A Dragon and A Wolf come again

by Evergreen_Winner

Summary

What if Arya follows Jon after their conversation in Kings landing and Arya saw Jon killing the Daenerys. When Drogon sees Arya, he turns to her instead of the iron throne. Jon tries to protect Arya from the dragon fire but they are descendants of King of Winter and Old Valyria. Their blood has magic. Hence the Dragon fire instead of burning them, made Jon and Arya back to Winterfell before the king arrives.
“You are my Queen now and always”

Arya heard Jon say that to the Dragon Queen and next thing she saw him putting a blade through Daenerys heart. Arya could see her brother’s eyes clouded with misery as he cradles his lover’s body. At eighteen years of her age, Arya may have had the energy and drive of a spoiled princess, but her travels through much of Westeros and the training she had received at House of Black and White, had given her wisdom far beyond her years. Arya knew her brother, a selfless hero. The moment he born into this world till now, he lived for others. He is the hero of Winterfell who had unified the dragon queen and the North even if that cost his crown. He is the hero who decides to renounce his birthright for the sake of his love. Now he is a hero who killed his love for the sake of realm’s peace even if they will name him a kin-slayer.

A loud piercing roar brings her back to the present from her thoughts. Arya raised her eyes to see a pair of red eyes and a set of sharp teeth focused on her. She is going to die today and she is ready to die. ‘What purpose does she have? Her home is safe now that the Night King and Dragon queen is no more.’ Suddenly Arya felt a warm body surrounding her and she then saw her brother’s face so close to her. Arya hugged him with all her might just like she used to do when she was young. Ready for the dragon’s fire that was about to rain down on them, she closed her eyes. She pictured Winterfell her father and mother standing at the rail, Sansa and Jeyne giggling in a far corner watching Jon, Robb and Theon training in courtyard, Bran climbing down the trees and Arya chasing around Rickon. What once was a painful, unbearable memory had now been transformed into bittersweet nostalgia. After a long long time, Arya was once again whole with Jon and they are going home. With that thought, she welcomes the hot orange flame that made her skin burn. Instead of turning into ashes, she fell into a void and she screamed her lungs out.

“Arya….Arya…Wake up” She heard someone calling and the familiar voice made her eyes snapped open. Arya could only stare at the beautiful red-haired women and a dark-haired broody man who once was her mother and her father. They were looking at her worried holding her hands. Arya blinked off her tears looking around the surrounding. She was in the old room in Winterfell and saw her beautiful sister all young, her brothers Robb Stark and Bran all intact and Theon too standing around her bed with an anxious face. They were all like she remembered, young and innocent before the evil crashes on the Starks. She would have summoned the God of death herself if she had known she would get to see them even if it’s just a beautiful vision before the old gods sent her to hell. Her eyes focused on her elder brother Robb who is looking at her with concern. How many nights she screamed after seeing his headless body in her nightmare? She had killed all the male Frey line to avenge him and mother’s death and also hoping to have some peace. But Alas! Peace was a false hope… Arya wanted to tell them that she missed everyone and she is happy to be with them but her body feel drained out and she succumbed to her weariness.

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“Mother. What happened to Arya…Why was she screaming?” A distressed Robb asked his mother.

Catelyn Stark hears his son asking something to her but she doesn’t bother to answer him as she was only focused on her little girl. She touched her forehead and winced feeling the heat from Arya’s tiny body. She looked to her husband and said “Ned…She is burning…”

Ned Stark immediately fell into action as soon as he heard her lady wife. He but swooped his little girl’s body into his arm and looked to his eldest son and ward

“Robb..go and wake Master Luwin quickly…by the time I will get her there”
“Theon… get some maids to help the master”

Robb and Theon do not need to be asked twice. They left the room immediately to follow Ned Stark’s order. Master Luwin was already wide awake and set to his work instantly as Lord Stark has laid the youngest Stark daughter in the bed. Master has ushered everyone out of the room except Lord Stark and Lady Stark. He was shocked at feeling her forehead. She is unnaturally hot like she is in fire. He placed a wet cloth on her head to reduce the temperature but to no avail. Other than heat everything is normal like she is just sleeping after a tough exertion.

“My lord…My Lady… Other than the heat she is perfectly fine. She might have seen some nightmare and probably got scared” Master Luwin said to Ned Stark and Catelyn Stark even he couldn’t believe Arya to get frightened at anything. Master Luwin couldn’t help to wonder what was that dream which made this wild little girl terrified!. He shook his head as he forced a few drops of dream wine to her mouth to ease her discomfort so that she will sleep soundly.

Meanwhile, Robb, Theon, Sansa and Bran waited patiently outside the master’s room. Robb couldn’t shake off his uneasiness as he recollects the deep pain in her little sister’s usually mischievous eyes as she gazed at him. Robb and Theon came back from their late-night venture from Wintertown, of course without his lord father’s permission. As they were trying to sneak back to their room without anyone’s notice, they heard a scream that shook his soul to the core. Even ever so cocky Theon stood frozen hearing the scream from the girl’s room. They reached Sansa’s room within a blink of an eye but to their surprise, Sansa was out at her door looking confused at Arya’s door. Their lord father and lady mother came upon them as they were about to open the door. They all stand shocked seeing Arya scream again like someone is torturing her as soon as they set foot in her room. Her scream must have woken the entire castle. She only stopped when their lady mother called out for her. Whatever she saw in her nightmare, it had shaken her terribly. Arya was never the one to be scared so easily. Robb could still remember the day Robb and Jon tried to scare the younger ones in crypts and Arya was the only one stood there unafraid. Thinking of that Robb looked around for Jon but he was no-where near. That was impossible Jon was a light sleeper, the whole castle is alive now because of her scream. Jon might have overslept otherwise he would have been the first one to reach Arya.

“I would go and get Jon…You people stay here” Robb instructed his siblings before grabbing Theon, heading towards Jon’s chamber. They knocked at Jon’s door but no response came. Theon and Jon barged into Jon’s room and saw his bed empty. Robb frowned thinking where Jon might have gone this late.

“Snow must be sneaked out of the castle to Wintertown after you mentioned him about our plan” Theon joked but he knew Jon will never do that. He is too honourable for that. Then they heard a whimper somewhere from the room. Robb looked around to see Jon lying unconscious in the ground.

“No…Arya…..” Jon was muttering and his skin was burning.

“Theon help me…We need to get him to Master…He is burning” Robb shouted. Might be Arya and Jon had been infected with some kind of fever. They somehow dragged Jon till Master Luwin’s door. Bran held the door open straight away seeing them. Then Robb helped Jon to set down in a nearby bed to Arya.

Ned Stark looked up as he hears the door open and his eyes widen on seeing an unconscious Jon been brought by Theon and Robb.

“Father…He is having a fever”
“Arya..” Jon crocked and to their horror, Jon started sobbing with his eyes closed.

“Jon…Arya is ok...It’s just a dream” Ned Stark tried to reassure the boy at once. He is already worried upon hearing Luwin’s report on Arya and now seeing Jon too in the similar state as Arya made him think of Lyanna. ‘Promise me Ned’ He shivered involuntarily at the memory.

Then Lord Stark saw Jon blinking his eyes looking around, his eyes stayed a little longer at Robb just like Arya did and asked a question that made everyone in the room taken aback, before passing out “Am I finally dead?”

Ned Stark’s blood ran cold on hearing his question...Jon..his blood…last piece of his beloved sister...
Catelyn Stark was a proud woman who is a dutiful wife to her husband and also a loving mother to all of her children. She also lived her whole life that fitted the expectations of her house, and their words Family, Duty, Honor’. But she broke a promise to all the seven gods long back when her husband’s bastard got pox at a young age ‘Let the boy live. Let him live and I’ll love him. I’ll be a mother to him. I’ll beg my husband to give him a true name, to call him Stark and be done with it, to make him one of us’ and she couldn’t keep that promise, all because she couldn’t love a motherless child. It’s been five days since Arya opened her eyes and her condition is not even improved. Master Luwin has no idea what caused this unnatural body heat but assured she is otherwise fine. The fact that the bastard is also in the same condition as her little girl, made her remorseful of her whole life. The Gods are punishing her by making her little girl suffer. She shuddered remembering the way Arya screamed. It doesn’t feel like a scream that caused by a terrible nightmare no it was something more and the way her little girl looked at her with sorrow so intense, that doesn’t go well with her young face. No, she needs to fix her mistake. She will not lose her girl because of her jealousy towards the bastard’s mother who he didn’t even know. Lady Stark immediately asked the guard to fetch her husband at once.

Hearing the guard, Lord Stark practically ran to master’s room afraid if anything happened to her little wolf and Jon too. He doesn’t know how he will survive and opened the door praying all his assumptions are wrong. But to his dismay, Ned Stark found his lady wife weeping with wordless anguish, sitting in a far corner of the room staring at Jon. He leapt forward to check on Jon and Arya and to his relief, could feel their heartbeat even though they are practically burning. Lord Stark turned around to his wife, whose eyes still trained on Jon and went down on his knees holding her hands “Cat…”

Her lady wife turned to him with a determined look in her eyes “Ned…” She started and seems to have some difficulty in whatever she wants to say. Ned suspects her lady wife is going to accuse his nephew no his bastard for this misfortune. He sighed internally preparing for his lady wife’s outburst and waited for her. She cleared her throat and then demanded with a steady voice “Ned, Please write a letter to the king requesting a legitimization for your bastard son. It’s past time that you call him a Stark but his claim to Winterfell should be last in line, after my children”

Lord Stark tightened his grip on her lady wife looking at her bewildered and couldn’t help the tears that formed in the corner of his eyes. Ned Stark always hoped for this day, for his lady wife’s acceptance to Jon. He always wished his lady wife will be that motherly figure in Jon’s life that could not be filled by his sister Lya. He doesn’t know what had changed her wife’s opinion on Jon but thanked the old gods silently. He brought her knuckles to his eyes and then to his lips “It will be done, Cat”. Lady Stark smiled and hugged her husband feeling lightness to her heart. It was then like the seven gods accepted Catelyn’s apology, their moment gets interrupted as they heard a sharp intake of breath. Lord Stark and Lady Stark turned to see Jon waking up.

Jon looked around feeling confused to wake up in his childhood home and most precisely Master Luwin’s chamber. He looked down at his chest and surprised not feeling any scars on his skin. He felt a tinkling around his back but he ignores it as he saw Arya lying beside him, strangely so young. He had a memory of seeing father, Lady Stark and Robb too in this room. This might have been the place where dead people come although he doesn’t remember dying only he remembers the heat and truth be told he still feel that heat. He slowly got up and sits but doesn’t have enough
strength to stand so he settles to call for her.

“Jon…” A familiar voice stops Jon to reach for Arya instead he turned to that sound and found his father even though his uncle by blood and his lady wife Catelyn Stark looking at him with shock. Happiness filled in his heart seeing them. Ned Stark was in front of him in an instant and hugged him even before Jon doesn’t have time to process what’s happening. Jon felt his uncle’s hand trailing across his spine and back, that’s the area he felt a strange sensation.

“Jon…” Ned Stark called him again and made Jon look at him “Are you ok son..?” Ned stark then turned to her lady wife who is looking at the scene bitterly “Cat…could you please fetch Master Luwin?”

‘What’s happening…what can a master do to a dead man…Why his uncle is making such a fuss over this..’ But he kept his thoughts to himself and asked respectfully “What happened?”

By the time lady Stark brought Master Luwin, Jon heard his uncle’s side of the story.

_Gods! He is not dead and he is young again and back in Winterfell._ Now he understood why Arya looks so young and why he does have no scars but then why Arya is still unconscious. Does Arya not survive? He felt a wave of panic and wanted to scream at the gods. He jumped to Arya’s side and took her in arms

”Arya. Wake up. Please it’s me, Jon”

“Jon..” Her tiny hands came around his neck and he could feel her tears in his neck “Gods…What is this Jon..is it some illusion or some test…?” Arya whispered so that only he could hear.

“We are not dead…I will explain later...Don’t say anything...try to play along” Jon felt Arya nod and released her once she seems to be controlled.

She then leapt forward to hug her father and mother who looked confused.

“Arya.. sweetling You scared us “ Her lady mother chastised her just like when she was young. Oh, how nice to feel to be in her lady mother’s arms and to be chastised. Arya was always a wild child and never tried to obey her lady mother. Now she had a chance even though she doesn’t understand, she would make sure she will be a lady like her mother wanted and also will be a warrior when circumstances arise. She will try to do her needlework, will try to sing and dance and wear a gown and whatever her lady mother wished her to be.

“Little wolf…How are you feeling?” Arya heard her lord father asking fondly holding her by the shoulder. It seems Ned Stark want to pry her little daughter from her wife for this moment and wanted to hold her close to his heart and he did that exactly earning a chuckle from Lady Stark. Ned Stark then put his little girl down and asked Master Luwin to check both Arya and Jon.

Master Luwin frowned on feeling the cold now. Hours back, when he checked their body was in fire and now it’s like they are in ice. “How are you feeling?” He asked both of them to which they said they are perfectly fine and wanted to rest in their rooms. He suggested them to take a warm bath before bed and also a mild meal for which they nodded. Jon took Arya’s hand and move to exit but then he remembered Arya’s scream and Jon’s feverish plea calling for Arya.

“Jon...Lady Arya” he called for them and beckoned them to come closer so that Lord Stark and Lady Stark could also hear what their answer is.

Arya looked at him with a blank face which was quite unsettling. Something felt wrong in her eyes. ”Child...What was that you dreamed...What made you scream like that”?
Arya doesn’t understand what dream they are talking about or when she screamed. Arya just stared at him for a second contemplating her answer and then turned towards Jon to which he nods. It was like some silent agreement between them. She needs to say something frightening and decides to say the truth. “I saw death…Destruction… “Arya then turned her attention to look at Master Luwin’s intelligent eye’s ”I saw father’s head in a spike, mother’s naked body rotten in a river, Robb’s headless body parading around by traitors, Sansa being raped in this very own castle, a crippled Bran, a dead Rickon, Jon stabbed to death in a wall of ice and me blind and beaten in a foreign land” Catelyn Stark gasped in horror hearing Arya’s dream no wonder she screamed like that. Even as an adult, Lady Catelyn feels to scream in agony after just hearing the dream and she could only imagine what it will be like for a 9-year-old girl to see that dream. She suddenly went to her daughter and hugged her tight saying this was just a dream. Arya just smiled at her but that smile was not genuine. It was like a bitter smile that saw all the horrors in the world and it somehow doesn’t feel right to see in such a young face. Arya walked to the door holding the bastard’s hand but then Jon turned to look directly at Ned Stark “Lord Stark. I too saw the same dream…” and then left the room leaving Lord Stark and Lady Stark tremble.

“It’s just a dream my lady” Lord Stark said to comfort his lady wife and also maybe himself.

“But?” Yes, Cat doesn’t need to complete that question. Jon too saw the same dream. And something in their eyes made him believe them.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to the encouragement you all gave through your comments and hope you will continue the support. Now let me know how did you like this chapter that includes lady Stark, Jon and Lord Stark's feelings. I hope I have achieved the expectation of you all. Enjoy reading :)

This chapter depicts the change in Arya and Jon through Sansa and Robb. Hope you will like this chapter and Happy holidays

Sansa:

Things become normal as Arya and Jon recovered except for Arya, Sansa thought to herself as she glanced over Arya sitting patiently and trying hard to do the embroidery rather than running away. Arya hated Needlework and never had exhibited patience in the task until recently. She often wonders how two sisters, born only two years apart, could be so different. Now looking at Arya, she seemed different. There is no mischievousness in her eyes and her grey eyes like her father’s is now solemn and calculated. Sansa still remembers the night Arya screamed her lungs out. She was scared to death hearing her scream. She went to the Septa and prayed for her sister’s recovery as any good lady should. And God had answered her prayers. But the Arya in front of her is strange but she like this new Arya. She admits she never noticed Arya’s behaviour until the incident with Jeyne.

“Oh, how wonderful it would to live in South... a balcony where one could see the ocean and a chamber with all intricate designs. And in expensive soft silk clothes... like in the song...”

Jeyne was gushing over her dream of going south with Sansa when she marries a handsome Southern knight. They were reading about Ser Loras Tyrell The Knight of flower who is as handsome as anyone can be and also gallant as any knight.

“I am sure. If Ser Loras Tyrell saw you in a tourney. He could not help but crown you the Queen of Love and beauty. When that happens will you accompany me to High garden as your lady?” Sansa blushed furiously at her friend’s words. She knows that she has inherited her mother’s beauty and also beautiful as many lords have already complimented her when they met first time or in the way, people always refer her as the pretty stark sister.

“What are you two talking about?” Sansa and Jeyne both jumped at Arya’s query. They both looked at each other and giggled. How could she explain these things to her wild sister so they didn’t answer in the hope that Arya will take the queue and leave her line of enquiry? But this is Arya she could never understand the meaning of polite dismissal.

“Tell me?” She demanded.

“We are talking about tournaments and the possibility of Sansa being the Queen of love and beauty?” Jeyne explained to Arya with a smug grin.

Arya flinched hearing the word Queen and then frowned her brows looking at Sansa and Jeyne and said in an irritated voice “Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown”

Sansa laughed at her sister. The crown means glory and glory means happiness. Sansa could only come to one conclusion Arya is jealous of her. But as a proper lady, she didn’t voice out her opinion but Jeyne did “Oh yes... how could Arya horse face imagine anything related to Queen of
Love and beauty?” Sansa could not help but to smile at Jeyne’s comment. Other girls who heard her laughed along with Jeyne at Arya. Good, she will learn to be polite and more lady like her.

“Jeyne..you are pretty” Sansa saw Jeyne startled at Arya. Not just Jeyne, even Sansa could not believe what she heard. Arya hated all her friends especially Jeyne Poole. Sansa looked over Jeyne and then Arya thinking she might have misheard her sister. Arya looked calm and repeated “You are pretty..not as beautiful as Sansa...But you are pretty”

Jeyne managed to come out of her surprise and laughed at Arya “Yes I am pretty than you Arya Horseface”

Rather than throwing some tantrum at them, Arya was still with a serene face that irritates Jeyne and maybe her too. “Yes, you are” Arya admitted to Jeyne like some casual truth rather than fighting. “So I should be thankful if at least Hodor will agree to marry me..or some hairy old fat lord...Right..” Arya raised her eyebrows. She had never seen any of the mother’s features in her wild sister but now the way she spoke and the way she handled the rude truth reminds her of mother. Sansa was surprised when Arya calls for her attention.

“Sansa” Sansa nods to Arya, trying not to show her surprise.

“You are beautiful and so beautiful that any man will crown you their Queen of love and beauty. But do you remember Aunt Lyanna? She was also crowned by a Targaryen prince that in turn instigated Robert’s rebellion. Queen Elia was beautiful and what happened to her...She was raped and then killed by a knight. A knight who is supposed to protect woman and children...That’s why I said the crown upon one’s head means uneasy”

Sansa frowned. She doesn’t like these stories. “You are jealous of me. That’s why you are saying all these nonsense”

Arya sighed then looked at her defeated “Yes I am jealous. I can never be as beautiful nor be a lady as you the same way as you can never be like me. You are good at singing, dancing and other ladylike activities when I am not. I am good at mathematics when you are not. We may be as different as the sun and the moon, but the same blood flows through both our hearts. I need you, as you need me. We are sisters and you are not any normal beautiful southern lady. You are a wolf... We are a pack. We must protect one another, keep each other warm and share our strengths. When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives”

“Father always says that,” Sansa said after hearing the pack quote from Arya. Arya was never a sweet talker so eventually, they will end up fighting if they are both be alone in a room. Arya was never the little sister she wants. But now she felt warmth hearing Arya’s words and suddenly she felt guilty for her rude behaviour.

“I am sorry Arya..” Arya smiled at her and Sansa couldn’t help but to smile back. This would be the first time Sansa has apologized to her sister truthfully and Jeyne looked at them surprised at the peculiar and the most unusual sight that played in front of her

“I am sorry too,” Arya said to Sansa sincerely and both sisters looked happy for the first time. Jeyne felt neglected she was perfect than Arya horse face and she should be Sansa’s sister, not Arya. So she tried to get to see Sansa her mistake

“So what....Sansa can be a queen?” unlike you horse face. She said the last part to herself afraid since Sansa seems to be in terms with Arya for now.

“Of course she can be a queen. What I want to say is crown not only brings glory but also
horrors” Arya replied to Sansa never minding Jeyne which annoyed her to no end.

“Sansa….Sometimes a monster can hide behind a handsome face. And you are a beautiful lady who is the eldest daughter of a great house and many will try to lure you. But promise me you will look beyond that mask and see the truth. No man is worthy of my beautiful sister.” Arya announced passionately.

Sansa’s lips trembled and whispered “You really think so…You always say I am stupid”

Arya snorted unladylike “Of course we can both be stupid time to time. But what I say now is the truth and I meant it”

Robb:

Robb breathed heavily feeling exhausted after training with Jon so he decides to take a break while Theon and Jon spar. He couldn’t help but notice today Jon was fighting hard, not in his usual way. Something felt different. It’s not that Robb is a better swordsman than Jon but they are equals in sword skills. Robb is strong and fast while Jon is quick and calculated. He sighed heavily and sat in the corner watching them spar. As usual, Robb could see Theon trying to getting under Jon’s skin by his rude comments. He has given up his desire of making Jon and Theon friends to each other as both are dear to him. Surprisingly Jon is not getting distracted and focused in the spar, unlike Theon who has not yet recognized the fact that he is being cornered by Jon and then FLIP…FLOP..there Theon on the ground and his sword in Jon’s hand. He was impressed at the move and he saw Ser Rodrick too astonished at this move. Jon is far better than Theon but he will always end up losing to Theon because of his anger. Today Jon overcome that disadvantage and he felt happy truly happy…Yes, Jon is his half-brother but for him, he is as good as any other brother even though his lady mother says otherwise. He clapped his hand and Jon looked over him in surprise.

Robb grinned “Snow you finally put the Greyjoy in his ass”

Theon got up and looked angry at Jon “I let him win. I don’t want him brood over me.”

“Yes…I am sure of it” Jon replied cockily which made Theon snort. Robb glared at Theon to stop any further comments. He likes Theon but his dislike towards Jon is the only thing that irritated Robb. Robb suspects Theon knew that too since he restrained himself to say much in front of him. Robb was thankful for that. He doesn’t want to choose between the two.

“Alright, lads…we are done…Go clean yourself” Three of them nodded and went back to the armoury to place back their weapons. Theon seems to be in still in embarrassment of his defeat by Jon…. A flushed Theon is not an everyday sight. So Robb teased endlessly to see the rather not so cocky Prince Theon Greyjoy as he always boasts about himself. Theon grumbled and left or rather ran from Robb and Jon. A Smile was still there in his face and he saw Jon looking at him strangely.

“What?”

Jon shrugged but Robb looked at Jon pointedly, whatever it is he brooding, Robb wants to know. “Nothing…It’s just…you have an easy smile…It’s good to see you happy”

Robb snorted. Seriously Snow! That’s why you are looking strangely at me. “Yup it’s not every day you can make Theon  no ..no Prince Theon’s foul mouth closed…” He japed at Jon expecting a grin but Jon’s brow scrunched and was suddenly in a solemn mood. He looked exactly like father now than ever. Jon looked like he wants to explain a lot but couldn’t. His shoulders tensed up staring over where Theon left and then looked back at him with his Stark grey eyes.
“Robb…Theon…” Jon started and then came closer like he is going to share some secret “Theon is a ward of Winterfell. He considers you as a brother. “

Robb stared at Jon with confusion etched into his face. Never in his life, had Robb seen Jon take Theon’s side. It’s not like he is not happy, just surprised. That’s it. “Of course He is my friend and is like a brother. And He knows that”

Jon shakes his head as if Robb is not getting the point. “I know how it’s to feel like an outcast of this family” Robb wanted to interrupt and say Jon is his brother, not an outcast but Jon stopped him and continued “I know you love me as your brother. But I don’t have a Stark name but at least I have the same blood as you. Forgive me to say It always hurts even if I have your love and support” Robb nodded his head and doesn’t reply. Jon never said his thoughts aloud until now about his bastard status. Jon touched Robb’s shoulders to get his attention “But Theon…he is a Greyjoy who was an unfortunate child who is far away from his family. I know even if he brags about being the Prince of Iron islands and still a part of him wants to be a Stark like you. So you have to remind him that he should not get confused. He doesn’t need to choose. He is a Greyjoy as he is also a Stark and He is your brother.”

“Why does he need to choose?” Jon raised his brows like he asked the most stupid question. “Oh..in the future if there is a Greyjoy attack…You say Theon will betray me?”

“I am not saying that he will betray you...But it will be a hard choice for him… He considers you a brother...Do you know why he hates me so much…Because I am your brother by blood unlike him? So you should show your love and support….But if in future there is a conflict always keeps Theon close”

Robb stared at Jon wide-mouthed but recovered quickly “I…I’ll think upon it” Jon still looked like he is not satisfied with his reply and he wants to say so many things but cannot. He always bore a stoic face like his father but now his eyes look different. Jon then nods to him and begins to leave. Robb thought the conversation is over and he thought to himself that he doesn’t want to think any of this. Anyway, he is not the Lord of Winterfell yet. If in future, there is a conflict there will be always father to make a decision. Robb snapped out of his musings when he heard Jon

“Robb…Even if I am not a Stark. I love you as a brother and that will never change. I will try to be with you in all the wars that you will face…But if I am not able to be with you, please remember my words. KEEP THEON CLOSE ALWAYS” Jon said with an emphasis in his last words. Robb would have laughed if he hasn’t noticed his eyes…the determination in his eyes and for the first time he has seen a glimpse of power and confidence in Jon, not a solemn bastard.
Choice

After the spar with Robb and Theon, he felt exhausted. It seems his body has the muscle memory of his experience in his past life but still his young body should adapt to it to feel it natural. He wondered what Arya was doing now. She seems to be determined to spend more time with Sansa and her lady mother now that she has gotten a chance. He wanted to appreciate the second chance with his family but all the knowledge of the future never allowed him to fully enjoy the small joys he had. For instance today he didn’t want to say all the politics to Robb, but the fear of losing Robb once again made him lose his tongue. Arya is right if he says the truth, they will consider them crazy. Arya is already worried she said too much when she woke up from the so-called fever but thankfully they all believed it as a nightmare.

Day they woke up….

“Lord Stark. I too saw the same dream…” Jon informed his uncle and left the room with Arya. Instead of going to their respective rooms, they found themselves walking towards the Godswood. They observed the multitude of trees as they reached the ancient weirwood tree at the centre of the grove. They stand there, staring blanking at the carved face, wishing that they had died, and everything would end forever at that moment. Arya looked anxiously at Jon. All the joy she had felt moments before seeing his father and mother, had suddenly disappeared thinking about the future. The things they had to do to save their loved ones. Cersei, Joffrey, Night King, Daenerys…They had to fight them again and she shivered at the memory. Jon immediately noticed Arya’s mood and took her in arms. They stayed like that for a few moments as they took comfort from each other. Finally, Arya pulled back from Jon and looked around.

“What are we going to do Jon? I…I am scared” Her eyes were glassy. It felt strange to have a serious conversation with a nine-year old girl even though her soul is old just like him. Truth be told when he received the message about Arya’s return, he pictured Arya as the skinny little girl he left before he went to Night watch. The Arya who returned to Winterfell was a stranger for him with familiar Stark features. He still remembers their reunion at this very same Godswood and remembers his surprise on turning and see a very beautiful grown lady instead of his skinny little sister. The moment Arya defended Sansa must be the first time Arya had disagreed with Jon and he felt betrayed. His Arya never took side with Sansa and never doubted her brother but for the first time in her eyes, Jon saw a spark of warning in her voice when she hugged him and said don’t forget that he is family. And for the first time, Arya treated him like an outsider and he felt like he lost something precious. He knew that Arya loves him still but doesn’t have the guts to take the liberty to reconnect with her nor does Arya. The War provides the perfect little excuse for him to be distant with her and well she too never concerned to approach him. He is never a jealous brother and never was. But he couldn’t help but notice the way Arya lingers near Sansa during the council meeting and the spark in her eyes when anyone raises a voice against Sansa. That anyone includes Jon too. The same spark he used to see in her eyes for him when anyone dared say that he is only a bastard. He cursed the fate for making him and his little sister a stranger and then in constraints of his heart, he accused Sansa for turning Arya against him. Then Bran told him the truth no actually a lie of his life. He was never a bastard of Ned Stark and his true name. His love, Daenerys His Dany who he admired and loved is his aunt and he bedded his aunt. He tried to shut Dany out by distancing himself. He tried to control his fate once again, to rein them in. The more he tried. Faster he fell to the web of conspiracies.

“Jon…Are you listening?” Arya’s voice brought him back to the present situation. Jon saw Arya looking like she is gonna break now. Suddenly he remembers he too felt this confusion and frustration on waking up from his death. It would be scary for Arya even if the said girl had the
“Sorry, Arya...What were you saying?”

“No, you think Sansa and Bran or anyone else too came back like us?” Arya asked with a calm voice but still, he could read an urgency or desperation in her voice. Jon thought about what his father..uncle told and then shook his head and explained to Arya about the fever. Arya listened carefully and nodded her head subtly to show her agreement on Jon’s theory. Secretly Jon is glad Sansa had no previous memory because he doesn’t want her to play again her secret southern games. When Sansa showed up in the castle back courtyard with Ser Brienne and Podrick, he was overjoyed thinking at least one of his siblings is alive and was happy when Sansa jumped to his hands. How could he forget her schemes with Little finger behind his back when he nearly died to protect Rickon her baby brother whom they could have saved. If only Sansa had mentioned about the Vale army at her disposal, Rickon would have been alive. He a blind fool turn a blind eye on that incident thinking Sansa must have been afraid or she doesn’t know the full implication of her action. But never, now thinking he felt like Sansa wants to show the North that she took their home back with her army, not because of her bastard brother and savage army. He remembers Sansa’s face when they declared him the King in the North. She quickly hides her disappointment by smiling at him but Jon noted that but thought now the war is important. Then again she turned against him by giving the vital information of his heritage to Tyrion Lannister. Until now, he couldn’t understand Sansa’s motives did she want the throne or did she want him to be out of the Starks so that she could become the head of the Starks. He dares mention his thoughts to Arya lest he doesn’t want an argument. He suddenly remembers a conversation with Ser Davos

“You go on. You fight for as long as you can. You clean up as much of the shit as you can”

“I don’t know how to do that. I thought I did, but I failed”

“Good. Now go fail again”

“This time I will win,” he said aloud gaining attention from his cousin Arya who looked confused. He smiled and holds her hand “We need a plan to win”

“Yes we need and for that, you need to know a few things. May be my skills could help us win this game” Arya answered and started her story that made the little girl to a real warrior. And in turn, Jon too shares his experience that turned the bastard boy to the king in the North. And thus they initiated their plan for the survival, for success, for love and family. This time winter will come to their enemies of course but with fire and blood.

KNOCK...KNOCK...

He suddenly woke up from his bed and heard someone knocking the door continuously. He must have fallen asleep in his bed after his bath. He jumped out of the bed and opened the door to see Jory looking at him with a curious face.

“Lad...Why did you take this long to open the door?” Jory raised his brows and asked sternly though one could see a genuine smile. Jon couldn’t help to be happy seeing every member of his mother’s house once long dead in his past life. He sheepishly smiled and offered “I took a nap”

Jory looked to his bed over Jon’s shoulder from the door and then sighed “Lord Stark requests your presence in Lord’s chamber now” Jon racked his memory to know what this is about. Alas! There is no such conversation with his uncle during this period of time in his past. He only remembered such a meeting in Lord’s chamber to inform them about the king’s arrival. Jon panicked. Does this mean King is coming soon than the expected time? His silence was noticed by Jory and informs in
Jon could only say “I will call upon Arya and come to the Lord’s Stark room” He offered but Jory shook his head “Jon...They asked only for you” That only confused him more then he racks his memory and thought Lady Stark’s presence only means an accusation. But what had he done...Then it clicked..today he bested the heir of Winterfell in the courtyard. He still remembers the day when he overheard Lady Stark coldly demanded his uncle to stop him from training with Robb as he is trying to humiliate Robb by beating him in the swordplay and that was one of the reasons he never tried to beat him in public thinking foolishly that Lady Stark will finally love him as a mother. He sighed and went along with Jory to the Lord’s chamber.

Entering his uncle’s chamber which was Sansa’s chamber in his past life, thoughts raced around madly. All the arguments with Sansa in this room regarding Daenerys came to his mind. Memory of the past and present crashed and forced his eyes to close tightly, desperately tried to calm himself. He sighed and opened his eyes to see his uncle sitting in his lord’s chair in front of the table he usually works and his lady wife standing beside with a pinched expression.

“My lord...My lady” he bowed to them respectfully while sitting as his uncle’s gesture and mentally prepared himself for the false accusation by the lady of Winterfell.

“Jon” His uncle called out for him with a crocked voice. That voice made him look up and saw Lady Stark sharing a forced smile to his uncle who merely nodded.

“I…” Lord Stark started and then cleared his voice “My lady wife has requested me to finally give you a name.” Jon snapped his head to the lady Catelyn and cringed mentally. But he kept a straight face so that his uncle could continue “Jon...You are a Stark and you have my blood. So we thought of writing to the king so that he can legitimize you to Jon Stark”

“But you will never inherit Winterfell” Lady Catelyn interrupted his husband looking straight to Jon with a cold determined eyes. Jon did not know what to say. Rage was stirring somewhere in him slowly but there was also a huge wave of sadness brewing. How dare they rob him of his identity like this? How dare they say he has no name? *He has a name and he is not a bastard.* He wanted to say it but the words stuck somewhere in his throat and did not come out.

His silence aggravated Lady Catelyn even more and she demanded in a firm voice “Answer me, Boy”.

He thought back to the question Arya asked while they plan. “Jon, you need to choose. Do you want to be the bastard of Winterfell or to be the man who you actually are, the true heir to the iron throne?”

The time came for him to choose. He had to choose between something he had become accustomed to and something he wanted to have. But he knew what he wanted was a true name but that name comes with a price. Lord Stark and Lady Stark were looking at him waiting for his answer and he then answered but couldn’t help the bitterness in his voice “Lord Stark, I appreciate your kindness to give me your name.  But I am sorry I don’t want this”

“Explain” Lady Stark almost spat out. Her words cut deep, scooping out his deepest feelings of apprehension and exposing it threadbare. Jon knew lady Catelyn despises his very breath and distrust him so much that he thinks he wants Robb’s title. It’s true that in hearts of heart he once desired Winterfell and Stark name but never thought of usurping his cousin’s right. He felt defeated. Whatever he does, he could never have Lady Catelyn’s trust. She would be the same even if he refused to take the Stark name. It was then that a thought struck. Did his uncle too mistrust him? Was I merely a duty for him? His promise to his sister in her death bed! Did he too think I
will usurp Robb? Is it because of that he never tried to stop him to join the wall? There was a flask of water in the table. In almost a flash, he had poured the contents into a glass and gulped it all at once.

The lump in his throat felt like it would explode. He felt defeated. He had had enough. He rose from his seat and leaned towards the lord of Winterfell his both hands in the table to support his weight but his eyes on his uncle the lord of Winterfell and the Warden of the North.

“As you said I have your blood. But I am no Stark. I have never been and never will be.” And I won’t take a false name when I already have a name my mother chose. But he never said that part aloud. And then he stormed out of the room.

Flashback...

“Why can’t we say this to your father directly?” Jon asked with evident irritation.

Arya huffed “He won’t believe us without proof. Probably he will get some masters for our treatment thinking we have gone crazy”

“We could start by revealing about my heritage that obviously in this world only Lord Reed and Lord Stark knows”

Arya looked at him as if accessing him and recognized something for the first time. She looked surprised and then turned into an understanding face and stated his truth as if he reads a book “You are angry with father and now you could not call him father after knowing the truth”

Jon doesn’t know whether to feel guilty or embarrassed by being caught by his younger cousin. Thankfully Arya didn’t bother for his reply and focused back with the plan they were actually discussing.

“Do you know why father got his head hacked by that cunt of a bastard?” Jon winced hearing Arya’s language. He suddenly remembered the company Arya used to have during the wartime. He sighed inwardly and looked towards Arya “He went to Cersei and inform that he knew the truth of her affair and also even reveals when he plans to tell that fat king. His honour killed him. His honour doesn’t allow him to be responsible for a woman and his children’s death even if that is Cersei. If he had arrested her and her children that moment instead of giving her an ultimatum, We Starks would have survived. Jon...So No we can’t just directly tell him.”

“Then what will we do? We don’t have time for these southern games. We need to deal with the Night King and for that, we need the support of the warden of the north?” Jon said frustrated. Arya adjusted little more comfortably in front of the pool and seems to be thinking contently as if they were just hearing someone else story. Moments ago, he saw Arya’s panic and now she seems to be content and happy...too happy for his likeness. Jon wants to whack her head with one of the dry sticks around them to put some sense to her stubborn heart but as a responsible adult, he controlled the urge. When the silence continued to last, he thought about what Arya said and on second thoughts, Arya was absolutely right. They couldn’t simply blabber out the truth to Ned Stark and expect him to be responsible for a thing that he never experienced. And Honor..he could understand that perfectly because he himself was a prey to the so-called honourable actions. It was for honour, he went to join the Night watch. He rejected Stannis offer to make him a Stark and why because of his god damned honour. What he got out of honour, he got killed by his own brothers who was honour-bound to their lord commander. It’s because of this honour he said the truth to Dany and his cousins, but they too backstabbed him even if it’s not directly. He then heard Arya say after for what feels like a long moment.
“You are right that Night king is more important. But you are wrong too saying we don’t have time for southern wars. We need to unite the entire realm for this war with Night king. For that, we are forced to play these southern games”

“Yes, we need to “Jon agreed albeit reluctantly.

“First we need to intrigue father and mother with our actions in the coming days in such a way that he himself will come and ask what happened to us. Since I already popped out some of the horrific incidents in our supposed shared dreams, we could continue with that farce. But never think about saying the truth” Arya said the last part pointedly and Jon felt slightly annoyed at Arya’s mistrust. Arya then said as if she just understood where his thought went “ Jon we all played with honour in our past and we failed miserably. Good or Bad I don’t know we got a second chance and we need to win. Unlike last time, we have the knowledge of future events and if we fail this time, we are solely responsible for the hundreds of death and we cannot blame fate this time”

Jon understood and smiled at her. Seeing Jon’s smile, Arya too grinned that wolfish grin she used to give just before she invites him for her rebellious adventure. But slowly Arya’s smile vanished and her lips pursed in a thin line and then asked Jon the most difficult question in his life.

“Jon, you need to choose. Do you want to be the bastard of Winterfell or to be the man who you actually are, the true heir to the iron throne?” Jon froze at that and barely could breathe. Arya leaned towards him and kissed him on the cheek. “Don’t answer now but think on it. Sooner or later you need to choose. Whatever you choose, I will be there with you. We are a pack”

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NOTES:

I hope you like Jon’s thoughts on various persons like Sansa, Arya and Ned Stark. A comment in one of my previous chapter forced me to look closely on the relationship between Jon and Ned. I have only shown the inner turmoil of Jon but will show more justice on both character’s attitude in the coming chapters.
"When you blame and criticize others, you are avoiding some truth about yourself"
This is what exactly happens in this chapter.

Arya was in the library going through a book that describes different techniques of warfares and strategies. She inspected thoroughly going through line by line and then noting relevant points in a personal diary that can be a handful in their supposed future. Whoever has written this has an intricate knowledge of war and had an amazing way of writing that helps the reader to have a vivid image while reading. She wondered whether Robb and the boys had gone through this book. She almost felt guilty to have never utilized the library in her past life. In her table, she already has a set of books that she wants to complete as soon as possible and one of them is of course about magic and the faceless man. She already knew about secrets of faceless men but curiosity won over to find out what is actually written in the book as the book itself was almost hidden in a secret shelf that got revealed to her by accident. She also had gone through a copy of Dance of Dragons that has a detailed narration of King Jaeherys Targeryans reign and political changes he had brought into it. It’s said that it’s actually Jaeherys Targaryen who actually unified the seven kingdoms in real not the Aegon the conqueror. She was always fascinated with Aegon and her sister’s story that consists of dragons and conquering the world. After living a lifetime and then coming back to her childhood, she understood now that there is a vast difference between a conqueror and a ruler. Logically, she could say that to conqueror a kingdom is far easier compare to be than to rule than the kingdom. Her mind drifted to one name ‘Daenerys Targeyan who came North to support Jon her brother..no her cousin.

She could still remember the disappointment when Jon didn’t even spare her or the crowd a glance as he was busy ogling at the dragon queen’s pretty face. She won’t condemn Jon for falling in love with the Dragon queen but what hurts was he too like Robb put a pretty face more importance without considering the precautious northern situation. Jon didn’t even bother to visit her after their reunion once and always seems to be in Dragon queen’s company or with Sansa fighting over some matters. She would have cried hard if she was the sweet innocent little girl before the war. But she is not and she is a survivor, so she buried her feelings deep in her heart and shut down Jon from her thoughts. If Jon does have no need of him, she too doesn’t need anyone. After all, she can be no one and No one needs any assurance or support from her elder brother. But she remembers the feeling of being wanted or desire to be loved by someone or rather to feel alive as war looms over her. That’s when Gendry happens. She always loved Gendry when she was just a little girl and him an annoying bastard who happens to be in running. And it hurts her a lot when Gendry chose her over Brotherhood that day and that’s when she felt truly alone. And when she saw Gendry again atop of a horse among Jon’s companions, she felt happy and delighted that he is alive and escaped from the red woman. Probably the only time she felt alive and wanted after coming back to Winterfell is the only time when she was with Gendry teasing and flirting with her. That’s why she chose to be with him that night. It was supposed to be a one-night thing but it was not for Gendry. And truth be told, it was not for her too. That night was the happiest day in her life. Arya was sure that she couldn’t give herself to him completely without revealing her secrets. Though she loves Gendry she doesn’t trust Gendry with her past, after all he once chose glory over her. So she embraced No one again and rejected Gendry’s marriage proposal. Now though she wondered, where would he be or would they meet? Will he be attracted to her the same way as in her past life?
Her past affairs with Gendry reminds Arya of a much more important matter that Jon and Arya had never acknowledged till. Daenerys, what will they do about her? If Jon still harbours feelings for her, things will get messy? Her own near-death experience in the Kings landing because of the Dragon queen’s madness will never ever allow Arya to accept Daenerys as her queen.

However, she couldn’t introspect much on that subject as she heard a familiar voice asking her a question.

“Why this name in your notes?” Arya looked down at the paper and mentally chastised herself for her foolishness. She somehow wrote Daenerys Targaryen in her notes involuntarily while she mused on Jon’s relation with the Dragon queen. Turning around, she saw Jon looking at her notes with a frown and then turned to her. One look at his face and she knew something was wrong. Jon’s face was as black as storm clouds. Jon was glaring at her angrily, his eyes glowing with rage as if she has offended him. She has never seen Jon like this in her entire life, of course, she has seen his anger towards Theon once or twice but never once directed at her. The only look Jon directed at her when he is displeased is his exasperated tone in his voice. This though, it’s like he is on the verge of his threshold and is going to explode now. And before she could collect her wits and react, Jon snatched her notes and tears the book bloody leaving torn papers flying around them.

“She isn’t even in Westeros. But you started plotting against her.” Jon slammed his fist at the desk and then continued “What is your problem with her? You and Sansa. Did I do enough for you, Starks? What should I do to earn your trust? She told me never to tell you and Sansa. But for me a fool like the loving brother I am, I told you and your sister my secret. And what you people did, your sister has transpired that information to a Lannister very well knowing it will reach Varys and look what happened. It’s not Dany who burned the Kings landing. It’s your ungratefulness and plots that made her like that. “

Arya Stark was many things but not a mere lady who will bypass any nonsense even if it’s from her favourite person. Arya felt her blood boil at Jon’s confession of his inner thoughts. She faced a furious Jon with the same ferocity. She is a wolf and she will never cover again even if the person is half wolf himself. How could he condemn her and Sansa on behalf of that mad queen? Yes, she is the mad queen. If not trained by faceless men, she would have thrown the damn table in front of her and have shouted at him for such irrelevant statements. Instead, she breathed while remembering her mantra “Calm as still water Fierce as a wolf” and mentally turned in to Noone wiping away all the emotion from her face and said

“If your so-called Dany is as good as you claimed, no plots or ungratefulness would have ever made her do that. Have you had any idea how many small folks burned alive in her madness? How many kids lost their mother? And you are saying we are the reason for that. If we are throwing blames, it is you who brought that evil queen to the North. Tell me true dear brother no... no... dear cousin, did you ever once thought the consequences before you bend your knee for that pretty cunt. If there was one lord like Bolton or Frey present among the northerners, Winterfell would have sieged again when you were fucking her in Dragon stone. Me and Sansa and Bran would have been murdered or worst raped before getting killed for your deed.” She got up from her seat and pulled him down to meet his heated gaze and whispered: “I am Arya Stark and next time you spoke against a Stark for that woman, I will gladly slit your throat.” Arya knew she would regret her words after some time but now she doesn’t care. She will not hear anything against Sansa or herself for that Dragon queen. She thought to herself as she poked his chest with her little finger and turned towards the exit but not before seeing a stunned Master Luwin staring at her and Jon. Gods! How much did he hear their conversation? If the kindly men would see this little drama, he would have punished her bloody. She groaned and left the place as quick as a cat.

‘Next time you spoke against a Stark for that woman, I will gladly slit your throat’
Jon’s eyes stink after hearing that…that too from Arya. Jon knew in his heart that she never meant it or does she? Ever since he woke up, he has an unusual tendency to snap at everyone and he had so far kept at bay until that meeting with Lord and Lady Stark. He felt himself falling off from a cliff because of all this pend up frustration and doubts and Jon decides to talk with Arya to cool down his temper. On contrary on seeing Dany’s name among the war strategy notes in Arya’s hand, he lost it and his mouth released all the treasonous words. He knew that everything he said was an utter nuisance and to somehow to loosen up the conscience of his past mistake. Arya was right his only thought while bending the knee was to show Dany how grateful he is to her at that moment for her help and her dragon’s sacrifice. He never once thought about Sansa and Arya like that in the mentioned situation. After all, Robb got killed for the same mistake as him, falling for a girl that is not loved by the North. Suddenly he felt awful for shouting at Arya. He slumps into the chair left by Arya looking the paper crumps around him.

“Jon” He snapped his head to see Master Luwin at his side with a question in his tongue and he ran his finger through his hair thinking ‘You know nothing Jon Snow’ but I am not Jon snow anymore.

NOTES

I am really sorry for taking nearly one month to update but I hope I could work out the next chapters within a reasonable time period. For this chapter, I hope you will enjoy reading the fallout with Jon and Arya. Yes, Jon and Arya love each other as a child but now they are adults and that too brought back into life. So there will be confrontation and fight between them that they couldn't in the past life. But Don't worry, It won't be long. After all, it's Jon and Arya we are talking about.
Revelation

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, it's a lot of revelation.

Arya:

Arya decided to finally talk with Jon after hours of wandering in the shadows swallowing her anger and hurt over Jon’s words. *We have come to a dark dangerous place, child. This is not Winterfell. We have enemies who mean us ill. We cannot fight a war among ourselves. This willfulness of yours, the running off, the angry words, the disobedience ... at home, these were only the summer games of a child. Here and now, with winter soon upon us, that is a different matter. It is time to begin growing up.*

Her father’s words reverberated through her memory. She walks with an intent to find Jon and clear everything once and all but unfortunately it was into Robb’s arms she fell into.

“There you are, Arya”

She was hoisted up in the air, hands around her waist like a doll when she tried to wriggle out of his grip to run. On normal situation, she would have tried even more to make at least his captor, in this case, her brother Robb Stark a little difficult to hold her. And if she wants she could easily paralyze Robb for a few minutes by pressing a fine spot in his neck that induces the flow of vital energy along with a complex system of subtle channels in the human body. If hit on that spot with an apt pressure leads to the instant death of the person. And if you only want to freeze the body for a few minutes, you need to press that spot with a slight pressure but not much. Courtesy of faceless men’s training. But this is her brother, not an intruder. Now though after all these years of missing him, she just snuggled close to her brother taking the comfort in his warmth, arms around his neck like a baby monkey. Robb looked surprised at her action and why he won’t be? She was never as close to Robb as she to Jon. And Arya’s hug is a leisure only extended to father and Jon and occasionally her mother too. And most of the time, Robb’s main duty was to stop Arya from picking her sister Sansa and hence Arya’s duty is to make it hard as possible for Robb which includes a lot of his ribs being poked by her pointy elbows. Arya felt Robb kissing her hair while she is being carried away. If her intuition is correct, she is been carted towards her father’s room. Of course, Master Luwin would have run and informed his liege lord and lady about the incident. Honestly, she wanted to be found by Master Luwin in the Library reading through war strategies and then eventually by her Lord father. But the problem is they didn’t plan to fight like that and she doesn’t know how much of their conversation the master had heard. Arya wondered where Jon is or is he still brooding over his ill fates and that bloody Daenerys. She thought with bitterness. She moved slightly to look back at Robb and nudged his nose with her finger “Where is Jon?” Robb grinned and pinched her cheek like he did when she was younger and technically still so. “Don’t know. After I deliver you to our father, I will find him” Arya sighed audibly which made Robb look at her in amusement and he teased “What did you do this time, young lady, to get a summon from our lord father?” He very well knows that she hates being called lady and Arya scrunched her nose up at him. He laughed heartily at his sister’s theatrics and put her down leading her to father’s
“Ah...Arya...come...” Ned Stark called Arya and then turned to Robb as if asking something without any words. Robb nods and left the room in haste. Arya frowns. May be father might have asked him to find Jon too. She looked around and saw her lady mother standing with a red face but what caught her attention was the pile of books in the table. The same books she was reading. Good! Master Luwin has noticed that. She was afraid that the master would have not taken notice of the books she was reading because of the argument he overheard. She then took her seat and looked towards her father. *We never stop playing.*

“Arya...” Her lord father said her name in such worry she felt sad. “Why are you reading these...”

Before Ned Stark could complete the question, Catelyn Stark’s voice came out with spite and horror “What did the bastard do to you? Master Luwin said he shouted and destroyed your notes. Is it true Arya?”

“Mother...” Arya was startled at her mother’s accusation. Her hate for Jon had clouded her judgment of the situation. Briefly, she could not help but hate father’s idea not to tell the truth about Jon to her wife.

“Cat...That is not important”

“Yes, it’s important. Today your bastard dared to raise voice against Arya. Tomorrow who knows what he will do to Robb. I don’t trust him. I don’t want him in Winterfell”

Arya sat silently observing her father and mother during their argument. If she would have been in this situation her past life, she would have snarled at her lady mother for uttering such deceitful words about Jon. That Arya was a sweet girl who loved her brother to moon and believed her father to be a hero. But this Arya has seen lives and lived through and now could understand a woman’s hate towards the bastard of the man she married. Though she couldn’t accept her attitude, she understood. Reaction to betrayal differs from person to person. Every person reacts to worry differently. This she learned while at the House of Black and White. Catelyn Stark is a proud woman who doesn’t like to jeopardize her or her children’s position because of her husband’s mistake. And maybe she loves her husband too much so that she couldn’t hate Ned Stark and so she started pushing that feeling towards Jon. And Ned Stark, her father!. She turned to see the emotions reflecting in his gloomy eyes stark grey eyes that she inherited from. Anger, Sorrow, despair… But his father never raised his voice. If it was any other lord, soon lady stark would have got a backhand. Ned Stark was not some man. He is honourable and he won’t even raise his voice to insult his wife that too in front of his daughter. She huffed. But the honourable Ned Stark is ok with his sister’s son unfairly treated by his wife. The son who would have the King of seven kingdoms if he so wanted. His silence infuriated her making her blood boil at the injustice Jon suffered in her own house because of her father’s negligence. This should end now. Ned Stark should reveal the truth to his wife today. Now at this moment! She jumped from her chair and closed the door making sure no one was there at their door. Her father and mother stopped their internal war and turned to their daughter wondering why the door is being closed. Arya walked slowly her heart pounding hard because she knew this moment will mark the future of the Starks. Her grey eye’s bores deep into her father’s eyes that hold secrets. The secrets that if used carefully will win the war and if not it will end in chaos and destruction.

*Catelyn Stark:*

“Please sit” Arya sat to her chair and urged them to move their chair close to hers. Her anger towards the bastard fled from her as she saw her younger daughter’s face. The only one who inherited the Stark colouring among her children! And if she is not wrong, her lord husband’s
favourite though he won’t admit it. Her wild child. But something is different. She has changed. A terrible sense of foreboding overtook her looking at her daughter. Then out of the blue, Arya asked that forbidden question that she only asked once and for the last.

“Who is Jon’s mother?” Her husband’s face turned still and as cold as the Winter kings in the crypts. His hands gripped the chair so tight she thought it would break and his usual calm grey eyes look as wild as a winter storm. She could see his throat moving in tension and heard his reply. The same answer she got when she questioned once.

“He is my blood. That’s all you need to know. Arya.” It was a clear dismissal and she still felt the same fear she felt on that day when she too asked the same question. But Arya was not done. She sat straighter in her chair and her own grey eyes gazed back at Ned Stark’s refusing to back down. Arya was always a willful child but never disrespectful especially towards her father. In fact, apart from the bastard, her husband is the only one who could tame Arya’s willfulness. Deny her something and that will become her heart’s desire. She wanted to chastise her daughter for disrespecting her father but before that, she heard Arya.

“Aegon” Arya whispered and her husband eyes widen and looking at Arya as if he is seeing her for the first time. She looked towards Arya to ask why she said the Aegon the conqueror name in midst of this serious discussion. Arya then bends towards them in such a way that only they could hear clearly.

“Aegon Targaryen, Sixth of his name. The Rightful heir to the iron throne” Ned’s face went pale. Sweat forming on his forehead. His hand in some point took hers and now he is gripping her hand painfully. But her husband never uttered a word and his face was one of shock and terror. The emotions she has never seen in her lord husband’s face.

Arya was directly in front of Ned with a glass of water directing at him. Ned gulped the water greedily and then after an eternity of silence he gazed at Arya who was still standing holding her father’s hand.

“How?”

“Remember the day Jon and I got sick,” Arya asked Ned and Ned nodded.

“Remember the dreams I have told that we both saw?” Of course, how could she ever forget her nightmare? The worst nightmare one can endure and will never turn true. She nodded and unable to stay in silence, croaked out “That’s just a nightmare, Arya. Don’t be afraid”

But Arya never took her eyes from Ned and said “In one dream, I saw you promising Lyanna Stark as she dies in your arms”

Arya’s words confused her and her lord husband’s reaction confused even more. It’s like she is trying to read a book in a foreign language. “I don’t understand anything. What are you rambling on, Arya?” She raised her voice in frustration.

“Mother” Her daughter who is only nine but acting like a woman grown now turned to her holding her hands “I know who Jon is. Who he really is!” She opened her mouth to question what does it mean but her daughter shook her head “Please hear me out first, mother” Arya begged and she nodded towards her. “I had seen Jon’s mother in my dream. And I believe father will say the truth now” She said in a stern voice, her eyes accusing at her lord husband who looked like he has seen a ghost. “And you will forgive father about hiding it. But mother you should not say this to anyone outside this room. Not now. Not in the future. Not to your family. Not to..” She paused momentarily hesitating to continue “Not to even your friend you think is true to you and known to
you from childhood” Catelyn doesn’t understand anything but her daughter’s eyes had made her nod and even without her permission “I swear Arya I won’t say this to anyone. I am not a fool”

Arya looked at her like accessing her soul the credibility of her statement. Somehow she felt oddly exposed at the way her nine-year-old girl looked at her. Arya cocked her head sideways and asked “Suppose me and Sansa are hostages to a cruel man. And if you believe this information will give you your daughters back, would you betray this oath?”

She scoffed at the absurdity of the situation. Her little girl “This will never happen. There is no war and your father will protect you anyone taking you or your sister” But Arya was not convinced and she raised her brow at her question. She noted that her lord husband was also looking at her seriously. For her reply! She stared at her daughter but refused to answer. Because she knows she will do that gladly if she believes she will get her daughter’s back. She is a Tully and Family comes first. And as if Arya heard her thoughts, she said in an emotionless voice that really mismatched with her wild girl’s nature.

“Family. Duty. Honour. these are your words.” Her face turned into a cold emotionless statue and for the first time, she glimpsed the true stark emerging through her features “Remember this mother. If you betray this information for your family, it would be your undoing. Your children’s undoing. The Stark’s undoing. And Winter will fall upon the Starks”

The words gave her a chill, as they always did. The Stark words. Every noble house had its words. Family mottoes, touchstones, prayers of sorts, they boasted of honour and glory, promised loyalty and truth, swore faith and courage. All but the Starks. Winter is coming, said the Stark words. Her mouth felt suddenly dry hearing her words.

“After you discussed the matter, you both will have a lot of questions and I will answer,” Arya informed them and left the room like a breeze. Catelyn sat there stunned looking at the now-closed door rewinding Arya’s words.

‘Jon’s mother... He is my blood .... Aegon Targaryen, Sixth of his name. The rightful heir to the iron throne...Ned promising Lyanna Stark....’ Gods! Ned brought the boy after the rebellion along with Lyanna’s bones. The boy resembled Stark but from his mother’s side. That means Rhaeger Targaryen is his father. She gasped in realization as she covered her mouth with both of her hands afraid of making any unwanted noise and then in horror as she knew exactly how she treated him like an unwanted guest. Tears filled her eyes as she felt anger at herself… at Ned... her husband’s warm hand engulf her as she sobbed. She wanted to scream at Ned for not saying the truth..for not trusting with the truth…But she couldn’t. She needs her husband now more than anything.

“I am sorry Cat...I am sorry..I was afraid for you..for our children.I am sorry” Her husband whispered to her ears as he carried her to their bed and laying down gently. She doesn’t know how long she stayed in Ned’s warmth. Finally, when she felt like she could think straight, she moved out of her husband’s arm and asked:

“Tell me everything, husband. Tell me the truth...” Ned smiled sadly but nodded. And His eyes turned haunted as he recollected what had happened.

“When I finally found her in the Tower of Joy, I expected many things. But what I saw there was Lya in a bed of blood and roses. And then a wet nurse put a babe in my arms and I still remember her words as she slips of from her life holding on to my hands. Promise me Ned promise me she told me” Catelyn leaned on him to provide some comfort and she felt her husband shiver as he continued.” She cried and apologized for Brandon and father and everything. She said she was in love with the prince and was married secretly. Rhaeger never kidnapped him. I was still…I didn’t know what to do or what to say and I don’t want my sister to die..But the fever has taken her
strength and her voice was barely a whisper. And I promised her that I will protect her son and then I saw fear leaving her eyes and a faint smile in her face.” Ned Stark’s stoic face crumbled as he revealed the past, his eyes turned glassy as he stared at her “I remembered what happen to princess Elia and her children. And I was there when Robert laughed when the lannisters displayed their brutalized body… And thankfully the boy looks like Lya...Like me...Like a Stark…And I claimed him as my bastard and gave him a new name to hide him in plain sight”

“You could have trusted me. Instead, you brought up him as your bastard and insult me in front of the whole North” Catelyn questioned Ned.

Ned shook his head and raised his voice slightly “And what? Risk our lives…I didn’t know you that time Cat. We were strangers…If something slips of your tongue, there will be war and I was not willing to trade that..Fewer people knew about the secret..less the chance of being caught…”

They stared at each other without saying anything. Ned looked at her with agony as he asked: “Will you forgive me?”

One part of her wanted to argue with him for not trusting her with the truth. To shun her in front of the whole North with a bastard. But she could understand. All these years, he was carrying that burden along in his shoulders for his sister, his children..my children..our children…He did that for family. And the most important matter is he never strayed from her. A small part of her always wondered whether Ned loved the boy’s mother more than her or is still loves her. And her suspicion turned true as Ned loves his sister  She took a deep breath and replied “I forgave you, Ned”

NOTES: HOPE YOU LIKED THIS CHAPTER. YOUR OPINIONS ARE WELL APPRECIATED. PLEASE DO LET ME KNOW THROUGH YOUR COMMENTS AND KUDOS THAT HOW MUCH YOU LIKED IT.

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