of her milky skin, her matching, barely there, panties making my mouth water.

Sansa reaches for my sweats, tugging them past my hips and I kick them off the rest of the way. My cock is achingly hard already and I don’t need to look down to know he’s standing tall and thick, even while hidden by my boxers.

“Gods.” Sansa says almost to herself.

When I manage to drag my eyes away from her thighs, I see blue orbs are as wide as her mouth.

“Little bird?”

Sansa’s head snaps up to meet my gaze. “You’re big.”

I can’t help but chuckle at her. “Aye.” I reach for her hands, lacing our fingers together. “We don’t have to do anything.”

She somehow looks more shocked at that. “No, I want to. It’s just, been a while and it’s never been like this.”

“I know, it’s the same for me.” I tell her gently.

Sansa pulls me down on top of her and I can barely contain my weight on my forearms when my shaft touches the heat and dampness of the space between her legs.

Our mouths crash together, sucking the air out of each other’s lungs. Sansa brings her legs around my waist and I break the kiss, groaning before showing attention to her neck. After leaving a small mark on her collarbone I reach around her back to undo her bra.

Without removing the material away from her chest, I kiss every inch of exposed skin above, just below or around her beautiful breasts until Sansa is writhing beneath me. Finally, I toss the fabric away and sit back to look at her supple mounds, tipped with tight, dusty rose colored nipples.

I’m not sure I’m even breathing when I lean down and suckle softly on her right peak while cupping the other with my hand and rub her pebbled flesh with my thumb.

“Ohhh.” Sansa moans. Her writhing has now turned into purposeful upwards thrusts of her pelvis into mine.

Licking a trail from one breast to the other, I suck on her left now, as my dick throbs and leaks with arousal. The wetness of my pre-cum brings me down off my Sansa high, as I realize something bloody awful.

“Sansa.” I pant, looking back to her flushed face. Her eyes open, black pupils blown so wide the
blue is almost non-existent. “I don’t have any protection.” I tell her now, disappointedly, before we go too far and I can’t stop. I hadn’t been planning for this to happen, wanting and bloody wishing for it, but not expecting it. Idiot!

It takes a second for my words to register but when they do she just smiles shyly, (despite the situation) at me. “I’m on the pill. And I’m clean. I’ve always used a condom.”

“So have I.” I feel the need to be honest with her.

“We can keep going then. If you’re comfortable with it.”

I’m the one shocked now. “You’d let me inside of you, raw?” How can someone so pure and beautiful want me that way?

Sansa furrows her brow but answers instantly. “Of course. I trust you and I want you. All of you.”

She’s barely finished speaking and I’m on her, my lust taking over even more so now. Sansa hums happily and kisses me back passionately. I begin working off her panties as my tongue slides against hers.

When I can no longer get them off of her from my current position I move my mouth slowly south. Scratching my beard along her skin, kissing and sucking every piece of her I can reach. I show more attention to her perfect breasts before sliding my tongue down her taut belly.

I skip the apex of her thighs, for now, opting to remove the damp lace from her legs first. Sansa opens her bent knees, when she’s completely naked, and the glory that is her pussy is on view, just for me.

It takes all my strength not to dive into her pink flesh right away and instead rub my hands up her legs to her hips. I lay on my stomach and rest my head on her inner thigh just looking at her sex.

It’s bare, save for a neat strip of auburn along her slit, and I can see and smell how wet she is. “You have the prettiest pussy Sansa.” I groan and my breath caresses her bare skin, making her jump.

Placing her knees over my shoulders I drag a finger from her clit to her hole and glide effortlessly through her slick. Sansa’s back arches as her hands find my hair and she moans long and low.

I don’t touch her again until she picks her head up to look down at me between her legs and then I suck my finger, wet with her essence, into my mouth. Sansa whimpers.

I’ve only gone down on one other person maybe twice so I’m hoping like hells I can please her. Pulling her lower lips apart with my thumbs and never breaking eye contact, I lick up the length of Sansa’s slit with the flat of tongue, slow and hard.

She cries out my name as her head falls back down and her cunt wets my face. I repeat the same motion a few times, Sansa is moaning and keening sounds along with my name and I have to move one hand to hold her hips still.

I then slide my tongue inside of her heat, while pressing my free thumb onto her hardened clit and Sansa’s inner muscles start fluttering. “Gods Sandor, yes!” She shouts.

I pull back and she grunts in disappointment but it doesn’t last long. Swapping places, I slowly push a finger inside of her tight body, her really fucking tight body. There’s no resistance or protesting from Sansa, she’s so bloody wet I’m knuckle deep quickly. And then as I pull out, ready to thrust back in, I suck her nub into my mouth at the same time.
Sansa’s body goes rigid a breath before bowing her back, clamping down on my digit and gushing her orgasm down my hand. “Sandor!” It’s a good thing she’s my only neighbor because Sansa is a screamer.

I work her pussy gently down from her high, only stopping when her body turns to liquid. Sansa still has enough strength to bring my face to hers for a kiss, another quieter moan escaping her when she tastes her own cum on my lips and tongue.

“You okay?” I ask as I tuck wayward hairs behind her ear.

“I think you know I’m more than okay.” She’s breathing heavily. “I’ve never....like that in my life.” Even after almost squirting on my face she can’t say cum or orgasm. Gods, she’s amazing.

“That’s the first of many little bird.” I nuzzle her neck.

Sansa makes a “mmm” sound while pushing on my shoulder until I’m lying flat. Her hands follow their same trail from earlier but venture lower, her nails grazing the waistband of my boxers. Meanwhile, Sansa’s mouth has kissed the entirety of my ruined cheek and she’s now nibbling my collarbone.

“Sansa...” I groan.

“Don’t tell me I don’t have to.” She murmurs against my pec and then nips me.

“You are a little wolf.” I pant.

Between the two of us we remove my boxers and Sansa sits up next to my side and stares at my bare length.

“Really, really big.” She finally whispers after staring for a few long seconds.

And then she wraps a delicate hand around my cock, she can just hold all of me. Sansa strokes up and down a couple of times and my balls are already tight.

“Gods little bird.”

My gasped words spur her on and Sansa runs her palm along my leaking head, gathering my pre-cum as lub and then she begins pumping me in earnest.

“I won’t last long if you keep that up.” I growl.

Sansa doesn’t even falter until she completely lets go of me moments later. Before I truly register what’s happening, I feel something hot and wet lick the underside of my shaft and I have to grip the bedding to stop my hips from bucking.

Looking down I see Sansa tentatively using her hot little mouth on my cock. Nothing’s ever been hotter in my life than that sight and I imprint it to memory. She licks me, like I did her, with the flat of her tongue from my base to tip several times and I’m almost shaking with pleasure.

I’ve never felt this good and I can’t stop myself from gently threading the fingers of one hand into her hair, after fumbling with the tie keeping her locks from me. Sansa moans around me when I rub her scalp and I’m done.

“Sansa, stop, I’m going to cum.” I choke out through a moan.

She pauses for a second and then sucks me harder and takes a bit more of my thick flesh into her
mouth. And suddenly I’m tugging her hair and shooting my hot seed down her throat. I roar her name and feel her own moans around my dick as she swallows every drop.

Sansa only pulls back when my dick stops pulsing and I open my eyes in time to see her wipe the corner of her mouth and it makes my not even half soft cock twitch.

“Come here.” I say as I try to find purchase on her skin.

Sansa props her head on my chest and I shake my head, pulling her up until I can kiss her, mixing the erotic tastes of our orgasms.

“Holy fucking hells.” I breathe out.

“Yeah?” Sansa seems shy, unsure.

I must always remember how shit Joff, the scum, was to her. Even ruining her sexual confidence.

Rolling us over, pinning Sansa beneath me as I kneel between her thighs again I lean down until we’re nose to nose.

“Nothing has ever felt better than your mouth on my cock. Not yet at least.” I smile and so does she. “You are amazing and hot and have me hard again already.” I emphasize each word with a kiss to her neck, under her ear and the hollow of her throat.

Sansa looks much happier, even more turned on and her heart is beating quickly.

“You sure?” I ask, caressing her face.

“Yes. Please.” She answers immediately.

I move my hand from her face, grazing her nipples with my fingertips and only stop when my thumb touches her clt. I rub circles over her wet nub as I grasp my cock with my free hand. I’m already hard and weeping, so it only takes a couple of swipes through the mess between Sansa’s thighs to have me coated and slick.

Resting my forehead against hers, I guide my cock to her entrance and push slowly inside of her body. Both our eyes fall shut when I’m only halfway sheathed in her heat and Sansa is gripping my shoulders so hard it edges on painful.

She tilts her hips up and wraps her legs around my waist again before I can even think about stopping. This angle has me sliding balls deep with one more stroke.

Sansa’s back arches as she sucks in a sharp breath that exhales as a moan and I can’t breathe let alone speak but a tremor travels throughout my body.

I grasp her hip with my free hand, withdraw almost completely and then slide home with one strong, slow push.

“Fuck Sansa, you feel so bloody good.” I groan into the skin of her neck before sucking and kissing the heated flesh there.

Sansa scratches my back, whimpering and begins meeting my slightly faster thrusts. I never lose rhythm of my thumb pressing and rubbing her clt, she’s so godsdamn tight and I need her to enjoy this.

I know I fucking am. The sounds escaping our throats, the slap of skin and the squelching of where
our bodies are joined, will push me over that edge soon, no matter that I just came.

Grabbing her ass now, changes my angle and I hit a place deep inside of Sansa that has me seeing stars.

“Sandor!” She moans my name loudly and her pussy starts milking my cock like it did to my tongue earlier. I know she’s close too.

“Little bird, gods.” I groan against Sansa’s lips before kissing her.

I slam inside of her on my next thrust and I feel her orgasm start. I can hardly move, her inner muscles grip me so tightly. Sansa is still moaning and cumming around me when I can no longer hold back. I press my hips roughly against hers and spill deep inside her body, growling her name as I finish.

We’re both a quivering mess, kissing each other between labored breaths, hands running over hypersensitive skin and still connected.

I can’t bring myself to move, to leave the heat of her body, so we stay that way for a long time. No words are exchanged, just touches, presses of lips and smiles. The “after” part of the sex is almost as mind blowing as the act itself.

This is intimacy and it’s what I craved. Not the release, I mean don’t get me wrong sleeping with Sansa was so good I can die happy now, but laying with her, being wanted by her in many ways, that’s what has the backs of my eyes burning.

When I eventually pull my soft cock, gently, out of her body, Sansa sighs and pouts and I know my face isn’t happy. Once she is cuddled into my side, her hand lazily tracing patterns into my chest hair as my own explores her back, we both perk up a bit.

“I think I lost my voice it was so good.” She whispers into my skin after a moment.

I chuckle and look down, into her eyes. “That makes two of us.” I say, running my thumb along her bottom lip.

She kisses it and then is silent for long enough I think she may have drifted off. “Where have you been?” Sansa asks me so quietly I wonder if she meant to speak the words aloud.

I search her eyes and see the raw emotion there, this spectacular woman truly cares for me. As I do for her.

“I’ve been asking myself the same question about you, my little bird.”

Sansa’s gaze is glassy now but a brilliant smile splits her face in half before she kisses me.

We’re never leaving this bed.

Chapter End Notes

Let me know how the zest was. I know we’ve all been waiting for it so I hope it didn’t disappoint!
Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Hello you beautiful people!

I didn’t fall off the face of the earth yay, LOL!

For those of you who celebrated (a month ago) I hope your Christmas was wonderful.

And as always I hope you and yours are all well!

Happy 2020!

We had a full and busy Christmas at our house, I have two kids so there’s lots of elves, trees, cookies, chocolates and presents happening! I know that the holidays are not always easy for some of us including myself and if you were in the same boat with me just know that I was and am thinking of you and it shocked me how it does get easier as the years go by.

Now back onto happy things like my story and our favorite couple. I’ll post just little FYI’s in the bottom authors note. You can read them if you want but they won’t bore you up here.

Anyways, I had a little bit of writers block there, plus with the holidays and the emotions they invoke I’ve fallen behind. I know certain scenes and directions I want the story to have and go in but the middle ground between is giving me a bit of trouble.

I’ve been inspired by other amazing authors and friends so I finally got through this chapter and feel happy happy with it.

I’m not going to give any more lemon warnings because they’re going to pop up whenever these two pop up ha ha ha sorry, I like bad puns!

However, WARNING, we dive into Sandor’s past some more so it’s a tad dark in this chapter.

Okay, read, enjoy and please comment!

Xo

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Sansa sighs a contented sound as she nuzzles her face into my chest, one arm over my middle and her legs tangled with mine.

That dark place within me allowed my thoughts to wander to the possibility she would run at the first opportunity. Perhaps it was all bull, the honesty, the promise of more. My heart was in my
throat waiting for her to get up, dress and leave, once the fucking was over.

I can feel every bone and muscle in my body loosen as I look down at Sansa, comfortable and happy in my arms. It seems as if she wouldn’t rather be anywhere else. The feeling is mutual.

Lacing the fingers of one hand with hers and trailing the fingertips of the other up and down her back, I’ve never felt so calm in all my life.

“You didn’t have any plans for the rest of the weekend did you?” She asks against my skin after a few more minutes of quiet.

I meet her gaze and furrow my brow. “No. Why?”

Sansa smiles at me and turns to kiss my shoulder. “I was hoping we could stay right here, until forced otherwise.”

I laugh out loud in delight. “Aye, you read my mind little bird.” I respond before leaning down to press a soft kiss to her lips.

This might not be the right time but I can’t stop myself. “Sansa, can I ask you something?”

It’s her turn to look confused and maybe a tad wary. “Of course.”

“When we spoke earlier, of the past, I sort of thought you’d have someone else to mention.” I start with, hoping she’ll catch my drift, maybe I can skip past my query all together. No such luck.

“Like?” She presses me.

I sigh, feeling like a tool. “Well, you’ve said your book is based on your life. I was wondering who the lucky bastard at the end is about?”

Recognition flashes over Sansa’s face before she giggles. “Oh!” She squeaks out in between laughter. “I forget about that sometimes.”
I feel my eyes widen like saucers as she continues.

“Only because it’s the one truly, purely fictional aspect of the story. Everything else might be altered or elaborated but the new love interest is solely from my imagination.”

“I see.” I say to her with a nod and a feeling of inner relief. Jealous of a fake man, great Clegane, just great. “Why did you add it in?”

Sansa sighs. “My story flowed from me with ease. It was the best therapy I had at the time. No offense to my doctor who is fabulous, but this was about me, from me and for me.” She’s turned serious now and I worry I’ve ruined our post coital bliss.

“However, towards the end, when everything restarts on a hopefully new and better path for me, it felt a little empty in the novel. Yes, it’s based on my life but I realized they didn’t need to mirror each other completely.”

“I was in a limbo area with love and how I felt about it. Plus, I had everyone around me, my manager, publisher, editor, reminding me that this first book would set the tone and theme for my career and I had to think about that carefully. Did I want to end the story as it was? Yes, life was looking up but would the readers be happy enough with that?”

Sansa shakes her head. “There was so much going on, not just in my career but I was still healing and becoming stronger myself, so, I went with the silver lining, the slightly more positive ending. And I’m glad that I did. It was nice to give someone, that was supposed to be me, the ending many hope for after they’ve suffered.” Sansa smiles and the mood starts to lighten again.

“I decided to add chapter...” She pauses thinking, and I have to bite my tongue to stop myself from interjecting forty, it’s chapter forty! as not to seem like some freak.

“Forty, right.” She remembers. “I added in that scene because I didn’t want the last sexual encounter the heroine had to be a negative one. I know that abuse survivors have read my book and I don’t want them to believe it’s all awful, painful or scary. It seemed to go over well.” She finishes, as if she isn’t talking about pages that have kept me up at night.

“And it still hits me sometimes, that even though I write for others, to entertain them, to help them or to relate to them, I’m one of those “others”. I need to be positive for myself. This.” She says and
gives me a squeeze around my waist. “I’ve wanted this to be real for me too.”

I clear my throat and cover the emotions bubbling up with a cough before I can even reply. “And you’re happy?”

Sansa tilts her head back to meet my eyes. “The happiest.” I know that no words will escape me right now, just pitiful sounds, so I don’t bother trying, instead I drag my hand up her body and into her hair, bringing my face to hers for a long, deep kiss.

By the third stroke of her tongue against mine, my cock is hard and standing tall, resting on my belly button once more. Sansa moves to hover over me and deepen the kiss, causing the hand on my abdomen to brush my weeping head.

“Ohh.” She pulls back, biting her swollen bottom lip. “Again?”

I can’t stifle my groan. “Not too sore?” No matter how badly I fucking want her, I refuse to ever hurt Sansa.

She looks down at my chest, smiling for a moment before meeting my gaze again. “It’s a good sore, not painful.”

Her honest admission makes my dick pulse and I pin Sansa to my chest, kissing the breath out of her as her hand grasps my length.

I devour her as my own slips down her taut body to the heat between her thighs. Sansa is sticky with our mixed orgasms and dripping wet with her renewed arousal.

“Fuck little bird, you do want this.” I can attempt to downplay her words and certain actions, but her body’s reaction to me, without even touching her, is undeniable.

Sansa moans from my ministrations to her engorged clit. “So much, ohhh, I want you so much.” She never loses her rhythm over my shaft as she starts grinding her hips to meet my fingers that are now inside of her.
I remove my digits and flip us over quickly, growling, her words affecting some place deep within me. Kneeling between her bent legs, I line my tip with her entrance and bottom out with one powerful thrust.

“Fuck!” I roar. Sansa feels as good as I remember, tight and hot and so bloody wet.

“Sandor!” She moans.

I barely allow us to catch our breath before sliding my hands under Sansa’s ass, lifting her off the bed and pounding into her. She has her head thrown back, moaning and whimpering, her knuckles white from grasping the sheets.

I’ve never had such damn trouble not spilling like a green boy but Sansa is ruining me in several ways it seems. Leaning down I suck on and drag my teeth across each of her nipples, making her cry out and her cunt gush down my cock. I know I’ll finish too soon at this rate and even though it almost hurts, I pull out of her.

Sansa’s head snaps up to see what’s wrong but before she can utter a word, I throw her legs back over my shoulders to suck on and lap at her clit long enough to bring myself back from the edge.

“Sandor, fuck.” Sansa’s cursed moan doesn’t really help the situation.

When she begins trembling I hoist her legs higher, her dainty toes touching my ears, and slowly slide back inside of her. I choke out her name, squeezing an ankle with one hand as the fingers of the other rub her hardened clit.

Sansa is clawing at my arms, her back bowed and pussy muscles clenching me. “Yes! Harder Sandor, please.” She begs.

I slam my hips against hers, my balls slapping her ass and Sansa’s breasts bouncing from the force. I keep up a relentless rhythm, my bed moving with the slow, yet rough, deep thrusts of my body inside of Sansa’s.

I’m sure she’s leaving marks from where her nails are gripping my skin and the thought makes my cock twitch. Finding that bump, deep in her body, I pound my length until my cockhead hits it just right and I press on her clit at the same time. Sansa finally cums around me, shouting my name and
pulling my own orgasm from me.

It’s take a long time for our releases to finish, our breathing to slow and bodies to relax. I’m not complaining, laying above and still inside of this beautiful woman, my beautiful woman.

When I can’t hold my weight up any longer, I withdraw from her heat, causing Sansa to whimper and me to sigh. Quickly, I maneuver us to our previous position of, what do people call it? Cuddling.

“Wow. I can’t even move.” Sansa mumbles.

I smile broadly above her head. “I think I blacked out for a second.”

Sansa’s face matches mine when our eyes meet but she looks back down almost instantly. “I’ve never had an...orgasm, during sex before.”

She’s more exposed now than any other moment we’ve been together today and her honesty simultaneously breaks my heart and makes it soar.

I fucking hate that anyone did anything less than worship her but the fact she feels so comfortable with me means more than she could ever know. I don’t take it lightly either, and vow then and there, to make sure it’s always like this between us. Safe and pleasurable.

“I’m so fucking sorry little bird. You deserve better than your past, a hells of a lot better.” I stroke her cheek, dragging my thumb along her bottom lip. “And I promise you this, you’ll always cum when we’re together.”

Sansa’s eyes darken again and she kisses me languidly. “Now, give a man a minute to rest and I’ll keep good on my word.”

She giggles and hugs me again. Her breathing evens out in no time and I find myself dozing with her.

I wake up first, hungry for something other than Sansa, for the moment at least. I don’t want to
disturb her and instead bask in the peace of this moment together. That comes to an abrupt halt when the exploration that my hand was on of the right side of Sansa’s body touches some sort of ridge of raised skin.

My stomach stinks immediately. It’s not that I had forgotten about the physical pain Sansa suffered that night, but the blonde piece of shit who inflicted the harm hasn’t been at the forefront of my thoughts.

I also hadn’t yet been able to explore her body as I wanted to but I was looking forward to doing so and this caught me off guard.

Absentmindedly, my fingertips trace back and forth over the scar, that I can’t see from this angle, until it rouses my little bird.

Sansa slowly brings herself out of her slumber. She pauses for a millisecond as if wondering where she is before squeezing my waist and nuzzling my pec.

She looks up at the ruined side of my face and gives me a sleepy smile before freezing. Her head turns slightly, trying to see what my fingers are doing.

“You made me forget about that.” She whispers, looking at my chest.

I lift Sansa’s chin until she meets my gaze again. “What’s wrong?”

She searches my eyes, looking almost frightened. “It’s so awful and it will always be there as a reminder of what happened, of how I’m damaged.” Her breath hitches on the last word.

The rage I feel to the entire Lannister family makes my vision blur before I can reign in my emotions. She doesn’t need this from me right now. “You, my little bird, are the furthest thing from damaged.” I stare straight into her eyes, relaying the truth behind my words.

“This,” I say as I drag of my index finger along the scar just above her hip, “is proof that you are tough as all hells, and you are meant to be here. He hurt you, he tried to break you and you did not let that happen.” My own voice waivers for a moment, another reminder of how I almost never met Sansa makes my heart stop.
"I’m sorry it’s there and that any of that shit happened to you but you have grown and I’m sure you are still growing from that time in your life. It is a reminder of how far you’ve come and how hard you fought.”

Sansa watches me intently the entire time I speak and now two lone tears track down her cheeks. I wipe them away with my free thumb and then she’s moving, scaring me, maybe I said something wrong.

She sits up next to me and turns, showing me an unobstructed view of her side. Of the scar. It’s the first time in my life I’ve ever been thankful for my own melted cheek. Looking at that all the time helps me keep my face as emotionless as possible and holds the choked sob in my throat.

How the piece of shit didn’t hurt her worse or damage an organ is beyond me. The fact her skin is raised, pink, thick and jagged, even after all this time shows just how deep he stabbed her.

“I chose not to do any plastic surgery on it.” Sansa says to me but keeps her eyes on her side. “Once they released me from hospital, I just wanted to forget. The after care and follow-ups to ensure it was healing, that was all I could handle.” I rub my palms along her thighs, where my hands have been the entire time.

“You’re perfect.” I say, raising up on my right elbow to drag that hand up to her hip, my fingers grazing the top of her ass and my thumb running along the scar.

Sansa cups my own scared cheek and leans down to press a soft kiss to my lips, and finally smiles when she pulls back.

“Let’s eat, yeah?” I ask her.

She simply nods, looking relieved and then we slip into our afternoon and evening.

After that, we don’t leave my flat until Tuesday morning. Neither of us have anything pressing to attend to, work wise, until later in the week.

Sansa showers at mine and wears my clothes for the next couple of days. That in and of itself did not help with actually attempting to leave my bed. I never understood the allure of a woman wearing your clothing, but that was probably just because no one had ever worn mine.
Of all the ways I’ve seen Sansa dressed up, from sexy to cute to drop dead gorgeous, nothing beats her lithe frame swimming in one of my shirts.

Arya had been looking for her and other than a few rushed phone calls and some messages to the rest of her family and also to Marg, Sansa hasn’t given attention to anyone but me. And I was reveling in that fact.

It wasn’t as if her sister was alone. When I went to get the food we ordered from the deliveryman in the lobby one night and I came out the lift as Gendry was getting in. I’m sure they were happy Sansa was holed up with me, giving them space to do whatever they want.

Sansa didn’t stay simply because our relationship had turned physical. Not that it wasn’t a factor. I think I had more sex over this past long weekend than my whole life put together. Mind blowing, numbing, life-changing sex.

The intimacy grew between us every time as well. I think we both are more exposed now than the first time we slept together.

We learned everything there was to know about one another as well. I can now tell the difference between each of Sansa’s smiles. I know when she wasn’t being completely honest or if she was holding back her excitement over something simple like a TV show. I know what she loves to watch, what she doesn’t and what she puts up with because I like it. Those small changes felt like huge ones.

I walk her home early Tuesday morning. The only reason she left is because Ygritte begged to have a catch-up before their meeting later that afternoon. We linger and kiss and touch, at her threshold so long we should’ve spent the time behind my closed bedroom door instead.

“What time do you want to go to dinner?” Sansa asks me when we finally part from our fifth goodbye kiss.

“I can come get you at six from the publishing house?”

“Sounds good.” She responds.
Sansa then looks down at her feet for a moment seemingly unsure of herself. This is something I have promised myself to work out of her. I want her to be almost obnoxiously cocky in life. Especially when it comes to me.

She could sneeze and have me panting at her feet. Before I can prod her to tell me what’s on her mind, Sansa meets my eyes again and tells me on her own.

“It’s going to be strange and difficult without you today. I like that little bubble we were living in.” She looks sadder than she ever has in my presence.

My heart does something in my chest, something I’m not used to. It’s like it’s cracking but not in a breaking way. No, this is a good crack, almost as if my heart is trying to shatter some of the ice around it, break the grip and coldness my past has it locked in.

Sansa has already melted away so much of the frozen, darkness within me, it’s no surprise to think she will continue to do so.

I keep her flush against my body with one arm around her waist as the other traces the frown around her eyes.

I heave out a large sigh. “I’ve never had to miss anyone before and I know I won’t like missing you at fucking all.” Sansa gives me a small smile.

“Good thing we’re neighbors huh?” She jokes, making me laugh.

“Yes, thank fuck for that.” I agree. But the hallway that separates us still seems too long and far.

I press my lips to hers, opening my mouth and stroking her tongue with my own one more time before slowly detangling our bodies and taking a step back from her. If I don’t, I will never leave this spot.

“I’ll see you tonight.” I tell her as I walk backwards down the hall.

“Can’t wait.” She responds a second before closing her door.
When I get back to my own apartment I don’t know what the Hells to do with myself. We had breakfast together, after we had each other, so I can’t busy myself making a meal. We didn’t really do much other than lie in bed, or on the couch or have a shower, meaning there’s nothing for me to clean either. And I sure as fuck am not going to work.

If I thought Bronn was up my ass when I didn’t come in the day after our first date, I was sorely mistaken. I’m actually surprised he didn’t attempt to get a window washing job so he could scale the building trying to spy on us. I will of course get in touch with him, I want to, really. He had his own date, well several, with Margaery over the weekend and I want to hear about that too.

But like Sansa said, we’ve been in a bubble and I still feel as if I’m inside of it. I don’t want it to pop or disappear just yet. Even though part of me knows life with Sansa will always be like living in our own world, separate from the rest of the population and I have grown used to it already.

And I’m not fucking complaining. I know I have been just surviving and not really living for far too long. I was happy though, I won’t take away from the life I had made for myself or insult the small group of family and friends who have made my life better.

However, I never aspired for more. I thought it was my lot in life to give back, to help those that suffered, somewhat, like I did. Orphans, abused children and women. And those who suffer with mental illness.

Even if I don’t think there was ever going to be a way to save my brother, if things had turned out differently. I have talked to shrinks over the years about him, obviously. One of them, the therapist I had been with the longest, fought tooth and nail to get any records on my brother and father and was successful in the end.

My dad had been a soldier in the war when he was young and his psychiatric evaluation did not come back clear. They didn’t really want him to serve but the war was horrendous and our side had lost so many that they had to take any able-bodied men, so he went into the trenches. It didn’t say much about what that specific doctor thought plagued him but it did mention possible bipolar disorder.

If times were different and coverage had been better years ago, my father might have been able to get help.

The reports on my brother were few and far between but it was enough for my doctor to get an idea of what had gone on.
Gregor had not suffered from anything like my father. He was simply a psychopath.

Even though we lived near a decent public school and my father had the funds to send us to private, he chose not to. Instead, my brother and I went to the shit school across town.

The guidance counselor and vice principal were pretty decent and caught him doing suspicious shit more than once. They called my house, my father came and nothing was done. Unfortunately, the principal was as terrible as the curriculum.

Those few reports however, were detailed and paired with some of my memories, it was enough to paint a picture of who Gregor was.

I remembered the plague that ripped through our neighborhood when I was little, when almost everyone lost their cats or dogs. I had caught my mother and father talking about it once not long before he attacked me. Mum had found a dead guinea pig of all things in our back garden, it was ripped open and bloody, not as if an animal had gotten it but as if it was tortured on purpose.

When she told my father he instantly turned defensive and screamed at her, trying to downplay the whole thing. He then broke down and told my mother exactly what she needed to know, my father was aware that Gregor had done this on purpose.

I don’t think my dad was a bad person like my brother but I think he was easily coerced, he already suffered mentally and had PTSD. My conniving brother used those weaknesses against him even though they’re not weaknesses.

My father did love my mum though, it wasn’t enough to save us but when she fell apart that night he started panicking over his admission and it spilled out of him. How he had found my brother doing that to the furry little thing and asked him where he even got it.

Dogs and cats run about outside and you can lure them to you but a small domestic pet that lives in a cage? My father even began to sob and hyperventilate when he recounted to my mother the truth and the horrors Gregor had told him.

How he had started breaking into houses and he loved the power. It made him feel good that he could sneak around someone else’s property without them knowing. He worked his way up to taking the live animal, first by stealing small trinkets that people might not even notice are gone.
After that, he was bored and decided to steal the little boy next-door’s pet. Greg told our dad that he also stood in the older sister’s bedroom door and watched her sleep. Thankfully, my brother died before he could sexually assault anyone but that girl got off lucky. He grinned when he recounted to my dad how if he hadn’t had the stupid fucking guinea pig squirming in his bag he would’ve taken her then.

I learned all this and heard the opinions of medical professionals many, many years ago when I was still young and have rehashed them over and over.

The defense department even opened a case for what happened to me in my house and then to my family after. It took a while but it was agreed that I was attacked on purpose and bedsheets had nothing to do with my burns. It was also subsequently finalized that the housefire that took my entire family was arson.

We all had hefty life insurance policies. Money I never knew about or wanted.

My brother was actually found on the front lawn and it was confirmed he died from a heart attack due to smoke inhalation. Whereas my father had a wound on the back of his head and was on the floor of his and mum’s bedroom.

Mum and Elenor never woke-up at least and suffocated in their sleep.

The confirmation of what happened to me, mum and Elenor gave me more peace than I thought it would. To know others believed me, that I wasn’t crazy and hadn’t made up the incident between Greg and I was a relief. However, it didn’t take away my pain and loss.

If only my mum and sister had survived, if I had been taken instead. Those thoughts and the despair plagued me for a long time. They creep into my mind now too, even if it’s rare.

It’s not until my back and hands begin to twinge that I realize I’ve been standing in my kitchen, knuckles clenched and leaning on my counter for half an hour, lost in my thoughts.

I need to go back to my shrink.

Raymond had me in intense therapy from the moment I was released to him. He would wait outside and make sure I stayed or if I did run out he was there to take me home. It took months and several doctors before we found Dr. Lyanna Mormont.
She was the kind of doctor you could call at home and she would talk you off of a ledge at any time. If it wasn’t for her, we might never have learnt as much as we have about my family.

She’s done every test I’ve asked for, sometimes twice and kept me informed on the different ages when certain mental illnesses can occur.

The reason as a young boy that I finally felt comfortable with her was because at the end of my first session she looked me dead in my eyes, after I had gone on and on for over an hour about the crippling fear I had that I would wake up one day and morph into my brother or father. She told without mincing her words that neither of them would have ever had an iota of concern about being a bad person. The fact that I was so anxious about it and how badly I wanted to be my own self, to live my life, just proved how different I was.

I saw her almost every day in the beginning and almost as frequent for years after that.

Raymond was also a psychiatrist for most of his career but by the time I went to live with him he was giving his time either pro bono or to youth shelters. He tried not to treat or diagnose me at home but understandably that wasn’t always 100% possible. And I’m glad he did give in because it was his suggestion to start group therapy that not only introduced me to Bronn but I feel it also helped me immensely to start dealing with some of my issues on my own.

By the time I left the north I was only seeing Dr. Mormont once a month, sometimes less but I did have her find me a doctor in the city. The move, changes, being away from Ray, worrying about our business. All of the thinking and concern was going to take its toll.

I was right. I started seeing Dr. Lewin immediately, before Ray had even driven back to Brighton, he moved as well, after helping me move to London. Even though he was an older gentleman, Lewin still had the vibe and spunk of someone like Dr. Mormont which put me at ease.

I saw him quite frequently until Bronn and I made our first profit as that was what mostly kept me up at night but not knowing anyone but Bronn and Osha in the beginning and having so many more in a city setting people around me every day to stare, made it difficult for me to be on my own two feet again.

At this point, I haven’t seen him for going on eighteen months and I know that’s too long. After we gave up on a standing appointment I would just go to him ad hoc. Even if I don’t feel as if I’ve needed to call him and speak or to be in his office for an hour, I still must maintain a better baseline and should’ve had an appointment more recently.
This is all true but the catalyst for my email to the man, as I’m still leaning on the kitchen counter reliving memories and parts of my life I haven’t shared with Sansa yet, even though she easily admitted that she has a therapist, is said beautiful redhead herself.

I have never felt this way for someone, even though it’s been all I’ve ever wanted. So many of my appointments, even as a child, were my hopes and dreams of finding someone that I could love and who would love me back. To build a life that I never saw or experienced. To give someone a beautiful life, one that my mother and sister didn’t get it.

I know my feelings are real and true, I can feel myself falling completely and irrevocably in love with her but I want to make sure they’re healthy feelings. I believe they are, and fuck, even if he says they’re not I won’t give her up. For the first time in my life I feel warm and alive and whole and happy. All because of her.

The slip of a fiery woman has flipped my life upside down.

Lewin emails me back almost immediately saying that he’s missed me and is happy to hear from me. He tells me to come by on Thursday and to not worry about his receptionist, I am to make appointments with him and can also call him at any time.

I breathe a sigh of relief when I know that I can see him soon, catch up and let him know how my life has changed. Every time I go to therapy it’s the same things over and over. What happened to me, how I was dealing with it, if I was feeling slightly more positive or negative at the time.

Yes, I grew and changed over the years, I could handle it better sometimes and other times it was worse. But I circled around same event in my life and I need to know how that my past will affect my future and how I can let that not happen. I cannot allow it to ruin my relationship.

I’ve been standing at my island for so long my legs and back are stiff when I finally let go of my demons inside, and decide to start my day with a good workout. Other muscles are hurting me too, ones I didn’t think existed even as a trainer, but I guess that’s what good sex does, because it’s a better workout than any exercise you can do.

A couple hours later, after a long shower that still doesn’t make all the kinks in my body disappear, I’m contemplating going into the sauna at the office when my phone finally goes off.
Sansa has sent me several excited messages or simply just emoji’s letting me know her meeting with Gendry was actually a surprise for her to come in and see the final hardcopy of her second novel.

They were having a meeting with about release dates and then gave copies out to the staff to read the book so they can report back on its feel. Once Sansa has had her own review of it, the order will go to the publisher and they’ll start printing copies for her summer release.

I congratulate her and let her know how excited I am. She replies immediately telling me she has to go back into another discussion and asks if we can change our time to meet to earlier and if I can come in to her office building and up to the second floor, she doesn’t want me waiting on the street in case she runs late.

I shake my head at my little bird simply telling her of course and that I can’t wait to see her.

If feels like days have passed by before I finally exit the elevator onto the second floor of the upscale, downtown building Gendry has built his empire out of.

As I approach the large waiting area and long reception desk, my eyes fall immediately on Sansa’s auburn hair. It’s cascading in waves down her back and she’s wearing one of those flowing skirts again and those red bottom heels. I can feel myself slow my gait so I can soak in every inch of her and I can’t even help myself, not caring if I get caught.

Which is exactly what I thought has happened when I finally tear my gaze away from her long legs and see the receptionist Sansa is chatting away to looking at me from head to toe. I realize quite quickly her gaze doesn’t hold judgment as I expected, instead it’s full of heat.

I know my height and the body I work so hard to maintain, earns me more looks than I’ve probably ever thought possible but it still shocks me when I notice a woman checking me out. Or a man. I never really want attention and I especially don’t fucking want it right now.

Thankfully, Sansa has been looking down at something in her hands that she then moves to put inside of her bag and misses the ogling her coworker is giving me.

And then my beautiful little bird must hear or simply sense my presence and turns to me. Her eyes light up and her face breaks into one of her dazzling smiles. I close the distance between us before she can think about moving and she throws her arms around my neck for a quick hug when I reach
I keep one hand around her waist and stand slightly behind her, finally moving my eyes off of her to peek at the woman behind the desk. There’s no longing or appreciation on her features now. Sansa has marked her territory and the woman is instead looking at me with a bit of surprise and a small smile on her face.

“Hi.” Sansa says to me.

“Hi little bird.” I reply.

She then turns back to the woman in front of us. “Everly, I’d like for you to meet my boyfriend Sandor.”

Even though this Everly character has more than likely put that together herself, her eyebrows are raised ever so slightly. “So you’re the reason for the pep in her step?” She asks me.

I look to Sansa who’s trying to avoid my gaze, but the pink in her cheeks gives it away.

“I suppose that’s me.”

“Well, keep up the good work, we all like seeing this one happy. One of a kind she is.” Everly says to me, while nodding towards Sansa.

“That she is.” I respond.

Sansa is seemingly embarrassed a bit by our back-and-forth and speaks up again.

“Sorry to have kept you Ev. I know you were supposed to knock off fifteen minutes ago.”

“Don’t you dare apologize. I love catching up with you.” The women smile at each other.
“We have a dinner to go to but I’ll see you soon.” Sansa tells her as she leaves the desk.

“Sounds good. “Have fun you two.” The brunette woman calls out after us.

”So was that your book I saw you stuffing into your purse?” I inquire as we walk away.

Sansa slips her hand in mine and smiles up at me. “Yes it was.”

I nudge her with my elbow. “Let me see.”

Sansa smirks and shakes her head. “When we get home. Gendry would have a litter of kittens if he thought my unreleased novel was out in public.”

I chuckle at her. “Fine, fine. I can’t wait to see it. So proud of you little bird, and happy for you.” I tell her as we reach the elevators.

One is reaching our floor but I can see it’s going to continue going up after that so I lean forward to press the down button for us. When I look back at Sansa she’s staring at me almost looking in awe.

“Thank you Sandor, you don’t know how much that means to me.”

The two of us are lost in this moment, standing side-by-side, holding hands, just watching each other. We are so deep in our little trance that we don’t even look up when the elevator dings, the door opens and someone exits. Not until we hear them speak at least.

“Oh.” We hear them say, sounding a bit startled.

We finally break our gaze to see who’s in front of us, or below us I should say, and it’s none other than Tyrion fucking Lannister.

Chapter End Notes
Just a heads up that I should’ve said before, but please always feel free to comment here or get in touch with me on Tumblr (if you have it), if something is unclear or you have questions. For certain characters, especially if they’re just mentioned in passing, in a flashback or are severely just background characters their names might simply be used from the show just to keep the Game of Thrones feel to the story. For example, with Meera, I just used the name she’s not based on her actual character or actor.

PS. I’ve been meaning to recommend this book for those of you who may be interested in a non-fanfiction story. It is an age gap, everyone’s legal but it’s a good amount of years between them, that’s all I’ll say about the story. It’s called Birthday Girl. I loved it and I recommended it to my other fandom with a couple who has a decent age difference. If you’ve read it let me know and I hope some of you amazing people can read and enjoy it!

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