in my end is my beginning

by Magali_Dragon

Summary

The North is ruled under Queen Sansa Stark while the remaining Six Kingdoms are ruled by Queen Daenerys and King Aegon, but what happens when the Queen in the North realizes that the Dragon Queen may have ultimately beaten her?

Notes

Plot bunny would not leave me, so this came from a thought I had about Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I-- they battled for control over England and while Elizabeth "won", one could argue that Mary "won" too in that her child became the King of England and Scotland.

And it also is a fixit for me because I will never understand the rationale that went into the whole "Starks rule all!" when none of them have any interest or ability in carrying on the name, since the last Stark male is the Three Eyed Raven and Jon is exiled and not even a Stark and blah blah blah /rant over
Christmas AU is in works-- the next chapter is almost done, I'm just going over it again because it's heavy with emotional stuff and wanted to make sure it was right.

You are WARNED-- this has a lot of Sansa POV and while I do not like what she became in canon, I do try to explore her thoughts and plus, she is an unreliable narrator. So you don't like-- you don't read. Click that X, easy peasy.

Also, Dany is not evil, she's pragmatic, which is all she ever has been. Jon is very OOC in that he is not season 8 "muh queen" Jon in this fic. He's more Book!Jon.

On with it then.

See the end of the work for more notes.
"I did it Father. The North is free."

The words rang hallow in the dark, damp, and silent crypts of Winterfell. At the foot of her father's statue, with its stone wolf and the false iron sword-- *He should have had Ice with him* -- Sansa Stark knew that it was too little, too late. She thought back on that fateful day, a young girl with fanciful dreams of becoming queen, marrying the golden-haired prince, and producing heirs to the throne, standing there in the same yard where now the battered smallfolk and what remained of the Northern lords and ladies assembled to crown her the Queen in the North.

The first Queen in the North, the Queen of Winter, but she had no wolf at her feet and no sword to call her own. She had her mind, honed from years of mental abuse and rising above, and she had her tongue, a curved blade she used to strike down anyone who dared to challenge her. They hadn't been honed on the battlefield or birthed from fire-- not like the monarchs who reigned the remaining Six Kingdoms. They had been crafted after all she'd gone through and all she'd suffered, the phoenix from the ashes.

The wolf emerging from the darkness.

That yard where she stood, in a gray and blue dress, her hair plaited just so, bowing before the King and Queen and praying to all the gods, old and new, she might one day become someone that people bowed to. She bowed to no one now, not even her brother, a king in his own right. She felt the smile, satisfied, pull on her lips, realizing that even she-- stupid Sansa Stark-- outwitted everyone. The pack survived, as best it could, and the North was free thanks to her. The North was free, for the first time, in nearly 300 years.

She gazed down the dark corridor, unlit, the stone wolves silent by the base of Torrhen Stark's tomb. He bent the knee to the Conqueror to save his people and he did, he saved them bloodshed in that moment, but then what happened? 300 years later they almost lost everything. The Starks were almost wiped off the map. Her father dead with false confession, her mother's body left to the fishes, and her brother-- mutilated and body unclaimed-- gone. The Young Wolf, they called him. She looked at the statue that she had commissioned, of the eldest Stark, for memories only-- his bones were lost in the Twins-- wishing he could be the one ruling them all.

Her feet made little sound, slight scraping of her heeled boots on the worn-away bricks, moving to the statue near her father's. The beautiful face of the only woman to have an effigy here. Hand outstretched, a candle melted in the palm, and a dried blue winter rose resting beside it. Her eyes dropped to the wolf beside the statue and she frowned, reaching for the object that lay hidden behind it. It was hard, but warm even in the cold, and through her thin kidskin gloves she could feel its heat. It was black as night, with a sheen of red in the faint glow of the candle lamps around her.
Ire bubbled in the back of her throat. *How dare he?!* She lifted her chin, glancing at the carved face of her aunt. "I hope it was worth it," she murmured, dropping the scale back onto the pedestal. She turned away, holding her gray skirts, patterned with blood red embroidery of weirwood leaves, and ascended the staircase to the crisp winter air, snow falling around her as she made her way, hands before her, from the crypts to the godswood, back straight and chin held high, a tiny smile as her subjects bowed before her, muttering "Your Grace."

The godswood was where she had hoped to find her brother-- he was most often sitting before the tree, eyes rolled back-- except she found the one who she still claimed as brother. *Cousin.* She pursed her lips, irritated he had intruded on the sacred space. *Dragons have no place in the North.* She relaxed the muscles in her jaw, allowing her gaze to soften. Something she had watched Cersei Lannister do, filing it away and wondering why one would need to lie with their face like that, but it had come in handy of late.

"Jon."

He turned away from the tree. She took note of his appearance, for she hadn't seen him since he arrived for the coronation two days before. Riding in on a great black war horse, he'd been every inch a king, but he still wore the same dark furs and leather as he always had, even when he was just the Bastard of Winterfell. Resplendent, he now wore black velvet doublet and leather gambeson and the gray lining of his black cloak was shiny, with stitching that resembled scales, rippling with the sunlight when he moved. Across his chest, attached to the black leather swordbelt was a silver chain, the clasp at his shoulder, attached to his cloak, a three-headed dragon with a snarling wolf curled around it.

Her nostrils flared when she saw was rested on his head, in his dark curls, tamed back from his thin, solemn face. The crown was made of dragonglass, glimmering in the sunlight. Upon first glance it appeared rudimentary, but the closer she stepped, she saw the carvings of the dragon and the wolf, with runes of Old Valyria and the First Men. Her smile turned tight again. "Have you seen Bran? I was hoping to speak with him before the coronation."

"He is in his rooms." She nodded, her lips pursing. Jon rested his hand atop the wolf pommel of Longclaw. She glanced at it, unsure why she was worried for a moment. They had come to a tense arrangement, but one she hoped would be fruitful for the coming years. For the rest of time, in fact. He followed her gaze and smirked. "I would not kill you, Sansa." He flashed a smile, it was dark and she felt her skin prickle at how it made him more comely, that darkness. "Not with this at least."
She scowled. "You threaten the Queen in the North?"

"Not a threat, merely a statement of fact."

"You are alone." It was an accusation this time.

He smiled again. "Yes, much like we were alone when you refused to attend the coronation in King's Landing."

"The must always be a Stark at Winterfell."

"Excuses," he said. He shifted on his feet, the snow beneath his boots crunching, like glass breaking. He moved closer to the tree, turning from her again, and bare hand reaching to touch the white bark. She watched, silent, wondering what this man before her prayed for. He'd already gone from bastard to king. What more could he possibly want? He sighed, breath rattling in his lungs, expelling out in a hard puff of steam in the cold air. "The Queen is with child, she cannot travel long distances at the moment."

"Not even on dragonback?" She smirked.

"She owes you nothing Sansa."

"Your Grace."

"If you expect me to use the honorific reserved for royalty, perhaps you should do the same," he replied. He was not her brother, this man, she thought. He was witty with his comebacks. Cold in his responses. He turned away from the weirwood tree, hands outstretched in mock surrender. "You have the North. The Starks are in power again. "You have the North. The Starks are in power again." His voice softened, along with his cold gaze and for a moment she was seeing the quiet, shy boy she called brother, hiding in the shadows. "Please do not make this a war between our kingdoms, Sansa. I am here because you are my family, because my family has the North again. Consider this a gesture of goodwill." He smiled briefly, gray eyes darkening for a moment. "Father, Robb, and Rickon would all want to be here to see this. Their daughter and sister a queen."

She found herself smiling, nodding. "And their nephew and cousin a king."
Perhaps it was using his true blood relation to them, but the bastard brother disappeared, locking back behind the visage of the trueborn dragon. "Very well," he murmured. He stepped away from her, walking towards the exit. "I'll let you pray. Ghost!"

The white wolf, the last surviving direwolf of their family, emerged from the snowy brush, red eyes fixed on hers, and she swallowed the lump lodged in the back of her throat. She was startled; she hadn't noticed him there, silent as ever. She watched as he walked quietly away, the only indication of his presence the great paw prints in the snow.

And as she fell to her knees to pray before the tree of her ancestors, she shuddered, hearing the high-pitched screech from the skies above, reminding her that she wasn't completely alone. *I have the North*, she thought, smiling as her eyes closed. *That's all that matters. I have the North.*

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"A raven from the King."

"King of the Six Kingdoms," she clarified, accepting the scroll offered to her by Maester Wulkan. She glanced sideways to her brother, who sat still in his chair, hardly moving. His eyes had remained their normal mottled blue-brown for the past hour or so, but she had learned that didn't mean he didn't already know what the parchment contained.

She nodded to the Maester, who provided a curt bow, before he turned and left them. Bran remained still. *Very well then.* She took note of the red wax seal, the three-headed dragon and wolf, her stomach curdling each time she saw her family's sigil used in that way. *He is a Targaryen, regardless of where he grew up.* She wondered what their father would think of such things.

*He kept him hidden, raised him a bastard, brought shame to Mother, all to protect him.*

She found the actions of her father as honorable as ever, protecting his sister's child, but she still yearned for her mother, to feel her brushing her hair and speaking to her about her embroidery. She wished she could tell her that Father had not betrayed her, but the Lannisters and the Freys and the Boltons stole that opportunity. *Where are they now?*

*Dead, burned, stabbed, their lines snuffed out like a candle's flame.*
She smiled at the thought, breaking the seal with her thumb, unraveling the rather large scroll, hoping it wasn't anything overly significant. Before she had a chance to read the cramped handwriting of the Hand of the Crown, she heard Bran's soft cough, glancing up irritated. "Do you know what it says already?"

"The Queen has delivered a child. A healthy baby girl."

A girl.

The part of her soul that still remembered days of their family, still remembered him as her brother, shielding her from protection at Catle Black, as eager and relieved to see her as she had been to see him, running across that snowy yard to grab her broken bruised body into his arms...it lighted at the news. "A girl?" she repeated. She looked at the parchment again, reading aloud, although Bran clearly didn't need it. "Great tidings from Kings Landing, as His Grace King Aegon VI of House Targaryen, the White Wolf, Hero of the Dawn, and Lord Commander of the Queen's Armies, announces with joy Her Grace Queen Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, First of her Name..." She skipped over the litany of titles, her lips a thin line. Why must she always repeat them for us? "Gave birth to a beautiful, healthy daughter. A tourney will be proclaimed in due time to celebrate the birth of Princess Alysanne..."

She trailed off, staring at the name provided to the girl. She cleared her throat. "Alysanne Snow of House Targaryen."

They called her 'Daenerys Stormborn' for she was born the worst storm in centuries, Sansa knew. It was not custom to provide a child with a second name, beyond their House. She set her jaw again; the muscle pained her sometimes and it did then, coupled with curiosity at the idea they provided a royal, trueborn child with the name of a bastard of the North. "Why?" she wondered, holding the paper, glaring at Bran. "Would they do that?"

Bran smiled, the furs on his shoulders lifting slightly as he moved in the chair. "I do not know. It seems they wish to honor her Northern heritage."

"Snow is the name of a bastard."

"Her name is Princess Alysanne Targaryen. Perhaps it is merely an addition like 'Stormborn.'" He gazed out the beveled window overlooking the godswood. "It did snow in Kings Landing a moon ago."
"Crown Princess of the Six Kingdoms, Princess of Dragonstone..." She trailed off, crumpling the paper in her hand, scowling. "Princess of the North."

*Princess of the North.*

She thought she felt irritation at the use of the wolf in the Crown's new sigil. She thought she was bothered by the fact that her brother-cousin had flown his dragon into her territory two months before to visit with the wildling settlements in The Gift. She was often at odds with how best to communicate with her good-sister, the Queen in the South, as they called her above The Neck.

This was fullblown ire. "How dare she!" she exploded, launching to her feet and throwing the parchment into the flaming brazier beside her brother's chair. He quirked a brow, saying nothing as she began to pace, her navy skirts whipping about her ankles, the silver direwolf crown on her brow feeling as if it were weighted with stone. She was the Queen in the North! "I am Queen in the North! I am Queen Sansa of House Stark, I am the only Queen of Winter, the first Queen of Winter, and that...that...that dragon *bitch* dares to name her child as my heir!?"

"You have no heir," Bran reminded her. Quite casual, he flicked his fingers to the fires, voice cool. "I cannot have children. Arya has no intention of marrying. The only other with Stark blood is Jon Snow and his newborn daughter." He fixed his unseeing eyes on her. "But of course you know that."

Her breasts heaved in her tight bodice, the high neck of her gown strangling her as she fought for breath, sudden panic overtaking her. She was not old by any stretch of the imagination-- barely in her twenties, with two dead husbands and no children to her name. There had never been need to discuss heirs to the North. She was quite healthy and always assumed Bran or Arya would carry on the title of King or Queen should something awful befall her. With her loyal Queensguard, with the Northern armies and lords and mountain clans on her side, she knew that would be highly unlikely-- downright impossible.

*Except.*...

The nagging thought grew, a small snag in the fabric that began to pull, to unravel in one long string and rip apart the garment she'd been creating since that day when those fat fools with their pretty words and desperate need for attention claimed her *stupid* brother as King in the North over her. *She saved them at the Battle of the Bastards.* She was the trueborn niece of the Lord of the Riverlands, the trueborn cousin of the Lord of the Vale, and she was the one who had saved their sorry asses, but they lifted their swords for the *Bastard of Winterfell.*
In the end he got whatever he wanted. He hated his crown, hated his throne, but he got to fuck his foreign whore for the rest of his days, fly on his dragon, run wild with the barbarians of the north, and spend as much time as he wanted in general fucking about while his Queen ran the rest of the realm. Sansa scowled, hands on her hips, still wearing a path in the carpet stretched before the fire. If Father could see him.

Robb was supposed to be the one who marry and carry on the name. His sons would be the Lord of Winterfell. His sons would be the King in the North. She was supposed to marry another Lord, first Sweetrobin, and then a Prince. Then she'd married the Dwarf of Casterly Rock and the Bastard of the Dreadfort and she'd been kept prisoner, raped, abused, defiled, and humiliated. She vowed to never let another man touch her again, she would marry no one for what they could provide her, regardless of the benefit for to her there would be none.

There had been many discussions among the fat council of Northern Lords regarding her marriage status and the succession of the North. Too many of them salivating for the opportunity to wed their sons or themselves to her claim. There would be no more marriage for the little girl who wanted to be a queen, because she was the Queen. The Queen in the North.

She was Sansa Stark of Winterfell. If she married she would become a piece of her husband, his name would carry on in their child, and she could not have that, for there must always be a Stark at Winterfell. She hugged her arms to her, chilled at the thought. There would be no more marriage for the little girl who wanted to be a queen, because she was the Queen. The Queen in the North.

"Arya has returned."

She lifted her head, confused suddenly by Bran's words. "Arya?" she murmured.

He nodded solemnly. "She is at The Driftmark. Velaryon ships have gone to bring her to Dragonstone, at the order of His Grace."

"Arya was always his favorite." Arya may not have wanted to bend the knee to the woman she still did not trust, thought a murderer, thought a foreign invader, but she had done it when her brother simply demanded they trust him. He stood there in the Godswood and he ordered Arya to remember things Sansa knew nothing about, using phrases and words she didn't understand. Trust the brother who defended you with Father, trust the brother who gave you Needle, the brother who looked just like you growing up, the one who you thought was just your brother, not the bastard, not the half-brother, but brother.
So Arya did, Arya bent her knee when the silver-haired queen walked by, arm in arm with their brother. "I'll have Maester Wolkan send a raven," she said. She needed her sister there. She had to speak with her.

Arya had to become her heir. Bran could not have children, he was not a Lord or a King, he said, he was the Three-Eyed Raven. Whatever that meant, she still didn't understand, despite his abilities. His eyes had gone white, his mind off somewhere else, maybe seeing where Arya was exactly or perhaps checking in on the new Princess.

Sansa took her seat at her desk, but found she could not think, she could not work. The quill in her hand was heavy and her crown hurt her skull. She closed her eyes and removed it, setting the delicate silver symbol of her status on the desk beside her hand. Her eyes remained shut. Daenerys Targaryen sent those ravens to the whole of the kingdoms. Everyone would wonder and talk. They'd think of the new princess as the heir to the North and what did that do to her? It meant once she died, once the heir took over, there would be no more Northern kingdom and Daenerys would fold it back into the Seven.

Hot tears pricked the corners of her eyes, but she blinked them away quickly and took a deep breath. She had to focus on being a queen. That was what queens did. They ruled.

"Do you really think a tourney is necessary? It is such a waste of funds," she complained, cradling her newborn daughter to her breast, one hand wrapped possessively around the baby's curled feet and the other cupping the child's head, the cap of dark hair smooth as silk in her palm. She stood at the opening of the Chamber of the Painted Table, gazing upon the Velaryon ships in the distance, coming to bring her good-sister to visit.

She wondered if Arya was pleased with being forced to come to Dragonstone. Although force was such a dark word. Her husband had merely been notified of his sister's arrival at the Driftmark, tired and dirty and in need of aid and had demanded their vassals bring her to him for recovery. She was not sure Arya Stark would see it as aid though. She frowned, once again wishing the young girl did not look at her with such distrust, when she had done nothing to earn it.

All I ever did was fall in love with your brother and for that I am damned for eternity.

The love of her life, her White Wolf, her King, came up behind her, one strong arm around her waist
and the other going to help support their child. The sad brooding face she'd come to adore had been
replaced with one she loved even more when he set sights upon their child, his smile showing his
teeth and crinkling the corners of his eyes, which danced merrily and shined bright on their princess.
"Tourneys are tradition. it isn't something I want either, it will be small. Davos is handling it."

Davos had become quite adept at being their Hand of the Crown. The new title for a new era, she
had decided, when she'd needed to finally face facts her previous Hand had failed atrociously,
despite her initial warm feelings to him. Tyrion claimed after everything that had happened-- all his
failures, not hers-- plus the murder of his siblings -- she gave Cersei and Jaime Lannister options to
surrender and they chose not to so of course they had to burn-- he wanted nothing to do with her, but
he was blinded by love of his family and in attempt to save his life, he had attempted to commit
treason and tried to have her family-- her Jon!-- murder her before she even had a chance to sit the
Iron Throne.

She broke away from the window, still cradling their daughter. He moved with her, almost in unison,
not wanting to be apart. Alysanne fussied, her perfect pink lips opening and closing as her delicate
eyelids fluttered, revealing the gray irises that even after two moons had not changed color, despite
what some of her Dothraki handmaidens said about babies' eye colors. She as the image of her
father. A Northern child, she thought, her lips brushing at the point of dark hair on her daughter's
forehead. "Dany."

"Yes?"

"You know she will not let what you put in the letter go."

So we are going to talk about that, are we?

She swayed with their child, who continued to fuss, tiny hands breaking free of the binding of the
lacy blankets and woven quilt. She sighed, carefully passing her to him, their daughter quieting
somewhat when in the arms of her papa. She patted Alysanne's back, rubbing gently at the solid little
body. "She wanted you," she murmured, her head going to his upper arm, resting her cheek against
the soft silk of his jerkin, glad he wasn't wearing his heavy doublet or gambeson. It meant he was all
hers for the time being, not going to run off to deal with something else that required his attention.

His forehead dropped down to rest against her temple, both of them inhaling the intoxicating scent of
their daughter. She smelled like flowers and sunshine, she was their a dream of spring. Conceived
and born in winter and darkness, but she would usher in a new era, she thought, rising on her toes to
press a kiss to the corner of his mouth. "I love you," she whispered, grateful for each and every day
they had together.
He smiled, gray eyes soft and filled with love. "I love you."

The talk of the North always soured her stomach, drove her to anger and frustration. It was her one failure, she thought, staring at the carved map table her ancestor created. Her fingers rested on the edge of the North, her thumb pressing where Deepwood Motte was located and her hand reaching over to Bear Island. "Our ancestors united Seven Kingdoms," she said. She gazed upon the dark grey of the Northern moors, the black and brown painted mountains and the white snowdrifts rising to the top of the table to the Wall. Her voice was firm. "I came to take back what the Usurper stole from our family." Her head whirled, her loose silver hair whipping in a cloud about her shoulders, and violet eyes flashing angrily. "In the end, to maintain the peace of my kingdom, to placate your family, I lost one of those Kingdoms."

The North helped her take Kings Landing, but ultimately his sister refused the call. The armies coalesced around her upon the announcement that their King in the North, the one who had already given their freedom to the foreign queen and she was not willing to burn her husband's home, not willing to destroy one of those kingdoms, so a tenuous agreement was made.

The North goes free, their protectorates the Riverlands and the Vale remained under the Six Kingdoms, and Jon Snow, Robb Stark's named heir to Winterfell and the trueborn son of Rhaegar Targaryen, would become the King of the Six Kingdoms by right. The North got their independence and she got her king. A private agreement was struck as well with her husband. No harm would come to them-- she would never hurt them, despite what some thought of her, but she couldn't be sure of her followers. So she would make sure the Dothraki, the Unsullied, the Greyjoys and the Martells would not harm the Northerners.

_Sansa Stark does not play a long game as well as she thinks._

She had realized it one night when they were discussing names for their child. They chose Alysanne for a girl, the Good Queen who loved the North, who gifted the Night's Watch major swaths of the territory where now the Free Folk made their home. Alysanne was intelligent, beautiful, just and wise, and she rode the beautiful dragon Silverwing. There were eggs somewhere in Winterfell, she was sure of it, from when Alysanne had visited there.

During their discussion they had also mentioned Alysanne's last name. She was married to a Snow, not a Stark, he repeated numerous names. Their daughter would be a Targaryen, like them. Even if he considered himself a Snow, despite his royal bloodline. Her husband was a dragon, he just didn't acknowledge it until it beat the wolf for dominance. The wolf was always there, lurking in his gray eyes and the prowling, protective way he moved.

The dragon came out when the wolf was pushed to a corner, when he had no choice but to unleash it. She felt her stomach flip in memory at the sight of him, in his black leather, curls falling free of
their bindings at the base of his neck, slicing his dagger through the mouth of a lowly Riverlands lord who dared to speak of their union and its results-- at the time her babe in her belly-- as abominations to the Seven and thank the Gods Lord Eddard Stark was dead, for he would surely cut his own head off at the sight of his kin engaging in such acts of disgust. The removal of his tongue had not killed the lord, but he would never be able to speak out of turn again.

The last name was barely her concern, because her daughter would be queen. Queen of the Six Kingdoms and...and the North too, she'd realized, knowing full well Sansa Stark would never marry again. Sansa could not abide sharing her rule, she wouldn't be able to marry anyone who could take power over her.

So they'd come up with their daughter's name. Should she have been a boy, her name was going to be Aemon, in honor of Maester Aemon Targaryen, the wise man who once counseled his hidden kin at the Wall. They'd come up with her name and she'd realized she had not lost her family's legacy after all. There would be Seven Kingdoms one day. One day.

Alysanne Snow, she thought lovingly, the name they all attributed to a bastard. It was her husband's name, the name he was most comfortable with, despite its shameful connotations. She was not a bastard, she was loved and wanted and cherished. "She is the song of ice and fire," she murmured, speaking her thoughts out loud, smiling still.

"Sansa is not going to take well to what you did."

"It is true though." She turned, glaring over her shoulder at him. She leaned against the table, her arms crossing under her breasts. "Your sister refuses to marry and produce an heir. It falls to the next Stark in line, Arya and then Bran, and then..." she trailed off, nodding towards their child. "And then Alysanne. Alysanne has the blood of the First Men, same as all Starks. Same as all true Northerners."

He nodded. "Yes, I understand. I'm simply stating a fact."

She waved her hand. "She cannot do anything or else she looks like a fool." It was the least of her concerns, who inherited the North after Sansa Stark left their world. She turned back to the table, gazing at the intricacies of its design. It was a beautiful artifact. It had withstood all this time. She felt her shoulders fall, eyes closing. I'm sorry Aegon, I failed you. I lost a kingdom.

For the good of the rest. To break the wheel.
"I think she's hungry, come, let's put aside this talk of death."

She smiled. "I remember when that's all you ever wanted to talk about. The War of the Dead."

"I was rather bleak, wasn't I?"

"Bleak? I thought you were horribly morose."

He laughed. "And I'm still not morose?"

They bumped heads together, walking to their private chambers, Alysanne's tiny hand curled in his and she reached over to touch the small fingers as well, grinning up at him. "Not like before. Besides, I know ways to rid you of your melancholy."

The growl in the back of his throat had her skin heating with desire and she mewled in pleasure when he nipped at her bottom lip. It was still too soon, she thought, accepting his hard kiss. But she had taken his thoughts away from the succession issue. For now, she sighed, taking their babe and bringing her to her breast to feed.

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"Sansa has named me her heir."

Jon needed a drink if this conversation planned to continue. He stood from his chair, walking over from the fireplace where he'd been cleaning Longclaw. It was comforting for him to sit with the sword over his knees, dragging the whetstone over the blade, watching as the Valyrian steel rippled and shone in the firelight. Dragons rumored to have forged its steel and he was the blood of the dragon, sitting in the keep where his ancestors fled after their home was destroyed. The sword managed to make it all the way to the North, to Bear Island for hundreds of years, before finding its way as close to Valyria as it could get again.

He poured two glasses, carrying one over and handing it to his little sister, who was standing by the great hearth, its obsidian dragons moving in the dull shadows of the fire. He dropped his attention to the small child who sat on a fur stretched before the fire, laughing and smacking her hands on the black stone, not flinching at the heat that washed over her, flushing her moonglow skin. "Alysanne," he chided. He spoke in Dothraki, reminding her not to touch the flame.
His sister smirked. "I did not think you had even mastered the Common Tongue, here you speak Dothraki."

"It's hard not to, after all this time with them." He sipped at the watered down wine, making a face at how sweet it was. Give him the swill from The Wall any day over this fancy stuff. He set the goblet aside, studying his daughter. She was such a happy child, loved and cared for, nothing to worry or fear. Not with her mother and father to watch over her, or the great white direwolf or the two dragons who viewed them as their sister.

He looked at the little ball of fluff that Arya had brought with her from The Riverlands. She claimed that she'd located the small direwolf abandoned by the Trident, believing her to be related to her direwolf Nymeria, who had been roaming the Riverlands since she'd been forced to run her off on that fateful journey south. The direwolf pup had taken to following Ghost around, something he did not care for, the great wolf tired and wanting nothing more than to spend the rest of his days relaxing before the fire. Alysanne had clutched her wolf to her immediately, speaking to it in Valyrian and Dothraki.

The five-year old was a handful, but she was her mother's daughter. Eager to learn, eager to play, and quiet when she needed to be. She stood from the hearth and walked over to climb into his lap. "Papa," she yawned. "Can I stay with you?"

"Not right now, Aunt Arya and I must talk."

"About what?"

"Adult things," Arya said.

Alysanne wrinkled her nose. "I wanna know." She began to speak under her breath in Valyrian. He rolled his eyes; she knew he didn't understand it.

"I'll get your mother; you can tell her whatever you just said."

"No," she immediately chirped. She gathered her wolf up, the pup yipping when it was woken so rudely, but instantly licking at her cheeks. She giggled. "Come on Snowflake." She half-dragged, half-carried the poor direwolf pup from the room, speaking in Valyrian to her pup while he walked with her from the study through the corridor to her rooms, guiding her to her bed, footsteps following
They set her to bed, as they always did together when they could, and with a quiet kiss to his wife’s forehead, he whispered he’d be in soon and she nodded, understanding. He returned to the study, where his sister remained standing, holding the silver crown he detested so much in her hands. She set it back in the box, on the desk where he kept it, pushed to a corner.

She looked up, her eyes shining and he realized his little sister, his warrior and explorer sister, the one who claimed to know death and have looked it in the eye and who killed it herself, she appeared worried. Fatigue hung on her small shoulders and he saw through the mask she put to the world, he always had, and he suspected he always would. For all her talk of knowing killers and being a killer and understanding Death and killing Death, it was he who had experienced Death.

I survived Death.

“Sansa named me her heir,” she repeated, hushed. She shook her head, voice cracking. “I don’t want it, I never did. I’m not a Lady.”

“And I was not a King, but it is something we must do.” Duty.

“You were always meant to be a leader, Jon. Whether it was of us or men at the Night’s Watch or the North or the entire realm, you were meant to lead and you do, but I am not meant to be a Lady, not even a Queen. I never have.” She looked at the crown again, whispering. “Sansa wanted the crown, she got the crown, and she is worried of losing it. She wants me to take it from her if she dies before me, but I cannot be Queen in the North.”

As I could not be King in the North, as I could not be Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch, as I could not be King of the Six Kingdoms or King of the Seven Kingdoms, he thought. He did not want any of it, but it was his duty. Maester Aemon told him that love is the death of duty. It was so many times for him. Love of Ygritte, love of the North, and love of Daenerys. Too many times he had dropped what he wanted for his duty, but no more. He would do what he had to do so long as he could have the woman he loved. For once, the Bastard of Winterfell wanted to be the selfish, wanton creature they all believed him to be.

And so he did his duty and he became the king for his queen. They lost a kingdom for the peace of the realm, his sister got what she always wanted—shiny pretty crown and all—except now she was facing the newest game she wanted to play. His daughter would inherit the role as Queen, if that was what she wanted. If they had other children they could choose to rule or not rule. It was something they were working on, part of their plans for the future of the realm, the councils and meetings and
alliances and one day he hoped the dream would come true.

The wheel might finally be broken, to use his wife’s words.

“I cannot be queen, but Sansa wants me to be her heir. Bran cannot have children and the Stark name will die with the three of us.” She ran her finger over the wolf engraved into the silver crown. Her voice trailed off. “We are the last of the Starks.” Her gray eyes, so like his, lifted. “Sansa can be Queen in the North, but the North will not remain independent forever.”

Something that no one seemed to understand until now, but Dany understood it.

“And what would you have me do?” he murmured, his fists clenching at his sides. He had stood before his wife, argued the merits of the Northern independence, and they had come to the peace agreement, to prevent further bloodshed. The North was not entirely free, in name only perhaps, but it relied heavily on the other kingdoms. It could not sustain itself forever and soon they would kneel again. He was not the King in the North, they had made that clear. He felt the dragon rise inside of him, that fire that burned through the ice. “The North made it quite clear the king they chose, their king in the north, his words meant nothing to them, his decisions meant nothing to them, and in the end, it mattered not that he was raised as Ned Stark’s son in name if not in blood, that his dragon blood meant more than all of that. The father he never knew, the one who did nothing wrong but love one of their own so much he started a war for her, that was what mattered to them.”

He strode forward, red blurring his vision, grabbing the silver crown and holding it aloft. “Dragons and wolves, I am the blood of the First Men and the blood of Old Valyria, but did it matter to them? No, it did not, because they would rather die in their cold halls clinging to what used to be than understand what the world could be.” He shoved the crown back into the box and grabbed it, burying it in the armoire by the fireside.

The wars had been unkind to them all and the North almost lost all their people for it. The North had seen the harshest of the winter, the true terror of the War of the Dead, and they’d lost their Warden, their King, and more noble houses than any of the other kingdoms. “My children will not be pawns in Sansa’s game,” he murmured, studying the flames, feeling the comfort of their heat. He closed his eyes against it, savoring it. The heat was comforting to him, having spent so long freezing and wondering what it must be like to be truly warm.

Or maybe it was the dragon who was happy to be warm.

Arya walked around the edge of the desk; her voice soft in the harshness of the dark obsidian room. “I’m not going to be a pawn either. I’m telling her I refuse it, she will have to find someone else. I
want you to know, this isn’t over. Sansa is obsessing over this more than I think she has over anything before. It’s her new quest.”

He tilted his chin up, not looking back, the fire burning and he knelt, reaching in and lightly touching a coal that fell from the brazier to the hearth, his skin sparking with pain, but an odd comfort filling him from the touch. “Well her obsession will be her downfall,” he whispered, standing straight again and kicking the coal back. He turned away from his sister, shutting the door on talk of Northern heirs.

As the King of the Six Kingdoms, he had other things to worry about than petty disagreements and feuds of the North. They made their choice clear when they renounced him as their king and he made his choice when he chose love over duty.

He marched down the corridors and entered their chambers, finding his beautiful wife stretched over the furs, wrapped in fine silks and her hair soft around her shoulders. He stared at her, for a long time, probably longer than one would consider proper, but he still could scarcely believed she was his. And I am hers. The words they spoke beneath the weirwood in Winterfell. The Long Night had passed, the time for healing was upon them, and that included their relationship. He'd almost lost her that night. They were family, they were a part of each other and he would never lose her again, godsdamn the revelation of his birth. They would rule together. If no one could understand that then damn them. Burn them all. So they did. First with Varys and then with Tyrion Lannister.

And she was his and he was hers and they were together in this fight, them and their child. Their gorgeous Alysanne, who was smart and funny and could speak two languages and had already traveled farther in the world than he had in his almost thirty years. It was all a testament to his wife, who ruled justly and fairly and put all the naysayers who said a queen could not rule in her own right to shame. He tilted his head, much like Ghost did when he found something interesting, observing her as she rested. She had her eyes closed, small hand curved beneath her chin, her pillowy breasts rising and falling in even tempo with her breath. He thought there was never a woman more beautiful.

His wife. Mother of his child. His queen. Dany.

He did not mean to wake her, but when his boot heel hit the break in the floorboards it creaked, alerting her to his presence. She stretched, languid, like the dragons in the noonday sun, before sitting up, draping over her knees and studying him. “You are tired,” she deduced.

“Yes.”
“Arya did not bring you good news from the North.”

“Is there ever good news from the North?”

“This concerns Sansa and her quest for an heir, does it not?” She pouted, looking sideways as he sank onto the mattress beside her, leaning forward to remove his boots. He did not answer, for she never asked a question she did not already know the answer to. She crawled towards him, her arms around his shoulders, draping her soft, pliant body around his harder one, her lips warm on his ear, teasing and breathing. “Speaking of heirs.”

“Were we speaking of heirs, I thought it was just you?”

She chuckled, her fingers firm as she turned his chin to her, before smoothing her hand along his jaw, cupping it carefully and fixing her wide violet eyes on him. The tip of her tongue darted to wet her lips, a move that sent desire coursing through his veins, the urge to throw her back onto the pillows almost overpowering. “I wanted to tell you earlier, but you left so early this morning and we did not get a chance to speak in private,” she murmured.

Her hands went for his and smoothed their wide warmth over her abdomen, the firm swell beneath her shift noticeable as he ran his hands over her, savoring in her shiver as she rose up over him, lighting pressing him against the furs. “Another?” he whispered, eyes lighting with joy. Another babe.

She nodded, tears trickling down her cheeks. “Yes, another baby. We will have to find more direwolves and dragons, Jon Snow, for it seems you and I are meant to bring more into this world.”

Talk of the North, of heirs, and of his sister were put to rest immediately. For his sister might be having difficulty wondering about her legacy and reign, but he did not, he thought, pressing Dany back into the pillows, his arms wrapped around her, never letting her go as they celebrated the beautiful news they would be welcoming another child-- another dragon, he thought-- into the world.
marriages and memories

Chapter Summary

Part 2 of 3- Sansa marries and reflects; Daenerys wonders; and the last Stark remains at Winterfell.

Chapter Notes

Not gonna' lie, I split the second half into two because I ended up fleshing out a bit more as I reviewed it. Plus I'm struggling with the Christmas AU to make sure the **spoiler** Viserys/Dany conversation that occurs in the chapter is good enough, I keep going back over it. So I'm delaying that one, sorry!

Enjoy?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The first time she married, she had been a girl, terrified and prisoner, humiliated by her circumstance, a pawn in a game tying lion to the wolf's lands. She looked back on that marriage with an odd sort of fondness, perhaps realizing it could have been far worse while at the same time recognizing the man she married was not the hideous beast of her imagination. He was a dwarf, of course, but he was kind and intelligent and had no interest in hurting her. He was the best of them.

The second time was true terror, something she hadn't realized the meaning of until that moment, again prisoner, again used for her name and her connection to the North, far deeper than even the Boltons' blood ran. She was already married, despite its non-consummation, and marrying again, to a true monster this time, despite his outward appearance as a rather comely bastard. She hadn't understood true humiliation until that moment in the godswood of her family, beneath the tree where her father prayed, where she'd learned what it was to be a servant to the gods.

By her marriage to Ramsay she had claim to the Dreadfort. It was a castle of depravity, horrors, and centuries of death, so she had done what she thought best and purged it, sending in smallfolk to clean its halls, remove the flayed men banners, and watched with pride as the Stark sigil waved above, a castle belonging to them and them alone. At the request of her brother it had become a refuge of sorts for the displaced families after the wars that had rent their lands apart. She had installed a Cassal to oversee it as castellan.

She vowed never to marry again, but she had realized that was a mistake. She had to produce an heir, she was Queen after all, she would name her heir a Stark. Her son could carry the name. To find a Northern family who would accept offering one of their sons to become King Consort and
would accept to losing the prospect of continuing their line in favor of the Starks would be difficult, but she'd found it after much discussion and deliberation.

Torrhen Flint was a second son of the Flints, a mountain clan with little control beyond their region, rather comely, more interested in breeding horses and traversing the mountains than he was in overseeing accounts or assisting his brother, to be Lord Flint one day, with running of their family's small castle in the far western region. She had scoured everything and decided he must be the one. They would be honored to marry to the Starks and they would be able to continue their name through their first son.

So here she was, married a third time, her husband a few years older than her, nervous and rather quiet. He was somewhat attractive, she supposed, but she had long thrown out girlish fantasies of marriage for love and wishing she would have a golden-haired prince like the Kingslayer. She was not Jonquil, after all. She was someone entirely else.

She was the Queen.

Another queen had attended her marriage, she thought sourly, pursing her lips as her good-sister drank from the horn of the red-haired wildling brute, making a fool of herself, standing there in a tight-bodice red coat with breeches of all things! Her silver hair was pulled in the most complicated of braiding, little silver clasps holding back some of them for extra support. She looks as though her hairstyle alone will topple her.

The Dragon Queen was smaller than her, but big in presence. Even the Northerners had bowed to her. Or maybe to their former king, despite his dragon blood he still was a wolf. Try as she might to pretend otherwise. Of all the Starks, he had a direwolf. He had four direwolves, she thought darkly, as the beasts prowled the edges of Winterfell's Great Hall.

"Fucking Snow, your woman can drink!" the red-headed man, Tormund, that was his name, shouted. He lifted the Queen clear up into the air, hoisting her above for them all as she threw her arms up, laughing as he spun her to the lutes and the horns playing dancing tunes.

"My queen would you care to dance?" Torrhen asked.

She shook her head, sipping her goblet, glowering at the other woman. "No queens do not dance." This queen does not. She patted his knee. "But please Lord Husband, you enjoy yourself." One of us should.
"Sansa."

Anything her husband had planned to say was cut off by the presence of her brother. He bowed his head. "Your Grace."

"Please," Jon said, waving his hand idly. "We are all family here." His gray eyes bore into hers, smiling slow. "Right Sansa?"

"Of course." She had invited them because Lord Royce said she must. It would have been considered a slight otherwise. Regardless of their kingdoms being separate entities, King Aegon was her family. To not invite him to her wedding could have been received quite poorly by the Southern houses. They did not need that, not when she was attempting to acquire more grain from the Reach, with the Hightowers now in charge, they were loyal to the very end to the Targaryen dynasty and had no love lost for the Starks-- her father had killed their family's hero Ser Gerold at the Tower of Joy-- so she had to bring them to the North.

They arrived, the whole lot of them, on dragonback. The two massive beasts flew overhead now and there were three others they brought with them, the size of dogs, hatched from a clutch laid by the great black one. Dragons and direwolves roaming the North. The Queen had even brought her newborn, strapped to her chest. There were three, her two nieces and a nephew.

All three of the Targaryen heirs were there to remind her of her inability to continue her line, she thought, but no longer. She had married, in spite of what they thought of her, and she would produce an heir. A true Stark for the North.

She studied her brother standing beside her, noting the silver making its way through her brother's temples and threading through his hair, pulled into a series of braids from his forehead, bound back in a tight bun at the base of his neck. It gave him an air of danger, but she had always known to be wary of the bastard. *Mother always warned me he would be the downfall of our House.*

He took a goblet, draining it of whatever drink it contained and glanced at movement at his side. Even she smiled, seeing her niece, the lovely Princess Alysanne. She had grown into a beautiful young woman, a true Northerner with her dark hair, gray eyes, and pale thin features. She wore a pretty black coat-dress in the style of her mother's, other gray leather leggings and tall shiny gray boots. A black leather sash crossed her chest and a silver pin of the dragon and wolf held it to her hip, where it fell down to the hem of the coat. Her dark curls were tugged in her face in braids, twisted in a knot before falling free to her shoulders.

"Your Grace," she said, voice strong for someone so young. Near twelve years, Sansa believed. She
bowed her head before straightening fully. Her gray eyes darted to her father, dancing merrily. "Come Papa, Mai says it is your turn."

He laughed, a strange sound to her ears, taking his daughter's hand and allowing her to lead him back to the center of the hall, where the Dragon Queen pulled him close, spinning in his arms as the music picked up, the wildling man roaring as they began to dance, with Alysanne joining, taking the hands of her brother, a strapping young lad in black leather, his silver curls wild around his face, violet eyes laughing.

There was the third, she thought darkly, glancing to where her sister stood with the Lord of Storm's End, both of them talking in the dim light of a corner, with Arya holding the toddler—another girl—on her hip, not bothering to stop as the child pulled on her hair.

Her husband had left to be with his family, drinking too much, leaving her at the high table. *Alone.*

The Dragon Queen and her Dragon Wolf King were the center of the attention. *At my wedding.* Even the Northern lords seemed entranced by the Princess Alysanne, who spoke four languages fluently and was discussing a recent visit to Braavos with Lord Manderly, laughing over how she had mixed up two words from High Valyrian to Braavosi Valyrian, causing quite the scandal at a trade meeting with the Sealord.

*They let her go with them on trade meetings?* When she was this girl's age she was still dreaming of a world in which she could be a princess. This girl already *was* a princess.

The other, the boy, was a skilled fighter, she'd heard. He looked too much like his mother though, pale and silver, wearing clothes better suited for her horse lords than for a prince of the realm. They called him Aemon. A Targaryen name, she sniffed. The least her brother could have done was at least honor his Stark family somehow, without them he would be dead. He'd shamed them, naming his second daughter after her aunt. Her aunt who had survived an abduction-- she didn't believe that Lyanna Stark would run off for love, not after what she'd heard of her-- whose name was bestowed silver-haired purple-eyed babe they called Lyella, combined with another name of a dragon.

Only their firstborn looked like her wolf heritage. The other two were dragons through and through. She scowled, the Northern lords falling over themselves to bow to the Dragon Princess, with her faithful direwolf walking at her side.

Out of the corner of her eye, her new husband smiled at her and raised his glass. She raised hers in response, before draining in, glowering as the other royal couple in attendance shamelessly kissed in front of everyone, her shy bastard brother downright *brutish* as he claimed his Dragon Queen, almost
lifting her clear in the air.

She met the Dragon Queen's violet gaze, smirking, her wintry blue eyes unblinking. *I have the North, I reclaimed Aegon's final conquest, you are nothing.*

With violet eyes still on her, the Dragon Queen smiled wide-- beamed-- before grabbing her somewhat drunk king by the front of his gambeson, planting her mouth on his. She narrowed her eyes, disgusted, watching Jon Snow simply lift her up again, before the Queen broke away and wrapped her arms around his neck, and sent a little flick of her fingers in wave to her, like she was brushing off a fly.

Sansa didn't understand why that bothered her more than anything. More than the Northerners talking about Alysanne Snow's recent tour of Essos, more than the return of the direwolves to the North, more than the talk of dragons birthing again, and more than the discussion of the prosperity of the South in comparison to the still recovering North-- even a decade after the wars.

*I'm trying you fucking fools!* She was the Queen, she was trying, she couldn't just wave her hand had grow grain, couldn't bring the coal mines back to their prosperity for trading with the south, couldn't get Lord Manderly to acquiese on taxing the ships that came to White Harbor. Even the wildlings--*Free Folk* Jon kept correcting her obnoxiously-- would not help when she needed. They claimed they followed no Queen, they were settled in the Night's Watch lands not hers.

"There is no Night's Watch!" she'd shouted at their leader, the giant redhead who was carrying the Silver Prince Reborn atop his shoulders, the boy laughing as though he were mad. Except he'd just shrhrugged and said something like how King Crow was who they would follow, but no one else.

She felt stifled and stood quickly, brushing by silent Bran—his eyes had gone milky white—striding to the exit, grateful for the cold blast of night air on her skin. She glared at the savage horse lords and the silent eunuchs that guarded the entrances with her men; her brother had insisted they bring their guards.

Somehow she found her way to the godswood, where earlier she'd exchanged the words, Jon giving her away in place of her father, Bran officiating the simple ceremony. She wished her mother were there. She wished her father were there. Robb and Rickon and everyone. Tears trickled down her face as she fell before the hearttree, its red smiling face mocking her as she cried.

*I don't know why I'm so upset. Torrhen is a good man, he's quiet and sweet and he will not hurt me.*
Except for some reason all she could see were the secret smiles that the Dragon Queen and her brother shared over the council table. The way they held hands when they thought no one was looking. The wanton displays of affection too much drink caused them to offer the great hall. They had heirs to their throne, but she heard there was some sort of elective council they were forming. Representatives from various portions of the realm. It made no sense to her.

She wiped at her eyes, whispering. "I wish you were here." To all her long dead family. To Robb, who should have been the one marrying for duty and not love. She was angry. So angry. Jon Snow of all people got to marry for love. He married for love and he ended up a king. How?

The Dragon Queen had an heir to her crown. She could carry on the Targaryen line.

Her hands pressed to her stomach and she prayed, prayed for an heir, not because she was eager to be a mother, but so she would not be left alone.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw movement, red and silver, and turned her head slightly. She glowered, irate that her private prayer was disturbed, and stared at the Dragon Queen, who only looked at her with a sad smile, before turning and disappearing back through the brush.

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She dropped the scroll into the fire, watching the edges curl and burn, a hiss escaping with bit of steam as it disintegrated to ash. "Your sister refuses my offer of Alysanne as her heir," she said, tugging her shawl around her shoulders in their cool stone room.

Her husband, still muddled with sleep, blinked owlishly in her direction. "You did what?"

"Alysanne carries the title Crown Princess of the Realm and Princess of the North," she reminded him. Not that those titles married. It was to placate some of her more old-fashioned lords and ladies. Alysanne could carry on their rule if she so chose. She believed she would. Her daughter was a young woman, seventeen-- older than she was when she'd been forced into her marriage with Drogo-- save for the fact her daughter would never be forced into anything.

He rolled onto his stomach, affording her a glimpse of his still shapely bum, peeking from under the sheet. She crawled onto the bed after him, slapping it quickly before he could move, glowing at her. She grinned, settling against him when he moved to sit by the headboard. He yawned, arm around her, drawing her to his chest. "It's too early for these talks."

"The raven came early." She hadn't slept. Lyella had been ill with pox and they'd almost lost her. It
had been several moons since she'd recovered, but her sweet daughter was still fitful in sleep, pained
in her legs, sometimes unable to walk great distances, and while her daughter tossed and turned, she
sat her bedside, holding her hand, and whispering to her nothingness.

"I'll be with her tonight," he whispered, kissing behind her ear, knowing she'd spent that night with
their ill daughter. He hugged her tight, rocking slightly, chin atop her shoulder. "I feel for Sansa, I
really do."

The woman had finally married to produce an heir and after five years she had nothing to show for it.
She understood from her sources in the North— she had no need for a Master of Whisperers when
she could be everywhere at once— the Queen in the North had been with child twice, to lose the
babe early, before she even knew she was carrying. It broke her heart—she had offered sympathy,
sent bushels of Essosi sweets and citrus fruits—except the Queen in the North had rebuffed any
advances of goodwill.

They would never be friends, they were essentially cautious allies, but she also knew the North could
be an enemy when it wanted to be. Despite her dragons, despite her vast armies and navies, she
could freeze-out the North of anything, but that would kill the people. The people who already
harbored resentment and hatred to her bloodline. She wanted it to be different, she was breaking the
wheel, and she still had several spokes left to splinter. The North held firm. If she wanted to change
their attitudes, if she wanted to bring it back into the fold, into what Aegon had created and what she
wanted to create, she had to fight her impulses to fly Drogon over their moors and burn everyone
where they cowered.

Even her Northern husband faced issues; they still loved him as the blood of the wolf, Lyanna Stark's
child, but he was a dragon. He flew a dragon, he wore the red of House Targaryen, and she know
they all claimed his gray eyes flashed purple of Old Valyria when you angered him. All lies, but they
remembered their Lord Commander, they remembered their King in the North, even if he bent the
knee to the foreign whore.

She now found it rather amusing how little they thought of their king, believing he could be waylaid
by her silver cunt and beguiling eyes. Sometimes she teased him about it, asked him if it was her
dragons or her cunt or her hair or whatever it was that drew him to her. What part of her caused him
to fall so hard and so fast?

*Your heart.*

They would never know, she thought lovingly, stroking his hand as he ran it over her flat stomach.
They would never understand. "Sansa and I are quite alike," she whispered, something she thought
about when these skirmishes and petty squabbles with the Queen in the North came up. She turned
her face to him, knowing that speaking of her past hurt him, so she stroked his cheek, head over his
heart, and lifted his hand to press to her left breast, so he could reassure himself she was alive in his arms. "We were married twice. Sold, held captive, raped and defiled. We were both humiliated. We understand what it means to be a pawn in a man's game but be the only one in the room with a brain worth using."

Sure enough, he tightened around her, a sound of distress in his throat. She kissed him, turning in his arms, touching her finger to his lips. "Shh, I'm here," she murmured. He nodded, head going into her shoulder. She held him, sighing again. "I wandered the Red Waste, I watched people I love die before my eyes, and I lost the one thing I ever wanted. A family. Everything became about the throne. Became getting back what they took from my family. Everything became that fucking throne and a crown and I came to realize that there was nothing I would not give up for it. The only thing held firm. I would never give up my family." She broke away, stroking his face, whispering lovingly, staring into his deep eyes, as gray as the storm clouds gathering around their island. "Until you came along. My stupid Northern fool. You changed it."

He smiled, nodding and whispering. "Yeah I love you too."

She giggled. They shared a sweet kiss, her forehead dropping to his, tears pricking her eyes. "I want the North back. You know I do, but I'm not willing to lose my family for it. Alysanne is owed that throne. If Sansa Stark continues to insist the only one who can rule the North is a Stark, then it will be our daughter. It will be her crown and her throne to do with what she wants. If not her, then Aemon and if not Aemon then Lyella, but if Sansa only wants a Stark, she should recognize that her kin still exists. Her family is still out there." She pursed her lips. "The great irony of it all Jon Snow is she looks down upon our union with distaste because of our blood relation and yet for some reason she only wants pure Stark blood. The same argument the Targaryens have used for centuries."

It was not the same, she understood, but it sounded that way to her. Sansa's outright refusal to even acknowledge a Targaryen-born daughter or son as her heir was what bothered her. It was a fight she wanted to fight, only because of its frivolity. Because of what it meant in the greater scheme of things.

Sansa Stark wanted her crown, wanted her kingdom, and she got it, but at what cost?

Daenerys Targaryen sacrificed a kingdom for her crown, but she was not going to let the red wolf get away with outmaneuvering her, she thought, kissing her husband again. He did not fight her on these matters, whether because he thought them a waste of time or because he just did not want to get involved in a queen's game, she didn't know. Jon Snow had his own problems to handle as King. He had Northmen defecting to fight in his armies, he had to figure out how to handle The Wall, and he was tasked with maintaining peace between the realm's ships and the pirates that continued to plague them along the southern shores.
She knew he was a good king, a just ruler, and he very much preferred to don a cloak and wander the streets of the cities, listening to everyone's complaints and bring them back to her for addressing. That's what Rhaegar used to do. He was the King that Rhaegar could have been. She nuzzled against him, her cheek resting over the faded scar on his heart, eyes fluttering shut.

"I could go talk to her."

"Hmm?"

"Sansa. I could fly up and talk to her about this. She needs to see reason. She's being a child."

She shook her head, whispering, eyes still shut. "She's in mourning Jon." Giving up her control to marry another, no matter how little power her husband might wield, coupled with the loss of babes she did not even know she carried. It was painful. Too much pain for one person to handle perhaps. "She doesn't know it. Give her time. Maybe she'll see."

"She's putting more men on the southern border, her uncle has complained that they're running over in to the Riverlands, causing disturbances with the smallfolk, stealing their crops and waylaying travelers over the Trident. Does she fear a war?"

"You're my Lord Commander of my Armies, you tell me."

He groaned, hitting his head against the headboard, playing with the ends of her braids. "She's posturing." He seemed to be talking to himself, muttering. "I'll take Rhaegal north. See what's what." He paused. "He likes the fish in the Trident, sets the water on fire and everything."

"You do that my love. Now hush, your queen needs her rest."

A soft kiss pressed against her brow. "Whatever my queen wants."

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Arya betrayed her.

Her stupid sister had renounced her claim to become the heir to the Queen in the North when she foolishly became the second wife of the Lord of Storm's End. The wedding had been simple, in the
Winterfell godswood before they rode for the Stormlands to have a marriage before the Seven, to honor the Southern beliefs of the Baratheon bastard's lords and ladies. She had graciously hosted a small feast in honor of her only sister.

The Lord of Storm's End had been legitimized by the Dragon Queen, he'd brought peace through the joining of his house with a daughter of House Selmy, in naming Ser Brienne of Tarth as the liege lady for Evenfall after her father died without heir, and for his work with the smallfolk of the Stormlands, encouraging them to take up trades and fostering as many as he could throughout the Lands, even going into the forge himself to show them how to rain. The Stormlands had stood behind him, proud of even a bastard of Robert Baratheon, for he might have been tall, strapping, and carried a war hammer like his father, but he was honorable and kind and more interested in ruling than he was in whoring.

She knew he had harbored feelings for her sister, but love matches were nonexistent in their world; if they could marry for love, who would be in charge, she wondered. She had heard he really did love his wife, a good woman by all accounts, but she had died after birthing two children, they were rather young when she passed, struck ill by a pox that arrived on the shores of Breakwater Bay from a passing ship. They said he would not marry again, but then he had, to her stupid sister.

Arya deciding, she finally wanted to be a lady had ruined everything. She should have wanted to be Lady of Winterfell! Now she was Lady Arya Stark of Storm's End, but even then she refused the title. The dragon *bitch* knighted her sister and she was Ser Arya. Ser Arya who only ever wanted to play in the muck with the boys and chopped off her braids in frustration at their mother when she had said that short hair like a boy's was never going to get her a husband. So Arya chopped off her braids, laughed, and said "Well now I won't have a husband!"

*I have no heir.*

She closed her eyes, fighting tears, sitting before the fire in her chambers. She had not shared her husband's bed since the last babe-- there had been four she'd lost, each one before she even knew-- to release him from his vows to her. To allow him to do whatever he wanted, which he did, claiming that he couldn't fuck a *cold fish*. She had recently returned from the wedding in the South. She'd had a very tense discussion in the Eyrie on her way home, her cousin having grown into a ruler in his own right, no longer the impressionable spoiled child she'd once slapped.

If only she could ahve slapped him when he claimed that the Eyrie could no longer afford to maintain such close ties with the North. She had sought their assistance in dealing with some mountain clans that were causing issue. "Call the dragons to your aid," he'd simply told her. Her confidant in Lord Royce had long since lost his mind, addled with age and not the warrior he'd once been. So she had had to leave, only to find her bannermen had started a war in the Riverlands.
There had been many issues along the Neck and the Reeds were of no assistance. Lady Meera Reed claimed her brother had died for Lord Bran Stark and she had sacrificed too much to provide assistance of Greywater Watch's few troops. So she sat aside in their tower on the rivers and did nothing as the Northerners encroached into the South, demanding the North take back what was once theirs.

So there had been war, there had been death, and there had been two dragons in the skies, burning Northmen. She'd met the Dragon Queen on the banks of the Trident, on the Ruby Fork.

"My brother died here, fighting a rebellion," the queen had said. She looked into the river, brown with muck, sneering. "It has lost its ruby color, for his blood has been washed away for so many years. Except his blood still stands, his blood will fight you if you continue this nonsense."

She had lifted her chin in defiance. "The North had the Riverlands under its protection since the Kings of Winter."

"Sansa, use your head, or have you lost that capability along with your heart?" her brother had demanded, sitting atop his black horse, his armor gleaming black. He nodded to the armies behind her. "You have never recovered fully from the War of the Dead, from the Battle of King’s Landing...your people will die."

"The North demands The Neck," she had said. It was always part of The North. Perhaps the Riverlands too. She had demanded those too. "My mother was a Tully. The Riverlands belong to us."

The dragon queen had laughed, high and light. She smirked. "Good-sister, honestly? You may be the daughter of Lord Eddard Stark and Lady Catelyn Tully, but your claim to the blood of the First Men is laughable at best. King Aegon has more First Men in his veins than you do in your pretty little red head." She had glared at the Lords sitting on their steeds behind her. "And we all know how looks are important to the Northerners, do we?" As she spoke, she had twirled a lock of silver hair around her fingers, ebefore letting it fall to rest against her breast. She had turned, getting atop her white mare, shouting for them all to hear. "Aegon the Conqueror united seven Kingdoms!" She had paced the horse in the Ruby Fork, counting off. "The Crownlands, the Stormlands, the Reach, the Vale, the Westerlands, the North and..." She tilted her head, calling out. "The Riverlands. Tell me Sansa Stark, you are Queen of which kingdom? The North it was? Not the Riverlands? You do not get what you ask for today. Control your banners or they will burn."

On cue, by some mystical tether, the dragons had screeched through the sky. There were five of them, for each one of the dragons that lived. Her eyes had dropped to the girl who sat on the chestnut mare behind her father, wearing black riding leathers, a sash of gray from her shoulder, and her raven-black hair in the Dothraki braids of her mother.
The war had ended, the battles lost, the rebellious Northmen burned. She had retreated to Winterfell, ashamed, knowing she had overstepped, failing in her quest. She knew what what they said. The whispers.

*It is Lyanna Stark reborn I tell you.*

*Rides a purple dragon you know.*

*Blood of the First Men she has, they say she can even speak the Old Tongue, lost to the ages, here but learned in the Shadowlands.*

*Prays to the Old Gods, had weirwoods put all through the South even.*

*Great direwolf at her side in battle, she even carries a sword, taught by her father.*

*Looks just like Starks, I'm telling you, wolf's blood some had, Lord Rickard's daughter and son dead before their time, its in the King too, can see through those red eyes of his wolf.*

"Enter," she called, rubbing her temples, looking up as the door pushed with a creak.

Bran entered, rolling his chair, frail and sickly, his powers consuming him. He would leave her soon. *I'll be all alone.* "I travel to the Heart of Winter," he announced. He blinked once. "By the next moon. Jon sent the Free Folk to assist with the travel, you will not need to waste men."

She shook her head, whispering. "Why do you want to do this?"

"Becasue it is my place. I am the Three-Eyed Raven."

*Whatever that meant.* She rubbed at her temples some more, aching head and aching body. *I will be all alone, not even Bran here, not that he was here much.* "They speak of the girl," she murmured. He had come to tell her that. Another, younger and more beautiful, to take her place. She fistcd her skirt in her hand, glaring. "She is not a Stark."
He nodded, grave. "Lady Manderley has been to Dragonstone. They seek an audience with Jon. They want her to be queen of the North when you pass."

"When I pass?" she snorted. She stared in the fire, whispering. "They want my crown now." They all wanted her crown, they would seek to see her in ruin, in chains even. She pressed her hand over her eyes. "I am a good queen." Bran said nothing, which only spurred her anger. She dropped her hand again, snapping. "I am the Queen of Winter, I am the Stark! I am the one who freed the North! Not father, not Robb, not you, and certainly not Jon and his fucking precious Alysanne!"

No amount of screaming at Bran would garner a reaction, so she fell backwards into the chair, glaring instead. She adjusted the crown atop her head, whispering. "Jon takes her to battles. She has fought."

"The Kings of Winter fought their battles."

"They say she has executed men."

"The man who passes the sentence shall swing the sword."

With each failed attempt to produce a Stark heir, the lords grew more distant. They grew more troublesome. The failed rebellion in the Neck had only made those fears greater and the sight of the mysterious Targaryen princess, a woman grown and no doubt entertaining marriage offers, it had only encouraged rebellion-- against her. "Arya may not have wanted to be my heir, but she certainly ensured it would never come to pass by becoming the Lady of Storm's End."

"Arya followed her heart."

"And so did Jon," she spat. She glared at him, her hands fists on the armrests of her chair. "I am the only one that did what was right for this family! For the pack!"

Bran stared at her in his unseeing and yet allseeing way. He could see everything at once. He could take you to the past and show you what he saw there. He could follow threads to perhaps feel what might happen in the future. He continued to stare at her and whispered. "Power is power."
A chill ran down her spine. She knew those words. She stared at him, whispering. "We are the last of the Starks, Bran. You cannot leave me." She lashed out, shouting. "I am the Queen in the North, I am Sansa Stark of Winterfell! They are nothing! Arya is now a stag's whore, Jon has been in love with the silver cunt since the moment he sniffed her like a dog in heat!" She jabbed her finger to her chest, bruising her through the thick neck of the gown she wore. "I am the one who survived! I survived being a prisoner, being raped, being humiliated, in my own home of all places, I watched Father's head chopped from his body with his sword and I saw it on a pike! You were off in the woods running scared, Jon was freezing his balls at the Wall and then warming them with the dragon bitch, and Arya was gods-knew-where, while I was here, fighting for our family and you all have left me for the enemy!"

And no one seems to understand that but me.

Her brother wheeled towards her, before he folded his hands in his lap. He stared at her and spoke again. Hollow, warning. "Everyone who isn't us is an enemy."

I know those words.

Her head lifted, her words cold as steel. "They all loved," she murmured, shaking her head, laughing to herself. It was all a lie. Everything that had happened to her, all for nothing. She closed her eyes again, unable to look at him. Her last brother, abandoning her. "They all loved and for what?"

"Love is a sweet poison."

I am not her. She thought of the woman who had imprisoned her, who had wrought so much death and destruction in her life. From the moment those cold green eyes landed on her in the yard of Winterfell, the false words from her lips at the feast, ones she thought were flattering. To the ones that she did not realize were so cold. We have another wolf. "I am not her," she barely managed to get out. She would kill Bran herself. She couldn't breathe, shouting. "I am not her!"

Bran pushed his chair back. "A raven comes for you sister. Perhaps you should read it."

The raven came two days later, when he left her. She stood on the ramparts and watched them leave, with her brother in a wagon, not even looking back at his home as he journeyed north, to the True North they said. She took the scroll from the new Maester-- Wolkan had died of pox that hit them hard a few years before-- unfurling it and staring at the words.
Queen Sansa of Winterfell, I will be traveling to White Harbor by my dragon within the next few moons, I would like to treat with you after my work is completed and pay my respects to my grandmother, great-uncle, and departed cousins. My wolf will be making her way to Winterfell ahead of me and should arrive before, please allow her passage. With great affection, your niece, Alysanne Snow of House Targaryen, Crown Princess of the Realm, the Wolf of Dragonstone.

Her hand crumpled the missive, shredding it to nothing, watching it disappear into the wind.

Chapter End Notes

To be continued...

Final Chapter: Alysanne visits the North; Sansa pleads with Jon; a queen wins all out.

End Notes

To be continued...

This fic will only be two chapters-- mostly because I wrote the whole thing in a meeting today when I was bored and it became so damn long I cut it in half.

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