Alyssa I Targaryen

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Alyssa I Targaryen

by Dock872210

Summary

As Jon Snow, the 998th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch lays dying at the knives of mutineers among his own brotherhood, his mind is whisked away by an unknown god and offered another chance. Will Alyssa Snow change the fate of Westeros?
"For the Watch." The voice of Olly and the other mutineers among his Brothers plagued the thoughts of Jon Snow, 998th Lord Commander of the Night's Watch as he lay dying surrounded by his killers in the cold courtyard of Castle Black from the innumerable stab wounds they'd inflicted on him.

A thousand and one thoughts flashed through his mind as his life ebbed away but only one dominated over all others.

Not like this. Not now! I have to rescue Sansa and save my family!

Is that so? A voice that sounded colder than any frost and yet warmer than any hearth spoke into his rapidly fading mind. Then let us bargain.

At this, Jon's dimming vision of the world vanished and was replaced by a featureless white expense.

I didn't know what to expect after death, but this was not it.

"This is no afterlife, boy." The same otherworldly voice from earlier spoke. "I offered you a chance to bargain earlier and so we shall."

Jon spun towards the voice trying to draw Longclaw in the process but finding it missing and forcing him to clench his fists in a defensive stance. One that he almost fell completely out of in shock as he beheld the being that was speaking to him.

It had the shape of a man but whose body seemed like nothing but a white void that somehow seemed even more empty than the featureless emptiness that surrounded them. Only his facial features seemed exempt, but even they were little more than white outlines of proper human features.

"Who? What are you?" Jon asked cautiously, forcing himself to remain in his defensive stance.

"My name is Nameless," the being said radiating amusement at Jon's wariness. "And I am what you, Jon Snow, would call a god."

Jon frowned skeptically. Why would a god be interested in a bastard like him? Yes, he'd accomplished much since he'd joined the Night's Watch but he doubted it was enough to warrant a
god choosing to pluck him from the edge of death just to speak to him. No, more likely this was little more than a hallucination his failing mind had dreamed up to comfort him in his last moments.

"You don't believe me?" The supposed god observed with a laugh. "I suppose I would be skeptical in your position even after all that you've seen. But I speak the truth and to prove it. Here."

At this Nameless snapped his fingers and any incredulity that Jon felt evaporated. In its place was an understanding of what Nameless truly was. He was no god like Jon understood it. He was something more. How so Jon could not put into proper words. Only that he was to gods like the Old Gods and R'hllor as men were to ants.

This knowledge should have inspired fear in Jon but it seemed Nameless had removed that from him as well.

"There. That should make this go much easier. Now let's begin shall we?"

Jon was still capable of shock and awe and those feelings rendered him speechless thus he could only nod feebly. The god frowned at this but did not take the feelings away from Jon like he had his skepticism, choosing instead to proceed with making whatever bargain he was intent on offering.

"I wish to give you, Jon Snow, another chance at life."

"I accept." Jon said without hesitation. I have to rescue Sansa from Ramsay Bolton!

"Without even hearing the price?" Nameless asked with a smile that radiated amused curiosity.

"I am willing to pay any price to save my family."

"Indeed?" Nameless asked with a chuckle and Jon nodded firmly. "Well then you'll be glad to know that the bargain I offer will give you a chance to save not just Sansa."

"What do you mean?" Jon asked warily, only to receive a mysterious smile from the god in reply. "Wait. If I can save more than just Sansa. Could you- Are you sending me back to a time before my death? Possibly considerably earlier?"

Nameless broke out in applause.

"Most impressive." The god complimented. "For all the claims that you know nothing and are a fool, you've just proved all of them wrong."

Jon instinctively rankled at the insult but kept his cool. Lashing out at anything that proclaimed it was a god and had already pulled him into a meeting after his death was beyond foolhardy.

"Bravo! Good self-control as well? You continue to impress me." The god said with another round of applause. "I wonder what will you do with my gifts."

"Gifts?"

"Indeed." Nameless says with a grin. "Did you think I would just send you back to the world of the living? That would be boring. And I abhor boring things. So let's spice things up shall we?"
"What do you intend?"

"Tell me Jon would you like some powerful magic when you get back?"

"What-

"Just yes or no, please." Nameless said cutting him off.

Jon frowned. "Yes."

Of course he wanted powerful magic. He needed all the advantages he could get if he wanted to save his family and defeat the Others.

"Then how about a great beast to go with it?"

"Yes," Jon said without hesitation thinking of his faithful direwolf, Ghost.

"Very well then!" Nameless said with a predatory gleam in his eyes that Jon ill liked but was powerless to do anything about. "Add those gifts to the little tweak I'm already giving you and viola! We're done here."

"Tweak?" Jon asked cautiously.

"You'll find out soon enough." Nameless said, before he suddenly snapped his fingers and Jon's vision went black.

The next thing Jon knew his eyes were opening slowly to the familiar sight of his old childhood room back in Winterfell.

*He sent me back to before I joined the Watch?* Jon realized as he sat up in his bed. *But by how mu-

Wait! Why does my head feel strangely heavy?

Reaching a hand up to his head, his eyes widened as he felt a thick mass of material that could only be hair. Something he confirmed as he brought a few strands into view and confirmed that it was indeed long, curly brown hair.

A cold fear gripped him at the sight as a terrifying thought began forming in his mind and he hurried out of his bed to glance at the small mirror on a nearby table. If he wasn't in so much shocked confusion he might've wondered at its presence alongside a host of other items that he'd never owned as a child, but as it was he was too preoccupied by the sight that greeted him in the reflection of the polished sheet of beaten metal.

For looking back at him was not Jon Snow, neither the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch nor the boy he remembered being. Instead, the person in the reflection was a girl who was slim of frame and possessed waist length brown hair, a long face and grey eyes. One with a striking resemblance to his sister Arya. A girl who he *knows* is named Alyssa Snow. An appearance that memories not his own tells him many of the older servants claim was the seconding coming of her aunt, Lyanna Stark.

"This can't be what he meant by a tweak." Jon said in a panicked whisper as he lifted the smock he wore and pushed aside her smallclothes and found to his horror that his member was missing. In its place was a very feminine slit instead. In the face of that, the fact that he looked like she was ten again was of small consequence.
"Oh gods, this cannot be-

Oh, stop it! Nameless’ voice echoed directly into his head. *Enough of this nonsense. This isn't what I want to see. There!*

There was the sound of snapping fingers and suddenly all of Alyssa's fear and confusion at being a girl vanished. Blushing at her silly panic, she hastily removed her hand from her smallclothes and lowered her smock. Hurriedly straightening it to hide the embarrassing loss of composure she'd just committed.

She was midway through doing that when she froze.

"Did you just-

*I only took the edge off it as it were. You'll still need to adapt on your own. Use the memories of this life to help you.* Nameless commanded almost dismissively.

"This life? What happened to the original Alyssa?"

*You were not the only one to make a deal with me. She was a Greenseer. The destined next host of the Three-eyed Raven of this world. Not that you'd understand what that means. Suffice it to say, she saw what was to happen to your family in her visions, a tragedy you had a glimpse at, and chose to give me her existence in exchange for changing that fate.*

"She died?"

*She gave up her personality to empower you.* Nameless explained rather unhelpfully. *But enough explanations. I tire of them. Go prepare for the day. And do not expect me to speak to you like this again unless I fancy it.*

With that Alyssa felt Nameless' presence withdraw from her mind. It was like a massive weight that she hadn't even known was there had just been lifted from her.

She sighed reflexively at the relief she felt.

But her moment of relief was short lived as a ray of sunlight stained red by the dawn peeked through her window and she started.

"Oh no! I need to hurry or I'll be late." The Bastard of Winterfell said in dismay as she hurriedly got dressed for the day, unconsciously relying on memories of a life she did not live to guide her through the task.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope you guys like this first short chapter of my foray into the expansive Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire mythos. Do let me know what you think of my work in a review if you would be so kind.

Till next time au revoir!
The memories of the original Alyssa guided the newly reborn girl as she went down to the kitchens and helped the servants there prepare the meal that her family would use to break their fast. It was a task that Alyssa had been doing at Lady Stark's orders since she was eight, supposedly as part of her training to run a household. Though she'd noticed that the things she was asked to do had more to do with being a servant than running a household. The girl had not said a word on the matter however, knowing the consequences of doing so would likely be unpleasant.

Which surprised honestly Alyssa. It seemed that being a girl had allowed Catelyn Stark to treat her worse than his past life. Something that had led to friction between Father and his wife. To the point that that they had not fallen in love like they had in Jon's life. As a result, Arya was their last child after whose birth Father had proceeded to almost completely sideline his wife.

"We're done, milady." The matron of the kitchens, a plumb woman named Marta, said as they finished preparing the meal. "Run on up to the Great Hall, dearie, and break your fast with the rest of your family."

"Thank you, Marta." Alyssa said giving the servant a grateful curtsy as her memories told her was her wont and amidst the giggling of the other kitchen hands, she hurried to the Great Hall.

It took her minutes of racing through the familiar halls of her childhood home, exchanging pleasantries with the guards and servants along the way, before she reached the Great Hall where she found her family was already waiting. Nervous at the idea that she'd taken too long, and the inevitable punishment from Lady Stark if that were the case, she sprinted up to the High Table and her seat. Her place was beside Robb at the right side of the table as her Father had insisted with a seven year old Sansa to her left and a four year old Arya nodding her head trying to fight off the last vestiges of sleep at the end of their side of the table. Whilst Lady Stark sat alone on the left, glaring unhappily at her.

"The food should be served shortly." Alyssa said as she slid into a seat that felt alien yet wholly natural at the same time.

"Thank you, Alys," Father said, his long face brightening as he offered her a proud smile.

Alyssa smiled back as the servants brought the food forward. It was only simple thin stew, the North disdained the kind of wasteful luxuries even in its food that the Southrons enjoyed after all, but it was filling and flavorful which was all that mattered.
"Your cooking is delicious as always." Robb's blue eyes shining with delight and contrasting wonderfully with his red-brown hair as he complimented her as he took a spoonful of the stew.

"It's not my cooking." Alyssa corrected on instinct. "I just helped a little in making it."

"You're too humble, sister." Sansa chimed in, shaking her head in exasperation and sending her thick auburn hair flying slightly.

That was another difference between Jon's life and this one, Alyssa noted. Here Sansa looks up to me.

"I wish Mother would let me spend more time in the kitchens learning how to cook and manage it."

Lady Catelyn briefly look scandalized, her pale skin coloring in indignation to the point where it almost matched the coloring of her long auburn hair, but quickly smothered the emotion. She moved to speak but Father spoke first.

"You'll have to wait another year at least, sweetling." Father told Sansa with a grin. "Even Alys only started helping in the kitchens when she was eight."

Sansa pouted but nodded.

"Cooking is silly. Alys should train." Arya said with a childish snort. "She's better than Robb."

"No, she isn't!" Robb protested.

Alyssa smiled and let herself be controlled by her instincts as she enjoyed this happy time with her family. It might not have been quite the same version of the family Jon remembered what with Bran missing, but it was close enough and she luxuriated in it.

She was enjoying it so much in fact that she completely failed to notice as Lady Catelyn left without a word and a glare thrown her way.

It was after the morning meal and relying on the original Alyssa's memories, the reborn Lord Commander knew she had a precious hour or so of free time before she had to return to the kitchens and help prepare the midday meal. Having been deprived of his family for so long whilst he'd been part of the Night's Watch, she rather expectedly chose to spend the time with her siblings. It was thus that all four Stark children found themselves in the training yard.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Alyssa asked with an arched brow as she brandished a wooden practice sword at her brother who wielded one of his own. "Because still in a dress or not, I'll beat you."

"We'll see about that sister." Robb declared as he lunged towards her.

Laughing, Alyssa parried the obvious attack and went for a thrust of her own. She held back though, her past life's extensive skill with the sword screaming at her to do this and that but she refused. This wasn't even a real spar, merely a game. There was no reason to use any of her real skill.

Nevertheless as the game continued, her skill told nonetheless. There were things that her adult male past self could have done that ten year Alyssa could not but if there was one thing that he had been it was adaptable and so she was as well. Thus over the course of their 'spar', she began working out some of what she needed to change her style. Though she wouldn't put it past
Nameless to be working his magic here too.

She was so focused on the game that she was wholly unaware that she was demonstrating a level of skill that baffled not only her opponent and their watching sisters but the growing crowd of onlookers that had wandered over from other parts of the yard drawn by her phenomenal display.

"Keep a tighter guard." Alyssa told Robb, unaware of her audience, and pointing the tip of her wooden blade over his heart. "I could thread a horse through that opening you gave me."

"Right," her brother said as they both backed away and their sisters applauded what they thought was a good match. "You've been holding back on me."

"A little." Alyssa said with a cheeky grin.

"I'd say that's an understatement." Jory Cassel, the captain of Winterfell's household guard said. "The skill you showed just now was leagues above anything I've ever seen from you. Have you been training without supervision?"

Alyssa paled as she desperately sought to come up with some explanation which made sense. Why had she let herself slip like that!? She hadn't even noticed she'd drawn a crowd! It wasn't even a day yet and her secret was already out? Wait! Why was she even keeping it a secret? Couldn't she tell-

**Because I want you to.** Nameless said into her mind irritability. **Now stop questioning my mental suggestions. Oh, and you better pay attention.**

_Huh?_ Alyssa thought dumbly until a blow struck her hard across her face. Unprepared for it, she began to fall but someone seized her arm firmly and did not let her touch the ground.

"Girl! Didn't you hear me calling you?" Lady Stark said menacingly as she pulled on Alyssa's arm hard.

"Lady Stark!" Jory cried out, sounding furious.

"I know what I'm doing Captain." The Lady of Winterfell said glaring at the guard captain. The man reared back looking angry but restrained himself.

_Oh no! I don't know what set her off, but if Alyssa's memories are anything to go by then this is going to hurt._ The bastard realized as fragmentary images of being struck with a switch by Lady Catelyn as 'punishment' flashed through her mind and a feeling of familiar yet foreign dread welled up in her.

"Go find Lord Stark," Jory ordered one of his men who immediately ran off.

"You go do that." Lady Stark said fearlessly as she turned to leave, Alyssa's arm still held in her vice like grip.

"Mother, let Alys go now!" Robb demanded, but his Lady Mother just started dragging her off.

"This doesn't concern you Robb."

"Alys is my sister!" Robb shouted running to catch up.

"And Sansa and Arya are not?" Lady Stark rebutted, finally coming to a stop much to Alyssa's relief.
"What does that have to do with anything?"

"Everything." The redhead lady said. "Can't you see the bad example she was setting for them? A woman sword fighting? How uncouth! I expected it of the bastard, even tolerated it. But I will not let her corrupt my daughters."

"Father! There! Mother is hurting Alys!" Sansa's voice cried as she and Arya rushed over with Father, having at some point gone to fetch him it seemed.

"Catelyn! Let go of Alys at once!" Father roared and Lady Stark complied at once, releasing Alyssa and acting as if she'd been scalded by the contact.

Breathing a sigh of relief, Alyssa began inspecting the part of her arm that had been caught in her Father's wife's vice like grip.

*It's going to bruise.* The oldest of the Stark children thought with a frown as she diagnosed the injury with the experience of a battle hardened warrior.

"We'll go see Maester Luwin." Robb said, appearing at her side and taking hold of Alyssa's arm gently. "Come on, Alys."

"See the Maester? For this?" Lady Catelyn said incredulously. "Robb, she's a bastard, not a lady. You need not pamper her so."

Perhaps Lady Stark had forgotten that Father was there or more likely it was Nameless' doing, but whatever the case her words prompted an immediate response.

"She's my blood!" Father roared, pushing himself between his wife and Alyssa. "You will not speak lesser of her."

"My apologies, my lord." Lady Catelyn responded with a sneer. "But I only speak the truth."

Father's face was so cold, so blank that it could have been carved out of ice of the Wall as he glared at his wife and his voice was like the harshest of blizzards as he spoke.

"Leave my presence now." Father told his wife. "Before I do something I regret."

The Lady of Winterfell's eyes flew open in surprise at the threat and perhaps coming to her senses at last, shivered a little in fear, before with a strained curtsy proceeded to march off to gods knew where. Everyone there watched her go, glaring at her until she finally disappeared from sight entirely.

"Alyssa, are you alright?" Father asked at last, breaking the tableau. "Do you need to see Maester Luwin?"

"No, I'm fine." Alyssa said, giving her brother's hand a squeeze before slipping her arm out of his grip. "It'll bruise but that'll fade in a few days."

Father frowned angrily at that and Alyssa winced, realizing that telling him that with the air of experience she had was a terrible idea.

"She's done this before." Father concluded, his voice frigid.

Alyssa just bit her bottom lip and refused to answer. She *refused* to incriminate Lady Stark any further. For all that the woman was horrible to her, she was her siblings' mother and her Father's
wife. Alyssa would not be able to live with herself if she was the source of trouble between her loved ones and the woman. That and she feared whatever new punishment the woman who was in charge of her care would mete out for this humiliation already, she did not want to make it worse.

Father closed his eyes at her silence and anguish took over his features.

"Why does she do this?" Ned Stark, Warden of the North, asked as he rubbed a hand tiredly over his face.

It was a rhetorical question, Alyssa knew that. But hearing him she could not help the wave of emotion that she knew belonged to the original Alyssa surge through her. Nor could she still her tongue as it acted on the feeling.

"How can you not know!? It's because she hates the idea of her husband, you Father, having cheated on her." Alyssa began to explain in an utterly flabbergasted tone. "Worse, in her eyes, you love me, your natural born daughter, as much as your trueborn children."

At this she swept an arm to gesture at her startled siblings.

"Lady Stark thinks this shows that you love my mother more than you do her!" Alyssa continued, angry tears pooling in her eyes. "To her, that is the only explanation why you would show such love to a bastard child over the trueborn children she bore you."

Privately, Alyssa thought that the reason she was treated worse than Jon had been, and Lady Stark did indeed do so, was because as the Lady of Winterfell, Lady Stark was in charge of a girl's education and much more of her day to day care. As a result, Lady Catelyn had a lot more opportunities to make her hate known to Alyssa than she ever did to Jon. She did not say any of this though, she'd said too much already as it was.

"I-What?" Father said, too stupefied by the revelation to even form a coherent sentence.

Alyssa herself was gasping as if she'd run leagues without rest, the strain of letting out all the pent up frustration at her lot in life having drained her more than she thought possible. Her siblings moved to surround her, telling her they loved her as a sister regardless of her birth and other words of comfort.

_I need to get away._ The Bastard of Winterfell thought as she shook off her siblings and broke out into a run. _I need to get these feelings under control!_

Guided by the instincts of her new body, Alyssafeld towards the Library Tower. The original Alyssa had always found sanctuary there when she needed time alone and the reborn girl definitely needed that. She needed to process the feelings her words had unlocked. For they were as much Jon's as they were Alyssa's. A shared hatred and anger at Catelyn Stark for her mistreatment of them as children.

Behind her, she heard her siblings attempt to follow but Father calling them to stop.

"Let Alys have some space." Father told her brother and sisters. "I think she needs it."

He said more but Alyssa was too far away by that point to hear anything else clearly. Nevertheless, she allowed herself a grateful smile at her Father's empathy.

_I might not have a Mother. But I have the best Father in the world._
"Father!?" Alyssa cried out in surprise when she found the Lord of Winterfell waiting for her in the kitchens when she'd walked in intent on helping with the midday meal as was her duty. "What are you doing here?"

"To speak with you sweetling." Father said with a comforting smile. "Sit with me?"

Blinking in confusion, Alyssa nodded and took a seat next to her Father in the nook at the side of the kitchen where the servants would occasionally have their meals instead of going up to the Great Hall. Despite its size, it could not accommodate everyone after all, especially when Winterfell was entertaining guests and at such times the lower ranked servants had to settle to have their meals elsewhere.

"What do you want to talk to me about, Father?" Alyssa asked cautiously, worried about whether this had anything to do with her outburst at the yard this morning.

"Your education, Alys." Father told her, pulling her close so she was practically cuddling into his side in a way she had not done since she was a babe. "I have decided that from now onwards Lady Catelyn will no longer be in charge of it."

"But then who will see to it?" Alyssa asked worriedly.

She might be a bastard but she was one raised in a castle and a girl besides. Unlike her fellows living among the smallfolk she had no chance to learn any trade by which to make a living, without an education to learn such skills how would she survive? Would she be married off and become some lesser lord or merchant's broodmare? Or worse, would she have to sell her body just to survive? While she doubted that her Father would allow any of those to happen to her, the specter of them nevertheless haunted her in that moment.

"I will," Father reassured her. "For now you'll join in Robb's lessons. As for any womanly skills that you might require an education in, I've written to Lady Maege Mormont for advice on the matter. She has five daughters of her own, I'm sure she'll know what to do in this regard."

Alyssa breathed a sigh of relief at that, her earlier fears driven away by her Father's reassurance.

"Thank you, Father." Alyssa told him sincerely.

"Think nothing of it, Alys. You are my blood and deserve nothing less."

Alyssa just nodded and leaned into her Father's side, luxuriating in the feel of the only parent she'd ever known in both her lives and who in Jon's had been taken from him for years. In that moment, the distinction between the two lives disappeared as they savored their Father's love for them.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope this was an entertaining read.

Some might be a little confused by the inconsistent use of pronouns when referencing Alyssa/Jon in the beginning of the chapter. If you are, don't worry, you're supposed to be. It's part of a deliberate attempt to show that despite everything Jon has not quite fully accepted he's become Alyssa yet. As the chapter progressed this issue faded...
away and that's because Jon stopped clinging onto his old identity.

Why did this happen so fast? Well, as hinted at in the story, Nameless is subtly influencing Jon. He, aka me, wants him to become Alyssa ASAP so that's why. ;)

Well that's it from me this chapter. Till next time addio!
Alyssa stood in the gatehouse of the North Gate as she watched her Father and Robb ride out of Winterfell. A Night's Watch deserter had been captured in a nearby hamlet and her Father was heading out to carry out his duty as Lord to Winterfell and administer justice to the man in accordance with the traditions of the First Men. Robb, as his heir, was accompanying him to see the execution first hand so as to harden him and prepare him for the time when he would have to do the deed himself once he succeeded their Father.

Alyssa had wanted to go with them but as a girl her Father had refused, asking her to stay in Winterfell to continue her lessons instead. This had disappointed her greatly as despite the timing being completely wrong, she felt certain somehow that when Robb came back he would be bringing with him a litter of direwolf cubs.

I can't wait to see Ghost again. Alyssa thought with an irrepressible grin as she watched the last of the men-at-arms that were escorting her Father and brother make their way out of the gate.

Below her Father looked towards the gatehouse and nodded. Seeing that he was looking in her direction, Alyssa offered him a wave.

"My lady, your permission to close the gate?" The guardsman in charge of the gatehouse asked with an amused grin.

Alyssa startled. That's what Father meant by nodding at me? It was a signal?

Covering up her fumble with a cough, she turned to the soldier. "Close the gate."

The man smiled at her before quickly turning to relay the order and soon the sounds of the gate being sealed filled the building, but Alyssa ignored it to watch her Father's small contingent of men snake their way down the road away from Winterfell.

She stood there watching them until they were far enough away that she struggled to make out her Father and Robb amidst the column of riders before at last she turned to retreat back into the interior of the castle. Her morning lessons with Maester Luwin and training in the yard with Jory Cassel had been cancelled for the day so she could watch her Father's departure, but she still had to help the kitchens prepare the midday meal and then attend her afternoon lessons with one of the instructors in womanly arts Father had hired at Lady Mormont's suggestion to attend to the education of his daughters. This included a dance master, a musician that was teaching her the harp, a seamstress who taught her the art of needlework, and a master of etiquette to teach her how
to behave according to her station. These lessons alternated each day and today it was the turn for her second most favored class, dance.

It was still early though and Alyssa was not expected in the kitchens for some time yet, she thus contemplated perhaps heading to the Library Tower and perusing its shelves for something interesting to read to pass the time.

Perhaps the The Conquest of Dorne? Alyssa pondered idly. Or something else?

Something else. Nameless' inhuman voice said into her mind, cutting into her thoughts with a chuckle. I have something for you to do. Head to the Crypts.

The crypts? Alyssa asked the god curiously even as she altered the direction in which she was walking slightly, thankful that the way to the Crypts was only a slight change from her original path. It made her sudden change much less suspicious.

Yes. Nameless told her. When you get there head down to Lyanna Stark's tomb. I will be waiting for you there.

Alyssa frowned but followed the god's instructions. She was not about to deny the will of the being who had already given her so much.

Walking towards her Aunt Lyanna's tomb whilst holding onto a torch, Alyssa was not surprised to see the white void that was the god Nameless waiting in the dark for her.

"She looks beautiful." Nameless noted, gesturing at the statue carved in her Aunt's likeness that stood in front of the sarcophagus that held her bones.

"She does," Alyssa agreed even as she mentally offered her apologies to her deceased Aunt for disturbing her rest by having this rendezvous by her tomb.

"No need for such apologies." Nameless told her, effortlessly reading her mind. "I asked for Lyanna Stark's permission before doing this."

Alyssa didn't know if that was true and of course had no way of checking, so all she could do was frown and accept the god's words at face value.

"You wanted me to do something here, Lord Nameless?" Alyssa asked respectfully.

The god snapped his fingers and the lid of her Aunt's sarcophagus slid open. Alyssa hissed in alarm but Nameless ignored her, choosing instead to point at a box sitting next to her Aunt's bones.

"Take the egg inside that box." He commanded.

"Egg?" Alyssa asked, her brow furrowed in confusion.

"Open the box and see for yourself."

She did as she was ordered, whispering apologies to her Aunt all the way as she lifted the lid off the box which upon closer inspection she found was covered in fine carvings of direwolves running through the woods. Inside it was a collection of carefully preserved documents and a fine carefully folded black cloak, all of which was underneath a pure white ovoid stone. She'd never seen anything like it but she was well read enough to recognize it immediately as a fossilized dragon
"Why is something like this doing here?" Alyssa asked, mystified by its presence as she removed the egg from the box and sealed it back. Even as she spoke, her mind churned with the possibilities. Her Aunt had been kidnapped by Prince Rhaegar Targaryen shortly before her death and was held in his captivity up till her death at the end of Robert's Rebellion, it was possible-

"That egg is the one Rhaegar Targaryen prepared as a gift for his daughter with Lyanna Stark. It was to commemorate her birth in accordance to Targaryen tradition." Nameless said cutting off Alyssa's wondering thoughts.

"Prince Rhaegar and Aunt Lyanna had a daughter!?"

"They have a daughter." Nameless corrected.

Alyssa froze and looked down at the egg as a terrifying idea grew in her mind.

I was born in Dorne, where Father found Aunt Lyanna dying. The dates match up, Aunt Lyanna could've been with chi- No! Alyssa thought, recoiling at the very idea. It can't be! It can't!

Nameless sighed in what Alyssa sensed was disappointment and with a snap of his fingers closed her Aunt's tomb

"Keep the egg safe. Do not lose it." The god told her firmly before vanishing.

In his wake, Alyssa could only stare down at the pure white egg with a deep seated feeling of unease as if it threatened to undo everything she understood about her world. Yet, she could not just discard it like part of her wished and not because of Nameless' command. No, there was something else. A subtle pull, a bond of some strange sort that tied her to the egg in a way she could not put into words. That more than anything stayed Alyssa's hands from destroying the symbol of everything that was shaking her perception of who she was.

It was this same bond that had her hiding the egg away in the secret hollow in the wall behind her bed she'd been using for months now to hide the money she's managed to save from whenever her Father allowed her to go visit the shops in the market. It wasn't much, but as a bastard she knew she needed to set aside some money for emergencies. If she was trueborn she would at least have the chance to rely on her name in some way to earn some kind of livelihood should the need ever arose. But as a bastard, unless she was willing to sell her body, which she was not, she would need every Halfpenny she owned to survive if the worst came to pass. Thus this small hollow where she kept her meager savings was her most secret place. She was thus loathe to put anything but that which she regarded most precious to her there and yet there went the dragon egg.

Why? Why do I regard it so highly? Alyssa asked herself as she pushed her bed back into place to hide the hollow from prying eyes and would-be thieves.

Before she could ponder the question at all, Arya's excited voice shouted through the door to her rooms.

"Alys!" Her little sister cried out excitedly. "Father's back! And he brought home direwolves!"

Alyssa perked up at the mention of direwolves and the image of her loyal companion in her last life, Ghost, came into her mind dispelling any and all thoughts about the dragon egg hidden behind her bed.
"Really?" Alyssa asked, slamming her door open in her eagerness only to find that Arya had already disappeared.

"That cheeky brat." The eldest Stark daughter said with a growl as she sprinted to the yard.

As she arrived, she found that despite her enthusiasm she was the last there and Arya and Sansa were already cuddling their wolves. She did not mind however and instead walked over to Robb expectantly, who strangely looked shamefaced as she approached.

"Robb?" Alyssa asked him questioningly.

"I'm sorry." Her brother said and she just looked at him blankly. "There were only three pups and-"

"Only three?" Alyssa asks, staggering back in shock as a terrible realization began to coalesce in her mind.

"Alys?" Robb grabs her worriedly. "Are you alright?"

"Yes, just-"

*I need to be alone.* Alyssa thought as she pulled away from her brother and just ran, ignoring the alarmed cries of her siblings.

*This can't be happening.* She thought to herself as she slammed the door to the rooms closed and collapsed at its foot. *No Ghost? But why-*

The answer came to her even before she could even finish the thought and she looked up to stare in mute horror at her bed and the alcove it hid wherein now sat a pure white dragon egg.

*He said he'd give me a great beast.* Alyssa thought as she paled. *He never said he'd give me Ghost.*

The sound of malevolent laughter echoing in her mind was answer enough that her supposition was correct. Without meaning to, she had had traded her direwolf Ghost for the dragon egg she now possessed.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope you guys won't kill me for the swap. Rest assured, Ghost will still make an appearance eventually. He'll just be changed. You can't expect Jon to become Alyssa and Ghost to just stay the same now can you? ;)

Now, I'm sure many of you will have guessed my intentions here but if you haven't? Well, I'm not telling. Just keep reading to find out what I mean.

Based on a review and PM conversation with jean d'arc to the last chapter over on FFN, I think I need to clarify some things.

Firstly, on the issue of Catelyn's poor treatment of Alyssa in this verse. To understand it, you need to understand the distribution of responsibilities in regards to the care of children in a medieval household. As a girl, Alyssa's education is entirely up to...
Catelyn whereas in canon with Ned being responsible for the upbringing of him as a boy he had far greater oversight over him. This meant Catelyn had to deal with Alyssa on a bigger basis daily than she ever would have Jon. Familiarity breeds contempt. In canon, her neglect of Jon might've been driven by her being sensible and honorable but it also gave her detachment from him that meant she did not have to get as familiar with Alyssa as she does in this verse and thus the dislike did not become contempt. Here the honor and sensibility that is core to her character forces her to take charge of Alyssa's education and welfare as a proper stepmother should, unfortunately this means that she's just put into contact with her even more and as repeatedly stated gave the chance for her dislike to fester into contempt. In this verse, with Alyssa being a girl she can subtly put her down by simply treating her less like a child of her husband and more like a servant. It probably started small, sending a noble child to the kitchens to help prepare meals is actually wholly logical as part of managing a household but Catelyn just never expanded beyond that. At first out of neglect but then when she realized her husband didn't care this became worse. Opportunity for her festering dislike is not a good thing for an overly emotional woman like Catelyn, see how she let her emotions led her to recklessly take Tyrion prisoner in canon when his words pushed her over the edge, something that the familiarity with Alyssa did the same here. As a result, her dislike of Alyssa grew into hatred. Hatred which in turn poisoned the hatred between her and the rest of the family.

Secondly, Catelyn snapped with Jory in chapter two when she was never disrespectful to the servants in canon. Why? Simple. Contrary to canon, Catelyn in this verse has not welcomed by Winterfell. With her relationship with Ned, their beloved lord, strained, they have never been friendly towards her. Even Catelyn cannot tolerate such for years on end and still maintain politeness.

Lastly, do not assume that just because Nameless sent Jon back as Alyssa that he intends for it to mean this life is going to be better than his last in all respects. He sent him back to for his own entertainment and to fix what he sees as a poorly concluded story but that does not mean everything in this life is sunshine and rainbows. Especially when not all gods are on Alyssa's side.

A guest reviewer on FFN also left a review, which I greatly appreciate, with a whole host of questions. The answer to all those questions will be answered as the story progresses. So if you're interested in the answers just keep reading.

Apologies for the long AN. It's done now though so till next time agur!
The New Beginning #4: The King's Visit

Chapter Notes
See the end of the chapter for notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire

Alyssa I Targaryen

Book : The New Beginning

Chapter 4: The King's Visit

Beta:

Trigger warning: Attempted Rape of a Minor

"What do you think Father wants to talk to us about?" Sansa asked as Alyssa and her sisters made their way from their sewing lesson to their Father's solar where they'd been summoned.

"No idea," Alyssa told her with a shrug. "Arya, know anything?"

"I didn't do anything." The youngest and most mischievous of the Stark children said.

The four children of Eddard Stark had been called into his solar and interrogated for one act of mischief or another that Arya had carried out on more occasions than they could count, but if Arya was denying any knowledge than that was unlikely to be the case this time. Arya might be an incorrigible imp at times but she was always honest about what she'd done.

"If that's the case," Robb said as he approached the door to Father's solar from the other direction. "Then it's a mystery."

"That it is," Alyssa said with a weak smile.

It was difficult to smile at all after she'd learned what she had inadvertently done to Ghost but for her family she'd managed. They had been so comforting to her over the past few days since she'd realized her mistake and been devastated by it, Robb had even offered to give her Grey Wind which she naturally refused. It was only right after all their effort, that she do the same to return the favor and not bring down the mood.

Robb saw through her attempt though and pulled her into a light hug and whispered into her ears. "It doesn't matter that you don't have a wolf. You're my sister. A Stark. Never forget that."

Alyssa squeezed her brother in gratitude and nodded against his shoulder even as her sisters wrapped their arms around her as well, joining in the hug.

They stood there like that for a moment before with a watery smile, Alyssa pulled away from Robb prompting Arya and Sansa to let go as well.

"Let's go in." She told her siblings. "We've kept Father waiting long enough."

Robb nodded and knocked politely on the solid oak door of the solar.
"Come in," Father said through the door and her brother confidently pushed it open.

Inside, they found their Father seated behind the solid ironwood desk decorated with intricate direwolf carvings and reading a scroll.

"Have a seat, children." Father said looking up from the scroll and offering them all a smile.

As the obedient children they were, the young Starks quickly sat down on the chairs placed before their Father's desk and waited for him to address them.

"This just came by raven from King's Landing." Father said gesturing to the scroll he'd been reading when they'd entered. "It is to inform me that King Robert is coming to Winterfell with Jon Arryn to mediate the growing rift between the North and the Riverlands because of my treatment of Lady Catelyn."

"I'm sorry, Father, this is all my fault." Alyssa said with a wince.

"None of that," Father said sternly, even as Robb and Sansa who sat on either side of her took Alyssa's hands into their own and squeezed them reassuringly. For her part Arya had slid off her chair and rushed over to give her big sister a hug.

"Father's right." The youngest Stark said into Alyssa's stomach. "It's not your fault. It's Mother's."

"Thank you everyone," Alyssa said offering her family a grateful smile.

"We just speak the truth." Father said gruffly. "Arya could you sit down please. There is more we need to talk about."

Arya complied though not without marring her long face she shared with their Father with a pout, earning her chuckles from everyone.

"Do you need us to help with the preparations?" Robb asked once Arya was seated once more.

"No, your Lady Mother will handle most of it, but the four of you will need to practice your etiquette before the King's party arrives in a month's time." Father told them with a smile at Arya's huff of annoyance at the news. "To that end you'll all have double the lessons with your etiquette master for the next month. I've already spoken to him and your other teachers and they'll be working on a revised schedule for your lessons that should be ready in the next few days."

"Father, what about our clothes?" Alyssa asked. "We'll need new ones if we don't want to look shabby in front of the royals."

Father frowned, obviously having not considered this but quickly nodded his agreement.

"I'll inform Lady Stark to make the arrangements. But Alyssa-"

"Yes Father?" The man's oldest daughter asked, blinking in confusion as to why she was singled out.

"You are never to be alone with Catelyn, is that clear? Either Robb, myself or Jory must be in the room with you if the two of you must be in the same place at the same time."

"Yes, Father. Thank you." Alyssa said, blushing at the consideration her Father was giving her.

Satisfied that he was understood, Father surveyed the four of them.
"Do you have questions about the King's visit?" He asked after a long moment of silence.

"Is the rest of the royal family coming?" Sansa asked excitedly.

"Unfortunately not," Father said with a shake of his head. "The youngest Prince is not yet two and so the Queen does not wish to allow him on such a long journey. She has also elected to stay with him and the Princess and Crown Princess have likewise chosen to stay with their mother."

"A shame." Sansa said with a pout. "I wanted to meet the Prince."

*And I wish you never will.* Alyssa thought, remembering all the horror that Joffrey Baratheon had been responsible for in her last life.

Arya and Robb had a few more inane questions about the visit after that, Alyssa herself had none but nevertheless waited patiently until they were dismissed, as she filed out at the rear of her siblings however her Father called out to her.

"Alys, stay for a moment."

"Yes Father?" Alyssa asked him curiously as she turned to face him. "What is it?"

"I just wanted to say that when the King is here, be careful around him."

Alyssa blinked in confusion. "Why?"

Her Father shifted uncomfortably for a moment before sighing. "Your resemblance to your Aunt is uncanny and the King pines after her even now."

*That much I know. But surely he's not suggesting anything will come of it.*

"I'm sure nothing will come of it, but I don't want you hurt." Father said, a guilty look flashing across his face. "So just in case, please stay away from him."

Alyssa frowned but nodded. "I will, Father."

"Good, good." Father said with a forced smile. "Then run along. I believe you have to meet with Varyon Poole and Robb to learn about how he keeps Winterfell supplied correct?"

"Yes, Father." Alyssa confirmed, not at all surprised that she knew her schedule from memory. He was the man who drafted it in the first place.

"Then off with you and take your lessons to heart."

"Yes Father," Alyssa said offering her Father a perfect curtsy she'd mastered thanks to help from Sansa, before departing for her lesson.

It was a month later and the whole Stark family was lined up in the yard in front of the South Gate as King Robert and his party entered Winterfell. As the black haired and bright blue eyed Baratheon king made his way towards them, Alyssa couldn't help but note that being five years younger did not make King Robert any less fat or less red-faced from constant drink as the memories of her past life made him out to be.

She kept such thoughts to herself however as Father greeted the King warmly like the old friends and foster brothers that they were, even exchanging hugs.
"It is good to see you again, Ned." The King said as the two men pulled apart.

"You as well, your grace."

"None of that, Ned." The King declared with a laugh. "To you I'll always be Robert."

"You honor me, yo-"

"What's that?"

"Robert." Father corrected himself hastily.

An old man with broad shoulders, blue eyes, blonde hair, and an aquiline nose cleared his throat and both Father and the King turned to face him.

"Your grace, Ned, perhaps we can continue this reunion later?" The man who could only be Jon Arryn, Hand of the King, said with a happy smile for his two foster sons. "There are others who seek to welcome you, your grace."

"Ah, you're right there Jon. Sorry to keep ya family waiting Ned."

"Not at all," Father said with an indulgent grin as he led the King towards the rest of his family for introductions.

"This is my wife, Lady Catelyn Stark." Father said, as he stopped before his wife.

"Lady Stark," the King said cordially but brimming with visible impatience as he accepted Lady Stark's curtsy.

"Your grace," Lady Stark returned politely.

She looked ready to add something. Perhaps some ingratiating compliment. But the King simply ignored her and simply walked further down the line, much to Lady Stark's impotent anger at the disrespectful slight.

"And this is my son and heir, Ro-" Father was saying as he introduced Robb, but neither the King nor Alyssa were listening. The moment King Robert had stepped past Lady Stark, he'd froze as he caught sight of the oldest daughter of his old friend. Caught in the strange look the King was sending her, Alyssa froze too just like a fawn when confronted unexpectedly by a hunter.

She was thus unable to do anything when King suddenly picked her up.

"Lyanna!" The King cried out as he pulled her close to his chest. "By the gods! Lyanna you've returned to me from the grave!"

What!? What's going on!? Alyssa thought as she regained enough of her senses to squirm in the King's arms in a desperate bid but futile for freedom. For all that she had a lifetime's worth of experience as a warrior, in this life she was only a ten year old girl. She had no hope of fighting her way out of the grip of a man such as Robert Baratheon.

Thankfully, she didn't need to as Father quickly intervened and with the help of the King's Hand pulled the fat monarch off her.

"That isn't Lyanna." Father said, his voice as cold as the winds on top of the Wall. "She is Alyssa Snow, my ten year old natural daughter."
"What? Nonsense, that's obviously Lyanna!" Alyssa heard the King insist even as Robb and their sisters rushed to check on her. She was still too dazed by what happened though and could only nod numbly to their concerned questions.

"No, it isn't!" Father insisted. "But I can take you to see Lyanna. Would you like that Robert?"

"Yes, why don't you go visit Lyanna's tomb?" Jon Arryn cajoled.

The mention of her Aunt's tomb seemed to cause a pall to fall over the King, one that brought clarity along with grief and the Stag King straightened.

"Yes." The former Demon of the Trident said in a heartbroken voice. "Let's go see Lyanna."

"This way, your grace." Lady Stark said as she rushed over to the King joining Father and Lord Arryn as the three of them led the King to visit the Crypts and Aunt Lyanna's tomb but not before her stepmother shot Alyssa an uncharacteristically compassionate and reassuringly look.

"Alys, are you alright?" Robb asked, shaking her shoulders insistently and turning her away from the sight of the King being led away.

"Yes, yes," Alyssa assured her brother with what she hoped was a confident grin. "I'm fine, just a little rattled."

He didn't look convinced and insisted she retire to her rooms to get some rest, even accompanying her alongside their sisters to make sure she got there. The gesture was so sweet and she was still so shaken that she didn't even protest.

\emph{I hope the King gets a hold of himself.} Alyssa thought to herself as she was escorted to her rooms by her siblings. \emph{I really don't want to know what he might do if he doesn't.}

Something told her that despite her wishes otherwise she would soon find out.

That night, Alyssa at her Father's orders had her dinner in her rooms instead of the Great Hall where the Welcome Feast was being held. After the incident in the yard, no one wanted to take any chances on the King's good behavior. Alyssa least among them.

So she did not mind at all that she missed the feast, especially since her siblings had all left it early with their parents' permission and brought her a spread of desserts to share with her. The company and sweets more than made up for not having to attend an event where she most likely would have had to endure the uncomfortable attention of the King.

The feast had ended some time ago though and she'd sent her siblings back to their own rooms and beds. She herself was preparing to go to sleep when there was an unexpected knock on her door.

Frowning at the idea of anyone seeking her out at this late hour but worried that it might be important somehow she headed to the door.

"Who is it?" She called out to the person outside.

She regretted doing so almost immediately as her door was promptly kicked open by one of the Kingsguard. Alyssa screamed but that did no good as the Kingsguard stepped aside and the King rushed into the room.

The moment she saw him and smelled the stench of drink that wafted off him, she turned and ran.
Robert Baratheon might have become a fat oaf since he became King, but he was still an adult and Alyssa was a mere girl of ten. She thus stood no chance as he easily caught up to her and tackled her to the ground.

"Stop!" She cried as she was pinned to the floor. "Help me! Help!"

But the Kingsguard and the King ignored her.

Perhaps it was the alcohol, the scent of which wafted off him thickly, or maybe whatever delusions he was operating under but the strangely white eyed King seemed to hear her pleas and struggles for him to stop as some kind of positive reinforcement.

"So f-feisty! So w-wuld!" He slurred, even as he pawed at her slip. "I-I's knew you w-would be wild in bed, m-my Lyanna."

"I'm not Aunt Lyanna! I'm Alyssa!" The girl cried as she desperately tried to push the overweight man off her. "Help! Father! Robb! Help me!"

"P-Playin' c-co-oy, eh, L-Lyanna?" The King said as he stopped pawing at Alyssa's body and instead grabbed a fistful of her slip around her chest area. This pulled the garment up and exposed much of her lower body despite Alyssa's best efforts to keep it down to protect her modesty.

Jon Snow's voice and instincts roared in Alyssa's mind telling her to fight but they were useless. She had tried to struggle like her previous life might have if he was pinned, but between her young age and the physical characteristics of her sex her efforts helped not all.

"B-But enough playin!" The King shouted enthusiastically as he pulled on her shift and ripped the garment open.

Alyssa screamed wordlessly as she was exposed entirely, having not chosen to wear any smallclothes to bed tonight.

"Get off my daughter!" Father roared as he appeared as if from nowhere and grabbed the King, pulling him off.

"Father!" Alyssa cried desperately as she tried desperately to cover herself.

"Here." Lady Stark said gently as she appeared by Alyssa's side also as if appearing from the aether and tucked a cloak around her body. "Can you stand?"

"Wha-?" Alyssa said, confused as Father pushed the King up against a wall and Jory and a dozen men-at-arms held the Kingsguard who had burst into the room at swordpoint. Jory's blade in particular resting dangerously on the man's exposed throat.

Seemingly deciding that Alyssa was in no condition to reply, Lady Stark picked her up. She struggled a little under the weight of a ten year old but she persisted and carried her towards the door.

"Don't pay attention to any of that." Lady Stark told her, breathing heavily under her weight. "Leave that to your Father. Just focus on me."

Alyssa numbly nodded as her Father's wife carried her out into the hall outside her rooms that were now crawling with guards, mainly those of Winterfell who eyed those who had come with the royal party with obvious malice.
"Alys, are you alright?" Robb said suddenly rushing up to her and blocking her sight of the hall, their sisters crowding round moments later.

"We're going to your Father's rooms." Lady Stark said. "Hallis, escort us."

"Yes, Lady Stark." One of the guards replied and a ring of men-at-arms surrounded them as they all made their way to Father's rooms.

All the while, Alyssa's siblings showered her with words of kindness and support. She heard little of it. Her mind was still in too much shock to process any of it.

I was almost r-rape wasn't I? Alyssa thought as things started to make sense again. As this realization settled though, the tears began to flow and she broke down in a sobbing mess.

"How is she?" Alyssa heard her Father ask Lady Stark as he entered his bedroom within which she'd been ensconced since that night.

"The same," the Lady of Winterfell said running her hand comfortingly through Alyssa's hair. "Is that man gone?"

"Yes." Father said, sounding furious. "It's taken two days but I've finally gotten that beast out of Winterfell. To think I once considered him a brother! If it didn't mean war, I would-"

Alyssa flinched at his anger. She knew it wasn't directed at her, it was on her behalf in fact but she couldn't help it.

"Ned!" Lady Stark chided. "You're scaring her."

"I'm sorry." Father said as he knelt by the bedside and took one of Alyssa's hands in his own. "Forgive me?"

Alyssa opened her mouth to speak but her throat felt congested, like the rest of her it was being pulled down by the weight of her shame, her fear, her anger and every other emotion she could name and many others she could not which now permeated her being. So instead, she settled for a nod.

Her Father looked crestfallen at that and Alyssa felt her heart constrict further, but Lady Stark just pulled her close and kissed her forehead.

"It's alright." She assured her traumatized stepdaughter. "Your Father understands, doesn't he?"

"Of course," Father said, patting her leg encouragingly. "Take as much time as you need to feel better."

Alyssa just nodded and snuggled into Lady Stark's side as the woman willingly pulled her closer. It was something that she would have declared impossible just days ago, but everything had changed now. Alyssa needed a mother's love and if Lady Stark was willing to offer it, then she would gladly accept. She had few, if any, other options.

Chapter End Notes
Some of you might be wondering why I had Robert do what he did. Simple answer? I like using this act to create drama. It is one of the most traumatic experiences a person can endure after all. Besides, its believable imo that Robert would do so. Between his lustful nature, his obsession with Lyanna and his alcoholism, I honestly cannot see him reacting to seeing a literal clone of Lyanna in any other way. And this is even taking into account Alyssa’s young age. The man is not thinking clearly at all, you think age is a consideration of his? Why didn't he react to Arya like this in canon considering her supposed resemblance to Lyanna? That's simple. Arya resembles Lyanna, while Alyssa is practically the spitting image of the woman he's obsessed with. That's a subtle difference but enough of one to set Robert off especially if there's outside influence *wink*. At least that's my reasoning. Feel free to disagree and leave a review if you're so inclined, though if you do please be civil about it.

On another note, I would like to say that much of the reviews seem to be about wanting things to be exactly the same as canon. While I understand the sentiment please understand this is a fanfiction. There will be inevitably be deviations from canon. For example, Ghost was not among the direwolf pups that Robb brought back. Neither were Summer or Shaggydog. Even if he was, asking Alyssa to go back to look for him would be pointless since he would have died from exposure by the time she found him if she even could.

Next, Time Parad0x on FFN suggests that I reduce Nameless' role. Besides the fact that doing so would require a major rewrite of a fic I've already completely written out and that is something I categorically refuse to do, it also defeats the purpose of including him in such an active role in the first place. He a plot device designed to be unsubtle commentary on author's railroading their stories whilst simultaneously allowing me to do exactly that.

Time Parad0x also mentions how he prefers time-travel stories where the timetraveler's only advantage is his/her future knowledge and them using it to change the future. If that's what you are hoping to find in this story then I'm sorry to disappoint you. In this story, Alyssa's future knowledge is only one of several things gifted to her by Nameless. Heck, Alyssa's future knowledge will in fact be a detriment. Instead, the whole point is to give her a host of 'gifts' I/Nameless feels would most make things interesting and see how she uses them to her detriment and advantage.

That's it from me this chapter I think. So till next time dovizhdane!
The night that the King left Winterfell, Alyssa fell into the first restful sleep she'd had since the night of her assault. This brought much relief to her anxious family, but whether they would feel the same if they knew the cause was another matter entirely.

"Alyssa," Nameless greeted the girl as she appeared inside the featureless void the god favored. "I have something for you."

Alyssa ignored him, instead choosing to hug her knees even closer to herself and tightening the fetal position she'd been in since before she'd fallen asleep.

The god sighed at this and with a snap of his fingers, Alyssa suddenly found the weight that had been weighing her down lifting from her shoulders and she felt normal for the first time in days.

"Take this." Nameless said handing the girl a thick tome.

"What is it?" Alyssa asked as she uncurled herself and took the book being offered her.

"It is a tome on magic."

"Why are you giving me this?"

"I had planned for you to learn your magic by trial and error, but that's changed."

"Because I was almost raped?" Alyssa asked, surprising herself by how easily she talked about what happened to her. It was not something she was able to do in the waking world where she was still just a mute husk of the person she once was.

"Yes," Nameless said with a growl. "I am many things. Many of them evil, but even I abhor rape. I cannot believe that the Three-eyed Raven resorted to such just to prepare its host."

"The Three-eyed Raven? What was that? And what does he mean by 'prepare its host'?"

"You need not worry about that for now." Nameless said with a firm look. "Leave the Three-eyed Raven and his like to me. I will not have petty gods ruin my entertainment."

"Very well." Alyssa said meekly. She had never seen the being so angry and even though she was sure it was not directed at her, she nevertheless wished his terrifying anger gone so she hastily
changed the subject.

"Are you why I don't feel the crushing weight anymore?"

"Yes, I will not have my source of entertainment encumbered by trauma." Nameless said, though from the very human way he refused to meet her eyes she doubted that was his only reason for doing this.

"Thank you." Alyssa said sincerely. "Will I be like this in the waking world?"

"Not immediately. That would be too obvious." Nameless told her. "But over the next month or so, the weight, as you call it, will mostly disappear and to you it will largely be as if it had never happened."

Alyssa fell to the ground in prostration. "Thank you, my god."

The girl meant what she said. Lord Nameless would be her god from now onwards. She would eschew all other gods from now on. Be they the Old Gods of her ancestors, the Andal's New Gods or the red god R'hllor. For what had any of them done for her? Nothing. In contrast, Lord Nameless had helped her repeatedly. In the face of that, why would she not worship him?

Nameless shifted uneasily, but quickly recovered. "If you must thank me then complete the tasks I give you now."

"Name them and I will accomplish them or die trying."

"Seize the Iron Throne."

Alyssa's eyes widened in shock.

"But- W-Why ask me that?"

"Search Lyanna Stark's tomb for the answers you refused to hear the last time."

"W-Why Aunt Lyanna's tomb?" Alyssa asked hesitantly. As much as she wanted to repay her god, she was still unwilling to accept what he was hinting at. It was just too impossible for her to do so.

"Burying one's effects with them is a very ancient noble tradition. You'll find something related to you there."

"In my Aunt's tomb? What are you insinuating, my lord?"

"You are smart enough to know the answer to that."

Alyssa did but she recoiled at the very suggestion.

"Disappointing. I had hoped you would be more open to accepting the truth than this. No matter. You will go. I'll force you if need be."

"No need. I'll go." Alyssa agreed very reluctantly.

"Good. Do so once your 'weight' has lessened. You will be under less attention then. It'll be easier for you to move around unseen."

"I will go as soon as I am able."
Nameless just nodded in satisfaction and vanished, taking the empty void with him and leaving her with a dreamless but restful sleep.

A month after the King left, just like Lord Nameless had said the weight had mostly lifted. Not that her family believed her, much to her growing annoyance. In spite of her determined assertions that she was fine, they'd taken to watching her like a hawk and was constantly around her, all watching her to see if there was any hint of the dark moods that characterized the weight. Of course there was none, a god had lifted it from her already. But she couldn't exactly tell them that. Because of that and also because she appreciated their concern, she put up with their excessive attention.

Even if it made it difficult to accomplish her god's mission to her. Thankfully, he'd given her just the tool she needed to get around this particular obstacle.

"Illusion." Alyssa cast the spell she'd learned from her Tome of Magic, using it to hide her sneaking out of her room. In the wake of her attempted rape, her Father had introduced a new security precaution thus there were now guards stationed at every door and at regular intervals in the family wing.

Thanks to her spell however, these guards didn't even perceive the opening and shutting of the doors to her chambers. All they saw was the same empty and quiet hallway they'd been looking at all night.

Thus cloaked in an illusion of invisibility, Alyssa snuck through the castle and down to the Crypts without incident.

As she reached the safety of the ancient Stark burial grounds, Alyssa let the spell fade away and breathed a sigh of relief even as she wiped the sheen of sweat that had accumulated there off her brow.

"That spell was tiring." She said with a groan as she made her way down to grab one of the torches set on a ledge just inside the entrance to the crypts and lit it with a Continual Light spell.

"I'll need to catch my breath before I use it again when I sneak back later." She said to herself as she walked down to her Aunt's tomb.

It took her a few minutes to reach the appropriate level and she was wholly unsurprised to find that the tomb had already been opened for her.

Pulling out the chest inside, she opened it and removed the documents within. As she did so, she realized the true nature of the folded cloak she'd seen the last time she'd opened the chest. It was a marriage cloak. One with the three headed dragon of House Targaryen emblazoned proudly upon it.

As if that isn't not proof enough. Alyssa thought to herself uneasily as she began sorting through the documents.

The special dispensation from the late High Septon, who had conveniently died in the chaos of the Sack of King's Landing, allowing Prince Rhaegar to take a second wife and the document attesting to the Prince's subsequent marriage to her Aunt signed by said High Septon alongside Ser Gerold Hightower, Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, removed the few doubts that remained.

So Aunt Lyanna and Prince Rhaegar were married. But had it been a willing marriage or was Aunt Lyanna forced?
A series of letters between Aunt Lyanna and Uncle Benjen implied it was very much consensual. Alyssa only skimmed them but there were enough mention of "her beloved Prince" to tell the tale clearly enough.

But what sealed the deal was the unopened letter at the bottom of the pile, one addressed in a feminine but messy hand to Alyssa Targaryen.

Sucking in a steadying breath, the Bastard of Winterfell opened the letter with shaky hands and began reading.

To my dear sweet daughter, the letter opened and Alyssa felt like a trespasser. She couldn't be Aunt Lyanna's daughter could she? Despite her doubts though, the mage found herself unable to stop reading.

I write this letter with the knowledge that it is unlikely that I shall live to tell you all this myself. I have little time left, I can tell. I am very weak, carrying you has been difficult. Made more so by the tragedies that have befallen our family. I would have liked this to be a sweet letter telling you of all my love for you, which never doubt is immense. But as I've said, my strength fails me and my mind wanders so pardon if I ramble here or there. I will try to stick to the main points though.

Beloved child of mine, know that you were not conceived of rape. Your Father, my beloved husband, Prince Rhaegar has not ever lain with me without my consent. He is an honorable man and I love him so. Trust my testimony on this, my daughter whom I see in my dreams. Do not believe whatever slanderous lies about your Father and I that Robert might choose to spread after his victory.

Of course I wouldn't believe that man. Alyssa thought with a hiss at the mere mention of her would-be rapist.

As you might have deduced, you are a trueborn Princess of House Targaryen. And if half my jumbled visions granted to me by greensight are correct, and yes I am a greenseer it seems. It just took dying to awaken my gift.

"That would explain the original Alyssa being a greenseer." Alyssa said as she shifted uneasily as she remembered she was not quite the same girl that was born into her body. "And how Aunt Lyanna knows to address this letter to a girl."

But I'm rambling. As I said, if half my dreams are correct, you'll be the Heir to the Iron Throne. I leave what you do with that knowledge up to you, my sweet child. All I ask is that you do not hate your Uncle. All he will do is for your protection. Forgive him. And accept yourself, my child. Jon Snow? Alyssa Snow? Alyssa Targaryen?

Alyssa sucked in a breath at that. There was no doubt now. Not when her Au- No, when her Mother was using her greensight to address her directly through the ages.

You are my Alyssa and that's all that matters. Lives past do not matter! All that matters is the present! Make it count, my love. Live!

Your loving and half-crazed mother,

Lyanna Targaryen née Stark

For a long moment, Alyssa Snow daughter of Lyanna Targaryen just stared at her Mother's letter to her in shock as tears rolled down her face.
At last though, she pulled it close to her chest and sobbed. Giving voice to the grief of a loving Mother she'd lost and all else that could've been.

"Oh, Father. Why?" Alyssa cried out, lashing out at the one person who must have known this truth but kept it from her. "Why did you hide this from me?"

"To protect you of course." Lord Nameless said appearing on top of the opened lid of Alyssa's Mother's tomb. "You are a smart girl. You know what Robert Baratheon will do to you if he ever learns the truth of your parentage."

Alyssa nodded as the memories of the fates of Prince Aegon and Princess Rhaenys, her half-brother and half-sister, came to mind. Both of them, along with their mother Princess Elia, had been brutally murdered with Robert Baratheon's retroactive consent during the Sack of King's Landing. She had no doubt that if the Stag King ever knew of her existence then a similar or worse fate awaited her.

"But then why keep this here? Down in my Mother's tomb?"

"They are your Mother's effects." The god said. "It is the least your Uncle could do as her brother to bury them with her bones. It is also a fitting place to hide away incriminating documents and artifacts that might reveal your parentage. At least for a man that is determined to utterly erase all evidence of your Targaryen heritage in a misguided attempt to protect you."

"Misguided?"

"Blood will out." Lord Nameless said with a careless shrug. "If not in your generation than in a few more. If you survive what is to come and have children that is. But if you did and remained ignorant, Eddard Stark's actions will cause your descendants to be wholly unprepared as their heritage manifests. It will destroy them."

Alyssa nods. She could see the scenario the god was painting. More importantly it was a god was saying it. She trusted it to likely be true.

"Now that you've discovered your parentage. It is time to hatch your dragon."

"Now?"

"Yes. As to the how, fetch your egg and your Tome then head into the Wolfswood. I'll guide you to an appropriate spot and walk you through the process. Bring a knife."

Alyssa should have been wary, especially after the last line of her god's command but she trusted him. Thus without any hesitation, she made her way out of the Crypts, used another Illusion spell to sneak back to her room to fetch the things she needed before using its cover to make her way out of the castle and into the Wolfswood. Once there, she followed the subtle tug on her mind that she knew was Lord Nameless' directions that led her into a modest clearing.

"What's so special about this place?" Alyssa asked looking around the seeming nondescript clearing. It seemed no different from the half dozen similar clearings she walked past on the way there.

"This was an execution ground once." Lord Nameless told her as he appeared before her, sitting on a stump on the far side of the clearing.
"Why is that detail important?"

"So full of questions aren't you?" Her god said with a chuckle. "Good. I like that in my followers. As for why this being a former execution ground is important, it is quite simple actually. What you will be attempting in this hatching is essentially bringing the dead back to life. To do that the power of life and death must be invoked and there is no better place in the vicinity of Winterfell to do that than this place."

"Not even the Crypts?"

"The dead lay there, but life was never taken there." Lord Nameless explained. "No. This place, this old killing ground is best."

Alyssa nodded in understanding.

"Now that you understand, open your Tome. You'll need some spells from within that you have yet to learn."

Alyssa put down the egg and flipped the Tome open.

"Begin with a Frost Nova." Lord Nameless instructed. "Use it to create a nest."

Looking down at the open Tome, the pages flipped on their own accord and settled on the appropriate pages for the Frost Nova spell. Following the book's instructions, Alyssa dutifully cast the spell.

"Frost Nova," she incanted creating an ice sculpture in the snowy clearing that looked like a bird's nest but made entirely of razor sharp icicles all around her.

"Cut yourself with the knife and let the egg soak up your blood."

Alyssa diligently followed her god's instructions and ran the knife over the palm of her left hand, careful to make sure it was only a shallow flesh wound. As the blood began to flow from the cut, she lifted her hand over the egg and let it fall onto it. She watched with fascination as the blood was absorbed into the egg almost hungrily and it slowly began to glow.

"That's enough blood." Lord Nameless said when the glowing egg began to radiate heat. "Take your Tome and step out of the nest."

Alyssa did so whilst simultaneously slipping the knife into a sheath in the folds of her skirt, noticing that as she did that her hand had healed through no action of her own.

"Now use a Flame Strike on the egg." Lord Nameless ordered. "And wait."

Letting her Tome of Magic flip to the necessary pages, Alyssa read through what was required for the spell before taking a steadying breath and cast it.

"Flame Strike." She said the magic words, causing a pillar of fire to shoot up into the sky from where the egg sat.

As the column of fire slowly dissipated, fire that she noted did not melt the icy nest at all, she could hear the sound of something cracking and she found drawn to where the egg should have been in anticipation. When the fire finally finished clearing, her eyes flew open in shock at the sight of a tiny dragon surrounded by shattered pieces of eggshell. Its scales, horns, claws and wing
membranes were all a solid snow white. The only source of color on the hatchling's body were its striking blood red eyes.

"Ghost!" Alyssa gasped in shock and the dragon turned towards her before radiating joy directly into her mind as it toddled over to her and leapt into her arms.

She caught him happily and cried tears of pure joy.

"Now the stage is properly set as I desire it." Nameless said, causing Alyssa and Ghost to both look at him. "I leave the rest to you Alyssa Targaryen. Do not disappoint me and most importantly entertain me."

"I will." Alyssa said with a reverential bow before her god. "I promise you, my lord, I will."

Laughing in amusement, her god vanished leaving Alyssa and her dragon alone.

Hugging the tiny creature close, she spoke to it.

"We must do Lord Nameless proud." Alyssa told Ghost who nodded its sinuous neck in agreement. "He has given us the tools to save our pack. To rewrite history itself. We will not fail. We cannot."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

What does Nameless mean by the Three-eyed Raven trying to prepare its hosts? Well, I observed that the Raven seemed to have hosts who were broken in some way. Bloodraven lost everything and was exiled to the Wall. Bran is paraplegic, saw his home sacked and his family torn apart. I can only reason that it likes hosts with vulnerabilities that probably allows it to more easily worm its way into their mind and pack itself there. Considering this and its antagonistic role in this verse, the details of which will become clear in the last 'book' of this story, I found it fitting to for it to engineer Alyssa's trauma in its bid to prepare her for becoming its host.

With that spelled out, there's the first 'book' of this story folks. Hope you guys liked it. The next 'book' will involve a timeskip to more familiar territory i.e. the start of the canon books/show and things will really start rolling from there. I look forward to seeing you there.

Till then slán!
The City of Vipers #1: The Game begins

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Alyssa I Targaryen

Book: The City of Vipers

Chapter 1: The Game begins

Beta:

Six years after Alyssa Targaryen learned her true heritage, the true heiress to the Iron Throne was out spending time in the Wolfswood with her familiar, the dragon Ghost. The ritual that had hatched him from his egg had bound them together through what her Tome called a familiar bond. They were now connected down to their very souls and through this bond could connect to each other mind to mind regardless of distance or at least so her Tome claimed. This was not like Warging like she'd been able to do in her past life however. Familiars were equal partners, so she could not force anything anything onto Ghost. She also could no longer perceive the world through his senses at will though he could show her snippets of what he perceived. Such images were his favored form of communication though she had taught him to comprehend and even speak Westerosi through their mind link.

"Hold still now," Alyssa ordered her scaly friend, waiting to receive a grudging acceptance from Ghost before she cast her spell. "Cone of Cold!"

At her command, a blast of frost shot out from her cupped hands and scoured her dragon's side of the dirt, blood and guts that had accumulated there. As she carefully walked around the great creature, not for the first time did she admire the shape that the familiar bond had changed him into. With her magic bleeding into him as he grew, he had become like no dragon before him. He'd grown into massive wyrm that was, by her admittedly very biased estimation, bigger than even the legendary Balerion the Black Dread. Though how much that was natural for a dragon and how much was the influence of her magic, she was unsure. The rest though, were clearly deviations from the norm. He had retained his snow white scales however the small gaps between them now glowed with the heat of molten magma that she knew now flowed in his veins. His horns had transformed into razor sharp icicles and the membranes of his wings had transformed into an ever changing net of raw magic. Most striking however were his eyes which whilst still blood red now shone a baleful crimson that spoke of eldritch power. She knew that he made a terrifying sight to behold, but to her he was her other half and she felt no fear of him.

The bond was a two way affair of course but as for how it affected her, she was at a loss as she felt no sign of it. Though her Tome suggested that it might extend her lifespan to match Ghost's own, there was no way she could confirm that anytime soon. Nor could she sense the boost to her magical strength it granted as she had only started her studies in the art at around the time of his hatching.

"Did you have to make such a mess?" Alyssa asked her friend as she gestured for him to move so she could hit fresh areas of his bulk with her spell.
Ghost just turned his long serpentine neck to look at her sharply.

"Alright, so it was Ramsay Snow and his Bastard's Boys but still!"

Ghost's response was to send an image of the presumptuous bastard's offer to marry "Alyssa Stark" that her Father had received last week into her mind alongside the simmering anger that he felt on her behalf.

Yes, she went by Alyssa Stark nowadays. King Robert, or more likely his Hand, had legitimized her as part of an attempt to appease the North and get them to fight in the Greyjoy Rebellion. Not that it had been necessary to convince the North to join the war, the Ironborn had been raiding the North's western coast as part of the Rebellion so the North would have joined in without the bribe but her Father had accepted it on her behalf nonetheless. Though, he had, at her urging, used the King's desire for reconciliation to avoid taking Theon Greyjoy as a hostage. Alyssa remembered well what the Ironborn had done to her family in her time as Jon and wanted nothing to do with him. Thus the boy had been taken in by Stannis Baratheon instead.

Time had been kind to her in other ways as well, though she sometimes find it hard to appreciate it, and she'd developed a voluptuous if somewhat slim figure that made her beautiful. That and her legitimization had earned her many offers of marriage, such as the one from Ramsay Snow, but thankfully her Father had, at her request, rejected them all.

A reprieve that greatly relieved Alyssa for despite having accepted that she was a woman now, there still lingered parts of her that was still Jon and that included his and now her attraction to women. As she had discovered through her attraction towards Alys Karstark when the Karstarks had visited Winterfell last year. She knew it was frowned upon, even thought of as unnatural by many, and that in spite of it she would someday have to marry a man and birth children but she could not help herself. She thus longed to put off that last eventualty for as much as possible.

"Did you finish him this time at least?" She asked her dragon with a sigh or resignation. Her dragon had, at her urging, been hunting the man off and on the past two years. The man was responsible for the most heinous of crimes, including if the rumors were to be believed the recent murder of his trueborn brother, and in her previous life had forcibly married Arya, thus neither Alyssa nor Ghost were willing to let him live to threaten their family ever again.

She was thus heartened by the image Ghost sent her of him tearing the ugly young man apart, careful not to have even a drop of his vile blood go down his gullet. The sight even brought a vindictive smile to her face.

"Good job Ghost." She complimented her dragon who preened at her praise.

Laughing at her dragon's antics, Alyssa continued cleaning his bulk. It took a good ten minutes and at least three recastings of Cone of Cold, but she eventually got it done.

Breathing a sigh of relief, she took a seat on a tree stump that Ghost had created specifically for the purpose. She was barely seated before her dragon plopped its massive head in front of her and purred invitingly.

Chuckling at the massive creature of legend behaving like a housecat, Alyssa nevertheless obligingly reached out and scratched her familiar's scales causing it to purr in contentment.

"You are so easy to please," Alyssa told her friend with a smile.

Ghost simply sent a burst of possessiveness her way that she translated into the equivalent of him
telling her "only for you." This made her smile brighten even more and she scratched her dragon friend at just the spot behind his right eye that he liked, making him purr happily.

"So now that you're clean, what do-"

Alyssa's question was cut off when Ghost tensed.

"What is it?"

Her dragon sent her an image of Robb and Alyssa sighed.

"He's looking for me?"

The mighty dragon just nodded, pointing his head in the direction of Winterfell where his superior senses must have detected her brother entering the woods.

"Then I better get going." Alyssa said as she stood, sending a sense of apology through her link to her familiar. "We wouldn't want him to think I'm missing and call a search."

*That one time had been enough.* Alyssa thought to herself.

Ghost agreed and nudged her gently, sending her a wordless farewell.

Sending her own goodbyes in a burst of emotion, Alyssa quickly made her way out of the clearing in the Wolfswood that was Ghost's lair. It took a few minutes of walking after that before she exited the complicated *Illusion* spell that she'd cast over the area to make it appear as a low hill complete with native wildlife moving around it at random.

She stopped for a moment to examine the spell, making sure it was working properly and didn't need to be refreshed. There had been plenty of rumors of Ghost's existence among the smallfolk stemming from those whose memories she could not change with her *Modify Memory* spell but there was no confirmation, and she would very much like to keep it that way.

Nodding in satisfaction that the spell wasn't in need of maintenance just yet, Alyssa turned to continue back towards Winterfell. If Robb was setting out from it to look for her then she was sure to run into him as she approached. There was only one proper path out into the Wolfswood from the castle in this area and her brother would not stray far from it.

Her conclusion was substantiated when she neared said path and heard Robb calling out.

"Alys, are you out here?"

Alyssa spotted him a minute later. He was standing in the middle of the path shouting into the woods and lacking even the most basic vigilance.

*Sloppy, brother. Very sloppy.* The mage thought to herself with a frown. *I think a little reminder to always be on guard is in order.*

Smirking mischievously, Alyssa cast *Levitate* on herself and floated unseen into a tree whose branches arched over the path. It had a perfect perch from which she had a view of her brother's unguarded back.

"Watch out below!" Alyssa shouted as she playfully pounced down on him from on high.

Her shout caught his attention and he spun around just in time for her to fall right on top of him,
sending them both crashing into the ground. He didn't know it but the only reason neither of them broke any bones from the impact was because she used her still active Levitate spell to adjust her fall. Not that he was grateful for it as he roughly pushed her off him.

"Alys! Are you crazy?" He accused, shooting her a suitably incredulous look.

"Just having some fun, brother." Alyssa said with a smirk. "Nothing more."

"By climbing trees? In a dress no less?" Robb said, looking most cross. "If you're torn up another dress, you know you'll be punished."

"My dress is fine." Alyssa said with a roll of her eyes. "Here see for yourself."

Giving her brother a twirl to prove her point. He, of course, didn't need to know she'd only managed that feat thanks to the Mage Armor she had wrapped around herself. Though if his frown was any indication, he sensed something was amiss but she deflected his suspicion with a smile that more than one resident of Winterfell had come to describe as mysterious.

"So why are you looking for me?"

"I came to fetch you," Robb told her, his frown still firmly in place. "Father wants to see us."

As Alyssa followed Robb into their Father's solar, the hidden Princess was surprised to find not just the Lord of Winterfell present but also her Stepmother. While the differences that had divided her family as a child had disappeared after Lady Catelyn's openhearted care for her after the incident, her stepmother was a very traditional woman. She strictly adhered to the customary division of responsibility between a lord and his lady. Thus it was somewhat odd to see her here in Father's solar in what one look at his hard face told her was a serious matter.

"Alys, Robb, sit." Father commanded.

Without hesitation, Alyssa and her brother obeyed and slipped into two of the chairs arrayed in front of Father's desk.

"Children, are you aware of the news from King's Landing?"

"That Jon Arryn is dead?" Robb asked, his disdain for the Hand and everything to do with the King in general clear as day in his tone.

"Yes, that." Father said, shifting nervously. While he shared the same hatred all the Starks felt for the King after what he'd done to Alyssa, he still thought well of his foster father and was uncomfortable at the clear dislike the rest of their family held for him.

"What of it Father?" Alyssa asked, even as a suspicion as to what grew.

Surely the Usurper isn't that stupid! The last time he visited he was driven out at swordpoint!

"In light of Lord Arryn's death, the King," Father began and Alyssa noted he refused to even address the man who he once called brother by name. "Has requested to visit Winterfell once more."

Robb's face burned bright red with anger at this and Alyssa paled, prompting Father to raise a hand to forestall her brother's outburst even as Stepmother came over and took Alyssa's trembling right hand into her own with a comforting squeeze.
"He wishes to convince me to be his Hand." Father continued. "I want to refuse. On both counts, but I would like to hear the opinion of you, my eldest children and heirs, before making any decision."

"Father, why are you even considering this?" Robb asked, his eyes narrowed as he pieced together the answer to his own question. "There's more to this, isn't there? If not, you would just refuse outright. It would be the right thing to do after what happened the last time the King visited."

"Yes, there is." Stepmother confirmed. "Alongside the King's request, I received word a private raven from my sister, Lysa Arryn, claiming that her husband had been poisoned by the Lannisters."

"Despite everything, Jon Arryn was like a father to me. If he was murdered, then I owe my foster father enough to at least try and find his killers." Father continued, a look of firm conviction on his face.

"The best way to do that is to become King Robert's Hand. It would grant you access to the former Hand's effects and the resources to further the investigation." Robb noted with clear disapproval, before turning to look at Alyssa meaningfully. "But doing so will make it seem like they've forgotten what he did to Alys!"

Father frowned and prepared to speak, probably say something that might just incense Robb more and cause things to spiral into an argument. It was into this tense atmosphere that Alyssa surprised everyone, even herself, when she suddenly spoke.

"L-Let the King come." She said in a whisper that nevertheless silenced the room. "And Father, you should accept the position of Hand."

"Alyssa, are you sure?" Stepmother asked, looking at her worriedly. "If you're concerned about the consequences of refusal, don't be. It's not something that we could not manage."

"But it's not something we need to manage." Alyssa countered. "More importantly, what happened to me is in the past. It's important and we must never forgive or forget it but the present and future are more important. And if someone has poisoned Lord Arryn then we must hunt them down. The Crown is not stable, what with the open secret of its enormous debts. We cannot afford to just ignore someone killing the Hand. Today they kill the Hand, what if they kill the King tomorrow? As things stand, with the Crown so weak and the grudges from Robert's Rebellion still fresh, it will almost certainly lead to civil war. Something that we must avoid."

As Alyssa finished her little speech, she noticed everyone looking at her with amazement.

"I see those lessons with Maester Luwin have served you well." Father said with a chuckle and Alyssa blushed. "You know your politics well."

It's not just politics. Alyssa thought as she gave a shy nod at her Father's praise. I need to keep things along the same path as they occurred in my last life or what I remember will be useless. And if that happens then it'll be all the more difficult to save everyone!

"After hearing Alys' assessment are you still opposed?" Father asked Robb with a pointed look.

"No, she's right. As much as I hate it, we will have to play along."

"Good, then it's agreed." Father said with finality. "I'll send a raven to King's Landing immediately to inform the King that we welcome his visit."

And so the game begins at last.
Done!

Some of you might be wondering about why Alyssa still seems rattled by her attempted rape even after Nameless lifted its effects from her shoulders. Note that he only ever said that he'd make her functional and more importantly that he'd make her recovery believable. He never said the recovery would be complete, which according to my understanding is rare for such traumatic experiences. As such, for the sake of keeping things believable in the eyes of others he deliberately made the healing incomplete. Alyssa isn't debilitated by it but it still affects her. Hope that makes sense.

Well that's it for the chapter. Till next time
Two months after the fateful meeting in Father's solar where the decision was made to welcome the King's visit, Alyssa observed the arrival of the royal party from the bridge between the Armory and the Great Keep. After what happened the last time the King visited it was universally agreed, even by the King himself, that she should keep away from him as much as possible.

She'd been excused from the welcoming ceremony as a result but she couldn't bring herself to stay away entirely. Not when this would be the first time for her to see the Lannisters, the ones who in her past life had been the architects of her family's destruction. So she'd hidden herself at a vantage point on the bridge with a decent view of the courtyard but which was out of sight from below where her family including their newest member, the five year old Bran, awaited the royals. The guards keeping watch there noticed her presence of course but no one said a word. She was a Stark of Winterfell after all and could move wherever she wished within the castle, even if it meant she was spying on the royal party.

She was thus uninterrupted as she watched King Robert and Father exchange strained but polite pleasantries, idly noting he looked even more fat and unbecoming of his crown than he did the last time he was in the North and in comparison to her memories of him from her past life.

Her mind quickly shifted away from him though as she spotted the first of the true objects of her attention this day in the form of the Kingslayer. He had not accompanied King Robert North on his last trip and thus this was Alyssa's first look at the man who had killed the madman who had been her paternal grandfather. He was much as she remembered him from her past life, a tall, handsome man, with curled hair the color of beaten gold and striking cat-green eyes that stood out even from the distance between them.

Next to catch Alyssa's attention was Queen Cersei as she stepped out of the wheelhouse. She shared the same eyes and hair as her twin though her hair was naturally longer and styled more femininely. In further contrast to her twin, where he had a muscular build, she possessed a slender, graceful figure. Again, she was much alike to her own recollections from her past life.

As were her three children who were exiting the wheelhouse behind her.

As befit his likely incestuous origins, Prince Joffrey had the blond curly hair and green eyes of his parents. He was tall for a boy his age and with his pouty lips Alyssa might have called him handsome if she had a taste for men or did not know of his madness. Beside him was his younger brother Prince Tommen who was the same plump boy with long white-blond hair from her past life.
Princess Myrcella was a surprise however. Not because she looked different. She was as Alyssa remembered her, a girl with golden curls, emerald eyes, and full lips. But because unlike in her past life the sight of the young Princess struck her in a way that the dragonrider did not expect. The moment she glimpsed her a well of strange affection for the girl seemed to fill her being that faded as quickly as it came.

*I must have imagined it.* Alyssa concluded as she shifted her gaze to the last Lannister to have come North who was just exiting his own separate smaller wheelhouse and moving to take his place at the tail end of the party.

*A place of shame considering his relation to the Queen.* Alyssa noted. *I see you are as hated by your kin in this life as you were in my past life, Imp.*

That might not have changed, but the dwarf's appearance certainly had. While the Tyrion Lannister she remembered had been handsome in his own short way, this life's version of the man could not be called so even by the most generous. This Tyrion was a ugly man with stubby legs, a jutting forehead, mismatched eyes of green and black, and a mixture of pale blond and black hair.

*I can't imagine that helped him win any love from his family.* The mage mused as she took a moment to burn the images of these people into her mind. She couldn't kill them yet, not without derailing everything and making much of her knowledge of future events moot but she would some day. And until then she needed to remember the appearances of her targets well.

*Not that it matters.* Alyssa thought as she stood to leave. *When the time comes I will kill you all. Even you Imp, regardless of any sympathy I might have for your looks.*

With that firm decision made in her mind she retreated into the Great Keep proper with a swirl of skirts. Her Father and Lady Stark had asked her to keep out of sight, and the best way to do so was to retreat to her rooms. That she'd have to do so without getting seen by any of their guests even as the royal party was getting settled into their rooms would be a challenge. But one she was ready for. She was a mage after all.

*Minor Illusion.* She cast with a thought as she took a corner and went out of sight of the nearest guards only to appear to the next set around the bend as a simple unassuming servant girl hurrying to some task or other. A ruse she kept up all the way till she reached her rooms and slipped inside without anyone being the wiser.

Her attempt to stay in her chambers for the duration of the King's visit was thwarted however when shortly after the midday meal a servant had arrived to inform her that her Father wished to see her in his solar. Thus she found herself seated in the familiar room and was left floored by what her Father had to tell her.

"He what?" Alyssa asked, shocked by what her Father had just told her.

"He's invited you, specifically, to join us in King's Landing, Alys." Father told her, his eyes swimming with anger. "I wanted to refuse him the moment he suggested it but I would not make the decision for you."

Alyssa just nodded as she processed everything.

*Is the King trying to create an opportunity to seduce me? No, even Robert Baratheon is not so*
much of a fool. Alyssa thought as she tried to process the King's reasoning behind this move. He is enough of one though to think that this might curry enough favor with me and by extension with Father and the North, to further bury the animosity between them and the Crown. At the same time, some of his more politically minded advisors likely think doing this will show the rest of the Seven Kingdoms that the rift is well and truly buried. After all, if I, the source of the conflict, has chosen to 'forgive' the King and go to King's Landing with him then surely all is well.

"I'll go." Alyssa said after her long contemplation. "Arya and Sansa are going are they not?"

Father nodded. "They are at an age that they would benefit from the experience."

"They are also expected to go as exposure to the court of King's Landing will help their marriage prospects. Thus not taking them along would be another sign of the rift between us and the Crown which will call the opportunist out of the woodwork. Potentially destabilizing the whole regime and risking the civil war we have been trying to avoid." Alyssa added. "The only downside is that me going will hurt my prospects by making it seem like I'm the King's mistress."

Father's face grew thunderous at that, but Alyssa raised her hand and forestalled his outburst.

"It's unavoidable Father. All the Kingdoms know what the King did to me and yet here I am following him to King's Landing? It is unavoidable that people will think as such."

"Then you will not go." Father said, his voice a cutting winter wind. "None of you will go."

"No," Alyssa said defiantly. "I will not cost Arya and Sansa's improved prospects or god forbid risk civil war for my own sake. Nor will I let them, or you Father, go to that city of vipers without me to watch them. All three of us will go."

*Only if I go will I have the chance to save you all from the fate which awaits you.*

Father frowned and the two glared at each other in a silent contest of wills, before at long last the Lord of Winterfell sighed.

"If I refused, I would never hear the end of it would I?" He asked wryly.

"Never," Alyssa agreed with a smirk.

"Then very well," Father said with a nod. "But you must be careful. I would assign you a guard but-
"

"I'll lose them just like the ones you ordered to shadow me in the past." Alyssa told him honestly, recalling her Father's failed attempts to appoint guards to protect her shortly after *the incident* and how she had used her magic to evade them.

Father sighed again and nodded.

"Moving on, the King also mentioned possible betrothals between our Houses to, in his words, 'close the rifts' between us."

Alyssa just scoffed and Father chuckled.

"That was my response when he first raised the matter as well," Father told her with a grin. "However, I tell you this because it seems that the Queen seemed especially interested in the idea of a betrothal between Sansa and Crown Prince Joffrey. She seemed worried the divide between our Houses might undermine his future reign."
Alyssa's eyes narrowed at that, her mind recalling what she'd heard of Joffrey in her last life and how nothing in this one had showed he was any different. Though that Cersei was advocating for this marriage was a surprise. Had the gulf between the North and the Crown grown so big that even the Lioness would resort to marrying her precious insane son to what she almost certainly regarded as a Northern savage to mend?

"Rest assured Alys, so long as I can help it, I will never allow such a marriage to come to pass." Father told her seriously. "I merely tell you so that you might be wary of the Queen's machinations on your sister's behalf. You know how she can be at times."

Alyssa nodded. Sansa could indeed be too taken by the tales weaved in the fanciful songs to see things as they really were at times. She was better than Jon's Sansa but not by much.

"I'll watch out for her."

"I know you will, Alys. I know you will."

It was not however Sansa that Alyssa and her Father that they had to worry about.

Bran Stark was the youngest of the Lord of Winterfell's children. Born a year after his reconciliation with Lady Stark, he was the well loved baby of the family having charmed them and all of Winterfell with his adorable looks, thick auburn hair, deep blue eyes and childish enthusiasm.

A healthy enthusiasm he was exercising as he played hide and seek with his older sister Arya a day after the royal party had arrived. The whole affair had been thoroughly boring and stifling for the young boy who had to be on his best behavior all day and dressed in his uncomfortable fancy clothes. Arya had felt the same so it had been no difficulty convincing his rambunctious older sister to indulge him in a game today. That Alys was hiding in her rooms from the royals, for some reason that no one wanted to explain to him, just made it easier. His eldest sister was always so strict! If she'd learned they were playing hide and seek when guests were around she'd have scolded him.

And then tell Mother who will scold me some more. The young Stark added with a pout even as he climbed the steps of the Broken Tower. The room at the top was his favorite hiding spot in all of Winterfell since no one ever came there.

As he reached it, however, he was surprised to find the door to the room closed.

Locked too? Bran noted to himself with a frown as he pushed against the door and it refused to budge. And are those voices coming from inside? Did someone else find my hiding spot?

Curiosity getting the better of him, Bran spied through the gaps in the old rickety wooden door and gasped in shock at what he saw. Inside was the Queen and her twin brother naked and rutting like some of the animals he'd seen in the Wolfswood doing.

His gasp must have been loud, for unlike his attempts at opening the door it caught the attention of the people inside the room.

"Jaime! There's someone outside the door!" The Queen screamed and Bran turned to run even as the door swung open behind him.

The youngest Stark didn't get far and the man easily grabbed hold of him, dragging him back into the room.
"Let me go!" Bran shouted as loudly and kicked at his captor as furiously as he could.

The two adults ignored his desperate attempts at escape.

"Jaime, he saw us!" The Queen hissed, holding up her dress to her naked body and looking terrified. "He saw us!"

The Kingslayer frowned but with a sigh moved towards the window.

"The things I do for love." He said with resignation as he threw the young boy out the window.

Alyssa had not forgotten that Bran had fallen out of the Broken Tower during this visit by the King in her previous life and even though her Bran was not the same child, she was determined to be careful. With Bran constantly in the care of his mother on the first day of festivities that marked the arrival of the royal party there had been no need to worry for his safety till the second morning whereupon the moment she awoke she proceeded to keep a close eye on her brother through constant use of the Scrying spell.

It was a strain on her mind and it left her distracted, something her family noticed but everyone chalked up to her uneasiness with the King after what happened the last time he had been in Winterfell. Lady Catelyn especially seemed to think so and was determined to keep them apart. Not in a hurtful way, but she had made sure either she, her Father or Robb was always with Alyssa whenever possible.

It was Robb's turn when she saw Bran stumble upon the Queen and the Kingslayer laying with each other in the room at the top of the Broken Tower. The sight of the Lannister twins engaging in treason with each other was shocking enough to have her gasp. She'd heard and believed the claims, supported by her Father, of such in her past life but seeing proof was something altogether.

"What is it?" Robb asked, looking up from the book he was reading while accompanying her in the library.

"Bran," Alyssa said in alarm as she stood hastily, not needing to see what was happening in the room at the top of the Broken Tower to know what was about to happen.

"He's in danger!" She shouted as she picked up her skirts and raced towards the Broken Tower.

"W-What? Alyssa what is going on?" Robb asked as he kept place.

"T-The Broken Tower! Go!" Alyssa shouted, cursing her skirts and how it slowed her down. The cut of her dress wasn't really very cumbersome, none except for her most formal dresses were but the slight hindrance was slowing her nonetheless. "Go!"

Robb looked lost, but at her desperation broke into a run, the better freedom of movement offered by his clothes and his masculine physical advantage allowing him to sprint ahead. Even as Grey Wind, who should have been in the kennels with his littermates suddenly appeared from nowhere and raced ahead of Robb. Alyssa followed behind them both as closely as she could and turned around the corner to the Broken Tower a moment after him.

Rounding that corner she found herself just in time to see Robb and Grey Wind attempt to catch their falling little brother. They were too far away however and all the two older Starks and the direwolf could do was watch Bran slam into the ground. An impact that caused his still developing skull to burst like a melon.
An ungodly scream ripped through the air and drowned out everything. For a moment, Alyssa wondered where it came from. Who could scream like that? It took her a moment to realize it the screams were her own.

That night, Alyssa was desperately trying to find some kind of resurrection spell in her Tome to revive her brother. All she found were spells from the School of Necromancy that animated the dead and as much as she wanted her brother back, she would not bring him back as a wight. She was certain that the Tome had the spells she needed but it stubbornly refused to provide it to her.

She was dismissing what must've been the tenth spell and flipping for another when a knock on the main door to her rooms caught her attention.

"Alys, can I come in?" Her Stepmother's voice called out to her from outside the wooden door.

Shutting her Tome, Alyssa hurried to the door to open it for the grieving mother.

"Stepmother," Alyssa greeted as she showed the surprisingly calm looking woman in.

A silence stretched over them as they took seats opposite each other in the small sitting room that served as the antechamber to Alyssa's bedroom. Much as this was a lady's chambers of one of the Great Houses of Westeros, the Starks had always been austere and despite being the eldest daughter of Lord Stark Alyssa had only been afforded two rooms.

Alyssa made a few abortive attempts to start a conversation but the blank look on her Stepmother's face stilled her tongue. As a result, the silence was becoming uncomfortable when Lady Stark finally spoke.

"Your distraction since this morning. It was because you were worried this might happen to Bran, wasn't it?"

Was I too obvious!? Darn! What do I say? Alyssa thought as she scrambled to figure out a way to deflect from her secrets.

"There's no need to deny it." Lady Stark said, sounding uncharacteristically solemn for the normally emotional woman. "Your Father, I, the whole family, the whole of Winterfell most likely, know that you've access to something beyond the natural."

"I-"

"You've been good at hiding it. Good enough that we have no idea what power you have. Ned thinks you are a Greenseer, Robb thinks you're a Warg, and I had suspicions that you are a Wood Witch. But whatever is your power, it doesn't matter. Only one thing does now."

"What?" Alyssa asked worriedly.

"Can you bring Bran back?" Lady Catelyn asked, looking at Alyssa hopefully.

The mage gulped and looked at her Tome as it rested on a nearby table while biting her lip nervously. Hadn't she thought that herself? That she might find a spell that could save Bran?

But…

Taking a deep breath, Alyssa steeled herself and answered her Stepmother. "I'm sorry. I've been trying to find something that might help, but I can't. I c-can't save him."
Lady Catelyn closed her eyes as she fought back tears, though a few slipped through nonetheless.

"I see," The grieving mother said after taking a long moment to compose herself. "I suppose I expected that. Some things not even magic can bring back."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be." Lady Catelyn said as she stood. "It's not your fault. You've already done everything you can. I trust that to be true. I know how much you love your siblings. You would do no less."

"Stepmother," Alyssa said following the woman to the door leading out of her rooms. "Are you alright?"

"No," the woman confessed. "But I'll manage. I have to. I still have four children to care for."

Alyssa sucked in a breath, as she realized that Stepmother counted her among her children.

"Try to get some sleep, Alyssa." Her Stepmother said, patting her comfortably on her shoulder.

Alyssa could only nod numbly, not knowing what to say but feeling like she should say something.

Stepmother did not expect it though and slipped out of the door as suddenly as she had come, leaving Alyssa standing there and looking at the closed door gripped by an indecipherable mix of emotions.

The next morning, before anyone had even broken their fasts, the surviving Starks of Winterfell, now joined by their Uncle Benjen that had arrived the night before, gathered in solemn silence inside the Winterfell Crypts as Father carefully laid Bran's remains into his tomb. With his body so badly damaged by the fall, there was no means to properly embalm him. Thus Father and Stepmother had the body cremated and placed into a freshly hewn stone sarcophagus. It had been a rushed job and it was a largely plain affair save simple Stark direwolf sigils carved into all four sides. It would be added to in time, but for now this simple tomb would be the youngest Stark's resting place.

Various members of the royal party had wanted to attend the ceremony, but had been firmly rebuffed by Father. This would be a private family affair and he would not be moved on the matter.

There were not a single dry eye among anyone there, either among the Starks themselves or even the handful of trusted servants that were in attendance.

Each member of the Stark family took a turn in order of their seniority to pay their respects to Bran.

"Rest well, my son." Father said, before his breath hitched and he had to stop.

Uncle Benjen went to his side and put an arm over his shoulder and guided him back to where the rest of the family stood respectfully a short distance away from the tomb, whispering into the silent Crypts as he did.

"May the gods welcome you, sweet child."

It was Stepmother's turn next and she walked up to the tomb and just kissed the top of the sarcophagus before she stiffly walked back to stand next to Father who pulled her close.

"I will avenge you brother," Robb said, his voice brimming over with grief and wrath in equal measure even as Grey Wind standing next to him growled furiously. "For taking you away from us
too soon, I will avenge you."

It was Alyssa's turn but all she could manage was collapsing to her knees and sobbing miserably. She'd failed! She failed to change things! To save Bran's life!

Dimly she sensed that her loss of composure had her emotions flooding through the link to Ghost who roared in agitation and sent her an image of him taking to the air to show that he was on his way.

No! Alyssa shouted through the link. You promised!

The last time she'd lost herself to her grief, when Bran had first fell, Ghost had almost flew to Winterfell to comfort her. Thankfully, he'd refrained and obeyed her standing request to not let himself be discovered. It seemed however this time he had enough.

He sent her a burst of anger.

Please. Just stay hidden. Alyssa pleaded with her dragon. I have enough on my plate as is! I can't deal with you exposing yourself too! Please Ghost! Just stay!

The dragon sent her a discontented growl accompanied by an image of him grudgingly landing back in his magically concealed lair.

"There, there Alys." Alyssa heard Robb tell her in a comforting whisper as her awareness returned to the present and she found herself being held tightly in her brother's arms. "It's not your fault."

"Robb's right!" Arya wailed suddenly as she bawled. "It's mine! Bran would've been fine if I didn't agree to play hide and seek with him! It's all my fault!"

"Nonsense," Stepmother said, pulling her distraught daughter into her arms. "You couldn't have known this would happen. You were just playing a game."

Arya's only response was to sob into her mother's skirts.

Sansa just stood there looking lost even as tears streamed down her face and Alyssa pulled away from Robb slightly to open her arms to her sister. The middle Stark sister took the invitation immediately and threw herself into her elder sister's embrace.

Running a soothing hand through Sansa's hair and whispering what words of comfort she could muster, Alyssa made a private pledge.

I will avenge you little brother. She swore. It might not be today or tomorrow. But I swear in LordNameless' name that I will avenge you!

It had taken hours before the Starks had recomposed themselves enough to finally leave the Crypts by which time the midday meal was already being served and at Father and Stepmother's insistence they were all told to eat. The Stark parents had not specified where they were to take their meals however and so Alyssa had taken the initiative of asking the servants to bring their food to her rooms. As they did so, however, the eldest Stark daughter herded her siblings to the Smithy instead.

"Why the Smithy?" A still sniffling Arya asked as they walked into the building, clinging tightly to Alyssa's skirts.
"Because I've arranged something for the two of you." Alyssa told her sisters.

"And not me?"

It was meant as a joke, Alyssa knew, but none of them were in a joking mood at the moment so she just answered him directly.

"You have plenty of what I commissioned already. You don't need more." Alyssa told him with a roll of her eyes. "Besides, you're not the one going to King's Landing and need these."

"You make King's Landing sound so dangerous, Alys." Sansa said with a frown. "Is it really?"

"It's dangerous enough that I'd rather you have these and not need than need them and not have them."

"What are these anyways?" Arya said with a tinge of her usual impatience. "You haven't told us."

"I can explain that, milady." Mikken, the Winterfell blacksmith, said as walked over. "If you'll follow me?"

Alyssa offered the gruff older man a smile and led her siblings in following the blacksmith to a table on which was a small, slender sword and a set of small easily concealed blades.

Both sisters gasped at the sight and even Robb whistled in appreciation.

"Are these for us?" Sansa asked, eyeing the knives with want.

"Yes," Alyssa told them with a nod. "The knives are for you Sansa and the sword is yours Arya. I commissioned Mikken to make them so they could help keep you safe while we travel to and when we are in King's Landing."

"I don't deserve it," Arya said with a sob. "I helped cause Bran's death."

"No you did not!" Everyone, even Mikken, chorused but Arya still looked hesitant.

**Time to try a new approach.**

"Arya." Alyssa said as she knelt down to look at her sister eye to eye. "Think of it this way. If the gods are good, these weapons might just help to avenge Bran."

This seemed to work and Arya's face scrunched up as fury overtook her and she turned to pick up the sword. She swung it around experimentally in the moves Alyssa had taught her.

"Lady Alyssa had me design it to suit the fencing style used by bravos of the Free Cities," Mikken informed them.

"Why those?"

"Because," Alyssa said thinking of the Water Dance instructor that her sister had studied under in her past life and which she had spoken to her Father and the girl's Lady Mother to hire for her in this one. "I have a feeling it will suit you."

Arya swung her new weapon around a few more times, before suddenly declaring. "Needle. That's what I'm calling this sword. They say a good needle is a lady's best weapon and this is mine."

"Fitting," Sansa said with a roll of her eyes.
"How about you Sansa? Naming your knives?" Robb asked with a grin.

"No, I'm not that crazy about weapons." Said her sister even as she slipped the blades into the folds of her dress. "I only train with them because we need to for self-defense."

"That is good enough."

At least I hope so. Alyssa thought as she looked between her two sisters and their new weapons.

"Here!" Mikken said suddenly as he returned with another slender sword. "For you Lady Alyssa."

"For me?" Alyssa blinked in confusion. "But I didn't commission anything for myself."

"It is good for you to get your sisters weapons to protect themselves, milady." The gruff blacksmith said. "But you mustn't forget yourself. So since you did, I took the liberty to do one extra for you."

Alyssa took the blade. It was a slender sword like Arya's Needle but slightly more robust to suit her own more heavy handed style better.

"Thank you, Mikken." Alyssa said sincerely.

"My pleasure, milady. Now what you gonna call it?"

Alyssa looked at the blade for a long moment. It was not Longclaw. That sword would likely never be hers again. But that was the blade she knew best and she wanted to pay her respects to it after all it had done for her in her past life.

"Steelclaw. I'll call it Steelclaw."

"Father, Stepmother," Alyssa greeted her parents as they settled in her sitting room that night. "Thank you for coming."

"Of course we would come, Alys," Father told her honestly. "Our daughter tells us she has something important to tell us? Did you think we wouldn't?"

Alyssa just nodded, hiding the bubbling happiness at what her Father said. Of his faith in her. The Lord of Winterfell and Warden of the North was a busy man after all, especially when there was royalty visiting. It was thus not easy to find time to entertain his children's requests like he was doing now.

"What is it, Alys?" Stepmother asked worriedly. "Did something happen?"

There's no easy way to do this. Alyssa realized. I'll just have to get right to the point.

"I know why Bran died." The mage said bluntly, looking around her room nervously even as she said so despite being sure they were alone.

Both her parents gasped in shock but Alyssa ignored it and barreled ahead before she lost her courage.

"He was killed because he saw the Queen and her twin laying with each other in the room at the top of the Broken Tower."

"How do you know th-" Father began before stopping himself. "It is best that I do not know. I trust that you have to keep your powers a secret, Alys?"
"Yes, my go-" Alyssa began, prepared to tell him everything then but froze as she caught sight of her Stepmother, the words dying in her throat.

The burning look of anger in Lady Stark's eyes stirred a long forgotten fear inside Alyssa, even if that anger was not directed towards her and instead attempting to burn a hole through the very walls as she glared at the rooms they'd given the Queen.

"Cat, don't worry. I'll move the heavens themselves to find proof so we can avenge Bran." Father swore, his face looking carved out of very Wall. "I will use all my power as Hand and proximity to those monsters to bring them to justice."

"Do whatever you need to Ned." Stepmother said without breaking her heated glare at the stonework. "So long as our boy is avenged."

Father just nodded, a dark look in his eyes.

What have I unleashed? She thought as she began to doubt her decision to say anything at all.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Wow! Long chapter, huh? Well, I can't guarantee the rest will be the same. I split my chapters up according to where it makes sense to end things and that will inevitably lead to inconsistency in length.

Some might be feeling I am railroading the canon plot by having Bran fall from the Broken Tower like he did. But that's the whole point. I probably won't spell it out in the story itself but there's an element of fate being hard to change at work in this story. So far, Alyssa has been subtle about what changes, if any, she's made to the timeline even going out of the way to preserve it. With such half-hearted efforts, is it any surprise she couldn't change Bran's fall?

Another point of railroading that has been raised as a concern is the issue of the Starks going South that was raised by a couple of reviewers on FFN. Let me broadcast my response to that issue. Alyssa is not a genius. If she doesn't let Ned go South and invalidates much of her future knowledge than she fears she will not know how to respond. The Realm is inherently unstable at this time, crisis is coming whether she wants to or not. Choosing to play conservatively is, in her opinion, the best bet at the moment. Plus she thinks that if she's in King's Landing with them, maybe she can rescue them if the hammer falls as per her last life. I allude to this in the story through her unwillingness to change the future and other related thoughts. Is she making the wrong call? You'll have to wait and see.

On a more minor note, some might be wondering about why Tyrion looked different from Peter Dinklage. It's quite simple. This is book!Tyrion not GOT!Tyrion. Draw your own conclusions from that. ;)

Till next time adiós!
"Take care of yourself." Robb told Alyssa as he hugged her goodbye. "Not just Sansa and Arya."

"I will." Alyssa reassured him. "And you take care of yourself and the North while Father and I are gone you hear?"

"I'll do my best," the Stark heir told his sister with a grin as they pulled apart.

"Robb, they need to leave soon." Stepmother chided her son with fond exasperation. "It's time you stop delaying your sister."

"Sorry Mother," Robb said with a slight blush, before turning to offer Alyssa his arm. "Let me help you into the wheelhouse."

Alyssa rolled her eyes, she was perfectly capable of climbing a few steps all on her own, but she allowed her brother this act of gallantry. She was likely to be unable to see him again for a long time after all. This coming long separation was temporarily leaving the pall of grief that gripped the Starks as they tried to make the best of the limited time before they parted.

"I'll still surprised that you're not riding." Robb said as he guided her up the steps from the ground. "Father even made sure that your favorite horse was part of the party."

"I wanted to keep Sansa and Arya company." Alyssa told him as she stood by the door before shooting one at her sisters already inside the wheelhouse. "I can ride later on during the trip."

"And we appreciate it, sister." Sansa told her, shooting a disagreeing Arya a quelling look.

Alyssa giggled softly at the exchange and settled into her seat, allowing Robb to close the door.

"Goodbye Robb, Stepmother," Alyssa shouted as she leaned out a window and waved at her brother and stepmother as her sisters did the same on the other side of the door, even as the wheelhouse began moving to join the column of horsemen and wagons that were the already departing royal party. "Gods willing we'll see you soon!"

"Gods willing!" Robb shouted back as he waved at his sisters.

The three Stark daughters didn't stop waving until they completely lost sight of two Starks staying behind. They however did not retreat inside the warmth of the wheelhouse and its small heating
stove despite the chilly weather outside until a good while after Winterfell, their home, had started to shrink in their perception as they got further away.

"Now it begins," Alyssa said as she finally pulled back into the wheelhouse and closed the window she'd been leaning out of, her sisters following her lead.

"What does sister?" Sansa asked curiously.

"The next chapter." Alyssa said as she looked off towards the South and distant King's Landing. She was uncertain what lay ahead for them there but she knew that whatever it was, it would likely be unlike anything they'd ever encountered before.

"You're being all mysterious, Alsys." Arya said with a pout. "You don't need to worry so much anyways. As Father says 'When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies but the pack survives.' We're going South together as a pack, all four of us, so as long as we stick together I'm sure we'll do fine."

Sansa boggled at their little sister saying such words of wisdom but Alyssa just smiled.

"I'm sure you're right, Arya." The hidden Targaryen Princess told her sister.

"Now if only I truly believed that."

Despite her unease for the future, the journey South was proving largely uneventful so far, so much so that the boredom had eaten away slowly but surely at the lingering grief over Bran's death, and a few days later their party stopped for the night at Castle Cerwyn. With the King, Father and much of their retinues retiring satisfied, many of them dead drunk, after the sumptuous feast Lord Cerwyn had thrown to honor the King, Alyssa had felt it safe enough to sneak off from her lodgings in the night to visit with Ghost inside the castle's expansive godswood. It had taken liberal use of the Illusion spell to hide his coming and going, but for the chance to catch up with her dragon such was a small price to pay.

She was just sneaking back into the keep when she walked around a particularly thick Sentinel and ran into an unexpected sight: Princess Myrcella accompanied by only a silent member of the Kingsguard wandering the godswood at night.

"Princess," Alyssa greeted the girl with a proper curtsy.

"Lady Alyssa," the little Princess returned with a nod as befit her higher rank. "What are you doing up so late?"

"I felt the urge to speak to the gods so came down to the godswood to offer some prayers." Alyssa lied. "And, if I may be so bold, what about you Princess? Why are you up at this hour?"

"I'm exploring the castle." The beautiful little girl said with a mischievous grin. "I did not have the chance earlier and since we are leaving first thing in the morning, I'm doing it now."

"At the expense of a good night's sleep?" Alyssa asked curiously.

"I can always sleep in the wheelhouse tomorrow." Myrcella told her cheekily.

Alyssa nodded. That made sense.

"Does the Queen know you're out and about in the night?"
"No, but Father does and gave me permission."

Considering her Father, the King, was drunk as usual earlier during the feast. He probably didn't remember giving any such permission. Something the Princess knew as well if the coy grin she sported was any indication.

"Well played, Princess. Well played indeed."

Even if she is the child of the incestuous duo who killed Bran, Alyssa thought as she offered the younger girl a playful grin. I can't help but like her.

"Thank you, Lady Stark." The adorable Princess said performing an exaggerated curtsy like a theater performer might at applause from an audience.

"If you wish to thank me, your grace, might you invite me to join in on your explorations this night?"

"But you have to ride tomorrow!"

"Only if I choose to," Alyssa told her. "I could ride in the Stark wheelhouse with my sisters if I wanted."

"But you're always riding."

"Because I enjoy riding." Alyssa admitted. "But I have not seen much of Castle Cerwyn either and I think I'm more than willing to give up a day's riding to join you in exploring it. If you'll have me."

Alyssa offered the little Princess her arm like she was a knight approaching a lady for a dance at a feast. It was just a jest, yet it still managed to bring a blush to the adorable girl's face as she accepted and threaded her arm with Alyssa's own.

"I would be honored, Lady Alyssa."

Ever since the pleasant time the two had spent exploring Castle Cerwyn together, the two Princesses had began to spend much of their time while the party rested in each other's company. And as they made camp along the side of the Kingsroad a few days before they reached the Neck was one such occasion. On this day, Alyssa was training with Steelclaw when Myrcella arrived with her omnipresent Kingsguard escort to pay her a visit.

"You really do train with a sword." Myrcella gasped in shock as Alyssa finished with a spar with a trio of Stark guardsmen.

"And she'd good with it too." The Kingsguard commented idly, his customary silence broken by sheer surprise if his tone was anything to go by.

"Your grace," Alyssa and the gathered soldiers she'd been training with greeted the Princess, the former forced to offer a bow instead of a curtsy in lieu of being dressed in her training breeches.

Myrcella returned it with a distracted nod and turned instead to her escort.

"Really?" The Baratheon Princess asked the knight.

"Yes," Ser Arys Oakheart, if Alyssa recalled correctly, said with a nod. "I'd reckon she's at least as skilled as Ser Mandon Moore. I for one would know I would not fare well in a duel against her."
"You speak too kindly, Ser Oakheart."

"I speak only the truth, my lady." The Kingsguard told Alyssa sincerely. "Except my brothers in the Kingsguard I have never seen such excellent swordplay."

Well, I do have two lifetimes worth of training behind me. Alyssa thought even as she blushed at the praise.

"If Ser Oakheart says it then it must be true," Myrcella assured Alyssa. "Though it does make me wonder."

"About what, your grace?"

"Why, Lady Alyssa, simply why Lord Stark would allow one of his daughters learn such an unladylike skill? Or is it custom in the North for all its ladies to learn skill at arms like the famous Mormonts of Bear Island?"

"Oh no," Alyssa said with a wave of her hand. "While it's not quite seen as much of an unladylike skill as it is in the South, skill at arms is still rarely taught to Northern ladies. My Lord Father simply felt it necessary out of a desire for his daughters to be able to protect themselves."

Myrcella hummed in consideration for a moment before nodding in understanding. "I can see how it would be useful but I at least have no interest in learning to use a sword."

"And what about other weapons?" Alyssa asked, spotting the blonde Princess' coy smile as she singled out the use of a sword in particular.

Myrcella looked around them for a moment before replying in a soft whisper that barely carried, "Do not tell Mother but Uncle Jaime has taught me the basics of using a dagger."

Alyssa's rage simmered at the mention of the man who had killed Bran, but she hid it behind a polite smile.

"You think a dagger isn't good enough?" Myrcella asked with a frown.

"To each their own," Alyssa said with a shrug. "But to me at least, a dagger is underwhelming."

Myrcella pouted and it was such an endearing sight that Alyssa could not help but laugh.

"What's so funny?" The emerald eyed Princess asked, her pout deepening.

"How adorable you look when you pout."

Myrcella blushed prettily at that.

This girl will be an absolute beauty when she grows older.

Shaking her head to dismiss that grossly inappropriate thought, Alyssa addressed Myrcella.

"Would you like to observe more of my training?"

"Yes please." Myrcella said with her infectious youthful enthusiasm.

Smiling, Alyssa was only too happy to oblige and gestured for the guardsmen she'd been sparring with to prepare for another bout. It was thus with a royal audience to her training that the hidden Princess passed a happy couple hours that day.
That was days ago however and over the intervening days, Alyssa had spent even more time with the undeniably lovable Myrcella whilst the royal party made its way into and out of the Neck. The humidity of which having spurred everyone to hasten their travel through it. As such after only three days of travel they had managed to set up camp for the night in the fertile farmland just beyond the Neck and Alyssa was getting ready for bed in her tent. All whilst she engaged in a telepathic conversation with her dragon.

*It seems miraculous how quickly the geography has changed.* Alyssa told Ghost as she slipped out of her kirtle, leaving herself only in her shift and smallclothes as she preferred to wear to bed. *It was almost as if one minute it was swamp and then the next it was all replaced by farmland. Truly the Rivermen of the area are master farmers to achieve such a feat.*

This was met with burst of disinterest as Ghost instead sent her an aerial view of two identical stone castles standing on a margin of a river with a stone bridge connecting them.

*Is that what I think it is!?* Alyssa sent back in shock as she froze mid motion in putting away her clothes.


Alyssa recoiled at the reminder and was thankful that she was alone in her tent.

"Lady Alyssa, are you alright?" The Stark guard keeping watch outside asked.

"I'm fine Elias." Alyssa told the man-at-arms. "Just stubbed my toe on something."

"Be more careful, milady." The soldier said with a chuckle.

"I will." Alyssa assured him and reminded herself the same all at once.

*Ghost.* Alyssa sent at her familiar. *Thanks for the reminder. Don't worry. We'll have our revenge.*

A burst of anticipation was her reply, and she responded by sending the broad outline of her plan. One that he very much approved of if the feral satisfaction she received after a moment was any indication.

*Glad you approve, my friend.* Alyssa sent back.

*Now, if you don't mind. I need to do some reading so I can set things up just right.*

With a burst of agreement and farewell, her dragon retreated from Alyssa's mind.

Smiling viciously, she used a *Gate* spell to quickly step into Ghost's abandoned lair in the Wolfswood and proceeded to quickly retrieved the small chest containing her Tome of Magic from where she'd hidden it inside a hollow log. Using another *Gate*, she stepped back into her tent within the royal party's camp moments after she left. She'd been gone and back so quickly that Elias who was standing guard outside hadn't even noticed.

Smiling at that, she went to the small desk she had inside her tent and unlocked the chest. Extracting the precious Tome within, she quickly flipped its pages with the spell she wanted in mind.

*Yes, that's the one I want. Pestilence.* Alyssa thought as the pages settled on the spell she sought. *Just the spell to repay the Freys for their crime against my family in my previous life. All I need to do is combine it with a few *Glyphs of Warding* all over the castle set to release the former some*
time after I leave and then my revenge will be complete.

As she began reading up on the spell, a bloodthirsty smile spread across her face.

I can't wait.

It had taken some effort but Alyssa did indeed set up her revenge during the royal party's brief stay at the Twins and the sense of heady anticipation of the prospect of her vengeance for the Red Wedding bearing fruit had followed her throughout the trip through the Riverlands and nothing pierced it till the party found themselves spending the night at Castle Darry, the seat of House Darry.

It was old and relatively small castle, but its lord, Ser Raymund Darry had nevertheless done his best to throw a great feast to welcome his august guests. It had been a lavish meal, especially considering House Darry's relative poverty, and Alyssa had for the most part enjoyed it especially since the King quickly got so into his cups he forgot to spend time ogling her like he so often did. There was one part of it that unsettled her and she wanted answers for though.

"Lady Darry," Alyssa called out to Lady Jeyne Darry, the eldest child of Ser Raymund, the lord of the castle as she hurried to catch up with the handsome woman with dark brown hair.

The other lady had been staring at Alyssa oddly all evening. Stares that had been accompanied by a sense of mutual attraction. That said, the hidden Princess was not about to jump to conclusions so as she saw Lady Jeyne leave the Great Hall, she had quickly made her own excuses and followed after her.

"Lady Stark," the other lady returned Alyssa's greeting. "You were looking for me?"

"Yes, I have a question for you."

"Oh? Ask away." Lady Jeyne said with a polite grin that contained just a tinge of mischief. "As your hostess, it is only right that I answer any queries you might have."

"Then could you explain the looks you shot me all evening?" Alyssa all but demanded.

"I do believe the looks were mutual." Lady Jeyne deflected. "You were ogling me as much as I did you."

Alyssa blushed but didn't deny it. She could not help herself! Lady Jeyne was a very attractive woman. Combine that with the calm and collected look she maintained, she looked like an unapproachable goddess. Of course, Alyssa would be drawn in by that. Anyone with a hint of an attraction to the female form would have too, as evidenced by the many males would had likewise shot lustful look at Lady Darry.

"I only did so because you started it," Alyssa nevertheless deflected. "I was merely trying to make sense of what you were doing."

"Is that all?" Lady Jeyne said, covering her mouth with her hand to conceal a giggle.

"What are you insinuating?" Alyssa asked warily.

In reply, the Lady Jeyne moved closer and leaned in to whisper into Alyssa's ear.

"Relax," the other woman said with a husky tone to her voice that combined with her closeness had
Alyssa's heart racing. "I was looking because like you, I am attracted to my fellow women."

Alyssa gasped and stepped away from Lady Jeyne to look at her in shock, to which the other women just smirked and nodded.

"Would you like to come to my rooms for some drinks?" Lady Jeyne suggested. "We can talk more about our preferences there."

Alyssa considered it. It might invite scandal but then again, her mere presence in the King's party already did so. And as the person offering the invitation, Lady Darry did not seem to care about it either. More importantly, this was the first time Alyssa had met anyone who shared her tastes and she longed to discuss the matter openly with someone who would understand.

Taking that into account, Alyssa composed herself and offered Lady Darry a smile.

"I would love to. Please lead the way."

As the two ladies headed off towards Lady Jeyne's chambers, neither noticed one of Queen Cersei's handmaids, one of the many Lannister relations she kept in her household, spying on them from behind a pillar and frowning as she watched them walk away.

Inside Lady Jeyne's sitting room a short while later, the two ladies were to be found chatting over cups of Arbor Gold

"It's unfair!" Jeyne declared with a frown as she took a sip of her wine. "Our society is just too restrictive towards people like us, especially us women who like other women! Men who like men just get ignored and written off as special friends-"

"Lord Renly and Ser Loras," Alyssa chimed in with the most famous example in the Seven Kingdoms. Not that anyone had confirmed the two men were lovers but it was pretty much an open secret to anyone who bothered to look into it, and as women in a similar situation in regards to their taste in partners both Alyssa and Jeyne definitely had.

Jeyne nodded but continued as if Alyssa had not interrupted her. "But we are still expected to have children despite our preferences!"

"It's like they see us women primarily as baby makers!" Alyssa cried out in dismayed agreement. "All our other achievements and abilities are secondary to whether we can birth children."

"Exactly." Jeyne agreed in a more measured tone. "But birthing children is important. Do you know how many children die before adulthood? If we want a functioning society then we need as many children running around as possible, so I can understand why society sees us the way they do. It's just a little excessive, you know?"

"I honestly hadn't thought of that." Alyssa admitted. "But you're right, the focus on baby making is excessive."

"To not being just a baby maker," Jeyne said lifting a glass of Arbor Gold.

Alyssa raised her own glass and tapped it lightly against Jeyne's as she echoed her friend's toast.

A few days after they had left Darry, Alyssa was sitting with Ghost inside the temporary lair he had made for himself inside a small wood that grew along the portion of the Trident and the Kingsroad
which snaked along the river's bank that they were currently traveling on. It was a substantial
distance away from the road and the royal party's encampment along it, so much so that Alyssa had
to use a Scrying spell on Ghost to pinpoint its location and then a Gate spell to create a portal to
reach it in a timely manner. However, that also meant it was in a place far from any human
habitation thus reducing the chance of the dragon being spotted.

"Was everything alright on the flight over?" Alyssa asked her familiar as she scratched its head the
way he liked it. "No one saw you?"

Ghost sent her a negative feeling and an image of him keeping far above the clouds, well beyond
the sight of men.

"Cloud cover was good then?"

With a sense of accomplishment, her dragon sent her his memory of using his frost breath to create
banks of fog and clouds to cover his movements. He even watched the weather carefully to make
sure the fog he created to hide his passage didn't seem too unnatural.

"You smart boy." She praised her familiar and scratching him in the spot he loved most behind his
right eye. "I wish I could use Illusion to make you invisible all the time though, then you wouldn't
have to go through all that trouble."

Ghost sent her a memory of the one time she'd tried that and how she'd passed out from the strain.
It had taken days before it had taken its toll but it had and she'd been left weakened for a full week
after.

"Yes, yes, I know." Alyssa said with a frown at the reminder. "That was a pain to deal with. Trying
to cover up magical exhaustion by feigning illness is not something I want to do again if possible.
Especially without someone as accommodating as Maester Luwin to help me cover up my lies."

Ghost sent a burst of unhappiness, obviously displeased by her blatant misrepresentation of his
concerns.

"And it's bad for my health." Alyssa conceded. "Duly noted, you worrywart."

Ghost sent her a wordless query and Alyssa looked him in the eyes in confusion.

"You asking what I've been doing?"

Ghost bobbed his sinuous neck up and down in his version of a nod.

"Not much to be honest. Training with Steelclaw, spending time with my sisters, reading a bit." Alyssa
told him a shrug. "Nothing special."

Ghost sent her an image of Myrcella, one she noted was from a bird's eye - or more accurately a
dragon's eye - view of the young Princess.

"Her Mother," Alyssa said, referring to Cersei with all the hate she could muster. "Has been
keeping her close since Darry. I haven't had a chance to spend time with her since then."

Ghost sent a burst of disappointment her way.

"I feel the same." Alyssa agreed. "But I can't defy Cersei. Not yet."

An intense eagerness seeped into her mind through the bond.
"Be patient, Ghost. We'll get our chance." Alyssa told her friend. "For now we can only prepare ourselves for when that time comes."

Ghost nodded once more.

"To that end, mind if I practice my magic?" Alyssa asked. "I know we don't get to spend as much time together as we'd like, but I don't get much time away from the party where I can safely use my magic without risking discovery either."

Ghost sent a burst of acceptance alongside an image of Alyssa using her magic to blow up a patch of the surrounding forest.

"You just want to see the explosions." Alyssa said with a laugh.

That Ghost didn't deny it just made her laugh even harder.

Her happy mood had long since evaporated by the time Alyssa has returned to camp and found herself forced to watch as her Father prepared to swing Ice to take Lady's head at the demand of the Queen.

She'd not been with her sisters, having snuck off on her own to spend some time with Ghost. But she'd heard everything that led up to this sad outcome in the sham of a trail later. Apparently, the two and their direwolves had been lounging on the bank of the Trident. Arya was playing with her friend, the butcher's boy Mycah whilst Sansa did some embroidery and enjoyed the good weather. Then suddenly out of nowhere Prince Joffrey arrived and upon seeing Arya and her friend stick fighting had drawn his sword demanding to be allowed to fight them with it too. When they'd hesitated, he had raised his blade threateningly at Arya prompting Nymeria to leap to her sister's defense and slashing at his sword arm lightly.

For that the Queen was adamant that both direwolves be executed as 'dangerous beasts.' This despite both her sisters testifying that it was Prince Joffrey who drew live steel during a game of stick fighting, leading to him threatening her sisters and causing the wolves to injure him in a bid to protect them. Nor did it matter to the vindictive woman and her enabling husband of a King that the overly beautiful prince had already asked the Hound to kill Mycah over the 'injustice'. The only silver lining to be had so far was that Nymeria had fled into the woods already and was safe. Lady though had stayed with Sansa, determined to protect her human and now faced execution.

Alyssa was not about to let this stand. She was not about to allow the Lannister witch to take another member of the Stark family. Not after what happened to Bran.

So as Father prepared to swing Ice down, Alyssa acted.

"Illusion," she whispered inaudibly under her breath, weaving a complex illusion.

One she used to trick all the humans at the scene into seeing that Lady has been beheaded as the Mad Queen had ordered whilst she simultaneously used the image and voice of Sansa to lure Lady to join her sister in the woods where Ghost would keep them both safe.

The effort was intensely draining and as the day drew on and she had to keep up the increasingly complex Illusion as her Father's men burned 'Lady's' body, it began to take its toll. Her magic was still plentiful but the mental strain of orchestrating what needed to be part of the spell to come across as realistic finally put too much strain on her mind. Thus she stumbled through the day as if in a daze as her head throbbed in growing pain.
"Alys, are you alright?" Father asked as they sat down for dinner that night.

Alyssa offered him a wan smile and tried to nod. The sudden movement of her head proved too much however and her vision swam. She felt herself collapse and her family cry out in alarm but she could do nothing to comfort them as darkness filled her sight.

When she finally awoke, she found herself inside the Stark wheelhouse with Sansa and Arya watching over her.

"Alys, you're awake!" Arya cried out in relief as she hugged her sister.

"What happened?" Alyssa asked as she patted her youngest sister's back comfortingly.

"You swooned at dinner last night." Sansa explained with a worried smile.

"Oh." Alyssa said lamely.

Sansa rolled her eyes at that before taking one of Alyssa's hands and giving it a squeeze.

"Thank you, sister." The middle Stark daughter told her. "I don't know what you did but whatever you did, it saved Lady. She made it to Nymeria."

"You're sure?"

Sansa nodded. "I saw her in my dreams last night. Thank you."

Alyssa breathed a sigh of relief even as she deflected her sister's praise. "It was nothing."

"That's not true!" Arya cried out insistently as she sat up to glare at Alyssa. "You never swooned before. Never. So whatever you did last night must have really pushed you hard. What did you do!?"

"What happened after I fainted?" Alyssa asked in lieu of an answer.

Sansa and Arya both frowned at the misdirection but the older of the two nevertheless proceeded to answer their sister's question.

"Father handled everything. The men who had been handling the fake Lady's body were all trusted men, so after a word from Father they know to keep quiet."

"That's a relief."

"That's what we should be saying." Arya said earnestly. "When you just collapsed in your chair last night. I, we, were so terrified. We were worried that you might end up like Bran."

Sansa nodded in firm agreement. "We didn't know what had happened and were so worried. Please, sister, never do that again. Please!"

Alyssa was touched by her sisters' honest sincerity and concern for her, she truly was, however she could not make such a promise. If the situation needed it, she would do that and more. That said, she was not about to offer her sisters nothing in return.

"I will promise to try."

Both her sisters sighed in exasperation at that.
"That is the best we can expect isn't it?" Sansa said in resignation.

Alyssa just nodded.

"Then we'll take it." Sansa told her. "But sister?"

"Yes?"

"Be more careful."

"I will, I promise."

*That* was a promise she could make and keep.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

This chapter was more a collection of snippets for the trip from Winterfell to King's Landing than a standard chapter, I hope that's not too much of a departure from the norm. I felt this was the best way to cover the journey.

That said, I just want to say that the last snippet was a headache inducing for me to write. I didn't want to rewrite the trail or execution of Lady from canon, so went with a summarization approach to it but it doesn't seem to have come off as well as I'd hoped. Shrug. It's good enough I guess. So I'm moving on.

Apologies if I am not giving enough 'screen time' for the grief over Bran's death. I just didn't want to focus on it too much, so imagine it's going on in the background.

Lastly, just want to bring up something that's became apparent through the much appreciated reviews of Light Lord Cybergate over on FFN. Some readers might be operating under the mistaken belief that in this fic everything is supposed to be better for the Starks all the time compared. Such a fic would be boring. Things here will go badly for them at least some of the time. There is a saying after all that things have to get worst before they get better. This fic is a fix-it but not a fix of every mistake just one aiming towards a better final outcome.

Well till next time ha det!
After more than a month of travel, Alyssa rode into King's Landing on the back of her own horse, she could not accept entering the city her ancestors had founded and from which they had ruled for hundreds of years for the first time inside a wheelhouse.

She almost came to regret that decision as the city of King’s Landing smelled horrid. The stench of human waste permeated the air, the crowded population and sea breeze making such smells particularly pungent. It was the most populous city in Westeros and it showed this fact in how unsightly and dirty it was.

Though I can only imagine much of that is due to decades of mismanagement, Alyssa mused as their party entered the city through the Dragon Gate and made its slow procession to the Red Keep.

Even if the city had long since fallen from the heights of its grandeur, it was still the seat of the Kings of Westeros and as the rightful heir of the Iron Throne Alyssa would not disrespect it by entering into the city like a helpless maiden. Not if she aimed to claim said throne as her god demanded.

Besides, riding gave her a view of the squalor that most of the city's smallfolk lived in as seen by ramshackle buildings which extended to the walls and the glimpse of the maze of narrow streets and alleys that must have been the infamous Flea Bottom. Worse yet were some of the smallfolk who came out to greet them as their procession snaked its way through the city's streets.

At first, the people wore what could best be called rags and were covered in dirt looked at them with hungry and resentful eyes even as they begged for some, any, offering from the party. Alyssa had reached for her coin purse but a sharp look from Jory had her refraining, though he trotted his horse to the side of the procession to give alms in her stead. As they reached closer to the Red Keep however the clothes of the people transitioned starkly into the lavish wear of the wealthy and the arms questing for alms were replaced by the occasional hand showering them with flower petals in welcome or calling out blessings from the Seven.

The difference is surreal. Is the disparity between the poor and wealthy truly so large here? If so, how can a city not be consumed by constant riots at such a divide?

Such thoughts occupied her mind as they finally began climbing Aegon's Hill and made it past the curtain walls of the Red Keep, stirring in Alyssa a sense of deep indignation and determination.

I can fix this. She thought as she burned the sights she glimpsed on the ride into her heart, their
images even overshadowing the majesty of her family's lost ancestral seat. Winning out even against the Red Keep's seven massive drum-towers crowned with iron ramparts, the great bronze gates and portcullises of its massive curtain walls, and its immense barbican with a whole cobbled square in front of it. What were works of architecture compared to the suffering of the people, her people, that she had witnessed?

Nothing. She affirmed as she followed the rest of the party as they trotted after the King into the castle.

I will fix this. She promised with fervor. I will save this city's people, no, all the people of Westeros, from such misery.

Such grandiose goals would have to wait however and shortly after entering her assigned rooms in the Tower of the Hand, she was forced to prepare for the feast to welcome the King's return to King's Landing. She was just slipping on a clean shift after finishing a bath as part of these preparations when there was a knock on the doors to her rooms.

Normally, Alyssa would have answered the door herself. Northern lords and ladies, even the Starks, did not keep retinues of servants or handmaidens however as she was getting dressed for her debut at court, Father had assigned a number of servants to assist her in getting ready for the important occasion.

"My lady," the servant who had answered the door said as she returned. "Lord Stark wishes to see you in his solar."

"Father has?" Alyssa replied with a frown.

"Yes milady." The maid confirmed.

Surely he would know that she was getting ready for the feast. What could be so urgent that he would choose to interrupt her preparations.

He was called away rather hastily to meet with the King shortly after our arrival. Alyssa recalled. Mayhaps this has something to do with that?

"Very well," Alyssa said after a moment of thought. "Then we can forego the fancy dress for now. Get me something simple. I do not want to keep Father waiting. I can change into my gown for the feast after I've heard what he has to say."

"Yes, milady." The servants replied obediently.

It took only minutes before Alyssa was ready and for her to make her way to her Father's new solar alongside her sisters. She had run into them on the way, both of whom were wearing simple day dress rather than the elaborate gowns she had helped them pick out for the feast having done much the same as Alyssa herself had.

"Why are looking so glum?" Alyssa asked the particularly sour looking Arya.

"It's nothing Alys, I just miss Nymeria."

"I miss Lady too." Sansa chimed in, patting their sister on the back comfortingly.

Alyssa looked around them carefully. They were in the Red Keep now. They had to be careful with
their words, even if they were surrounded by loyal members of the Stark household from
Winterfell for the moment there was no guarantees that there were no one hostile listening in.

"Do not forget sisters that the King was right in ordering the wolves execution," Alyssa told them,
still looking around furtively. "Whatever the cause, the Crown Prince was injured by them and the
King could not let that go unpunished."

_Not without looking weak._ Alyssa added to herself alongside a silent thanks that her Father had
understood that. As much as it pained Alyssa to admit especially after all she had gone through to
save her, if she had not been in a position to save Lady as she had it would have been better for
Sansa's wolf to be executed. Not doing so would have left the Crown looking weak. Worse as
much as she loathed the Lannisters they were probably the only thing keeping the Crown from
bankruptcy at this point and could not be alienated, so appeasing Cersei by killing Lady was the
right move on the King's part. _I am glad Father agreed and didn't do something as silly as trying to
refuse the position as Hand as leverage to save her. Doing so would not only ruin his plans to
investigate Jon Arryn's death and find proof to destroy the Lannisters, it would most importantly
destabilize the Realm! And we are not ready for civil war. As dear as the direwolves are to us, it is
not worth setting things up such that we are all destroyed!_

Both her sisters shot her incredulous looks at her statement but Alyssa just gestured to an empty
patch of wall. Sansa's eyes widened in fearful understanding even as Arya just glared angrily at the
wall. Neither of them refuted her claim as she knew they wanted to though, so she knew they
understood her meaning: the walls had ears.

"Do you know what this is about?" Arya asked irritably as she changed the topic.

"No," Alyssa said with a shake of her head. "Though why are you upset Arya? I'd have thought
going out of dressing up would make you happy."

The youngest Stark pouted at the tease even as Sansa giggled at their sister's expense.

"You're not wrong." Arya had the good graces to admit. "But I'll still have to wear it later. Since
that's the case, I just want it over with."

"Fair enough," Alyssa allowed as they reached the unfamiliar door that led to their Father's solar
and knocking politely on the hardwood.

"Who is it?" Father's voice called out from inside.

"It's us, Father." Alyssa informed him. "Alyssa, Sansa and Arya. You summoned us?"

"Yes. Girls, come in."

Pushing the unlocked door open, Alyssa gestured for her sisters to enter ahead of her and waited
for them to do so before she followed after them, closing the door behind her. Only then did she
notice that Father was not alone inside the room but was accompanied by a Maester and a Septa.

"What's going on Father?" Sansa asked, eyeing the unknown man and woman suspiciously.

"The feast has been cancelled." Father began to explain, causing Arya to perk up at the news. "A
raven has just arrived with word. A merchant caravan seeking to pass through the Twins
discovered the castle empty of all life. Apparently some time after we left, plague swept through it.
Excepting a handful of Freys who were away when the pestilence struck, they along with their
entire household are all dead."
"Good riddance. Alyssa mentally crowed at the success of her revenge against the Freys.

"In light of that, as a precaution, the King and I have agreed to have the entire party examined for signs of plague." Father said, gesturing to the Maester and Septa.

"What about the other holdfasts we visited after the Freys? If we're worried that we might have carried the plague then what about those castles?"

For a brief moment, illogical panic struck Alyssa that Jeyne might have been infected. Thankfully, the moment passed as quickly as it came when she remembered she and her magic were the cause of the so-called plague and more importantly there was no chance of it spreading beyond the Twins. Her Pestilence spells only had a limited range and its effect was non-contagious after all. Plus they had activated long after they'd left the Twins. There was no need to worry about being discovered as the cause of the sickness either as between the nature of the Pestilence spell and a set of likewise timed illusions that prevented discovery of what happened as the deadly necromancy spell rotted away all living things within the Twins over the course of a day until it was far, far too late. Helped along immensely by the fact the were so actively disliked even by their smallfolk that they rarely had any visitors at all.

"It is good that you show such concern Sansa." Father praised causing the middle Stark sister to preen a little. "We've thought of that as well and are sending ravens to alert the holdfasts we visited since the Twins to also check for signs of the plague"

"So does this mean the Freys are all dead?" Arya asked with an enthusiasm that betrayed just how much she disliked them. "Who gets their castle then?"

"Arya!" Father chided meaningfully causing the youngest Stark to quail. "Do not make light of the misfortune of others."

"Sorry Father." Arya replied contritely.

"Don't do it again." Father said sternly. "As for your question, your Grandfather Tully is hunting down the Frey survivors and determining who has the strongest claim. They will be installed in the Twins once it is confirmed that the plague has passed."

And whoever it is better be a better person than Walder or I might just have to finish what I started. Alyssa thought darkly even as the faintest lingering embers of Jon Snow railed against what she had done. She ignored it easily enough though. Jon Snow and his precious ideals had failed and led to his death, a mistake she would not make.

"In the meantime," Father continued. "I'd like for you three to go through the checks immediately."

Arya and Sansa shot each other nervous looks at this.

Alyssa wanted to tell them there was nothing to worry about but could not, so instead she took a confident step towards the Septa. Hopefully setting an example would alleviate some of her sisters' nerves.

"I'll go first."

When the Maesters had finally declared the royal party free of plague a month later and the precautionary confinement that had been placed on everyone was lifted, King Robert as if attempting to make up for lost time organized a tourney which he insisted, over Father's objections, to celebrate the naming of the Lord of Winterfell as his Hand. The whole thing was a thoroughly
lavish affair with prizes of forty thousand gold dragons for the winner of the joust, twenty thousand dragons for the runner-up, twenty thousand dragons to the winner of the melee, and ten thousand dragons to the winner of the archery contest. Handsome prizes that had drawn in competitors from far and wide, making the whole farce even more extravagant.

So much so that Alyssa wanted no part of it. Something she'd managed to do by begging off from her Father for most of the tourney but at the insistence of the King, she was forced to make an appearance on the second day of the joust in the Royal Box alongside the rest of the Starks.

It was a miserable experience so far. Between the King's leering and occasional attempts to flirt with her that she was forced to politely rebuff, the Queen's presence and the Crown Prince's palpable disdain, she felt a hair's breadth away from doing something rash like lashing out and killing Cersei to avenge Bran. She only refrained thanks to the company of Arya and Myrcella would just made it bearable. Together, the three of them had created a little bubble of conversation among themselves that ignored everyone else. Sansa would have joined them but she was too busy distracting Joffrey who, probably acting on his mother's orders, seemed intent on courting her.

*I should do something nice for her to show her my gratitude later.* Alyssa thought as she shot her sister a grateful smile which her sister waved away even as she kept the Prince busy with inane conversation.

"Look, Lady Alys," Myrcella said using the pet name that Alyssa normally reserved for family but which she'd allowed her friend to use as well. "Doesn't Ser Loras look handsome?"

"I suppose he does." Alyssa agreed as she examined the Tyrell knight as he trotted his horse into a ready position for the latest round of the joust. "Unfortunate that he is taken."

"Is he?" Myrcella asked, blinking in confusion. "I didn't know he was betrothed."

"He isn't." Arya told her with a smirk. "That doesn't mean he's not taken."

"How scandalous," Myrcella said as she blushed and Alyssa smiled at the younger girl's innocence. She was sure the Princess had no idea what Arya meant by that and for a moment she wondered what fantasy the blonde had concocted to explain her little sister's words.

This good mood vanished however when she spotted Ser Loras' opponent.

"The Mountain," Alyssa hissed as she saw the extremely tall man with massive shoulders and arms thick as the trunks of small trees that rode an equally impressive horse on the opposite side of the arena.

"What about him?" Myrcella asked, blinking in confusion.

"Alys doesn't like him." Arya explained, though she was putting things lightly. "Because of his unsavory reputation."

"I can see why." Myrcella conceded with a frown after a moment of thought.

"Let's just watch the match." Alyssa said, trying to defuse the tension despite her own simmering anger at the man who had killed her brother and his mother.

The joust went back and forth for a few rounds and through it all Clegane's mount was having a strange reaction to that of his opponent.

*It's almost as if- No, I'm sure it's exactly that! Ser Loras is riding a mare in heat and it's inflamed*
Clegane's stallion! Alyssa realized as she recalled the reaction of how stallions behaved in the presence of mares in heat that she'd observed in the Winterfell stables. At this rate, it'll throw him off.

Her conclusion proved correct as in the next round, Clegane's huge stallion finally lost what control it had and reared up suddenly as Ser Loras closed, bucking its rider clean off his saddle. A massive cheer went up at the sight, more out of hatred of the Mountain than praise for the Tyrell Alyssa was sure, but unfortunately that was not the end of it. For the Mountain was not about to take his defeat graciously. Instead, he drew his monstrous greatsword and after slaughtering his own stallion, advanced upon Ser Loras.

Alyssa considered taking action. This was the perfect chance to kill the man who murdered her brother and violated his mother. But before she could act, Sandor Clegane did so instead.

Jumping out of the royal box where he'd been serving as the Crown Prince's shadow the Hound leapt between his brother and the started Ser Loras and engaged him in a heated duel, stopping only when the oafish King Robert I Baratheon recovered his senses and finally did something.

"Stop!" The King commanded.

The Hound immediately backed away from his brother and fell to one knee and despite advancing as if to take advantage of this, a sharp look from the King soon had the Mountain doing the same.

"That was scary." Myrcella commented as the man she thought was her Father rebuked the Cleganes for the Mountain's dishonorable behavior and then both of them for disrupting the event.

"It was exciting." Arya corrected, even as the two Cleganes apologized to the King and were dismissed. "Did you not see the Mountain and the Hound go at it?"

"That was the scary part." Myrrella said with a frown. "That and when Ser Gregor just cut down his horse like that."

"Not everyone has the same tastes." Alyssa cut in to remind Arya before she could say anything. "What you find exciting, others like the Princess might find terrifying."

Arya pouted at the rebuke before turning to Myrcella.

"I'm sorry Princess," Arya said as honestly as her stubbornness allowed.

"It's alright, Lady Arya." Myrrella said generously. "I understand. It is as Lady Alys says, everyone has different tastes."

They lapsed into silence after that, with Alyssa breaking the silence as the next match came up.

"Look Princess," Alyssa said, pointing at the Kingslayer as he trotted his mount into the arena. "It's your Uncle."

"It is!" Myrrella said happily as she cheered for the man who was most likely her sire.

Not that her joy lasted long as Jaime Lannister was soon bested by the Hound, much to Myrrella's disappointment and Alyssa's satisfaction even as it raised her opinion of the younger Clegane brother.

"Perhaps he'll have better luck next time." Arya suggested to the pouting Princess as the arena was cleaned up for the final round. "Your Uncle did well making it as far as he did already. You should
be proud of him."

"I know. But I wanted him to win."

Alyssa giggled at that. "No one can win all the time."

The blonde Princess just nodded dejectedly as the final pair of combatants, Sandor Clegane and Ser Loras Tyrell, took their places at the tilt. With solid performances from both men so far, it was shaping up to be a show for the ages. So much so that even Alyssa and Arya, both Northmen true and true and sharing in their cultural disdain of the frivolity and wilful exposure of warriors' skills as a tourney, were feeling enthused for the event.

They were to be sorely disappointed however.

"I yield!" Ser Loras declared just as the match was about to begin. "In gratitude for saving my life from his brother earlier, I yield the match and the forty thousand gold dragons prize to Sandor Clegane."

Alyssa could only gape as she heard that. Forty thousand gold dragons was a staggering amount of money! Alyssa didn't know if she would just yield it even for someone who saved her life.

*I suppose that makes Ser Loras a more honorable person than I am.*

"I accept the prize." The Hound said, seemingly unfazed by the shock.

"Uh. Very well." The King said, thrown by the sudden turn of events. "Then we shall now move on as is tradition to the naming of the Queen of Love and Beauty, Clegane, if you-"

A servant was moving towards the Hound with the customary flower crown, when the man waved him away.

"Save it." Clegane said in the gruff way he always spoke. "I'll keep the money because I deserved that, but I don't gi-"

He paused for a moment, as if realizing who he was talking to before smoothly changing tactics.

"I won on a technicality. I don't deserve the honor."

*Smart man. Alyssa noted. And honorable too, if the way he stepped in to save Ser Loras is any indication. Perhaps there are some men of honor in service to the Lannisters after all.*

"How honorable." Myrcella commented with a sigh.

*And perhaps there are good Lannisters too.*

Alyssa was still pondering such thoughts and what it meant for her plans when she was summoned days later by her Father to his solar after the evening meal. It was not uncommon for him to do so, as he regularly did so with all his daughters to question them on the headway they have made in their studies. Though he did so most often with Arya so as to keep a close watch on her progress with the Water Dance. She was alarmed however this evening when she found her Stepmother there as well.

"Stepmother?" Alyssa gasped in shock.

*What is she doing here!? With Bran dead there should not have been an assassin armed with a*
"You are right to be ill at ease, Alys." Stepmother said with an understanding look. "I come bearing bad news. But sit first and then I'll explain."

Alyssa nodded and hurriedly took a seat.

"I come bringing evidence I received from my sister that implicate the Lannisters in an affair." Stepmother said indicating a set of documents Father was reading.

"These are testimonies." Ned said as he paused through examining the documents. "Damning testimonies but nothing that we can use as credible evidence."

"No, Ned, they are not." Stepmother agreed. "But they are enough for you as Hand to justify an investigation."

Ned frowned but nodded.

"Stepmother," Alyssa said looking at the woman worriedly. "I know it's probably presumptuous of me to say this but-"

"Nonsense Alys." Stepmother waved the concern away. "You're my daughter. If you have a concern, just name it."

Alyssa's heart warmed as Stepmother declared her as one of her daughters without hesitation, but she still nibbled her lip nervously before finally speaking her mind.

"I hate the Lannisters as much as you do, Stepmother. But we can't be rash about this. They're powerful. We have to be very careful when dealing with them."

"I am very aware of that." Stepmother told her reassuringly. "I promise to be careful."

Watching as her Stepmother left King's Landing from the courtyard of the Red Keep the next morning to return to Winterfell, Alyssa couldn't help the uneasy feeling that bubbled in her mind. A feeling that like how Stepmother had shown up in the capitol unexpectedly just like in her past life despite all that had changed, that some things were fixed in stone and that naught but tragedy for their family would follow this parting no matter how careful any of them were.

Extra scene in response to Time Parad0x's review on FFN (I can't fit it into the last chapter without disrupting the narrative flow so I'm adding it here as an omake of sorts):

After the farce of a trial that had just been held to determine Lady's fate, Ned stormed into the King's tent.

"Your grace, a word!" He demanded in a voice full of righteous fury.

Robert looked at him with a tired look before sighing.

"I can guess what you'll say, but out with it anyway." The King said as he collapsed into a chair.

"Your grace, if you insist I will fulfill your command and kill her direwolf, even though she who was only protecting her mistress from being cut down by your son. Afterwards however, I have killed my daughter's protector I will go back North to give her the burial a protector of House Stark
deserves and if I have any say we won't see each other again during this lifetime and I'm going to make sure none of my children will get anywhere near your family for as long as I'm alive." Ned said as he dramatically removed the pin that symbolized his office as Hand of the King and tossed it to the ground before Robert.

"You are going to turn your back on me because of an animal!? One which, irregardless of the reason, indisputably injured my heir!? Do you intend to tear the Realm apart!?" Robert shouted as he shot to his feet.

"What in the world are you talking about?" Ned asked, looking startled.

"If I don't have that wolf executed, I will look weak. I am a drunkard but I am not a complete fool. I know how precarious my position is! Jon told me often times enough for it to sink in. Do you want the Realm to think even worse than me? Or maybe you want me to refuse Cersei and have the Old Lion cut off the gold that is the only thing keeping the Crown afloat? Would you want me to side with you and doom the Realm?"

"You could do the honorable thing-"

"The honorable thing?" Robert scoffed. "Like you rejecting your post of Hand over an animal and exposing to the Realm just how great the rift between us, between the North and the Crown, really is? Do you want war, Ned? Because you're giving all those idiots unhappy with me plenty of excuse to start one up. With Jon dead, you and the Lannisters are the only allies I have left. And the Lions are as hated as I am. If you turn around then within a year, maybe two, the damned plotters will find the perfect spark to set things off. Do you want that Ned? Another full scale civil war?"

Ned could only stand there in stunned silence as the horrors of Robert's Rebellion played in his mind. No, he did not want a repeat of that. Especially not with his daughters as vulnerable as they were now that they were out of the North.

"Fine, Robert." Ned said picking up the pin that symbolized the office of Hand reluctantly. "But I formally express my protest at this unjust execution."

"Whatever!" Robert shouted in exasperation and stormed off, muttering about honorable fools.

And not for the first time in his life Ned found himself agreeing with another's deprecating opinion of him.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope you guys liked the chapter.

Things are still mainly going according to canon for now, but that's only because Alyssa is choosing not to derail anything. That'll change soonish.

Since I'm skipping tons of canon material, let me just make it clear here. If something is not described/mentioned explicitly in the story, then it's essentially proceeding according to canon unless stated otherwise later in the story. Canon is too vast for me
to cover every facet in the story, so naturally I'm focusing on what I think are the important bits. Also Alyssa is the primary POV so things she doesn't know, I mostly won't show. Considering some villains that think they're so smart will have their scheming completely ignored as a result of this, it just adds insult to the injury of their eventual fates as it makes clear that it all amounted to nothing.

Some of you might disagree with Alyssa's reasoning for why Lady's execution still went ahead. If you do feel free, but take note that what really was odd was that Robert was hesitant to execute the wolf in canon at all. As a King whose Crown Prince was injured by an animal, there should be no hesitation to see it executed. In the name of his standing he cannot countenance allowing such a potential threat to his heir continue living. If you take into account the need to appease Cersei both for his peace of mind and more importantly to maintain Lannister support for his bankrupt regime, then there's no doubt he'd go ahead with it. What could Ned do in this circumstance? Leverage his position as Hand? Such an abrupt refusal would likely destabilize the Realm by exposing the depths of the rift between the North and the Crown especially since it would seen as being done for the sake of a mere animal, which is diametrically opposed to Ned's broader intent.

A reviewer on FFN asked about Summer. So let me point out that Summer and Shaggydog just do not exist in this world. Robb only brought back three direwolf cubs. I did not mention any other cubs did I?

Well that's all this chapter, so till next time abschied!
A few days after Stepmother’s ominous visit, Alyssa received an invitation from Myrcella to attend a small gathering of the young ladies in the Red Keep alongside her sisters.

"It was nice of the Princess to invite us like this," Sansa said as the three Stark sisters made their way to Myrcella's quarters.

"Indeed, it is." Alyssa said with a smile. *Especially since Cersei has been trying her very best to keep us apart.*

"You needed the break." Arya told Sansa honestly. "You've been dealing with the Crown Prince a lot lately. It must be tiring."

Alyssa shot her youngest sister a reproving look. She knew better than to speak ill of the royal family in public. Though thankfully she at least she had used his title and not just called him by name or one of the dozens of unpleasant epithets that she'd taken to calling him.

"He can be quite demanding." Sansa said measuredly, eyeing their surroundings warily. "Especially since he fancies he is courting me."

*Or in other words, his attempts disgust you more than anything.* Alyssa added the words wanted to but could not say in a hallway of the Red Keep. *Considering he almost led to Lady's death, I don't blame you.*

"Enough talk of the Crown Prince," Alyssa said as they approached the doors to Myrcella's rooms. "We are here."

As the Stark sisters were shown into the Princess' chambers they were startled to find that besides Myrcella's cousin and handmaiden, Rosamund Lannister, they were the only other attendees.

"Are we early?" Alyssa asked with a raised eyebrow as she and her sisters took their seats across from the two nearly identical looking blondes.

"Not at all. You are right on time." Myrcella informed her with a sly grin. "This is a gathering of the few among my fellow young ladies in the Red Keep that I can actually trust."

"You honor my sisters and I, Princess. And I must applaud your skill at deception." Alyssa asked
with an amused grin. "You truly a great player of the game."

Everyone gasped at Alyssa's forward words but Myrcella simply laughed.

"You know that I am, Alys."

Laughing as well, Alyssa began examining the delicacies Myrcella had arranged to be prepared for them and her sisters followed her lead.

Smiling, Myrcella clapped her hands and in response a number of bards walked in. They quickly took positions on a dais off to the side of the sitting room and begin to play.

Arya grimaced at the music however.

"Is there a problem with the music, Lady Arya?" Myrcella asked curiously.

"Yes, they're terrible." Arya said in her blunt way.

"Are they?" Myrcella asked with a frown. "They are some of the best bards in the city."

Rosamund nodded in agreement to the Princess' assessment.

"They are good." Sansa reassured her. "Arya is just exaggerating. But there is someone in the room who is better than all of them put together."

"And who could that be?" Myrcella asked, blinking in surprise.

Both daughters of Catelyn Stark looked pointedly at their elder half-sister.

"You have talent with music, Lady Alys?"

"Some." Alyssa said modestly, earning scoffs from both her sisters. "I sing and play the harp."

"Really? You never told me! I must hear you perform."

Sansa gestured at one of the Northern servants that had accompanied them.

"Please bring my sister's harp." She ordered and the servant nodded, before hurrying off to fetch the instrument.

"I'm not really as good as my sisters say," Alyssa deflected. "They are not fair judges of my ability."

"You once moved the whole of Winterfell to tears with a single song." Sansa reminded with a roll of her eyes. "I do not think it's just us who think you are good, sister."

"You are too humble, Alys. Like always." Arya insisted.

"If half of what your sisters say are true, Lady Alyssa, then I would very much like to hear you perform." Lady Rosamund chimed in.

"As would I," Myrcella insisted.

Sighing in resignation, Alyssa nodded.

"Alright," she conceded reluctantly.
Conversation shifted to the mundane happenings of the Red Keep form there as they waited for Alyssa's harp to be delivered, but as soon as it was all attention returned to her. Even the hired bards who had stopped playing at Myrcella's command were waiting eagerly.

"Patience everyone," Alyssa said with a roll of her eyes as she tested her instrument was in good condition and contemplated what to perform for a moment. "Okay, I'm ready. With your permission, Princess?"

"Please go ahead." Myrcella said with a barely stifled giggle.

"Since I am performing for a Baratheon Princess," Alyssa said as she made her selection. "Then it is only fitting for me to perform an iconic song of the Stormlands. Please enjoy the Lay of Durran's Defiance."

Alyssa played and sang, telling the story of the mythic first Storm King Durran Godsgrief and how he won the love of Elenei, the daughter of the sea god and the goddess of the wind, during the Age of Heroes. And as she so often did, she became lost in the music and her eyes closed as her song took on a life of its own as it told the epic love story. It was only as she reached the end, as the music swelled with Durran's victory, with the roar of the thwarted storm, and at last the notes of a happy marriage did she open her eyes.

And she found, to her surprise, that she had transfixed everyone in the room. From Myrcella to the bards to the servants, everyone was frozen as they looked at her with awe.

"Amazing," one of the bards gasped out before hastily covering his mouth for speaking out of turn. No one cared. He had merely spoken what everyone was thinking.

"I told you that my sister was better." Arya said proudly, forgetting to tack on an honorific when addressing Myrcella something she hastily corrected at Alyssa's glare. "Your grace."

Myrcella just nodded. "Could you perform a few more songs Lady Alys? Your music is truly enchanting and I would love to hear more of it."

"My pleasure, your grace."

And so Alyssa spent an enjoyable afternoon entertaining Myrcella and her sisters. It was a wonderful experience that left everyone feeling happy as music often did and Alyssa was glad for that. That it earned her more than a few rounds of ecstatic applause from the adorable Princess was neither here nor there.

A few days after her unscheduled musical performance for Myrcella, the aforementioned Princess invited Alyssa to tour her private garden. And what a garden it was! The mere sight of all the exotic flowers present left the hidden Targaryen stunned. There were some flowers there that she had only read about in books from exotic lands like Yi Ti.

"Are those plum blossoms from Yi Ti?" Alyssa asked in shock at the delicate pink flowers of a weeping tree.

"It is." Myrcella said proudly. "My Uncle Tyrion arranged for the tree to be shipped as a sapling to King's Landing via Qarth for my fifth nameday."

"He must dote on you." Alyssa noted as her mind boggled at the cost of such a gift.
"He does." Myrcella said proudly.

Surveying the whole garden once more, Alyssa turned to Myrcella.

"Is there any flower you don't have here?" She asked the Princess teasingly.

"Well, I can't seem to make Winter Roses grow here for some reason." Myrcella confessed. "I've tried a dozen times it seems but they've never managed to take."

"Winter Roses are picky plants." Alyssa agreed. "The gardeners in Winterfell have been growing them in our glass gardens for centuries but even then they have trouble with them on occasion."

"Is that so?" Myrcella asked, with a disappointed pout. "I was hoping you had a solution to my difficulties."

"Not immediately I'm afraid." Alyssa told her apologetically. "Winter Rose production is something of a secret as it's a major export of ours, but I can write you an introduction to the Winterfell gardeners and hopefully they'll be willing to correspond with you. With their guidance I am sure you'll manage to overcome your difficulties."

"You would do that? For me?" Myrcella asked, lighting up and looking beautiful for it. She was always a beautiful child of course, but the brilliant smile she was currently wearing made her look even more so. Alyssa was under no illusion that the girl would one day become one of the most beautiful women in all of Westeros.

"Of course."

Which was why when the younger girl wrapped herself around her waist and hugged her in gratitude, Alyssa could feel herself flushing. Though with what emotion she could not quite place. It felt like want, but surely that couldn't be the case! Myrcella was much too young!

"Thank you! Thank you!"

Alyssa just awkwardly patted the girl's head. Not because she hadn't done so before. She'd done the same to Arya and Sansa countless times, but because the strange emotion was still raging through her and that just made everything awkward.

I need to excuse myself. Now.

"Why don't I go pen a raven right away?" Alyssa suggested desperately.

Myrcella let go then and for some reason looked torn but eventually nodded.

"Thank you Lady Alys." The Princess said more formally this time. "I look forward to the reply."

"I'm sure it'll be positive." Alyssa assured her as she dropped into a curtsy. "Now, if you'll excuse me. I'll go pen that letter now."

"Yes," Myrcella said sounding strangely wistful. "I shall see you again soon."

"I promise." Alyssa said without thought. It nevertheless was the right thing to say as she was rewarded with the one of Myrcella's brilliant smiles as she made her leave. A sight that buoyed her mood for the rest of the day.

That night, Alyssa's good mood has mostly dissipated. Dealing with the King and his leering at the
evening feast did that to her. Without it to cloud her judgement, she recalled the dangerous feeling of want she'd felt around Myrcella. As a result, she ended up pacing her room in agitation when she should be sleeping.

"Consider it one of the prices you must pay." Nameless said, leaning nonchalantly against the walls of her chamber.

He had appeared out of nowhere but Alyssa had grown so used to his sudden comings and goings that all she did was pause at it.

"This is your work, Lord Nameless?"

"Hardly." The god said with a shake of his head. "It is yours."

"I don't understand."

"It is your magic, child." The god said as he pushed off the wall to stand in front of her, his height allowing him to loom over her. "It wishes to be passed onto the next generation. It thus resonates with those with whom you can produce strong magical children."

"But Myrcella is a girl!"

"Gender is a small obstacle to magic and yours, no matter what else it might be, is still part of you. It follows your preferences. It will not resonate with someone who you find wholly unattractive."

"But she's so young."

"And your magic did not make you ravish her there and then did it? I assure you that it can if the compatibility is strong enough. It recognizes your concern. It merely seeks to make you understand however the desire that your conscious mind cannot."

"T-That's convenient. Is this why-"

"You were so open to the Darry girl? Yes, it is." Nameless said as his form began to grow indistinct. "You chose this magic, now you must deal with some of the consequences it brings."

Alyssa nodded. A little awkwardness with others caused by her magic was a small price for the power that it had granted her already.

"Thank you for explaining things to me, Lord Nameless."

"Merely a small reward to you for the ample entertainment you've provided me thus far."

The god told her as he completely disappeared from view. "Keep up the good work."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

A short one to cement Alyssa's friendship with Myrcella. Why is that important? One big reason should be made clear by next chapter.
I do have a question though that I hope some readers might be nice enough to answer for me. Why do some people who disagree with story elements in a story have to be so rude about things when they choose to drop a fic that does not suit their tastes? If you dislike a fic because certain story elements don't agree with you so be it, but there's no reason to start ranting about every perceived flaw in it. It reflects more badly on you than me to be honest, especially when every single one of the flaws you identified are explained in story. You might not agree with those explanations but at least an attempt is made to explain them. More importantly, not being civil is just a sign of immaturity not as a sign you are edgy as you might think it is. Do these folks think that any particular author has to write things their way and if they do not then they can be flamed? If so that reeks of entitlement. So this turned into a rant, and yes it was prompted by a particular review of this type this fic received recently on FFN, but I've received enough of them to know that this is not an isolated case. Its uncommon but not rare which just makes me feel sad. Sorry I just had to get this off my chest. It's so frustrating to get reviews of this type.

At the guest on FFN who points out that Robert is at fault for letting the Realm become unstable? So what? Does that detract from the point he is making in the extra scene? Ned was about to sacrifice the Realm for an animal! He was risking war, which will invariably cost the lives of thousands because of a single direwolf! You can rightfully blame Robert for letting things get to this stage but you must be fair and point out that in this situation he is right. Or does Lady's life, no matter how beloved, matter more than the thousands of men who will die if civil war breaks out? Because that's the kind of calculation that needs to be made in that situation.

Another thing I think readers might need to take note of that I discovered while discussing the Lady incident with Time Parad0x further via PMs is that some might think that Robert's unfairness matters there. It doesn't. Despite what any political fiction that Robert or more likely Jon Arryn on his behalf might spin about his Targaryen ancestry, his claim to the Iron Throne is entirely based on the right of conquest. At least now. A case might have been made otherwise when he ascended the throne but now with Dorne, the Reach, the Iron Islands and the Targaryen loyalist Houses only held in check by the strength of the Tully-Baratheon-Arryn-Stark-Lannister alliance. This perception of strength is all that keeps the Realm from all out civil war. So the need to preserve this veneer of strength (which has already been previously observed to be fracturing) trumps all considerations of fairness, simply because there are large factions (at least three whole Kingdoms in the Iron Islands, Dorne and the Reach and the whole bunch of loyalists scattered across the Realm) who do want him on the Iron Throne either way or want to break away, so if he shows weakness he gives them more reason to rise up. That is why he must act in defense of Joffrey even if he might think that he was in the wrong because if he didn't he would appear weak for not being able to punish those who harmed his his heir, especially since it was (to the eyes of most of the Realm) nothing more than an animal. Let me give you a modern example of what it would have meant if Robert did not take action against the wolves: It would be tantamount to an attacker wounding the Vice President of the United States and not being punished for it at all. Matters of self-defense and what not are also not valid in this case because they were not in a medieval society, not when it came to royalty. Essentially endangering a royal, especially the Crown Prince is always a crime especially if it's just an animal. Robert could cave to Ned and send the wolves back North or some other lesser punishment but the options before him are this: alienate the North and appear strong to the Realm or alienate the Lannisters (who bankrolls his regime) and appear weak to the Realm (and ask for the vultures to circle
more enthusiastically). Which of these two options is likely to destabilize his regime?

(The previous section was edited based on Borg Collective's review on FFN of this chapter)

Long AN because people are reading the subtext wrong, at least for my fic, so I'm clarifying to prevent having to repeat myself in the reviews. If you disagree whether this is true in canon, feel free but don't bother me about it in regards to this fic as this is the set up it is working on and I'm not changing it. Well that's all for this one, till next time adjö!
Ned Stark was just leaving the shop of Tobho Mott at the top of the Street of Steel where he'd just met one of Robert's bastards as part of his investigation of his predecessor as Hand's death. Thanks to the testimonies from his goodsister that Cat had brought him and retracing his foster father's last days, he is now certain that Jon Arryn had been murdered because he had either discovered, or was close to discovering, proof of the Lannister twins' treasonous incestuous affair.

Which means that they are the most likely suspects. Ned reasoned. Time to shift focus and determine if they did take action and if so how.

As loathe as he was to letting the Queen and the Kingslayer go, especially since he was certain that Alys was correct and they'd killed Bran, he was not about to take action against them without evidence. It was not the honorable thing to do and was why he had not killed the two for killing his son immediately after his eldest daughter had told him they were the killers.

"Lord Stark," Jaime Lannister called out angrily, as if summoned by Ned's thoughts.

Turning to face the man, Ned was surprised to find him accompanied by a dozen Red Cloaks. All of whom had their swords drawn, Kingslayer included.

"What is the meaning of this?" Ned demanded even as he drew Ice warily and his own contingent of guards similarly unsheathed their weapons.

"You wife kidnapped my brother Tyrion," the Kingsguard spat. "She accuses him for being party to your youngest son's death without any evidence at all mind you!"

Ned blinked in confusion. Cat has what? Why?

Even as he asked himself the question he knew the answer though. Cat was acting out of blind rage. His wife tried her best to live up to her House words of Family, Duty, Honor but when her emotions were high, she did foolish things. Her ill treatment of Alys in the past was born of this and now it seemed her anger at the Lannisters had driven her to do something dangerously reckless.

"I have no knowledge on the matter." Ned replied cautiously. "If that is true, let me write to my wife and convince her to release him."

"Save it Stark," Lannister said with an angry scowl. "I know a faster way to gain my brother's release. I'm taking you hostage."
"Over my dead body!" Jory declared defiantly, bringing his sword to the ready.

"Gladly," Lannister replied coldly as he gestured to his men to charge.

Much to Ned's disamy, the fight was laughably short. While he was struggling to take down the trio of Red Cloaks who had run his way, his half dozen men at arms were cut down. Not because they were less skilled than the Westermen, no, if anything his men easily took down two of the Red Cloaks each before dying. No, what swayed the odds was Jaime Lannister who fought with such ferocious grace and skill that he cut through Ned's men like they weren't even there. Even brave Jory barely put up much of a fight before he was slain. And thus Ned found himself standing over three dead Red Cloaks but alone and surrounded by two more plus the dreaded Kingslayer himself.

"Surrender Stark," the Lannister offered. "You can't win this."

"And you won't get away with it." Ned warned. "I am Hand of the King."

"Like I care," the Kingslayer hissed as he lashed out with his sword.

Ned tried to block but the blonde's blade moved so fast that it seemed to flow around his clumsy defense. Something he'd only ever seen Alyssa manage. Not that he had time to be impressed, as the razor sharp steel cut deeply into his side and caused him to wince. This just created another opening, not that the Lannister needed one, and he easily disarmed Ned with a painful but deliberately shallow cut to his sword arm.

"Take hi-"

"Lord Jaime!" A Red Cloak shouted as he ran up, cutting the Kingslayer off and holding out a raven's scroll. "A-A message! From Lord Tyrion!"

"Tyrion!?" Lannister said, surprised. "Let me see that."

The blonde read the scroll twice before turning to the men who had restrained Ned while he had been doing so.

"Let him go."

"My lord?" The one to Ned's right asked, confused.

"My brother has won his freedom through a trial by combat at the Eyrie and escaped from your wife's custody, Stark. Apparently her mad sister had more sense than her and put him on trail for some trumped up charges." The Kingslayer spat. "Consider yourself lucky that he has."

With that last ominous statement Lannister turned and began to walk away.

"Come. We're leaving."

"And Lord Stark?" One of the Red Cloaks asked.

"Leave him," Lannister said dismissively as he led his men around a corner and out of sight.

It was only then that a group of Gold Cloaks who had been down the street the whole time but which were too fearful to intervene earlier, rushed to Ned's aid. He would normally have called them cowards, but as he saw the bodies of his own men littering the street he couldn't help but think that perhaps they had made the right choice. The Kingslayer was undeniably a monster.
"Damn it Stepmother!" Alyssa hissed under her breath as she paced inside her Father's bedchamber while awaiting for him to be brought there for treatment after his run in with the Kingslayer. "Why did you have to do something so very reckless!"

Having taken to periodically using the Scrying spell to monitor the progress of her Father's investigation since her Stepmother's visit and the ominous thought that it planted that the future was not as mutable as she'd hoped, she had seen his bloody encounter with the Kingslayer first hand. Thus even before word had reached the Tower of the Hand of the incident, Alyssa had begun preparing for her Father's return and treatment.

Her angry venting was brought to an end when the door to the room was flung open and a group of Gold Cloaks carried her injured Father inside whilst escorted by a squad of loyalguardsmen.

"Put him on the bed," she ordered and though the Gold Cloaks hesitated at taking orders from her, they nevertheless complied.

Once he was on the bed, Alyssa quickly eyed and judged his injuries.

_Painful and temporarily debilitating, but not lethal. She surmised quickly. I suppose they would have to be since the Kingslayer sought to take Father hostage._

"Out," she ordered the men in the room distractedly. "I need privacy to begin treating my Father."

"My lady, are you sure?" One of the servants they'd brought from Winterfell asked as she wrung her hands in uncertainty.

"Yes. Now out!"

"Listen to her," Father managed with a wince. "Give us some privacy."

With their lord having spoken, the servants quickly filed out of the room and helpfully closed the door behind them. Alyssa watched them go and only when she was sure they were alone, she turned back to her Father.

"Father, I can heal you with my magic." She told him honestly.

"I guessed that was your intent." Father admitted with another wince. "You would not require privacy otherwise. Can you make the healing seem natural?"

"I can," Alyssa told him after she ran through the small selection of healing spells she knew. "I have a spell that can enhance the body's natural healing. It won't vanish the wounds like my others would, but it should greatly speed up your recovery."

"Use it," Father told her with a nod. "Vanishing my wounds would be too suspicious."

Alyssa frowned. She honestly didn't care about appearing suspicious at the moment, not when everything appeared to be on the verge of ending in the same tragedy that had destroyed her family in her past life. However, she was a dutiful daughter, so she just nodded and placed her hands on her Father's wounds.

"Regeneration." She incanted in a soft whisper, her hands glowing green as she channeled a stream of magical energy into her Father's body to spur on his body's natural healing ability.

Father breathed a sigh of relief as her magic began his work and leaned back on his bed.
"I suppose you want to know how I ended up like this?" Father said after taking a moment to get comfortable.

"You had a run in with the Kingslayer because Stepmother unwisely took Tyrion Lannister hostage." Alyssa informed him with a frown, still upset by her Stepmother's reckless actions.

"You were watching?" Father said knowingly.

"I've checked on you from time to time." Alyssa told him with a shrug.

"Then you know that I have discovered proof of the Lannister affair?"

Alyssa blinked. She hadn't known that but he'd been attacked visiting the known location of one of the King's bastards.

He can't mean-

"Father, surely using the King's bastards as proof isn't enough."

"It will be for Robert." Father insisted.

"Even if that's the case, the King is away." Alyssa told him with a skeptical frown. "While you were out in the city, he decided to head out into the Kingswood on an impromptu hunt."

"Then I'll just have to tell him as soon as he returns."

This is a bad idea! Alyssa's instincts screamed at her, but she knew she could not convince her Father otherwise. For all that their relationship was strained, part of Father still saw Robert as his brother. That familial bond and his honor would not allow him to keep the secret of his cuckolding from the King.

So instead of attempting to dissuade her Father, she settled for issuing a warning.

"Then promise me you won't do anything reckless until you have the chance." Alyssa said pleadingly. "We're in dangerous enough waters already."

"I know," Father agreed. "I should have found an excuse to have you and your sisters sent back to Winterfell before it all came to this. I have been trying since the incident with Lady but-

"The King wouldn't let you." Alyssa told him. "He knew it would be seen as distrust of him on our part which would paint the fragile reconciliation with the Crown as false. Worse as our alliance with the Crown is one of its key sources of strength, as such any sign of renewed rift between us will make him seen weak and for a King's who only remains on the throne through the claim of superior strength of the increasingly fracturing Tully-Baratheon-Arryn-Stark-Lannister alliance, that is something he cannot afford. Not when a break with the North could take the Riverlands and possibly even the Vale with us. Thus ever since the incident or perhaps even from the moment we left Winterfell all of us have been as much hostages to ensure the North's continued loyalty as we are guests of the Crown."

Father winced. Whether it was at his failure to arrange for the return of his daughters to safety or Alyssa's pulling back of all the pretenses behind the legitimacy of reign of King Robert's House or their predicament here in King's Landing, she did not know nor did she care.

"I should not have have brought you and your sisters South."
"No, in hindsight, you probably should not have." Alyssa said with a sigh. "But we underestimated how treacherous the waters here were."

If I had known things would spiral out of my control like this, I would have never advocated any of this! Invalidating my future knowledge be damned! Alyssa thought self-deprecatingly. She blamed mainly herself for all that was happening and likely about to happen but now was not the time to wallow in her guilt.

"You have not made your promise, Father." Alyssa demanded of her Father while letting none of her own self reproach show. "Remember that if you do something reckless that it is not just you but Sansa, Arya, I and our whole household here in King's Landing that will pay the price of any missteps you might make."

"I promise to not do anything reckless." Father assured her.

Despite her Father's words, Alyssa could not help the sense of impending doom that plagued her.

In spite of this growing dread, Alyssa could not afford to let her family's enemies know that something was amiss. She was sure that the vultures were already circling since the news of Father's altercation with the Kingslayer spread and the rift it exposed between the Starks and Lannisters was made public. Thus in spite of everything, the morning after the incident Alyssa met Myrcella for tea as they had previously planned.

"Lady Alys," Myrcella said sounding surprised as Alyssa walked into her sitting room. "I didn't think you would come."

"I promised I would, didn't I Princess?" Alyssa told her with a smile. "And I try to always keep my promises."

"But after yesterday- Oh! About that! I'm so sorry about what Uncle Jaime did!"

"You need not apologize, Princess. You did nothing after all."

"That is true, but on behalf of-"

Whatever the blonde Princess was about to say was cut off as a flustered looking messenger ran into the room.

"P-Princess, t-the King," the man said as he finally steadied his breathing. Myrcella's face twisted with worry and Alyssa instinctively reached out to give her arm a comforting squeeze, even as the supposed Baratheon Princess demanded the messenger make sense.

_Dammit all! This can't be happening now!_ Alyssa knew this was coming but with the specific of events from her past life changing or coming out of order, she had hoped they had more time. _Please don't let it be what I think it is! We finally have the proof we need._

"What's happened to Father?"

"H-Hunting mishap." The man said as he finally steadied his breathing. "The King is dead."

The words had barely been out of the messenger's mouth when despite her desire to comfort the
shocked Myrcella, Alyssa had made her excuses and raced back to the Tower of her Hand to find her own Father. She found him in his solar penning a raven's scroll.

*Writing a letter now!? With the King dead, our only hope of settling our score against the Lannisters with words is gone! We can oppose them with arms now! But we can only do that if we get out of King's Landing first!*

It was sad but true. With the evidence of the Queen's affair they had gathered now, they would likely have been able to convince King Robert to execute her and her twin for their treasonous adultery thus avenging Bran. But with the King dead? That evidence was pointless. With the King, the only check to the Lannisters' power in King's Landing, dead, they would seize power and deny everything. And as had happened in her last life seize her family and usher them to an unpleasant fate for ever even accusing them as such.

"What are you writing?" Alyssa demanded, feeling too harried for politeness.

Father looked up sharply at her uncharacteristic lack of decorum but perhaps sensing the urgency that had taken hold of her, he did not reprimand her as he would have otherwise and simply answered her question.

"A letter to King Stannis to come to King's Landing to accept the crown."

*This can't be happening! If Father is calling Stannis to be King then he means to confront the Cersei with the truth behind Myrcella and the rest of her children. Or Lord Nameless be kind has already done so! The witch will kill him for it! I have to try and stop him! Convince him to flee instead!*

"He won't come!" Alyssa shouted at him. "Lord Stannis fled the city weeks ago when his brother was still alive and could protect him somewhat from the Lannisters! Why would he return now when even that feeble shield is dead!?"

"You worry too much Alys," Father said reassuringly. "We have the Gold Cloaks. With their help we can contain the Lannisters and ensure that King Stannis can assume the Iron Throne."

*No, we don't! The Gold Cloaks serve Littlefinger and he is no friend of ours. Alyssa thought through careful recollection of the events of her past life and a healthy dose of divination in this lifetime. None of which she knew would convince Father, at least not in time to avert disaster.*

"Please tell me that beyond writing that letter you have done nothing so far."

"I have also spoken to the Queen-"

"You have what!?" Alyssa all but screeched.

"She might have killed Bran and committed treason but her children are not to blame. For their sake, I gave her fair warning so that she might prepare them for what is to come."

Alyssa looked at her Father in a way that she never had before. All her lives she had idolized her Father but now as he led her family to ruin that veneer was being torn away to reveal the truth. He was nothing more than a naive fool.

"We don't have time for this!" Alyssa hissed desperately. "We need to run! Now! Before the Lannisters capture us all."

With that she ran out of the room, ignoring her Father's reply and hurried into her own to grab
Steelclaw, she needed her sword right now, before racing off to find her sisters. If she took them and fled the city, she was sure her Father would follow. Then and only then would they be safe from the claws of the Lannister lion that was descending to rip them apart.

With that thought in mind, she desperately searched the Red Keep's gardens for Sansa, the redhead having mentioned that she would be spending time there in the late morning with some of the other young ladies of the court. Despite her efforts, the search was fruitless.

"Lady Alys!" A cry calling out to her suddenly had her spinning towards its source with Steelclaw at the ready only to find Myrcella alone.

"Princess, what are you doing here? And alone?" Alyssa asked, just slightly surprised the blonde hadn't even flinched when she'd been confronted with a sword raised threateningly at her. She had always known the little Princess was made of stern stuff.

"I snuck away. Rosamund is covering for me." Myrcella explained. "But that's not important now. You have to follow me quickly."

"Why?"

"If you're going around armed then you must know some of it." Myrcella said with an exasperated frown, obviously unhappy that they were wasting precious time. "I don't know why but the Gold Cloaks and the Lannister guards are hunting down and seizing your family. I know you can't have done anything to deserve it, you're too nice. And even if you did, I don't care. You're my friend and I protect them. I will not let you suffer Joffrey's cruelty. The best way to do that now is to smuggle you out of the castle. So follow me!"

*If the Gold and Red Cloaks are hunting me then if I don't leave now... I'd have to fight them all. I don't think I can manage that.* Alyssa thought even as an image of Ghost blasting the Red Keep with his dragonfire passed through her mind but she dismissed it forcefully. *No! Doing so would risk kill Father, Sansa and Arya too! And innocents like Myrcella as well.*

"Lead the way." Alyssa said reluctantly, putting her trust into the other girl.

The blonde Princess breathed a sigh of relief and began leading them towards a large building that functioned as a storage shed for the Keep's gardeners' supplies. It was suspiciously devoid of any of said gardeners at the moment however and Alyssa had to believe that Myrcella had something to do with that.

"There's an entrance to the servants' passages in here," Myrcella explained as they entered the building, faint sparks of barely discernible magic flickering arcing off her body. "They connect to the catacombs. I know a route that will take us through them all into the city. That's how we'll get you out. We need to hurry though, the servants have all been sent to their quarters for now so we won't have to worry about them but the guards should be combing the castle. I managed to redirect the group sent to the gardens, but I don't know when they'll return."

"Thank you, Princess." Alyssa told her sincerely as they slipped into the door built into a wall and down a short spiral staircase, all lit by small flaming braziers built into alcoves cut into the wall. "I hate to ask anything more of you but do you have news of my family?"

Myrcella hesitated a moment but taking a fortifying breath replied.

"Lord Stark was taken first. The Gold and Red Cloaks stormed the Tower of the Hand and seized it by surprise. He was taken then. Lady Sansa had already been captured as well by the time I came
looking for you." The Princess told her apologetically as she took a pair of conveniently placed unlit torches, lighting them in the nearest brazier and handing one to Alyssa. "She had tried to fight them off with a set of hidden daggers, but she was overpowered by the guards. Though if what I heard was correct she managed to badly wound a number of them. I didn't know Lady Sansa could fight."

"We Starks are wolves. We all have fangs even the harmless looking ones."

Alyssa barely saw Myrcella's shallow nod as they descended into the dark passages beneath the Red Keep, even as the Princess continued speaking.

"I do not know what happened to Lady Arya. There has been no news. I will look for her and if I find her, I will smuggle her out as well."

"Thank you." Alyssa told the Princess again.

"I am only doing what a friend should." Myrcella told her honestly. "I am sure you would do the same if put in the same situation."

"I would," Alyssa responded cautiously. While she would definitely return the favor in regards to Myrcella and even her little brother Tommen, she could not say the same for the rest of her family.

It was as they navigated the winding corridors of the Red Keep that the gravity of the situation began to fully dawn on Alyssa. The worse case scenario of coming to King's Landing was coming to pass!

*I should have tried harder to prevent it!* Was a thought that repeatedly raced through Alyssa's mind as they walked through dark passage after dark passage.

Myrcella, bless her soul, was kind enough to leave her be perhaps knowing that Alyssa was in no condition for any conversation. It was thus in this tense silence that they passed the hour or so it took to reach the end of their journey.

"This it it," Myrcella declared at long last, breaking the quiet as they stood before a wooden door. "That door opens to inside the Great Sept of Baelor. I trust you can make it out of the city from there?"

Alyssa just nodded before turning to glance back the way they'd come. She wanted to stay. To rescue Father and Sansa, and find Arya. But she knew that would be impossible.

"Thank you again, Princess." Alyssa said as she moved towards the door. "I will not forget your kindness."

"Stay safe, my friend." Myrcella said before in an act of what Alyssa thought must have been impulsiveness she hugged her. "I hope we meet again."

"We will. I promise."

Sneaking out of the city after Myrcella had departed back to the Red Keep had been laughably easy. Once she'd stepped into the empty cellar of the Great Sept of Baelor that lay beyond the door the Princess had shown her to, Alyssa had used a *Gate* spell to create a portal to Ghost's lair in the Kingswood. In hindsight, she realized she probably had not needed Myrcella's help making an escape in the first place. Not that she appreciated the assistance any less because of that.
Now a week of hiding with her dragon later, Alyssa had snuck back into King's Landing to watch her Father's so-called 'confession' of his crimes that the town criers had loudly proclaimed was to be held on the steps of the Great Sept. She had tried to use Scrying to locate her Father and attempt to Gate him out but discovered a major problem. An alien force that reeked metaphorically of birds and ancient forests was keeping her from using either spell within King's Landing. What this force gained by interfering she did not know. All she got when she tried to force her way through the disruptive magic net over King's Landing was a cryptic message in many voices speaking as one: Come to us.

She did not know what it meant and did not care. All she wanted to do was to rescue her Father and Sansa, and her best hope to do so was to go to the 'confession'. It was for this reason that hidden under an Illusion, a spell she was surprised to find actually worked without interference, to appear as a simple peasant woman and jostling for a spot with a good view of the event with the large crowd of smallfolk gathered to watch it, Alyssa reflected on all that had happened in the intervening days. If the criers were to be believed, Joffrey had been declared King and he'd betrothed himself to Sansa just like Queen Cersei had wanted.

And now despite all that has changed, things are playing out just as it had in my past life. Alyssa realized with helpless anger as she watched from her place in the crowded square as her Father was dragged by two Gold Cloaks into a kneeling position before 'King' Joffrey, Queen Cersei, Sansa, Lord Baelish, Lord Varys, Grand Maester Pycelle, the High Septon, several Kingsguard and the King's Justice, Ser Ilyn Payne.

The filth said some nonsense to the crowd that Alyssa tuned out, she was too busy looking at her bedraggled Father with dismay. It was clear that his time in the infamous Black Cells had not been kind to him. He was dirty, looked like he hadn't eaten in days and most of all defeated.

"And now the accused will confess his crimes." The Grand Maester said, dragging Alyssa from her observations.

Crimes!? What crimes!?

"I am Eddard Stark, Lord of Winterfell and Hand of the King." Father began in a voice so weak that Alyssa barely recognized it. "I come before you to confess my treason in the sight of gods and men. I betrayed the faith of my King and the trust of my friend Robert. I swore to protect and defend his children... but before his blood was cold, I plotted to murder his son... and seize the throne for myself. Let the High Septon and Baelor the Blessed bear witness to what I've said. Joffrey Baratheon... is the one true heir to the Iron Throne... by the grace of all the gods, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm."

"Lies all lies." Alyssa hissed to herself. Her Illusion keeping her words to her ears alone.

The Grand Maester stepped forward then and began speaking of the justice and mercy of the gods. All of which Alyssa dismissed as the ramblings of a Lannister stooge. It was an open secret that Pycelle was deep in Lord Tywin's pockets and had been for years now. She turned her attention back to his words though when he turned to address Joffrey.

"Your grace," the old man said sycophantically. "What is to be done with this traitor?"

The gathered smallfolk, riled up by the farce unfolding before them and unaware of the truth, began yelling out angry demands for Father's head and Joffrey allowed this for a moment before he held out a hand for silence. It took a moment for the crowd to settle but when it finally did, he spoke.
"People of King's Landing," he said addressing the smallfolk with a vicious looking smile. "My mother advises me to let Lord Stark join the Night's Watch and live the remainder of his days at the Wall, stripped of lands and titles, while my betrothed, Lady Sansa, has begged mercy for her father. However, they are but soft-hearted women and I promise that, for as long as I am King, treason will never go unpunished."

At this, he turned to Ser Ilyn Payne.

"Bring me his head!"

The crowd roared in enthusiastic agreement, even as Sansa desperately begged for their Father's life. So much so that she had to be restrained by a Kingsguard. The Queen also shouted at her son to reconsider his sentence. Even Lord Varys ran to the King clearly asking him to reconsider the matter. However, he was unmoved.

"Ser Payne!" He shouted, pushing Lord Varys aside. "What are you waiting for?"

As her Father was pushed to his knees by two Kingsguard and Ilyn Payne put on a black hood to conceal his face, Alyssa found herself frozen for in shock that things had come to this despite everything. Immediately she moved to cast, but her already slowed reaction was further hampered by the strange force shouting into her mind.

"Come to us!"

Alyssa was forced to clutch her head in pain as the voice almost overwhelmed her, but using all her will she ignored the voice and directed her magic at Ilyn Payne. "Flame Strike!"

But her hesitation proved costly as she was still midcast when the knight swung Ice, the greatsword of House Stark itself, and took the head of the Lord of Winterfell.

She did not scream at the sight as she had when she'd witnessed Bran's death. No, she was done being helpless as her family died around her. Instead, in this instance unbridled anger surged through her veins.

Thus even as her Flame Strike incinerated Payne, her Illusion shattered as she was already wrapping herself in Frost Armor and drawing Steelclaw as she rushed forward towards a panicked Joffrey intent on avenging her Father. The terrified smallfolk that had so packed the square just moments before fleeing at the sight of her.

Their panicked flight delayed a group of Gold and Red Cloaks as they attempted to get in her way, allowing her to easily deal with them with a dismissive Cone of Cold from her off hand that turned them and the majority of their compatriots into frozen statues.

The slight distraction however was enough time for one of the Kingsguard to drag a hysterical Sansa in front of Joffrey and his pale faced mother to act as a human shield while they began to make their escape even as another charged at Alyssa.

"Out of my way!" Alyssa shouted. "Flame Blade!"

Channeling the spell through Steelclaw, she stabbed Arys Oakheart as the Kingsguard hesitantly tried to engage. The heat caused the sword to warp and get stuck in his body even as it cooked him alive. The loss of her sword infuriated her however and she was not satisfied to just kill him.

"Fireball!" She said, pointing a finger at his chest and sending a bolt of flame into his still
collapsing body that reduced it to ash.

His sacrifice had however bought Joffrey and his party, including Sansa, enough time to escape as when Alyssa turned away from the pile of ash that were his remains, she found them nowhere in sight.

"No one else gets away!" She shouted furiously. "Wall of Ice! Wall of Fire!"

At her invocation, thick walls of solid ice spontaneously shot out of the ground and encircled the entire area in front of the Sept of Baelor, impaling all those unlucky enough to be standing where they came into being on wickedly sharp icicles. This was shortly followed by a ring of blazing flames just within their circumference that incinerated those few who hadn't fled back in fear as the ice walls rose.

"Flame Blade! Ice blade!" Alyssa incanted, conjuring a fiery scimitar blade into her right hand and a rapier of ice into her left, intent on using them to cut down anyone remotely associated with the Lannisters within reach of her blades.

The first of which was a group of cowering Red Cloaks that had been cut off from escaping with Joffrey and the others by her elemental walls.

"Time to die!" She told them ominously as she advanced on them.

"Mercy!" One of their number cried as he dropped his blade, soon followed by his fellows.

"Mercy? Where was the mercy for my Father!?" Alyssa roared as she charged the five men and in a deadly dance of her elemental blades cut them to pieces. "All who side with the Lannisters will die!"

"Alys!" The shout of a familiar voice breached through her fury and Alyssa turned to see Arya running through the huddled, terrified crowd towards her. Her hair was cut short and she was dressed in boy's clothing but the mage would recognize her sister anywhere.

"Arya!" Alyssa cried out in pleasant surprise as she moved towards her sister.

Perhaps seeking to exploit her distraction, a mixed group of brave Gold and Red Cloaks attempted to attack her from behind but a Frost Nova skewered them before their blades got anywhere near to her. Similarly, the desperate fool thinking to reach out to grab Arya as a hostage was promptly reduced to a frozen statue by a Frost Bolt.

Thus nothing stopped Alyssa as she dispelled her blades and picked her little sister up in a tight hug.

"F-Father and Ice," Arya cried out in between sobs. "W-We need to t-take them."

Alyssa frowned. She hadn't even thought of that, of recovering her Father's body and Ice. Ever since Father's head had started to roll, all Alyssa had felt was rage. All she wanted was to kill Joffrey and all who were responsible for Father's death.

Perhaps seeing her lack of action as an opening, another group of Red and Gold Cloaks charged her. Pulling Arya closer for a moment, Alyssa used Firestorm to consume them all in sheets flame.

"You're right." Alyssa said as she gave Arya a hug. "Come."

She pulled Arya towards Father's body. "I'll get Ice. You go pick up Father's h-head."
Arya sobbed but nodded, even as Alyssa moved to Ice and cast a **Cone of Cold** and sent a blast of cold air from her hands at a group of Red Cloaks who had dropped her Father's body when they saw her coming. They were turning back to flee away from her when Alyssa's spell turned them into yet another set of frozen statues. She barely paid them much attention though and walked over to the pile of ash that had been Ilyn Payne and picked up Ice. It was still pretty much red hot from the heat of her **Flame Strike** but Alyssa had never feared the heat especially since she was still protected by her **Frost Armor**.

"Alys, I have F-Father." Arya said, running over with his head and the two of them stood over Father's body. "Now what?"

Alyssa honestly didn't know. She still wanted to focus on killing on Joffrey and Cersei, leveling the whole city in the process if necessary. Getting her sister and her Father's body out of the city wasn't something that she could really process.

Thankfully, she was not alone and a very familiar screeching roar echoed overhead.

Gasps and cries of terror erupted all around her, even Arya had squealed in shock. Among them a single unknown man with a long white beard reacted not with shock, awe or fear, instead at the sight of the dragon, his eyes filled with tearful determination. Alyssa heard and saw none of it however as she saw her friend swoop down towards her.

"Ghost-" She began before her familiar unceremoniously plucked her, Arya and her Father's body up in his talons.

"Ghost!" Alyssa roared over the wind and through their bond. "Attack the Red Keep! Avenge my Father! The Red Keep! Tear it down!"

Her dragon refused her calls, choosing instead to fly further and further away from King's Landing.

"Why did you do that!?!" Alyssa demanded of her familiar as they stood in a clearing in the middle of nowhere that he'd landed in after hours of flight and many leagues. "Why didn't you attack the Red Keep like I asked?"

You know why. Ghost sent her.

Alyssa frowned. **What do you mean?**

Ghost sent her an image of them rampaging through King's Landing and unleashing their full might against the city and its Lannister overlords. More importantly, he sent an image of the aftermath. Of Sansa slain before she they got anywhere close to rescuing her, just to spite her if nothing else. Of Arya getting caught in the crossfire of her rampage. Of her body destroying itself from overusing her magic as her rage stripped her of all her restraint.

Alyssa recoiled in horror at the images.

"Alys? What happened?" Arya asked, looking at her sister with concern before turning to glare at Ghost whilst her hand rested meaningfully on Needle's hilt. "What did you do to her?"

The dragon just looked at her brave little sister incredulously. That unexpected emotion from her familiar was enough to pull Alyssa out of her shock.

"It's alright Arya. He just showed me something I needed to see."
"And what was it?"

"What would've happened if I continued being a fool." Alyssa told her even as she leveled Ghost with a serious look. "Thank you for stopping me."

The dragon just shrugged and sent a wordless reminder that they were partners. Now and forever.

"I don't get it." Arya whined with a pout.

"It means Arya that if I want my revenge. To rescue Sansa. That I will need to win the Game of Thrones."

And it is finally time to stop procrastinating and get started on achieving the goal Lord Nameless set for me all those years ago.

Arya just shot her a lost look, but Alyssa didn't explain. She was too busy plotting her next move even as she turned to their Father's body.

"Ghost." She said, sending an image of what she wanted.

The dragon sent a burst of agreement before using his long tail to rip a sturdy oak that stood at the edge of the clearing from the ground and began carving into it with his claws.

"What is he doing?"

"Making a casket." Alyssa told her as she mentally prepared a spell, modifying it to fit the reduced requirements she needed of it and directed it at the small packs and waterskins they'd been carrying on their persons when they'd been plucked from King’s Landing. "Create Food and Water. There, that should be enough supplies for the trip."

The conjured unleavened bread would be bland and spoil within a day but they would make do. At least the water would last. Not that it would be too large of a problem if it did not, since she could easily cast the spell again.

"Trip?" Arya asked looking hopeful. "Back to Winterfell?"

Alyssa shook her head even as Ghost placed Father's body inside the hollowed out oak he'd prepared.

"Flame Strike." Alyssa cast whilst carefully controlling the intensity of the spell, so as to reduce her Father's body to ash but not damage the casket which would contain it.

"We can't win this war with just the North and Riverlands behind us," Alyssa told her sister as she watched Ghost place a lid over the makeshift casket before using his frost breath to seal it in ice. "So we're going to get allies."

"So where are we going then?"

"Highgarden," Alyssa said as she gestured to Ghost who promptly lowered his neck. "The Tyrells supported the Targaryens during Robert's Rebellion, let us see if they will choose to do so again."

"Targaryen? What are you saying Alys?"

"Just climb aboard Ghost." Alyssa told her sister sternly. "I'll explain once we are in the air.

Her youngest sister pouted angrily but complied, scrambling up onto Ghost's shoulders where there
was a small break in the row of icy spines that ran down his length with just a little help from Alyssa. Once her sister was on board, the last Targaryen in Westeros used Levitate to float herself behind Arya whose position she had to adjust slightly.

"Hang on to me tightly." Alyssa told her as she gripped one of her dragon's spines. "And don't touch Ghost's spines. They are made of ice and are very cold, they'll give you frostbite."

"And you can?" Arya asked curiously as she wrapped herself tightly around Alyssa's waist.

"Ghost is my familiar. I have nothing to fear from him." Alyssa told her, before sending a wordless sense of readiness to her dragon.

Sending a sense of acknowledgement, Ghost moved to pick up Father's frozen casket before he began beating his wings strongly and he pushed off the ground. As he did, Alyssa steeled her resolve for what she needed to do.

*Paraphrasing what Maester Aemon told me in my last life for my current situation. It is time to kill the girl and let the Queen be born.*

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope you guys liked this chapter. I know I did, especially the part when Alyssa totally lost it and goes on a rampage. How did you think of that? Did you like it as much as I did?

Well, things have gone off the rails now hasn't it? What will this verse's War of the Five Kings be like after this? Keep reading to find out.

So a reviewer on FFN going by Shashakul raised some points that I think need clarification.

First, I am not aiming for a male perspective on living inside a woman's body for Alyssa in this story. I do not write that kind of stories because I am not knowledgeable enough about how someone in that position would be like to even attempt writing something like that. My intent with Alyssa was for the knowledge and skills of Jon's life to carry over into this one while the overall Jon identity, which includes his maleness, sublimating away as demonstrated by his increasing distance from his previous self. Furthermore, the original Alyssa's memories, instincts and muscle memory have merged into his own and he went through puberty as Alyssa which as anyone who has been through puberty knows is a formative experience which reshapes one's identity. Jon's identity has long since been diluted away into the his new Alyssa identity and the lack of a male perspective on her part is demonstrative of this. There is little male perspective left. Because honestly I find stories where a character reincarnates into or otherwise takes over another body and *not* have their identity be changed from the experience be strange.

Whether Alyssa's homosexuality comes from her old Jon identity is subject to debate but Alyssa certainly thinks it does. Since this a story from Alyssa's POV that's what's said in story.
Lastly, Shashakul implied that Alyssa is not feminine and that left me genuinely puzzled. She wears dresses without complaint and even prefers them, something which will become more evident later in the story. She pursues classically feminine pursuits like singing and music. Yes, she rides and knows her way around a sword but do these make her unfeminine? So too do other women such as the Free Folk spearwives, Mormonts and many Dornish women, and they are not considered unfeminine. Strange and unladylike to some but not unfeminine. Plus she cannot exactly abandon such vital self-defense/combat skills when she knows the kinds of things that might be ahead of her. She is essentially the same kind of feminine as Dacey Mormont which is described in the ASOIAF wiki as a woman who "finds herself at ease in a lady's garb or in leather armor." If that's not a good enough comparison then think of her as a healthy medium between the very ladylike Sansa and the wild Arya.

Till the next chapter búcsú!
"So that's Highgarden?" Arya asked as she craned her neck over Ghost's side to catch a glimpse of the castle they were flying towards. "Doesn't look too bad."

Alyssa rolled her eyes at her sister's ridiculous standards. Highgarden wasn't Winterfell or the Red Keep but it was impressive in its own right. It was surrounded by three rings of white stone, each wall higher than the one before it. Between the outer and middle walls was a briar labyrinth which Alyssa reckoned served to entertain as well as slow invaders. Its towers were a mix of older squat and square towers from the Age of Heroes and tall, slender, round fortifications dating from after the Andal invasion.

Her inspection of the castle was interrupted when Ghost sent her a view of a large group of people gathered in the castle's central courtyard preparing to depart on a long journey.

Thanks to her Scrying, Alyssa knew they intended to rally their forces there with the intention of joining them with those of Renly Baratheon in a bid to back his claim to the Iron Throne. A plan that Alyssa had every intention to thoroughly disrupt.

And it seems I caught them at just the right time to do so.

"Ghost, take us down right in front of them"

Her dragon sent her his eager agreement and after taking a moment to angle himself properly promptly dove. Alyssa giggled at her dragon's enthusiasm even as Arya screamed, though whether that was from excitement or fear the Targaryen doubted even her sister knew. The winds buffeted them but the Mage Armor that Alyssa had wrapped around herself and Arya kept them both safe.

Now. Ghost sent just as he leveled off his flight, sending a powerful gust of wind into the Tyrell ranks that confused and threatened to knock them off.

Rolling her eyes at her dragon's sense of dramatics, Alyssa dropped the Illusion spell she'd been maintaining over all three of them to keep their approach unseen. Such that to the assembled Tyrell party, they seemed to appear as if from nowhere. The sight of a massive dragon stunned everyone and spooked the horses, though their excellent riders soon had them back under control.
Most surprising however, was the fact that the recognizable form of the elderly Olenna Tyrell took one look at Ghost and fell to one knee even before the dragon landed.

"Hail! Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name. Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms." The wizened matriarch of the Tyrells declared in a firm voice. "Your loyal vassals, House Tyrell, welcome you to Highgarden."

"Mother! What are you doing!?" A fat man with curly brown hair and a beard cut into a triangular shape that could only be Lord Mace Tyrell asked incredulously.

"Saving us all from a second Field of Fire!" The infamous Queen of Thorns shouted back indignantly. "Now bend the knee!"

Blanching, the Lord of Highgarden and Lord Paramount of the Reach hastened to follow his Mother's example, causing the rest of the gathered Tyrells and their men to do the same.

"You made the right choice, Tyrells of Highgarden." Alyssa told them with every bit of menace she could muster. "If you had refused me, I would have been forced to give you a taste of Fire and Blood."

Surveying the crowd as she was, Alyssa was pleased to see that more than one person kneeling before her trembled in fear or breathed a sigh of relief. One of the few exceptions though was the Tyrell daughter, Margaery was her name if she remembered correctly, who instead had a strange look on her face as she snuck glances at her even as she bowed. Sneaking looks she understood, Alyssa was riding astride a dragon after all. But the look of wonderment and almost longing that was directed at Alyssa herself was odd. It was almost like she was enthralled somehow.

I wonder what's that about. I'll have to find out later.

"Rise!" Alyssa said in as commanding a tone as she could manage and making sure she had a firm hold of Arya used Levitate to lower them both off Ghost's back. The use of magic meant to both intimidate and to eliminate the need for her dragon to bend his neck down, thus allowing him to instead keep his mouth in the perfect position to breathe dragonfire on their hosts if necessary.

"Lord Mace, Lady Olenna, I believe we have much to discuss."

At her demand said meeting began without undue delay and even as Arya was shown to quarters to refresh herself and her Father's frozen casket stored away in a place of honor, Alyssa allowed herself to be led into Lord Tyrell's solar where they were joined with the man's crippled eldest son, Willas, and his Mother.

"First things first," Alyssa said as she sat in Lord Tyrell's seat as was proper as his Queen. "I want you to send out ravens to all of Westeros declaring my claim to the throne as the last surviving child and the rightful heiress of Prince Rhaegar Targaryen and his second wife Princess Lyanna Targaryen née Stark."

"So that is your parentage, your grace?" Lady Olenna asked with faint surprise. "I see the Realm's speculation over the past few days since your rather dramatic debut in King's Landing have been correct."

"Yes, it is." Alyssa acknowledged with a nod. "I have proof of it if any dares question my parentage or legitimacy."

"Considering you command a massive dragon I doubt that would be an issue." Lord Willas
commented with a charming smile.

"Quite," Alyssa said with a dismissive wave of her hand. "But it always helps to be prepared."

"Of course it is, your grace." Lord Mace said ingratiatingly.

"Speaking of being prepared, what is the situation in the Realm at present?" Alyssa asked. "I have been on dragonback for the past few days and am uncertain of what has developed whilst I made my way here. I will need to know to plan ahead."

Not helped by us getting lost and flying in the completely wrong direction for three whole days! Alyssa thought to herself as she recalled the frustrating detour that had taken them almost to the Red Mountains of Dorne before they'd realized their mistake. I'm going to have to make sure to study navigation if I plan to make long distance flights in the future. Though I suppose the trip was worth it in its own right.

It had after all allowed time for news of what she had done in King's Landing to disseminate and with it the understanding of her parentage as a Targaryen, perhaps not the specifics but that she was a dragonrider and thus had the blood of the dragon was enough for her purposes. It would allow her to leverage it into support from Targaryen loyalists like the Tyrells. It had also allowed her time to refine her plans for what to do next. It was for these reasons that she had not simply used Gate to travel directly to Highgarden. Well that and it being the first chance she had to travel long distance on dragonback and a childish part of her wanted the chance to savor it.

"The North has declared for you, of course." Lady Olenna said, "We just received the raven about it this morning. We had thought your grace had flown to Riverrun or to the North to link up with your cousin and his army."

"Beyond that," Willas said speaking with less of the charm he was exuding earlier, apparently wisely cowed by her rebuff. "Ravens from Renly Baratheon, Stannis Baratheon and even Balon Greyjoy have arrived declaring themselves Kings. The former two staking claims to the Iron Throne whilst Greyjoy is limiting himself to being the King of the Iron Islands."

"Including Joffrey Waters in King's Landing, that means Westeros currently has five sovereigns?" Alyssa said with a frustrated sigh. She knew this would happen but living it a second time did not make it any less exasperating. "What a mess we have found ourselves in."

"Joffrey Waters, your grace?" Lord Mace asked, sounding curious. "So the usurper currently sitting the Iron Throne truly is a product of the Cersei Lannister's affair with her twin as is alleged?"

"Yes. Sadly, I have had the misfortune of having seen the two in the act."

Lord Mace and Lord Willas both looked disgusted but Lady Olenna just looked curious.

"I take it then that you do not intend to follow your ancestors' marriage traditions, your grace?"

"Not on my life," Alyssa said vehemently. "All incest ever did for my family was drive them into madness. I want no part in that."

"Then I might have a suggestion."

"What is it, Lady Olenna?"

"My grandson Loras has Renly Baratheon's ear," the Queen of Thorns told her though from what Alyssa heard, she was grossly understating Ser Loras' influence over the youngest Baratheon
brother. "That being the case I believe it is possible to work out favorable terms with him for an alliance."

"A marriage alliance?"

"Possibly," the aged Tyrell matriarch admitted.

"I will consider it." Alyssa told her honestly. While she held no attraction towards men, she was more than willing to subject herself to a marriage if it meant getting the Throne. Besides, considering Lord Renly's own preferences, a marriage to him would likely give her the room to explore her own so long as she was discrete.

Setting aside such considerations for later however, Alyssa moved on.

"Now then, tell me of the troop movements that you are aware of."

"Besides that everyone except the Vale and Dorne have called their banners not much I'm afraid." Lord Mace said apologetically. "We know Tywin Lannister and his army is engaged with your cousin's Northmen and the River lords, but not the particulars. We can prepare a more detailed summary in a few hours though it that pleases you, your grace."

Alyssa let out a disappointed sigh. It seemed she would have to wait before she could make plans.

"Who is the Stark in Winterfell?" Alyssa asked curiously after a moment of thought, knowing that tradition held deep meaning for her House.

"Lady Catelyn, I imagine." Lord Willas said after some consideration. "Word had it that while Lord Robb called the banners she rushed back North. Considering the Starks' ancient traditions, I cannot imagine Lord Robb marching South before his mother returned to be the Stark in Winterfell."

Alyssa nodded in agreement. "That it gives him more time to muster his forces is another boon. Beyond that, I do not have other business for the moment. Does anyone have anything else they think I should know?"

"Your grace," Lord Willas spoke up questioningly and waited for a nod from Alyssa before continuing. "Might I ask what your dragon would like as provisions?"

"Leave Ghost to his own devices when it comes to his meals. He'll hunt when he is hungry." Alyssa told the Lord as she stood. "Anything else?"

"No, your grace." Lady Olenna said, shooting her son and grandson warning looks as she did. "Please do go refresh yourself and rest. Days on dragonback must have been exhausting."

"You don't know the half of it."

"Thank you, Lady Olenna." Alyssa said graciously. "I shall."

Despite her claim to the Queen of Thorns that she would rest, after a bath and a change into new clothes provided by her hosts that were just a little ill fitting Alyssa found herself restless and unable to relax. Thus when an invitation to some tea with Lord Mace's wife Lady Alerie arrived, she jumped at the opportunity.

"Couldn't sleep, your grace?" Lady Olenna asked as Alyssa stepped out of the rooms she was
provided with the servants assigned to her trailing dutifully behind her.

"Lady Olenna? What are you doing here?"

"To show you the way, your grace." The Tyrell matriarch told her. "And to check on you. I was concerned when I learned from my gooddaughter that you had accepted her invitation to tea despite earlier mentioning you would like some rest."

Is her concern genuine? Alyssa wondered, but quickly dismissed the notion. By coming to Highgarden she'd chosen to gamble on their loyalty, doubting it at every turn would get her nowhere.

"Yes, unfortunately." Alyssa admitted as she gestured to the older woman that they should talk as they walked and they began making their way towards the tea party with their attendants in tow. "My sister, Arya, is sleeping like a babe but I feel too tense to even attempt it."

"Understandable." The older woman said with what seemed like genuine sympathy. "You have too much on your mind."

"Indeed," Alyssa agreed. "Though perhaps you can alleviate one of my concerns."

"How so, your grace?"

"Tell me, Lady Olenna, is this tea somehow part of your plans? An attempt to ingratiate me to the Tyrells perhaps?"

The Queen of Thorns laughed at the suggestion and shook her head.

"Heavens no." She said as she calmed herself. "If I wanted to do that I'd be throwing my grandchildren at you in a bid to bind you to us in a marriage. No, this is simply my gooddaughter being the woman she was."

"And that is?"

"A good hearted one." Lady Olenna said with exasperation. "It is admirable but it makes things difficult at times."

"I can imagine. A good heart is often inimical to being a player of the Game of Thrones."

"You'd understand." The Queen of Thorns said with a nod. "You play the game differently from most but you understand the game."

"I have the benefit of magic and a full grown dragon."

"Remarkable advantages indeed."

By this point they had arrived at the small garden where Lady Alerie had set up a table upon which was laid out a host of savories and a collection of teas. Alyssa hadn't really interacted with Lady Alerie beyond the most basic of introductions when she'd first arrived. The tall, dignified and handsome woman with long silver hair had been visibly intimidated by Alyssa then. Yet now, the woman showed no sign of her earlier fear.

"Welcome, your grace," the Lady Paramount of the Reach said with a graceful curtsy. "I am very glad that you have deigned to join us today."

"The pleasure is all mine." Alyssa said, with as much poise as she could manage when she found
herself unable to tear her eyes off the beauty standing next to her hostess.

Margaery Tyrell stood next to her mother in a pale green samite gown with a tight-laced bodice that bared her shoulders and the top of her bosom. She was overdressed for the occasion of a simple gathering like the one they were having, but Alyssa couldn't complain. The glimpse the gown offered of the smooth and unblemished skin of the vision's shoulder and the peek at her breasts, had her swallowing hard.

A reaction that was not lost on the other woman if the coy smile she let slip for a moment was any indication.

"Lady Margaery, you are looking especially beautiful today." Alyssa told the Tyrell heiress honestly.

"I am glad to hear that, your grace." The brown haired enchantress said with the hint of amusement. "I was trying to impress."

"Impress whom?"

"Why you of course, your grace."

"Margaery!" Lady Alerie said, sounding scandalized.

"Oh, leave her be Alerie." The Queen of Thorns said with a chuckle. "The girl is just doing what she needs to get what she wants."

"By being so forward?"

"Mother, I do believe her grace prefers the forward approach. Don't you, your grace?" Lady Margaery asked, walking over to Alyssa to offer her an arm.

"I do indeed." Alyssa said honestly as she took the lady's arm and guided her to a seat. "I can play the part of a proper lady if I must, but I despise having to do so. Fortunately, I am in a position now that I can forego most of it."

"But your reputation! Your grace, surely you must worry about that?" Lady Alerie said, worried.

Alyssa shrugged even as she sat down, thus allowing the other ladies to do so as well. Being their Queen, it was only proper that they waited for her to sit first before doing the same.

"If what I heard on the journey here was any indication, the people already call me a Witch Queen and rightly so. I openly wield a sword. And though they might not know it yet, I am attracted to women." Here Alyssa unabashedly glanced at Lady Margaery who daringly grinned at her in return. "I do not think my reputation is salvageable. That being the case better to take refuge in audacity and simply ignore the rules of propriety to simply do what I want."

"Surely there are limits?" Lady Alerie fretted.

"Of course there are Mother," Lady Margaery of all people assured her. "After all, I doubt her grace is going to walk around in the nude for example."

Alyssa chuckled before replying. "As amusing as the looks on people's faces would be if I did that, it is not worth the loss of dignity or the embarrassment I'd feel. So, no, I won't be doing something like that. And Lady Alerie, whilst I do have limits, I do not yet know what they are. It is only recently that I've gained the freedom that I now enjoy, it will take time to find what limits I intend
to impose on it. Rest assured though that I will not do anything too scandalous."

"By your definitions at least." The Queen of Thorns scoffed.

"As I previously mentioned to you, Lady Olenna, I do possess the advantages that grant me that privilege."

"That you do," Lady Margaery said with a sweet sounding giggle that stirred something deep in Alyssa's loins.

Questing desperately for something to distract her from the twisting feeling of arousal that was overcoming her, Alyssa asked the first question that came to mind.

"Lady Alerie, I am surprised. Are you not concerned with your daughter attempting to seduce another woman?"

Seven hells! How is that any improvement?

"Should I be?" Lady Alerie asked with a shrug, surprising Alyssa enough to forget her arousal. "I've known my daughter held attraction to both men and women for years now. I have no objection to it."

The reprieve didn't last as Lady Margaery had shifted as her mother spoke to reach over to take a cake from the table and in so doing had allowed Alyssa a look down her dress causing the Queen to quickly become all stirred up again. And the minx knew it too if the smirk she wore was any indication.

"Margaery, ease up on the Queen." Lady Olenna said chidingly. "At this rate, you'll have her too wound up to have a proper conversation."

The seductress pouted, which was an alluring look in its own right, but sighed. "Very well, Grandmother."

"Thank you, Lady Olenna." Alyssa said offering the Tyrell matriarch a grateful nod, before turning to her granddaughter. "And Lady Margaery, we may continue later but for now I believe I should like to have enough of my wits to speak to your mother."

The charmer smiled brilliantly at that. "I look forward to it, your grace."

Alyssa offered the other woman a smile of her own before turning to the Lady of Highgarden to continue their conversation.

"So, Lady Alerie, your objection is to Lady Margaery's public attempt at a seduction?"

"Yes. I worry for my daughter's prospects if it is publicly known that she has a taste for other women."

"Prospects will not be a concern if I get what I want." Lady Margaery said impishly.

Alyssa knew what the lady was implying and despite her best attempt at fighting it, a blush spread across her face.

"Lady Margaery," Alyssa said with a with steadying breath to prevent herself from doing something rash. "I believe we agreed to discuss that later."

"Apologies, your grace."
Throughout their exchange Lady Alerie eyed them both like a hawk for a long moment before sighing in resignation.

"When you do end up taking my daughter to your bed, your grace." She said, causing Alyssa to blush brilliantly. "Might I ask you to offer her some official status? Declare her your mistress at least?"

"She's not even doubting that Lady Margaery and I will become lovers? That's just- Alyssa honestly had no words to describe. She couldn't imagine any mother being so permissive, especially a noblewoman. Then again her only frame of reference there was Lady Catelyn and despite their improved relationship in recent years, Alyssa remembered enough of her cruelty to know that she wasn't the most accepting of persons.

Distracted by the tangent her thoughts had taken, Alyssa was late in her reply thus allowing the Queen of Thorns to cut into the conversation.

"You worry too much Alerie, of course the Queen will do that." The old woman said shooting Alyssa a stern look. "She plays the Game too well to make such an oversight."

Message received. Alyssa wordlessly acknowledged with a nod to the elderly Tyrell matriarch.

"Yes, rest assured that I will Lady Alerie."

"Lady Margaery," Alyssa called out to the other woman as she walked into her sitting room, which she idly noted strongly resembled a solar in its decor. "I would like to have a word."

"Of course, your grace." The minx said with a sultry smile as she rose from her curtsy. "Please have a seat."

Taking a seat directly across from the Tyrell heiress at the low table where she had been working on some sewing that had Alyssa raising an eyebrow in surprise.

"Is that one of the dresses from my wardrobe?"

"Yes, your grace." Margaery told her shamelessly. "I'm resizing it for you."

"Shouldn't that be the job of my ladies-in-waiting and handmaidens?"

Margaery just shrugged. "I wished to help."

"I see," Alyssa said her eyes narrowed. "And I am to understand that this help extends to the selection of my attendants?"

"It does," Margaery admitted. "Is something the matter with them, your grace?"

"Nothing. They have all been excellent, though I have noticed something about them."

"Oh?" The other woman said coyly.

"They are all rather plain in appearance. Which is no fault of their own of course, but considering the comeliness of your own attendants and those of your Mother, I cannot help but be suspicious that this was done on purpose."

"I freely admit that I deliberately made an effort to ensure that your grace's retinue be on the plainer side of things."
"Afraid of the competition?" Alyssa teased.

"Yes," Margaery said without a hint of shame. "I am not above playing dirty to get what I want."

"You surprise me with the lengths you are willing to go."

"For you, your grace, I might just be willing to do just about anything." Margaery said completely seriously.

Flustered by the frank admission of want by the Tyrell heiress, Alyssa stood to leave.

"Your grace, wait a moment."

"What is it?"

"If your retinue is really upsetting you, I can reshuffle it if you want."

"It's fine. Leave it as is. I wouldn't want to risk you getting jealous." Alyssa said, fighting a blush.

"Thank you, your grace." Margaery said with a smile that had Alyssa's heart skipping a beat.

A week after Alyssa's arrival in Highgarden and a round of negotiations via raven with Renly Baratheon later, a meeting had been arranged in Bitterbridge to discuss the possibility of an alliance. And thus the Tyrells departed for the small castle situated where the river Mander met the Roseroad. As it would take at least two weeks for even Renly to reach the town by conventional means, the main Tyrell party and their army would depart first, while Alyssa would fly there with Arya, Margaery and a handful of guards a day after she received word via raven that their host had arrived. Margaery was to be her 'hostage' and serve as Alyssa's means to get a peaceful introduction to Renly via her brother Loras.

No one in Highgarden and privy to the Tyrell heiress' attempts to seduce Alyssa was fooled however by this arrangement. They all knew it was just an excuse the Tyrells had concocted to give Margaery more time to work her charms on the Mage Queen.

Time she was putting to good use as she took the Targaryen falconing on horseback.

"So do you like it, your grace?" Margaery asked Alyssa as a falcon flew back to her carrying a hare in its talons. "Does it compare well to the hunting that your sister tells me you enjoy?"

"It is different," Alyssa allowed as watched the raptors fly overhead searching for prey.

"I suppose it is," Margaery allowed. "Though it is the closest thing to a hunt that ladies in the South do. I'm afraid that hunting is mostly seen as a male pursuit outside the North."

"I was aware of that but I never knew how popular falconing is here." Alyssa said as she eyed the dozens of trained birds Margaery had used this afternoon alone.

Said expert falconer just giggled. A sound as sweet to Alyssa's ears as a babbling brook.

"I do not think I am a good representative of Southron ladies in this regard, your grace. Falconing is a minor obsession of mine."

"I can see that," Alyssa told her in a deadpan that earned her another giggle.

"Tell me, your grace, how does this differ from a Northern hunt?"
"It has a slower pace for one, something that I admit I find myself quite enjoying." Alyssa told her with a smile. "Although I always enjoyed the frenetic energy of a hunt where everyone involved was competing to take down the biggest game, it can be too much at times. In contrast, letting the falcons do the hunting is less stressful."

"Is that so? Then perhaps you should get your own birds, your grace, to enjoy the sport for yourself."

"Perhaps after the war. In the meantime, I can use yours."

"Well, I could give you some of mi-"

"No need." Alyssa said with a coy grin. "After all, if you succeed with your seduction what's yours will be mine as well, will it not?"

Margaery blushed brilliantly at that and Alyssa chalked it up as a win for her.

*It's not only you who can play at this game, Margaery.* Alyssa thought as she savored the victory.

The night before they were to fly to Bitterbridge, Alyssa was entering her bedchamber after making a final check on the supplies they would bring with them with her mind preoccupied with recounting the various landmarks she'd memorized to avoid getting lost on the flight. She was thus not as aware of her surroundings as she probably should have been.

"Your grace," Margaery's voice called out suddenly in what should have been Alyssa's *empty* bedroom.

Spinning to its source, Alyssa was stunned speechless as she found the Tyrell minx sprawled across her bed whilst as naked as the day she was born.

*She has been trying hard to seduce me for weeks now, but I've never thought she would resort to this.*

"M-Margaery, what are you doing?" Alyssa asked, too rattled to address the other woman by her title.

"Merely taking a page out of your book, your grace." The enchantress said as she ran a hand playfully down the length of her body and pulling Alyssa's gaze with it. "I'm being bold in getting what I want."

"W-What do you mean?" Alyssa said, her breath hitching at what Margaery was implying.

"You know what." The other woman said teasingly as she walked behind Alyssa and began undoing her belt.

"W-We can't." Alyssa said but making no move to stop the brown haired beauty. "I-I'm to marry Lord Renly. For our alliance."

"And I'll be your mistress." Margaery said, whispering into Alyssa's ears she finished with her belt and she pressed herself into her back, causing Alyssa to be very aware of the other woman's small breasts as they molded themselves against her. "Like my brother is his."

"B-But."

"Ssh. Don't you want me?" Margaery asked, a hint of sadness in her voice.
"Of course I do!" Alyssa said, spinning around to face the naked woman.

"Then prove it." Margaery demanded.

Alyssa did not hesitate. "Finish helping me out of this dress."

Hours later, the two women lay in Alyssa's bed spooning each other after their lovemaking.

"You know, Alys, I have slept with both men and women ever since I've flowered." Margaery told her Queen as one of her hands traced the soft curves of her lover's body.

"I'm not surprised." Alyssa told her. "You knew how to make me come apart last night too well for you to not have had experience."

Margaery smiled proudly at that observation for a moment before adding, "But even with all my 'experience', as you call it Alys, I've never felt what I feel for you with any of them. Since the first time I saw you, I've wanted to be yours."

"And you are." Alyssa assured her.

"So you'll take me as your mistress?"

"If it's what it takes to keep you by my side then yes."

Margaery pulls her into a grateful kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Before I say anything about this chapter I just want to let you know that the execution scene in Chapter 11 has been redone, so you might want to read it over again.

Hope you guys liked this chapter. As I always say when I tackle it, romance isn't exactly my favorite thing to write so I apologize if the quality is subpar.

On another note, some might be calling OOC on Margaery here. And yes I agree, but read in between the lines and you'll notice something is up with her. It's not directly spelled out in the story, but she's basically being influenced by Alyssa's magic and its drive to ensure its carried on through her offspring. Nameless never said that its effects were limited to Alyssa herself did he? Add that to Margaery being bisexual in this verse, which is something of a headcanon from me after I saw mention of the idea in Madrigal-in-training's Winter Thorns of Highgarden and everything just comes together nicely.

Another part where some might call OOC is Olenna Tyrell and the Tyrells in general bending the knee so easily. Keep in mind what they were staring down at the time: a full grown dragon commanded by a mage who just recently demonstrated her capability for slaughter with the massacre she carried out in King's Landing. Add this to their historical loyalty to House Targaryen, is it any surprise that they'd capitulate so readily? I, for one, think not.
If you disagree with me on any of these fronts feel free to drop a comment and we can discuss things just do not expect me to entertain strawman arguments like those presented in Time ParadOx’s last review on FFN and the subsequent PM conversation with anything other than amused dismissal.

What do I mean? Well since I feel the review is so wrong I think it deserves a broadcasted response especially since my reply might clarify some details others might have missed, so here's an edited version of the pertinent parts of my PM replies to him:

I find it very strange that he claims the effects in story have no cause when I clearly signposted their causes. It's one thing to dismiss their validity, it's another to ignore their existence. Either he missed them entirely or he was being insincere in his critique. Though considering some of the things in his review I think he's just not reading the story well.

For this he cited two examples so let's look at them:

1) Catelyn goes to King's Landing because she had receives a set of evidence from Lysa that the Lannister twins are committing treason. Why she delivers this in person should be obvious. She knows that the Lannisters killed Bran thus King's Landing is at least potentially a hostile place, she thus transmitted such sensitive information to Ned by the most trusted means possible namely in person. This is a simple inference to make.

2) Catelyn and Ned are trying to prove the Lannister twins are committing treason by sleeping with each other. They explicitly say so in the story. Doing so would have them executed which would be tantamount for vengeance for Bran. The whole point of Catelyn coming to King's Landing was to provide Ned with testimonies that support this investigation. However, something like this is not easily done. It is accusing the Queen of treason and naming her children as bastards thus stripping them of their claim to the Throne. It takes a lot of evidence.

Edit: He did however acknowledge his mistake in the PM conversation that followed and offered an apology about it.

Then he claims I made the rumor that the Lannister twins were sleeping with each other and thus that Jaime is the real father of Robert's supposedly trueborn children be traced to Catelyn. Edit: It seems I made an error here and he was suggesting that Catelyn should have just started a rumor. Unfortunately, considering the rumor was already floating around thanks to Stannis, I do not see how that helps.

In the following PM conversation he asks, though I must be honest and says it came across as a demand to me since all his claims for lacking causes are entirely because it was by his own admission because he "forgot it was mentioned", that I "have the events in chronological order - show us the causes and then the effects". This story is almost entirely from Alyssa's POV by design. The details of many events are supposed to be inferred. This is because I trust readers can make such inferences, I refuse to spoon feed anyone. I am not writing a story on the same scale as canon and thus cannot cover all events. If this is a problem then perhaps this story is not for you.

Edit: Despite the fact I generally disagree with his thoughts, I did take bits of it that was helpful and go to improve the story. So give credit where credit is due.

Okay. Response over.
With that I think I'm done with this chapter so till next time pożegnanie!
A few days after Alyssa had consummated her relationship with Margeary, the couple, Arya and a selection of half a dozen guards flew into the sprawling encampment that had sprung up around the town of Bitterbridge to house the armies of the Reach and the Stormlands.

"That's a lot of tents," Arya commented as Ghost came in for a landing in a clearing prepared for them inside the heart of the Reach portion of the tent city. "How many men are down there?"

"When everyone has gathered, the Reachmen will number about seventy thousand men of its hundred thousand men," Alyssa told her sister as Ghost touched down. "The Stormlanders have brought about twenty thousand and have another ten on the way if the reports are to be believed."

"A hundred thousand men!?” Arya boggled. Alyssa could understand why, that was more than twice the number of men that the North could reliably count on mustering if they called its banners. "And the Reach still has more men in reserve?"

"Yes, we do." Margeary told the youngest Stark as they got off Ghost's back. "Someone has to guard our lands while the rest of us go to war."

Arya could only nod numbly and Alyssa giggled at the adorable look her sister was sporting.

"Your grace," Lord Mace greeted on behalf of the gathered Reach lords as Alyssa walked away from Ghost, after a grateful pat to his head for flying them over, and stepped forward to receive the men gathered to welcome her. "Welcome to Bitterbridge."

*Considering this is Lord Caswell's fief, shouldn't he be the one saying that?* Alyssa asked as she shot a quick glance at the wispy, young man who she recognized as the Lord of Bitterbridge by his House's crest sewn into the doublet he wore and who flinched at her scrutiny.

"He asked me to speak on his behalf," Lord Mace said with thinly veiled exasperation at the younger lord's lack of a spine.

"I see," Alyssa said with a sympathetic smile for the man who was for all intents and purposes her goodfather. "Then please extend my thanks for this welcome to him. And thanks to you and all the Reach lords for answering my call to arms."

"We are glad to serve the rightful heir to the Iron Throne," Lord Mace declared proudly. A pride that seemed shared by many of the other Reach lords if the looks of agreement they sported were
any indication.

"Nevertheless, you have my thanks. All of you." Alyssa said addressing the Reach lords directly. "I would like to speak with you more, but-"

Here Alyssa turned to the other contingent that had come to greet her.

"Your grace. I am Brienne of Tarth, a member of King Renly's Rainbow Guard." A tall, muscular, flat-chested, and ungainly woman with long, shoulder-length brittle straw-colored hair and broad, coarse features covered in freckles that was dressed in blue plate armor greeted at the head of the contingent of men bearing the crest of Renly Baratheon's crowned stag on their armor. "His grace requests that you speak to him immediately upon your arrival."

"He seeks an audience with me immediately?" Alyssa asked with a raised eyebrow. "That seems presumptuous."

The Baratheon men shifted nervously at that, which was exactly the reaction Alyssa wanted. While she knew the sooner they met and at least agreed to the broad terms of the alliance they both sought the better, she refused to be seen as inferior to him in anyway and that included the appearance of being at his beck and call that this hasty summons was trying to convey.

"However," Alyssa said with a smirk. "I am feeling generous. Go tell your king that I will meet with him in three hours in Lord Caswell's solar. That is if the Lord is willing to loan its use to me for the time."

"M-More than happy, your grace!" The nervous lord stammered out in reply.

"Good," Alyssa continued. "Then I shall meet with your King in three hours."

The unfeminine and unattractive warrior woman hesitated. She probably had orders to bring her directly to Renly. However, she seemed to quickly realize that was not going to happen and so was forced to nod in reluctant acceptance.

"Very well, your grace. I will inform his grace of the change in plans."

Alyssa nodded absently and returned her attention to her lords, leaving Brienne and her men to retreat back to the Baratheon camp to carry her message to their king.

Three hours later, Alyssa had finished introductions with the Reach lords and accepted their personal oaths of fealty. She'd have preferred to have done this before arriving in Bitterbridge but since most of them were already en route there when she'd reached Highgarden, the delay was unfortunate but unavoidable and more importantly had not led to any issues. That had taken an hour, leaving two more for Alyssa to enjoy a bath and change out of the tunic and breeches that she'd taken to wearing when riding Ghost. While it was certainly possible to ride him in a dress, it was much more comfortable in more masculine clothing. Such attire however would not be appropriate for a meeting with the man she hoped to become her husband or so Margaery insisted and thus she had changed into a gown of black velvet and gold baroque damask.

Thus dressed, she greeted King Renly Baratheon as the lean and lithe man with a handsome, clean-shaven face and thick, jet black hair entered the room.

"King Renly," she said politely with a nod. As a fellow monarch in her own right, she would not curtsy to him.
"Queen Alyssa," the tall man, almost as tall as the towering King Robert, greeted with a polite nod of his own.

"Please have a seat," Alyssa said as she offered the seat in front of the desk that dominated the small solar that they were using for this meeting at which she sat to the Baratheon king.

He scowled at the clear power play but did not protest as he sat down, his Rainbow Guard that according to Lord Mace were his version of the Kingsguard and her own detachment of Reach knight bodyguards taking positions around the room.

"Before we begin negotiations, Queen Alyssa, let me compliment you on your dress." King Renly said flatteringly. "It becomes you."

"I did not realize you appreciated the female form." Alyssa shot back pointedly.

The Baratheon winced.

"Is that the Northern bluntness of which is so acclaimed?"

"No," Alyssa said with a roll of her eyes. "Merely my own. I have little patience for needless pleasantries, much preferring to get to the point of things as quickly as possible."

"I see." Her fellow monarch said as he processed this. "For your information, while I do prefer the company of men as you do your fellow women, I am also a connoisseur of fashion in all its forms and thus can appreciate a well dressed woman as easily as a well dressed man."

"Is that so?" Alyssa said coyly. "And are you as understanding on the issue of marriage?"

"You propose a marriage alliance even knowing my preferences?"

"Considering my own, yes I do." Alyssa told him bluntly. "So what say you?"

"We keep our lovers?"

"I would not set Margaery aside for the world."

"The same for Loras," King Renly said with a sigh of relief. "What other terms do you have?"

"We take the Targaryen name for the added legitimacy it will grant our claim to the Iron Throne."

Even if I think my Father and Mother who gave me the name were fools whose actions plunged the Realm into a bloody war over a romance that they could have very easily carried out in the open. This was a conclusion that Alyssa had come to after years of pondering her parents' actions. They had been lovesick fools whose thoughtless actions doomed thousands to early graves. Especially when according to the documents in the chest in her Mother's tomb not only had Father secured a dispensation for a second marriage but even got the surprisingly enthusiastic approval of his first wife, thus negating almost all need for the secrecy that led to Robert's Rebellion. As such as much as she loved them for being her parents, she could not deny their true nature. Nor can I deny that the name he gave me is something that I need to achieve my goals.

"That is most unconventional." The Baratheon said with an unhappy set to his features.

"It is to be an unconventional marriage regardless considering the previously agreed arrangement." Alyssa reminded him. "More importantly, this condition is non-negotiable. Either you take my family name or I take the Reach, North, Riverlands and my dragon elsewhere."
"You drive a hard bargain, Alyssa." Renly said with a frown, using the familiar use of her name like a barb. "But I accept."

"Next condition then," Alyssa said with a smile, pleased that things were going her way so far. "I insist that you make me pregnant before we set off on campaign. I want to ensure that should you die in battle, your men will remain loyal through our child."

"Pregnancy is not easily achieved." Renly observed with a skeptical look on his face. "We will need to stay here at Bitterbridge for at least two months before all our men are gathered but I doubt we can manage such a feat in that time with certainty."

Alyssa just smiled and gathered a small portion of magic to her right hand and lifted the glowing limb in front of herself meaningfully.

"Did you perhaps forget that I am a mage?" Alyssa said with a playful smirk. "With magic on my side, I assure you that two moons are more than enough time."

Renly still seemed doubtful, but nodded. "Very well, but let us not make it a formal term of our alliance. We wouldn't want to delay our campaigns just to fulfill it."

"Agreed." Alyssa conceded. "A commitment to attempt as much will suffice."

"That I can agree to." Renly allowed. "Though in exchange might I propose a term of my own?"

"Of course."

"I want Mace Tyrell appointed as our Hand." Renly said seriously. "We might have Loras and Margeary in our beds, but Lord Mace will want more assurances than just that. Giving him the post of Hand will do that."

"I had considered the matter myself." Alyssa admitted. For all that she was certain of the loyalty of House Tyrell as a whole through Margaery alone, she was not so confident in the full loyalty of her lover's Father. He wouldn't betray her but he was also not an enthusiastic supporter of her, upset over her relationship with Margeary depriving him of a chance to marry her off for an alliance.

"So you are in agreement?" Renly asked, looking pleased.

"That we need to further strengthen our ties to House Tyrell, yes. However, I have a much better candidate for Hand than Lord Mace." She told him, causing his face to fall. "I've spoken to the Queen of Thorns and she's agreed to temporarily be our Hand."

"Temporarily?"

"She old, Renly." Alyssa told him bluntly. "And she would in her own words 'much prefer to play the Game from the shadows'. I have however convinced her to assist us until such time as she's groomed a successor."

"That works I suppose," the man said sounding somewhat defeated. "Any other terms?"

"Just one major one before we can leave things to our subordinates to iron out the details and write things up. How should we rule?"

Alyssa was throwing Renly a bone here and let him state the obvious so as to have it appear as his suggestion, hoping that doing so would take the sting out of her domination of the negotiations but the way he shot her an incredulous look told her she'd failed.
"We will co-rule as joint rulers of course," the Baratheon said with a cold tone. "You would accept nothing less than being treated as an equal, am I correct?"

"You are," Alyssa told him with a nod.

"Then let us break for the midday meal," Renly said as he stood before he paused. "Ah! Forgive me, but I forgot. There is one last thing to discuss."

"Oh?"

"The date of the wedding." The man told her with a raised eyebrow. "I'd have thought a woman would be more concerned with her wedding."

Alyssa giggled at his joke for politeness' sake before replying. "A week's time? That should be enough time to draw up the formal terms of our alliance and make the preparations for the ceremony."

"That is acceptable." Renly agreed. "Now, Alyssa, would you be so kind as to allow me to escort you to the Great Hall for the midday meal?"

"You're too kind, Renly." Alyssa said as she stood and walked around the desk to offer him her arm.

Thus they strolled down to the meal arm-in-arm as befit a pair of betrothed. The whole thing was little more than political theater and showed all the onlookers, the inevitable spies included, that they had reached a deal and were now a united front. Alyssa's Northern sensibilities with its distaste for deception despised it, but another larger part of her that she'd cultivated over the years of using illusions to hide Ghost and her own clandestine activities reveled in it.

And thank Lord Nameless that side of me exists. Alyssa mused. If not, I doubt I'll survive Southron court life.

It was a few days after they had arrived at Bitterbridge and Alyssa was just finished with having her measurements taken for final adjustments to the wedding dress that Margeary had been working on since Highgarden. A dress that despite repeated requests, her mistress insisted on keeping a surprise much to Alyssa's irritation.

She was thus plotting some way to convince Margey to let her at least glimpse the dress she would be walking down the aisle in when Arya barged into her chambers ahead of a clearly flustered servant that was still midway through announcing her presence.

"Arya," Alyssa chided her rambunctious sister. "That was rude."

"Sorry," the youngest Stark said distractedly to the poor servant.

"Forgive my sister," Alyssa said more formally.

"Of course, your grace." The servant said, bowing deeply. "And apologies for not announcing her in a speedy enough manner."

"That was no fault of your own," Alyssa assured the man with a kind smile.

"You are too generous, your grace." The man said as he retreated to his place among the other servants.
Alyssa waited patiently for him to dismiss himself before turning to her sister with a reprimanding look on her face.

"Sister," she said sternly who much to her frustration had thrown herself onto a couch and was sprawled across the expensive piece of furniture in a most unladylike manner which was odd considering the girl had been on her best behavior since they'd arrived at Highgarden. "What has you so worked up that you've forgotten your manners?"

"I'm feeling useless that's why!" Her sister pulled herself into a sitting position to declare with a pout.

"Aren't your lessons in Water Dance useful?" Alyssa asked, blinking in curious confusion. "I understand that Master Fyllolis is no Syrio Forel, but weren't you singing his praises just days ago?"

Alyssa having hired the former Braavosi Bravo, Maerryros Fyllolis, to replace Arya's old Water Dance Master Syrio Forel who had apparently died helping her escape capture back in King's Landing. Master Fyllolis had apparently come to reside in Highgarden as a man-at-arms after coming into the Tyrell employ after having helped Ser Garlan Tyrell from some bandits in King's Landing once. It was a fortuitous state of affairs and with Margey recommending the man, Alyssa had taken him on without much hesitation.

"It's not that." Arya said, her pout lifting just a bit. "I love the Water Dance lessons. It's just learning swordplay will only be useful in the future. I want to be useful now."

"Perhaps you can help Margaery with the preparations for the wedding?"

"Your Margaery has that handled. She doesn't need me."

Alyssa refused to raise to the bait of discussing her relationship with Margaery. Her sister had not been surprised that she'd taken a woman as a lover, she was however upset that having done so she was still getting married to a man and relegating her lover to a mere mistress. Not that it was any of her sister's concern.

"What do you want to do then?"

"I dunno, Alys. That's why I'm asking you." Arya said with a whine.

Alyssa was stumped for a moment before she hit upon an idea. *That could work.*

"Ser Cuy!" Alyssa calls even as she used the *Scrying* spell to locate her targets, pleased to discover they were still together.

She was just done when one of the two Knights of Renly's Rainbow Guard assigned to her protection stepped into her room from his post at her door.

"Yes, you grace?"

"Would you accompany my sister to the Riverlands for a moment?"

Ser Emmon Cuy looked at her in confusion. "To the Riverlands? For a moment?"

Smirking, Alyssa silently cast the *Gate* spell and created a vertical oval of swirling darkness.

Both Arya and the knight were startled but to their credit they both recovered quickly, though the
other startled servants and guards took a little longer.

"Beyond this is a forest in the Riverlands." Alyssa said gesturing to her conjured portal. "Arya, I want you to go through and fetch Nymeria and Lady. I checked and they aren't far from where I placed the portal's exit. Ser Cuy, I want you to accompany her just in case."

"Alys, you're the best." Arya said as she ran over and gave Alyssa a hug.

"And once we get the direwolves, your grace? Do we just walk back through the portal?"

"No. It's one way. But I'll close it once you're through and then reopen another one at the same spot that will take you back here."

"I see, your grace. I will accompany Lady Stark but promise to keep Ser Morrigen close while I'm gone."

"Alys, will I take care of Nymeria and Lady once they're back?" Arya asked with a gleam in her eyes. "Is that what you want me to do?"

"For now," Alyssa said running a hand through her little sister's hair. "But I might have other things for you to do too."

Arya nodded and finally let Alyssa go.

"Then I better hurry. I want to be useful to you." Arya said as she skipped through the portal, Ser Cuy hurrying after her after offering Alyssa a hasty salute.

"You already are sister, you already are. Your mere presence brings me joy." Alyssa said quietly as she looked fondly at the Gate portal even as it winked out of existence as she shut the spell down.

A day later, Alyssa was touring the small town that surrounded Bitterbridge castle and ingratiating herself to the locals by giving them some alms with her retinue. In particular, she'd taken to using her magic to heal the town's sick. Such as how she used her Healing Touch spell on the broken arm of one of the townsfolk who had taken a bad fall while coming down the stairs at the tavern he owned.

"There that should do it," Alyssa told the man with a smile as she moved her hands away from the arm in a sling and the gentle white glow around them faded. "Give a try at moving it."

The tavern owner did as she ordered, a sceptical look on his face that transformed into shock as he found his arm suddenly fully healed.

"By the gods! It's fixed!" The man said in rapturous joy as he pulled his arm out of its sling and tested its range of motion with a series of odd motions.

Alyssa giggled in amusement at the exaggerated exercises he put the newly healed arm through and that caught the man's attention.

"Oh! Thank you, your grace!" The man said falling to his knees in gratitude. "You're a gift from the gods to come down and help us smallfolk with your magic."

"Think nothing of it, my good man." Alyssa said helping the man to his feet. "I am only Queen by the grace of people like you. It is thus my duty to help you wherever I can."
"You are too ki-"

The tavern owner's heartfelt thanks was interrupted when a commotion erupted some distance behind where they stood. Immediately, Ser Guyard Morrigen and Ser Parmen Crane, the two knights of the Rainbow Guard assigned to serve as her guards today pulled Alyssa away from the man and into a protective ring of guards.

"What's going on?" Alyssa demanded.

"Some of the guards just confronted a suspicious person." Ser Morrigen informed her. "He was hiding plate and a sword under a cloak."

"An assassin?" The tavern owner shouted in alarm and suddenly the whole crowd of smallfolk that had gathered to meet their Queen turned rowdy and cries of anger filled the air.

This could get bad. Alyssa thought. I need to do something to calm the situa-

"I am no assassin!" A strong voice bellowed from the distance. "I am Ser Barristan Selmy and I have come to pledge my fealty to Queen Alyssa Targaryen, the rightful Queen of Westeros!"

Things had been chaotic after that but eventually Alyssa and her guards had managed to make it out of Bitterbridge town and into the castle alongside the Ser Selmy, who Alyssa recognized from her time in King's Landing. And thus she found herself seated at the High Seat in the castle's Great Hall awaiting Renly so they could hear what the man wanted.

"You're late," Alyssa chided her soon to be husband as he strolled in after they'd been waiting ten whole minutes.

"Apologies, Alyssa." Renly said with a chuckle as he moved to take the seat to her right. "I was visiting our men. It took some time to make it back to the castle."

Alyssa just nodded. That was a decent reason for his timing. Depending on where exactly he'd been in the expansive encampment their armies had set up around Bitterbridge, it could very well explain his tardiness. It did not explain his lack of urgency however, but that was something to chide him on in private.

"Now that you're here, let's begin." Alyssa said and after receiving a nod from Renly, she continued. "Ser Selmy, I understand that you have come to pledge your support for our cause?"

"Your cause, your grace." The elderly and well-respected knight said from where he knelt before them.

"I appreciate your support," Alyssa said, ignoring Renly's frown. "And I expect you to send ravens out to all of Westeros declaring your new allegiance. It will certainly help muster even more support for us. But I do not trust you."

"What?!" Renly asked, sounding scandalized. "This is Ser Barristan Selmy! One of the most honorable men in all of Westeros! How can say that you do not trust him?"

In contrast to Renly's surprise, Ser Barristan actually looked understanding.

"I can imagine why, your grace." The knight said once Renly had stopped ranting. "I failed your
House and you personally for the incident in Winterfell-

"Do not mention that. Ever!" Alyssa snapped.

Barristan snapped his mouth shut and Alyssa fumed for a moment. She'd honestly forgotten Selmy was even party to her attempted rape all those years ago and it was only the fool's reminder that let her recall that he had one of the Kingsguard who had accompanied Robert to Winterfell during that fateful visit. He might not have been the man who had knocked down the door to her rooms thus enabling her assault, but he had nevertheless been part of the King's party during that occasion and that was bad enough in her eyes. That this recollection brought back some other rather muted, thank you Lord Nameless, but still painful memories meant it took Alyssa a long moment before she regained her cool.

When she finally did, she was unsurprised to see her breath misting in the air as a result of a drop in temperature in the room. It seemed in her anger, she lost control of her magic for a moment.

*At least it's frost and not flame that reacted to my rage.*

"Better now?" Renly asked, who to his credit managed to feign unaffectedness at the unexpected chill unlike the majority of the room's occupants.

"Yes," Alyssa said with a thankful nod to the Baratheon for his concern. "Ser Barristan!"

"Yes, your grace?"

"There is one way that you can restore my faith in you."

"Name it your grace and I shall endeavor to carry it out."

*Making such a blanket promise? He is no fool though and is experienced with court, could he really have such a high opinion of me that he thinks I would not abuse such a promise?*

"I want you to seek out my Aunt, Daenerys Targaryen, in Essos. I have spied with my magic that she has recently hatched three dragons-

This news was met with gasps from many in the room, but Alyssa ignored them and continued.

"And I would like you to see her and her dragons safely back to Westeros as our allies. Do this for me, Ser Barristan the Bold and you will have regained my trust."

"Alyssa, wouldn't Ser Barristan be more help to us in Westeros?" Renly asked, not so much in objection but curiosity.

"Perhaps," Alyssa allowed. "But would you trust a man who failed to protect your Father as was his duty and then went on to serve your Father's killer, because that's exactly who Ser Barristan is to me."

Renly's handsome face twisted into a mask of distaste before nodding.

"I will depart immediately, your grace, but might I ask what I should tell your Uncle Viserys when I meet him?"

"He is dead." Alyssa told him bluntly. "I've been using my magic to track my family across the Narrow Sea from time to time and I saw him be killed by my Aunt's husband, Khal Drogo for assaulting her."
"I see." The aged knight said, a dark look crossing his face at the mention of what Viserys had done to earn his death.

"Beyond that, write your letters first. I'll provide for your transportation tomorrow after they've been sent off by raven." Alyssa told him as she got up and began taking her leave with more haste than was probably seemly. She couldn't help it though, she wanted to get away from Selmy's presence and all he represented to her as quickly as possible.

Early the next morning, Alyssa, Renly and a small contingent of their advisors stood across from Ser Barristan in the yard of the Bitterbridge castle.

"Have all the letters been sent?" Alyssa asked the castle's surprisingly young Maester.

"They have, your grace."

"Good," Alyssa said with a nod. "Then Ser Selmy, have you prepared the necessary provisions and equipment for your journey?"

"I have, your grace." The knight said as he gestured towards a pack leaning against his side.

"Very well. Gate."

The familiar vertical oval of darkness that was a Gate portal spontaneously came into being in the center of the courtyard, causing more than one of the onlookers to make some expression of amazement.

"I've set this portal to open to a deserted location just outside of Qarth where my divination tells me that my Aunt will be shortly. Ser Selmy, head into the city and await her arrival."

"Yes, your grace." The elderly knight said as he shouldered his pack. "I swear that I shall not fail you."

With that he stepped through the portal without the slightest bit of hesitation.

"Was exiling one of the most celebrated living heroes of the Seven Kingdoms really a good idea?" Renly asked once the man had disappeared into the darkness of the Gate.

"We will make our own heroes," Alyssa told him as she dispelled the spell. "We have no need for old traitorous fools. Besides, if Barristan does succeed, he'll bring three more dragons to our cause."

Renly's expression clearly showed that he was not entirely convinced but he said nothing so Alyssa turned to leave, their advisors trailing after her. They had a council meeting to attend after all.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

So there's two things implied in this chapter that I want to point out/elaborate on to avoid confusion so without further ado let's get started.
Firstly, the way Alyssa dominated negotiations has less to do with her political acumen and more to do with simply holding the better hand. As she mentioned in the last chapter, she has a great hand and is going to leverage it to play things her way. This extends to politics too.

Secondly, her perception of Renly. I tried to make it as obvious as possible without it being completely blatant but Alyssa has a low opinion of Renly. Why? Simply because he does not impress her at all. Partly this is because of her superior hand in the Game of Thrones and partly it's because she knows how he'll amount to nothing if she does not change things. Not that she's conscious of any of this. That said, their relationship does improve as the chapter goes on or at least I tried to make it seem so.

FFN Guest review responses:

At the guy who why Ned Stark is trying to prove Cersei’s cheating and cuckoo ways anyway? It's one part revenge for Bran and another to give the Realm a chance at a legitimate King. If Ned can prove Cersei is cheating then Stannis can be made heir or Robert can remarry so as to produce a new heir. The Lannisters will resist regardless but if proof is presented, it would be a short war as everyone (hopefully) will side against the Westerlands. I assumed people would understand this, I have went back to update Chapter 9 to illustrate this. Thanks for pointing this out.

The above was such an important issue to address that I decided to publish this chapter early to address it.

Well, that's all I wanna talk about this chapter so till next time byvaj!
It was the day of her wedding and Alyssa found herself standing inside the antechamber off the main hall of Bitterbridge's small sept with a fidgeting Arya. Something that did nothing to calm Alyssa's own anxiety.

"This dress is too restrictive," Arya complained as she tried to make herself more comfortable in the white off shoulder dress with a short sewn in cape that folded down from the neckline to cover her budding bust and most of her upper arms. A dress that was covered in beads and grey embroidery sewn into the design of various wolves and winter roses.

Alyssa couldn't help but chuckle at the complaint.

"If your dress is bad, Sister, than what about mine?"

Not that Alyssa disliked her dress at all. Sewn lovingly by Margaery herself, she adored the shoulderless tube of black silk that clung to her body. The entire dress, from the chest and collarbone, was conservatively stitched over in red lace and its trim was endowed in Myrish lace. It was accentuated by a recurring design of a forest artfully punctuated by the odd rose, three headed dragon, direwolf and even a few stags. The matching full-length sleeves were made entirely of lace and attached by thin cords of white satin. The train was short and the veil held by a gold circlet studded in tiny rubies.

Margaery had loaned her some of her jewelry in the form a delicate necklace, matching set of earrings and twinned bracelets. All of which were finished off by a pair of satin slippers. That is, of course, with the exception of her marriage cloak which was a careful recreation of the ruby studded, silk and wolf fur trimmed affair with the design of the Targaryen three headed dragon stitched into it prominently that her Father had put over her Mother's shoulder during their secret wedding at the God's Eye that like everything else of her attire today had been sewn by Margaery.

"Can you even move in that?" Arya asked teasingly.

In lieu of a verbal reply, Alyssa simply reached over and easily caught hold of Arya as she tried to squirm away,

"I can move well enough to catch misbehaving little sisters." Alyssa warned her. "So best behavior."
"Yes, Sister." Arya replied with a pout.

A gentle melody began to play, the tune unfamiliar to her and Alyssa turned to Arya expectantly while offering her arm.

"You know it should be Robb giving you away, right?" Arya said even as she wrapped her own arm around Alyssa's.

"Yes, but he's not here." Alyssa reminded her. "Now be quiet and play your part in the ceremony."

Looking ahead to the opening doors into the sept's main hall, Alyssa didn't see it but she was sure her little sister rolled her eyes at that.

She put the matter of her sister out of her mind however as the symbolic seven bells finished tolling and they began the slow walk down the aisle to the altar. Instead, she chose to survey the hall. The relatively humble Bitterbridge sept was on this occasion filled to the brim with Reach and Storm lords as well as the more prominent knights in service to Renly and her. Like with her dress, Margaery had done a remarkable job with the decorations. Tapestries and brocades that proudly bore the sigils of House Targaryen, Stark and Baratheon lined the walls. A small dais stood at one side atop which sat a handful of musicians to provide music and there was even a painter on hand to immortalize the event. As one final touch of thoughtfulness, a large window had been hastily cut into the side of the sept to allow Ghost to poke his head in and join in the festivities.

You're beautiful, Alys. Her dragon sent as he followed her slow march up the aisle to the altar.

Thank you my friend. Alyssa sent back happily.

That happiness vanished though as she caught the almost empty row at the front of the right set of benches that should have been reserved for her family. It was a stark contrast to the row on Renly's side that was full of men from various branches of the Baratheon line. Though she was pleased beyond words to note that it was not completely empty. Lady and Nymeria stood there and more importantly standing next to the two direwolves while offering her an encouraging smile was her lover Margaery. She looked absolutely gorgeous in a dress of green and gold with red and black accents that spoke volumes to those with the eyes to see of her place within Alyssa's household.

Alyssa was so captured by the Margaery's beauty that she barely noticed as she reached the altar and Arya released her to head to her seat in the front row, leaving her to Renly and a Septon.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today…"

Alyssa tuned out the Septon's words. She was no believer of the Seven and had only agreed to the ceremony being in the traditions of the Faith, despite the many unorthodox changes she'd insisted upon, to legitimize the union in the eyes of the various pious Reach and Storm lords whose forces made up their armies. Besides, Renly was a follower of the Faith and thus would be familiar with the rites so she allowed him to guide her. So she turned to Renly and just stared blankly at him while her mind wandered.

I hope all the changes we made doesn't upset our lords too much. We need their support. Alyssa pondered. Then again, even without them I'm fairly sure we'd still win this war. So perhaps I shouldn't be too worried.

Thoughts such as this permeated her mind as she went through the motions of the ceremony, following Renly's prompts and what she remembered form the few rehearsals that they had conducted. Thankfully, despite her distractions she made no blunders and soon Arya was stepping
forward to remove her marriage cloak from her shoulders to allow Renly to place his own Baratheon themed cloak on in its place.

"With this kiss I pledge my love" Renly said as he faced her and begun his vows. "And take you for my lady and wife."

Offering him a polite smile, she too made her vows.

"With this kiss I pledge my love and take you for my lord and husband."

Even as she spoke however she offered more sincere private vows to her own god in the sanctity of her own mind.

*Lord Nameless,* she beseeched. *Grant this marriage your blessing.*

She wasn't expecting a reply, but received one nonetheless.

*I appreciate the gesture, Alyssa.* The god said into her mind with an amused chuckle. *And for that I will bless this union you've entered as much as you do.*

*You're a difficult god to please, my lord.* Alyssa sent even as she kissed Renly chastely on the lips as the ceremony dictated.

Lord Nameless merely laughed in response and withdrew his presence from her mind.

As Alyssa and her new husband pulled away from their kiss, the Septon addressed everyone in the Sept.

"With this I declare King Renly and Queen Alyssa, man and wife. One flesh, one heart, one soul, now and forever."

At this the entire audience cheered.

After leaving the wedding feast, Margaery walked Alyssa to her bedchamber. Much to the disappointment of many of the lords, there had been no bedding ceremony. Alyssa was too proud to allow herself to be undressed by a bunch of drunken men and with a dragon and magic to support her demands, none dared even question her decision. For which Margaery was secretly glad. While she knew she would have to share Alyssa, with her husband and Loras if no one else, she didn't want just anyone seeing her lover naked.

Despite thoughts of sharing her lover and considering what they were about to do when they reached it, the walk to the royal bedchamber was enveloped in a strangely companionable silence.

"Aren't you nervous?" Margaery asked her Queen at last.

"Not particularly." Alys told her with a shrug. "It must be done. Besides, you'll be with me. Are you? Nervous, I mean?"

Margaery considered the question for a moment before shaking her head.

"No. As you said, this needs to be done. And you'll be there with me. How can I be afraid when you are there, my Witch Queen."

"You say the nicest things, Margey." Alyssa said addressing Margaery with the familiar nickname that only her family was ever allowed to use and she ran a hand lovingly through the Tyrell heiress'
hair.

Margaery luxuriated in the caress and offered the Queen a loving smile in reply.

Their flirting had to come to a temporary end though as they reached the doors to Alyssa's bedchambers and walking in found Loras already servicing the King, causing Margaery to freeze in shock. Not so much at what they were doing, but at their impertinence of starting without them!

"Couldn't you two wait for us?" Alyssa asked with a raised eyebrow. "We need Renly's seed to be fresh when Margaery puts it inside me."

Renly, even with his member down Loras' throat, chuckled and replied. "I can easily manage more than one load a night, Wife. I'm sure I can manage."

"I'm sure you can, your grace." Margaery said with a roll of her eyes. "Come on, Alys, let's get out of our dresses. We can't lose to the men."

"Of course not," Alyssa said, her voice brimming with the competitive spirit that was one of the many things that made Margaery love her, whilst turning to allow the Tyrell lady access to her stays. "But the end of this night, we'll show them why we ladies are the rulers of the bed."

After an exhausting night of lovemaking, Alyssa laid back on the bed with Margaery cuddled into her side.

"Do you think we got you pregnant?" Margaery asked as she traced her hand over Alyssa's stomach.

"I hope so." Renly said from next to Alyssa with Loras lying on top of him. "Didn't you put enough of my seed into Alyssa that she was practically overflowing."

He wasn't wrong. Alyssa had honestly been shocked with just how much seed Renly was able to produce. She'd never managed to produce so much of it in her past life as a man. There had been so much of it that Margaery had been able to put so much into Alyssa's cunt that Renly's thick white seed was still leaking out from her body.

"Don't be crass, Renly." Alyssa chided her husband. "Even if you're correct, there's no need to so crude about it."

"So we don't need to do this again?" Loras asked, turning to look at Alyssa.

"I'm afraid that we must." Alyssa said with an apologetic look at Margaery's brother. "At least until I can confirm I'm pregnant with Renly's child."

Loras groaned.

"You did not enjoy what we did, brother?" Margaery asked curiously.

"I enjoyed the act," Loras replied.

"Very much so," Renly said with a smirk, earning himself a playful slap to the leg from his lover even as Loras continued whilst ignoring the King's cheeky statement.

"But I would really wish that I didn't have to share the bed with my sister."

"That's not negotiable." Alyssa said sternly.
"I know. I know." Loras said. "I never said I wouldn't do this again, did I? I just hope we don't have to do this often. So I pray you get with child soon, your grace."

"I think we all do." Renly said expressing the opinion of everyone in the room.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

And thus Alyssa is married! Plus we get a glimpse of just how she intends to get pregnant with Renly's child without actively having him touch her. It's not exactly magic, she won't pull that out unless she needs it mainly because that's a bluff. She doesn't know a spell which can ensure she gets pregnant.

Also can I just say that medieval fashion is frustrating! I was trying to keep everything as believably medieval as possible but found myself limited as a result. Not just in regards to fashion either but concerning things like furniture as well! So you know what? I'm going to take a page out of the Game of Thrones show and freely mix in both medieval, renaissance and later elements so long as they fit the 'period' aesthetic, authenticity be damned. This is a fictional, fantastical universe, accuracy to real life history shouldn't be that big of a deal.

Some might be wondering about why Alyssa doesn't just use the Gate spell to just to rescue Sansa and end this war by assassinating all her enemies. Let's just say all will be revealed progressively over the next few chapters.

Well, that's it from me this chapter. Till next time la revedere!
Sansa Stark sat in her rooms in the Red Keep surrounded by guards as always and worked on her marriage cloak. Though who she was supposed to be marrying was up in the air. It had been Joffrey at first but if rumors were to be believed that had changed lately and she was to marry the Imp instead. The dwarf having recently arrived in King's Landing from the Vale with a small army of Mountain's Clansmen after escaping her Mother's ill advised attempt at kidnapping him.

So my husband is to be a monster either way. Either one in appearance or one at heart. Sansa thought to herself sadly as she worked on her sewing. She loathed doing so but Cersei had demanded it of her and she knew better than to resist her. The last time she'd tried, she'd been beaten so badly she'd not been able to walk for days.

She winced at the memory and almost missed as a spiraling portal of darkness formed just behind her. Her omnipresent guards did not and roughly pulled her away from the portal and dragged her away. She thus barely noticed as Tyrell men surged through the portal and were cut down by the ready guards. They kept coming however and the Red Cloaks were on the verge of being overwhelmed.

Yes! Kill them all! Take me back to Alys! Sansa cheered in her own mind even as she made sure not a word escaped her lips. If she did and this attempt failed like the others before it had, she'd be punished and Sansa Stark was tired of being punished.

"Close the portal, Witch! I know you're watching you dragon whore!" The guard dragging Sansa away said as he put a blade to her throat. "Do it or I'll slit your precious sister's throat!"

Sansa panicked and fought to remain as still as possible to avoid accidentally nicking herself on the Red Cloak's blade.

At the threat there was a bolt of fire shot through the portal that incinerated the man's head. Sansa immediately broke free barely avoiding the flames in the process and tried to flee towards the portal but was immediately knocked to the ground by the backhand from another Red Cloak even as a crossbow bolt landed inches from her head. The sound of dozens more cocking chilled Sansa's heart.

"Try that again Witch and the next bolt won't miss!"
Sansa did not know how much of a threat that was. The Lannisters seemed very invested in keeping her alive after all. Yet the mere mention of it was enough to break her sister's nerve as the portal slammed shut.

*No Alys! Don't do this! I'd rather be dead than stuck here any longer!* Sansa screamed in the sanctity of her mind as she stared impotently at the place where the portal had been.

Yet the fates were not kind to her and she would be a prisoner of the Lannisters a little longer it seemed.

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It was a balmy night that found Robb Stark inside the solar of Castle Darry, where he'd encamped for the night while on his campaign in the Riverlands. He'd arrived at the small castle just in time to relieve it from a siege by a Lannister host and thus had been welcomed with great hospitality by young Lord Lyman Darry and his House. Despite all that, as Robb read the raven's scroll sent to him by his sister and Queen, Alyssa, from Bitterbridge he could not help but frown.

The expression of gratitude for listening to her advice to his joint Northern and Riverlands host to help liberate the River lords' castles from the Lannister forces, the action that had brought him to Darry in the first place, was welcome even if it was something he would have done without her encouragement. No, what caused his consternation was the rest of the missive.

"She's pregnant!" Robb shouted in disbelief after rereading the line three times to be sure that his eyes were not deceiving him. "She's barely been married two moons and she is already with child!?"

Robb understood the political logic in his sister choosing to get pregnant so quickly. It would undeniably consolidate support from her husband's men behind her and would further strengthen their joint claim to the Iron Throne. However, he struggled to accept his sister becoming a mother! He just couldn't process the idea of his sister with her preference for other women laying with a man, much less becoming with child. Yet, for the sake of politics, she had. It would take time for him to rationalize this strange reality he'd found himself in.

"Lord Robb. Lady Jeyne Darry is outside requesting an audience." His squire, young Olyvar Frey one of the precious few Freys that had survived the plague that had swept through the Twins moons ago, said as he slipped into the room.

The plague had radically changed the character of House Freys. It had killed not just the humans in the Twins but their livestock and gardens too, putting a major dent in their finances. Finances that along with everything else about of their House's affairs were in shambles as the survivors struggled to make sense of their House's dealings that until the plague they had been shut out of. This meant that until they got back on their feet they had to turn to others for help, a humbling experience for the legendarily haughty Freys. Though how much of that was due to Lord Walder Frey and how much the House in general the world would likely never know. Either way, House Frey under its new Lord, Steffon "the Sweet" Frey was a lot more reasonable as evidenced when they had allowed Robb's armies to cross the Twins for a fair toll and taking Olyvar on as his squire.

*Who would've thought all it took to make them less of onerous would be near extinction.* Robb thought with dark amusement even as he addressed Olyvar questioningly.

"Lady Jeyne, Lord Lyman's elder sister? At this hour?" Robb asked even as Olyvar nodded. "Did she say what she wanted to speak to me about?"

"No, my lord. She said it was private."
Robb frowned as he considered the possibilities. There was a chance this was an attempt at a seduction but from what he knew of Lady Darry he doubted it. Beyond that though, he could not fathom any reason for the young lady to speak to him.

*I suppose I have only one way to find out.*

"Send her in, Olyvar."

"At once, my lord."

It took a moment but soon the attractive woman with calm features was shown into the room.

"Olyvar, stay." Robb called out to his squire as he prepared to step out. "For propriety's sake."

"Yes, milord." The young Frey said as instead of leaving the room, he closed the door instead even as Robb and Lady Jeyne exchanged greetings.

"I'd say asking your squire to act as chaperone is hardly an improvement if you wished to avoid talk, Lord Stark." Lady Jeyne told him with a roll of her eyes said as she rose from her curtsy.

"It is the best I can do on short notice, my lady." Robb shot back, a smile tugging at his lips at the woman's refreshingly blunt wit and he gestured for her to take a seat. He could see why his sister liked her. "Should I call for one of the ladies instead? Lady Mormont perhaps?"

"That's unnecessary," Lady Darry replied with a giggle as she accepted his offer by sitting in a chair directly in front of his borrowed desk. "I have no fear that our discussion will affect my prospects. Nor am I here to seduce you, if that's what you fear."

"Not at all, my lady." Robb said seating after the lady as was proper. "What brings you to see me tonight?"

"Are you aware of my friendship with our Queen, my lord?"

"My sister had written to me about it." Robb admitted.

"In line with that, I would, if possible, like to serve her grace as one of her handmaidens."

Robb's eyes narrowed in suspicion. At best, Lady Jeyne knew his sister for only a couple days, why would she want to leave her home *during a war* just to serve her? Was this a political move? An attempt by the Lady Darry to leverage her acquaintance with Alys to further her standing and that of her House? It was possible Robb supposed, but everything he knew of the lady suggested otherwise. She did not seem politically minded enough to do something like that.

"May I ask why?"

"Besides the honor of serving the Queen?" Lady Jeyne said with a shrug. "I believe the Queen is a kindred spirit."

"In what way?" Robb pressed.

Lady Jeyne's eyes narrowed and seemed to struggle with her thoughts for a moment before sighing in resignation.

"It is because we are both women who prefer other women over men." Lady Jeyne confessed. "I want to be part of a court where my preference would not be seen negatively."
"Our Queen is married and with child."

Lady Jeyne just laughed.

"And it's an open secret that the marriage and pregnancy is merely a political convenience. It's Lady Margaery Tyrell not King Renly Baratheon, who is the Queen's true consort."

"That is true, but is wanting to be free with your preference your only reason?" Robb asked skeptically. He was inclined to agree with the lady's request already. Alyssa needed as many like minded people around her in his opinion and if Lady Jeyne met this need than he was happy to send her along. However, his instincts were telling him that there was more to this and he wanted to know what that was before he made his decision.

"You are a difficult man to convince, Lord Stark. Must I tell you all my secrets before you agree?"

"When it involves sending anyone to my sister's side I will want to know everything," Robb told her seriously. He would not risk sending a traitor into Alys' court.

"I can understand that." Lady Jeyne allowed with a sigh. "Very well. I will be honest then. I wish to go to the Queen's side partly because I am attracted to her."

Robb nodded. When Alyssa had first met the Lady Jeyne all those months ago, she'd wrote a glowing letter to him about the other woman. While his sister had not outright said it, he could read between the lines enough to know she was attracted to the Lady Darry. After all, he had known of her sexual preferences before she declared it by taking Margaery Tyrell as her mistress, as such he could see the signs well enough.

_I don't how this will affect her relationship with Lady Tyrell but I'm not about to deprive Alyssa of a possible person she could love. She'll need as many of them as she can get in these trying times._

With these thoughts in mind, Robb addressed Lady Darry.

"Very well." Robb told her with a nod. "Make whatever arrangements you need for travel, Lady Darry. I will have you sent to Bitterbridge to join my sister at the earliest opportunity."

"Thank you, Lord Stark." The woman told him sincerely. "You have no idea how much this means to me."

"Think nothing of it, Lady Darry. I do this for my sister."

As the mortals in the room exchanged pleasantries, none of them saw as the invisible figure of Nameless leaning against one wall of the solar and nodding in satisfaction even as a giddy Lady Darry left to make arrangements for her departure.

---

Two nights after his meeting with Lady Darry, Robb found himself sitting around a campfire in a small wood outside of Darry with a contingent of cavalry waiting. They had been doing that for hours now and despite his best efforts to stay awake the Stark lord was teetering on the edge of sleep.

"Here Lord Robb," Lord Jon "the Greatjon" Umber said as he handed Robb a bowl of hot stew. "Eat some of that. It'll warm you up and help ya stay awake."

"Thank you, Greatjon." Robb told the older lord with a smile. Calling the man without his title was somewhat impolite but Lord Umber had insisted and thus Robb had acquiesced despite how the
polite sensibilities his education instilled in him squirmed in discomfort.

"Think nothing of it, Lord Stark." The giant of a man said with a grin of his own. "It's not easy staying awake when there's no action even for the best of us. Helping each other stay awake is-

Whatever Lord Umber was about to say was cut off when Grey Wind suddenly jumped to his feet from where he had been lounging nearby and snarled softly.

*By how softly he's being, the enemy can't be too far.*

"Greatjon! Have the scouts reported anything new yet?" Robb asked, putting the bowl of stew aside. He wouldn't need it now that the thrill of coming battle coursed through his veins as the enemy drew near.

"Nothing new since they came in a couple hours ago saying that Ser Gregor Clegane, his Mountain's men and a Lannister host were spotted moving towards Darry."

Just then a rider in Darry colors rode up.

"My lords," the Darry rider said as he pulled his horse to a stop a short distance from the campfire Robb and the Greatjon shared, watched closely by both lords' retinue of guards. His presence alerted the other lords who sat at other nearby fires who now trickled over.

*He's one of our scouts. Either that or a messenger.*

"Report!" Robb barked, eager to hear what he had to say.

"Yes, milord." The rider replied quickly. "The Mountain's host have been sported and based on the speed of their gallop, they should have engaged the camp at Darry by now."

"Then we ride! To Darry!" Robb shouts, rallying his men even as he jumped on his horse that an already mounted Olyvar had helpfully guided over. "For the North! For Queen Alyssa!"

An hour of hard riding later, Robb and his horsemen arrived at Darry to see most of the Lannister men surrounded by his soldiers, clearly having fallen into the trap he'd set for them. Having ridden through the night, the Mountain and his men probably expected an unwary camp but thanks to the excellent work of their Rivermen scouts familiar with the terrain of their homeland, Robb had learned of the approach of the infamous knight's force early. Thus when the Lannister force slammed into his camp instead of finding Robb's men unprepared and scrambling to muster a defense, he found himself facing a numerically superior foe that was ready for him.

*Not that it all went as planned. Robb mused. If it had we wouldn't be so out of position for attempt to flank them with our cavalry.*

Despite their absence however, it seemed things were nevertheless going well. Enough that a group of mounted men in Lannister colors broke off from the fighting in a bid to make an escape.

"Lord Karstark!" Robb shouted at the gaunt and tall lord riding on the wing closest to the fleeing Westermen riders. "Take your men and intercept them!"

"At once, my lord!" Lord Karstark shouted back as he proceeded to peel off a substantial portion of their cavalry in pursuit of the fleeing Lannister men, leaving Robb to ride towards the main melee with the remainder.
With that situation in hand, Robb turned back towards the main battle where the surrounded Lannister host was being cut down. Helped along by Grey Wind who surged ahead and tore into the Red Cloaks with tooth and claw, filling the pocket of Robb's mind where his direwolf always resided with the taste of blood.

"Lord Stark! To the right!" Someone, possibly Olyvar but Robb couldn't be certain, shouted and Robb turned to the aforementioned direction to see a group of Lannister riders somehow broke free of the melee and ride towards Robb and his men, hastily pursued by a squadron of Tully knights.

That was all the warning Robb and his men got before the Lannister men crashed into them at full gallop and desperate fighting began. Perhaps they recognized Robb either by his appearance of banner. Perhaps they simply saw him and his contingent as being in their way to freedom. Either way the Westermen fought like men possessed and hacked their way through his guards with alarming speed.

As a result, soon Robb found himself forced to draw his own sword and parry a frenzied thrust aimed at stabbing him through his head. His attacker hastily tried to pull back his blade back in a guard, but Robb's parry had forced his sword arm wide. This created an opening that the young Lord Stark happily exploited to swing his better positioned sword and lob his head off.

His attacker dispatched, Robb was looking around for another opponent when he saw the pursuing Tully knights catching up to the Westermen. Now caught between his Uncle's knights and his own horsemen, the Red Cloaks were quickly cut down. Robb would have wished to say he had more part in that than the one man he'd slain but sadly he'd barely managed that when his guard formed a tight circle around him, fending off any further threats to his person.

"Good job with that man earlier, Lord Robb." The Greatjon told him, clapping Robb on the shoulder as he did and they finished the remainder of the ride towards the edge of the infantry melee.

Robb just nodded his agreement.

"How goes the battle?" Robb asked, trying to peer around the wall of bodies his men had formed around him. "Have we cornered Clegane?"

"The battle is all but over," The Greatjon told him, his taller stature allowing him to see over the guards where Robb himself could not. "As for the Mountain, he's over there."

Robb strained his neck in the direction the Greatjon pointed and his guards finally seemingly taking the hint, relaxed their circle enough to allow him to see what exactly Lord Umber was gesturing at.

It was frankly a surreal sight that greeted him. In the midst of the chaotic killing field and surrounded by piles of dead bodies, many of them likely slain by him, Clegane stood out as he defiantly killed anyone who tried to engage him. Such as the brave trio of Darry men-at-arms who tried to skewer him with their pikes from three directions only for him to spin his greatsword around him in a circle, cutting the heads off their weapons before following up and relieving the owners of theirs shortly thereafter.

"Lives up to his reputation as always." The Greatjon said with a scowl. "Let me go handle him Lord Robb. I'll take him down."

Robb who had been surveying their surroundings had a better idea.
"Apologies, Greatjon. But I think I have a better, less risky solution to our problematic Mountain. Olyvar?"

"Yes, my lord?" His loyal squire asked from somewhere behind him.

"You see that unit of crossbowmen over there?" Robb asked as he pointed towards the aforementioned men who were firing into a group dismounted Red Cloaks cowering behind their shields even as three units of loyalist pikemen hemmed the traitors in.

"Yes."

"Ride over and tell them to target Clegane instead." Robb ordered. "But tell them to try to avoid killing him, if possible. The Queen will want the man who killed her brother Prince Aegon and his mother Princess Elia alive."

"At once, my lord." Olyvar said as the boy pushed his horse out of the circle of men surrounding Robb and rode quickly over to the crossbowmen to relay his orders.

Moments later, the men began shifting their fire. At which point, Robb could only watch in amazement at what transpired. Unfazed by the rain of crossbow bolts headed his way, Clegane kept fighting. Even as bolt after bolt made their way into his flesh, he just kept swinging his sword, killing men with every stroke. Certainly many bolts were deflected by his sturdy armor, but plenty were burying themselves in his flesh in such a way as to be debilitating yet it barely slowed the man.

"He truly deserves his moniker as the Mountain." Robb said in reluctant awe as finally the monstrous knight fell to his knees, now resembling a hedgehog more than anything else and the crossbowmen hesitantly ceased fire.

Even brought low as he was, Clegane killed the first two men brave enough to check on him with one last swing of his greatsword before another half dozen crossbow bolts found their way through gaps in his armor. Only then did it prove too much for his superhuman constitution and he tipped forward into the mud.

"Make sure he's still alive," Robb ordered.

Despite this direct order from the Lord Paramount of the North, no one moved to obey for a moment. It was not until Grey Wind moved to do so for them that at long last a brave pikeman cautiously used his weapon to poke Clegane's body. Only when he received no response did he get closer.

"He's breathing, milord." The Cerwyn man said as Robb and his retinue rode over.

"Good." Robb said with a pleased nod. "Bind him in chains. The thickest we have and throw him into the dungeons. I will send word to the Queen of his capture immediately."

Two days later as Robb and his men were preparing to move off to continue the liberation of the Riverlands, Darry's Maester hurried into the courtyard where the young Stark lord was checking the readiness of his horse for the long ride ahead.

"Lord Stark!" The middle aged man gasped as he ran into the yard, his chain clinking with every step. "A raven! F-From the Queen."

Everyone in the yard perked up at that, especially the lords but none more so than Lady Jeyne
whose eyes seemed to sparkle at the mere prospect of news of Alys.

*She has it bad.* Robb thought with amusement, even as he accepted the raven's scroll and began to read his sister's missive.

**Dear Robb,**

*Congratulations on capturing Gregor Clegane. Please make sure he does not escape. I have plans for him.*

Robb shuddered at that, not wanting to even imagine what torments his sister had thought up for the man who had so harmed her family. It did not surface often but his sister had a darkly vindictive streak. He well remembered the often devious reprisals she had concocted in their childhood for any slights her siblings had done to her. And now that one of those she had most cause for seeking vengeance against was in her hands, he had little doubt she'd indulge.

*I have not had as much success with my attempts to rescue Sansa. The latest batch of men I sent into King's Landing via the Gate spell have failed. Again. The Lannisters keep her under too close a guard and are too willing to threaten her life. I am honestly afraid of trying again. Even if the Lannisters need her, in the heat of the moment threat there is no telling what a desperate guard would do. Which is probably what they are counting on. Unless I Gate in a whole army into the city, I doubt I can succeed.*

Robb winced. He lacked her magic and yet his inability to help their trapped sister was already a constant pain in his heart, what more Alyssa with her phenomenal magic?

*Though why didn't she just Gate an army into King's Landing anyways?* He could understand not using it to check in on him and Mother as they hoped she might. She knew they were safe and was busy running a campaign, gods knew he had come to appreciate how time consuming that was, but why didn't she use her Gate spell to kill all her enemies? Was there some limit to its use? Or was she pretending there was?

Hoping to figure out why, he kept reading.

*But onto other matters, space on a scroll is limited.*

*And yet you wasted space writing that.* Robb thought with an amused smile. A reaction that was probably exactly what his cunning sister intended. She was deflecting from the previous line of thought and the young Lord of Winterfell couldn't help but wonder why.

*Here are my orders,* the letter continued. *Do not attack the Westerlands as I know you are tempted to do. Merely continue the liberation of the Riverlands and hold out against counterattack. Also send at least half the Northmen at your command back North. The Ironborn are stirring.*

*What!?* Robb growled in indignation at the barbaric reavers attacking the North while its men were away. It fit with their pattern of behavior however and he trusted his sister. If she said they were about to attack then they were.

His mind swirling as he tried to decide which contingents of troops to send back North, Robb continued reading the letter.

*I know that parts of my orders do not make sense, especially the part about the Westerlands. But I do have a plan, but one I cannot risk sharing by raven. Come down to Bitterbrigde. We can discuss everything at a war council.*
Your sister,

Queen Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name, Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms.

Robb frowned, the order to not attack the Westerlands did indeed derail his war plans and Robb wondered about why she would issue something like that.

"What new orders have we received from the Queen, Lord Stark?" Lady Jeyne asked, cutting into Robb's contemplation of Alys' motives.

"We go to Bitterbridge." Robb said loudly enough for everyone in the yard to hear. "Olyvar go spread the word among the men."

"Yes, my lord." The squire said as he rode off to relay his orders.

Robb watched him exit the castle before turning to address his fellow lords, intent on informing them of the full extent of the change in plans but before he began a Darry servant run into the yard shouting his name.

"Lord Stark!" The young boy said as she ran over. "Raven from Winterfell!"

Even as her son campaigned for her husband's rightful vengeance and her niece's claim to the Iron Throne, Lady Catelyn Stark stayed in Winterfell to serve as Robb's regent. She had very much wanted to join Robb but someone needed to be the Stark in Winterfell and she was the only one capable of the task, so after a brief reunion with her son in Riverrun she'd rode North at his insistence. Considering it was her anger getting the better of her when she ran into the Imp at the Crossroads Inn all those moons ago that had set off this war, she had not fought his request.

If only I had not let the Imp's talk of visiting Winterfell and Robb affect me.

In hindsight she knew his words were probably benign but to her mind at the time, filled with rage at the dwarf's siblings' killing of her little Bran as it was, it had come across as nothing less than a thinly veiled threat against her last surviving son. It was this misunderstanding that had led to all her current grief and the self-condemnation she felt. Much as she regretted it though, she could not change her past actions. All she could was do her best in the present.

It was thus that she found herself in Ned's solar reviewing unsettling correspondence from the western coast that Ironborn were harrying the Stony Shore, and besieging Torrhen's Square and had even taken Moat Cailin and Deepwood Motte.

How do I respond? She thought as she struggled to think of what she could do. Sadly, she had few options. With most of their men fighting in the South, they simply did not have the warriors to repulse the Ironborn's invasion. She had sent ravens South asking for help but unless they had started marching some time ago, they were unlikely to arrive in time.

Maybe I should send Ser Rodrik with a host to relieve Torrhen's Square? Lady Stark mused as she glanced at the stout knight with his large white whiskers where he silently stood awaiting orders. But that would deplete Winterfell's garrison and put us at risk.

"My lady," Maester Luwin said in greeting as he entered the room without any fanfare carrying the freshly arrived raven's scrolls that she had sent him to collect.

"More bad news from the western coast?" Catelyn asked with resignation.
"Some, my lady." The mall grey man with grey eyes and thinning hair said. "But there is also one from the Queen."

Ser Rodrik's previously somewhat fraught features relaxed at that. For her part, Catelyn openly sighed in relief. If anyone could salvage the situation it was her brilliant, magic wielding niece. Even if she was half a continent away.

"Let me see the Queen's raven." Catelyn said impatiently.

"Here you are, my lady." The Maester said passing her the relevant scroll which she hastily rolled open to read.


Dear Stepmother,

Stay in Winterfell. Do not sortie out for anything. I've protected the castle with my magic, it will hold against the Ironborn even with its depleted garrison. Don't worry about the other keeps and Houses. I've already written to Robb and he is sending a portion of the Northern army back up North, more than enough to take on the few thousand Ironborn. They will just need to hold out till the reinforcements arrive.

Do not worry about Sansa. I am working on her rescue.

Apologies for being brief. I hate raven's scrolls. They are too short!

Your stepdaughter,

Queen Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name, Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms.

Catelyn couldn't help it, she laughed. Partly at Alyssa's parting statement and partly out of sheer relief that her wonderful niece did have things in hand.

Oh! How could I have ever thought that she was anything other than a gift from the gods. Catelyn scolded herself for the umpteenth time for her horrid treatment of the girl in her youngest years.

"My lady, what are the Queen's orders?" Ser Rodrik asked, pulling Catelyn out of her thoughts.

"We're to hold fast." Catelyn told him. "Reinforcements are already on the way. We need simply wait till they arrive. Maester Luwin."

"Yes, my lady?"

"Have ravens sent out to all the Northern Houses to inform them of the Queen's orders."

"At once, my lady." The Maester said with a bow.

"Good then Ser Rodrik please prepare the castle for a siege." Catelyn told the knight. "The Queen said she has enchanted it to strengthen its defenses but wisely did not mention how she did so in the raven, so assume that we do without and prepare accordingly."

"Yes, milady." The loyal knight said with a bow of his own.

"Then both of you are dismissed. Get to work!"

Offering one last bow, both men left the room to carry out her orders. Catelyn waited for both men to exit the room and close the door behind them before she turned to look out the window of Ned's
solar at the view of Winterfell and the Wolfswood beyond that it offered.

For a moment the reminder that this room was her beloved Ned's and that he was gone almost brought her to tears but she quickly steeled herself. Until Robb took a wife, she was still the Lady of Winterfell and Lady Paramount of the North and the North was at war. She had no time for grief. Not yet.

*Besides vengeance will feel infinitely more satisfying,* she thought vindictively as she looked in the direction of King's Landing. *And Alyssa will reap that harvest soon enough.*

"He's done what!?" Renly roared suddenly at the table where Alyssa and he were breaking their fast alone save for their omnipresent Rainbow Guard shadows of whom Brienne of Tarth and Ser Parmen Crane were on duty today.

Looking up from her meal of some bread and a nice thin soup, Alyssa saw that a raven's scroll had seemingly triggered the reaction.

"Renly, what is it?" Alyssa asked her husband.

"It's Stannis. He's laid siege to Storm's End with five thousand men!"

Alyssa blinked. Didn't I already tell him Stannis would do that?

"Don't give me that look," Renly snapped irritably. "I believed you. It's why I had Ser Penrose prepare for a siege despite no sign of it."

"Then what's the problem?"

"Stannis actually did it, that's the problem." Renly said, furiously. "He's attacking our family's ancestral seat! Do you know how audacious that is?"

"I suppose it'll be as audacious as me leading an attack of King's Landing." Alyssa snarked.

Renly deflated at that. "Yes, I suppose it is."

*What's with that reaction?* Alyssa thought, thoroughly confused by Renly's reaction.

"So what will be our response?" She asked, discarding her confusion as irrelevant.

"Stannis has five thousand?" Renly scoffed. "Then I'll take twenty thousand cavalry and ride out to break the siege."

She distantly recalled that in her past life doing so had led to Renly's death, so it was without hesitation that she spoke up.

"I'm coming with you."

"You can't be serious," Renly balked. "You're pregnant!"

"It's barely been two moons." Alyssa told him with a roll of her eyes. "I am not even showing yet. Besides, do you want Ghost on your side when lifting the siege or not?"

"I think twenty thousand men are more than enough."

"Yes, but a *dragon* will make a statement. Exactly the kind that will have an impact on the
"Targaryen Loyalists that make up the bulk of Stannis' forces."

"That is true," Renly hesitantly agreed. "But if you come, then you must promise me to stay out of the fighting."

Sighing at her husband's illogical overprotectiveness Alyssa agreed. "Very well, I promise."

A week later, a now noticeably pregnant Alyssa and Margey were watching from Ghost's back high up in the sky as Renly and Stannis parlayed. Alyssa had not wanted Margeary to come but her mistress had insisted, arguing rather rightly that if Alyssa was going while pregnant than there was no reason why she couldn't accompany her.

"They're breaking up already?" Margey noted worriedly as the two groups of riders below indeed began to pull away from each other. "It's barely been ten minutes. This is a bad sign."

"It is," Alyssa agreed. "Let us fly back to camp. We can ask Renly what happened."

The flight to the nearby camp was brief and the two women even had the time to change out of their riding leathers and back into proper dresses before Renly and his men arrived.

"Stannis refused to yield." Renly said without prompting the moment he entered the royal tent that they shared. "We are set to do battle at dawn."

"He refused to negotiate?"

"Completely." Renly told Alyssa as she collapsed on to a camp chair. "He's being as obstinate as always."

"Even though he and his men could see Ghost with their own eyes?"

"Even then."

Alyssa exchanged a look with Margey who nodded in agreement.

"He's up to something." Alyssa said, giving voice to their shared conclusion.

"Yes," Renly chimed in with his own agreement. "But what?"

The answer presented itself that night in the shared tent that Alyssa and Renly maintained to keep up appearances but which was internally partitioned into their respective halves, Alyssa was between Margey's legs servicing her lover when she suddenly sensed a burst of foreign magic from Renly's half of the tent.

Reacting quickly, she pulled away from her mistress, much to Margey's confusion.

"Mage Armor!" She cast on Renly through the curtain that bisected their tent before running through herself.

As she did, she caught sight of a vaguely humanoid shadow wielding an equally insubstantial sword trying to stab at the Mage Armor clad Renly who was on top of Loras on their bed.

Ignoring the sight of her husband and his lover's nudity, Alyssa pointed a hand at the creature.

"Fire Bolt!" She shouted, sending a mote of fire flying at the thing which transformed into a
stream of darkness and fled before her spell could make contact.

At this time, Ser Robar Royce and Brienne of Tarth who had been standing guard outside rushed inside.

"Your graces! What's going on!?” Ser Royce shouted in alarm.

An hour later and after everyone had gotten dressed and the small fire started by Alyssa's missed Fire Bolt had been put out, Alyssa, her husband, their lovers and the Rainbow Guard, even those not on duty that night, met to discuss what happened.

"The creature just appeared out of the shadows suddenly," Loras said, recounting his experience. "And immediately stabbed its blade down at his grace. If not for her grace's spell, the King would be dead."

"Thank you for that Alyssa.” A shaken Renly told Alyssa with a grateful look.

"We are married.” Alyssa reminded him in exasperation. "Saving your life is a given if I can manage it, husband."

A chastised Renly just nodded.

"Your grace, did you perchance recognize what that creature was?” Ser Royce asked.

"I've never seen it before." Alyssa admitted with a frown. "But-"

"You've read about it?" Margey said knowingly as Alyssa trailed off thoughtfully.

"Yes. It seems like something I've read that the shadowbinders of Asshai can create. A shadow assassin. It's exactly what its name implies. An assassin created from shadows. One that will stalk its target relentlessly until it completes its mission."

"How can we protect against it?” Loras asked, looking at Renly worriedly.

"I can cast a Glyph of Warding on Renly for if it returns, one loaded with a Frost Armor. If a simple Mage Armor protected him from it just now, than a Frost Armor should should be even more effective."

"That keeps him protected but how do we fight it?"

"I don't thi-"

"Enchant the swords of the Rainbow Guard." Margey said suddenly. "Use your glyph spell to enchant them so that they'll contain a spell that can drive it off."

"That might work." Alyssa nodded, blinking at Margey with surprise. "It'll likely destroy the sword unless its made of Valyrian steel but I can store a Flame Blade. Yes, as a shadow creature, flame is better than frost. So a Flame Blade to trigger whenever the sword is swung at a shadow assassin."

The various Rainbow Guards immediately begin to draw their swords but even as he did so, Loras asked a question. "Will killing this one be enough? Will the shadowbinder be able to make more?"

"I honestly don't know."
"Then-

"Loras, that's enough." Renly said cutting his lover off. "We can only do our best. Alyssa cast your spells."

Alyssa nodded and as the Rainbow Guards, including Loras, drew their swords she began casting.

"They're withdrawing?" Alyssa asked, surprised that Stannis would give up so easily, even as she watched with her own eyes as the man's troops began to break up their camp in the distance.

"It appears so," Renly said, sporting a frown. "Should we attempt to stop them?"

Alyssa considered the matter for a moment before shaking her head.

"Let them go," she decided. "It'll take time for news of Ghost's existence to spread among his supporters and the more men we have doing the spreading, the better."

"You're still thinking about convincing the former Targaryen Loyalists to defect?"

"Yes and we can best do that by not having them or their men burn in Ghost's dragonfire."

Renly's frown deepened but he nodded. "We'll follow your lead on this front, but I must say that I have my misgivings about it."

She nods, knowing his complaints. He'd mentioned them at every turn despite her countering every point he raised with one of her own. Despite which he stubbornly held onto his doubts.

At least he's willing to follow the plan in spite of that. Alyssa thought as she turned her return to their tent and finish the morning meal that had been interrupted by the news of Stannis' retreat.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

A long chapter and one lacking in the battles as advertised, huh? Apologies about that but I'm not Martin and can't come up with exciting battles at the drop of a hat, so I'm saving my muse for the truly important ones. As a result, till then I'll make do with stuff like this.

I think I'm done with this story. The negativity is getting too much for me. I'm uploading all the chapters at once and just moving on.

Well, that's all from me this chapter. Till next time zbogom!
Lord Roose Bolton was in the Hall of the Hundred Hearths breaking his fast in Harrenhal, a castle he’d recently taken in the name of Queen Alyssa Targaryen. Oh! He knew full well that the woman officially co-ruled with her husband Renly Baratheon but he was under no illusions who wielded the true power in that relationship.

He was just finishing his meal when an upright oval of swirling darkness forms at the other end of the castle's excessively large great hall. Standing up quickly, he drew his sword and watched as a group of flabbergasted guards encircled the strange phenomenon only to be further shocked when no less than Lady Arya Stark stepped out of the portal with the direwolves Nymeria and Lady, a flamboyantly dressed Braavosi Bravo, and a contingent of what appeared to be Reach knights led by a man in yellow plate armor with sunflowers worked into the metal as adornments following closely behind her.

"What is the meaning of this?" The yellow knight demanded furiously. "Weren't we expected? The Queen sent a raven did she not?"

Roose in a rare moment of shock could only mutter a weak response. "We weren't expecting you for days. Nor for you to arrive via whatever that was."

"That's a Gate spell." Lady Arya said as the portal vanished. "One of my sister's magic spells. She is a mage. You do know that right, Lord Bolton?"

Roose should had been affronted by the tone, much less the question. Though he had the grace to be neither. For he had indeed chalked the Queen's supposed magic to be little more than fanciful tales like those of the snarks and grumkins.

"Apologies, Lady Arya." The Bolton Lord said instead with an apologetic nod. "I underestimated our Queen's prowess.

"Don't do it again." Lady Arya told him bluntly.

Did the girl have no manners? On second thought, that's unlikely. Her trout mother may be many things but she would not fail in teaching her daughters proper manners. This, Roose looked to the two horse sized direwolves standing on either side of the Stark girl. Is her wolf's blood talking. That and I imagine a healthy amount of bravado from being regarded by a dragon riding witch Queen as a sister.
"I will endeavor not to."

"Good." Lady Arya said before she fished through a pouch she slung at her waist over her decidedly masculine trousers and tunic, opposite the small, slender sword sheathed on her right. It took her a moment before she pulled out a sealed missive. "This is for you."

"Thank you, my lady." Roose said with a bow as he took the Queen's letter. He checked the seal was unbroken and was satisfied, the shield of House Targaryen was indeed whole. Not that he suspected any foul play when it was the Queen's most beloved little sister serving as her courier but one must still go through the motions.

Especially when the leader of Lady Arya's escorts was watching.

"All seems in order, my lady." He hadn't noticed it earlier but every time he called her that Lady Arya's nose crinkled in displeasure. It was a childish, unsightly gesture but he wasn't about to say anything. It wasn't his place to correct her, not when he suspected from the lack of surprise at the action from her escort that the Queen permitted her such behavior.

Instead, he proceeded with the niceties. "Would you and your escort like to be shown to your chambers for a rest? Or-"

"No, we're fine. We came straight from Bitterbridge, no travel involved." Lady Arya cut him off in a decidedly unladylike way and Roose was thankful for that. While he had given orders to have rooms ready for her and her party when he'd received the raven to expect her today, he'd put no urgency behind them. After all, he'd mistakenly thought she wouldn't arrive for days. He thus would need some time to make sure that the appropriate accommodations were indeed ready.

"I'd rather you had someone show me around the castle." Lady Arya said, unaware of the relief her host was feeling at her request. "My grandmother on my mother's side grew up here and I would like to explore it."

"Of course, my lady." Roose said gesturing to the highest ranking of the men-at-arms in the hall. "Take the lady on a tour of the castle."

"Yes, milord." The soldier, a man from House Tallhart. "This way milady."

As Lady Arya's party filed out of the hall with their new guide, Roose hurried off in a separate direction to make sure that everything was ready for the girl and her men when they were finished. He did not want a visit from her sister if she was made unhappy.

Later that evening, Roose found himself sitting in his solar in the captured castle pondering after the two missives before him. One was from the Lannisters offering him the North in exchange for defecting to their side. The other was from the Queen, as delivered by her sister-cousin Arya Stark, that told him that she knew he and the Lannisters were secretly communicating with each other and that they were making him offers for his defection which he might be considering to accept.

That alone chilled him to the bone. He was certain that the agents he used were secure. And he had checked, as far as possible, that the same was true on the Lannister end as well. Yet, the Witch Queen had discovered their exchanges anyway.

If her dragon had not convinced him of which side to align himself, this feat of espionage would have. Not to mention the feat of magic she'd worked sending her sister to Harrenhal this morning.

"The Lannisters are fools to challenge someone like her." Roose Bolton said with a dry chuckle.
Had he not been attempting to do the same? Perhaps, but he would not be a fool any longer.

The Queen had ordered him to hand whatever communications he'd already had with the Lannisters to her sister who would act as her courier and to play along with the Lannisters in the hopes of gaining some useful intelligence. It was a dangerous game where one misstep would likely see him burned alive by dragonfire but it was the unfortunate position his attempt to play both sides had put him in. He could only live with the consequences.

Standing, he walked to the door and opened it.

"You," he said to one of the guards standing watch outside the solar. "Go let Lady Arya know that I would like to speak to her."

Roose closed the door to the man's armor clinking as he ran to obey his orders and walked back to the desk. He had some work to do before Lady Arya arrived. There were many missives and letters he'd need to hand over to the Queen after all and it would take time to compile them all.

"Robb, welcome!" Alys greeted him warmly as the customary greetings were completed and she pulled him into a hug in the middle of the Bitterbridge yard. Something that made the slight bulge caused by her pregnancy very noticeable to him. It was thus impossible for him to not stare at it as they pulled apart.

"Not even going to greet me, brother? Is my baby bump really that interesting?" Alys asked with a teasing pout.

"I would be lying if I said no." Robb told her honestly. "But it's good to see you too."

Alyssa smiled at him happily, looking radiant even as she probably unconsciously ran a hand over her slightly swollen stomach.

His examination of his pregnant sister was interrupted when his other sister tackled his side.

"Robb! Did you forget me?" Arya asked him with a glare.

Chuckling, Robb pulled his little sister into a hug. "Of course not. But couldn't you just wait your turn?"

"If I did, you'd be stuck staring at Alys and her belly for the next hour." Arya told him as she returned the hug.

"She'd be right too."

"Alyssa, we'll be retiring for now. You'll show your brother the way-"

"I'll handle it Renly." Alyssa told her husband sternly and Robb had to smother a chuckle.

It was exactly how he'd always pictured his sister dealing with a husband. With how strong willed she was, he had always known that whichever man she ended up marrying would end up controlled by her. It seemed that Kings were no exception to this as Renly Baratheon just nodded at his wife's words and walked away, looking not unlike an obedient dog. At least to Robb and if Arya's shaking shoulders were anything to go by, his sister as well.

"If you two are done laughing at my husband," Alyssa said, calling them both out on their behavior. There was no heat behind it though, rather amusement. It seemed she thought as highly
of the man she'd married as they did.

"Then I have some important things to hand over to you, Robb." Alyssa continued as Robb finally released Arya though his youngest sister refused to let go entirely and instead leaned into his side.

"What is it?" Robb asked seriously.

Alyssa gestured to a group of servants and they brought forward a familiar greatsword and what looked liked a chunk of ice.

"Ice belongs to you now, brother." Alyssa said as the servant bearing their family's ancestral Valyrian steel sword presented it to him.

With subtly trembling hands, Robb took the blade from the man and reverently strapped it to his waist.

"Thank you, sister, for recovering it. And that is?" Robb asked, nodding towards the chunk of ice.

Alyssa looked at whatever it was and a distant look came across her face. It was thus Arya who answered his question.

"It's the casket containing Father's ashes." His usually rambunctious sister said with uncharacteristic solemnity. "Alys made it with her magic."

Robb's eyes went wide even as he opened his arms to receive the icy casket with even more reverence than he had Ice.

"He would want to be laid to rest in Winterfell." Alyssa said, finally pulling herself from whatever memory had taken hold of her. "I would've preserved his body, but-"

"His ashes are good enough, sister. Thank you." Robb told Alyssa sincerely.

He didn't know what went through his sister's mind to prompt her to burn their Father's body rather than preserving it like was their family tradition but he trusted she had her reasons. Reasons that she could inquire after when they were in private for the sound of nervous shifting behind him reminded him that they were very much not alone.

"Alyssa, I have a surprise for you as well." Robb told his sister with as much of a teasing smile as he could manage while he held the supernaturally preserved ashes of his Father.

"What is it?"

"That would be me," Lady Jeyne said stepping forward at last, instead of hiding herself anxiously in the heart of Robb's party. Nerves that were probably not helped by the appraising look that Lady Margaery offered her from where she had stood silently supportive to Alyssa's right the whole time.

"Jeyne?" Alyssa gasped in surprise. "What are you doing here?"

"At her insistence, I brought her here to serve as your handmaiden."

"That is if you would have me, your grace." Lady Jeyne said while offering Alyssa a low curtsy and a questioning look towards Lady Margaery.

Looking visibly confused, his poor sister could only nod.
It was a look that was so amusing that Robb almost forgot he was holding the remains of his wrongfully killed Father. Almost.

A few hours later, Alyssa had regained her poise and leaving Jeyne to be settled into her new role by Margaery, she sat beside Renly at the High Seat in the Bitterbridge Great Hall as they convened their war council.

"First things first," Alyssa said as she began the meeting. "I think congratulations to my brother are in order for the successful taking of Harrenhal by his bannermen."

"You honor me, your grace." Robb replied with such formality that Alyssa had to fight to hide her pout. "But while that might be true, our attack on Duskendale was repulsed as were other attempts to cut off the Lannisters' supply lines to King's Landing. Furthermore, we have been unable to do anything about Tywin Lannister's large host at Stoney Sept."

"That is all true," Alyssa acknowledged. "But we need not worry about the old lion for much longer."

"Your ravens mentioned you have a plan." Robb asked, leaning forward in his eagerness. "Would you enlighten us?"

"Renly, if you please," Alyssa said sweetly to her husband who rolled his eyes but nevertheless picked up the explanation.

"We're using King's Landing as bait." Her consort said. "Not just for Tywin but also for my brother. You see-"

As Renly began getting into the details, Alyssa sensed a familiar foreign magic and she searched the hall and especially the many patches of shade in the room for the shadow assassin. Her wandering attention did not go unnoticed by the present Rainbow Guard and they gripped the hilts of their swords expectantly and swept the hall as well.

Perhaps sensing that its presence was detected, the creature decided to throw caution to the wind and shot out of the shadows directly behind where Alyssa and Renly were seated.

"Renly!" Alyssa shouted in warning even as she summoned a Flame Blade to her hand.

The hall exploded into confusion as the gathered lords shot out of their seats in confusion and reached for their weapons. At the same time, the shadow assassin stabbed at Renly with a lance of shadow that shattered the Frost Armor that had deployed from the Glyph of Warding cast upon him. It had nevertheless deflected the blow however and before the shadowy creature could launch another blow, Alyssa swung her flaming scimitar at it forcing it away from her husband.

This unfortunately had the effect of making the assassin change its target and it lunged at Alyssa with its lance.

"Not on my life!" Brienne of Tarth roared as she parried the shadowy weapon with her sword now ablaze with the stored power of the Flame Blade spell Alyssa had enchanted it with.

"Take the Queen to safety!" The warrior woman said as she pushed Alyssa behind her.

"I have her." Robb said grabbing Alyssa's arm and pulling her away from the fight as four of the present five Rainbow Guard engaged the magical creature, while Loras dragged Renly to safety on the opposite side of the hall.
"Be careful!" Alyssa shouted at the Rainbow Guard. "The Flame Blade will start warping your swords!"

"Don't worry about them! Worry about yourself!" Robb shouted as he stepped up his pace. "Greatjon! Carry her!"

"Wha-!?" Alyssa managed before the giant of a man that was Lord Umber picked her up in his arms and began sprinting out of the hall.

"Sorry about this, your grace." The man said but she barely heard him as she leaned over his shoulder to see as the four Rainbow Guard bested the shadow assassin stabbed their flaming, half-melted swords into its umbros flesh.

Clearly dying and unwilling to do so without completing the task for which it had been created, the shadow assassin transformed the last of its body into a pair of shadow bolts. One shooting towards Renly as he was led to safety by Loras and another hurtling directly at Alyssa herself.

"Wall of Ice!" She cast hastily, conjuring a barrier of thick ice that shattered at the impact of the shadow bolt but nevertheless negated the shadow assassin's last desperate attempt to kill her.

"Alys, are you alright?" Robb asked urgently as Lord Umber unfolded himself from where he'd wrapped himself around her to shield her from the ice shards that flew everywhere when her Ice Wall had failed.

"I-I'm fine." Alyssa said, shaken by how close she'd just come to death. "Renly? Is he-

The heartbreaking sobs from Loras that echoed throughout the hall was answer enough.

"You should just let us kill them all." Loras said angrily as Alyssa, Margeary, Robb and he watched from a window in one of Bitterbridge's towers as half of Renly's Stormland army prepared to leave.

News of Renly's death had spread quickly through their camp, not helped at all by how very public spectacle it had all been. As a result, half of the Stormlanders had chosen to defect despite pleas from the remainder to stand with her as Renly's widow and mother of his unborn child. The defectors had even fought a brief skirmish with the loyalists but the fighting had thankfully ended when Alyssa flew in on Ghost and demanded they stop.

"I made them a promise." Alyssa reminded her late husband's lover. "Out of their previous loyalty to Renly, they will be allowed them to leave."

"And I don't understand why!" Loras hissed. "They are turning their back on Renly. You're his wife and you're pregnant with his child. And they would abandon you for Stannis? The man who is most likely responsible for Renly's death!? They deserve to die!"

"Renly wouldn't want it." Alyssa told the knight, putting a hand on his shoulder. "Doing so would be tyrannical."

"Is that wise?" Robb asked with a frown.

"We- I must not be seen as a tyrant," Alyssa said with a sigh at the slip of her tongue and pulled away from Loras to allow herself to fall into Margey's comforting embrace. "Westeros has seen enough tyrants. If I mean to sit the Iron Throne, I must make it clear that I am no despot. That means being honorable and allowing these traitors to to abandon ou- my cause peacefully."
"Even if it means you'll just have to face them on the battlefield later?"

"On the battlefield at least they will die as my enemies, killing them now would be dishonorable." Alyssa said. "Father would disapprove and so would the people of Westeros. Rightfully so."

"Agreed." Margey said supportively. "Though there is something strange."

"What is it?" Loras asked, his face a dark cloud as he turned to face them.

"Simply how quickly so many of the Storm lords turned their backs on us. It's almost as if this was all planned."

"It probably was to some extent." Alyssa concluded. "Stannis must have planted agents in the ranks of the Stormlands contingent. Some of the lords themselves might have served the role and worked to convince their peers."

"Are we absolutely sure that Stannis is responsible for that thing?" Robb asked with a frown.

"He has the motive." Alyssa informed him. "In addition, our agents in his court say that an Essosi Red Priestess is serving as one of his closest advisors. We have no proof she's a shadowbinder but it's possible."

"And he will die for killing Renly. This I swear."

"You'll get your chance brother, right Alys?" Margaery asked.

Running a hand over her small baby bump, Alyssa leveled a harsh glare at the departing traitors.

"Indeed you will, Loras. Soon we will avenge Renly."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

So things are still moving along the canon rails huh? I know it might be late but it's about to jump the tracks entirely. So hang on folks!

Besides wanting to tell you guys that I really have nothing to say this chapter. So till next time ardievas!
The War of the Four Sovereigns #6: The Battle of King's Landing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Alyssa I Targaryen

Book : The War of the Four Sovereigns

Chapter 6: The Battle of King's Landing

Beta:

The day after the last of the defectors had left Bitterbridge, Alyssa gathered the remaining Rainbow Guard in Bitterbridge's archery range. It was just Loras as Lord Commander, Ser Robar Royce, Ser Emmon Cuy and Brienne of Tarth left. Lord Bryce Caron, Ser Guyard Morrigen, and Ser Parmen Crane having decided to defect to Stannis after Renly's death.

"I suppose you might be wondering why I've summoned all of you here," Alyssa said as she paced stood in front of her four remaining sworn protectors. "It is quite simple actually. We will be beginning our march on King's Landing soon and before I do I would like to make some changes to the Rainbow Guard."

She looked across the four warriors for any sign of dissent but found none, so with a pleased grin she continued.

"Firstly, I'm changing the name of your order from the Rainbow Guard to Queensguard. As innovative as the Rainbow Guard is, tying it to the Faith of the Seven is problematic as not all of the Seven Kingdoms follows the Faith and it would not do for any King or Queen that professes to rule them all to so obviously privilege one Faith over the others. So where I can help it, I shall minimize this. In addition, Queensguard will also serve to hark back to the long standing Kingsguard as well which helps my legitimacy. I have no qualms with all of you maintaining your armor as is since it is a fitting tribute to Renly but I will not ask any future members to wear colored armor either."

"Your grace," Loras said stepping forward. "How then will we maintain a sense of identity?"

Alyssa blinked at that. She hadn't considered that point at all.

"What would you suggest Lord Commander?"

"Perhaps a compromise?" He suggested. "We maintain our current armor as tributes to King Renly as you say, but wear a piece in the White of the old Kingsguard?"

"That is a good compromise." Alyssa said agreeably. "Can I leave the decision of which armor piece to be changed up to you and your fellow Queensguard? I know nothing of armor."

"Of course, your grace." Loras said with a grateful bow and stepped back in line with his fellows.

Seeing this, Alyssa continued.
"In addition to the issue of armor, I would also like to retain the Rainbow Guard's lack of restriction in regards to owning land, marriage, or having children. Furthermore, to make this more manageable, I intend to make service in the Guard a matter of terms of five years allowing for more easy replacement of members as and when required. Of course, those who wish to serve longer may request new terms of service but the reigning monarch shall reserve the right to grant or refuse such requests."

This was met with nods of relief from Ser Robar Royce and Ser Emmon Cuy, to whom Alyssa offered a smile.

"Lastly, I want to introduce a new addition to the Guard." Alyssa said gesturing for an immense bald man with a large mustache stepped forward from where he had been standing patiently nearby. "This is Ser Wendel Manderly, he accompanied my brother's party south and I have decided to induct him into the Guard where I hope he will represent the North with honor."

"I will do so or die trying, your grace." Ser Wendel said with a polite bow.

"Your grace," Loras said sounding uncertain even as he eyed the rotund knight warily, expressing the skepticism at her choice of the rest of her Queensguard. "Is Ser Wendel's appointment purely a political move?"

"Hardly," Alyssa said with a giggle. "Ser Wendel perhaps you should demonstrate your impressive skill with a bow."

"As you command, your grace." Ser Wendel said as he moved to one of the firing positions of the range, unslinging the longbow across his back and got into a ready position.

As he fired shot after shot, Alyssa watched the looks of skepticism on her other Queensguard vanish as Ser Wendel hit the bullseye on all the targets, on more than one occasion splitting the previous arrow embedded in half in the process, despite firing as quickly as he could draw back his bow which was impressively fast in its own right as he worked his way through all the arrows in his quiver.

"Now do you see why I chose Ser Wendel to join the Guard?" Alyssa asked rhetorically when the master archer finally ran out of arrows. "As a dragonrider, I will inevitably spend a significant amount of time on Ghost's back where a sword is not as useful as a bow, it was with this in mind that I chose Ser Wendel, renowned throughout the North for his archery skills, for the post."

"A wise choice, your grace." Loras said. "Apologies Ser Wendel for our doubts."

"Think nothing of it Lord Commander," the Northern Knight waved the apology away. "I understand your doubts. If you didn't have them, you wouldn't be worthy protectors of her grace."

This seemed to endear Ser Wendel even more to the rest of her Queensguard as they offered him pleased grins.

"Your grace."

"Yes Lord Commander?"

"What of the two remaining seats? Do you have any candidates in mind?"

"They shall remain open for the moment." Alyssa told him. "It is my hope that in time they can be filled by worthy warriors from other Kingdoms."
"A noble goal, your grace." Loras said offering his agreement.

Settling the reform of the Rainbow Guard into her Queensguard was only one matter Alyssa had to handle before the army began marching on King's Landing at long last, another matter was the situation at the Wall which her **Sceryng** of Castle Black and of Mance Rayder showed her was growing critical. Hence, she had summoned Robb to her solar to discuss a response.

"Alys, you wanted to see me?" Robb asked as he entered the room.

"Yes, Robb." Alyssa said gesturing for him to take a seat. "Tell me what do you of the situation at the Wall?"

"The Wall?" Robb asked, surprised by the question even as he took his seat in front of her desk. "Last I heard, the Lord Commander Mormont was killed. Supposedly by wights, or so the new Lord Commander Thorne says but that's likely just stories."

"It isn't," Alyssa told him and he startled. "But that threat is not the pressing one. Look."

Silently casting a **Scrying** spell and **Minor Illusion** she created an image over the desk of a vast Wildling host massing to attack the Wall.

"The Wildlings, or Free Folk as they preferred to be called, have fled from their homes due to the Others and their wight hordes and rallied under the banner of a new King-Beyond-the-Wall, a Night's Watch deserter named Mance Rayder." Alyssa told her brother based more on knowledge from her past life than what she had learned in this one.

Much to her chagrin, she'd been so preoccupied with affairs in the South that except for the occasional **Scrying** spell to check on events at the Wall and beyond she had barely paid the matter any mind. It was thus pure luck that she had spotted the mustering of Mance Rayder's army in time to formulate a response as was the fact that her friend from her past life, Samwell Tarly, was still alive without her there to aid him.

"How many are there?" Robb asked as he got over the shock of what she was showing him.

"Around sixteen thousand." Alyssa told him recalling an estimate Stannis Baratheon had made after he'd defeated Mance's army during the Battle beneath the Wall in her past life.

"The Night's Watch can't possibly hope to stand against such a large force." Robb declared. "They have less than a thousand men at best."

*Less than six hundred actually,* Alyssa corrected mentally recalling the dire situation her past life had been faced with after the Attack at the Fist of the First Men.

"Exactly," Alyssa told him. "That's why you need to send ravens North immediately to arrange for men to go support the Night's Watch. It will slow the efforts to drive out the Ironborn but if the Free Folk-"

"If the Wildlings get through the Wall, we'll fight a two front war." Robb said with alarm, cutting her off and stood. "I'll prepare the missives immediately."

"Robb wait!" Alyssa called out. "I want you to give orders to capture as many of the Wildlings as you can afterwards, even the women and children. And burn the dead."

"Why?"
"If we don't. The Others will raise the dead as wights and kill the survivors to do the same, adding them to their Army of the Dead."

Robb rolled his eyes in disbelief. "You can't believe in the Others-"

Alyssa's reply was to alter the image of her **Minor Illusion**, causing it to show a memory from her past life of a white walker and a band of wights at Hardhome. It hadn't happened yet and Lord Nameless forbid, it would *never* happen but despite the subtle deception it managed to get the point across.

"Good gods!" Robb gasped as he saw the monstrous wights and their inhuman master. "They're real? You've seen them with your magic?"

"Yes," Alyssa told him a half-truth. She had actively avoided **Scrying** the Others, especially since the only one of their kind she knew was the Night King and she did not want to risk him knowing of her until it was absolutely necessary.

Robb paled and Alyssa continued, dismissing the illusion completely.

"I know convincing the Northern lords to obey will not be easy so tell them that the Free Folk will be forcibly settled in the Gift where they will become smallfolk and support the Night's Watch."

Tearing his eyes off where the image of the Other had been just moments ago, Robb nodded.

"Can the Watch trust the Wildlings though?"

"The fear of the Others will keep them mostly in line for now but in the long run Winterfell will have to manage it, in exchange for a cut of the land's taxes of course. Of course any other Houses willing to assist in such will likewise receive the same benefit."

"I think I can convince most of the lords." Robb said. "But some of them-"

"If anyone refuses, refer them to me." Alyssa told him. "But handle Mance Rayder's attack first."

Robb nodded.

"Oh, and before I forget. After you have repelled the attack, work with the Night's Watch and any Free Folk that might volunteer to arrange for an expedition to head beyond the Wall to capture at least one Wight but preferably two or three and bring them to Castle Black."

"Why- Ah! You want to use them to convince the lords of their existence."

"And the need to fight them yes."

"I'll get it done, sister." Robb assured her. "If there's nothing else?"

"No, that's all." Alyssa told him with a grin. "Go send those ravens."

Nodding, Robb turned and left leaving Alyssa to worry over the situation at the Wall. She had many friends there from her last life, friends that she'd probably doomed or at least consigned to a harder life by choosing in this life to focus on matters in the South first. The guilt of that gnawed at her.

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Lady Jeyne Darry had very much enjoyed her time as a lady in waiting to Queen Alyssa. The Queen was as personable and friendly as she remembered her from her brief visit to Darry almost a
year ago in spite of her greatly elevated station. That her grace was also surprisingly frugal and insistent on tending to most of her personal care meant there was also surprisingly little for her to do except stand around waiting expectantly for the Queen to need something. Jeyne was performing just such a duty one day as they encamped somewhere along the Roseroad whilst the Queen was preparing her plans to attack King's Landing by looking over a map of the city and the surrounding region when an unexpected visitor arrived.

"Your grace, Lord Varys seeks an audience." Ser Robar Royce said as he entered the tent, looking perturbed.

Alyssa looked up in surprise. "What? How come this is the first I heard of him being in our camp? Did he just suddenly appear out of nowhere?"

"It certainly seemed like it," the Queensguard said. Jeyne's fellow ladies in waiting had described him as comely in a rough-hewn way but she regarded as merely plain then again she regarded most men that way.

"Was there a group walking by just before he appeared?" the Queen asked for some reason.

"Now that you mention it, your grace, yes there was."

"Parlor tricks then," the Queen said with a dismissive snort. "But whatever the source of his tricks, the Spider is useful. Send him in."

"As you command, your grace."

A moment later the plump, bald, and effeminate eunuch that had been the Master of Whisperers for three Kings stood before the Queen with Ser Royce standing behind him as an escort, his hand firmly on the hilt of his sword.

"Why have you come Lord Varys?" Alyssa asked, leaning back in her chair and looking the picture of impatience. "I had thought that after you vanished after my rampage at the Sept of Baelor that you had made your way back across the Narrow Sea to Essos and wherever you called home, washing your hands of Westerosi affairs."

"Never, your grace," The perfumed eunuch said with a low bow. "I would never abandon the Realm. I have come to offer you my services."

"Why me though?" Alyssa questioned. "You could have continued serving Joffrey Waters or sought out Stannis or even tried your luck with Greyjoy. Why choose me?"

"I have always worked for the best of the Realm, your grace. For stability. And now, I feel that the Seven Kingdoms' best hope for that is with you."

"Even though you are known for your distrust of magic users and I am openly a mage?"

Varys blinked in surprise, though Jeyne wasn't certain he was genuine. Among other things, a Master of Whisperers had to be an expert actor and there was no one alive more worthy of the title than the Spider.

"I am surprised, your grace, that you know that detail about me."

He's using the Queen's formal address far too often to be wholly natural. What is his game?

"While I do not have your little birds, Lord Varys, I do have my own means of learning secrets."
"You impress me again, your grace." The Spider said with a grin. "You impress me enough that I am willing to make an exception in regards to my distrust of magicians."

Queen Alyssa looked at the eunuch searchingly for a long moment before coming to a decision.

"Very well," she said sounding resigned more than anything else. "I will accept your service and place you as my Master of Whisperers but you must provide me with something first."

"I understand. Would word from the former Targaryen Loyalists among Stannis' forces that they are willing to defect to your side at a provided signal suffice? Or the means to safely correspond with them to make arrangements without our enemies knowing?"

"That is helpful but something I could manage on my own." Her grace said with a dismissive wave. "No, I want to know news from within the capitol."

"I trust that you already know that your sister was forcefully wed to Tyrion Lannister?" Lord Varys asked.

The Queen nodded, her eyes narrowed in anger. Jeyne remembered well how incensed her grace had been when the news first reached their camp. She had stiffened like she was a statue, no perhaps a glacier would be a more appropriate comparison considering the cold rage she'd radiated then. This reminded Jeyne of the Queen's reaction to the first attempt to rescue Lady Sansa from King's Landing using the Gate spell which had been thwarted by the constant guards kept around her person and their willingness to use take her life hostage. Said failure and those of the subsequent attempts having just incensed the Queen further.

"I am aware. At last report, the marriage was still unconsummated."

Lord Varys winced slightly at that.

"I'm afraid, your grace, that your information is somewhat out of date. My little birds tell me that the couple, at Lady Sansa's request, began being intimate some time ago." Lord Varys said as delicately as he could, watching nervously as the Queen's eyes literally began to blaze as he spoke, "Furthermore, evidence suggests that while it has not yet been announced, the Lady Sansa is pregnant with her husband's child."

For a moment the tent was consumed by absolute silence. The only sound coming from the crackling flames of the candles and braziers that illuminated its interior. Then suddenly the Queen's fury erupted and standing she slammed her hand into the campaign desk where she'd been reviewing maps earlier which was promptly consumed by a fireball.

"Out!" The Queen roared. "Everyone out! Now!"

Some of the more cowardly fled immediately, but the rest stayed.

"Didn't you hear me!? Out!" Her grace demanded as an aura of flames surrounded her.

At this, most of the rest retreated, ushered out by Lord Varys and Ser Royce. The knight gestured at Jeyne to follow him, but she ignored him and instead moved to the Queen.

"It's going to be alright, Alys." Jeyne told her friend, addressing her with the pet name that she had been told to use when in private even as she hugged her close.

The Queen did not respond, just cried inconsolably into Jeyne's shoulder muttering about how she'd failed her sister. The eldest Darry child did not know how long she just held Alys but
eventually the Lady Margaery arrived.

Jeyne opened her mouth to explain to the Queen's Mistress what happened and avoid being misconstrued as having been in an intimate situation with the other woman's lover but to her surprise, the Lady Margaery simply waved her attempt away and knelt down beside them.

"Alys, why don't you come with me and take a rest?" The Tyrell coaxed. "We can talk about what's got you so upset in private there, how about that?"

Jeyne honestly did not think something like that would be enough but much to her surprise Alys did disentangle herself and turned towards her mistress.

"Margey?"

"Yes, it's me." Lady Margaery said, running a hand over the Queen's face and wiping away her tears. "Want to come with me?"

Nodding liking she was a little child, the usually strong looking Queen allowed her mistress to help her back to her feet and pull her close, before walking off towards their private tent.

All the whilst, Jeyne could only look on with longing.

Much to her own personal annoyance and Margey's worry, Alyssa didn't get the time to fully overcome her upset over the news of Sansa's pregnancy as just two days later they arrived at the position from which they planned to strike at King's Landing. Thus Alyssa was forced to push aside her emotions and don the mask of the confident Witch Queen as she observed Stannis' attack on King's Landing with her lords from the safety of the command tent, a day's journey from the city through the use of a Scrying spell coupled with an Illusion.

Stannis had chosen to start the battle with a naval engagement and had sent his numerically superior navy up the Blackwater Rush to secure it which would allow his army on its southern shore to cross it and attack the city. A tactic that seemed to be going well as his ships brushed aside the Royal Fleet's stubborn resistance despite heavy support by various siege machines mounted on the walls, and especially the three trebuchets built on Visenya's Hill, and they advanced up the river to get into position to ferry the large Baratheon host in the Kingswood to the flat ground outside the Lion Gate where they could most easily form up for their main attack.

"Those siege weapons will be a threat to our troops." Lord Mace said, stating the obvious.

"I'll handle them first when the time comes." Alyssa assured him.

"What are those hulks the Lannisters are launching?" The slight man that was Lord Beric Dondarrion freshly rescued from his guerilla war against the Lannisters in the Riverlands asked. "Are they trying to clog the river with them to block Stannis' fleet?"

"No. That wouldn't work." The balding and stoop shouldered Lord Paxter Redwyne said, offering his naval expertise. "There must be some trick-"

The trick presented itself as one of Stannis' ships rammed one of the hulks and it promptly exploded in a massive green explosion.

"Wildfire!" Lord Redwyne breathed, expressing the shocked awe of the assembled lords. "The Lannisters are using Wildfire fire ships!"
I knew the Imp would do this but to actually see it happen is another thing entirely. Alyssa thought as she took a moment to take in the carnage as the Blackwater Rush was transformed by the Wildfire into a sea of green flames.

"Lord Redwyne!" Alyssa shouted as she regained her wits. "Does Stannis still have enough ships to ferry his army across to the northern bank?"

The commander of the Redwyne fleet did some quick calculations as he surveyed the scene before turning to Alyssa with a frown.

"Yes, he does your grace."

"Then despite the Imp's brilliant use of Wildfire, Stannis has won this round of the battle." Alyssa declared. "Let us check on Lord Tywin's position shall we?"

With that she changed the target of her Scrying spell to Lord Tywin and the image projected by the Illusion changed with it to show the tall, slender, broad-shouldered Lion of the Rock standing in a command tent discussing something with his lieutenants.

"They've made camp." Ser Loras pointed out. "Your grace, could you give us a bird's eye view? Perhaps we can spot some landmarks that might help us identify their location."

"I can do one better," Alyssa said as she adjusted her spell, causing the image to slowly move skyward from Tywin himself. Pulling out of the tent, it showed a large Lannister host making camp before pulling back even further until it was possible to discern King's Landing and the burning Wildfire on the Blackwater on the edges of the projection.

There were murmurs of awe at this feat, but Alyssa ignored them as she frowned when she noticed Tywin's position.

"He's closer to King's Landing than we are." Robb noted. "Why isn't his force marching to the city to reinforce it against Stannis? Is he-"

"Thinking of hitting them in the rear most likely." The lean and balding man with a short, bristly grey beard that was Lord Randyll Tarly opined. Alyssa honestly hated the man for how he had treated his son in this life and her last, but the man's military skill was undeniable and she simply could not afford to alienate him.

"Most likely," Alyssa agreed as she dismissed her spells, though a satisfied smile spread across her face. "All is at last in place. All the key Lannister leaders and Stannis along with their armies are finally within our grasp. It is almost time to take them all out in one fell swoop as we had planned."

There was murmurings of eager agreement from everyone.

"We just need a little more patience," Alyssa said, more to herself than her lords. "Neither Stannis nor Tywin are in a position to act any time soon. The former will take the rest of the day, at least, to ferry his troops across the river and Tywin will only act after Stannis has. So for now we wait."

There were murmurs of agreement from the gathered lords.

"But my lords," Alyssa said as she stood. "Tell your men to prepare themselves for it is likely that we will be taking the field tomorrow."

Alyssa watched from atop Ghost's back and through his superior sight he relayed to her in a steady
stream of images that was at once similar to but completely different from her past life's limited experiences with Warging as Stannis' army advanced on King's Landing western wall.

Much to the surprise of her and her advisors, Stannis had somehow managed to prepare siege engines of his own beforehand and brought them with him, presumably in pieces on his ships. Having assembled them overnight, he was now using them to cover his men as they sought to scale the capitol's formidable walls.

The fighting had been going on for hours now and this was Alyssa's fifth flight up to check on its progress. Not that there was much to observe, as the fighting was wholly indecisive.

"Your grace," Loras said from behind her where he'd been keeping watch in the direction of where they knew the Westermen army was. "Tywin's army is here."

Spinning to look in the direction, Alyssa smiled as she saw the lead elements of Tywin Lannister's army were indeed marching towards Stannis' exposed rear.

"Aye and Stannis sees them too or will soon." Ser Wendel, the other Queensguard she taken aloft with her said as he pointed to the many Baratheon scouts galloping desperately to deliver the news of the arrival of the new enemy to their lords.

A task that they accomplished with time to spare. And to her goodbrother's credit, he reacted with impressive speed as within minutes of the first scout making it to his camp he was reinforcing his rear and preparing for an attack.

Alyssa herself was not idle however and had used that same time to use a Message to contact her own men.

Robb. She sent telepathically to her brother through the spell. Tywin's forces are attacking. Prepare our own men. I'll be opening the Gate shortly.

Understood. Robb sent back. We'll be ready.

Cutting the connection, Alyssa waited with anticipation as the Lannister army charged Stannis' camp. She gave it a good fifteen minutes after that to make sure both sides were fully committed, a nerve wracking time for everyone in the air with her as they itched to make their move.

But only when she was sure that the battle was in full swing did she call on her magic.

"Gate!" She cast, causing a massive oval shaped vertical portal of swirling darkness to open both in front of her camp and at the flank of the two already fighting armies.

The move expectedly caught the two armies by surprise and thus neither were able to react meaningfully as her knights charged out of the portal in a massive arrowhead formation. They cut deeply into the enemy ranks, opening ground to allow her infantry to march out to replace the knights as they wheeled away. This probably created more than enough confusion among her enemies, but Alyssa was not done quite yet. Reacting to the arrival of her army as the signal that it was, Targaryen Loyalists among the Crownlands contingent of Stannis' army promptly turned on him, defecting to her side and hastily throwing up Targaryen banners of red and black.

"Hang on," Alyssa told her Queensguard. "We're going in. Ghost!"

She did not even need to tell her dragon what to do, acting on a deep eagerness he dove down towards the thickest concentration of enemy troops on the plain far below.
"Dracarys!" Alyssa commanded as they got within range, the word rolling off her tongue easily despite it being the first time she'd spoken it. Her familiar dutifully unleashing his dragonfire at her call, sending a jet of white flame shooting from his maw as he strafed the enemy lines that froze and burned in equal measure, killing hundreds with a single pass.

The various siege weapon engineers desperately tried to train their weapons at her, sending scorpion bolts and boulders flying at her in a bid to recreate the Ullers' feat of killing Qheen Rhaenys Targaryen and Meraxes during the First Dornish War. Sadly none of them had anywhere near the same luck and the shots all flew past by large margins causing Alyssa to start to feel that the Mage Armor she'd cast over Ghost had been as unnecessary as he told her it would be.

Nevertheless, the siege weapons needed to be dealt with.

"Ghost, torch the siege engines!" She ordered her dragon who winged towards the nearest cluster of the aforementioned weapons without once letting up on the continual stream of dragonfire he was breathing on the unfortunate souls beneath them.

At the same time, Alyssa targeted the three large trebuchets on Visenya's Hill.

"Blizzard!" She cast sending hundreds of ice shards, some as large as small houses falling down from the sky onto the area where the three machines had been set up, crashing them without much trouble.

By the time her spell petered out and the trebuchets were little more than kindling, Ghost was banking towards the city where he proceeded to strafe the walls where the majority of the Lannister machines had been installed. Deciding to help him along, Alyssa began hurling explosive Freezing Spheres at the weapons on the far side of the city from where they were. Working together, they had cleared the walls of all siege weapons after only completing three quarters of a circuit of the walls.

At this point, Alyssa shot the Red Keep a longing look as they flew past it but Loras grabbed her shoulder.

"It can wait." The Lord Commander of her Queensguard said firmly. "If I can forego my chance at personal vengeance against Stannis for the greater good. Then you can do the same. The men on the ground need us."

"Ser Loras is right, your grace." Ser Wendel chimed in.

Alyssa frowned but nodded.

"Ghost, take us back to the battle outside the city."

"Looks like her Queensguard finally managed to pressure the Queen off the battlefield to get some rest," the Greatjon commented almost absently as he cut down a pair of unlucky Red Cloaks with a swing of his greatsword.

Glancing back towards their camp, Robb noted that the massive form of his sister's dragon was indeed flying away from the battlefield at last.

"She's reckless." Robb replied to the Lord of Last Hearth as he slashed Ice at his opponent and the Valyrian steel blade easily cut through the other man's blade as he brought it in a guard and tore open his throat. "She's pregnant yet still insists on joining the battle."
"At least she's doing it atop that dragon of hers," Greatjon retorted. "That's a lot safer than if she was fighting down here. Though even if she was she'd still be doing better than most of you lot!"

The last was shouted at the men who opposed them as they fought their way up Aegon's High Hill towards the Red Keep. They had mostly secured the city by this point, the Gold Cloaks had even surrendered an hour ago after Alys had shattered the Lion Gate with Ghost's dragonfire to allow their men to swarm through the walls, but despite the foregone conclusion that the battle had become the Lannisters still refused to yield.

"Olyvar, any news from Lord Mace?" Robb asked his squire as they moved a little ways back from the heat of the fighting.

"No my lord," the loyal boy said with a shake of his head. "Not since that last runner brought news that he was going with Lord Varys to access the Red Keep through the secret passages."

"Archers!" Someone shouted and Robb and Olyvar both turned to look up at the top of the Red Keep's curtain walls where it seemed the Lannisters had managed chip enough of the towering blocks ice Alyssa and Ghost had created there to deploy their archers once more. Sadly for them, they had only managed to clear a small portion of the wall thus leaving the handful of bowmen who made easy targets for the combined weight of fire for the Loyalist archers who rained down enough arrows on the tiny section of wall to silent the enemy within a few minutes.

"That's the third time they tried that," Olyvar pointed out. "And the third time it failed. Why do they keep trying something that they must know wouldn't work?"

"Because they are desperate." Robb told him. "And desperate men do stupid things. Now let's rejoin the fight. It's almost over."

Olyvar nodded and the two of them began walking unhurriedly back towards the frontlines which Robb noted had advanced noticeably since he'd broken off for his short break. The desperate Red Cloaks and their remaining allies forced to give ground inch by inch as the weight of the loyalist numbers pushed them back. Not helped by how they had used consistent pressure to prevent them from forming up into a proper shield wall or any cohesive formation for that matter after their last attempt to do so at the base of the Hill had been torn apart by a pillar of fire that Alys had sent down upon them with her magic.

He'd just rejoined the lines and soon found himself thick in the action when an axe wielding Mountain Clansmen from the Vale leapt at him. Robb ducked to the side, narrowly avoiding the powerful overhead blow that likely would have cut him open from head to groin. A little too powerful it turned out as the Valeman's axe embedded itself into the cobblestone street, leaving him open as he struggled to pull it out. It was not Robb how finished him off though but Olyvar who stabbed the distracted man through the heart from behind.

"You alright, milord?" The young squire asked.

"Yes. Thank you Olyvar." Robb said as he stabbed a recklessly charging Red Cloak who couldn't have been much older, if at all, from running his squire through with his spear.

The sudden sound of cheering caught everyone by surprise and the fighting paused for a moment as the combatants turned to see its cause and found the great bronze gate of the Red Keep's gatehouse opening and Reachmen pouring out from within.

"Looks like Lord Mace managed to get in." Robb noted with a grin.
"Looks like, milord." Olyvar agreed.

"Sard this!" A Red Cloak nearby declared loudly as he dropped his sword. "I yield!"

For a moment his fellows hesitated so Robb decided to give them an incentive.

"Give quarter to all who yield!" Robb shouted. "Lord Stark, cousin to the Queen, commands it!"

With this assurance, the sounds of discarded swords and cries of men giving their surrender began to drown out everything else.

"Lord Stark," Mace Tyrell greeted his gooddaughter's brother-cousin as he joined him in the sunken courtyard of the main building of the Red Keep.

Oh, he knew that the Queen wasn't technically his gooddaughter but his Margaery had the girl so tightly wound around her little finger that she might as well be. It was for this reason, and the Queen's terrifying dragon and magic, that he made no objection to Margey's lost chance at being Queen. She might not have the title, but being one in all but name was good enough especially when her lover was as powerful as Alyssa I Targaryen.

"Lord Mace, Ser Garlan." The young Stark lord greeted him and his son. "Are your men still securing the keep?"

"Yes, my lord." Garlan told the younger man. "Lord Varys is assisting them."

"Waters has not surrendered even now?" Stark asked, incredulous.

"No." Mace told him with an equally exasperated shake of his head. "Perhaps he is as mad as they say and is delusional enough to think he can somehow still win."

"That or he thinks he can use the nobles of his court as hostages." Garlan suggested instead.
"According to the prisoners we've taken, he ordered them all brought to the Great Hall when the battle began this morning."

"If so then we have hostages of our own," the young Stark countered. "I got word before I arrived that my men have secured Tywin Lannister."

"Didn't he attempt an escape after the battle outside the walls turned into a bloodbath for his men?" Mace asked, curiously. "Your cavalry chased him down?"

Robb nodded. "With a little help from my direwolf. He tracked the old lion down for my riders."

"Well done, my lord." Garlan complimented the other Lord Paramount. "With him in custody there is a good chance we can force Waters' surrender."

"No need for that, my lords." Lord Varys said, appearing suddenly out of a section of wall that swung open a short distance away from where they stood, startling all three of them with Garlan and Stark drawing their swords. "Apologies. I seemed to have startled you."

"Please don't do that again, Lord Varys." Stark said as he sheathed Ice, the famous Valyrian steel greatsword of House Stark. A sight that filled Mace with jealousy that he quickly squashed.

"I will try, Lord Stark." The Spider said insincerely.

"You said we would not need to force Waters' surrender? Why?" Mace asked, getting to the point.
He hated dealing with the Master of Whisperers, the man had an uncanny knack for knowing things which he shouldn't which considering his profession might have been forgivable if only he did not always flaunt his superior knowledge so.

"He has surrendered, Lord Tyrell." Lord Varys said with a grin.

"How?" Garlan asked, blinking in surprise. "Last I heard our men were still at least two levels from the Great Hall."

The Spider merely nodded back towards whence he came. "He became quite amenable to surrender when I led three hundred heavily armed and very enthusiastic knights directly into the Throne Room through the forgotten passages."

"Well done, Lord Varys." Robb Stark said with a grin. "You've saved us plenty of hard fighting. The Queen will be pleased."

Sansa Stark, she refused to be called Lannister no matter who her husband was, watched with no small amount of satisfaction as the usurper Joffrey Waters' world came crashing down around him as her sister and rightful Queen's armies tore their way through his men and advanced steadily towards the Great Hall of the Red Keep. Where like the coward that he was, Joffrey had holed up whilst taking what nobles from court he could round up as hostages.

"Do you think my sister will attempt to rescue me by magic again? Considering the circumstances it might work this time." Sansa asked eagerly.

"I doubt it. She'll likely try something more conventional this time, I imagine. Magic has failed her in that regard after all. It is time to rely on more mundane means." Tyrion said with a shake of his head. "Besides, I doubt your sister wants to draw too much attention to you at the moment, wife. Joffrey might get over his panic and remember you exist. To that end you are too obvious in your glee." Tyrion warned her in a harsh whisper, pushing her back into the back of the crowds and keeping them as out of sight as possible. "Your sister has not won yet. And until she has, we are not safe. We cannot risk earning Joffrey's ire. Think of the baby."

"You worry too much Tyrion," Sansa chided her husband. "He is too busy issuing orders to even notice us."

She wasn't wrong. Waters was in a flown blown panic, issuing one nonsensical order after another that must have seemed in his own deluded mind as being able to salvage his hopeless situation. His cronies had entertained him at first, sending messengers to relay his foolish orders but as they became ever more unhinged - Where in the Nine Hells would they find new scorpions after Alys had destroyed them all with her dragon and magic? - even the sycophants had started to ignore him. In fact, by his point no one was paying attention to the usurper as he raved like a madman.

"Still-"

Tyrion's cautious reproach was cut shot when screams erupted throughout the Great Hall and he spun around, drawing a dagger to defend them even as he passed her one as well.

_I wish Bronn was here_, Sansa thought absently of the loyal former sellsword that served as the captain of their guard who Joffrey had sent away with the bulk of the city's fighting men to fight in its futile defense.

He wasn't there however so it was just her and Tyrion armed and ready to die fighting if need be. A need that seemed unlikely as the couple were shocked to see dozens of heavily armed Reachmen,
Northmen and Stormlanders suddenly surging into the hall from hidden openings in the walls. The few Red Cloaks present tried to put up a fight but they were so badly outnumbered that they barely lasted a few minutes before they were cut down.

Joffrey's Kingsguard fared better. But whilst they killed many of the attackers through their sheer skill even they were quickly brought low when the attackers brought crossbows into the fray.

"I surrender!" Waters cried as the last of his Kingsguard, Ser Preston Greenfield, fell and a wet stain began to spread over his groin.

Seeing the sight, Sansa couldn't help it. She laughed. Not just at the humorous sight of her tormentor wetting himself in the face of defeat but more out of sheer joy. Her sister had won! After almost a year of being a prisoner to the Lannisters, she was free at last!

Despite the overwhelming advantage of their surprise and Ghost, the stubborn Lannisters had not surrendered and Stannis despite the odds had actually managed to make a retreat to his ships in Blackwater Bay. The last detail was of great consternation to not just Alyssa but Ser Loras as well, both of whom dearly wanted his head for his part in killing Renly. Worse yet, thanks to all that the battle had dragged on for most of the day.

So much so that at Ser Wendel's insistence and concern for her unborn child, they had flown behind their lines after an hour of supporting their men from the air to rest and have a meal. Even though her men were still securing the city at that point.

She was still having this meal in a hastily set up command tent, when a messenger came rushing in.

"Your grace," the young man in Tyrell livery said as he fell to one knee. "I bring news from the front."

Setting aside the bowl of stew she was eating, Alyssa turned to the man.

"What is it?" She demanded.

"The usurper Joffrey Waters has surrendered, your grace. Lord Mace and Lord Robb are securing the city and the Red Keep as we speak with the help of Lord Varys."

A brilliant smile spread across her face at the news. They had won! They had taken King's Landing!

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Hope you guys liked it.

Now some of you might be annoyed that the scenes of the actual battle were so short in comparison to the build up and yes I'll admit that's the case. That said, there are two reasons for this:

i) The story, with a few exceptions, is being told from Alyssa's perspective and as a pregnant Queen, no one wants her on the field long if at all.
ii) I wanted to convey how for military campaigns, especially successful ones, the planning stage can far exceed the actual engagements. So this is an attempt to reflect that.

Well that's it for the chapter till next time lamtumirë!
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

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Alyssa I Targaryen

Book: The War of the Four Sovereigns

Chapter 7: Securing the City

Beta:

Trigger warning: Canon typical underage, nudity

Escorted by all five of her current Queensguard, Alyssa entered the Throne Room of the Red Keep in triumph. All around her, her men cheered her as she walked down the center of the hall towards the Iron Throne even as they held much of the Lannister regime at swordpoint and waiting her judgement. Even some of these prisoners, the nobles of the Lannister court mainly, cheered her procession to her birthright.

As she ascended the raised dais upon which the Iron Throne sat, her loyal Queensguard arrayed themselves protectively before her even as Ghost clung to the side of the towering keep and pressed his massive head to the glass of the windows that overlooked the hall. Without any hesitation or fear, Alyssa took her seat on the throne of her ancestors and leaned as far back as she could while still maintaining a sitting position before rising uncut.

This was a sign for the cheers to reach a crescendo as Loras proclaimed at the top of his voice, "All hail Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name. Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms."

"All hail Queen Alyssa!" The many soldiers loyal to her in the hall shouted and Ghost roared his enthusiastic agreement.

I wonder what they'll say if they knew I was only so daring because I'm clad in Mage Armor? Alyssa thought to herself with some amusement even as she raised a hand to call for silence.

"There is much to celebrate my loyal soldiers," Alyssa told the hall when it quieted enough for her to be heard. "But before we begin our celebrations, there are some matters that we must attend to."

This was met by approving nods from many quarters, some more sycophantic than others.

Ignoring them, Alyssa continued. "First order of business, Lord Mace!"

"Yes, your grace?"

"Have Cersei Lannister and her incestuous spawn Joffrey Waters hauled to the black cells. I will see to their execution on the morrow." The Lord Paramount of the Reach nodded with a bloodthirsty eagerness that Alyssa honestly thought was beyond the usually genial man. "As for the rest of the Lannister regime, they will have to sit in the black cells a little longer as trails or
other special arrangements are made for their fate."

Of course, Cersei and Waters screamed defiance and all kinds of empty threats. But Alyssa did not dignify them with a response. She did not have much choice in the matter, not when a visibly pregnant Sansa, though not as far along as Alyssa herself was, rushed forward. Brienne of Tarth, sensing a potential threat, tried to stop her but a tall thin man with black hair which fell over his black eyes and a stubble of a beard intercepted her. Thus her sister was unmolested as she fell to her knees before the Iron Throne.

"Your grace, please spare my husband!" Sansa begged.

That must be the captain of the Imp's guards. Alyssa thought as she ignored her sister's plea for the moment and instead gesturing for Brienne to stand down. He shows remarkable loyalty for a sellsword.

"The Imp stays." Alyssa said to the pair of Northmen who had been in the process of dragging him away. "For now."

"Thank you, your grace." Sansa said sincerely as she watched her husband be released and toddle over to her side even as Lady raced out of the crowd, almost tackling the dwarf over in the process to reunite with her human.

And where exactly did she come from? Shouldn't she be with Arya back in the camp!? Alyssa asked even if she could guess. There was no way the direwolf so long divided from its human companion would stay behind when a reunion was so close at hand.

Robb moved towards Sansa but Alyssa signalled to him to wait. She had no idea where their sister was going with this call for mercy, and she'd wager he didn't either, so they best hear it out. Besides with Lady at her side, there was no telling what harm Sansa could cause if she chose to.

"It is only a temporary reprieve." Alyssa told her sister with a frown. "Tell me, Sister, why should I spare the man who you were forced to marry and who put a child in you? Both against your will?"

"He's a good man." Sansa insisted. "He married me to protect me! And he didn't touch me for moons because he didn't want to hurt me, even though it was fully within his rights as my husband to do so. I had to beg him to lay with me."

"You only did that because of pressure from the Lannisters. His family."

"No! I did it because he's my husband. I did not want to live with a sham of a marriage. We might not have chosen each other as husband and wife, but fate decreed that was what we were to be and so we are." Sansa said fiercely. "So please, sister! If you love me at all, spare my husband!"

Everyone was left a little speechless by Sansa's heartfelt speech, even her husband who looked like someone had slapped him. And metaphorically that was exactly what had happened.

"That's why?" Tyrion Lannister whispered just loudly enough to be heard over the stunned silence of the hall.

"Yes, husband, that's why." Sansa told her spouse, taking one of his hands in her own and giving it a squeeze.

This makes things complicated. Alyssa thought as she overcame her shock.

"Sansa, even if I believe you that he is a good man. Your husband is hated by the people of the city
for raising taxes to hire the sellswords that the Lannisters tried to use to defend the city."

"A city that I, his pregnant wife, was trapped in." Sansa pointed out. "He was merely doing what he
needed to do to protect his family."

"He was doing it for the Lannisters." Alyssa insisted. "They killed our Father!"

Sansa winced at the reminder of Father's fate but stubbornly replied, "I am a Lannister now and so
is my unborn child. Will you judge me for that too, Sister?"

Alyssa growled in a way not dissimilar to Ghost as the frustration got the better of her.

"Fine." She barked. "I'll pardon your husband as not doing so would make me a kinslayer."

"You have our thanks, your grace." The Imp said with a bow.

"Do not be so hasty with offering me thanks, Imp." Alyssa spat. "If you betray me or my Sister, I
will have your head. Is that understood?"

"Yes, your grace. You have nothing to fear from me. I would never do anything as foolish as
betraying Alyssa Targaryen, the second coming of Aegon the Conqueror. The woman who will
conquer all of Westeros whilst pregnant. Doing so would jeopardize my family's lives and that is
something I would sooner die than do."

His words had a sarcastic edge to it and Alyssa's eyes narrowed in displeasure, prompting Sansa to
shoot her a pleading look. Sighing, the Queen let it go.

"You better live up to those words, Imp." Alyssa warned one last time. "Robb, please see that our
sister and her husband are taken care of. The rest of you out, I would like a moment of privacy."

Robb nodded his agreement and escorted Sansa and the Imp away, their loyal guard captain trailing
behind them alongside Robb's own guardsmen. Meanwhile, the rest of the court and soldiers filed
out slowly. It took a long while for them all to leave but Alyssa waited with the same patience that
had her camping in Bitterbridge for the better part of a year waiting for the proper moment to
strike.

Only when the Great Hall was empty save her Queensguard and Ghost who still looked on
curiously from the window, did she step down from the Iron Throne and standing before it bowed
to the ugly looking thing.

"I've done it. Sister Rhaenys, Brother Aegon, I've reclaimed our birthright. Grandmother Rhaella,
the Dragon is restored to glory. Father, Mother, as you hoped I have retaken the Iron Throne.
Renly, husband, I've achieved our ambition. Uncle Ned, I've become Queen despite your wishes."
Alyssa said, tears running down her face. "All those who have died to bring me to this day, I offer
you my thanks. I pray to the great Nameless god that I shall prove worthy of this burden."

Her prayer of thanksgiving complete, she rose and retook her seat on the Iron Throne once more.

She might have imagined it but she thought she heard faint, otherworldly applause echo around her.
And as she sat on the Iron Throne once more she saw Nameless standing in mid air and looking
down on her approvingly whilst surrounded by all those she'd invoked by name and many more
besides. They had been the source of the very real applause.

Her Queensguard didn't see the specters she was sure, for they did not react.
Once more she leaned back, but this time her **Mage Armor** had long since faded. She sat up uncut nonetheless and the various ghosts knelt or bowed as befitting their ranks in life in acknowledgement of her before one by one they vanished. Nameless left last, offering her a pleased grin before he too vanished.

Thus began the reign of Alyssa I Targaryen, Queen Regnant of Westeros.

"So Theon Greyjoy was killed during the battle?" Alyssa asked Varys as they sat in a quickly constructed pavilion as they waited in the square before the Great Sept of Baelor for the execution of Cersei, Jaime and Joffrey. The Kingslayer having been hastily transported to the capitol from his cell in Riverrun via **Gate** so he could die alongside his lover and eldest son.

"Yes, your grace." The eunuch informed her with a nod. "He was killed in the fighting on the Blackwater Rush. We fished his body out of the river earlier this morning."

A *fitting end*. Alyssa mused thinking more of the man who had sacked Winterfell and killed two of her brothers in her past life than the Theon Greyjoy of this one. *Now if only the rest of the Ironborn can follow suit.*

"And the Hound?" The Queen asked, letting none of her genocidal thoughts surface.

"No word, your grace." Varys said with a frown. "He has not been seen since he abandoned his post and disappeared on the first day of the battle."

"Find him," Alyssa ordered. "He is the last of the Lannister Kingsguard unaccounted for. I do not like loose ends."

"I will do my best, your grace." Varys told her. "Ah! The condemned have arrived."

Turning away from Varys, Alyssa caught sight first of the damaged Great Sept. The building having taken a direct hit from several stray shards of her **Blizzard** spell when she'd used it to destroy the trebuchets that had been mounted next to it on Visenya's Hill by the Lannisters during the battle. Fortunately for her relations with the Faith of the Seven, the damage was relatively minor and she'd already agreed to help pay for the repairs plus an overall renovation of the building besides.

Her eyes however did not linger long on the Great Sept as they soon fell on the pitiful figures of Tywin, Cersei, Jaime and Joffrey as they were dragged before her. Gone was their finery, replaced instead with rags. Gone also was their fiery defiance and haughty arrogance, covered in filth from the dungeons and gagged they looked absolutely pathetic. Trailing behind them and looking intensely nervous but still dressed as befit their old stations of Princess and Prince were Myrcella and Tommen. Alyssa was tempted to offer them, especially her old friend and savior, a comforting smile but they were in public and she had a personae to maintain.

"Show time," Alyssa muttered under her breath as she stood to address the gathered crowd of onlookers, packed full of smallfolk and highborn alike.

"My subjects," Alyssa began. "People of King's Landing. All peoples of the Seven Kingdoms. We are here today so I, your Queen Alyssa Targaryen, may pass judgement over the treasonous usurpers that stand before us now."

This was met with cheers and calls for death for the Lannisters. Alyssa ignored those. She well remembered the way the crowds had called for the unjust death of her Father on this very same
spot a year ago. The crowds were fickle and knew nothing of justice. That would be hers to deliver.

_Ghost, if you please._ Alyssa sent her familiar who responded by suddenly diving down from the clouds with a roar before landing on the steps leading up to the Great Sept so he overlooked everyone in the square below. An action that silenced the crowd instantly as they looked warily at her dragon, remembering well the death and destruction he unleashed on her enemies during the recently concluded battle.

_I asked you to silence the crowd! Why did you have to be so dramatic about it!?

Alyssa's exasperated rebuke merely received a burst of smugness in reply.

"Let us begin," Alyssa said into the quiet her dragon's entrance created, studiously suppressing her irritation with her dragon's love of dramatics. "Joffrey, Myrcella and Tommen, children of Cersei Lannister. I hereby denounce all three of you as as Waters and the result of the treasonous incest between your mother and her twin brother, Jamie Lannister."

Joffrey tried to shout something but thanks to his gag it came out unintelligible and she was spared his whining or posturing. His parents just looked resigned though Cersei defiantly shot her a venomous look that earned her a painful blow to her head from the Northman guarding her. Myrcella and Tommen though looked fearful, with the young boy seeking comfort by pressing into his sister's side.

_I need to speed this along before they have a break down.

"However, as Myrcella and Tommen Waters are blameless in both their own conceptions and in the crimes of the rest of their family, I shall spare them a life of shame and legitimize them as Myrcella and Tommen Lannister."

This was met with dissatisfaction from the crowd of onlookers but that was quickly silenced by a loud growl from Ghost.

_Thank you, old friend._ Alyssa sent her dragon and received a roll of his eyes in reply.

Suppressing a giggle, the Queen continued with her sentencing.

"Furthermore, I take Myrcella Lannister as a concubine."

The crowd almost erupted in protest but Ghost shifting and sending sending some loose rock falling down Visenya Hill quickly reminded them of who had the power here and they stifled their cries. Alyssa wished she could so easily do the same at her discomfort at the idea. Sadly, she could not. She could see the merit in the scheme that Margey and her grandmother had devised. Having a harem of concubines made out of ladies from all the Kingdoms of Westeros would certainly enhance her legitimacy. That it would offer a way for Alyssa to keep the innocent daughters of her enemies safe was another bonus. Yet unconsummated or not, as she expected her relationship with Myrcella would be, it sat uneasy with Alyssa. Especially since the latter advantage could easily be achieved by simply taking the girls as her wards. Yet, Margey and her Hand had insisted and against her own better judgement she had agreed. Damn Margey and what her tongue could do to her!

To Alyssa's surprise instead of being horrified or disgusted, Myrcella looked pleasantly surprised by the announcement of her fate. The girl was even blushing shyly!

_What in the Nine Hells!?_ Alyssa thought, receiving only amused laughter from Ghost in reply as she inadvertently sent her thoughts through their link.
Shoving the whole matter into the back of her mind for further consideration later, Alyssa barreled on ahead.

"Her brother, Tommen Lannister, will be sent to the Citadel where he will study to forge his chain and become a Maester to serve the Realm."

This announcement at least earned her a modestly positive response and whispers about how merciful she was, which was comforting after the crowd's dislike of her previous judgements.

"Now onto those who are truly guilty." Alyssa said, causing a murmur of excitement to spread through the crowds. "Tywin Lannister, Cersei Lannister, Jaime Lannister and Joffrey Waters. For the crime of treason against the Crown and many other crimes besides you are all hereby sentenced to death. May the gods have mercy on you for I do not."

With that the four were dragged towards four wooden posts and tied to them by their guards who hastily backed away once their captives were secure. A wise precaution indeed.

"Ghost!" Alyssa cried as her dragon crawled forward so he loomed directly over the four condemned who cowered, even the supposedly fearless Kingslayer trembled slightly. "Dracarys!"

At her command, her loyal friend unleashed his dragonfire of frost and flame setting the four Lannisters that had brought such harm to the Realm and Alyssa's life alight and froze them solid all at once. It was a glorious sight and the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms luxuriated in its beauty.

Alyssa did not have long to bask in the death of some of her most hated enemies however as she had another set to deal with so as to properly secure King's Landing. That being Dragonstone and Stannis' forces on the island. Located just south of the capitol in Blackwater Bay, it was the perfect staging ground for attacking the city, Whilst Stannis' forces were all but depleted by his defeat in the Battle of the Blackwater, it was nevertheless a threat that Alyssa simply could not allow to go unchallenged. That it meant liberating her family's most ancient seat in Westeros was just a bonus.

Thus it was that almost as soon as the executions had been completed, Alyssa had mounted Ghost with her escort of Ser Wendel and Loras and they leapt into the air to join the fleet of defected Crownlands ships as they sailed to take the island. The fleet had set sail a three days ago and would likely be almost at Dragonstone by now.

"Remember Ghost don't outpace the ships." Alyssa reminded her dragon as they caught up with the fleet and in his eagerness, her dragon shot ahead of the ships. He sent back a burst of acknowledgement mixed with exasperation and Alyssa patted his side comfortingly.

I wonder if I can Gate an entire fleet into directly into battle? I've managed it for an army but what about a naval fleet? Alyssa pondered. It hadn't made sense to try in this case, not when her forces needed time to regroup after the Battle of the Blackwater. Many had attempted unsuccessfully to chase Stannis down when he had made his retreat thus leaving her fleet scattered. Especially since Stannis had cunningly split his forces to throw off pursuit. Even now squadrons of loyalists ships from all over the Blackwater were still joining the fleet. And she had to wait, for Dragonstone was a formidable island fortress and unless she intended to level it with Ghost, she would a sizable fleet to the men they to secure it.

Maybe I could have gathered it by Gate too? Hmm... Such an undertaking would probably too tiresome to be worth the effort considering how many different squadrons that needed to be consolidated. Or maybe force a surrender with Ghost then Gate troops in? That have might worked actually. Alyssa concluded. Things to consider for my future campaigns I suppose.
Your grace, there's movement north of the island. Ser Wendel shouted suddenly, his keen archer's eyes spotting something that everyone else missed.

Ghost swung his head in the direction and began sending Alyssa images of what he was seeing. It was a small fleet of ships with Stannis' sigil of a crowned stag in the middle of a flaming heart sailing away from Dragonstone.

"It's Stannis," Alyssa declared. "He's trying to escape. Ghost don't let them."

Her dragon roared in reply and banked towards the fleeing enemy ships, picking up speed. As he did, Alyssa used the **Message** spell to contact Lord Monford Velaryon, commander of the her loyalist fleet below.

*Lord Monford.* Alyssa told him hurriedly. *We've spotted Stannis' fleet attempting to escape. Moving to stop him.*

Without waiting for a response, Alyssa cut her connection. Just in time for them to reach the first of the enemy ships.

"Dracarys!" Alyssa ordered without hesitation, sending Ghost into a dive at the ship as he breathed dragonfire and setting it ablaze.

"The next one!" Alyssa shouted at her familiar when he hovered and attempted to finish off the first ship. "This one is done already."

Ghost growled in dissatisfaction but obeyed, winging over to the next ship.

Ship after ship was set mercilessly ablaze all whilst the enemy were helpless to stop her. They had shot arrows at Ghost, some more skilled ones even aiming at her or her Queensguard but the **Mage Armor** she had cast over all of them kept them safe. The same could not be said of those Ser Wendel had shot at in retaliation.

There were only a handful of ships left and Ghost was pivoting in the air after lighting one up to attack another and Alyssa was preparing to lob a **Fireball** at yet another when suddenly a massive fireball hurtled at them from the furthest of the enemy ships.

"Your grace!" Both Loras and Ser Wendel shouted as they wrapped themselves around her protectively as the flames consumed them and Ghost howled in pain as the fire burned through his protective **Mage Armor**. She would have used **Frost Armor** but that made him too heavy to fly properly and **Fire Shield** made it impossible for him to carry riders as even armored with magical protection which would protect them from burns, the heat created by that spell would have made anyone near her dragon unbearably uncomfortable.

For a moment the world lurched as Ghost almost fell out of the air, but he thankfully managed to work through his pain and leveled his flight. His riders had almost been thrown off by his bucking but he recovered quickly enough and the Queenguards' grips strong enough that they managed to hold on.

"Ghost! You're hurt!" Alyssa shouted, ignoring all of that as she felt her familiar's pain through their bond. The dragon unconsciously sharing it with his mage.

"Ghost! Get us away from here! We can't risk another hit like that!" Loras shouted even as the dragon was already banking away from the still fleeing enemy ship as quickly as possible.
Alyssa meanwhile was calling on her magic.

"Healing Touch!" She cast, sending healing energies into Ghost that knitted his wounds and dulled his pain.

*That's not going to be enough.* Alyssa noted. *But judging by his pain, I don't think I can heal all his wounds with just Healing Touch.*

"Regeneration!" The Queen cast next, hoping that enhancing Ghost's own supernatural healing would do the trick. It would not be spontaneous like it would with Healing Touch but the effect should be more powerful. By the relieved growl that Ghost gave as the spell took hold, she had done it right.

"Is anyone else injured?" Alyssa asked belatedly, looking between Loras and Ser Wendel.

Both knights shook their heads.

"What was that, your grace?" Loras asked though. "I thought you were the only mage in Westeros."

"I don't know, Loras." Alyssa admitted. "If I'd hazard a guess that was the Red Priestess Stannis has admitted into his court that we've heard so much about."

"The one we think created that thing which killed Renly?"

"The same." Alyssa told him with a nod.

"Then we must be careful when fighting Stannis, your grace. We have no experience fighting another magician."

"We will Ser Wendel," Alyssa assured him as Ghost made it back to the relative safety of the air above their own fleet which by now was already landing their first troops on Dragonstone. "We will."

The next day on the captured island, Alyssa took stock of the situation with Lords Velaryon, Celtigar, Bar Emmon and Sunglass on the cliff that Ghost claimed for his own. While her magic and his own supernatural healing meant he was no longer injured, Alyssa was worried enough that she had spent all her time on the island by his side even sleeping in a tent set up beside his lair rather than inside the island's castle.

"We're confirmed through interrogation of the survivors we fished out of the Blackwater that Stannis, his wife Selyse and the Red Priestess have managed to escape." The man with long, fair hair that showcased his Valyrian heritage that was Lord Velaryon informed her. "However, we did manage to capture his daughter, Shireen Baratheon."

"She was not with her parents?" Alyssa asked, surprised by this development.

"Apparently in a bid to increase the chances for someone in his family surviving in case of an attack by dragon, Stannis acting on the advice of his Red Priestess split his family up and sent them to separate ships." Lord Celtigar explained. "At least that's what the girl said her father told her."

Alyssa nodded.

"What should we do with Lady Shireen, your grace?" The plump Lord Duram Bar Emmon asked.
"In order to ensure her safety and to strengthen my claim on the Stormlands, I intend to take her as a concubine."

*If Margey insists I go through with this idea then I might as well go all the way.*

Lord Sunglass looked disapproving and Lord Bar Emmon uncomfortable at her declaration.

"A wise move, your grace." Lord Velaryon expressed his support, to Alyssa's surprise, even as Lord Celtigar nodded his agreement.

"Thank you, Lord Velaryon." She told him sincerely before moving on before Sunglass or Bar Emmon could comment. "As for the island itself, until such time as a proper castellan can be appointed for Dragonstone to hold it for me and my child, I'll be placing it under the management of Lord Velaryon as Driftmark is the nearest seat."

"It would be my honor, your grace."

"I trust that you will do brilliantly, Lord Velaryon. Though whilst you are in charge I would like you to start mining the dragonglass from the old tunnels beneath the mountain."

"To what ends?"

"They will be used to make weapons for a war to come."

Velaryon, all the lords really, looked at her skeptically.

*I suppose I'll have to sweeten the deal.*

"To facilitate the mining operations, the Crown will cover the costs and pay market price for all the dragonglass extracted."

"That is very generous, your grace." Velaryon blinked in surprise. Market price for dragonglass was not an insubstantial amount. Whilst not highly sought after, the material was often used in exotic jewelry or weapons and commanded a decent price. Considering the amount of dragonglass that could be mined from Dragonstone, paying market price for what was extracted would make the venture quite profitable indeed. Of course the influx of all that obsidian into the market would inevitably drive prices down but not before Velaryon made a lot of gold.

*It will be immensely costly. But it is a price we must pay to survive the Long Night.*

"I know you do not believe me yet, my lords, but rest assured that we *need* the dragonglass."

Alyssa told them firmly. "Now is there anything else that we need to urgently discuss?"

The four lords exchanged looks but one by one they shook their heads.

"Then," Alyssa said as she stood from the camp chair from whence she'd been holding council. "It is about time I met my new concubine."

Since her rescue from the Blackwater, Shireen had been held in her old rooms in the castle and kept under constant guard. It was thus there that Alyssa met the girl with blue eyes, a square, jutting jaw inherited from her father, and a pair of large ears as she cowered away from her even as they sat across from her in a quaint sitting room. The sight almost broke Alyssa's heart, she was terrifying the poor adorable little thing.

"You are afraid of me," Alyssa noted as she fought the urge to pull the younger girl into a
comforting hug. "Why?"


"That's not it." Alyssa said, her eyes narrowed. "I've seen men and women traumatized by a near death experience. You do not look quite shaken enough for it."

The Baratheon girl flinched at that, probably not expected to be called out on her lie. Gritting her teeth, the girl tried another.

"I-I'm just upset at being separated from my parents a-and the death of my friend, Patchface. He was on my ship with me but he d-did not make it."

"The court fool?" Alyssa asked and Shireen nodded even as she rubbed tears away from her eyes. "That is part of it, I think. You do genuinely feel distraught over his death but I suspect there is something."

Shireen looked like a startled doe at once more being called out, but to her credit she recovered quickly and sucked in a deep fortifying breath.

"You want the t-truth?" She asked, actively trembling.

"Yes." Alyssa told her sternly.

"I-I'm afraid of b-becoming like Myrcella."

"My concubine?" Shireen nodded. "That is what I have planned for you."

Shireen recoiled away from Alyssa in fear, rocking her chair back so badly that it only barely avoided toppling over.

"Don't be afraid." Alyssa said coaxingly, calling on all her experience dealing with younger siblings from both her lives whilst simultaneously cursing Margey's idea to the Nine Hells. "The title of concubine is merely ceremonial, part of my attempt to secure the Seven Kingdoms. An empty fiction if you will."

Shireen just shook her head in disbelief and Alyssa was tempted to just scrap the idea entirely. Stannis' daughter was a very sweet girl, Alyssa could tell that much, and it pained her to see her so distraught. But doing so would mean she had to back down from an idea she'd already publicly informed her lords about. She simply could not allow such a display of weakness.

Maybe there's another way to win Shireen over.

"Healing Touch." Alyssa cast suddenly and reached out with her glowing hands to touch the cracked and flaking, gray and black skin that were the Grayscale scars which covered most of Shireen's left cheek and much of her neck.

"What are you doing?" Shireen cried out in alarm.

"Look," Alyssa told her as she use Levitate to pull a hand mirror over and Shireen fearfully obeyed only to gasp in shock at the sight.

Alyssa's healing spell had caused the scarred skin that dominated her left cheek and most of her neck to glow and the edges to flake away, revealing unblemished normal skin beneath.
"H-How?" Shireen asked in breathless shock as the light of Alyssa's spell faded and she pulled away.

"Healing Magic," Alyssa told her, handing Shireen the mirror. "I don't know much but I do have a few spells. It seems a single spell isn't nearly enough but I'm sure with repeated application I can remove those scars entirely."

Shireen touched her left cheek experimentally as she surveyed the change with the help of the mirror.

"It's shrunk." Shireen gasped in disbelief. "It's really shrunk. And the new skin. It feels normal!"

"Yes, it has." Alyssa told her gently. "And like I said, with a few more treatments I think I can get rid of them completely."

"Yes! Please!" Shireen said, prostrating herself before Alyssa. "Do that, your grace, and I'd do anything you ask."

Alyssa just blinked in confusion.

_I didn't think healing her would be this effective. I guess it was affecting her more than anyone expected._

Leaning down, Alyssa pulled the girl to her feet and acting on an impulse that she didn't even fully understand kissed her. She fully expected Shireen to pull away in shock despite her words but instead, the Baratheon was only shocked for a moment before she tried to return the kiss in her own inexperienced way. The two girls were so preoccupied that neither noticed the sparks of magic that arced between their lips as they kissed and the few servants present were completely blind to their presence.

When they finally pulled apart, Shireen collapsed into Alyssa's front.

"That was amazing!" The Baratheon girl said in a soft voice. "Can we do it again?"

"If you'd like." Alyssa said with an amused grin, even as Shireen was already moving to kiss her again.

The two would spend the next couple hours kissing, much to Nameless' great amusement as he watched unseen.

While the Queen was on Dragonstone getting to know her newest concubine, Margaery had just arrived in King's Landing and was busy readying the Red Keep for its new lady. This involved much remodeling of the royal quarters of course, and an expansion as required by the plan for a harem like she'd convinced Alys to form. But more important than that was the human element, which was why she had summoned Lady Jeyne Darry to meet with her in the privacy of what would soon be Alys' royal bedchamber.

"You summoned me, my lady?" Lady Darry greeted Margaery with a perfect curtsy as she entered the room.

"Yes, close the door behind you would you?" Margaery asked as she surveyed the room and took note of what changes to make that would make it more amenable to Alys' tastes.

_"Less ostentatious for a start."_ The Tyrell thought as she frowned in distaste at the sheer amount of
"We're alone, Lady Margaery." Lady Darry declared a moment later, pulling Margaery from her thoughts about remodeling.

"Good." The Queen's Mistress said as she turned to face the other woman. "Now let's talk about you feelings for Alys."

Her fellow brunette startled at the blunt statement but contrary to Margaery's expectations did not deny her feelings.

"I'm sorry, my lady." The Riverlander said with a deep bow. "I can't help how--"

"Stop." Margaery said before the other woman could work herself up. "You misunderstand. I did not summon you to reprove you. In fact I approve of your feelings for our Queen."

Lady Jeyne just looked at her with a stupefied cast to her face that made Margaery giggle and understand, at least somewhat, the affection her lover had for this woman.

"How can you be alright with someone else being in love with your lover while being in close proximity to her?"

Margaery just shrugged.

"Did you know I fell in love with Alys at first sight?"

"The same for me."

"Did you now, Jeyne? You don't mind if I call you that? You can call me Margaery or Margey if you'd like in return."

"Uh, yes, um, Margaery." Jeyne said and Margaery pouted at her choice to use the less intimate name. "I did. Fall in love with Alys at first sight I mean."

"I thought so," Margaery nodded. "She tells me it's because of her magic. It reaches out to people who are compatible with her and brings them in. I don't know if I believe her. And I don't care either way. I love her and that's that. But if it is true, and it very well might, than it raises a problem."

"A problem?"

"Yes. Magic or not, Alys is still attracting and is attracted to other women even after we became lovers. And I know she's been resisting it, but she shouldn't have to. I love her too much to ask her to deny herself." Margaery said, voicing her honest feelings. Her grandmother hadn't understood when she'd tried to explain it to her as part of convincing her to support her plan for a harem but she had a feeling Jeyne might.

"I know what you mean," the other woman said, proving Margaery right. "I don't think I could deny Alys anything she asked, but she's never asked anything."

"And she won't." Margaery said with a sigh at her annoyingly stubborn lover. "That's why we must be the ones to be bold here."

"Are you suggesting what I think you are?"

Margaery just offered Jeyne a coy look. "Did you know that on more than one occasion Alys called
out your name when we were making love?"

Jeyne looked horrified and opened her mouth to say something apologetic but Margaery silenced her by putting a hand over her mouth, and leaned down to whisper in her ear. "Our Kings of the past had many multiple mistresses, why can't a Queen? I've already gotten her started with Myrcella. Why hesitate to join in?"

The Riverlander didn't need more convincing than that.

That night, Jeyne sat nervously in the Queen's bedchambers naked and second guessing agreeing to Margaery's suggestion.

_T-This is stupid. This is no way to get Alys to take me as her woman. I'll just come across as a whore!_ Jeyne thought as she stood to get dressed and leave when the door to the room opened and Alys's familiar voice gasped in surprise.

Jeyne spun to her to find the Queen standing in the door with Margaery who was smiling like a cat that got the cream.

"Jeyne? Are you sure?" Alys asked breathlessly as she walked towards her while Margaery closed the door behind them.

Despite her earlier doubts, Jeyne didn't hesitate. "Yes."

The next day, Jeyne woke up in the Queen's bed with her naked back pressed into Alys's front.

"Morning Jeyne." Margey greeted as she sat on the side of the bed and was wiping herself down with a washcloth.

"M-morning." Jeyne stuttered as the sight of Queen's Mistress' naked body reminded her of just what they'd done, all three of them, the night before.

"Morning~!" Alys said with a yawn as she let go of Jeyne and pushed herself into a sitting position.

"Morning," Jeyne joined Margey with more confidence. She might be uncertain about sharing the Tyrell heiress' bed but she had no doubts about having made love to her Queen.

"Shall I call for a bath for us?" Margey said, slipping on a robe that she'd laid out on a nearby chair.

"Yes please." Alys said as she slipped out of the bed and stretched, giving both her lovers quite the show. "Make it an extra large one. All three of us can share it. It'll be quicker."

"Alys!" Jeyne said sitting up at last and shooting the Queen a look. "The servants will talk!"

"Let them." Alys said dismissively as she walked over to the washbasin that Margey was using earlier. "Besides Marge called a servant to get this water and towels for us right?"

"I did." Margey agreed before she poked her head out into the antechamber and began relaying Alyssa's orders for a bath.

"Then the servants already know."

Jeyne put her head in her hands.
"So we're just going to be shameless about this?"

"If loving you is shameful, then I'll brave being called a harlot." Alys said confidently as she began cleaning herself of the secretions of their lovemaking with one of the two unused towels by the basin.

"I've already been called worse." Margey said with a shrug as she came and took hold of Jeyne's hands.

Giving them a comforting squeeze, she pulled her off the bed. "We really don't mind and you shouldn't either."

"Exactly." Alys said handing Jeyne the last towel. "Now clean up. As much as I would like to spend the whole day in here ravishing and being ravished by you two, I have work to do and as my handmaiden you'll need to accompany me."

Accepting the already helpfully dampened washcloth, Jeyne began cleaning herself.

"Let's just hope the High Septon does not decide this is too much and finally decides to act."

Watching the three women as they cleaned up, an invisible Nameless chuckled knowingly before retreating entirely.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Some might be wondering what is going on with Nameless and setting Alyssa up with multiple women. The simple answer is I like harems and wanted it included, so there! The second is a little more complex. Basically, its commentary about two things:

i) Railroading of plot points. I think all writers, at some point or another, is guilty of this. Nameless' (aka me) heavy handedness in how he's engineering things so Alyssa gets the lesbian harem outcome he wants is my attempt to point out how it can happen. I tried to make it heavy handed enough for it to obvious but logical enough to not be a stretch within the world of the story. Because I think we can all agree that a ROB with no qualms about interfering repeatedly would totally do something like this.

ii) The absurdity of harems without some kind of magic or massive power disparity involved. Not saying it isn't possible as multi-partner relationships are a thing. However, they are vanishingly rare. Thus to facilitate the one Nameless (aka me) wants, he had to resort to magic to get it to work. And as you can see he's increasingly moving away from subtly nudging Alyssa towards the women he wants her to hook up with to full blown mental and emotional manipulation via magic. Something that folds back to the other point quite nicely.

Long AN is long. So I think I'll not make it even longer and sign off here. Till next time antio sas!
Much to Alyssa's annoyance, Jeyne's words the morning after they first made love proved prophetic. No sooner than she had formally announced that she was taking Jeyne as one of her concubines did the High Septon begin to make his displeasure known.

"What is the High Septon saying about me today?" Alyssa asked Varys, more curious than anything. She cared nothing for the Faith of the Seven after all, much less the smears of its chief priest.

"He is decrying you as a heretic for being a follower of the Old Gods." The Spider informed her and they both shared a laugh that earned them curious looks from her concubines with whom she was breaking fast.

"What's so funny Alys?" Myrcella asked, looking puzzled.

"It's just, he thinks I'm a follower of the Old Gods."

"You're not?" The former Princess asked, tilting her head in confusion.

"Lord Varys, have I knelt before a Heart Tree since I was a child?"

"Not since you were ten if my little birds are to be believed."

"Then what faith do you follow, love?" Margey asked, trying out yet another new pet name. For some reason her First Concubine was determined to give her one despite her protests against needing one. Scrunching her face in distaste of Margey's latest attempt and earning a pout in reply, she explained. "I believe in Lord Nameless. He is the god who appeared to me when I was ten. He gave me my magic, taught me how to use it, showed me where to find Ghost's egg and guided me through hatching him. I owe everything I am to him."

All her concubines, everyone in the room really, looked shocked by this. Even Varys which was something Alyssa would hold over the Master of Whisperers forever! The man was almost impossible to surprise and she would savor this rare moment.
"You must tell me more about your god, Alys." Myrcella said to nods from her fellow concubines.

"Another time," Alyssa told the blonde. "Right now, I have to deal with the High Septon. Lord Varys, what else is he saying about me? I'm sure it's not just that."

"Indeed not, my Queen." The eunuch agreed. "He has also taken to slandering you over your magic, calling you a witch."

"Which I am," Alyssa noted with a roll of her eyes. "Though I prefer the term mage myself. It's what the Tome of Magic Lord Nameless gave me calls magic users like me."

"I will see that the proper nomenclature is spread among the smallfolk, your grace."

Alyssa rolled her eyes at how her offhand comment was being taken so seriously.

"Focus, Lord Varys. What other slander is the High Septon spreading?"

"He is calling your laying with other women unnatural," the Spider said almost hesitantly. "That your taking of not one but four highborn women as your concubines no less, is a sign that you are unworthy of the crown."

That's an escalation. Alyssa noted, her eyes narrowed in anger though she wasn't the one who reacted most negatively to the news.

"He dares!" Shireen shouted, surprising everyone. "Alys you should take his head for saying that!"

"You've very worked up about this, Shireen." Jeyne said, expressing the room's surprise. "To my knowledge, you have not lain with Alys yet."

"Of course not," Alyssa said hastily. "Shireen is much too young! She hasn't even flowered!"

"But I will soon!" Shireen shot back and looked at Alyssa with what could only be considered a predatory look. "And when I do, I expect to be made a woman your grace."

"Me too!" Myrcella chimed in before Alyssa could reply.

Startled she looked between her two youngest concubines at a lost and turned to Margey and Jeyne for help, only to see her lovers nodding in agreement with the two younger girls.

Put this off! Alyssa decided. That's my only hope here. Make no promises and push this off till later. Maybe they'll change their minds over time.

"We'll see." Alyssa said noncommittally as she looked away from her concubines and to an amused Lord Varys. "And the Septons? How have them responded to the High Septon's new stance towards me?"

"They have been dutifully repeating his slander." The Spider said without commenting on her abrupt change of topic even as her concubines giggled at her desperate evasion. "Thankfully their words have found surprisingly little traction among the masses of King's Landing, who are receiving ample supplies of free bread baked in the Red Keep's kitchens, made from grain shipped from the Reach and provided to them by the very Queen they decry."

"I suppose the fact that the smallfolk have had to endure great hardships under the rule of the Lannisters whom the Faith had supported helps us in this regard."

"Indeed, Lady Darry, it does."
"Even if that's the case, we cannot allow the High Septon to continue." Alyssa concluded. "I can accept dissent. Even slanderous dissent. Giving the people room to express themselves reduces unrest but I draw the line at open questioning of my right to rule. Lord Varys, it is time to take action."

"I am at your command, your grace."

Seated in one of the pews reserved for observers, Alyssa watched as the Most Devout debated over who would be the new High Septon, the previous one having tripped while climbing the steps leading up to the Great Sept just yesterday and was sent tumbling down the long flight of stairs almost all the way down to the base of Visenya's Hill. A fall that proved fatal.

Just the thought of the man's humorous death brought a smile to Alyssa's face and she made a mental note to have Varys and those of his little birds responsible for the deed handsomely rewarded.

"Alys," Margey said leaning into her side to whisper into her ear. "They're about to vote."

Alyssa nodded and used a Message spell to allow them to speak more freely.

_Are we sure the man we've arranged to get the post will be more pliable than his predecessor?_ Alyssa asked through the spell's telepathic connection.

_Yes. Margey reassured her. Of all the candidates, he is the most corrupt. So long as we provide him with the coin he needs to feed his appetites for luxury and women, he'll do whatever we tell him._

_And we are sure that he will win?_ 

_The Reach is the cradle of the Faith, Margey reminded her. That means it has great influence over us but the reverse is also true. See for yourself, beloved._

Alyssa frowned in distaste at Margey's latest pet name but nevertheless did pay attention as the voting finished and the ballots were counted. She was pleased but not overly surprised when their preferred candidate won by a wide margin.

_I told you so._ Margey said, preening at what she rightfully saw as a victory for her family.

_Well done, Margey._

Not everyone was happy with the results of the election however and almost as soon as news of the results were announced, the Sparrows, a radical sect of the Faith made out of followers of the Seven most affected by the War of the Four Sovereigns and whose leader had been poised to win the vote if Alyssa hadn't intervened, threatened revolt as they denounced the election as a sham and the new High Septon as a mere pawn of the 'Witch Queen'. And in the process signed their own death sentences.

"This is the last of their safe houses?" Shireen asked as Alyssa, her concubines, Hand and Lord Varys watched the crushing of the Sparrows by the Gold Cloaks via Alyssa's combination of her Scrying and Minor Illusion spells.

"Yes, Lady Shireen it is." Loras, serving as their on duty Queensguard today. He would know. As Lord Commander of the Queensguard, he had been deeply involved in organizing the raids that were crippling the Sparrows and their nascent rebellion.
"Hush," Myrcella said. "They're breaking into the leader's room now."

Indeed they were, Alyssa noted as a squad of Gold Cloaks kicked the door to a small, spartan bedroom open. They were immediately beset by a group of men with woodcutters' axes but superior training and equipment soon told the tale. Within minutes, the five men were dead and the three Gold Cloaks had merely suffered a few bruises where the blows from the axes had dented their armor.

Now unopposed, the loyalists seized the small, thin, hard-eyed, grey-haired man with a heavily lined face that was the leader of the Sparrows. Perhaps realizing there was no escape, the man didn't even bother to resist as he was dragged away.

"And that's that." Alyssa declared as she dispelled her spells. "Now the Sparrow leadership can all be executed by dragonfire tomorrow morning."

"Just in time to show your strength to the Dornish." Lady Olenna noted with a smirk. "You have a good sense of timing as always, your grace. The executions will not only cow the remaining Sparrows and the rest of the Faithful but it will also hopefully at least rattle the Viper."

"We can only hope." Alyssa agreed. "Margey are they settled in?"

"Last I checked, yes." Margey replied, having been responsible as Alyssa's first concubine for ensuring that the newly arrived Dornish diplomatic delegation was taken care of. "But I'll make sure before I retire."

"Make sure to leave invitations to the executions." Jeyne reminded. "We don't want them to miss it."

"I will." Margey agreed. "Thanks for the reminder."

"I will assist with that, Lady Margaery, Lady Darry." Varys offered. "My little birds can ensure that our guests attend."

"Right, then I leave the matter to you two." Alyssa said as she stood. "I'm going to retire. Jeyne, join me?"

Blushing lightly Jeyne hurried over with a smile.

"Good night everyone," Alyssa threw over her shoulder while wrapping an arm around Jeyne's shoulders and pulling her close.

She received a chorus of wishes for a good night in reply as the two departed for bed.

Memories of her lovemaking with Jeyne last night proved essential in the day which followed for Alyssa as she found herself negotiating with the Dornish. They had traveled by ship to King's Landing to meet with the Lannisters initially, with the full understanding that they would end up negotiating instead with whoever won the battle that had become known as the Battle of the Blackwater. To that end, the Dornish party was led by no less than Prince Oberyn Nymeros Martell himself who as brother to Dorne's ruling Prince had more authority to conduct negotiations than most.

This would have been a boon. If not for one problem. The Red Viper hated her for having survived Robert's Rebellion where his sister Princess Elia and her children, Alyssa's half-siblings, had not. Anger that was compounded by Alyssa as the daughter of Lyanna Stark was a living reminder of
why that disastrous war had been fought in the first place. At least that's what she'd been able to
gather from his seemingly ceaseless barbs over the last hour of negotiations.

"We've already agreed to give you the Mountain and Amory Lorch for punishment," Alyssa
reminded the Prince tiredly. "Even though as Rhaenys and Aegon's sister, I have as much right to
vengeance against them both mind you. What more do you want?"

"You cannot give me what I want, your grace." The Viper spat her title out with venom.

"Then what does Dorne want?" Lady Olenna asked, sounding as frustrated as Alyssa felt.

The Viper looked ready to spit even more venom but thankfully the levelheaded Harmen Uller, the
Lord of Hellholt and the second in command of the Dornish diplomatic team cut him off whilst
shooting the man who was his bastard daughter's paramour a quelling look.

"A treaty that reaffirms our special place in the Seven Kingdoms in accordance with that the one
between King Daeron II Targaryen and Prince Maron Martell that made Dorne part of the Seven
Kingdoms is a start."

Oh thank Lord Nameless! Progress at last!

"Agreed," Alyssa said. "What else?"

Here Lord Uller sent Prince Oberyn another hard look and though the Viper seethed, he obediently
held his tongue.

"To strengthen the ties between the Iron Throne and the Sunspear, we would also like to have you
appoint a Dornishman to your Queensguard."

"Easily enough." Alyssa acknowledged. "It was my intent from the start to diversify its
membership to include warriors from as many Kingdoms as possible."

"And lastly," Lord Uller began only to pause to glare Prince Oberyn into silence as the Martell
growled angrily for some reason. "We would like you to take a Dornish paramour."

"Agre-" Lady Olenna began, only for Alyssa to raise a hand to tell her to wait.

"You want me to take a Dornish concubine?" The Queen asked. "Immediately?"

"Yes," Lord Uller said with a firm nod. "You already have concubines from all the Kingdoms who
you have conquered or have bent the knee to you."

Not entirely true. Reach forces under Lord Mace's command were still clearing up pockets of
resistance in the Stormlands and they hadn't even invaded the Westerlands yet. And of course, she
had taken no Northern lovers. But it was close enough she supposed.

"While not all of them share your bed yet-"

Alyssa really wanted to know how he knew that.

"-but they all have your affection and confidence. We desire the same privileged access."

Alyssa shot her Hand a glare. The whole harem idea was partly her idea!

"Blame Margaery." Lady Olenna deflected. "More importantly, the man is right. If we want Dorne
to reintegrate peacefully then we need to treat them like we've treated the other Kingdoms and that
"Alright, I can accept that much." Alyssa said with a resigned sigh. "But immediately?"

"Prince Doran feels that delay is not beneficial." Lord Uller said with a grimace, obviously not liking this stipulation either. "It would give whoever you choose less time to earn your confidence and thus put her at a disadvantage to your other concubines."

_Since when did my love life become a matter of politics!? Oh right! When I decided to be Queen._

"I see," Alyssa said with a raised eyebrow. "But even if you say that the only Dornish women of eligible age that you've brought with you-"

"Are my daughters." Prince Oberyn cut in angrily, glaring at Alyssa like this was somehow her fault.

_Well, I suppose this is the real reason why he's so angry._

"I suppose I should meet them then." Alyssa said in resignation.

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It turns out that the five oldest of the eight infamous Sand Snakes had come to King's Landing with their Father and were now stuck in the unfortunate situation of being forced to potentially becoming one of Alyssa's concubines. At her request, Prince Oberyn unhappily led her to one of the Red Keep's training yards which the five had commandeered for their own.

Walking towards the yard, Alyssa paused to observe the scene.

A woman in her mid twenties that was probably Nymeria Sand with a figure that was slim and slender as a willow and straight black hair worn in a long braid which pulled back from a widow's peak was practicing with some throwing knives. Seated next to each other in one corner of the yard were the fair skinned, golden haired Tyene Sand and light-brown skinned younger woman who Alyssa guessed by the books that surrounded them and the tales of the various Sand Snakes' interests was Sarella Sand. In the center of the yard, the oldest looking of the sisters was a big boned and mannish looking woman that Alyssa instantly recognized from Varys' reports about her as Obara Sand was exchanging blows with a slender woman with an athletic figure with her hair bound in a braid.

"Who's that?" Alyssa asked in an eager whisper even as natural process of elimination told her the girl in question was Elia Sand as she pointed to the girl in question.

"My daughter Elia," Prince Oberyn said with his eyes narrowed.

"Elia?" Alyssa said breathing out the name as if it was a prayer.

As if her attention was caught by the sound of her name even over the impossible distance. Elia Sand's head snapped to Alyssa's direction. This unfortunately distracted her and her sister took full advantage and swept her feet out from under her with her spear, sending Elia crashing onto her back and forced to yield as Obara pressed the tip of her spear to her neck.

Acting entirely on instinct, Alyssa rushed over to Elia's side. Arriving just as the other girl was helped back to her feet, she pulled the girl towards herself and raked her eyes over her.

_This deep concern for a girl I've just met... Yes, I know what this feeling is... Or at least I am getting familiar with it._
"Are you alright?" Alyssa asked urgently. "That looked like a hard fall. You didn't hurt anything did you?"

"No, um-" The girl asked, blushing brilliantly at the unexpected scrutiny even as unseen sparks of magical energy arced between them from where Alyssa's hands still held her shoulders.

"Elia, this is the Queen." Prince Oberyn supplied, now sounding mildly amused despite himself.

"Your grace!" Elia shouted as she hastily pulled away from Alyssa, causing her to pout at the loss of contact, and knelt.

Her sisters had hurriedly done the same, but Alyssa was so overwhelmed by the pull of her magic right now that she only had eyes for Elia.

"Rise," she said as she practically pulled Elia to her feet, the sparks of her magic that she previously missed now clear as day to her as they jumped between her and the Dornish woman.

"Elia Sand," She said without hesitation. "Would you accept being my concubine?"

Everyone in the yard made sounds of shock, even Lady Olenna and Ser Royce who was her Queensguard shadow for the day. All except Elia herself.

Instead, blushing prettily, she shot her Father a pleading look.

Alyssa turned to look at him as well, though her glance was far more demanding.

Prince Oberyn looked unwilling.

"Father, please." Elia said pleadingly.

The Red Viper looked thoroughly confused but he was not known for pampering his daughters for no reason and with a reluctant nod, he gave his approval.

"Your grace, I am yours." Elia told Alyssa with a passable curtsy despite wearing breeches.

"And I am yours." Alyssa replied, pulling the other girl into a kiss that intensified the sparks of magic jumping between them into a veritable storm which the mage struggled to understand how the others couldn't see.

Unlike the kisses which sealed her relationship with Shireen, this was only a brief peck. They were after all still in public but as they parted, Elia nevertheless let herself fall into Alyssa's arms.

"Which of your sisters would you like to join you in King's Landing as a Queensguard, Elia?" Alyssa asked her soon to be concubine as she ran a hand through her hair, even as everyone just looked on in confusion.

Elia shrugged and turned in Alyssa's arms to send her sisters questioning looks, who in turn just stared back at her as if she had lost her mind. Considering the powerful effect Alyssa's magic was having on her, they might not be too far off the mark.

"Sard this!" Nymeria said at last. "I have no idea what's going on, but I'm not leaving Elia here alone. I'll do it."

"Thank you, sister." Elia said offering her older sister a grateful smile.

And that was the very unorthodox way that the negotiations concluded with Elia becoming one of
Alyssa’s concubines and her sister Nymeria a member of her Queensguard. That it was followed by lengthy explanations and Elia insisting she wasn’t being controlled and she stood by her decision magically influenced be damned. It was a long week that was for sure.

She was therefore more than relieved when word from the North provided her with a distraction from the still ongoing drama between Elia and her family, as she continued to struggle to convince them to respect her decision. Thus she happily took her leave of that ongoing disaster and fled to read her correspondence.

Your grace,

The Wildling attack on the Wall has been repelled and the last survivors of the pretender Stannis Baratheon’s army who showed up as you predicted to ‘assist the Watch’ have been wiped out. Lord Commander Alliser Thorne wrote in the raven he sent to inform her of the situation. The reinforcements you had sent our way were a godsend. Without them we likely would not have survived. Please let me express my awe at your foresight for predicting all that has happened and sending us those men.

Not all is good news I’m afraid, your grace. I regret to inform you that Stannis Baratheon was killed in the fighting and that his wife apparently died of an unknown malady while sailing North. Both their remains have been cremated and their ashes sent on their way to King's Landing. The Onion Knight, Ser Davos Seaworth, along with the survivors of the Baratheon men have been captured and await your judgement as you requested. As for the infamous Red Witch, she is despite our best efforts unaccounted for. The remaining Wildling survivors have, as you ordered, been captured pending resettlement further South under the Night’s Watch’s jurisdiction.

Lastly, I am pained to report that there remains no new news on the whereabouts of your Uncle Benjen. I’ll continue to have my brothers be on the lookout for signs of him but I’m afraid that it’s unlikely he’s still alive.

Your eternal servant,

Ser Alliser Thorne,

998th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch

Who would’ve thought, Alyssa mused. That Thorne, who hated me so in my past life, not only has assumed my old position but is so polite to me in this one?

"Apologies Loras," Alyssa said with a sigh as she handed the missive over to the Lord Commander of her Queensguard. "It seems we have both been deprived of our vengeance."

"There is still that Red Witch," Loras declared in a furious hiss. "She worked the magic which killed Renly and she will die for that."

"There is that," Alyssa said as noncommittally as she could. As much as she wanted revenge for her husband, she knew how powerful Melisandre was and was loathe to lose her assistance against the Others in the war to come.

"Myrcella?” Alyssa asked her the blonde former princess who had volunteered to serve as her scribe for the day. "Write up a message in my name to Lord Commander Thorne telling him to offer Ser Seaworthy the chance to either bend the knee to me or take the Black, but to inform him either way that his lands are safe and the inheritance of his heirs are assured."
"That's very generous of you," Myrcella noted as she began drafting the letter.

"Shireen adores Seaworth," Alyssa told her concubine. "Just like I didn't send Rosamund to the Silent Sisters for your sake, I can offer mercy to Seaworth for Shireen's."

Rosamund who had been sitting patiently at one side doing some embroidery whilst waiting for instructions as befit her role as Myrcella's handmaiden startled and shot Alyssa a thankful look. It seemed Myrcella had not told her cousin just how close she'd come to being punished for the crimes of their family.

"Ah, I see." Myrcella acknowledged. "I hope Seaworth bends the knee then. Shireen would like that."

"That she would." Alyssa agreed as she picked up the next piece of Northern correspondence. This time it was from her Stepmother.

Your grace,

I bring you good tidings. The Ironborn have mostly been repelled thanks to the reinforcements you sent north and we are now scouring the countryside for their remnants.

Winterfell was besieged but like you predicted we thankfully held out. Alyssa breathed a sigh of relief to know her childhood home would not suffer the depredations in did in her past life. A circumstance we owe almost entirely to the many magical traps you'd set up in the Wolfswood. They were responsible for taking out more of the Ironborn raiders than anything else.

I knew planting those Glyphs of Warding around Winterfell set to trigger whenever someone with the intent to attack the castle passed by would prove useful. Alyssa thought to herself with a grin as she continued reading.

As you can see, all is well in the North. Though I hear alarming news from King's Landing.

What exactly has she heard? Alyssa pondered worriedly.

What is this I hear of you preparing to go campaigning while seven moons pregnant? Her Stepmother wrote and Alyssa winced as she imagined the stern look that would have accompanied those words had she been there. It wasn't that hard. She just had to picture the disapproving look Robb had given her when she told him and imagine it was ten times worse. Do you know how reckless that is!? I implore you to reconsider Alyssa! Think of your child!

I hope you come to a wise decision.

Your worried Stepmother,

Lady Catelyn Stark,

Lady of Winterfell

"Need me to write a response?"

"No Myrcella, I think I'll write to my Stepmother myself." Alyssa said as she picked up a quill and a fresh raven's scroll. "I would not want to get her any more upset with me than she already is."

"I heard from Margaery that your Stepmother scolded you via raven for thinking of campaigning in
such a late stage of pregnancy. Did it change your mind?" Lady Olenna asked as they sat down in
the Small Council Chambers to discuss the body.

Alyssa shot her Hand an unimpressed look. "I have not and you know why."

"A few moons will not make much of a diff-"

"It will give our enemies time to recover that I will not allow."

*We need as much time to prepare for the Others as we can get. Which means we need to end this war as quickly as possible!* Alyssa thought but did not voice.

"Besides" Alyssa continued instead. "Despite my supposed late pregnancy my movement has not been impeded in any way."

"You are remarkably small for a woman that is almost seven moons with child." The Queen of Thorns allowed. "But it is still unwise to put yourself in unnecessary danger whilst in your condition."

"Save it, Lady Olenna." Alyssa said with a sigh. "I've made up my mind on the matter. Let us discuss the matter of the Small Council as we agreed shall we?"

"Very well," the Tyrell matriarch said with a frown. "You said this would be a war council correct? One designed to run the country in your absence while you campaigned?"

"Yes," Alyssa acknowledged with a nod.

"With that in mind, I came up with a few suggestions."

"Let me hear them. Go in order of the seven reserved positions."

"That'll start with me," her Hand said with a roll of her eyes. "And then the Grand Maester who we currently lack."

"He will have to be decided by the Conclave of the Citadel."

"Or you could just appoint whoever you liked, it's not like anyone would gainsay you."

"Perhaps," Alyssa said with a frown. "But, for now at least, I want to avoid rocking the boat wherever possible. We did enough of that dealing with the High Septon. As such, I'll follow the forms here. Though I would prefer someone I trust and with whom I had a prior relationship like Measter Luwin from Winterfell."

"I see." Lady Olenna said with a smile. "I'll make the arrangements to have word of your preference discretely reach the appropriate ears."

"I know nothing." Alyssa replied with a smirk and the elderly Tyrell laughed prompting her to do the same.

When they both calmed they moved on to the next appointment.

"How about Tyrion Lannister for Master of Coin?"

"He's certainly capable. But I'm surprised that you'd trust him?" Alyssa asked, with a raised eyebrow. "At least, enough to suggest him."
"He is married to your cousin, quite happily if word of their domestic life is to be believed, and is the father of her child. Furthermore, you've promised him Casterly Rock." Lady Olenna said with a roll of her eyes. "With such incentives, it's easy to win loyalty. Besides who else could we trust to impose those exorbitant taxes you intend to impose on their mines as reparations and to fund our expenses?"

Alyssa hummed noncommittally. Unwilling to imply, like her Hand wanted her to, that she had set these circumstances up deliberately.

"Where is Baelish though?"

"You wanted to consider him for the position?"

"Heavens no!" Alyssa replied with a laugh. "I'd rather have him burn. He was pivotal in my Uncle's death. I merely am curious where he's run off to."

"If Varys' reports are to believed he fled to the Vale when the Lannisters sent him to treat with your brother-cousin."

"A rat fleeing a sinking ship? How fitting of Littlefinger." Alyssa noted with a scoff. "Let's move on. I don't want to discuss that man any further."

"Agreed." Lady Olenna nodded, her distaste for the Mockingbird clear. "Master of Laws is next. I think Oberyn Martell would fit the bill."

"Are you serious?" Alyssa asked incredulously.

The Queen of Thorns shrugged.

"Dorne needs a boon that's above and beyond that treaty you worked out. Passable though it is. This will do that."

"But the Red Viper as Master of laws? Really?"

"It might not suit his temperament but he is certainly intelligent and capable enough to carry out the tasks required." Lady Olenna explained. "More importantly, it's relatively unimportant. We thus throw Dorne a bone without actually giving them any additional power."

Alyssa thought about it for a long moment before reluctantly nodding. "Alright. So long as you can honestly assure me that this isn't part of some revenge plot against the man for what happened to Willas."

"You have my word, granddaughter." Her Margaery's beloved grandmother said.

"Then let us move on."

"My goodson Paxter Redwyne for Master of Ships."

"The expected and appropriate choice." Alyssa commented simply as she waved at her Hand to move on.

"This goes without saying but Lord Varys as Master of Whisperers."

"This will not change anytime soon, I think." Alyssa observed with an amused chuckle. "The Spider seems to be the lone perennial survivor of the Small Councilors."
"Indeed."

"So with Loras serving as the Lord Commander of my Queensguard that rounds up the council," Alyssa said with a pleased grin at one task done. Just innumerable more still left unfinished. Including the still ongoing arguments between Elia and the rest of her family. Which were frankly driving Alyssa insane. Her Father and sisters had accepted that she would stay as one of Alyssa's concubines regardless by this point but were still adamant she had been mentally manipulated into agreeing, much to Elia's adamant objection.

"I doubt Loras will ever step down of his own accord." Lady Olenna told Alyssa frankly, pulling her thoughts from one family problem to another. "After Renly's death, he is utterly devoted to the child in your womb. I would not be surprised if he sees it as a second coming of his love."

"I know." Alyssa said rubbing her pregnant womb lovingly.

"First time mothers," Lady Olenna said with a roll of her eyes. "I'd like to see you be so happy on the birthing bed."

"Says the woman who gave birth to three children." Alyssa countered. "If it was so terrible, I can't imagine having more than one."

"Ha! That shows what you know, young lady." Lady Olenna said with a laugh. "The birth is terrible but the children themselves make it worth it. That is why women are so willing to bear with it. You'll see what I mean soon enough."

"I suppose I shall." Alyssa agreed, before pulling the list of proposed Small Councilors that her Hand had compiled and looked it over again. "This looks good overall."

"Really? I had thought that you would comment that there's no woman on the Council except myself."

Alyssa rolled her eyes. "Just because I am a woman and I sleep with other women does not mean I will push them forward over men. What I want is merit and ability."

"Good." Her Hand said with a pleased nod. "Though does that logic hold true for who you'd like to appoint as Lord of Storm's End and Lord Paramount of the Stormlands?"

"What are you saying?" Alyssa asked curiously.

"I'm saying making Shireen Baratheon Lady Paramount would be a mistake. She might have the claim but she would be too weak."

"What do you mean? She is still young yet, I'm sure with a good regent she can grow into being-"

"It is because she is Stannis' daughter." Lady Olenna cut Alyssa off. "And one of your concubines. On the first count, the Stormlords were gutted by the Battle of the Blackwater that Stannis led them into. That anger will carry over to his daughter. On the second, not only will the specter of being part of a homosexual relationship haunt her, consummated or not, but one with the woman who was responsible for their defeat on the Blackwater? It'll doom her chances of ruling the Stormlands."

"I see your point." Alyssa conceded. "Then keeping her by my side-"

"As one of your kept women," her Hand said with a snort. "It will be how they see it."
Alyssa glowered but nodded. "They might see that as me keeping her hostage and thus keep them from raising up in fear for her safety and loyalty to House Baratheon, but the same is not true for wanting her to rule."

"Yes. We humans are strange creatures."

"Yes, well." Alyssa said, not knowing what to say to that sudden if accurate observation. "Who then should we elevate to Lord Paramount?"

"One of Robert's bastard sons." The Queen of Thorns said as if it was obvious. "Find one, legitimize him and give him Storm's End. I recommend Edric Storm."

"Not the boy currently at the smithy in Harrenhal, Gendry Waters? His lack of education would make him easy to control." Alyssa suggested half-heartedly, more to sound out her Hand's reasoning than anything else.

"By others as well." Her Hand reminded. "More importantly, he was not acknowledged by his father. Edric Storm was and had a lord's education besides. He is also already known to the Stormlords as well and will be more easily accepted."

"Very well." Alyssa said after the pretense of a moment of consideration. "Have the appropriate documents drafted and you'll have my signature."

"You're very kind, your grace. And the smith?"

"Can happily remain a smith." Alyssa said with a shrug. "He's an innocent in the Game of Thrones, I will not take his life simply because of who his father is."

"Your mercy might one day lead to ruin."

"We'll face that crisis if it comes to pass. For the time being my order stands."

"As you command, your grace."

"How are our preparations for our campaigns against the remaining kingdoms?" Alyssa asked, changing the topic from the uneasy direction it had taken.

"We have the 40,000 men we used to take the city waiting for your magic trick to link up with the 20,000 men from the North and the Riverlands already at Golden Tooth."

"And the Redwyne fleet?"

"Sailing towards Lannisport with another 10,000 men."

"Then everything is ready." Alyssa noted with an expectant grin.

Soon. Soon this war will be over.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Told you guys that Nameless' manipulations of Alyssa's love life will escalate. Hope
you guys liked the drama that it created with Dorne. And yes, Elia is totally in denial but as Margaery stated when she discussed the influence of Alyssa's magic on her during her conversation with Jeyne last chapter, it doesn't matter the source to those affected they love Alyssa and that's all that matters. Is that creepy and unethical? It's supposed to be.

On another note, is Alyssa insane for going campaigning in person in her third trimester? Yes. She's also a stubborn ass who as she said wants to end this war quickly so she can pivot her attention, and those of the Seven Kingdoms, to the threat of the Others. That she has a rather superhuman constitution as a result of her being a mage and a dragon for a familiar just lets her justify her reckless decision.

That's all I feel the need to discuss this time so till next time mar sin leat!
Alyssa I Targaryen

Book: The War of the Four Sovereigns

Chapter 9: Finishing the Conquest

Beta:

Trigger warning: Implied canon typical underage

Alyssa looked through her Scrying spell and surveyed the spot near the Golden Tooth in the distant Westerlands where Lady Maege Mormont stood. It was a reasonably flat patch of land surrounded by relatively high hills, the perfect place for an army to magically appear.

Cutting her spell, Alyssa turned to Robb as he sat behind her on Ghost's back gripping one of his frigid spines through a thick set of gloves. A needless precaution he had insisted on despite the protection against the cold the Mage Armor she had cast on him provided.

"Lady Maege has chosen a good spot," Alyssa told her brother.

"I have no doubt," Robb told her with a shrug, unimpressed with her doubt. "She is very capable."

Alyssa giggled at his reaction even as she turned to the empty plain just outside her army's camp outside the walls of King's Landing and cast her spell.

"Gate!" She shouted, pumping a sizable fraction of her magic into the spell and creating a wide oval portal of swirling darkness. "Ghost, take us up."

Her dragon growled eagerly and leapt in the air where he began to circle the entrance to the portal.

"My loyal soldiers!" Alyssa shouted down at her men, all lined up in marching order and awaiting her command. "Beyond this portal is the Westerlands, our enemies. And it is far past time to bring our wrath. So march forth, my brave warriors! Let us go forth and take another step in reuniting the Realm! Commanders! Begin your march!"

As the various units began moving to obey, Alyssa sent a wordless command to Ghost and the great dragon flew through her Gate portal. The other side was exactly as she had seen it while using Scrying, a modest valley with reasonably flat ground and surrounded by hills tall enough to hide her army as it marched out of her portal. Standing at the far end of the valley from the portal was a small encampment flying banners from the North and the Riverlands.

"Over there, Ghost." Alyssa told her friend even as he adjusted his flight to head towards the cleared space in the middle of the small army just in front of a tent where a group of people stood waiting.
In moments, he had landed and Alyssa was using **Levitate** to help herself and her fellow riders off Ghost's back.

"Your grace, welcome to the Golden Tooth," The short, stout, grey-haired woman in patched ringmail and with a spiked mace swinging from her waist that was at the head of the welcoming party said as she fell to one knee in greeting.

"Rise Lady Mormont, my lords," Alyssa said with the ease of practice whilst gesturing for the kneeling lords and their men to stand. "It is my pleasure to be here. Is Kevan Lannister still marching towards us?"

"Yes, he aims to retake the Golden Tooth." The She-Bear said after a moment of shock that Alyssa was jumping into the heat of things, though when she had processed it continued with a smile. "Our scouts report his host to be about fifteen thousand strong and at most two days away."

"Only fifteen thousand? The combined army of Northmen and Rivermen already here number twenty thousand already! How could he think to win with only three quarters that number?"

"Desperation and hope that better knowledge of the terrain will deliver a miracle I imagine," Lady Maege said with a shrug.

"If that's the case than any hope of that is gone." Robb said with cold viciousness. "We've brought 35,000 Reachmen, Crownlander and Stormlander veterans of the Battle of Blackwater with us. The Lannisters will stand no chance now."

"Indeed," the head of House Mormont nodded. "But, if you like, your grace can continue this inside the tent where we can be more comfortable?"

"Of course," Alyssa said with a slight blush as she realized her eagerness had made her host seem impolite. "Lead the way, Lady Mormont.

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"I honestly do not understand why you are disappointed that Stannis' Hand refused your offer to bend the knee," Loras said spitting the late middle Baratheon brother's name out venomously. "I understand that Shireen would have liked to meet him again but he is taking the Black, not dead."

Before Alyssa could reply she was forced to grip the frozen spike that she was using to stay on Ghost's back harder as a change in the air currents caused her dragon to suddenly shift a little more than usual to maintain the hovering position in the clouds over the Golden Tooth they had held for the last fifteen minutes.

"Despite his common birth, he is a resourceful man Loras." Alyssa replied once Ghost had stabilized his flight. "And I appreciate talent."

*That I remember him from my past life as a level headed and honorable man helps as well.*

"T'm sure we can find someone just as capable, your grace." Ser Wendel opined.

"Exactly," Loras said with a firm nod. "So stop letting the news affect you. We need you focused on the upcoming battle."

"I know, Loras." Alyssa said with a roll of her eyes allowing a familiarity between her Lord Commander, and goodbrother in all but name, and herself that she only did in private. Though with only Ghost and the trusted Ser Wendel as witnesses, this was probably private enough.
"I honestly don't know why you're so affected anyways." Loras commented. "You don't even know the man! Yet you've been upset since you received the raven this morning."

_I may not have known him in this life, perhaps. But in my last I trusted him._

"Enough chiding, Loras." Alyssa said with a pout. "I'll stop so please do the same."

"Only if you do stop. I reserve the right to speak up if you let your upset get the better of you again."

"That's fair."

"Your grace, Lord Commander," Ser Wendel cried out cutting off their spat. "Looks like the Westermen are moving in to attack."

"He must not be aware of our arrival." Loras noted with a frown as he and Alyssa both looked down to see that, sure enough, the Lannister army was moving to attack the Northmen and Riverlands formed up in front of them and blocking their way to the Golden Tooth.

"Either that or he doesn't believe it." Alyssa said offering an alternative. "Despite everything I've done so far, many still seem to think my magic and even Ghost are just myths."

"Let us disabuse them of that notion shall we?" Loras said with an eager grin.

"Indeed," Alyssa agreed. "Ghost! You know what to do!"

Her dragon roared in happy reply and dove down through the clouds towards the Lannister host.

"Dracarys!" Alyssa ordered the moment they were within range and the mighty dragon breathed his breath of frost and flame over the ranks of the Westermen army.

Even as he strafed the enemy ranks, his riders were not idle with Loras and Ser Wendel taking aim with their longbows and shooting at anyone they spotted that appeared to be a commander. Ser Wendel of course scored much better by far in this regard but thanks to recent practice Loras' tally was still wholly respectable. For her own part, Alyssa rained down spell after spell on the enemy. _Cone of Cold_ and _Blizzard_ brought frigid death down upon them whilst _Flame Strike_ and _Firestorm_ conjured great blazes which consumed many a hapless soldier.

Such was the devastating effectiveness of their airborne assault that by the time Ghost banked away to circle around for a second strafing run, the Westermen ranks looked on the verge of breaking. The unexpected appearance on the field of the army she had brought from King's Landing was the death knell to their morale and as her thirty five thousand marched over the hills that concealed them, the Lannister army lost all cohesion as men turned and fled in panic.

"No mercy!" Alyssa shouted to her dragon and her Queensguard at the sight. "Not until they raise the flag of surrender!"

"Yes, your grace!" Loras and Ser Wendel shouted back in acknowledgement and Ghost sent her a wordless one through their link, even as they began their second run over the now routing Lannister forces.

"You will all have to choose," Alyssa said sternly to the various Lannisters, of all branches, that she had rounded up before her inside the Great Hall of Casterly Rock on the High Seat of which she now sat and passed judgement mere days after the Westermen army had been crushed at what
her men were calling the Second Field of Fire. In the wake of which, the Westerland lords had surrendered en masse and she was free to fly directly to Casterly Rock via Gate which in turn had surrendered at the mere sight of Ghost and the small army that had escorted through the portal.

"Either you take your chances at trail or you for the men take the Black and the women the vows of the Silent Sisters," Alyssa decreed firmly, glaring down at the crowd of terrified golden haired, green eyed Lannisters.

"And who would judge these trails?" The fat Lady Genna Lannister demanded. "You, your grace?"

Even as she spat the honorific out and her family cowered at the defiance of the wife of the late and un lamented Ser Emmon Frey, Alyssa just raised an eyebrow. The woman was trying to provoke her. That much was obvious. The question was why? What did the last surviving sibling of the old lion hope to achieve by doing so?

"If you're hoping to anger me and get me to kill you so as to paint me a tyrant, you will fail."

Alyssa told the woman with the largest bosom she had ever seen. It was frankly so immense that the Queen would have felt her own much more modest bust was inadequate in comparison if not for the fact the woman sporting said massive breasts was so very fat.

The Lannister frowned and Alyssa supposed that her guess had hit the mark.

"As for your question," Alyssa continued, ignoring the woman's dark look. "Your nephew Tyrion and his wife, my cousin, Sansa will be in charge of your fates should you seek trail as is their right as the new Lord and Lady Paramounts of the Westerlands."

Fearful murmurings spread through the crowd of Lannisters and Alyssa smirked. She knew well how badly the House and its branches treated her goodbrother. There would be no mercy for family from him. The Lannisters were about to reap what they had sowed as the one family member they had all treated like an outcast would soon hold power over their lives.

"For now though," Alyssa said silencing the muttering after enjoying the fear of her defeated enemies for a moment. "All of you, irrespective of age, gender, or rank will spend time in cells in the dungeons. You may inform me of your decisions regarding whether you wish to take vows on the morrow."

"You can't do that! We surrendered!" Lady Genna shouted, her broad and smooth face twisted in fearful anger.

"Unconditionally," Alyssa reminded the older woman as she gestured to her men who promptly began herding the terrified Lannisters out of the hall, physically dragging away those who resisted. "That means your treatment is entirely at my discretion or did you not understand that facet of what an unconditional surrender meant? If you expected better, you should have sued for terms."

Lady Genna paled as a pair of burly Mormont men grabbed her by her arms and forcibly began removing her from Alyssa's presence. The Queen watched with a malicious smile as all the Lannisters had been dragged away to join practically the entire household of Casterly Rock down in confinement. Though due to fears of overcrowding most were simply imprisoned inside the various large storage rooms that littered the interior of the great stone hill from which it had been carved. Though, Alyssa had given orders to keep the worst of the secure cells available for their new occupants.

Only when the last Lannister had been dragged away did Alyssa turn to other pressing affairs.
"Maester Creylen," Alyssa called out to the castle's Maester who looked deathly pale.

"Y-Yes, your grace?"

"I believe you have a raven for me?"

"Yes," the terrified man said as with all politeness he handed a raven's scroll to her. One forwarded to Casterly Rock from the Golden Tooth and originating from Lord Varys back in King's Landing.

Your grace,

The self-proclaimed King of the Iron Islands, Balon Greyjoy, is dead.

Your Master of Whisperers,

Lord Varys

The kraken king is dead? Alyssa thought as she blinked in surprise. She couldn't be sure but didn't this happen slightly later in her past life? Then again with all the changes to events, she could not be certain of things anymore. If Varys has managed to learn of it then it had to have happened at least a week ago, probably more. That means the Ironborn, if I remember the culture of those raiding savages correctly, would be organizing a Kingsmoot to select a new King by now. Hmm… Can I exploit that?

With much of her armies still busy securing the Westerlands and the Redwyne fleet still at least a few days from Lannisport, it would be tricky. But-

I can make it work. Alyssa thought as she began to piece together a plan.

Three weeks later found Alyssa looking through a Scrying spell that she had focused on Euron Greyjoy and saw with satisfaction that thanks to Varys' manipulation everyone she wanted was there in the Great Hall of Pyke, not just Asha, Victarion, and Aeron Greyjoy were there but also most of the prominent Ironborn lords had shown up at a Kingsmoot that the Crow's Eye had called.

It seems convincing each of the squabbling Greyjoys they had a realistic chance was all it was necessary. Alyssa thought as she finished tallying those in attendance. Time to pluck the fruit of my plotting.

"Ghost, take us in." Alyssa told her loyal familiar and the dragon dove down from the position he'd been holding over Pyke far above the cloud cover.

"Dracarys!" Alyssa ordered as the castle came within view and Ghost obligingly unleashed his deadly mix of freezing and flaming breath. Stone melted and flash froze in quick succession, the rapid shift in temperatures causing it to violently explode. Thus Pyke's Great Keep where the Kingsmoot was being held was destroyed as the very stones of its walls detonated. Even then, Alyssa and Ghost did not relent and proceeded to make several passes to ensure everyone inside was killed.

"Destroy the rest of the castle too." Alyssa told Ghost when nothing stood of their first target but shattered rubble. "I'm going to check if any of the Greyjoys survived."

Her dragon sent her his affirmative through their link and banked to level the remaining the castle's keeps and towers. In the meantime, Alyssa used Scrying on the various Greyjoys and was pleased as the spell failed as she attempted to target one Greyjoy after the other.
"Looks like we got them all." Alyssa said with a grin and noticed that while she was working her magic, Ghost had finished leveling Pyke reducing the once mighty castle to scorched and flash frozen ruins. "Good job, Ghost."

Her dragon sent back a burst of pride in his handiwork.

"The Ironborn will never raise from this," Loras noted with a grin. Being from the Reach which had suffered raids by Ironborn reavers for centuries, it was only natural to take pleasure in their through destruction.

"Or this might galvanize them into defiance." Ser Wendel countered warily as he surveyed the devastation with narrowed eyes. "The Ironborn are a stubborn people."

"They are," Alyssa agreed. "But let's see them remain defiant now that their entire leadership has been killed, their precious islands occupied, and themselves displaced by a new wave of settlers."

The Ironborn had been a problem for Westeros for untold centuries and it was past time that someone finally dealt with it. Thus there would be no quarter given this time. The Ironborn lords, reavers all, would be wiped out. The Iron Islands would be occupied by Loyalist troops to protect the new migrants from the rest of the Seven Kingdoms who would be enticed to settle there through generous land grants for while the islands were largely barren, to landless peasants any land was better than no land. An influx which would dilute and hopefully outright destroy the abhorrent culture of the Ironborn. It was a cold hearted plan that had shocked all her advisors when Alyssa had first presented it, but which they had all eventually accepted without much complaint such was the hatred for the Ironborn.

"The Ironborn are about to die." Loras said with a satisfied grin.

*And with their annihilation Bran and Rickon will be avenged!* A strange part of Alyssa that was a mix of her own vindictive streak and her past life's love for his siblings crowed in victory.

"Indeed." Alyssa agreed as she looked out to the sea. "So let us bring in the Redwynes and finish this. Gate."

A large portal opened out in the open sea and moments later the Redwyne fleet waiting at anchor at Lannisport began to sail through it. Thus began the last days of the Ironborn.

Despite her desire to wipe out the Ironborn entirely, some of their lords had managed to escape death during her destruction of Pyke and so she found herself enjoying the hospitality of Lord Rodrik Harlaw at his seat of Ten Towers where he had been recuperating from a bout of illness and thus fortunately unable to attend the ill-fated Kingsmoot. This whilst the Reach troops that had been transported to the Iron Islands by the Redwyne fleet secured the islands, joined in growing numbers by vengeful Northmen fresh from scouring the Ironborn invaders from their homeland.

"Y-Your grace, you summoned me?" An average-looking man with brown hair and eyes and a short, neat grey beard greeted Alyssa as he stepped into the solar she had taken from him.

"Have a seat," Alyssa told the clearly terrified man. "We have much to discuss."

Warily, the man did as he was told and looked expectantly at Alyssa.

"I have made a decision as to your fate, Lord Harlaw."

Rodrik Harlaw nodded with the air of a man awaiting his execution.
"After consulting with my advisors I have decided to appoint you as the new Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands."

The new Lord Paramount breathed a sigh of relief.

"But," Alyssa said loudly enough to startle the man. "There are conditions. Firstly, the Ironborn nobility will be purged. Besides your House, all other Ironborn Houses will be dispossessed."

Lord Harlaw looked ready to protest but in a well timed move, that was wholly coincidental but which Alyssa doubted anyone would believe was such, Ghost chose to fly pass the tower that housed the solar at that very moment with a massive dead kraken in his claws. How he had even found one of the semi mythical creatures was something Alyssa was curious to learn for herself, but she could ask her familiar later. For now, she merely appreciated how the display cowed the last of the Ironborn lords.

"In their place," Alyssa continued. "I will raise new lords from among the men now occupying the Islands. Besides your House, never again will Ironborn rule the Iron Islands."

The bookish man shivered at the harshness of her decree but could only mutely nod.

Good he understands his place.

"Second, all salt wives and thralls are to be freed. And the practice of taking captives into servitude is to be outlawed and made punishable by death. All existing salt wives and thralls are to be paid one silver stag for every year of their servitude, with a minimum of one silver stag. Failure to make payment will result in seizure of land or property which will be sold to make up the cost, if that still proves insufficient than the Crown will provide a loan to cover the difference."

"T-That'll ruin our economy! Our people will become destitute!"

"And the former salt wives and thralls will come to be a major economic force." Alyssa added with a malicious grin. "Thus further breaking your people's control over these islands."

"Y-You want to destroy us utterly." Lord Harlaw said in a terrified whisper.

"I thought that was obvious." Alyssa told him honestly. "Your people have been a blight on Westeros for long enough. I will stand it no longer. I will destroy you. If not through this then by setting everyone of your settlements alight with dragonfire and displacing the lot of you elsewhere in the Seven Kingdoms."

"Why?" Lord Harlaw asked pitifully, his spirit broken.

"Because your destruction will win me the undying loyalty of half the Kingdoms." Alyssa told him bluntly. "The North, the Riverlands, the Westerlands, the Reach, even Dorne at times. All of them have lived in fear of your people's reaving for as long as anyone remembers. My ancestors stopped that but they never broke you and time and time again you returned to your old ways. No more. The Ironborn way dies now."

"You're a monster."

"More than you already consider me such," Alyssa told him. "I care not for their opinions. I merely care for the results. Besides to you this act makes me a monster but to those whose lands your ilk have raided for centuries this makes me a hero. One who did what many desired but none before me has had the will to do."
"I met Eddard Stark once, you know?" Lord Harlaw said suddenly. "Briefly during the Greyjoy Rebellion. On opposite sides of course, but even then I think I had a measure of the man and I can say with confidence that the man who raised you would not approve."

"My Uncle was many things, Lord Harlaw, but a good player of the Game of Thrones he was not." Alyssa shot back, her blood boiling that this man dared bring her late Father into this. "He lost his head for that. I will not follow in his footsteps. More importantly, I refuse to subject any future generations with the scourge of Ironborn reavers. That I am sure he would approve of, even if he would decry my methods. That is enough for me."

There will never again be scenes like the heads of my brothers impaled on the walls of our very home by Ironborn ever again. Alyssa added to herself as she recalled some of the nightmares her past self had suffered after learning of the fate of his brothers.

"You are a hard woman, your grace." Lord Harlaw said, almost sadly.

"Such is the burden of the Crown." Alyssa said with a shrug. "Now onto my last condition. To ensure your obedience, I desire something from you."

Alyssa watched as Lord Harlaw's oldest child, a daughter of age with herself named Gwynesse, was led into her solar by her father and was at once unimpressed and struck dumb. Unimpressed because the Lady Harlaw was no beauty, but a rather plain looking woman with long white hair and pale skin. Struck dumb by the intense desire that welled up inside of her the moment she laid eyes on the other woman to protect her.

That's new. The Queen thought at the strange response her magic had to a compatible woman.

"Y-Your grace," the girl said with a passable curtsy despite her obvious anxiety. The poor thing was visibly trembling.

"Your grace, my daughter, Gwynesse." Lord Rodrik introduced unnecessarily.

"Have a seat Lady Gwynesse," Alyssa offered. "You as well, Lord Rodrik."

Lady Gwynesse shot her father a worried look but at his nod, complied.

"Do you know why you are here, Lady Gwynesse?"

"You wish to inform me that you will be taking me back with you to King's Landing as a hostage." Lady Gwynesse told her bravely even as she clutched her skirts so hard that her knuckles turned white. "Am I correct?"

"You told her?" Alyssa asked the woman's father.

"I would not let her come in here not knowing what to expect."

He is a good father.

"Fair," Alyssa told him with an approving nod. "And Lady Gwynesse that was indeed the plan."

"Was?" Lady Harlaw noted with a frown. "What changed?"

"Take my hand and tell me," Alyssa said offering her hand to the other woman.

Lady Gwynesse shot her father a confused look but he shook his head to indicate he was as clueless
as she was. Her vigilant Queensguard, Loras and Ser Wendel, shot her knowing looks but as the loyal knights that they were kept their silence.

"Please," Alyssa said encouragingly to the other woman, who at this prompting finally hesitantly raised her hand to take the Queen's into her own.

The moment they touched bolts of magic shot between them and Lady Gwynesse began to cry as she pulled the hand to her face where she proceeded to begin to shower it in tender kisses. The sight of her tears pierced Alyssa's heart however and she shot to her feet. Careful to make sure she never pulled her hand away from the other woman, the Queen made her way around the desk until she pulled Lady Gwynesse into a comforting hug.

"Ssh, I'm here now." Alyssa told the woman who by now had all but thrown herself into her arms. "I'll protect you."

"Thank you!" Lady Gwynesse said to her through her tears. "Before you killed him at the Kingsmoot I was set to wed Denys Drumm and I hate him. He already had ten salt wives! And he still wanted me! I don't even like men! But I have no choice. You've saved me!"

"Gwynesse? You told me none of this!" Lord Harlaw said in shock.

"Of course I didn't!" Lady Gwynesse turned her head towards her father to shout, tears streaming down her face. "What could you have done!? Nothing! Better to suffer in silence than let you do something foolish and tarnish our reputation among our fellow Ironborn Houses. They already whisper disapprovingly enough of us because of your bookishness. I refuse to shame our House further."

Lord Harlaw looked like he had been slapped.

"Gwynesse? Can I call you that?" Alyssa asked the woman in her arms.

"Gwyn, call me Gwyn." The Ironborn woman said shyly, pressing her face into Alyssa's rounded middle to hide her face.

"Gwyn then. I need to ask you something important. Would you become my concubine?"

"For you? I'd gladly be your salt wife."

"No," Alyssa said pulling Gwyn away so the latter could look into her eyes and see how serious she was. "It might mean the same thing, but no concubine of mine will ever be a salt wife."

"I believe you. Take me. I am yours, your grace."

"Alys. Call me Alys."

One uncomfortable night of revelations of Gwyn's feelings and explanations about the tendency of Alyssa's magic to draw compatible women to her and vice versa later, the royal party, now obviously including the newest Royal Concubine, were having one last meal the next morning before they departed the Iron Islands.

"You should try this Alys," Gwyn, seated to the Queen's left as befit her new station, said pushing a bowl of unfamiliar stew towards her. "It's a delicacy among my people."

"Is it?" Alyssa replied as she pulled the bowl close.
"Yes." Gwyn nodded. "It's a traditional lamb meat stew."

Alyssa took a spoonful of the dish.

"It's wonderful."

"Thank you," Gwyn said with a blush. "I made it thinking of you."

"You made it?" Alyssa genuinely surprised that her newest concubine would go to such lengths.

"That she did," Harras, Gwyn's ten year old brother said with a laugh. "She went down to the kitchens early this morning just to do it."

"Heard she was so excited about the whole thing that she got there before the servants started preparing the morning meal." Hotho, her other eight year old brother chimed in as well.

"Harras! Hotho! Stop teasing your sister!" Lady Yara Harlaw, Gwyn's mother, chided her sons even as Gwyn herself hid her blushing face in Alys' shoulder.

"I must agree with your mother, Brothers Harlaw." Alyssa said offering the two rambunctious lordlings an arched look even as she patted Gwyn's hair soothingly. "Besides, I think it is sweet that your sister would wake up earlier just to prepare something special for me."

Though I might have appreciated it more if she'd chosen to join me in my bed last night. A particularly lewd portion of Alyssa's mind thought before she could suppress it. Gwyn had been in no condition after her emotional discussions of the night to even contemplate something like that and Alyssa would never force anyone into her bed. Even if the weeks away from her lovers had left her feeling needy.

"Uh, your grace?" A young boy said suddenly, looking incredibly nervous as he approached the High Table with a raven's scroll held to his chest like a protective charm.

"Yes?" Alyssa asked with a raised eyebrows as her Queensguard and the other guards tensed.

"I'm, um, one of Lord Varys' little birds. He, uh, wants me to hand you this."

"Loras?"

The Lord Commander of her Queensguard nodded and took the missive from the boy who promptly turned and fled.

"Don't manhandle him!" Alyssa shouted at the guards that moved to stop him, causing them to pause and giving him enough time to escape.

"Lord Rodrik," Alyssa said with a sigh as she took the scroll from Loras. "If you find that boy please give him my thanks."

"Of course, your grace." Lord Rodrik agreed.

"Why would the Master of Whisperers not send a normal raven?" Gwyn asked as she lifted her head from Alyssa's shoulder and looked at the scroll with a frown.

"He does but his private network of birds can be faster at times and is much more secure, so he claims." Alyssa explained. "As such when something is important he uses those. Now let me see what has the Spider so rattled."
Your grace,

This letter brings urgent news. The Volantene fleet intends to transport the Golden Company from Lys with the intent to invade and crown an impostor of your brother Aegon VI Targaryen as King of Westeros.

An impostor of my brother? What!? Alyssa thought, her mind thrown for a loop by the unexpected development.

I can confirm with confidence that this supposed Aegon known also as Young Griff is an impostor. Though he does not know it, as he has been fed a story that he is the true Aegon who survived the Sack of King’s Landing by being swapped with a tanner's son who died in his place and subsequently smuggled across the Narrow Sea. He believes that following this he was first entrusted to my former friend and ally Illyrio Mopatis and later to the exiled Lord Jon Connington, a friend of your late father, Rhaegar, who had by then risen to a prominent position in the Golden Company.

That is ridiculous! Aegon can’t be alive. Just to confirm the truth of whether this Young Griff was an impostor, Alyssa tried to use Scrying on him only for the spell to fail. As I suspected it would. I saw Aegon’s ghost with Lord Nameless when I first ascended the Iron Throne after all.

I know this because this entire scheme, the Spider explained. Was a contingency created by Illyrio and I to replace the weak Baratheon dynasty with the blood of the dragons should the need arise. For this supposed Aegon was a Blackfyre from the maternal line. More importantly, at least, for why Illyrio is still proceeding with the plans of this contingency, is that the boy is the Magister’s son born of his second marriage to a former Lysene pillow house worker and unknowing descendant of Daemon I Blackfyre.

Connington is unaware but having raised the boy from youth as a son, it is doubtful that the truth will sway his loyalties. Likewise for the Golden Company. They have been preparing for this move for almost two decades. Seventeen years in which they have longed to use the claim to the Iron Throne of their Young Griff, false or not, to return to their homeland at last.

I imagine war is the only option with have with these fanatics, my Queen, but what are your orders?

Your loyal servant,

Varys

"What is it Alys?" Gwyn asked, biting worriedly at her lip.

"The Golden Company is preparing to invade Westeros with the support of the Volantene navy whilst using an impostor of my deceased brother Aegon to legitimize the whole thing," Alyssa said with a tired sigh. "Someone bring me a fresh raven's scroll and a quill, I need to write a reply to the Lord Varys and the Small Council with my orders."

"And what might those be?" Lord Rodrik asked warily even as one of his servants ran off to carry out Alyssa's order.

"Twofold," Alyssa explained as she took one of Gwyn's hands and gave it a comforting squeeze. "Firstly, I will have Lord Varys disseminate the truth about the impostor to all the lords of the Seven Kingdoms so as to deprive him of support. The boy was one of his contingency plans for replacing the Usurper that he has lost control of, so he has all the information needed to undermine
any claims the imposter might make. Second, raise a host and repel the Golden Company."

"Sounds simple enough," Lord Rodrik said sarcastically.

Alyssa shrugged. Simple or not, it needed to be done so it would be done.

Since the Golden Company invasion had not yet reached Westerosi shores, Alyssa decided not to change her plans and rush back to King's Landing to manage that crisis. As such, using the proven combination of Scrying, Gate and flying on Ghost's back to travel directly from Ten Towers to the skies above the Eyrie.

"That's so beautiful!" Gwyn said as they looked down on the majestic great castle of the Arryns. It was a cluster of seven slim towers of fine white stones bunched tightly together situated astride the peak known as the Giant's Lance, overlooking the Vale of Arryn several thousand feet below.

"I think Highgarden is more beautiful actually and Winterfell more grand." Alyssa opined. "And of course, the Red Keep more storied."

"I think Highgarden is best of all," Loras countered. "But I'm biased."

Ghost sent Alyssa an image of Winterfell for his won vote even as began a slow spiral down to the castle.

"Ser Wendel?"

"I think I'll stay out of this if you don't mind, your grace." The Manderly knight said with a chuckle.

"Of course," Alyssa said with a smile as Ghost began his final approach towards the mountaintop castle's central garden. It being the only open space in the cramped castle that was big enough for his bulk.

Throwing up clouds of mountain snow with his wingbeats as he landed, Ghost certainly made their appearance even more grandiose than it already was.

_You and your dramatics._ Alyssa sent to her dragon in fond exasperation only to receive a burst of unabashed amusement in reply.

Hopping down while Alyssa was chatting with Ghost, Loras strode proudly ahead. His silver armor, decorated with sapphires and twining black vines, shined in the glare of the high mountain sun especially the pure white pauldron that signified his place in her Queensguard. Add in his fluttering rainbow cloak and he looked every bit the gallant knight.

"Lord Arryn! Come out this instance!" He roared, startling the gawkers that had been drawn by their arrival. "Her grace, Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name, Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms demands your presence!"

It took a moment but soon a small party hurried out of one of the towers. At its head was Lady Lysa Arryn, a thick bodied woman with a passing resemblance to Alyssa's own Step mother and her son Robert Arryn, a small and painfully thin boy with spindly limbs and splotchy pale skin. Much to Alyssa's annoyance it also included the Mockingbird, Lord Petyr Baelish, sporting as always that untrustworthy smirk that he was infamous for.

Unwilling to waste time, Alyssa simply issued a blunt ultimatum.
"Surrender or suffer the fate of Pyke."

Much to Alyssa's exasperation, both Lady Arryn and her son both immediately looked to Lord Baelish.

"We, of course, offer the Vale's capitulation." Littlefinger offered with a gracious bow. "If you prefer, would your grace like to follow us to the High Hall to discuss specific terms?"

"Bring a table and chairs here instead," Alyssa countered. "I will not go out of sight of my dragon until we are finished, neither will you, Lady Lysa or Lord Arryn."

This clearly caught Baelish off guard but offering a dishonest smile he complied and a table and some chairs were hastily brought out to the garden. Of course, as they all sat down to begin to negotiate the terms of the surrender, he stayed. Ostensibly to 'advise' Lady Arryn, but he was fooling no one.

"Let me begin," Alyssa said when they were all seated even as she squeezed the Gwyn's hand under the table to calm her down as she fidgeted nervously in her seat. The Ironborn woman having never been in such a situation before. "I will be blunt. I have little to ask of the Vale beyond submission. As such, for that I offer a return to the status quo before the War of the Four Sovereigns."

"That is most welcome," Baelish said with a slimy smile and shot a knowing look in Gwyn's direction. This caused the woman to shift uneasily and clutch Alyssa's hand more tightly but she otherwise kept her cool. "But might I offer Mya Stone to you as a concubine in exchange for some terms? She is a baseborn child of Robert Baratheon, your grace, as such taking her as a member of your harem will further legitimize your rule."

"I will need to meet the girl first," Alyssa hedged. "But I am open to the idea. What would you want in exchange?"

"I would like to once more serve as Master of Coin, your grace. That this would offer the Vale some representation on the Small Council would only serve to further your legitimacy."

"I'll make the arrangements. Is there anything else that the Vale wants?" Alyssa asked, emphasizing the Kingdom's name on purpose since so far at least everything only seemed to serve Baelish's interests.

Said master manipulator sent a perfunctory look to Lady Lysa and Lord Arryn who both gave a disinterested shake of their heads.

"If that is the case then I accept your surrender, Lord Arryn." Alyssa said looking not at Baelish but the young Lord Arryn. "And the Vale is once more a part of the Seven Kingdoms."

The boy just nodded and Alyssa frowned. Was that his only response.

Deciding to put the matter out of his mind for now, she turned to Baelish. "My party and I will be spending the night here at the Eyrie and depart in the morning, so produce this Mya Stone before then. Now show us to our rooms for the night."

The Mockingbird made a gesture and a servant hurriedly ran forward.

"Before I forget, I'll have my own servants attend to me tonight. Gate."

A portal promptly opened next to Ghost and Brienne of Tarth stepped through from Ten Towers
leading the small cadre of servants that had served her throughout her campaign so far.

"Please lead the way," Alyssa told Baelish's servant.

As the now very intimidated man nodded and walked into the castle while Alyssa and her retinue followed, Alyssa couldn't help but smile at how she had managed to get something out of the Mockingbird. For though he did not know it, he was a man living in his last days. Varys had confirmed Baelish's involvement in her family's misfortune through his arranging for the Gold Cloaks' betrayal of her Uncle and how that led to his demise. As a result, she had already arranged with the Spider for the Mockingbird to have a fatal accident in the near future. As such getting anything out of him beforehand was just plain amusing.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

And so Alyssa finishes living up to Tyrion's boast about her being the second coming of Aegon the Conqueror. And by being monstrously cruel to the Ironborn in the process. I think I outlined her reasons for those extreme actions well enough but just to recap, she's doing it because i) it will earn her favour from half the Kingdoms and ii) she is holding onto a burning hatred for what she thinks they did to Bran and Rickon during Jon's life.

As for Gwynesse's induction into the harem, all I can say is that Alyssa's magic wants to complete the set as it were. One lady for each kingdom and all that. Why am I pursuing something like this? Well, read my AN from last chapter since I explained it pretty well there in my opinion.

That's all for this chapter. So till next time tchau!
As they prepared to travel back to King's Landing the next morning, Alyssa went through her plans in her head whilst her servants gathered her things in the Eyrie's central garden.

I'll make a quick stop in the capitol before heading south.

The latest news was that their information about the time of the Golden Company's arrival had been wholly inaccurate and they'd already made landfall by the time even Varys' rushed message had reached her at Ten Towers. Fortunately, despite their surprise attack they had been repulsed when they'd tried to take Storm's End. All was not well however and they had managed to take the castles of Griffin's Roost, Rain House, Crow's Nest, and Greenstone. And this was only part of the forces. If prisoners at Storm's End was to be believed, the Company's fleet had been separated by a storm with only a portion making it to the Stormlands and the rest reportedly making landfall in the Stepstones.

I can't let the rest of the Company join up. I must crush these footholds they've already taken!

"Alys," Gwyn said, pulling Alyssa from her thoughts.

"What is it?" Alyssa asked the Ironborn lady who much to the Queen's disappointment had not shared her bed last night, though Loras had reported she had made it as far as Alyssa's door before losing heart.

I suppose I'll just have to wait until she can find the courage.

Not privy to her once again wandering thoughts, Gwyn nodded towards a tall, strapping young woman, with coal-black hair cut short and deep blue eyes who was being escorted over by Baelish.

"Your grace, I present to you Mya Stone." The Mockingbird said with a showman's smile. "My apologies for doing so only now. It took some time tracking her down."

Alyssa just nodded, already feeling her magic responding to the Valewoman's presence. And from the way the previously resigned looking woman froze in shock, she felt it too. Gwyn's amused giggling to their side, did not help matters.

"Greet the Queen, Mya." Baelish demanded, looking oddly between Stone and Alyssa.

"Your grace," the older woman said with a stiff curtsy.
"Oh, let's not drag this out." Gwyn said suddenly and grabbing hold of one of Alyssa's hands placed it on the Stone's shoulder.

As seemed to be the case since Elia, the effect was immediate. Sparks of magic invisible to everyone but Alyssa and those it affected coursed between the two women and the next thing the Queen knew it the bigger woman was glaring at her with concern.

"Why in the Nine Hells are you flying around when you're so heavy with child!?” Mya scolded.

"I asked Alys the same thing." Gwyn added. "But she just said she could handle it."

"I can," Alyssa said with a pout. "My magic is supporting me. I am fine. As good as I ever was."

"You have been slowing down lately actually." Loras, the traitor, corrected. "It's slight but you've been moving slower and getting tired more easily."

"Yes," Ser Wendel added. "Ever since you entered your eighth moon."

"I know your ladies back in the capitol are most concerned over this as well, your grace." Brienne chose to throw in as well.

Even Ghost nodded his head in agreement, much to a watching Baelish's amusement. She was so glad he was set to die soon. She shuddered to think of what he could do by holding this public scolding over her head in the future if he survived.

"You're all worrying too much." Alyssa insisted. "And you!"

"Me?" Mya asked, blinking in confusion as Alyssa pointed at her.

"Yes, you. If you have time to be concerned about me then what about yourself? Aren't you the least bit worried about what is being asked of you? Being my concubine? Magic be damned, aren't you attracted to men? I have it on good authority that you and a certain squire named Mychel Redfort were courting?"

"How did you know that!?" Mya asked, her mouth falling open in shock.

"Lord Varys' little birds." Alyssa said as if it was obvious.

They didn't need to know that she had used Message last night while waiting to see if Gwyn would join her to check in with Lord Varys and learn about her latest potential concubine. That doing so also allowed her to learn of the latest news of the Golden Company's invasion from the ravens that had arrived in King's Landing late that night was a bonus.

"They seem to be everywhere," Baelish said with a frown.

"They wouldn't serve their purpose if they weren't." Alyssa pointed out to him distractedly. "Now Mya, answer my question! Why aren't you more concerned with being my concubine?"

"So long as it's for the Vale I can accept it." Mya told her with a shrug. "It's not like I've never been attracted to another woman before, I've always preferred men yes but being with a woman was never something I ruled out. And that thing between us, those sparks-"

"Alys' magic." Gwyn supplied helpfully, a thoroughly amused smile on her face.

"Yes, that." Mya nodded at the Ironborn woman gratefully. "Thanks to that, I'm sure I can."
"You're sure?" Alyssa asked uncertainly, the anger at being put on the spot having faded and replaced with deep seated concern.

"Yes," Mya told her firmly.

"Why don't we discuss this further after we get back to King's Landing, your grace?" Loras asked. "The servants are done moving our things for the trip."

"Very well. Then Gate." Alyssa cast, opening a portal to the square just in front of Maegor's Holdfast and the servants began streaming through the portal.

"You're leaving now?" Baelish asked, alarmed.

"Yes, why?" Alyssa asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Just wait a moment, your grace. Let me summon Lord Arryn and his mother so they may see you off as good hosts should."

Alyssa sighed and nodded.

A little over half an hour and one hastily put together parting ceremony later, Alyssa and her immediate party flew through a freshly cast Gate into the square just in front of Maegor's Holdfast that was barely able to fit Ghost, much less the reception of advisors and family that await her.

It's good to be back. Alyssa thought as she saw the smiling, welcoming faces of her concubines and Arya as she used Levitate to float down from her dragon's back.

As if responding to the thoughts, a shell of magic surrounding her stomach that Alyssa hadn't even noticed was there faded away.

What was th-

She never finished the thought as the moment her feet touched the ground, a painful burst like the pain she sometimes felt when she had her moon's blood but much more intense hit her. She would have fallen if not for Mya and Gwyn hurriedly grabbing her. At the same time, she felt a sudden gush of water that she could not control rush out of her and stain her skirts.

"Wha- What's happening?" Alyssa cried out in alarm before she hissed in pain as another surge of pain coursed through her.

"You're about to give birth that's what," Mya said sounding harried. "Someone get a Maester! And a Septa! Hurry!"

"But Alys isn't due for another moon!" Gwyn gasped.

"Then it probably has something to do with flying all around the Seven Kingdoms while heavy with child!" Mya snapped.

"Your grace," the comfortingly familiar voice of Maester Luwin, fresh from Winterfell to serve as the Red Keep's temporary Maester, said as he rushed to Alyssa's side. "May I examine you?"

"H-Here?" Alyssa gasped out in between the bursts of pain.

"I need to see how far along you are, your grace." The elderly Maester said calmly. "If it is still
early we can move you inside but if not then I'm afraid we have no choice but to deliver the Prince or Princess here."

"D-Do it!" Alyssa ordered, biting her lip to avoid crying out at the agony.

"Shield the Queen," Alyssa distantly heard Margey bark even as a contingent of men formed around her, their backs to her and shielding her form from prying eyes whilst Ghost used his voluminous wings to try and do the same.

She barely noticed this though, too preoccupied as she was by the pain and how Maester Luwin was ordering Gwyn and Mya to lower her to the ground whilst simultaneously flipping up her skirts. She was mortally embarrassed, but considering the situation there was nothing to do about it.

"Good, it's still early." The aged man who was almost like a grandfather to her declared with a sigh of relief after a moment of studying her nethers and flipped her skirts back down. "We can move her. Someone carry the Queen to her rooms. Quickly."

Before Alyssa could so much as say a word, Ser Wendel had picked her up and was sprinting into the massive square fortress of the Holdfast, everyone else trailing after them as they made their way to the Queen's Bedchamber.

Almost ten hours of painful labour later, Alyssa brought a healthy boy into the world. The new Prince which she had named Eddard after her Uncle-Father was a beautiful baby with a tuft of jet black hair and shining blue-green eyes. Like all those of their blood, young Ned Targaryen would undeniably grow to look every bit the Baratheon like his father. He should probably have been put in the nursery but at Maester Luwin's advice to encourage bonding between them, he was instead sleeping in his crib by Alyssa's desk as she worked.

"He's sleeping?" Arya asked in a quiet whisper as she poked her head into Alyssa's bedchamber.

"Yes," the Queen told her sister. "So be quiet. We don't want to wake him."

*It would oh so troublesome to put him back to sleep if he does.* Alyssa thought unhappily, barely keeping herself from glaring at her child.

Arya nodded and carefully closed the door behind her as she slipped into the room.

"Why are you here Arya?" Alyssa asked as she gestured to her sister to take a seat in the chair in front of her desk.

"I've been sent by Margaery, Jeyne and the others to try my luck at convincing you to stop working and go rest." Arya said with a roll of her eyes. "Like if they couldn't manage it, I could."

"You are my favourite sister." Alyssa told her teasingly.

"Don't tell Sansa that." Arya shot back with a grin. "But seriously if your wives can't get you to stop, you won't listen to me."

"They aren't my wives."

Arya just rolled her eyes. "Not by law but you lot are fooling no one, sister."

Alyssa sighed, refusing to be drawn into this argument again. Arya was adamant that Alyssa
should just stop with all the pretense and give her concubines the title they deserve whilst Alyssa and said concubines were equally adamantly unwilling to make such a controversial move. They'd been arguing about it on and off since Renly died and neither side had budged from their positions at all, something that was unlikely to change for the foreseeable future.

Perhaps sensing this, Arya changed the topic.

"So what are you so busy working on instead of resting?"

"Primers for others on how to cast magic like I can. It is my hope that I can train some mages to assist in the coming war against the Others."

She knew she was late in doing so and as a result she was unlikely to have any mages ready in time but this was the first time she could find to do so. And late or not, she had to try.

"You sure they aren't just a story? You know like snarks?"

"I'm sure." Alyssa told her sister seriously.

"If you say so," Arya said skeptically. "By the way, where's Ghost?"

"I sent him to assist Lord Mace in dealing with the Golden Company."

"On his own!?"

"You sound like Lady Olenna and Lord Varys." Alyssa told her with a roll of her eyes. "They reacted the same way when I told them."

"No offense, sister, but can Ghost control himself without you?"

"I trust my dragon."

"Oh! Speaking of Lord Tyrell." Arya said loudly, causing baby Ned to stir and Alyssa to glare at her. Thankfully, her son merely rolled over and simply continued sleeping.

"You're lucky he's such a heavy sleeper."

Arya chuckled nervously.

"So what about Lord Mace?" Alyssa asked with a sigh at her sister's antics.

"There was a raven from him. Maester Luwin was on his way over to pass it to you but I ran into him on the way and so I asked him to pass it to me. Oh, and he reminds you to rest more too."

"Everyone tells me to rest more." Alyssa said with a frustrated growl even as she shot her and Ned's Queensguard shadow for the day a glare. "And Ser Royce, Lady Brienne, that is not an invitation for you two to add your opinions to the matter. I've heard you already."

Both Queensguard frowned but nevertheless kept silent as requested.

"They wouldn't be on your case if you stopped pushing yourself," Arya told her with a disapproving look even as she fished out the raven's scroll and handed it over. "Everyone is just worried about your health."

"I'm fine." Alyssa insisted. "I used Regeneration and Healing Touch on myself once Ned was born and I could. Thanks to them I'm as fit as I ever was. There is really no reason to worry."
"You're as stubborn as an ox, you know that sister?"

"So everyone tells me." Alyssa said with a huff. "Go watch Ned. I need to read this."

"Alright." Arya said with a pout even as she obligingly went over to Ned's crib and stared down at her nephew with a happy little grin.

The letter was an overly verbose and flowery letter from Lord Tyrell that began by thanking her for sending Ghost down to the Stormlands to help his forces in the annihilation of the Golden Company which contained much praise for her dragon's prowess and contributions to the campaign.

Considering by his own account Ghost had only participated in a single engagement, he was exaggerating things grossly out of proportion. Then again she didn't expect anything less from the man. Despite Margey's place by her side, her father was constantly trying to further ingratiate himself with Alyssa.

She's already my formal First Consort and his mother is my Hand, what else could he want?

Shaking her head at the Lord Paramount of the Reach's odd behavior, Alyssa continued reading and found that it continued with an apology for not being able to account for her dragon's current location beyond that he was last seen flying north.

Ghost where are you? Alyssa sent to her dragon curiously.

He returned with an image of the image of King's Landing in the distance as it sat beside the Blackwater.

Oh good! You're almost back. Thank you for helping with the Golden Company.

He returns a sense of exasperation and a desire to help her wherever possible. That and a sense of satisfaction from having gorged on some of their elephants.

I know, but thanks regardless my friend. Alyssa sends him in reply, ignoring the churning in her stomach at the shared taste of elephant meat he'd inadvertently sent her with the ease of practice. This was not the first time Ghost had shared an echo with his meals with her over the years. Head to the Dragonpit. I just received word a couple days ago that most of the rubble has been cleared away. It won't do for you or any dragon to nest there permanently, we don't want to stunt your growth like it did for the dragons of old but it should make a fine temporary nest for the time being.

He roared his appreciation both into her mind and if the faint bellows in the distance was any indication to the rest of the world as well.

Chuckling at her friend's antics, she continued reading Lord Mace's letter.

He reported that he was returning to King's Landing post haste with the heads of the Company's Captain-general Harry Strickland, Jon Connington and the impostor claiming to be her brother Aegon.

"Good. They'll be nice additions to the heads on the Red Keep's ramparts," Alyssa said with a satisfied smirk.

"So Lord Tyrell won?" Arya looked up from watching a sleeping Ned in fascination to ask.
"Yes." Alyssa told her with a grin. "The Seven Kingdoms are secure now."

"Good to hear."

Their conversation was interrupted when there was a soft knock on the solar's door and Brienne cracked it open to check who it was.

"Your grace, it's Maester Luwin." The lady warrior announced. "A raven just arrived from the Wall."

"Hand it over," Alyssa said eagerly and her Queensguard complied by letting the old Maester inside who promptly passed a new raven's scroll to her.

"They did it," Alyssa gasped in pleasant surprise. "They actually did it!"

"Did what, sister?"

"Captured a pair of wights, Arya. The madmen captured a pair of wights."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

A nice short one to finish off this 'book'. As you guys might have guessed the next book will be the finale as the Westeros that Alyssa has united prepares to face the threat of the Others. How will that play out? Well, hopeful better than the disappointment of Game of Thrones Season 8 at least. To see if I manage that, please do keep reading.

Oh, and in regards to my descriptions of Alyssa going into labour. I'm just a guy with only as much understanding of a woman giving birth as I can glean from research on the internet. So if I got anything off, just know I tried. That said, I do have an in-story explanation for it and that's Alyssa's magically enhanced physiology throwing everything off.

Till the next installment nakhvamdis!
A mixed group of about two dozen Night's Watch Brothers and Free Folk of which Tormund Giantsbane was a part and led by Black Jack Bulwer, the Watch's First Ranger were gathered around a group of small campfires in the Haunted Forest in the land Beyond the Wall.

"First Ranger," Tormund called out to the leader of the Crows that he found himself sharing a weak fire with. He normally wouldn't have been so polite to a kneeler, but the damned stubborn man would answer to nothing else despite Tormund's efforts to goad him into doing otherwise.

"What is it Giantsbane?" The bull of a man asked with a tired grunt.

"How does your Queen know that dragonglass works against the wights and Walkers?" Giantsbane asked lifting the weapon that the kneelers had designed to use the dragonglass and which had started arriving at the Wall for moons now. It was a wooden club with sharp bits of dragonglass worked onto two sides. "I thought you Crows only figured that out by chance when that fat, smart Crow-"

"Samwell Tarly," The First Ranger supplied.

"Yes, him. Since he accidentally killed a wight and Walker with a dragonglass arrowhead he found."

"That's how we learned how to use dragonglass." The Crow agreed. "But how the Queen knew? Magic I'd say. She's a witch."

"How's that different from a wood-witch?"

"Your guess is as good as mine."

"Fat load of good you are."

"I could say the same for you and your Wildings, Giantsbane." The First Ranger shot back angrily. "We've been trudging through this wasteland for weeks now and we haven't so much as run into a hint of the wights or the Walkers."

"Do you want to?"

"No," the Crow was honest enough to admit. "But it's what we set out to find. It's the only bloody
reason we brought you lot along."

"You don't trust us?" Tormund asked mockingly.

"My Brothers and I trust you about as much as you trust me," the other man spat. "Enough to fight the Others together because none of us want to end up as wights, but that's about it. If we didn't need your experience in dealing with them we wouldn't have brought you at all!"

Tormund just let out a full bellied laugh at the First Ranger's frankness.

"You're a good man, Crow." He told the kneeler genuinely. "You say it as it is. I like that in a man."

To Tormund's astonishment the Crow actually allowed himself a smile.

Their moment of camaraderie was ruined when suddenly the ambient sound of the forest abruptly disappeared and the light showering of snow that had been falling till then grew in intensity.

"They're coming," Tormund said as he stood and brought his new weapon to the ready, the whole party doing much the same.

"Aye," the Crow said as he surveyed the forest as he lit some prepared fire arrows with their dying campfire.

As if sensing that they had lost the element of surprise, the enemy changed tactics and without warning surged out of the surrounding trees towards the ready party of the living.

"I count thirty wights! No Walker!" The Crow shouted as he shot his first fire arrow at a wight that by its clothing and the spear it carried had once been a spearwife. The flame caught easily and the dead thing burned away into ash abnormally quickly, a result of whatever magic that fueled the undead abomination being particularly weak against fire.

"Ain't that a relief!" Tormund shouted back even as he used his bladed war club to slash at a former raider armed with a chipped bronze axe who collapsed back into the inanimate corpse it should have been at the first nick by the dragonglass of his weapon.

"Aye," the Crow said as he set another wight alight, before shouting at the rest of their men. "Remember we need to take at least one of these things alive!"

A roar of agreement came from the living warriors and snarls of inarticulate defiance came from the undead, or at least that's how Tormund interpreted the animalistic sounds the wights were making as he took them down one by one. Armed with proper weapons that could actually hurt these damned monsters, they were hardly as scary as they used to be. Terrifying still, but not unbeatable.

A fact that became apparent when after a short but intense fight that saw them whittling their attackers down to a handful.

"Throw the nets!" The First Ranger ordered, prompting men to begin tossing the heavy weighted nets they'd prepared for the occasion at the surviving wights.

A half dozen of the nets flew through the air in quick succession. Three missed entirely, one even ending up stuck in a tree of all places. One landed poorly on its target and the bulky wight easily threw it off. Two hit their marks though and brought a wight down each.
"Finish the rest off!" The Crow ordered and the living warriors obeyed eagerly.

"By the looks of their clothes and weapons, I'm thinking those wights used to be one of your people's raiding parties." The Crow said as they made the trek back to Castle Black with their prizes now locked inside a pair of heavily reinforced wooden crates. "Know any of them?"

"No," Tormund said with honest relief that he wasn't lying. "We aren't so small a people that I know every other Free Folk, ya know?"

"I know." The First Ranger acknowledged. "Just asking. I know the blasted Others like sending our own people against us when they can. Rattles our nerves."

"Aye, they do like doing that." Tormund agreed shuddering as he recalled instances of such.

"So what do you think they were doing? Those wights I mean."

"Hunting stragglers I imagine." Tormund said with a heavy heart. "By now they've likely killed and added almost all of us Free Folk to their Army of the Dead already. Those that didn't make it across the Wall thanks to your Queen that is. There are only stragglers left in the True North."

"So that's why there wasn't a Walker? Their job wasn't important enough?"

"Probably." Tormund said with a shrug. "I don't honestly care about the reason, I'm just glad we didn't have to fight one."

"I'm with you there Giantsbane." the Crow said as the Wall came within view in the distance and with it the end of their journey.

"Hello, Alyssa." Lord Nameless' familiar voice said as Alyssa found herself in a white void.

"My lord?" Alyssa asked as she looked around her in surprise. "Why am I here? Last I recall I was-"

"Falling asleep in your lovers Margaery and Jeyne's arms." Nameless supplied. "I am currently visiting your dreams."

Alyssa nodded her acceptance.

"You wanted to speak with me?"

"Yes," Lord Nameless agreed, conjuring a pair of chairs for them and Alyssa took her seat. Only noticing as she did so that she was dressed. It seemed her god respected modesty. "I believe congratulations are in order. Congratulations on becoming Queen Regnant of Westeros."

"Thank you, my lord."

"And congratulations as well on a healthy baby boy."

"Yes, thank you." Alyssa said with far less enthusiasm.

Lord Nameless frowned at her reply but didn't comment.

"But do not think that these victories mean that your hardships are at an end, my servant."
"The god told her. "**The hardest battles are just about to begin.**"

"I am aware, my lord. The news of the wight hunt's success arrived earlier today. With proof in hand I can now properly begin preparing for the war with the Others. A war that I assure you will provide you with the entertainment you long for."

"**It better,**" The god said as the dreamscape began to fade into nothingness. "**Or I might be forced to take drastic action.**"

"I repeat, I am perfectly fine!" Alyssa told the gathered party of her concubines, the newly appointed Grand Maester Luwin and the rest of her Small Council as she used **Levitate** to mount Ghost, the morning after the arrival news of the successful wight hunt and her meeting with Lord Nameless.

"Even if you are physically recovered thanks to your magic, your grace, surely you need the rest? For peace of mind is nothing else?" The Grand Maester argued with a disapproving frown.

"I will have peace of mind after I've convinced everyone of the threat of the Others and that means I need to fly those wights south so I can present them at the Great Council," Alyssa argued. "And before anyone mentions Ned."

At the mention of his name, her young son turned in Jeyne's arms to glance at his mother for a moment before yawning and falling back against her concubine's shoulder where he drifted off back to sleep.

"Ned is in trusted hands." Alyssa said simply, hiding how torn she felt.

Not at the idea of leaving her newborn son behind. But with the ease with which she had accepted the need to do so. If she had a child in her past life, she doubted she would be able to do something like this. In this life however it was easy. She had the mission of defeating the Others to accomplish and even if it required taking time away from her son to accomplish than so be it. This did not mean that she did not love Ned, he was her son and naturally meant the world to her. And in order to ensure he had a future, she needed to leave him. At least that's what she told herself.

*I'm a terrible mother.* Alyssa concluded but shunted the thought into the depths of her mind. She had no time for self-loathing.

"We'll take care of Ned," Margey reassured her. "But he needs his mother so please, Alys, be back soon."

Alyssa nodded and used **Levitate** to help Brienne and Loras, her Queensguard escorts for this trip, mount Ghost as well, whilst her dragon growled his agreement with Margey's words.

*Even my dragon is against me.* Alyssa lamented even as she remained firm.

"I will return as swiftly as I can." Alyssa said before turning to her Hand. "Lady Olenna, in the meantime, I trust that you and the rest of the Small Council can finish the arrangements for the Great Council?"

"All will be ready, your grace. Just come back safely and swiftly."

Alyssa just nodded. "Then I leave matters in King's Landing to all your capable hands. **Gate.**"

With that Ghost leapt into the air and flew through the portal and into the air over Castle Black.
Ghost landed them just outside the collection of stone towers and timber keeps that made up Castle Black and was immediately greeted by Lord Commander Thorne.

"Your grace, welcome to Castle Black," the kneeling Lord Commander said as Alyssa and her Queensguard floated down from Ghost's back courtesy of a **Levitate** spell. The man looked just like she remembered from her last life, humorless, dry and hard.

He was surrounded by a reception party of kneeling Night’s Watch Brothers and the odd defiantly standing Free Folk. All of whom were looking at Ghost in awe and hope.

*They probably think I can solve the problem of the Others by simply flying Ghost north and torching the Night King with dragonfire. Alyssa realized. I almost wish it was that simple.*

She knew it wasn't though. While the Night King might be susceptible to dragonfire, especially Ghost's magically altered dragonfire, the monster would not be alone and any attempt to just fly off and face him would be suicidal. The only way to defeat him was to fight his armies with her own, lure him out *then* kill him.

"It is an honor to be here," Alyssa told the slim and sinewy leader of the Night's Watch honestly as she signaled for him and his kneeling Brothers to stand. "Now show me the wights."

The Lord Commander looked startled, probably expecting pleasantries or that she would request to be shown to her rooms first. To his credit however, he recovered quickly.

"This way, your grace." The knight said as he led her down a familiar path through a building, the Shieldhall if she remembered correctly, then along the subterranean wormwalks down to the Ice Cells.

"You have stationed guards," Alyssa observed as they passed the fifth man holding on the dragonglass weapons Lord Velaryon's craftsmen had designed and shipped to the Wall.

"Of course, your grace. We can't risk the things getting out." Lord Commander Thorne said as they arrived at a pair of the frigid cells carved out of the ice of the Wall itself and secured by a set of sturdy iron gates.

Inside the two cells in front of them, which were flanked on either side by a guard, were crates. Both were heavily reinforced by strips of metal bolted on and wrapped in thick chains. It was somewhat excessive Alyssa reasoned but was reflective of just how much the men of the Wall feared the abominations they had trapped within.

"Open them." Alyssa ordered. "I need to see that they are what you claim they are."

Lord Commander Thorne winced but nodded at one of his Brothers, who rushed off.

"We'll need more men and equipment." The old knight said. "My Brother will be back with what we need."

"I'll wait."

They didn't have to wait long, though it was long enough that Loras had to accept an additional cloak to ward off the chill as the cold began to get to him. Though they had all prepared for the trip by wearing warm furs, it seemed Loras had underestimated just how cold it would get.

"I don't understand how either of you aren't freezing." Loras asked as he adjusted his additional
cloak so that it wouldn't get in the way and the men carefully began working on opening the crates.

"I grew up in the North and my magic helps." Alyssa told the Lord Commander of her Queensguard with a shrug.

"Brienne?"

"At the her grace's suggestion I'm wearing thrice the layers I normally would." Brienne told him with a shrug.

"Her size helps," Lord Commander Thorne added. "The bigger sized people always seem to have it easier with the cold."

"Is that so?" Brienne asked, intrigued.

"Yes, but we can continue this later." The leader of the Night's Watch said. "The men are almost done. Follow me, your grace, but keep your distance from the crates themselves."

"You're not opening them entirely?" Alyssa asked as they cautiously advanced into the first cell where a group of Brothers very carefully pulled the lid of the crate off slightly. It was more than enough however for a rotted, frostbitten hand to lash out as the snarling wight within struggled to get free, its blue eyes glowing with an alien contempt for the living.

"By the Seven!" Loras shouted as he and Brienne pushed Alyssa back, both of them drawing their swords.

"Very good, Lord Commander." Alyssa said calmly. Unlike her Queensguard, she was sadly familiar enough with wights to have lost her sense of shock at seeing the pitiful creatures. "Seal it up and let's see the other one."

"You heard her grace," Ser Thorne barked and his men used long wooden poles to force the wight back into the crate as they slid the lid back on even as he began leading Alyssa and her escorts over to the other cell to repeat the inspection.

Alyssa stood outside the King's Tower and looked up at the long wooden stairs leading up the Wall with nostalgia as the servants she'd used Gate to transport in from King's Landing tried to make the best of the ancient and ill maintained quarters within.

"Who goes there?" Brienne issued a challenge from behind her, causing Alyssa to spin around to see who had approached her.

It was her old friend from her past life, Samwell Tarly. He was just as fat as she remembered and his dark hair, pale eyes, and a large moon-shaped face were likewise unchanged. Nor it seemed was his nervous disposition as he fidgeted anxiously as she looked at him.

"Y-Your grace," the man stuttered out. "I, uh, am Samwell Tarly. I am Maester Aemon's assistant."

"No need to be nervous, young man." Alyssa urged as comfortingly as she could manage. "Just tell me why you are looking for me."

"R-Right. Uh. Maester Aemon would like to see you, your grace. He is, uh, your-"

"My great, great granduncle," Alyssa breathed in shocked realization. She had not given the matter much thought before now but the old Maester of the Night's Watch was indeed a Targaryen.
"Yes," Sam nodded looking surprised that she would know that. "He, uh, would like to see you."

"Lead the way."

"May I touch your face, your grace?" The bald, wrinkled, and shrunken Maester Aemon said in a surprisingly strong voice for a man clearly on his deathbed. "I am blind you see."

"Of course, Uncle." Alyssa sat kindly as she moved to the side of the small bed inside the tiny, cramped quarters her Uncle occupied inside the wooden keep at the base of Castle Black's rookery. "I hear that you take after your mother?"

"I do, Uncle." Alyssa said kindly as the old man ran his hands slowly across her face as he tried to create an image of her appearance in his mind. "But you have your father's chin, my brother Egg's chin."

"Aegon V?"

"Your great, great grandfather yes." Uncle Aemon said with a gummy smile as he removed his hands and Alyssa clutched the one closest to her lightly. "You have his long, elegant hands as well. He got them from my mother, you know?"

"I didn't." Alyssa admitted. Feeling sad that she knew so little about her family. "Do you have your father's talent for music?"

"My sisters, I mean my cousins," Alyssa said, correcting herself quickly even though Uncle Aemon just smiled at her uncaring of the mistake. "They claim that I do though I always think they exaggerate."

"A musician and a conqueror." Uncle Aemon praised. "You truly are a talented young woman."

Alyssa couldn't help herself, she blushed at the compliment. Here was a man that was a hundred years old and had seen the most turbulent years in Westeros' recent history praising her achievements!

"It is a great joy to me to see that our family once more sits on the Iron Throne as is our right." Uncle Aemon continued. "I've only held on as long as I have to see that. To see you."

"Uncle?" Alyssa asked worriedly. He couldn't mean what she thought he meant could he?

"I am dying, child." He said with a surprising levity despite the situation. "Nothing can change that. But before I go there is one last thing I want to do. Sam, give it to the Queen."

"Yes, Maester Aemon." Sam said, fighting tears in his eyes as he presented Alyssa with a sword. Its slender blade bore the distinctive rippled patterns of Valyrian steel, its guard was inlaid with gold in the pattern of coiling dragons and at its pommel sat a large ruby.

"Is this-"

"Dark Sister." Uncle Aemon confirmed. "I have kept in my care all these years since Lord Commander Brynden Rivers disappeared while ranging beyond the Wall. And now it has at last found its new rightful owner."
"Uncle, I am not worthy."

"Says the second coming of Aegon the Conqueror." Uncle Aemon said with a laugh that soon descended into a coughing fit.

"Uncle!" Alyssa cried out in alarm as she leaned over him and prepared to cast her healing magic but he grabbed her hand.

"No." The elderly man insisted through his increasingly labored breathing. "I've lived long enough. Let me die."

"But Uncle, I just found you."

"And that just proves you don't need me, child." Uncle Aemon lifted a trembling hand to caress Alyssa's cheek. "Look at all that you have accomplished without my help. Now that I've given you Dark Sister, I have finished my final duty in this world. Let me have my rest, your grace. I beg you."

"If that's what you want, Uncle." Alyssa said, even as tears flowed down her face.

"Stay with me till the last moment?" He pleaded. "It shan't be long now."

"Of course."

Thus Alyssa spent the next hour keeping vigil at the bedside of her Uncle as he breathed his last.

Lifting Dark Sister in a salute to the man who had guarded it for so many years, Alyssa called on her magic.

"Flame Strike!" She cast, her magic to her surprise streaming into the blade before shooting out its point and causing Uncle Aemon's pyre to ignite into a bigger than normal pillar of flame for the spell.

Valyrian steel can channel magic! Alyssa startled at the revelation even as she flinched back from the more powerful than expected fire. She didn't know if she was immune to fire like some of her ancestors were said to be and she was not exactly eager to find out.

"And so ends the story of Maester Aemon Targaryen, faithful Brother of the Night's Watch." Alyssa said solemnly, hoping it would hide her earlier surprise. "May he rest in peace."

"May he rest in peace." Chorused the gathered mourners that included all the Night's Watch in Castle Black, the entirety of her own entourage and many of the Free Folk who now also shared the stronghold with their ancient enemies. Even Ghost gave a mournful roar in honor of his mage's deceased relative.

They all stood in silence watching as the flames of Alyssa's overpowered spell consumed Uncle Aemon's body. It took mere minutes before nought but ash remained of the man with the storied history.

Alyssa kept a vigil for a moment more as the last embers of the spell conjured flames faded before she turned away and walked towards where Lord Commander Thorne stood a respectful distance behind her. Next to him stood a number of Free Folk, none of which she immediately recognized.

"Your grace, my condolences." Lord Commander Thorne offered with sincerity.
"They are appreciated, Lord Commander." Alyssa said formally as she blinked away some tears. "But we have no time for grief. There is much to do. Are these the delegation Free Folk leaders I asked you to gather for me to represent their people at the Great Council?"

"Yes, your grace. They are led by-"

"I can introduce myself, Crow." A broad chested man with a massive belly and a beard white as snow interrupted Ser Thorne. "The name's Tormund Giantsbane, pleased to meet you Queen of the Kneelers."

"This is Tormund? Wasn't he red of hair in my past life? Alyssa thought even as she couldn't resist her smile at the man's forwardness. I suppose if the Imp looks different then it stands to reason others would too."

"The pleasure is mine, Tormund." Alyssa said back politely surprising her Queensguard and Lord Commander Thorne how had tensed at his rudeness. "Though I must ask that you try to be more polite when we head south. While I am understanding of your culture's preference for openness and frankness, many of my lords will not. Thus any impoliteness will only serve to be problematic in your dealings with them."

Tormund blinked and frowned.

"You kneelers have too many rules. But for the Queen who saved our people, we will try." Tormund said with a sigh.

"I ask for no more," Alyssa told the Free Folk leader with a sincere smile. "Now then, are you all ready?"

Tormund exchanged a look with the others in his delegation and received affirmatives from all of them.

"Good, then Lord Commander, your man is ready as well?"

"Yes. First Ranger Bulwer is." Ser Thorne said nodding to a broad shouldered, muscular Night's Watch Brother that stood some distance away discussing something with another of his Brothers. "He's just giving some last minute instructions to the man he's leaving in charge of his Rangers while he's away."

"Then please see to moving the wights out to the yard would you?"

"At once, your grace."

A few minutes found Alyssa waiting impatiently in Castle Black's training yard, looking forlornly at the scorch mark in the packed earth and snow that was the only remaining sign of her Uncle's pyre as the wights were transported out to the yard so that Ghost could carry them for the return trip to King's Landing. No easy feat considering the narrow passageways they had to be maneuvered through from the ice cells. Her grieving was interrupted however one a little Free Folk boy caught her attention as he approached.

"Your grace," the fur clad boy said with a passable if rough bow just before Loras or Brienne could challenge him. "I work for Lord Varys."

Alyssa's eyebrow quirked up then. The Spider had already managed to hire little birds among the Free Folk? The eunuch certainly worked fast.
"I found the spearwife you asked us to look for."

"Is that so? Bring her to me." Alyssa ordered, eagerness seeping into her voice.

Sketching another rough bow, the boy scurried off and returned moments later with a round faced, pug nosed woman with pretty blue-grey eyes that seemed too far apart. Her most distinctive feature however was her thick, shaggy mop of curly bright red hair. Despite some minor differences this was undeniably Ygritte, the love of her last life. Yet strangely enough Alyssa felt none of the romantic attraction towards her that her past self had. Even her physical attraction was limited.

*How odd. And disappointing.* She thought fighting a frown. *Is this the result of my experience with vastly more beautiful women? I mean, Ygritte, past or present, cannot hold a candle to the likes of Margey.*

"Your grace," the spearwife greeted reluctantly as she was dragged in front of Alyssa by the boy.

"Ygritte, how would like to become part of my Queensguard?" Alyssa offered.

She had initially intended, hoped even, that the Ygritte of this life would be compatible with her and her magic would resonate with her like it had with the others. Now that it hadn't, she had to fall back onto her second option. One she'd come up with if her fears came to pass as it just had.

After all, just because she could not love Ygritte in this life did not mean she didn't want her close. Alyssa knows Ygritte. Better than she knows any of her existing Queensguard and even some of her concubines. She thus has faith in her skills as a warrior and was certain she can trust her if she can get the proud woman to agree.

"Why the sard would I want that?" Ygritte refused fiercely. "Working with you kneelers is bad enough, but I don't want to become one."

"If so then why did you and your brethren accept my offer to settle the Gift?" Alyssa countered with a sly smirk. "Included in that offer was a requirement to become my subjects, to become kneelers."

"We had no choice." Ygritte spat. "It was either that or face extermination at the hands of the Others."

"So you and your leaders accepted it for the good of the people. To survive. And accepting this rank would do the same."

"How in the world would it do that?"

"Titles, ranks, these things have power in the South. More so than in the True North." Alyssa explained, her use of Free Folk terms startle Ygritte slightly like she had hoped it would. She needed to shake the spearwife's certainty that she was right. Only then could she convince her.

"If you accept this position, the standing of all Free Folk in my Realm will be bettered. Not by much, not at first," Alyssa admitted knowing honesty was also necessary. "But it is a first step. And if the Free Folk are to make a life south of the Wall, then they need to start taking those steps."

Ygritte was quiet for a moment as she pondered the matter.

"Why me then?" Ygritte asked quietly, her earlier belligerence gone. "There are better warriors among the Free Folk."
"Perhaps," Alyssa allowed. "But of all the Free Folk warriors and I've observed many via magic, I trust you most of all."

The redhead's chest puffed up at that, the flattery obviously having an effect.

"Alright! I'll be your Queensguard."

Alyssa smiled in satisfaction at a job well done as she offered the spearwife a hand in welcome.

"Then get your things," Alyssa ordered glancing behind her and seeing that the crates containing the wights were already being carried out into the yard. "We leave soon."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

For those who are curious, the dragonglass weapon that Tormund uses is essentially a mesoamerican macuahuitl. I imagine it is easier to mass produce than casting obsidian into a new shape. More logically straightforward too, just embed sharp bits of obsidian into a wooden club or other shape as needed and you'd have effective obsidian weapons.

As for Alyss's apparent dislike for Ned… She might be in denial but she's actually suffering postpartum depression or the Planetos equivalent of it. This is because of a variety of factors. One is that she never really wanted the baby in the first place. He was a political necessity but that's about it. Most importantly, he is Renly's child. And husband or not she did not respect or even like him and given a free choice would never choose him to father her children. Then there's the fact that she is very much homosexual. The entire idea of having a man's child was something that never sat well with her. I'll try to stick to the recognized symptoms of the IRL illness but I'm no medical professional and this is a minor plot point so don't expect fidelity to the matter.

Why didn't I add Ygritte to the harem? Simple. It's a matter of taste on my part. I just think Alyssa can do better. Plus her harem is of the Seven Kingdoms because that's what she rules and this is Nameless'/my way of symbolically showing her where her focus should be. Elements of the Free Folk might integrate into the Realm by the time everything is done but they won't need representation like the various Kingdoms do.

So after that long AN let me sign off at last. Till next time viszontlátásra!
"Thank you everyone for your hard work in organizing the upcoming Great Council," Alyssa said addressing the Small Council inside its dedicated chamber of the Red Keep. "You have all done wonderfully and I am sure that the Council will be a success as a result. So till then, or something urgent comes up, you are all dismissed."

The various members of her Small Council offered their thanks and began filing out of the room, Alyssa waiting for them all to leave until it was just her and Loras. The latter doubling as her Queensguard shadow today for convenience's sake since as Lord Commander he was also a member of the Council.

"Your grace," Lady Olenna said from the door with a mischievous look on her face that was only subtly different from when she was scheming and something Alyssa could only tell from careful observation of Margey who shared the same tells. "It seems you have someone waiting for you?"

"What do you mean?" Alyssa asked, too tired after their long meeting reviewing preparations for the Great Council to entertain her Hand's games.

"I think I will let you find that out yourself," the elderly woman said with a chuckle as she left whilst addressing someone outside the door. "She's waiting for you."

This turned out to be Elia. She looked stunning in the Dornish style dress in traditional Targaryen red with black she wore that exposed her shoulders and with a neckline that offered a tantalizing glimpse at her breasts. A beauty that was somehow accentuated by the angry look on her beautiful face.

"You needed something from me Elia?" Alyssa asked curiously, unsure of why her concubine seemed upset with her.

Her reply was Elia leaning down and pulling her into a hungry kiss, even as she pulled Alyssa out of her chair. Startled, the Queen didn't resist as the Dornishwoman pushed her lightly and she fell on top of the large round table that dominated the Small Council chamber. Through some expert maneuvering on Elia's part this did not break their kissing for more than a second or two as she merely climbed atop the table herself, straddling Alyssa in the process.

"E-Elia, s-stop." Alyssa pulled away from her concubine long enough to gasp out.
The Dornishwoman pouted but obeyed. She did not however get up and kept Alyssa pinned atop the table.

"What's gotten into you?" Alyssa asked as she struggled to steady her breathing and calm her stampeding heart.

"I thought it was obvious, Alys," Elia said with a shrug. "I want to lay with you."

"Didn't we agree to proceed slowly between us to appease your family?"

"To the seven hells with that! If I'm going to be your Paramour then I'm going to live up to the title. I will not let my family dictate my love life. I didn't before I wanted you, I won't now!"

Alyssa blushed. She had never heard someone so openly declare they wanted to lay with her. Margey had came close when she had been trying to seduce her back in Highgarden but even she was never this blunt.

"What do we have here?" Margey said, almost as if summoned by Alyssa's thoughts.

"Looks like Alys is allowing Elia to have her way with her in the Small Council chamber," Jeyne joined in with the same teasing tone as Margey. "Shame on you two. Can't you at least save this for your rooms?"

"I would if Alys would visit my rooms!" Elia shot back irritably, looking down at Alyssa with a glare.

"Alys, you haven't?" Margey asked in faux surprise. As her First Consort, she was also de facto Lady of the Red Keep and thus in charge of its management. There was no way she didn't know that Alyssa was as of the moment only laying with Jeyne and herself.

"No," Alyssa admitted nonetheless.

"That explains a lot," Jeyne said with a shake of her head.

"About what?"

"Jeyne don't!" Elia said, covering her face as she blushed prettily.

The Riverlander had no mercy for her fellow concubine however and with a smirk continued, "About why Elia has been suffering from hysteria lately."

Hysteria? Alyssa thought as she blinked in confusion.

Margey laughed at that and Jeyne just sighed, even as Elia blushed even harder.

Jeyne opened her mouth to explain but Elia cut her to the chase.

"What Jeyne means," the Dornishwoman said, her face practically glowing. "Is that I've been feeling very needy lately."

Alyssa blushed as she finally caught onto what her concubines meant.

"What they mean," Nymeria who was serving as Alyssa's second shadow for the day chimed in from where she was leaning on the doorframe casually. "Is that my sister has wanted to lay with you so badly the past couple months that she has been pleasuring herself at least twice a day to smother the urge."
"Nymeria!" Elia, now resembling a tomato despite her tan skin, hissed angrily at her sister.

Sitting up and pulling Elia into a hug, Alyssa shot Nymeria a stern look.

"Nymeria, please stop going around airing the royal family's secrets in public." Alyssa chided. "Even if said royal family member whose secrets you are sharing is your sister."

Turning away from the chastised Queensgard, she put her hands on Elia's cheeks and kissed her. Not with the passion of earlier but a more chaste, romantic one.

"You should have told me sooner." Alyssa told her honestly. "I'd have visited your bed sooner. But I promise I will do so tonight."

"Or we could have a go at it now, right here in the Small Council chamber." Margey suggested, only half-joking and causing Loras who had uncomfortably stood silent through this all to begin edging towards the door.

"I'd be game." Jeyne added.

Elia who was once again blushing hard just shook her head.

"Tonight," she said in a whisper. "Promise?"

"Promise." Alyssa told her kissing her again in assurance.

"So how was Elia last night?" Margey asked as Alyssa walked with her through the Red Keep's gardens. "Was she as passionate in bed as she is in the yard?"

"Quite the opposite actually," Alyssa told her lover. "She was all sweet and innocent, I suppose that's the best way to describe it. Which was strange since she was also clearly experienced."

"That's not strange at all. Just because she's experienced doesn't mean she has to be aggressive in bed."

"I suppose not." Alyssa agreed. "But enough of that. You can see how Elia's like in bed yourself soon. She's agreed to try out that little deviant fantasy Jeyne and you came up with yesterday."

"The four of us in the Small Council chamber?" Margey asked eagerly, even as poor Ser Royce who was escorting Alyssa for the day stumbled in shock though he thankfully caught himself before he fell.

"Yes," Alyssa agreed. "Now seriously, let's move on. You said you wanted to remodel the Red Keep's gardens?"

Margey pouted at having her fun denied but quickly grew more serious.

"Yes," she said and gestured to the various beautiful plants around them. "This is wasteful. Almost the entirety of the gardens' plants are purely ornamental, at least back in Highgarden roughly two thirds of the plants were food-bearing plants as well."

"I see where you are going with this, but have you spoken to Myrcella about your plans like I asked?"

"I have," Margey assured her. "Myrcella is only really concerned with her small garden. And did you really have a gardener sent down from Winterfell just to help her grow some Winter Roses?"
"Yes," Alyssa said with a shrug. "The Imp got her peach blossoms from Yi Ti."

"That girl is so spoiled," Margey said with a shake of her head as if she wasn't just as privileged and pampered.

Alyssa was smart enough to not mention it though. She did not want to be barred from Margey's bed as punishment.

"So can I have your permission to remodel the Keep's gardens?"

"Draw up a budget. I'll need to run it by the Imp. Even with the reparations we've levied from the Westerlands, gold is tight at the moment." Alyssa told her.

"Don't worry, I'll keep costs down." Margey assured her. "Besides, once we can start harvesting, the food that the new plants will produce will help to cut costs."

"True."

"So I have your approval?" Margey confirmed.

"Subject to your proposed budget, but yes."

"Thank you, Alys!" Margey said with a grin as she pulled Alyssa into a grateful kiss.

A groan of disgust came from nearby and the two women pulled apart to find Arya pretending to gag just ahead of them on the garden path, clearly having just rounded the corner. She was not alone however as along with her shadow Ser Emmon Cuy and direwolf Nymeria, she was also accompanied by a stern looking girl with long, straight raven black hair and startlingly expressive brown eyes who was looking at Alyssa's sister with disapproval.

She looks adorable. I wonder who she is? Alyssa thought as she felt the faint but familiar stirrings of her magic. It wasn't quite sparking yet and was more akin to her earliest reactions to Myrcella which was worrisome in itself.

"Arya!" Margey scolded. "That was rude."

"Ugh! I don't care," Arya shot back with a playful smirk. "If you want to kiss then don't do it in public. It's gross."

"You only think that because you're still just a girl." Margey countered. "In a few years when you're a woman flowered, you'll think differently."

"Never," Arya declared defiantly.

Rolling her eyes at her sister's antics, Alyssa addressed the rambunctious girl.

"Arya, more importantly what did you think would happen if someone hostile saw the little mummer's show you put on?"

"Huh? What do you mean Alys?"

"It would be used to justify the impression that you disapprove of the Queen's relationships with other women, Lady Arya." Her sister's friend said, to everyone's surprise. "An impression of disunity within her grace's family. One that will hurt her politically."

Arya paled.
"I didn't know that!"

"Obviously not," Margey said with a sigh. "You wouldn't have done it if you did. But now you know. So no more teasing like that, is that clear Arya?"

"Yes, Margaery." Arya said contritely. "Sorry Sister, sorry Margaery."

"Good. Now, would you do the polite thing and introduce us to your friend?"

"I am Lyanna Mormont, your grace." The girl said with a curtsy. "My Mother Lady Maege Mormont brought me along to get a chance to visit the capitol while she attended the Great Council. Lady Arya was being kind enough to give me a tour of the Red Keep."

"I see." Alyssa nodded as she rolled the name over in her head. Partly because the girl shared a name with her mother but mostly because she didn't want to forget this adorable child's name. "You have a good grasp of politics, Lyanna."

"Thank you for the compliment, your grace, but I am still only a beginner."

"That may be true but you're still better than my sister."

"Sister~!" Arya whined, blushing in embarrassment at the barb.

Everyone laughed at Arya's expense even Nymeria.

It thus no surprise when with a frustrated growl, Arya stomped off forcing Ser Cuy and her direwolf to follow after her.

"You best follow her, Lady Lyanna." Alyssa urged. "My sister is liable to do something foolish when she's in a huff. So please rein her in if you can."

"I will try, your grace." The adorable girl said. "By your leave?"

Alyssa waved in dismissal and with a curtsy, the young Lady Mormont scurried off in pursuit of Arya.

"I know the look on your face, Alys." Margey said teasingly as they watched the two young girls disappear down the garden path. "You do know that when I suggested you collect a mistress from every Kingdom in Westeros that it was a joke, right?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about." Alyssa insisted looking away from the knowing grin Margey must be sporting.

"Of course I do," Margareery said with a laugh as she leaned in to play with Alyssa's curls. "You were sporting the same look while talking to Lyanna that you did before Jeyne formally joined us. And look how that turned out? Doesn't she spend every other night, at least, in your bed? Hmm?"

Alyssa blushed. Though at what Margey was insinuating or the reminder of just how sexually active she was, she couldn't be sure.

"Lyanna is far too young."

"She is the same age as Myrcella,"

"And I haven't laid with Myrcella, magic be damned. She is only my concubine in name and for the sole purpose of tying the Westerlands to the Crown."
Margey laughed at that.

"Why don't you tell Myrcella that and see how she reacts?"

Alyssa winced. She could imagine the tears already and it twisted her heart. Unfortunately for her, Margey was not done with the hard truths yet.

"And, be honest, would you be able to turn her away when she comes to you once she flowers and demands she join you in bed?"

"I-I," Alyssa struggled to sputter out a denial knowing full well that she would be unable and unwilling to say no to such a request.

"You're hopeless about these kinds of things, you know that Alys?"

Loathe as she was to admit it, Alyssa could only nod in agreement.

The Great Council was held in a vast wooden amphitheater that came complete with retractable awnings copied from an ancient Valyrian design that kept it serviceable in all weather conditions which Alyssa had ordered built in the tourney grounds on the flat ground outside King's Landing's Lion Gate. And after days of pointless ceremony and equally inane discussion Alyssa sat stiffly in her throne as things finally came to what was truly important.

"All those against validating Lady Alyssa Targaryen as Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms?" Lady Olenna asked the gathered nobles of Westeros and was met with silence.

"All in favour?"

There was a forest of raised hands as every delegate did so.

"Any abstentions?"

There were none.

"Then as Convenor of this Great Council, I Lady Olenna Tyrell, hereby confirm Lady Alyssa Targaryen as the rightful Queen of the Seven Kingdoms." Her Hand declared before taking a knee. "All hail, her grace, Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name, Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms!"

"All hail, her grace, Alyssa Targaryen, First of her Name, Queen Regnant of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms!" The nobles of the Seven Kingdoms chorused as they too knelt.

Alyssa basked in the acclaim for a moment. It could not have ended any other way of course. Not when she had either earned the loyalty or conquered all of Westeros south of the Wall, to not back her now would be folly. Especially with the precedent for ruthless action she had demonstrated in her treatment of the Lannisters and the Ironborn. Nevertheless, having her rule validated like this was still an achievement that she rightfully took pride in.

Now comes the difficult part. Alyssa thought to herself as she gestured for her many lords and ladies to rise before stepping forward them.

"Thank you all, my lords and ladies," Alyssa told them. "For confirming my right to the Iron
Throne. There is much I could speak to you about at this historic juncture, but there is one matter above all that we must disgust. To that end, I have something to show you."

Nodding to Ygritte at the side of the dais where she stood, the Queensguard nodded back before disappearing outside for a moment and returning with a small squad of specially chosen knights and a familiar chained and heavily reinforced wooden crate. The sight of which had all the other Queensguard gripping their weapons tightly and ready to draw them at the slightest hint of trouble. All of them watched warily as the crate was moved to the edge of a pit that had been dug just in front of the stage of the amphitheater constructed for the Council.

"Open it," Alyssa ordered and the men did as they were told even as murmurs of confusion spread among the Westerosi nobles. Even most of the observers such as tall, thin, and gaunt Tycho Nestoris, representative of the Iron Bank and his Free Cities counterparts were looking on in barely concealed agitation. The only ones who weren't nervous were her men, the Night Watch's First Ranger Black Jack Bulwer, and Tormund's Free Folk delegation, all of whom knew what to expect and were ready to take action if things got out of hand.

The chains came off first and the moment it did the crate shook violently as the monster inside fought to escape. This caused the men handling it to back away fearfully but a stern look from Alyssa had them swallowing their fear and cautiously return to the task. Two men rushed forward with the keys to the three locks that kept the crate closed. One on the left and two on the right. They had no sooner finished their task than they sprinted back and another pair of men knocked the crate over the edge with long poles, sending the wight toppling out into the pit below.

Undeterred by the fall, the undead abomination crawled to its feet tossing aside the net that had first restrained it during its capture and let out an inhuman roar that spoke volumes of its hatred of the living. The wight had been a man once but all that was left of that life were the tattered remains of furs clinging to its rotting body. A body that was wholly missing a lower jaw, probably having been torn off by another wight when the man had first been killed, and its bones was visible in multiple places where its flesh had completely rotted away. Most chilling of all though was the icy blue eyes that shone with the desire to end the living that it used to survey the crowd of nobles who were now as a body recoiling in horror.

More than one person screamed and many of the warriors reached for weapons. Things seemed on the verge of degenerating into a panic, but Alyssa cut that off by speaking with such authority that the nobles were compelled to listen.

"Watch!" She barked, before nodding towards Ser Wendel. "Kill it."

The Manderly knight happily complied shooting a dragonglass tipped arrow into the wight. The moment the obsidian touched the monster, the blue fire that seemed to burn in its eyes disappeared and its body collapsed as it became a corpse once more.

"See! These wights can be killed!" Alyssa told her nobles. "By dragonglass like Ser Wendel has just demonstrated. Fire works even better. And we have reason to believe that Valyrian steel will as well."

This seemed to bring a sense of relief to the nobles and they began to calm. Those who had fled their seats slowly moving back to retake them. As Alyssa expected knowing that they were able to fight back against these undead horrors was enough to inspire some confidence.

"But these creatures are mere pawns, my lords and ladies. Isn't that right First Ranger?"

"That's right, your grace." Black Jack Bulwer said stepping forward. "They are naught but the foot
soldiers of the Others."

This was met with incredulity by many but the vast majority were looking down at the pit and the former wight with fearful or contemplative looks.

"We have no Walker to show you. Trying to capture one is madness itself." The Night's Watch Brother said. "But I've seen them. The Wildlings have too. We can all vouch that they exist."

"And can they be killed?" Prince Doran Martell of Dorne asked from where he sat in his wheelchair at the head of the Dornish section of the theater, his eyes narrowed as he glanced up from the former wight.

"They have been slain by dragonglass." The First Ranger said with a nod. "And the Queen thinks Valyrian steel works too, though we haven't tried it."

"How many of those dead things, those wights are there?" Robb asked looking not at the Night's Watch Brother but at Alyssa. "Your grace, how many of them have you seen with your magic?"

"There are at least a hundred thousand wights," Alyssa said, citing an estimate she and her Brothers had made in her past life having never dared spy on the Army of the Dead in this life. "And their numbers grow with every death they cause as the Others raise the slain to fight for them."

Fear began to grip the nobles once more, so Alyssa pressed on.

"Lords and ladies of the Seven Kingdoms! We have no choice here, either we fight this threat or we die and become wights alongside our mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, sons, daughters and all we love."

"Can we flee?" Gwyn's father asked fearfully.

"We have nowhere to go."

"Where in the world could take all of Westeros? And even if we found such a place would it truly be safe from the Others? Their wights need not sleep, eat or breathe. Would mere oceans stop them? And if they did, then for how long? Our only option is to fight. Fight with the might of all Westeros. Before the Others scour it of the living and add them to their dead host. Before they move on to cleanse the world of all life!"

Her words silenced the crowd and everyone looked thoughtful as they visibly weighed their options.

"The Riverlands will fight!" Lord Edmure Tully, of all people, declared as he stood and glared at the former wight as if it was a conduit to let his defiance be known to its White Walker masters. "I refuse to let Westeros be reduced to a land of the dead! Who is with me?"

"Dorne is with you!" Princ Doran shouted as his Dornish lords roared their approval.

"The North stands with the living!" Robb declared as the Northern lords raised their swords into the air behind him.

"The Reach fights with the Queen!" Lord Mace declared with as much enthusiasm as he could manage, his lords too raising to voice their support.

"For Westeros!" Lord Velaryon shouted as he led the Crownlands lords in adding their voices to the growing consensus.

"To the destruction of the White Walkers!" The elderly Lord Eldon Estermont, senior most
surviving of the Stormlands lords shouted as he rose to his feet prompting his fellow Stormlanders to join him.

"The Westerlands march with the Queen!" The Imp said as he finally managed to find somewhere so his lords could see him. That this amounted to the captain of his guard carrying on his shoulder made it a comical sight and there was a burst of much needed laughter even as the Westermen answered his call and jumped to their feet to pledge their support.

"The Iron Islands gives its ships and men to the cause of the living," Gwyn's father said at last having finally finished the hushed but intense discussions he had been having with his bannermen. Considering most of those were newly raised to their positions by Alyssa herself, she reasoned the recalcitrant one was Lord Harlaw himself.

*I'll have to ask Gwyn to go scold him later.* Alyssa thought absently as her attention and that of everyone in the amphitheater settled on the Valemen.

"I speak not for Lord Arryn but I, Ser Harrold Hardyng, declare that House Hardyng will fight for the Realm!" A handsome young man with sandy hair and deep blue eyes said, looking disgustedly at Lord Robert Arryn who looked smaller and even more painfully thin than Alyssa remembered when she visited the Eyrie. Though considering his mother had killed herself after Baelish had been killed, she could understand somewhat.

His bannermen did not however and one by one they shot their incompetent lord dark looks as they rose to pledge their support. Said Protector of the Vale was shaking his head strenuously he and as his regent, the aging Lady Waynwood, argued. At last it seemed even the woman gave up and ignoring the boy she stood.

"As Regent for Lord Robert Arryn, I pledge the Vale to the cause!"

Lord Robert paled and shook his head in denial but by this point everyone was ignoring him.

*I'll have to speak to Varys about removing him.* Alyssa thought. *We cannot afford such a weakling for Lord Paramount at this time. Kin to my siblings or not, the Realm is more important.*

"Thank you for your support to the cause, my lords and ladies!" Alyssa said addressing the now raucous crowd and only being heard thanks to the excellent design of the amphitheater that allowed sound to carry. "To victory!"

"To victory!" The collective of all the lords and ladies of Westeros roared in one voice.

Alyssa smiled at this sight of Westeros united in defiance of the Night King.

*We have a chance after all.*

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Why the hell are Alyssa and her harem so sexually adventurous? 'Cause I want them to be is the easy answer. ;) But seriously, it is because Margaery is the one setting the tone of their sexcapades and I've always seen her as game for it. In addition to her bisexuality, her being into kinky stuff has also always been my headcanon for her. Part
of this is derived from her willingness to share Renly with her brother as political marriage be damned, making an heir is still a necessity of such. Another is just my general tendency to assume that the 'innocent' ones are hiding secrets, usually of the sexual variety.

Sorry if the chapter title is misleading. As you can see the chapter revolves around the Great Council but the event itself is mostly skipped over. Why? Because I am loathe to create all the ceremony from whole cloth and it would be something full of ceremony. Modern parliaments evolved out of such bodies and are still to this day full of ceremony, what more during a time when such ceremonies were even more highly regarded? Yeah, I'm not going to worldbuild to that extent.

Alyssa is going to arrange for Robert Arryn to be killed? Are you surprised by this point? I think it should be abundantly clear by now that while largely well intentioned, she is utterly ruthless. Remember her annihilation of the Ironborn? The reasons for this deviation from Jon Snow's unflinching dedication to the pursuit of the honorable path is manifold but fundamentally it's because she saw where honor led. I've tried to be subtle about it in-story but besides spurring her on the path to taking the throne, Ned Stark's death or more precisely her inability to stop it broke any dedication to honor she has left. In its place is a ruthless pragmatism.

Argh! A look AN after a short chapter? My bad! I'll try to avoid doing it again. But to not drag this out any longer let me just wish everyone oant sjen!
Days after the Great Council, Alyssa was in her solar reading the latest reports on what the various Houses of Westeros was willing to offer to the war. As much as she wanted to immediately go on the offensive against the Night King and his Army of the Dead, it simply was not possible. It would take time, possibly a year, for the Seven Kingdoms to mobilize its forces and resources for the effort. And in the meantime there would be plenty of tiresome but necessary work to coordinate said mobilization.

"Alys," Mya said loudly as she practically slammed the door to the solar open. "I would like to have a word with you!"

Blinking in confusion at the sudden intrusion by the Valewoman but treasuring the opportunity to escape the mentally exhausting work she had been doing, Alyssa put aside the reports and turned to give the other woman her full attention.

"Of course, Mya. What is it? Is everything alright with Ned?"

Mya was Ned's caretaker for the day. Her concubines having decided among themselves that they would split the responsibility for overseeing the care of her son. Not that she thought it necessary considering the wet nurse and Essosi governess that Alyssa had hired for the boy.

"Ned is fine." Mya said with a shake of her head. "Myrcella and Shireen volunteered to take over. They want to play with him apparently."

"Play with him? Alyssa though incredulously. Considering he is only able to sleep, eat and shit at his age how exactly would they manage that?"

Alyssa nodded and successfully kept her frown off her face. Even if she disliked her son, she knew that letting on about it was unwise especially when he was but a babe. Some would even call it unnatural and she didn't need more accusations of that!

"Then what is it you need?" Alyssa asked, a pleasant smile on her face as she realized this wasn't about her son.

"Us," Mya said, her temper rising and her voice rising. "You've taken Elia to your bed?"
"I did." Alyssa admitted.

"And then why not me!?" Mya demanded leaning over Alyssa's desk so their faces were only inches apart. This close it was easy to see the hurt mixed in with the more obvious anger.

"I-I did not know you wanted me to." Alyssa admitted nervously. "Unlike Gwyn or even Myrcella and Shireen, you've shown no such interest."

Mya pulled away with a groan.

"Of course I'm interested!" Mya said with an exasperated roll of her eyes. "I am one of your concubine aren't I?

Alyssa opened her mouth ready to repeat the by now tired spiel about how the title was a purely ceremonial and political title magic be damned, when Mya shot her a look that had her snapping her mouth shut.

"And don't start with the spiel," Mya told her sternly. "Just answer me this: do you want me as a woman or not?"

"Of course I do," Alyssa told the Valewoman honestly. "I'd be a fool not to. You're a beautiful woman both inside and out."

To Alyssa's surprise Mya blushed bashfully at that.

"You really believe that?" The blue eyed beauty asked almost disbelievingly.

Alyssa could only look at her with disbelief of her own. Certainly Mya did not look traditionally beautiful. Her shoulder-length hair was cut in a rather masculine style and her preference for men's clothing such as the tunic and breeches she was currently wearing made fools think her mannish. That said clothing hid her attractive figure certainly did not help, even her substantial breasts were often hidden under layers of fabric that served to flatten them rather than flatter them.

*Oh! I think I know where this is coming from...*

"Has no one told you that Mya?" Alyssa asked genuinely.

Mya just shook her head, tears shimmering in her eyes.

"Not even the Redfort boy?" Alyssa asked, getting up and crossing around her desk to pull the other woman into her arms.

"No," Mya confessed. "At best he called me pretty."

"Fool." Alyssa said genuinely upset on her concubine's behalf.

"It's not his fault," Mya defended causing Alyssa to frown.

*Why was she defending him? Did she still have feelings for him?* Alyssa thought with a surge of irrational jealousy.

"I don't like dresses," Mya confessed before gesturing to her clothes. "And what I do like to wear doesn't make me look like an attractive lady. Something I'm not."

"You are now," Alyssa told her. "It would not be wrong to call you a Princess even."
"I'll honestly say I'm not too comfortable with that yet."

Alyssa smiled. "I didn't expect you to be. People take time to accept change."

Mya just nodded.

*How did a request from her to lay with her lead to us talking about how uncomfortable she is with her new status?* Alyssa thought with a giggle.

"What is it?" Mya asked as she pulled away from the hug slightly to look at Alyssa curiously.

"Simply wondering how strange the course of this conversation has taken."

Mya cocked her head for a moment before she too chuckled. "I guess you're right. It is strange. But that reminds me!"

"Of what?" Alyssa asked an eyebrow raised.

"You still haven't promised to lay with me!" Mya said pressing finger into Alyssa's right breast and causing the Queen to hiss in a mix of pain and pleasure. The sensitivity in her breasts since Ned's birth being one of the better things that it had brought her.

Deciding to be a little playful, Alyssa scuttled back and folded her hands over her bust.

"Now?" She asked coyly.

Mya looked startled for a moment before suddenly a predatory gleam entered her eyes.

"Yes, now." She demanded as she advanced on Alyssa whose eyes widened in surprise.

"Really!?" Alyssa asked flabbergasted.

"Why not?" Mya shrugged as she pointed to a piece of furniture from Yi Ti in the corner that Margey had bought and which functioned interchangeably as both a couch and a bed which she had added to Alyssa's solar for precisely such situations as the one playing out now. "There's a bed over there."

*I don't think she expected Mya to be the first one to use it though.* Alyssa thought absently.

In her distraction, Mya had already discarded her belt and was already lifting her tunic over her head.

"Ser Wendel, Ser Royce, out!" Alyssa ordered hastily and the two Queensguard hurried to obey, even as their Queen stepped forward to help her soon to be lover finish pulling off her outer garment which would leave her in her inner smock and breeches.

She was a tad too slow though and Mya managed to pull it off before tossing it at her face with a mirthful laugh. She took advantage of the temporary blindness this caused however to close the distance between them and as Alyssa pushed the tunic to the side, the Valewoman leaned in for a kiss.

It was their first kiss and it was heavenly. Mya was not as experienced as Margey or had Elia's mix of skill and desire for innocent exploration nor did she have the daring of Jeyne. Instead she had a forcefulness to her that was uniquely her own. She ravaged Alyssa's lips and left her feeling very thoroughly kissed. It was so wonderfully intense that as Mya pulled away, Alyssa moaned in disappointment.
Out of it from the kissing, she didn't realize for a moment that Mya had began to pull up her gown.

"You're overdressed, Alys." Mya told her with a playful smirk. "So hands up, your grace, and let me get this gown off you."

"By your leave Princess," Alys teased back and earning herself a delightful giggle as she complied and her lover pulled off her outer garment.

It would be the first but certainly not the last of her clothing to be shed that afternoon as she made sweet love with Mya in her solar. The two of them only leaving its confines until they were both satiated and that did not happen until well into the night. It was thus not until early morning that Alyssa was informed that her Aunt Daenerys Targaryen had captured Dragonstone.

"How did we miss this?" Alyssa demanded of Varys as she prepared to fly to Dragonstone to meet with her Aunt for the parlay that her Hand had hastily arranged once news of the island's fall had reached King's Landing from a battle weary Lord Velaryon.

"My birds across the Narrow Sea are thin, your grace. Especially in Slaver's Bay." The eunuch said in apology. "It is an oversight that I will endeavor to rectify."

"It's not just Slaver's Bay if your network failed to report how a fleet of the size she commands and one carrying armies of Unsullied and Dothraki no less. They would have needed to resupply at the Stepstones and thus spotted then at the very least!"

"I am aware, my Queen." Varys said with a wince. "I will inquire as to why my birds did not inform me of the fleet."

"Have you acquired any useful information at all that I can use?"

"The only new thing is that Princess Daenerys was supported in this endeavor by the Iron Bank. I have spoken to their representative and he rather belatedly confessed that they provided her with the loan to salvage the Volantene, Astapori and Yunkish ships from the siege of Meeren that make up the bulk of her fleet as well as hire the sellsail ships that account for the rest."

Why would they do that!? Haven't I already worked out an agreement with them on how to repay the Iron Throne's debts? Then again...

"That must have been months ago," Alyssa noted. "Did he tell you why?"

"No, but I presume they were hedging their bets as to who would end up ruling Westeros. She does have three dragons to your one, your grace."

Alyssa just scoffed.

"We'll see how well they measure up soon enough." She told Varys before turning to her Hand. "Lady Olenna, I leave King's Landing in your hands."

The elderly woman just nodded, still sporting the frown that she had since it became clear that Daenerys refused to parlay with anyone but Alyssa herself. Her Hand worried this was an attempt to entrap her, but the Queen reassured her that even if that were the case it would not work. They after all had contingencies for that.

With that she turned away from her Master of Whisperers and used Levitate to float up to Ghost's back. Her dragon had somehow gotten a growth spurt in recent weeks and had grown so immense
that it was now impossible and not simply difficult as it had been in the past to climb up his back without assistance. Behind her in a fighting platform adapted from those used on the Golden Company's elephants by the ingenious mind of her goodbrother Tyrion Lannister that had been strapped onto her dragon's back were Loras, Ser Wendel, and Ser Royce serving as her Queensguard escorts alongside a large contingent of guards.

"All ready?" Alyssa asked as she moved to the throne that had been built into the center of the platform.

"Everyone has secured themselves," Loras informed her as she too fastened the belts that would keep her in the throne should Ghost need to pull a particularly difficult maneuver mid flight.

"Good. Then let us fly." Alyssa said as she sent word to Ghost mentally that it was time.

Her dragon let out an eager roar before pushing off the spot on in the Kingswood that he had transformed into his lair after he had outgrown the Dragonpit and took to the sky, a familiar reinforced crate clasped firmly in one of his talons. Within a few powerful beats of his massive wings, Ghost was over the Blackwater and the Royal Fleet that sailed towards Dragonstone. Daenerys might have taken the island, but that was by dint of surprise. No one had been expecting her, something Alyssa suspected was thanks to interference from the Iron Bank. Bolstered by the elements of the Redwyne Fleet and Lannisport Fleets as well as fresh construction, the Royal Fleet had more than recovered from the destruction of the Battle of the Blackwater. And if Lord Velaryon's estimates of Daenerys' fleet was correct then they were only slightly outnumbered. Considering the bulk of the hostile fleet was serving as overloaded transports, Alyssa and her Master of Ships Lord Redwyne reckoned they had the advantage.

It was thus with confidence that Alyssa flew towards Dragonstone. A confidence that Alyssa felt validated as Ghost arrived in the air above Dragonstone and she caught her first glimpse of her Aunt's dragons. While mighty in their own right, only one came anywhere close to challenging Ghost. But even that black scaled creature was smaller, by a not insubstantial margin, than her dragon was. Something the smaller dragons seemed to recognize as they retreated as Ghost came in for a landing though they hissed in restrained anger at the intrusion into their territory as he did.

_Show them their place, Ghost._ Alyssa encouraged her dragon as they touched down and he sent back a burst of eager gratitude even as she let loose a terrible roar that silenced the smaller cream and green dragons while even the black dragon seemed just a little more cowed.

"Lower the ladders!" Loras ordered the men as he unbuckled himself from his harness.

Alyssa waited as her guards carried out the various disembarking procedures that she, Loras and the Imp had drawn up. Only when a group of her men were arrayed on the ground next to Ghost, did she finally unfasten the belts keeping her secure and dismounted with a Levitate spell. Once on the ground, she walked through the ranks of her guards to the front and finally faced the party her Aunt had sent to greet her.

"Of course, Daenerys was not there to meet her in person. That would just be unsafe plus forcing Alyssa to meet her inside Dragonstone castle which she had just taken was a nice power play. Knowing that did not temper Alyssa's disappointment at the delay at meeting her long lost Aunt.

"Queen Alyssa," A large balding middle-aged man with a black beard and who was noticeably swarthy and hairy said. "I am Ser Jorah Mormont and by your leave, I will escort you to my
Alyssa couldn't help but be surprised that the notorious Northern fugitive had thrown in his lot with her Aunt. I wonder if Daenerys knows what he's done.

Though if the demon's mask brand on his right cheek which she had read was how slavers in Slaver's Bay marked their dangerous and disobedient slaves was any indication, the Mormont had at some point had a taste of the fate had once so condemned others to.

I suppose that's why she accepted him. I wonder if he learned from his experience though? Alyssa wondered idly of the man who had been sent into exile for selling poachers he'd captured to a Tyroshi slaver.

"Have your forces evacuated the island as the terms of our parlay agreed upon?" Alyssa asked, that being the concession she had demanded to accede to Daenerys' demand that they meet in Dragonstone.

"Except for the agreed garrison of five hundred men, yes." Mormont replied unhappily.

Ignoring him, Alyssa turned to look at Lord Duram Bar Emmon who along with a hundred of his men had volunteered to go ahead to verify that the terms were met. He nodded and Alyssa relaxed a tad.

"Very well, Ser Jorah," Alyssa told the disgraced knight. "Lead the way."

Perhaps in a power play or some symbolic move, Daenerys decided that they would conduct negotiations inside the Chamber of the Painted Table. Stepping inside Alyssa saw the famous room for the first time, having been too preoccupied with other matters to even contemplate touring her family's ancestral seat when she was last here.

She was impressed by the view offered by the chamber's four tall windows, overlooking the north, south, east and west. As well as the Painted Table itself. It was more than fifty feet long, was roughly twenty-five feet wide at its widest point, four feet at its thinnest and offered what was perhaps the most detailed map of all of Westeros Alyssa had ever seen.

It can be improved though. She thought as she noted the lack of borders and the various inaccuracies of the map and the miniatures it used to signify various strategic holdfasts and castles. I will make it a point to commission a new version at some point.

Her Aunt was seated in the raised seat located at where Dragonstone's position on the map would be, allowing her a view of the entire table. It was yet another power play but one that Alyssa allowed as she took a seat across from Daenerys. Her Aunt was her host after all and it was only fitting for her to take the seat reserved for the ruler of the castle.

A silence descended over the room as the two Queens stared at each other, assessing the other. Daenerys was a classical Valyrian beauty with the violet eyes, pale skin, and long, pale silver-gold hair. There was no doubt to her ancestry as a Targaryen though, so strongly did she resemble the paintings in the Red Keep of Queen Naerys Targaryen. She was dressed in a Ghiscari tokar, a long, loose shapeless sheet that was wound around her hips, under an arm and over a shoulder. With its dangling fringes adorned with many decorations, it was a truly beautiful garment. It was also decidedly foreign. As was the style in which her Aunt had decided to wear her hair, having silver bells affixed in her braided hair as per Dothraki custom, one for each of her victories.

It was a statement showing who she had supporting her and her achievements, that much was
obvious but perhaps Daenerys had missed it but it gave the impression not of a Targaryen seeking to restore their dynasty to the Iron Throne, something Alyssa had done already, but that of a foreign invader. Whoever had convinced or failed to stop Daenerys from choosing to dress as such in the midst of her campaign to retake Westeros was either a fool or incompetent!

*Though it could be worse for her I suppose.* Alyssa mused. *She could have chosen to wear a Qartheen gown. Whilst I would find baring a breast an alluring sight, especially from a woman as beautiful as my Aunt, it would paint her a whore to all of Westeros. Not even Dorne would condone such indecent attire.*

"You have an impressive dragon," Her Aunt said suddenly breaking the staring contest and apparently deciding to skip over the various formal pleasantries that should have accompanied what they were doing. "I had heard much about it in Essos, but the stories do not do it justice."

"Thank you, Aunt." Alyssa said with a grateful nod. "Ghost will like to hear that."

"You call him Ghost?"

"That is his name," Alyssa confirmed.

"It's not very Targaryen."

"I am not a very traditional person." Alyssa said with a shrug. "And judging by the casual tone of our discussions so far, neither are you Aunt."

"I was led to believe that you prefer things this way."

"I do," Alyssa acknowledged. "It makes things move more quickly."

"I can agree with you on that." Her Aunt said with a smile that Alyssa felt was probably genuine.

That moment of shared feeling over their mutual dislike for formalities broke the ice and Alyssa allowed herself to relax just a bit more, offering her Aunt a smile of her own.

"Whatever happened to Ser Barristan?" Alyssa asked after a moment. "I sent him to meet with you. Did he manage that?"

"He did," Aunt Daenerys said, her tone bittersweet. "He saved my life in Qarth when a Sorrowful Man attempted to assassinate me with a manticore and through that earned a place among my circle of closest advisors where he always counseled that I should ally myself with you."

"Where is he now then?" Alyssa asked curiously. As agreed by the terms they had set for this parlay, they were alone in the room save for a single guard, Loras for Alyssa herself and a serious looking Unsullied of medium height and square build serving as her Aunt's. As such he could very well be somewhere else in the castle.

Her Aunt frowned and a look of sadness settled on her face as she replied. "He died fighting a rebellion by the Sons of the Harpy whilst we were in Meereen."

"A shame," Alyssa said with some genuine regret. She had never intended to send the man to his death.

"Really?" Her Aunt asked, sounding surprised. "Did you not send him into exile in the first place?"

"Only in the firm belief that he would return successful." Alyssa told her. "I am saddened to learn
of not just his failure to do so but his passing. He was a good man."

"He was," Aunt Daenerys agreed.

The two Queens took a moment to mourn the death of Ser Barristan the Bold.

"I think we have talked around it long enough," Alyssa said after the shared moment of silence. "What do you want Aunt Daenerys?"

"What is rightfully mine, the Iron Throne." Her Aunt said bluntly.

"Rightfully yours?" Alyssa asked, arching an eyebrow. "How so? Going by the line of succession as the daughter of your eldest brother Rhaegar, I am the rightful heir and more importantly my rule was validated by a Great Council of all of Westeros' nobles."

"Only because they had no other viable alternatives." Her Aunt countered. "And as the daughter of the last crowned King of the Seven Kingdoms I have more right to the Iron Throne than the daughter of a mere Prince."

"That is not how succession works in Westeros," Alyssa countered. "It goes down the male line first then the female one. Besides, I have a son who as a male has a stronger claim than you do."

"Or you," Aunt Daenerys pointed out. "But what does the right of claims matter. In the end if is who managed to crown themselves Queen or King that is the one who matters, regardless of any rightful claim. To that end, you have not crowned yourself."

*She can't be seriously be making this argument! This is just grasping at straws!* Alyssa thought her eyes widening in disbelief. Though I suppose this is just an attempt to provoke a reaction of some kind. I don't know her well enough to make such a judgement.

"There has not been any time to organize a proper coronation." Alyssa replied calmly, refusing to raise to the bait.

Her Aunt laughed at that.

"Why? Because of your so-called War against the Others?"

"Yes," Alyssa told her firmly. "It is because of that war that the two of us cannot afford to fight among ourselves. Not at this time. There is a greater threat Beyond the Wall."

"You expect me to believe that this supposed Army of the Dead led by Others exists as you claim?" Daenerys said with a dismissive scoff. "You might fool others, but I see it for what it is. A deception you are using to convince the gullible lords and ladies of Westeros to support you."

*Calling people you intend to rule gullible? That is not a sign of a good ruler.* Alyssa thought, but wisely did not say.

"I expected such skepticism." Alyssa said, so I brought proof. "With your permission I can have a wight brought to prove my claims. Though I advise you to call my guards, as a precaution, before I release it. Summon your advisors as well, since I only have one wight and I am certain that they will need to see it for themselves to believe as well."

Daenerys looked uncertain. Probably not expecting Alyssa to have come prepared with proof. She looked at Alyssa searchingly for a long moment and, at least Alyssa hoped, found only confidence. This seemed to convince her and she nodded to her guard who stepped to the door, where he had a
whispered conversation with someone outside.

"You may bring your proof," Her Aunt said with a hint of uncertainty.

"I thank you for this Aunt," Alyssa said sincerely before nodding to Loras who moved to the door like his counterpart had earlier and gave the necessary orders.

Aunt Daenerys' advisors arrived first and Alyssa was struck by how small her inner circle was. Besides the Unsullied man who had been serving as her guard, there were only two others. One was Jorah Mormont and the other was a girl with a round flat face, dusky skin, and eyes like molten gold. They were accompanied by three Dothraki and a squad of Unsullied acting as guards, though by the way the former positioned themselves Alyssa reasoned they functioned as her Aunt's Queensguard.

*Is she so unwilling to trust that she can maintain only so few close advisors?* Alyssa thought disapprovingly.

It took a moment after that before the crate with the wight was brought up, accompanied by a large contingent of her men including five of them armed with pole arms with a two pronged head. Each prong was semi-circular in shape with a spring-loaded device on the front that could snap the prongs closed when triggered. These 'man catchers' were yet another device invented by the Imp in recent weeks. How he found the time, Alyssa didn't know especially when he had a young daughter to care for, but she could not deny his inventions were proving most useful.

"Release it," Alyssa ordered once the crate had been moved into the center of an empty part of the room and was in the middle of a ring of warriors, many of them armed with dragonglass weapons. Behind which everyone stood and watched with rapt attention.

At her command, the crate was cautiously unlocked than tipped over. Immediately the wight spilled out and tossed aside the weighted net that had initially captured it. The undead creature was much more decomposed than the other wight, the extra days in the warmth of King's Landing having done it no favors. It was thus less recognizably human, yet enough of its features remained intact to tell the thing had been a young woman once. One that had been at the cusp of womanhood and just beginning her training to be a spearwife of the Free Folk judging by the leather armor she wore. Enough of her face had survived even that they could all still tell the girl had once been a pretty child.

That was gone however and all that remained was a blue eyed horror who tried to lunge at Aunt Daenerys. Thankfully, those of Alyssa's men armed with the man catchers reacted quickly and quickly snagged their weapons around the creature, restraining it in the vice grips of their pole arms.

'T-This is a wight?" Aunt Daenerys asked, her stuttering the only sign of her fear unlike her female advisor who had thrown herself into her Unsullied counterpart's side in terror.

"Yes," Alyssa said calmly. "They can be killed with dragonglass"

Here Alyssa said gesturing towards her men with the dragonglass studded war clubs.

"Valyrian steel," Alyssa continued drawing Dark Sister from the hidden sheath cleverly worked into the skirt of her dress by Margey and pointing it at the wight. "And lastly with fire. **Fire Bolt.**"

At her invocation, a mote of flame shot from the tip of her family's ancestral blade and hit the undead creature, setting it alight. It burned away into ash in moments, the dark magic that had
sustained its unlife reacting with the fire in such a way as to dramatically heighten their intensity.

"And the Others?" The Unsullied asked from where he was comforting the young girl clinging to his side.

Alyssa raised an eyebrow and looked to her Aunt Daenerys.

"Answer Grey Worm please, Niece." Her Aunt said with a nod. "I would like to know as well."

"Dragonglass works against them as well," Alyssa told her as she sheathed Dark Sister. "As does, I suspect, Valyrian steel."

"You suspect?" Grey Worm asked, his eyes narrowed.

"Valyrian steel is rare and no one equipped with it has had the chance to face a White Walker." Alyssa told him with a shrug. "We do know fire doesn't work though, since it's been tried."

"And you're sure dragonglass does?" Jorah Mormont pressed with a skeptical frown.

"Yes, at least one Other was killed with dragonglass that we know of." Alyssa confirmed and receiving a satisfied nod in turn from both the disgraced knight and Grey Worm.

"What if that thing was an illusion?" The little girl asked, surprising everyone. "It's known you can cast illusions with your magic."

"If it's an illusion created by the Queen's magic then she's the most powerful person in the world." A Free Folk who had accompanied the wights all the way from the Wall said with a haunted look in his eyes. "Cos she's had to create them by the thousands in the True North from all the way down here in the South. And made them real enough to kill my whole family and then raise them up as more of those monsters."

The girl recoiled, the brief but still harrowing glimpse into the man's suffering at the hands of the Others and their wights terrifying her.

"Missandei, I thank you for trying to offer an alternative opinion." Aunt Daenerys said running a hand comfortingly through the girl's hair. "But I believe my Niece."

The girl nodded in understanding.

"Thank you, Aunt Daenerys, for believing me." Alyssa said sincerely. Despite everything she genuinely worried that she would not. "Now that do you do, may we talk terms?"

"I won't challenge you rule for now." Her Aunt said easily. "Instead, I offer you an alliance and the use of my armies against the dead."

"That is generous of you," Alyssa noted, suspicious of her Aunt's motives.

Her Aunt frowned at that as if shocked that Alyssa would question her motives but quickly sighed and offered them nonetheless.

"Whoever sits the Iron Throne, the Seven Kingdoms must not be allowed to be reduced to a land of the dead, Niece."

Alyssa could accept that.

"And the matter of who shall rule?"
"We can decide that after the war," her Aunt said irritably. "We can organize another Great Council to decide who would rule the Seven Kingdoms. Are those terms acceptable?"

"They are, Aunt Daenerys." Alyssa said as she offered the other Queen her arm.

"Call me Dany." The other monarch said as they clasped arms to seal their deal.

After the slight delay of her Aunt Dany's arrival in Westeros with her armies, preparations for the war against the Others was swiftly moved back on track. This despite the difficult task of incorporating her armies into their plans, though the unusual competence of the young Naathi girl named Missandei that served as he Aunt's de facto Hand made it far more manageable than it could have been. As such two weeks after the negotiations on Dragonstone, Alyssa was poised to leave King's Landing the next day to finish the war preparations from Castle Black.

She would have left sooner but Ned's first Nameday had come and much to her personal annoyance, Margey had insisted they celebrate. Alyssa was just thankful that she had been able to convince everyone to keep it low key so as not to waste resources that might have gone to the war effort. Thankfully, that was over with and Alyssa could finally focus on what was important!

Seeing as she was about to fly off to war, Alyssa wasn't about to do so without getting some comfort from her concubines first. As such she was about to leave to visit Margey and her other lovers who had gathered in Jeyne's rooms for a farewell when there was an unexpected knock on the door to her bedchamber. Considering neither Ygritte or Ser Wendel who were serving as her shadows for the day announced who it was when they entered her chambers, it could only be one of her concubines. Only they had such privileged access to her rooms.

I wonder who it is. Alyssa thought with a curious frown. Maybe one of them got impatient and came to drag me over?

"Alys, can I come in?" Gwyn's voice asked from the other side of the door.

"Of course," Alyssa said even as she blinked in surprise.

Her surprised grew immensely when Gwyn walked in and she saw what she was wearing. The Ironborn woman had seemingly borrowed from Elia's sense of fashion and was dressed in a black and silver gown in the Dornish style with the typical exposed shoulders and plunging neckline. Most daringly, Gwyn was not wearing the inner garment that typically supported the breasts when wearing this style of dress.

"Gwyn? What?" Alyssa managed to say.

Gwyn offered her a nervous but determined smile.

"You're flying off to fight monsters from legend tomorrow." She said as she closed the door behind her. "So before you go I want you to do something for me."

"What?" Alyssa asked, having a good idea of the answer.

"Make me pregnant."

Alyssa gaped. She was not expecting that.

"I can't do that." Alyssa confessed.
"Even with your magic?" Gwyn asked, looking mightily disappointed.

"I probably could but I never researched a spell that would manage it."

Gwyn pouted.

"I'll be sure to work on it as soon as I can!" Alyssa reassured her.

"Thank you," Gwyn said her mood lifted and a slight coy grin spread across her face. "Well, why don't we practice for now?"

"Are you sure?" Alyssa asked. "I know how you have been coming to my rooms and then turning around along the way on more occasions than I can count."

"How did you know that?" Gwyn asked as she blushed prettily.

"The Queensguard and servants told me."

"I should have been more careful." Gwyn said with a pout.

"Considering how many times you did it, I doubt any level of caution could have hid what you were doing long."

Gwyn just sighed in defeat.

"I ask again. I am not depriving my sisters of you tonight," the Ironborn woman said with a shrug. "Even if I want to be alone with you our first time and be your first tonight."

"You can have me," Alyssa said as she gently tossed the Ironborn woman onto the bed and earning herself a playful giggle even as crawled on top of her.

Gwyn reached up to pull Alyssa into a kiss. One which mixed daring, playfulness and pent up want all in equal measure.

"Make love to me." Gwyn ordered as they pulled apart.

"As my Princess commands."

Chapter End Notes

Done!
For those wondering, the title is a reference to a triptych which are sets of three associated artistic, literary, or musical works intended to be appreciated together. With the middle piece, the negotiations between Alyssa and Daenerys in this case, sometimes considered the most important, something which is definitely the case in this chapter. I know it's not a perfect fit, since the middle part had multiple scenes but I still thought it fitting enough.

Yup, I made Mya a bit of a butch. She is presented in the art I've seen her with a decidedly masculine bent to her appearance, still very feminine mind you but just a tad less traditionally so. Also I made her be the more assertive one during her coupling with Alyssa. That's simply because there had to be one among Alyssa's seven wives that has the temperament.

So Ghost is bigger than Drogon? Why!? Well, he's older and is juiced up on magic, how could he not be? It's totally not me trying to pimp my MC! How slanderous of you to even suggest it! XD

Alyssa has a bad opinion of Dany as first, huh? Look at this way, who is Dany to her? She is an enemy when they first sit down. A rival who seeks to claim the Iron Throne. When has Alyssa ever seen her enemies in a good light? As you can see though, by the end of their negotiations Alyssa's view of her softens a bit as seen in the terms of address she uses to identify her in her mind. Especially once they agree to at least temporarily not be enemies.

If anyone is wondering what changes were made to Daenerys' road to Westeros from canon, then let me just say that it mostly follows exactly what happens in the books save for minor deviations based on missing characters that stayed in Westeros instead of going to Westeros. The second Siege of Meeren of course ends in Dany's victory despite the lack of Victarion Greyjoy's fleet, the man being dead by that point in the story. As for what happened to the missing Dany, things play out as per the show instead. In the aftermath, things occurred as hinted at in the story i.e. the Iron Bank bankrolls a fleet to transport Dany to Westeros.

And yes, Alyssa continues to be a terrible mother. Did you expect her to change? Considering she did not receive any treatment for her postpartum depression, not that there is anything like that in Planetos, she never truly bonded with Ned. As a result, she has developed an active dislike for her son. It's sad and disappointing but it happens. I've personally never seen it explored in fiction much, at least not from the mother's perspective, so I decided to try it out.

Long AN is long. This is becoming a trend. Argh! Anyways, I'm signing off here so till next time acomiadament!
The morning after finally consummating her relationship with Gwyn and the farewell orgy they had shared with the rest of her concubines afterwards, Alyssa was in a courtyard of the Red Keep as her men organized themselves for the ride out of King's Landing towards Ghost's lair where he was waiting for her so they could travel together to Castle Black via Gate. He would have flown into the castle and pick her up but since his latest growth spurt, he had become far too big to safely land anywhere inside the walls.

She was just about to mount her horse when Arya and Elia approached her, both dressed in full plate armor.

"Let me guess," Alyssa said with a roll of her eyes. "Both of you want to come North with me and join the fight?"

"Yes," both her sister and her Dornish concubine chorused without hesitation.

Even if Alyssa knew this was coming, actually confronted with it she couldn't help but be annoyed by it.

"Elia I can understand." Alyssa said with a sigh. "And I welcome you, Lady Lance. Though I wished you had approached me about this sooner."

Elia blushed at the use of her nickname but nevertheless smiled at the easy acceptance. Something which also seemed to give Arya hope if her own eager smile was anything to go by.

"But I draw the line with you sister," Alyssa continued sternly. "Whereas Elia is a trained and skilled warrior already, you have not even fully mastered the Water Dance."

"Master Fyllolis says I'm competent, don't you master?" Arya asked her Water Dance Master who she'd dragged along apparently just for this.

"Master!" Arya whined.

"I'm sorry, my student, but I must speak the truth."
"There you have it, Arya." Alyssa told her sister with finality. "You're not ready. So stay in King's Landing."

Arya looked ready to argue, so Alyssa added. "Do I need to make it an order?"

Arya pouted but shook her head.

"Good girl," Alyssa said leaning over to ruffle her little sister's hair, earning a cry of indignation and her pulling away to hastily 'fix' her hair.

Alyssa looked on in amusement even as she addressed Arya's Queensguard shadow.

"Ser Cuy, please make sure my sister doesn't do something foolish like sneaking away to join the front." Alyssa told the Yellow Knight.

"Ser Royce and I will make sure that won't happen, your grace." Ser Cuy replied with an amused grin. "We will keep the royal family safe while you are away on campaign."

Over by the rest of her concubines and Ned, carried in Margey's arms today, the other Queensguard knight staying behind in King's Landing nodded in agreement to his Brother's words.

"I have full faith in you both," Alyssa told them seriously. "I would not leave you this task if I did not."

"You honor us, your grace." Ser Cuy told her with a grateful bow.

"Elia, go mount your horse. It is time to move out."

"Right," the tan skinned beauty agreed as she rushed off to obey.

"Alys-" Arya began but Alyssa just shot her a look and she subsided though not without an adorable pout.

Alyssa couldn't help laughing at how lovable her rambunctious sister could be when she wasn't trying. It was thus in good spirits that she mounted her horse and began to trot out of the castle, her retinue following behind her including her concubines and Small Council. At the formers' insistence they would say their farewells at the last minute, something the Small Council, at her Hand's urging no doubt, was happy to agree with and shift the formal ceremony marking the departure to Ghost's lair. Though for some reason, they had insisted she ride there instead of simply using a Gate to travel there.

I guess I should be glad Elia and Arya didn't try to convince me at the absolute last second, though this was bad enough. Alyssa thought with a sigh as Elia made her way to her place to her left at the head of the procession just as it exited the Red Keep.

As it did, the reason why the Small Council had agreed to change in itinerary became evident as Alyssa caught sight of people lining the streets and they began showering her and the rest of the royal procession in flowers and well wishes. For a second Alyssa questioned the people's apparent enthusiasm but quickly realized this was the first time she had ever processed through the city since she had taken the city during the War of the Four Sovereigns. Every time before this whenever she had to travel to and fro from the Red Keep, she had, for the sake of convenience or speed, either flown over the city directly to the castle or used a Gate. As such the people of King's Landing had never had a chance to express their feelings for her before now.

Feelings that if the storm of flowers and unending well wishes were any indication were positive
It was those positive feelings that buoyed Alyssa as a day later, she found herself at Castle Black and was confronted by the enormity of what needed to be done. Such as overseeing the repair and expansion of the main stronghold of the Night's Watch just to accommodate the incoming armies, which would be arriving in the coming months. Thankfully the handful of surviving giants and mammoths had helped immensely in these efforts, their manual labor alone making up for hundreds of men and greatly accelerating the pace of construction. With their help, and on occasion that of the dragons, they were keeping pace with the arrivals. If only barely so. Already the new curtain walls being built to protect from attack from other directions beyond the north to accommodate the expanded area the final form of the newly imported Castle Black was expected to take up was well underway.

And that just keeps getting revised doesn't it? Alyssa thought irritably as she stood at the top of the King's Tower and looked at the giants, mammoths and men at work.

She had been up there for some time when she heard the sound of the trapdoor that led up to this uppermost level of the tower opening, turning around to see she saw her Aunt Dany climbing up the ladder to join her. The Mother of Dragons and her men had sailed directly from Dragonstone to White Harbor and marched from there directly to Castle Black, making them one of the first major armies to reach the Wall.

"It is amazing, you know that, Niece?" Her Aunt said by way of greeting as she moved to join her at the edge of the tower and looking over its merlons at the frenetic construction.

"The temperature?" Alyssa asked, genuinely confused by the seemingly random statement. It was a completely valid assumption to make. Unlike Alyssa who had grown up in the North and was thus somewhat used to the cold of the Wall and thus could make do with just slightly more winter clothing than usual, her Aunt and many of the new arrivals hailing from warmer southern climes were all bundled up in thick furs. The exasperated look her Aunt shot her in reply told her she had been wrong in her guess however.

"That too I suppose," her Aunt conceded. "Though I meant the diverse forces that you have brought together."

Alyssa just shrugged. "I merely did what needed to be done."

"And that's why it's so impressive." Aunt Dany insisted. "Everything you've done so far, including the restoration of our dynasty was for this war wasn't it?"

"In part," Alyssa admitted.

"Like I said, you're an impressive woman Alys."

Shrugging again, Alyssa decided to change the topic.

"How are your Unsullied and Dothraki taking to the new dragonglass weapons?"

The production of dragonglass weapons was thankfully proving less difficult than expected as supplies of the material poured into Castle Black from Dragonstone and other smaller sources. They were arriving in more than enough quantities for the small army of craftsmen she'd recruited to produce the weapons they needed to properly fight the Others and their Wights.

indeed.
"The Unsullied have adapted fine. Their new dragonglass spears are fundamentally no different from their old ones. It is the Dothraki who are the problem."

"The craftsmen still cannot produce a dragonstone arakh?"

"They have," Dany said with a shake of her head. "But the Dothraki are hesitant about using them. They are very attached to their traditional blades."

"They need time to adapt." Alyssa concluded. "And pressure to do so."

"I know. I will continue to push them."

The sound of a commotion below tore the two Queens from their discussion and they both turned to its source to see many people pointing at the Kingsroad. Following their gaze they saw a host marching towards Castle Black, at the head of which flew Stark banners.

"He's arrived." Alyssa said with a smile. "Come, Aunt, let us go welcome my brother."

Days after Robb's arrival, Alyssa was in the training yard of Castle Black to see Tormund and Black Jack Bulwer off. The two unlikely friends were leading a host that would be marching along the wall towards Eastwatch-by-the-Sea, detaching forces to reclaim and man the old abandoned Night's Watch castles along the way whilst reinforcing those still occupied. They were departing a day after a force led by Robb had left towards Westwatch-by-the-Bridge with the same overall mission.

"May you not encounter any unforeseen difficulties along the way." Alyssa told the two men as their forces, a mixed group of Night's Watch Brothers, Free Folk, Northmen, Unsullied and Dothraki, marched pass behind them.

"No need to worry, Witch Queen." Tormund reassured her. "Thanks to you, we have all we need, even if we end up fighting the Others. Dealing with anything else besides that is easy."

"Apologies for this rude, overconfident ass, your grace." Bulwer said hastily while shooting his Free Folk friend an exasperated glare out of the corner of his eyes. "We appreciate your concern and will be sure to be careful."

Smiling at the clearly visible camaraderie between the First Ranger and the Free Folk leader, Alyssa moved to dismiss them.

"I won't occupy anymore of your time then, good Sers," Alyssa said giggling at Tormund's jovial indignation at being addressed with a kneeler title. "You are free to return to your men."

Tormund nodded politely and Bulwer bowed respectfully before both left.

Alyssa watched them go for a moment and could clearly hear them arguing goodnaturedly at Tormund's refusal to accept the Seven Kingdoms' etiquette.

_They really have become friends haven't they?_ Alyssa mused as she turned to return to the King's Tower to continue with coordinating the campaign. _I suppose without me around for Tormund to develop a friendship with, someone else would have to step in to fill the role. Still, I never expected Bulwer to be the one to do so._

Not that she had anything against the man. He simply was not someone Alyssa remembered strongly from her past life at all, thus it was surprising to see him fill her shoes in this one.
As she stepped inside the King's Tower and the command center for the defense of the Wall that they had transformed it into, Alyssa discarded such thoughts. She had no time for them at the moment.

"They have departed," she informed Lord Commander Thorne and her Aunt Dany as they waited expectantly where they sat at a table upon which was spread out a map of the Wall.

"Good. With this all the castles along the Wall will be occupied for the first time in centuries." The Lord Commander said with a sigh of relief.

"Will that be enough?" Her Aunt asked skeptically as Alyssa took a seat beside her at the planning table.

"No," Alyssa admitted. "But it is a beginning. Before we can think of a way to attack we must first see to our defenses. Especially against a foe like the Others. Their armies are tireless, fearless and likely to outnumber us in most battles. We must fight them from defensive strongholds as much as possible."

"Queen Alyssa is right, your grace." Lord Commander Thorne opined. "That's why refortifying the Wall is so important."

Aunt Dany nodded even if she didn't seem happy. Alyssa could understand. Much of her Aunt's military successes came from being aggressive and bold, a defensive posture was not something she favored. Yet, such was exactly the kind of war they now had to fight.

At least she's not fighting us about it. Alyssa thought. Better bitter acceptance than open disagreement.

"Understood," Aunt Dany said in a resigned sigh. "We were working on how to redeploy the incoming Westerosi armies before you returned Alys. They are your men, do you have anything to add?"

And thus began yet another long day of planning and preparation. Despite that, Alyssa still savored it. Better tiresome organizational work than fighting for her life against the undead and their otherworldly masters.

It seemed that not everyone shared her opinion on the matter as less than a week later, an unknown army was spotted marching towards Castle Black under a flag of truce. With limited manpower at their disposal, it was decided that it was unsafe to intercept them and they were thus allowed to travel an uncomfortably short distance to the Night's Watch headquarters before Alyssa and Aunt Dany flew out to confront them.

Thus it was that with their dragons looming behind them Alyssa and Aunt Dany met an unexpected army just outside the growing camp around Castle Black, which now included men from as far away as the Stormlands and the Reach. The latter of which had been accompanied with much appreciated supplies of foodstuff. While the army would not have starved thanks to the multiple supply lines without it, it had provided much desired variety to the rations that was hard to come by when all the local game was largely being hunted down and eaten by four hungry dragons.

"I recognize many of those banners," Aunt Dany whispered to Alyssa. "They belong to various sellsword companies from Essos."

"And they all march under the banner of the Iron Bank." Alyssa whispered back as a small party rode ahead of the army towards them carrying a large pennant bearing the key sigil of the Iron
Bank of Braavos.

"Greetings, Queen Alyssa, Queen Daenerys. I am Noho Dimititis, a representative of the Iron Bank." the leader of the delegation said as he respectfully approached after he and his guards dismounted. Guards which Alyssa belatedly noted was being led by the heretofore missing Sandor Clegane.

What is he doing here? And with the Iron Bank of all people?

"And what Banker Dimititis are the Bank's intentions?" Aunt Dany asked the dour Braavosi Banker. "First, you funded my return to Westeros. And now you march an uncalled for army to, I presume, aid our cause after I have allied herself with my Niece?"

"We have done all that to better our chances, that of the living, in the war against the dead."

"You say that. But you offered the loan to my Aunt before the Great Council where I revealed the threat of the wights." Alyssa countered as she tore her attention away from the Hound.

"Indeed we did," Dimittis admitted. "And we make no apologies for that. We weren't sure that with only one dragon your grace would be hold the Iron Throne against Queen Daenerys. We were thus hedging our bets."

"By supporting both of us?" Dany questioned.

Dimittis nodded without shame.

"And this sellsword army is recompense for the deception?" Alyssa asked, picking up the questioning once more.

"In a way," Noho said with a frown. "It is also us playing our part in this fight for survival. Your demonstration at the Great Council was most persuasive."

"And my Aunt's debts to the Bank?" Alyssa asked, causing her Aunt to look at her in surprise.

"Your Aunt has prudently already made arrangements for the Cities of the Bay of Dragons, that is Astapor, Yunkai, and Meereen, to shoulder the debt. Something they happily accepted as an act of repayment on their part for the Mother of Dragons liberating them from the Masters."

"That was forward thinking of you, Aunt Dany," Alyssa told the other dragonrider honestly. "I'm impressed."

"She never told you about it, your grace?"

"I never asked," Alyssa told him. "It is a potentially sensitive subject. As family and her ally I had the grace to not probe her on the matter."

"But it is perfectly acceptable to do so with a neutral third party?" Dany observed with a roll of her eyes.

"Exactly." Alyssa said with a coy smile.

"Well played, your grace. Well played indeed." The Bank envoy opined.

"Thank you. One last question, are you aware of the reputation of the captain of your men?" Alyssa asked, eyeing the silent Hound warily.
"Sandor Clegane has proven himself quite capable and we needed someone familiar with Westeros. If you are asking after his crimes, I believe your trials found him not guilty in absentia."

"I ask merely to know if you were knowledgeable as to his past. Since that appears to be the case, I have no objections to his presence. We need every able warrior we can."

Dimitis nodded, looking inordinately pleased. He seemed to think he'd won one over her. Alyssa couldn't see why. She was being honest in all her preceding statements.

Deciding that deciphering the Banker's thoughts was not worth the effort, she moved to dismiss him. "That concludes our business I believe. Aunt Dany?"

"I too have no more questions."

"Then unless you have further business with us, I regret that we must end this audience." Alyssa told the banker. "We have much other work to attend to."

"No, your graces, I believe I am done. May fortune favor you."

"You as well, Banker Dimittis."

With a polite bow, the Banker left, taking his entourage back with him as they moved to rejoin the marching column of his men. Alyssa waited for him to be out of earshot before she sighed. She wasn't lying when she had other work to attend to. Organizing all the necessities for the arriving armies was proving more difficult than conquering the Seven Kingdoms had.

"There, there, Niece." Aunt Dany said patting her shoulder comfortably. "At least we have Missandei to help us."

"Thank god," Alyssa said earnestly. Without the little Naathi girl and her exceptional talents, she was sure the sheer amount of work would have overwhelmed them.

The work of coordinating the hundreds of thousands of men they had rallied to their cause never ended but neither Alyssa nor Aunt Dany could work non-stop thus they sought diversions from time to time. One such was touring the camp and on this occasion both Queens had decided to do so together and had decided to stop at an archery range that had been set up to have a look at some of the men as they practiced.

"Is that really appropriate?" Aunt Dany asked with a raised eyebrow as Elia quite shamelessly snuggled into Alyssa's side.

"Hells if I care," Elia said with a shrug. "It's cold up here and Alys is warm."

Alyssa rolled her eyes at her lover's flippant response.

"It's fine." She reassured her Aunt.

The Mother of Dragons still looked skeptical but shrugged and turned her attention back towards the archers. The range was being used by a group from the Vale today and they were showing quite impressive skill for men who Alyssa knew were usually farmers or shepherds.

"You look surprised, your grace." Ser Wendel, one of her Queensguard shadows for the day, said suddenly. "At their skill, I mean."

"Yes, I am actually. I presume you can enlighten me?"
"The Vale is rife with predators, your grace." The skilled archer told her. "And these men use their bows to fend them off."

"Why a bow?" Elia asked curiously.

"It's cheap for one but more importantly it has decent range." The knight explained. "When you're dealing with a bear or shadowcat which can disembowel you with its claws if given the chance, range is your friend."

"And there is a special need of such a defense in the Vale?" Aunt Dany asked curiously.

"The Vale is highly mountainous," Alyssa supplied. "More so than any other region of the Seven Kingdoms. That means there are many places for dangerous wildlife to survive, sometimes very close to human habitation. More so than any other place in the Realm. If I follow Ser Wendel correctly then I imagine that is why the smallfolk of the Vale have such skill with the bow?"

"You are correct, your grace." The plump Manderly knight said with a nod.

"I see," Aunt Dany said with a frown. "It seems that is much I need to learn about the Seven King-"

Her words were cut short when suddenly a messenger ran over.

"Your graces!" The young boy said as he came to a stop. "A group of unknowns have been spotted heading towards camp under a flag of truce. Lord Commander Thorne is requesting orders."

"Another one?" Elia asked warily.

"We might as well check it out," Aunt Dany said with a sigh.

"Agreed. Boy, let the Lord Commander know that we'll handle this."

It took Alyssa, Dany, Elia and their escorts ten minutes to arrive on horseback to find a tall slender woman with long hair the color of burnished copper and pale, unblemished skin dressed in the long robe of red fabric characteristic of a red priestess of R'hllor that Alyssa instantly recognized as Melisandre. She stood at the head of a hundred Red Priests and Priestesses surrounded by a squad of Reach knights under the command of Dickon Tarly, Sam's younger brother. Alyssa had met Tarly in passing at Bitterbridge and her march to King's Landing afterwards, but she had never actually bothered to give him a close look. Now that she did, she could appreciate the handsome dark haired man who unlike his fat, intellectually inclined older brother, instead looked every bit the capable warrior.

"You have our thanks, Lord Tarly, for handling the situation." Alyssa told the man.

"Just doing my duty, your grace." Tarly said with a nod, his eyes not straying from Aunt Dany since he first caught sight of her. Her Aunt noticed this of course but beyond a smirk showed no sign of being aware of the smitten boy.

*I am not touching that with a ten foot pole. I have enough issues with relationships of my own. Alyssa thought as she shared an amused look with Elia. Though mine are happy issues.*

"Red priestess," Aunt Dany said while Alyssa was daydreaming. "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"I am Melisandre and-"
"Stannis Baratheon's infamous Red Priestess?" Alyssa asked at last.

"The same." The Red Priestess freely admitted. "That was a mistake on my part. I had mistakenly believed that he was Azor Ahai reborn, but I know better now. If anyone is to be the legendary savior than it would be either of you, your graces."

"Is that why you're here?" Aunt Dany asked, her eyes narrowed. "Because you think one of us could be your prophesied hero?"

"Yes. The two of you are the two most likely candidates. And since both of you are fighting alongside each other, your cause must be just thus we have come to assist you."

"And how am I to know that you won't betray us?" Alyssa asked even as Ghost flew over from his lair to add his intimidating glare to the one she was already leveling at the Red Priestess. "You did try to burn me and my dragon alive with a fireball once."

Many of Melisandre's fellow Red Priests shot her incredulous looks at that revelation.

"As I said, I was operating under the foolish impression that Stannis was Azor Ahai at the time. I sincerely apologize for my mistake, your grace."

Alyssa was not mollified and neither was Ghost as his growl and the burst of anger he sent her indicated but Aunt Dany shot them both a sharp look.

"Calm yourself and your dragon, Niece." Her Aunt said sternly. "We cannot turn anyone away. Not against a foe of unknown power like the Others. Set aside your misgivings for now and we can have an accounting of this woman's crimes against you, whatever they might be, after this war."

Alyssa was unhappy, but her Aunt had a point.

"Very well." Alyssa conceded. "But there will be an accounting."

"I will gladly present myself for your judgement when the time comes." Melisandre said with what appeared to be genuine honesty.

"You better," Elia cut in unexpectedly. "If you don't or even think of betraying my Queen, you'll answer to my lance."

She emphasized this point by brandishing her lance, now modified to have a dragonglass tip.

"But of course, Lady Sand." Melisandre assured her. "I would be more than happy to hand over any traitors to your justice. Myself included should the unthinkable ever happen."

"Enough with this posturing." Aunt Dany said, her tone chiding. "It is cold. Let us get these men in front of a fire before they freeze to death."

"Agreed. Let us escort you to a spot where you can set up your camp then," Alyssa said turning her horse around back towards the camp.

Two days later, Alyssa and Aunt Dany stood outside of a target range set aside for Melisandre's red priests as they practiced with her brand of fire magic by tossing **Fire Bolts** and **Fireballs** accurately downrange like they had been doing so all their lives. All she had done was given them copies of the primer of her fire magic she had written and they had taken to the new magic like fish to water.
"How?" Alyssa turned to Melisandre in shock.

"All priests of R'hllor have wielded fire magic from the earliest days of their service. Not as easily cast or as powerful as your own most of the time. Not without the sacrifice of blood. However, we still have ample experience shaping fire mystically to our god's will. In light of that, learning your magic is simply a natural progression."

"That makes sense," Alyssa said with a sigh.

"You're jealous, your grace?"

"Yes," Alyssa admitted. "Fire came easily to me, but not this easily."

Melisandre just smiled. "Your blood sings of ice and fire, your grace, but even its potency cannot make up for years of study and training."

"Does that mean I can learn fire magic too?" Dany asked curiously.

"It is likely, your grace." The Red Priestess said consideringly. "But it will take you some study."

"I wonder."

"I'll pass you a primer later." Alyssa told her Aunt. "It took me weeks to master just Fire Bolt when I started though, so don't expect quick results."

"Thank you, Alys. And I won't."

Their conversation was interrupted when Elia suddenly rode into the practice range on her favourite black filly.

"Alys! Father is here with the Dornish spears! And he brought my sisters!" She cried excitedly offering Alyssa an arm. "Come greet them."

Alyssa gave Melisandre and Dany a quick nod in farewell before taking her lover's arm and swinging herself up onto the horse.

The moment she was secure, Elia turned her filly towards the Kingsroad entrance to the camp and rode through it at an excited gallop. Her poor Queensguard shadows for the day, Ygritte and Brienne barely managing to mount horses of their own and chase after them.

"I'll prepare the formal welcome!" Aunt Dany shouted after them. "You two go see Elia's family."

"Thank you, Aunt Dany," Alyssa shouted back as they raced through the camp uncertain if her Aunt could even hear her.

Thankfully, Elia slowed down as they made it out of camp and began riding towards the Martell host. She was also strangely enough adjusting her riding leathers.

"Are you trying to look better in front of your family?" Alyssa asked, surprised by Elia's reaction.

The Dornishwoman just blushed. "Yes. I haven't seen him in moons, not since we left King's Landing. And my sisters since they went back to Dorne after visiting with Uncle Doran during the Great Council. That was almost a year ago! I want to look my best."

Alyssa giggled and kissed her lover's cheek. "I think you look lovely always."
"And you're biased Alys."

"So's your Father." Alyssa noted. "Isn't that right Prince Oberyn?"

"Indeed, I am." The Red Viper said with a chuckle as he rode up to them, having pushed his own horse into a gallop as he saw them exit the camp and managed to reach them while Alyssa had helpfully distracted his daughter.

"Father!" Elia practically squeaked, causing both her loved ones to burst out laughing at her expense.

"You deserved that," Tyene said as she and Obara caught up with their Father.

"Tyene~!" Elia whined.

"It's good to see you've not changed a bit, Elia." The oldest of the Sand Snakes said in lieu of a proper greeting as she looked around. "Where's Nymeria?"

"Probably, with the rest of the official reception party." Alyssa said with an amused smile at the embarrassed look Elia was sporting. "Someone was impatient and rode on ahead."

"I think we can guess who," Prince Oberyn said with a teasing smile at Elia that had her turning to hide her blushing face in Alyssa's chest.

Shaking her head at her lover's behavior, Alyssa wrapped an arm to make sure she was secure and used the other to take the reins of their horse that she had discarded.

"Let's head into camp where we can welcome you all properly," Alyssa said, turning the horse around.

"Lead the way, your grace."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Just a final set up chapter. The next one should be the start of the War for the Dawn, so look forward to that.

Anyone wondering why the people of King's Landing are so supportive of Alyssa? Let's see the reasons. All of which can be inferred from the story, but which I will outline here:

i) She has ensured any food shortages are a memory of the past since she has the firm support of the Reach thus ensuring foodstuff from the breadbasket of Westeros arrives to the capitol without issue

ii) Unlike the Baratheons and Lannisters, she actually bothered to call a Great Council to validate her rule and not just assume the throne entirely by right of conquest. That this event also meant a lot of money flowed into the city from all the attending nobles just endears her even more.
iii) She defused the threat to the city of Dany's taking of Dragonstone and thus being only a short distance away from King's Landing itself peacefully, preventing a bloody repeat of the Battle of the Blackwater.

Beyond that, any issues should've been entirely self explanatory within the chapter itself. As such, I'll be calling it here. Till next time saluu!
The Long Night #5: Battle of Castle Black

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire

Alyssa I Targaryen

Book : The Long Night

Chapter 5: Battle of Castle Black

Beta:

Trigger warning: Canon typical underage, nudity

It was late at night at Castle Black and in their bedchamber in the King's Tower, Alyssa was busy making love to Elia. She was in fact enthusiastically rubbing her cunt against Elia's own as their wandering hands explored and pampered each other's bodies. A delightful activity that was helping them build towards a powerful peak when suddenly there was an urgent knock on the door.

"Your grace, Lady Elia! Wights! An army of wights have been spotted!" Brienne shouted from the other side of the sturdy oak.

For a moment the two lovers just froze as their passion addled minds processed the news before with massive groans of disappointment they pulled away from each other. They had not yet successfully reached a high but they nevertheless knew their duty and could not continue. A fact that left them deeply annoyed as this had been the first time that they had the chance to lay with each other in a sennight, Alyssa having been, at Elia's insistence, secretly using Gate to have her other concubines back in King's Landing visit her here in Castle Black in accordance with the schedule they had worked out before they had departed North.

"Tonight doesn't count!" Elia demanded as she pulled on her breast band and drawers heedless of the sweat and other things that covered her body from their lovemaking. "We didn't get to finish! I demand a make up night!"

"Agreed." Alyssa acquiesced easily as she threw on her chemise with the same disregard for what coated her body at the moment before slipping on then lacing her boots.

"You should wear men's clothes." Elia said a moment later as she slipped on and secured her trousers and tunic even as Alyssa just finished her boots and was pulling on her kirtle. "It's more comfortable in a fight."

"I have an image to maintain." Alyssa countered as she finished putting on her gown and was tightening her sword belt with the sheathed Dark Sister dangling securely from it around her waist.

"What that you're a woman and a warrior at once?" Elia asked as she, having put on her outer furs, held Alyssa's fur lined jacket for her so she could slip her arms more easily into its sleeves.

"Thank you." Alyssa said as she finished slipping her arms in and began working on the buttons. "And precisely."
"Aren't your breasts enough proof of that?" Elia said with a scoff as she slipped on her boots.

Alyssa rolled her eyes.

"Sadly, no." She said as she took the time her lover used to put on her footwear to adjust how her clothes sat a little. "Besides I like dresses."

"On the battlefield?" Elia asked incredulously even as she continued lacing her boots uninterrupted.

"I do ride on Ghost's back most of the time, which means I don't need armor and can dress how I like. Is that not why you're forgoing armor now?"

"Yes, but at least I'm wearing something I can fight in." Elia said as she finished one boot and moved to the next.

"I can fight well enough in a dress." Alyssa countered with a shrug. "Besides, I mainly use magic in combat anyway."

"I won't win this will I?" Elia said with a sigh halfway through lacing up her second boot.

"No," Alyssa confessed with an amused smile. "Just like you didn't the last nine times you brought this up. Or the four times Mya did."

Elia just giggled at that and finished with her boots.

"Done!" Elia she declared triumphantly and Alyssa nodded as they both moved to leave their rooms.

As they finally exited their chambers, they were met with Aunt Dany just hurrying out of her own rooms with Dickon Tarly, both of them showing signs, much as they themselves were, of having dressed hastily.

Alyssa couldn't help the amused smirk she shot at her Aunt at the sight, but the other Targaryen just rolled her eyes.

"Now is not the time, Niece." She reprimanded as she took the mage's arm and pulled her along as they rushed out of the Tower.

"True," Alyssa said with a giggle. "But I reserve the right as your Niece to tease you about this later, Aunt."

"After we fight off the wights, you can tease me all you want."

Moments later, Alyssa, Dany and Elia were riding the newly expanded elevator up to the top of the Wall. Constructed by giants and powered by their mammoths, the new elevator could now carry up a giant and a mammoth up the Wall at the same time if ever the need arose. This in addition to two dozen new smaller elevators and many more new added stairs made travel up and down the Wall much easier. A point that was made clear by the unit of Valemen archers they now shared the elevator with that were hurrying up to reinforce those on duty.

"The sentries spotted the wights massing just beyond the tree line across from the Castle Black gate through the Wall." Brienne briefed them as they stood to one relatively secluded corner of the crowded elevator.

"Do we have any ideas on the enemy numbers?" Alyssa asked seriously, her levity over her Aunt's
liaison with Dickon Tarly pushed aside for a more appropriate time.

"No accurate ones, your grace." Brienne said apologetically. "They have been keeping to the tree line which has made attempts to count their numbers next to impossible, but estimates indicate that they number in the thousands."

"Is this their main force then?" Elia asked. "The horde of a hundred thousand?"

"It's possible." Alyssa said with a frown. "But something doesn't seem right. Every account of his campaign against the Free Folk shows that the Night King is no fool. So why would he mass his forces to attack a heavily fortified location like Castle Black and risk the destruction of the wight army he's taken years to amass?"

"There does feel like something is amiss." Aunt Dany agreed. "But whatever the Night King's plan, we cannot let this chance to wipe out a chunk of his army go to waste."

"And we won't." Alyssa affirmed as the elevator came to a jerky stop as it reached its destination at the top of the Wall.

They promptly disembarked and headed to an observation hut on the northern edge of the Wall where Lord Commander Thorne was already peering through the lens and bronze tube of a Myrish eye, one of the many new pieces of equipment Alyssa had provided the Watch, at the undead horde standing patiently at the edge of the Haunted Forest.

"They've just been standing there," the Lord Commander said handing the far eye to Alyssa as she and Aunt Dany walked over. "That and growing in numbers."

Alyssa nodded and put the device to her eye and peered down at the undead along the tree line. They were everywhere she could see. Beasts of all types, men, women, even children, all dead but animated to an unholy imitation of life and forced to serve as the Others' slaves. It might have been her imagination but as her eyes looked over them, she thought their glowing blue eyes followed her gaze as if they were searching her soul from the distance.

What was not her imagination was when an Other stepped very deliberately into her view. He was tall and gaunt, with flesh pale as milk and had cold blue eyes akin to burning ice just like all his kind but was dressed in elaborate armor and had a series of horn like growths on his head that together looked very much like a crown.

"The Night King!" Alyssa gasped as she pulled the far eye from her eye and tore her gaze away. Even as the victorious smirk on the monster's face that was her last glimpse of the Night King sent a shiver of fear down her spine.

"Let me see." Aunt Dany said reaching for the Myrish eye.

"No time," the Lord Commander said as movement below caught all their attention. "They're coming."

It seemed the Night King realizing that Alyssa was there was the signal the wights had been waiting for as suddenly thousands of the undead swarmed out of the tree line and towards the Wall.

"Fire!" Thorne shouted at the men on the Wall. "All archers and catapults fire!"

Thousands of fire arrows shot down at the wight hordes even as the catapults began hurling barrels of Wildfire down as well, together they turned the empty expanse between the tree line and the Wall into a sea of flames, many of them green. Yet the wights still came in a seemingly unending
tide, braving the flames and smothering large patches of it with their own bodies as they advanced relentlessly. Many fell but enough made it through the barrage that the men at the tunnel through the Wall would have plenty of work to do.

"Keep firing!" Thorne shouted as he too picked up a bow and turned to the two Queens. "Your graces, what are you waiting for!? Get on your dragons!"

"Right!" Alyssa shouted as she ran to the Castle Black side of the Wall, already calling out to Ghost through their bond. "Aunt Dany, Ghost is bringing your dragons so follow me."

Her Aunt looked skeptical but nodded and trailed after her. Alyssa did not make her way to the elevators which were even now hard at work bringing more companies of archers up the Wall, but to an empty edge nearby where seconds later Ghost flew in and took a hovering position.

"Levitate!" Alyssa cast on all of them before jumping off the Wall.

There were cries of alarm but as her spell took hold and she floated down onto the fighting platform on Ghost's back, the rest of Alyssa's retinue starting with Elia followed her lead and leapt off the Wall with varying degrees of reluctance. Followed at last by a fearful Aunt Dany.

Drogon didn't seem to want to cooperate though and even as Alyssa moved her Aunt onto his back with her spell, the black dragon literally snatched her out of the air with his jaws and tossed her on instead.

"Aunt Dany, are you alright?" Alyssa shouted in concern.

"I'm fine!" She heard her Aunt shout back sounding a little rattled even as she hastily adjusted her grip on her dragon's back while Rhaegal and Viserion squawked at their brother angrily as they flew over the Wall.

"Ghost! Over the Wall! We need to support them!"

Ghost roared his agreement and began beating his wings to take them over the Wall even as Alyssa cast Mage Armor over him as they readied to join the fight.

Even as two of his daughters and his royal gooddaughter flew over the Wall to join the fight on the other side, Prince Oberyn Martell, Red Viper of Dorne, met up with Obara as they rushed to the tunnel entrance that led to the other side of the Wall from across the greatly expanded Castle Black.

"Where's Tyene?" Oberyn asked his eldest daughter who should have been with her sister while he had been enjoying the pleasures of a particularly comely Free Folk wench.

"She's gone to the healer's tents." Obara told him as she fell in besides him. "She said she'd be more help there."

"Good decision," Oberyn concluded even as the sound of something very heavy smashing into the Wall reverberated through the air.

"What was that?" Obara asked, alarmed. "I thought the wights didn't have catapults."

"No," a Night's Watch Brother rushing beside them confirmed. "But they do count giants among their number."
"So they're having wight giants tossing boulders take the role of catapults?" Oberyn asked. "These Others are smart bastards."

"Is that what they're doing?" Obara asked as they finally began to near the fortifications guarding the tunnel.

"It's only a guess," Oberyn told his daughter. "The only way I'd know for sure is if I was up on the Wall or on the Queen's dragon. But I'd bet good coin on it."

Their discussion was cut off when a group of bedraggled looking men ran out of the tunnel.

"They've broken through the gate on the other side!" Their leader, a Night Watch's Brother, shouted as he helped an injured Northman through the disorganized group of men standing at the top of the incline leading down into the tunnel entrance. "The line in the tunnel is holding but not for long. They're coming."

His words seem to shake the defenders, mainly Northmen, Oberyn noted, and they looked at each other worriedly. Even their commander a young man wearing the Karstark colors, one of the Lord of Karhold's younger sons perhaps, looked lost.

Guess I'll have to step in. Oberyn concluded as he climbed up a wooden observation tower that gave him a nice vantage point from which to see the whole area around the tunnel entrance. Thanks to some remodeling ordered by the Queen, the tunnel now opened up onto an incline at the top of which the Karstark men had formed up. On either side of the incline were short, thick walls from the tops of which a spearman could just about jab down at the enemy below and still had enough room for two or three men to stand behind him. These walls were anchored on one side by the Wall itself and internally by a pair of short towers, the latter of which were currently manned by only a paltry three archers each. Between these towers was a heavy gate ahead of which stood the Karstark men.

"Form a shield wall!" Oberyn shouted into a conveniently placed speaking horn at the Northmen guarding the gate. "Lower your spears and stab any of those undead monsters that you see coming!"

The Karstark men looked at their commander questioningly and the man shot Oberyn a grateful look before echoing his command. Taking heart from their commander's renewed courage and clear instructions, the men did as they were told and formed up into a passable shield wall with dragonglass tipped spears pointed firmly at the tunnel entrance.

"Get a line of men on the walls!" Oberyn shouted and his arriving Dornish spears rushed to obey. "Two rows at least. Three if you can fit them. Archers behind them! And get more archers into those towers! Pack them as tightly as you can and still shoot!"

"On it, your grace." Ser Ryon Allyrion, one of the Dornish commanders, shouted as he organized the men according to Oberyn's instructions.

"Get blocks of spearmen to cover any possible breaches just in case one of the damned things slip through," Oberyn added. "And stagger archers behind them or inside their formations if possible."

"Yes, your grace." Ser Ryon returned, adding it to the instructions he was relaying even as the lines on the walls on either side of the incline solidified into a proper shield wall.

This they managed just in time as a dozen or so Night's Watch Brothers and Northmen ran in terror out the tunnel even as the wights chased them. Many bore marks of having braved the sea of fire.
that Oberyn knew was being unleashed against them on the other side of the Wall and which severely thinned the numbers of the highly flammable creatures, but still dozens of them came pouring out inarticulately screaming their hatred of the living.

"Archers fire!" Oberyn shouted and dragonglass and flaming arrows aplenty rained on the wights as the survivors of the tunnel defense line pressed their way through the forward lines towards safety.

Over a dozen wights fell but they were replaced by more of the monsters pouring through the Wall behind them and the first finally met the defender's spears. These were promptly silenced by the mere nick of the spears' dragonglass tips but many used the inertia of their suicidal charge to impale themselves on the spears making them next to impossible to maneuver by their users and thus useless.

"If you spear is stuck then drop it!" Oberyn shouted. "And fall back to get a new one! Commanders rotate in new men as needed! And where the hell is the Wildfire!?"

"Here, your grace!" An Alchemist said from nearby where he was standing next to a small catapult. "Should we unleash it now?"

Oberyn turned to the situation at the tunnel entrance. They had taken out at least three dozen wights already but there were at least twice that rushing their lines using their fallen brethren as shields in an act of intelligence that frankly surprised the Prince but which he chalked up to their distant Other masters. Worse, more were coming in a seemingly unless tide.

I need to slow them down. Oberyn concluded. And there's more than enough fuel in there already.

"Do it!" Oberyn ordered the Alchemist who smirked like a madman and activated the catapult, sending a cask of Wildfire precisely into the heart of the mob of wights pouring out of the tunnel entrance, spilling the flammable liquid all over the creatures. With dozens of fire arrows flying at them every moment, it took naught but a second or two before the Wildfire caught ablaze transforming the attacking mob into an emerald green pyre.

"Commanders rotate out your men if they need it, but keep an eye out for enemy stragglers!" Oberyn ordered. "And keep watch for the next wave!"

"They're coming!" Someone shouted as a dozen or so wights hurled themselves out of the tunnel and into the green flames smothering them with the ash of their rapidly incinerated bodies, opening a space in the process that allowed even more of their ilk to surge out behind them.

"Shoot them down! Don't let them smother the flames entirely!" Oberyn shouted even as the archers hurried to obey.

"They just keep coming." Obara noted with a frown as the wights did just as she said and kept pouring out the tunnel entrance.

"Of course they are." Oberyn said as he eyed the undead with angry distaste. "They are nothing but puppets for the Others now. They know no fear and no pain. No matter what we do they will keep coming until either they are all dead again or we are."

"Then we'll just have to outlast them." Obara said. "Kill them until they are none of them left."

"Let us hope that happens before there are none of us left to fight them."
"Save your arrows," Alyssa urged Elia and her Queensguard as they all armed themselves with bows and quivers of dragonglass from a crate, all modified for safe use from the back of a flying dragon, while strapping themselves into their fighting positions on the howdah, as the Imp had discovered such platforms were called, on Ghost's back. "Use them only on the Others."

"As you command, your grace." Loras shouted his agreement as Ghost crested over the Wall and dove groundward to add his dragonfire to the streams unleashed by Aunt Dany's dragons that were burning deep furrows in the ranks of the wight tide surging out of the Haunted Forest.

"Meteor Swarm!" Alyssa cast, sending three dozen blazing orbs of fire plummeting to the ground from the sky above into the forest itself, setting swathes of it alight even as she killed hundreds of wights. That this also created illumination by which to spot any Others Elia and her Queensguard might target with their bows was just a happy coincidence.

"Your grace, wight giants!" Nymeria shouted and Alyssa turned just in time to see a pair of the undead giants stomp into view each with a massive boulder in their hands.

"Ghost!" Alyssa shouted in alarm, even as her dragon reacted smoothly and evaded the thrown boulders with ease and the huge rocks impacted the Wall instead.

"Firestorm!" Alyssa incanted in retaliation nonetheless, conjuring a sheet of white hot flame that incinerated the two boulder throwing wight giants.

"Your grace, more giants!" Brienne shouted and Alyssa turned to see another three undead giants appear out of the foliage of the forest their bulk previously hidden by the thick tree cover.

This time, Alyssa didn't even need to issue a command for Ghost to evade the rocks hurled his way so she just jumped to the offensive herself.

"Wall of Fire!" She cast, creating a line of white flames that ignited the three wight giants and wishing she could use her more powerful spells in quick succession.

"Alys! More!" Elia shouted and Alyssa turned to see another pair of wight giants suddenly make themselves known.

*What in the world is the Night King doing? He's just wasting his wight giants by having them appear in small groups like this.*

The moment that Alyssa took to contemplate what the Night King was doing, was when Aunt Dany decided that she would take the initiative and attack the wight giants this time and had Drogon bank towards them with his smaller siblings in tow.

_Alys hasn't seen them._ Daenerys concluded when her Niece didn't destroy them instantly with her magic as she had the first two batches of wight giants. *Then it's up to me!*

"Drogon! Attack those giants!" Dany ordered and her black scaled son obeyed, breaking off his strafing run on the helpless wights below to bank towards the giants prompting his smaller siblings to follow.

The massive wights made out of the friendly and majestic giants noticed them immediately, their unnatural glowing blue eyes turning to them and leveling them with a malice filled gaze even as they tossed the boulders they used as projectiles at them.

Dragons were masters of the air however and all three of her children easily evaded the two
boulders. Each of the wights turned to rip up one of the massive trees that seemed to dominate this forest Beyond the Wall to use as a club or possibly even a throwing stick but they were too slow and Dany's children were upon them before they could so much as grab hold of a trunk.

"Dracarys!" Dany ordered and jets of black, white and green dragonfire shot from her children's mouths and easily set the highly flammable wight giants alight.

That was also the exact moment that the spears began flying up at them from the forest below. Reacting immediately, her children climbed into the air desperately in a bid to escape the attack. But the sheer volume of the ice spears thrown at them by what Dany were horrified to discover were inhuman white skinned humanoids that could only be Others were too many and some struck their targets. Drogon was hit twice, one in the tail and another in the left leg. Smaller and more agile Rhaegal managed to evade all but one spear which hit him in his right knee and caused him to howl in pain. Viserion had got the worse of it however as he was hit right in the chest and began to fall out of the air.

"NO!" Dany screamed as her son fell to his doom.

"NO!" Aunt Dany's agonized scream resounded across the battlefield as Viserion plummeted out of the air with one of the Others' ice spears firmly embedded in the center of his chest.

"Flame Strike!" Alyssa cast as she poured extra power into the spell and created a massive pillar of fire in the spot from whence the ice spears were being hurled. So intense were these pure white flames that they literally disintegrated the patch of forest they targeted and revealed the three dozen Others stumbling away from the liquefying remains of what might have once been giant ice spiders.

"Kill them!" Alyssa ordered Elia and her Queensguard as Ghost flew in and they dutifully rained down a shower of dragonglass tipped arrows that caused the disorientated White Walkers to shatter one by one as they were taken out by the relentless fire.

The rain of arrows was cut short however when suddenly Ghost surged upwards.

"Ghost wha-"

The answer presented itself as even more ice spears flew past, many of them missing entirely and others thankfully bouncing off the Mage Armor Alyssa had cast on him.

A quick glance to the side saw Drogon and Rhaegal similarly being forced back by what must have been hundreds of Others throwing their spears at them despite their best efforts to recover their brother's body.

Speaking of Viserion's body.

"Where is it?" Alyssa asked as she searched the forest for its location. As much as she knew doing so would hurt her Aunt, she had to cremate it before the Night King could raise Viserion as a wight.

Her search had barely begun when a sudden blizzard appeared entirely out of nowhere and turned the visibility to zero. Ghost shot skyward, the whizzing sound of missed ice spears and the pinging of on target ones accompanying them as they flew high into the air and burst out of the unnatural snowstorm that now blanketed the Haunted Forest. First Rhaegal and then Drogon shooting out of the cloud of swirling snow moments later.
This whole attack was nothing more than a trap. A trap so the Night King could get a dragon! Alyssa realized as Ghost began flying back towards the Wall, whose top barely made it over the unnaturally low clinging blizzard.

Behind them Rhaegal and Drogon continued circling the spot where their brother had fallen crying out for him but thankfully refused to dive back below the thick cloud and into danger despite their mother's increasingly desperate pleas for them to do so. It was futile though, and they needed to regroup but Alyssa left them be for the moment. She would just keep an eye on them. For now.

"Ghost, strafe just ahead of the Wall. Use it as a reference." Alyssa told her dragon. "But do not go under the cloud."

Her dragon roared his understanding as he moved to do just that. As terribly as the battle had gone so far, it was still ongoing and unlike her Aunt she would not waste time grieving while her men were still fighting for their lives.

"I'm sorry," Dany said as she walked into Alys' solar in the King's Tower two days after the battle and causing her Niece to look at her with confusion, though the other woman quickly dismissed that and the correspondence she had been reading to come over and pull her into a hug.

"It wasn't your fault," the mage said patting Dany's back comfortingly. "I didn't realize it was a trap either."

"No, but you weren't the one to recklessly close with the enemy and expose yourself."

"I had the benefit of my magic allowing me to attack the giants from range." Alys said as she pulled away slightly to allow her right hand to wipe away at Dany's tears. "And I didn't lose a son in that battle."

The reminder almost had Dany break out into sobs all over again like she had been doing for the past day but she couldn't afford to waste time on grief any longer so she took a shaky breath to steady herself instead.

"We'll avenge him." Dany said, her grief transforming into anger in a moment.

"We will." Alys agreed as she pulled away entirely.

"Have you been able to locate his body?" Dany asked, hoping that her worst fears were not realized.

"No," Alyssa said with a shake of her head. "After that unnatural blizzard lifted and the wights finally stopped coming, our scouts combed the Haunted Forest for leagues but we found no trace of Viserion's body. I'm afraid-

"Don't say it, Niece. Please don't."

As likely as it was, the thought of Viserion having become a wight was too painful to bear.

"We can't deny reality, Aunt." Alys said as kindly as the stern woman could.

"I know," Dany admitted looking away and unable to meet her Niece's intense eyes. The other Targaryen did not know it, but whenever she spoke of the war with the Others her eyes took on the cast of a fanatic. As if she would do anything to achieve victory over the abominations.
"But," Dany continued in a soft, vulnerable voice that since the birth of her dragons she had only ever used in Missandei's presence. "Please. Until we must, let me hold out hope."

Alys said nothing, which was disapproval enough coming from her Niece who had something to say in almost any situation.

"What needs to be done now?" Dany asked, breaking the uncomfortable silence. "Anything I can do?"

"I'll handle the search for the Night King." Alyssa told her with cold intensity. "My magic can see him but he's not anywhere I recognize unfortunately, so all I can say is that he is on the move."

"Where?" Dany said, less a question and more just idle wondering.

"Hopefully the scouts will tell us." Alyssa answered her anyways. "I have told them any details that my Scrying has shown me. It's up to them now."

"So what can I do?" Dany asked again.

"Check up on Drogon and Rhaegal." Alyssa urged. "We'll need them whenever and wherever the Night King makes his move."

"I can do that," Dany said with a sigh of relief and turned to leave.

"Aunt Dany?"

"Yes, Alys?" Dany turned back to ask as she was just about to open the door to leave.

"We will avenge Viserion and win this war." Alyssa insisted with the cold certainty of a true zealot.

Dany merely offered her Niece a smile and left, hiding her discomfort with the other woman's intensity. Now was not the time to confront her about her strange focus on this conflict. That could wait until after this war was won.

_That is if we live long enough to enjoy victory._ Dany's mind thought against her will and images of Viserion falling from the sky filled her mind's eye.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Yes, I had Dany hook up with Dickon Tarly. Right now it's just a fling. Will it become something more? I'm not telling. XP

Moving on…

I hope the battle was acceptable. It was a fun but challenging thing to write so I'm not a hundred percent on its quality. That said, I do hope it is not too bad. And yes, I still gave the Night King Wight!Viserion. Why? Because it's honestly the most expedient way for him to get over the Wall unless I use the Horn of Winter plot and have him take down the whole Wall but that's too damned Deus Ex Machina for me. Besides despite its poor execution at times and its lack of ultimate payoff in the show, the idea
of the Night King getting his hands on an undead dragon is a good one.

Lastly, Dany sees Alyssa as a fanatic? How could she not when in the previous chapter Alyssa all but admitted to her that everything she's done so far was nothing more than preparation for this war. And she doesn't even realize this is the second time that Alyssa has fought this war. That said, is Dany's perception of Alyssa accurate? Well, she is grieving Viserion's loss here and not exactly all there when she made the observation but that doesn't mean she's wrong either. So how correct is she? I'll leave that up to the individual reader to decide.

That's it for me this chapter so till next time addiju!
Scarcely a week after the Battle of Castle Black, Ser Davos Seaworth was on the galley, the Blackbird, which along with the two other smaller galleys, the Storm Crow and Talon of the Night's Watch fleet were out in the Bay of Seals providing as much support as they could for the section of the Wall that the castle of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea defended with their hastily installed catapults and their arsenal of Wildfire explosives as it was attacked by a horde of wights. They probably would not have managed such a maneuver if Queen Alyssa had not used her magic to inform Cotter Pyke who commanded the castle that the enemy was coming but even with the forewarning and their preparations, the battle still looked hopeless.

It was difficult to fight such despair when looking at the hordes of undead that covered the northern foot of the Wall like a carpet of rotting flesh. One that was already forming into veritable mountains at the base of the Wall as the wights piled up on top of each other in a bid to climb the towering formation of ice whilst others still tried to force their way through the castle's gate through the Wall. All in all, it was a sight that left the Night's Watch Brother barely able to suppress a shudder.

Just how many did they kill to create an army that big? The Onion Knight thought even as he shouted commands at the crew to keep the ship steady so the catapult crews could have a more better shot. Thank the gods the rumored dragon wight isn't here at least.

"Ser Davos!" Someone shouted urgently. "Dragon! Incoming dragon!"

Nine hells! I jinxed us didn't I? Davos thought even as he spun in the direction his Brother, a former sailor from the Lannisport fleet that had been forced to take the Black to escape execution in the Queen's trails after the War of the Four Sovereigns, pointed and saw to his dismay a cream colored dragon with tattered wings and a gaping wound in its chest all of which in addition to its eyes glowed with an unnatural blue light. That was terrifying enough but on its back rode a figure that Davos' instincts told him could only be the Night King and that was enough to almost freeze the blood in his veins.

A fear that only grew as the undead dragon flew towards the Wall heedless of the projectiles shot its way, which Davos saw were being deflected away from it by a nearly invisible swirling nimbus of frigid looking air that quickly formed around it. Thus protected, it flew right up to the Wall and unleashed its dragonfire against the ice. The effect was almost immediate and a whole section of the Wall closest to the Bay of Seals collapsed, sending hundreds of men atop it to their deaths. With many more following shortly after as massive chunks of ice fell onto the castle below.
"We're doomed!" Someone said and Davos would have agreed if not for a swirling portal of black appearing just south of the battlefield from which flew out the three living dragons.

"No, not yet." Davos said with a forced grin before he raised his voice so he could be heard by everyone on the Blackbird. "Keep to your tasks! We still have a battle to fight!"

Alyssa had been using her Scrying spell to attempt to track the Night King ever since the Battle of Castle Black but the leader of the Others seemed to know this and had been deliberately making it difficult on her. Through whatever magic he possessed, he made it impossible for her to simply use his position as a reference and pull skyward to locate him, forcing her to try and decipher his position based on whatever landmarks he passed in her limited visions. Sadly, he was also very careful to avoid any such landmarks.

He could however only keep such a game on for so long and today Alyssa had finally met with success. Though discovering he was flying on the back of an undead Viserion as he prepared to assault Eastwatch-by-the-Sea was not exactly good news either. Nevertheless it was progress and so Alyssa had hastily used Message to contact the castle's commander to inform him of the imminent attack before preparing a response.

"Aunt Dany, are you sure you're ready for this?" Alyssa asked her Aunt as the final preparations for the relief force was completed

"I am," her Aunt reassured her. "I will not let the Night King continuing desecrating Viserion's body. I will cleanse it of the Others' foul magic and give my son the rest he deserves."

"Good," Alyssa nodded, pleased that her Aunt's grief had been reforged into anger. "Hold onto that anger when we face the Night King. We'll need it."

Aunt Dany just nodded.

"Your graces," Prince Oberyn said as he walked up with Ser Garlan Tyrell. The latter had freshly arrived with another batch of Reach knights and would be commanding the relief forces. "The relief force is ready."

"Thank you, Prince Oberyn." Alyssa said formally and earning an annoyed look from Elia's father for the formality of her tone. "Then I leave Castle Black and Elia in your hands."

The Red Viper looked ready to quip back but Aunt Dany clearing her throat meaningfully had him reconsidering.

"I'll keep them safe," he replied instead though he shot her Aunt an unhappy look.

"Ser Garlan, I trust you remember the advice the Free Folk and the Night's Watch Brothers told you about fitting the wights and the Others on the open field?" Alyssa asked Margey's brother.

"Don't let them mob you. Retreat if you are about to be overwhelmed. Use fire to force them to spread out, that'll leave them vulnerable to cavalry. In general use fire a lot." The knight said, rattling off some of the advice he'd received. "I think I know what to do, your grace."

"Good. Remember to heed it in battle." Alyssa told him sternly. "It might mean life or undeath for your men."

Garlan shuddered and nodded.
"I will, your grace." The knight said with a solemn nod.

"Then let us fly, Niece." Aunt Dany said as she turned to mount Drogon. "We have a castle to relieve."

Alyssa nodded and turned to Ghost.

"Levitate." She incanted as she floated up to the howdah on his back even as he sent her a burst of eagerness for the coming battle that she returned.

"All ready?" She asked her Queensguard, excepting Nymeria who was staying behind in Castle Black with Elia for this mission, and the band of archers that Ser Wendel had selected out of the best Bowman available to accompany them as she strapped herself into the throne of the platform.

"We await your command, your grace." Loras replied from where he was strapped into his fighting position and clutched his bow.

Alyssa nodded and began working her magic.

"Mage Armor. Mage Armor. Mage Armor." She cast, covering Ghost, Drogon and Rhaegal in protective magic before she sent a command to her dragon to take to the air.

With a beat of his mighty wings and a push of his powerful legs, they were airborne and were soon joined by her Aunt's two surviving sons. They circled Castle Black once so that Drogon and Rhaegal could form up on either side of Ghost before Alyssa cast her next spell.

"Gate." She cast, opening a portal just south of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea.

Without the need for prompting from her, Ghost flew through the portal and they exited to a scene of horror. A whole section of the Wall had come down, with massive chunks of its ice having landed right on top of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea itself and allowing thousands of wights to pour over the gap this created in their defenses. Worse yet though was the Viserion with the Night King riding him was actively using his dragonfire to widen the breach in the Wall.

Not on my watch! Alyssa thought even as Ghost flew to attack the undead dragon and she readied a spell.

"Fireball!!" She casts sending a streak of flame flying across the distance at Viserion. She would have preferred using a more powerful Flame Strike but the Night King, perhaps deliberately, was hovering over the castle at the moment and she feared the spell's pillar of flame would hurt her men down below.

Her frustration just grew when the explosion of flame from her spell occurred prematurely as it hit the sphere of swirling winds that surrounded the undead dragon and its rider.

"He's developed counters." Alyssa hissed in anger as Ghost swerved to the side to evade a stream of unnatural blue flame that Viserion spat at them whilst returning with a stream of his own mixed freezing and burning flame.

The undead dragon easily evaded Ghost's stream but could not do the same for those unleashed upon it by its living brothers as they flew at it from the sides while it had been distracted by Ghost. Its protective sphere of swirling winds kept it safe however and it shot out of the firestorm created and immediately made a run of it as it flew west.

Aunt Dany pursued ordering Rhaegal and Drogon to breathe streams of dragonfire at Viserion even
as he led them away. Alyssa paused in joining them however as she turned to survey the battlefield below.

The relief forces below had quickly spreading out into a ring around the all but fallen Eastwatch-by-the-Sea and the giants in their ranks were hastily building fortifications from the materials they'd brought with them and packed snow. All the while, archers with flaming arrows and hastily deployed siege machines, many of them still hooked to the mammoths that had dragged them through the Gate portal, used their fiery projectiles to force the horde to spread out. This allowed cavalry units made up of Dothraki screamers and Westerosi knights to ride through the mobs of wights thinning their numbers even further and covered the retreat of survivors from the castle.

"Garlan has things in hand, your grace." Loras opined as Ghost helped out the men below with a strafing run that devastated an entire flank of the wight army and bought enough time for a quick marching company of sellsword spearmen to finish setting up a shield wall.

Alyssa agreed. Most of the wights were still bottled up inside the ruins of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea and probably being held back by its valiant defenders and while hundreds were spilling out into the field, her cavalry were hunting the small groups down. If things proceed as it was going so far, she was confident her men would be able to contain this breach even if the castle was likely a lost cause.

"Ghost, follow Aunt Dany." Alyssa shouted at her friend, more for the sake of her retinue than his since she simultaneously sent the message through their link. "We'll leave this to Garland."

Ghost roared his displeasure at this but nevertheless pulled up from yet another strafing run against the wight hordes below and turned to fly after Aunt Dany and the Night King. The aerial battle between them having already moved a considerable distance westward by this point.

*Calm, Ghost.* Alyssa sent soothingly. *Remember if we kill the Night King then we might just end this war. If not, at the very least eliminating Viserion will deprive him of a powerful asset.*

Ghost growled his unhappy understanding and began beating his wings hard as he strove to catch up with the other dragons.

"He's pulling away!" Dany shouted in dismay as the sun began to set. "Drogon, Rhaegal, Alys we can't let him!"

Drogon and Rhaegal roared their agreement but despite their enthusiasm Dany could hear the sound of exhaustion in their voices. A slight tremble that betrayed how tired a full day of flying and fighting had left them.

*Aunt Dany, it's me Alys. Her Niece's voice said into her mind thanks to her Message spell. I'm sorry, but we can't keep this up. Ghost is exhausted and so are my men and I. We need to rest.*

Dany hated to admit it, but she was beyond tired herself. And hungry and thirsty as well. She had been so dogged in her pursuit of the Night King and Viserion that she had not eaten or drunk anything since she had heard the news of the attack on Eastwatch-by-the-Sea.

*But Viserion-*

*Is a wight now and thus has undead endurance. We cannot hunt him down like this.*

Dany growled in frustration but her Niece was right.
Very well. Dany sent back reluctantly. What should we do? We can't just let the Night King fly along the Wall with impunity.

I don't think we have a choice. Alys sent back sounding tired. I'll create a Gate back to Castle Black. We'll come up with something there.

Perhaps sensing his pursuers were about to give up, the Night King suddenly veered north but not before having Viserion use his dragonfire to blast apart a small breach in the Wall as he did. Something he'd done occasionally as he had led them on the frustrating chase along the length of the Wall.

And these breaches? Dany sent back as she shouted at Rhaegal to not pursue the Night King over the Wall.

I've contacted the commanders of the nearest castles. They'll send men to secure them. They aren't much of a threat, not without an army waiting on the other side. If we act quickly we can seal them.

Fine! Let's head back to Castle Black.

Thank you for listening, Aunt Dany. Alys sent back even as a familiar Gate portal opened a short distance ahead and they all flew through it.

Even as the two Queens headed back to Castle Black for some rest, the situation at Eastwatch-by-the-Sea was turning desperate.

Cotter Pyke had never been a handsome man and years as a Brother of the Night's Watch had not helped in that regard. The commander of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea was a lean, hard and wiry man with small, close-set eyes, a broken nose, a pox ravaged face, a widow's peak and a sparse, rough beard.

Not that he cared for his looks especially not now that he and the remnants of his men were holed up in the castle's keep with an entire mob of wights outside banging desperately to get in.

It was a foregone conclusion that this was how things would end up. Cotter had no illusions about that after the Wall had come crashing down and crushed much of the castle, letting swarms of wights through in the process. He had, by dint of sheer luck, survived by being in the keep when it happened and the sturdy building had managed to avoid being hit by anything larger than a small boulder of ice which it withstood easily enough.

Having escaped death for a little longer, he had hurried to rally what survivors in the castle as he could and organize some kind of holding action. He knew defending the ruins long term would be impossible but at least holding them back so that the relief force the Queen had said she was sending had time to form up properly so they could put up a proper fight, that he could do. And he had. Through hard fighting he and his men had bought his countrymen as much time as he could.

"The wights have mainly moved on," Maester Harmune informed him as they took a break from defending the doors in the dubious safety of the center of the keep's hall. "It appears they have lost interest in us now that they've gotten us surrounded."

"Looks like," Cotter spat. "They are smarter than they look."

"I think it more likely any intelligence can be attributed to the Others controlling them."
"Don't care," Cotter said with a shrug. "How is our last farewell?"

"The men have been quite enthusiastic." Harmune said with some amusement. "Though they are sampling it as much as they have been spreading it around."

"So long as there's enough for what we have planned, they are welcome to it. If they want to die as a lush then so be it."

"Indeed," the Maester agreed.

"So are they done?"

"Oh, yes. Can't you smell it?" Harmune asked and Cotter could. The smell of alcohol was thick in the air all around them. "They await your order."

Cotter nodded and climbed up onto the nearest table.

"Brothers, it's time to die." The Night's Watch commander said with a grim smile. "Light it!"

All around him, men, both Night's Watch Brother and not but all his Brothers in this moment, overturned the various candles, braziers and torches onto the alcohol soaked floor causing the whole place to catch fire. The courage of some broke at this moment as the flames began to consume them and they howled in agony and desperately tried to put out the flames. It was futile though, as they had been very thorough indeed in emptying the castle's ample stores of alcohol throughout the hall.

There were however a group that seemed to ignore the pain of being burned alive however and with Cotter Pyke as their leader they instead repeated the vows by which they had sworn to live by and for which they now gave their lives.

"Night gathers, and now my watch begins. It shall not end until my death. I shall take no wife, hold no lands, father no children. I shall wear no crowns and win no glory. I shall live and die at my post. I am the sword in the darkness. I am the watcher on the walls. I am the fire that burns against the cold, the light that brings the dawn, the horn that wakes the sleepers, the shield that guards the realms of men. I pledge my life and honor to the Night's Watch, for this night and all the nights to come."

It was with the words of their oath on their lips that the Night's Watch Brothers of Eastwatch-by-the-Sea died, defiantly burning themselves alive to deny the Army of the Dead their bodies.

The situation was not much better outside the ruined castle.

"Retreat!" Garlan shouted as loudly as he could as his men began pulling back through the dozens of Gate portals that the Red Priests of R'hllor and other magic users under his command who had pledged themselves to the cause of the living and had studied Queen Alyssa's magic had created. "Back through the portals!"

For most of the day, they had been holding out well enough. Especially with most of the wights focused on taking the remains of the castle but about two hours after the Queens' dragons left in pursuit of the Night King, the tide turned. Garlan would never know what caused it but the wights abruptly changed tactics and abandoning their costly attempt to take the wrecked castle they instead began spilling out of the ruins and towards the hastily constructed fortifications that his
men had built. Amazingly, despite their makeshift nature they had held for hours. But they ultimately were no castle walls and could not withstand the undead tide anywhere near as long. Thus near the end of the day they began to fail.

With his lines collapsing, Garlan simply had no choice but to order a retreat. He was not however just going to leave without giving the Others a parting gift.

"Are the Wildfire caches ready?" Garlan asked the leader of the Alchemists assigned to his command.

"They are, my lord." The madman said with a grin. "The fire mages await your command."

Garland surveyed the situation. His men were fighting an effective retreat, pulling back in an orderly manner with walls of spears keeping the enemy at bay as they shrunk their lines whilst archers with fire arrows and teams manning the remaining mammoth sled mounted catapults used ample flames and Wildfire to force the wights to spread out into more manageable formations. More importantly however, the wights had completely overrun all the areas where he'd had the Alchemists set caches of Wildfire.

"Give them the order." Garlan told the man. "Set them alight!"

"With pleasure, my lord." The Alchemist said as he raised a finger at the nearest cache. "Fire bolt!"

A small mote of flame shot from his pointing finger, a far cry from the bolts of screeching white flame Garlan knew Queen Alyssa was capable of with the same spell but it didn't need to be. Shooting over the heads of his men and hundreds of wights, the small arrow of magical flame struck true and ignited the Wildfire cache in a massive explosion that decimated the deep ranks of the wights. Worse for the undead and their inhuman masters, this was only the first of dozens of such explosions that ripped through their army and thinning it substantially.

"Speed up the retreat!" Garlan shouted. "I want us out of here before the enemy recovers!"

Heeding his orders and warning, his men scrambled to obey.

"So Eastwatch fell?" Alyssa asked Garlan tiredly an hour and a good meal on her part later inside her solar in the King’s Tower at Castle Black.

"We held out as long as we could, your grace." Garlan told her apologetically. "But there were too many of them."

"But you managed to retreat with most of your army intact," Aunt Dany observed. "Well done, Ser Garland."

"Yes, very well done Garland." Alyssa said, too tired to maintain the fiction of formality with Margey's brother.

"Thank you, your graces." Ser Garland said offering them both a thankful bow.

"Oberyn, what is the situation with the other breaches?" Alyssa asked Elia's father, who had been coordinating the response to the other gaps in the Wall that the Night King had created.

"They are distractions," the Red Viper hissed. "I contacted the nearest castles using those mages who have learned the Message spell and had them rush forces to all of them to contain any possible
attack by the wights through them but as far as I can tell there were none."

"So the chase along the Wall was purely to distract us from the battle at Eastwatch?" Aunt Dany said with a sigh. "The Night King tricked us?"

"It would appear so," Alyssa said as she rubbed at her eyes. "Still the possibility of him opening a second front by attacking through one of the other breaches or even creating a new one we do not know about means we cannot draw down forces along the Wall."

"He's tied us down." Grey Worm, the leader of Aunt Dany's Unsullied, concluded grimly.

"Yes," Alyssa agreed. "Worse, we have lost him. He's improved whatever magic he was using to limit the scope of my Scrying magic. I can no longer see him at all anymore."

"Have Tormund Giantsbane and Black Jack Bulwer's scouts reported back anything?" Aunt Dany asked.

The two leaders of the eastern section of the Wall had been at Greenguard overseeing its refortification when the Night King had attacked Eastwatch and due to a lack of a mage capable of the Gate spell on hand had been unable to reach the battlefield in time. They had however in the battle's aftermath taken charge of observing the movements, as best as they were able, of the Army of the Dead as it poured through the gap in the Wall it had created. Assisted in the endeavour by Ser Davos Seawatch and the surviving ships of the Watch and the Message capable mages that had been transported aboard via Gate.

*The mages trained by my primers have proven invaluable, limited though their repertoires may be.* Alyssa noted absently. *I really should have trained more of them.*

"Only the most basic reports," Prince Oberyn reported. "It seems the Army of the Dead marches south."

"That could mean anywhere." Jorah Mormont, Aunt Dany's advisor, broke his silence to observe.

"Perhaps," Alyssa noted. "But I reckon they are headed towards Last Hearth. It is the northernmost major holdfast outside of the castles of the Night's Watch."

"Whose defenders they have tied down like Grey Worm noted earlier." Aunt Dany said with a contemplative frown. "It makes sense. The Night King would want to take it and replenish his army. What do you think Grey Worm, Jorah?"

"It makes sense." Mormont said with a contemplative frown. "And even if it isn't, we should at least evacuate and reinforce it on the possibility."

"It would make a good base to hunt the Army of the Dead down in that region of the North." Grey Worm added.

"Very well," Alyssa said with a decisive nod. "Then contact all our forces and let them know to be on guard for the Night King. And I want plans of how to prepare Last Hearth for the coming of the Army of the Dead on my desk by tomorrow afternoon."

"Afternoon, your grace?" Oberyn asked, curiously.

"We are exhausted, Prince Oberyn." Aunt Dany told him. "My Niece and I will need more than just a night's sleep to fully recover."
"Undue hurry with the planning of something this important is also not a good thing." Alyssa added. "So please take your time, my lords."

"As you command, your grace." Garland said with a bow that Oberyn copied.

Alyssa nodded in return and stood to leave. Her bed was calling.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

A short but hopefully entertaining chapter.

Not much to say about it so I'll just sign off here. Till next time dovidenja!
It was another day in the war her people were already calling the Second Long Night and Alyssa was once more responding to a wight attack from across the Wall, this time at the vulnerable castle of Westwatch-by-the-Bridge.

This castle was probably the most ill-defended of the nineteen castles on the Wall. Not because the castle was not well built, it was as sturdy as any of the other long abandoned and recently reoccupied Wall castles. Its weakness lay in the fact that it sat where the Wall ended and was flanked by the Gorge, a large, deep chasm that separated the Wall from the Bay of Ice. With the sharp rocks and a small lake at its base it was treacherous enough to deter all but the most determined Free Folk from descending it in the past, however the wights had no such qualms. They thus swarmed through the deep ravine without hesitation.

Fortunately, this also made them easy targets for the barrels of Wildfire and flaming pitch that was hurled down at them via catapult from the cliffs above. Still many wights scrambled through this barrage and made it across but these were easily dispatched by the disciplined lines of Unsullied and Westerosi spearmen who guarded the heights they needed to pass to truly cross the Wall. Less fortunately, this endless tide through the Gorge drew precious men away from the brutal fight on the Bridge of Skulls that crossed the chasm across which the wights pushed with their undead relentlessness. They were thus making steady progress across the structure.

Surveying all this at a glance from her vantage point in the howdah on Ghost's back, Alyssa made a decision.

"Ghost!" She shouted at her dragon verbally and through their bond. "Destroy the bridge."

He roared his acknowledgement and weathering the thrown spears of the wights thanks to the Mage Armor Alyssa had cast upon him, he flew low over their ranks and unleashed his dragonfire on the supports of the bridge starting from the northernmost ones and steadily making his way south. With each support he destroyed with his breath, a whole section of the Bridge of Skulls was sent falling down into the Gorge far below taking the wights upon them down as well. The dragon only stopping when he came to the section upon which the living defenders' line had retreated to whereupon he shot upwards and raked the wight occupied far end of the section with his dragonfire, alleviating almost all of the pressure that the defenders were under.

That this was met with ecstatic cheers from the defenders was no surprise. What was surprising was the ice spear that pinged off his magical protection in response.
"Walker!" Ser Wendel shouted even as he lined up a shot.

*What in the Nine Hells is that fool Walker thinking by exposing himself like this!?* Alyssa thought as she turned towards the broken remnants of Bridge of Skulls on the Northern lip of the Gorge and saw a lone White Walker standing there with another ice spear raised like a javelin. *Is it frustration at being thwarted on the bridge? Can one of the Others even feel emotions like that?

Distracted by such thoughts, Alyssa was slow in calling on her magic. Ser Wendel was not and loosed his arrow even before Alyssa had managed to select a spell to cast. His dragonglass tipped shaft flew true and struck the White Walker in the chest just as the Other threw its spear. The moment the dragonglass made contact with the inhuman creature it dramatically shattered like glass being smashed by a heavy rock into chunks of ice and perhaps even more surprisingly, the many hundreds of wights that had been attacking the castle suddenly collapsed as if they were puppets whose strings had been cut.

*And in a way I suppose they are.* Alyssa mused as she had Ghost fly over the battlefield to make certain the enemy wasn't simply playing dead, as it were, to trick them.

Many of the defenders did not share her caution however and were already loudly cheering.

"So that's how to get rid of their wights fast? Kill the Others controlling them?" Ygritte commented from her fighting position even as she kept a close watch below them for any sign of deception by the enemy. "Good to know."

"Perhaps," Alyssa allowed warily. "But newly discovered weakness or not, the Night King still has the initiative."

"What do you mean?" The spearwife asked, sounding confused.

"These," Alyssa said gesturing to the hundreds of fallen wights. "Small, sporadic attacks along the Wall are tying us down and our Gate capable mages. It's distracting us from pursuing the Night King."

"Do not worry so much, your grace." Loras told her soothingly. "Trust in your Aunt. I am sure that she can hold Last Hearth long enough for us to reinforce it should it come under attack."

"I hope you are correct, Loras." Alyssa said skeptically. "I really do."

Even as the armies of the living fought to secure what remained of the Wall, Thoros of Myr, a tall, fat man with a shaved head, smooth face and dressed in the red flapping robes of his office as a Red Priest of R'hllor was leading a group of newly arrived fellow Red Priests from Essos as they moved to support the looming battle at Last Hearth. It was no secret that while the situation at the Wall was mostly contained with men led by Ser Garland Tyrell and a newly arrived Ser Harrold Hardyng had even managing to retake the breach at Eastwatch-by-the-Sea. That however still left a roving army of wights and presumably Others somewhere in the northeastern reaches of the North and most likely marching towards the northernmost of its castles. A castle defended by an undermanned force by all accounts and one Thoros hoped to reinforce as best he was able.

After his time in the Riverlands during the early days of the War of the Four Sovereigns before Queen Alyssa secured them from the marauding Lannisters, he'd received a vision in the fire showing him going back to Essos and recruiting his fellow Red Priests for a war unlike any other. He had questioned his faith ever since his inability to convert the Mad King all those years ago, but the rise of the magic wielding Queen Alyssa and the vision renewed it. He thus sought out the first
ship back to Essos and dove into his new divinely ordained mission with fervor.

Sadly, recruiting proved difficult as few believed in his vision. Of the few who did, most were obsessed with the return of Azor Ahai and declared that the prophesied savior would be the only one to whom they would pledge their loyalty. It thus was not until Queen Daenerys had sailed to Westeros and joined Queen Alyssa's cause against the dead thus uniting both candidates for Azor Ahai reborn that he began to make progress.

*Better late than never.* Thoros reasoned as he led his band of a hundred fellow priests to the frontline. All of whom, he'd had practicing the new magic Queen Alyssa was disseminating as they traveled so that they would be of most use to the living in this pivotal conflict.

They were marching across one of the many dirt tracks that characterized the North's pitiful excuse for roads when suddenly the omnipresent snowfall suddenly began picking up in strength.

"This isn't natural." One of his brother Priests, a man known to dabble in the study of weather said loudly over the wind which had started howling ominously.

"No it isn't," Thoros agreed. "Prepare for an ambush!"

He barely finished shouting his warning when the unnatural snowstorm picked up in intensity once more and their vision became obscured by the blizzard. It however could not hide the massive shadow that moved through it towards them, nor its instantly recognizable shape.

"Dragon!" Someone shouted and Thoros' blood ran cold. A dragon in a blizzard like this? It could only mean one thing, the Night King had come!

"Brothers! Deflect it!" Thoros roared just as a tongue of twisted blue dragonfire shot out of the storm at them.

Thankfully, enough of his peers had heard his call and together they used their command over fire as Priests of R'hllor to deflect the undead dragon's breath into a dome around them. That it served as a barrier against the wights charging at them was fortuitous for the sheer number of the walking dead that had suddenly hurled themselves out of the swirling storm would have overwhelmed them otherwise despite many of his colleagues throwing Fire Bolts and Fireballs at them with abandon.

*We can't keep this up forever.* Thoros realized a moment later as the stream of dragonfire never stopped and a Priestess who had been helping in its deflection collapsed into a faint as the strain proved too much for her. That the loss of her assistance made the strain on the others greater just made their situation more dire. *I have to get out a warning while we still can.*

"Message!" Thoros cast, even as he continued supporting the magic deflecting the dragonfire. The strain of maintaining of both spells, each of a fundamentally different school of magic, sent shooting pain through his body but he endured. He had to.

_Queen Alyssa!_ He practically shouted through the telepathic link his spell created. _Night King! In region of Last Hearth!_

_What!? Who-

_Thoros of Myr!_ Thoros sent back as the strain became too much and he felt the link start to unravel. *Cannot hold link! Sorry!*

It was not just he who was feeling the strain, already dozens of those helping to deflect the unrelenting dragonfire had fainted. Some he suspected had died outright.
"Thoros!" The weather dabbler shouted suddenly. "We can't survive this and we can't let the dead get their hands on our magic."

"I know, brother." Thoros said with a grim smile as he surveyed the looks of resigned acceptance on those among his brothers and sisters who remained standing. "We are agreed?"

"For the Lord of Light!" One man shouted.

"For the Lord of Light!" Everyone able chorused.

"You won't have us, you monster!" Thoros shouted instead leveling a defiant look at the figure of the Night King who had been sitting atop his undead dragon throughout their struggle and looking down at them with serene contempt. "Flame Strike!"

Pouring everything into this one last spell, Thoros of Myr conjured a massive pillar of white hot flame that could be seen leagues away even through the Others' unnatural blizzard. It utterly incinerated himself and all his fellow Priests of R'hllor as well as a good chunk of the wights assailing them. The Night King however had escaped, his mount having just managed to fly to safety, though not without losing a chunk at the end of its tail. All told his losses were inconsequential yet the successful defiance of the humans still brought a frown to the inhuman monarch's face.

"We have confirmation?" Dany asked Lord Jon Umber, Lord of Last Hearth bluntly as they, Jorah, Grey Worm and Missandei met in Lord Umber's solar in Last Hearth to discuss the latest developments.

"Aye," the formidable warrior hailed as the Greatjon said with a tired nod. "Or as much of it as we're likely to get. My scouts found a spot showing all the signs of dragonfire and since you are certain, your grace, that neither of your dragons were in that area-

"Then the Night King is in the area." Dany finished for him with a sigh. "Missandei, did my Niece say anything? Can she offer us any reinforcements?"

Missandei, bless her, had in addition to the plethora of things she already did had somehow found the time to learn the Message spell. As a result, they could now have ready contact with Alys at the Wall.

"I'm afraid not, your grace." The Naathi scribe said with an apologetic frown. "The Night King has launched an offensive all along the Wall and they simply cannot be spared. Not unless they want it to fall and thousands more wights to stream south. We must win this on our own."

"An offensive all along the Wall!?" Jorah, expressing everyone's shock. "How can the Night King still have so many troops?"

"We cannot be sure," Missandei said with a shrug. "But based on observations of the condition of the wights in the recent attacks, many of them being little more than skeletons animated by foul magic, Queen Alyssa surmises that they were raised from the long dead."

"Sard it!" The Greatjon cursed.

"Indeed," Grey Worm said, his face pulled into a frown. "If the Others can do that then we must revise the size of their armies up dramatically."

Missandei nodded before she added. "Thankfully, whatever magic the Wall has it is limiting the
Others’ powers somehow even though it's been breached as they do not seem to have this ability south of the Wall."

"So they can't raise wights altogether?" Jorah asked hopefully.

"We cannot be sure," Missandei said apologetically. "All we know is that the Others' powers when south of the Wall are noticeably weaker. What they can and cannot do still we are still uncertain about. However, judging by all accounts of encounters with them south of the Wall they at best can only raise the freshly slain."

There were sighs of relief at that, though they were restrained ones. As that was still a terrifying ability.

"What do you think we should do?" Jorah said, looking at Grey Worm with a grim frown.

"We cannot hold the castle," The Unsullied commander declared with a frown. "Even with the men we brought with us, we have only a little over ten thousand men here. The army marching towards us had, at last count, ten times that number."

"Can we hold out at least long enough for my Niece to reinforce us?" Dany asked hopefully. A hope shared by the Lord of Last Hearth even if the man already seemed mostly resigned.

"Only if the pressure on the Wall is lifted and there is little hope of that." Jorah said with a shake of his head.

"An evacuation is our best recourse." Dany said bowing to the inevitable even as turned to Lord Umber. "But these are your lands and your people, my lord. The final decision is yours."

With a world weary sigh, the Lord Umber that was famous for his ferocity could only concede.

"You and your advisors are correct, your grace, we have little choice. Give the order."

Reaching out to give the obviously distraught lord's arm a reassuring squeeze, Dany gave the order.

"Begin preparations immediately for a full evacuation of Last Hearth and its lands."

It was in fulfillment of those orders that led to Grey Worm and Jorah escorting a convoy of refugees fleeing from their village to Last Hearth on the ground while their Queen flew overhead with Drogon and Rhaegal.

Thanks to a shortage of Gate capable mages, further limited by the ability of most of these to only cast the spell twice a day and them only being capable of creating small short lived portals each time, they had been forced to carry out the majority of the evacuation the conventional way. They would thus be pulling in all the smallfolk from the villagers around Last Hearth into the relative safety of the castle itself then using Gate portals to send them further south where they would hopefully be safe.

They were thankfully aided in this effort by many of the villagers having already fled into the castle to weather the winter but there nonetheless remained many villagers, some quite large, that still needed to be evacuated.

Thus here Grey Worm was marching next to his fellow Unsullied on either side of the column of villagers carrying what supplies they could carry or load on the few carts they had as they traveled
along the path to Last Hearth. Between his men and the villagers marched Umber men armed with bows each of whom carried torches for the fire arrows they would use to keep the wights from grouping up. Further out, Dothraki outriders kept the whole column safe.

"Thank the gods that Missandei is safe at Last Hearth coordinating this whole effort and not out here risking attack by the Night King. The Commander of Queen Daenerys' Unsullied thought as he kept a vigilant eye on their surroundings, knowing that even with the many Dothraki outriders keeping watch an ambush was always possible. I wish the Queen would do the same."

It was wishful thinking and he knew it. She would not willingly abandon her men, much less her people to danger and not at least share it. Not if she could help it. Beyond that, she and her dragons were their best hope should the Night King appear on Viserion. Most importantly however, he knew that she burned with the determination to avenge and free her son from the abomination's control. And nothing would stand in the way of a Targaryen when they were determined.

Even as he had these thoughts, he had kept perfect pace with his brother Unsullied as they marched over the snow covered ground. Even though it was a far cry from the deserts and savannahs of Essos with which they were most familiar and they were clad in unfamiliar fur to ward off the cold, the training that had been drilled into them by years of abusive training allowed them to maintain the professionalism for which they were famed. Thus as the snowfall suddenly grew unexpectedly intense and the Umber men and the refugees began to panic, Grey Worm and his men kept their cools.

"Shield wall!" He shouted and his brothers obeyed immediately. "Incoming ambush!"

His men had just interlocked their shields and lowered their spears when the first wave of wights emerged from the now blinding storm screaming their hatred for the living as they charged their lines.

"Hold the line!" Grey Worm shouted at his men. "Protect the innocent!"

"Where did they come from!? Did they use magic?" Grey Worm thought in frustration at this ambush even as he surveyed his men whose formations were as perfect as they ever were and the Umber men taking courage from his brothers' discipline had recovered their nerve. They were hastily stabbing their torches into the ground behind them as they readied their fire arrows. If not surely the Dothraki would have spotted them coming!

The first wave of wights hit their lines just as the archers loosed their first volley, shattering against the implacable wall of Unsullied spears. The second wave thinned and forced to spread out to avoid being prematurely set alight by the fire arrows was repulsed even more easily. They were aided by the Dothraki whose shrill war cries Grey Worm could now hear as they rode through the loose ranks of the wights. All the while the smallfolk cowered in fear.

"Where is the Night King?" Grey Worm asked himself worriedly as he searched the unnatural gloom that surrounded he and his men.

The words had barely left his mouth when a screeching roar overhead had him looking up as surrounded by a sphere of swirling winds and wreathed in a sickly blue glow Viserion emerged from the storm, its dark master riding on his back.

"Die, you monster!" Dany cried as Drogon dove towards Viserion and the Night King, Rhaegal following close behind. "Dracarys!"
Tongues of black flames shot with red and orange-and-yellow fire shot through with veins of green shot at their undead brother from Drogon and Rhaegal respectively but were easily deflected by the sphere of swirling wind that surrounded him.

Thus protected, the Night King turned to look at her contemptuously as he slowly, lazily even, raised his right hand in which an ice spear formed from thin air and which he promptly hurled at her. Dany had learned the **Mage Armor** spell by this point and had clad both Drogon and Rhaegal in it, but her sons took no chances and with fluid grace evaded the deadly javelin.

This however seemed to be exactly what the monster wanted and while Drogon was still trying to recover from the evasion, it had Viserion slam into his bigger brother. While the blow did no harm thanks to the magical protection cast on him, the hit had such force behind it that it knocked Dany clean off her son's back and she plummeted towards the earth.

*Is this how I die!?* The Mother of Dragons thought as she prayed to whatever god was listening that the **Mage Armor** she'd cast on herself would be enough to save her.

She fortunately did not need to put her mediocre magical skill to the test as she was still in midair when Drogon swooped down and caught her in his claws. Looking up, she saw Rhaegal dueling with Viserion and the Night King holding them off as they tried to pursue. Despite her green scaled son's best efforts however, the abomination had the undead caricature of her fallen son fly through Rhaegal's desperate gouts of flame. Its protective sphere of winds keeping it safe, the wight that Viserion had become slammed once more into Drogon and attempted to rip into his back with his talons.

Startled, Drogon dropped her but thankfully they were barely ten feet from the ground by this point and Dany made a painful but safe landing thanks to her **Mage Armor** on a patch of ground suspiciously empty of any wights. Scrambling to her feet, she was horrified to see the Night King leap off Viserion's back to almost float down towards her. It looked vaguely like the **Levitate** spell that Alys used so often, but less refined but more natural at the same time.

Not that Dany had much time to admire it as the Night King landed just across from her and with a menacing smirk began marching towards her as a thin crystal sword that was alive with moonlight and gave off a faint blue glow formed within its right hand. She glanced skyward praying one of her living sons would come to her rescue, but even as they tried Viserion blocked them at every turn.

"Stay away from her!" Jorah shouted defiantly at the Night King as he appeared out of nowhere and placed himself firmly between Dany and the monster, his dragonglass war club raised.

The Night King paused at his sudden intrusion and tilted its head to the side and only then did Dany see the ring of wights that surrounded them and the rapidly filling gap in it that Jorah must have hacked through to come to her aid. This feat seemed to impress the Night King for the leader of the Others raised its sword in an unmistakable challenge.

Jorah did not hesitate and charged the monster. Demonstrating incredible grace, the leader of the Others effortless parried Jorah's powerful overhead slash and pushed him off balance. Despite the opening this created, it did not attack instead choosing to back away and allow her Bear to attempt another attack. This repeated itself for at least three more times before the Night King seemed to grow tired of the game.

Parrying yet another swing by Jorah with its crystal blade, the Night King slammed its empty hand into her loyal friend's chest. It was a simple open palm strike and should not have had much force
behind it, yet this single blow somehow sent Jorah flying back and landing flat on his back.

"Jorah!" Dany screamed in horror.

Smirking at this, the Night King strolled over even as Jorah, with blood trickling out of his mouth, tried to get back to his feet. He was still on his knees when the Night King thrust at him. Even then, Jorah tried to block the blow with his weapon which he had not once released from his iron grip. But the leader of the Others simply stabbed its blade through the hard wood of the club and into Jorah's body, all while it sported a victorious smirk.

Dany screamed at the sight of her Bear, one of her oldest and most trusted followers being killed. The sight was much to her relief short lived as soon Jorah and the Night King was consumed with black dragonfire as Drogon strafed their position, even as Rhaegal plucked her off the ground while a badly injured Viserion crashed to the ground behind the Night King.

The leader of the Others was not so easily denied however and an ice spear shot out of the flames that Drogon had left behind aimed directly at Dany. Rhaegal always having been the most agile of her sons easily evaded the first spear. But neither he nor Dany expected the second one that came shooting at her seconds later. Even then, Rhaegal made a desperate evasion and managed to avoid a direct hit but the massive wound in her side that the lance left in its wake as it grazed her was more than fatal enough.

Screaming in fury, Drogon dove towards the Night King and unleashed a firestorm but the leader of the Others simply flew out of the conflagration atop Viserion's back and winged away. It might have been Dany's imagination or some delusion brought on by her injury but it seemed to radiate satisfaction as it did so.

"R-Rhaegal, la-land." Dany forced out through what she could only imagine was punctured lungs as blood trickled down her chin.

Roaring sadly, her green scaled son obeyed and winged towards the center of the circle formation her living warriors and the refugees had formed into. Hastily space was made for them and they landed in the middle of it.

Immediately, Grey Worm and her Bloodriders rushed to her side even as Drogon incinerated the last of the attacking wights before landing just outside the circle which promptly opened a path for him as he walked towards where she lay dying.

"G-Grey Worm, Jho-go, A-Aggo, Rak-haro," Dany addressed them even as they tried to summon a healer. It was futile and they all knew it. The only healer with the power to save her now was her Niece with her healing magic, but she there was no way they could reach her in time.

We should have brought someone who knew Message. Dany's mind thought distractedly. Though since the only such person they had at their disposal had been Missandei and with she and her spell being so vital to the coordination effort back at Last Hearth, doing so would have been foolish.

She powered through the distraction though, she had no time for it.


"We will Khaleesi." Rakharo assured her. "We Dothraki will honor your wishes to the death."

"As will the Unsullied." Grey Worm said without hesitation.
"T-Thank you." Dany said with a sincere smile.

"What of the dragons?" Grey Worm asked, even as he clutched Dany's hand desperately.

"T-they will listen to my Niece. She's a Targaryen and the M-Mother of Mages. They will listen, won't you?"

Drogon and Rhaegal growled their agreement.

"Good b-boys," she said half-deliriously as she felt the grip of death tightening its hold on her. "D-Do your m-mother one l-last f-favor? B-Burn my b-body. D-do not let me b-become a wight!"

The two dragons crooned sorrowfully at that but they both nodded.

"T-Thank you, m-my sons." Dany said offering them both a motherly smile. "Y-you make your m-mother p-proud."

With that Dany pushed Grey Worm and her bloodriders away. They looked heartbroken but acquiesced to her final wish and stepped back. Once Dany was sure they were safely out of the way, she nodded to her two sons.

They exchanged one last sad look with her before combining their dragonfire they let it wash over her. Twice in her life she had dramatically proved that she would not burn. That fire could not harm her. But now, perhaps because she willed it or perhaps it was because this was dragonfire, it did burn. As the flames consumed her however she felt no pain like she imagined most would. Even as it incinerated her, fire treated Daenerys Stormborn differently. For instead of pain all she felt as her body turned to ash was the peace of release.

_I leave the rest to you Niece._ Dany thought as her consciousness faded from the world. _I trust that you will show the Night King and his ilk the power of Fire and Blood!_

And thus passed Daenerys of the House Targaryen, the First of Her Name, The Unburnt, Queen of the Andals, the Rhoynar and the First Men, Queen of Meereen, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Protector of the Realm, Lady Regent of the Seven Kingdoms, Breaker of Chains and Mother of Dragons.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

A bit on the short side but this felt like a very appropriate place to end the chapter.

Yup, I killed Dany. Why? Firstly, for the drama of course. Her death serves to raise the stakes quite nicely. Secondly, it's to prevent the need for a post-Long Night war because Dany is obsessed with gaining the Iron Throne. To the point, I feel at least, even after everything she would still try to fight Alyssa for the throne. To avoid that and thus having her become the villain, because the Seven Kingdoms don't want a foreign invader like her as their Queen, I decided to kill her while she's still a hero.

Till next time verið þið sælir!
Hours later and unaware of the events near Last Hearth, Alyssa was going through her correspondence after a long day that had included helping to fend off an attack on Icemark.

"Alys!" Elia scolded as she marched into Alyssa's solar. "Come to bed! You need rest!"

"It can wait a few hours. I still ha-" Alyssa tried to say before her body betrayed her but cutting her off with a yawn.

Elia laughed at the lapse in Alyssa's self-control even as the Queen herself blushed.

"Come on you," her lover said as she pulled Alyssa out of her seat and began leading her towards the door. "You can come back to your correspondence in the morning."

"I suppose I can use a few hours of sleep." Alyssa allowed as she stifled another yawn.

They were still only halfway across the small room in the King's Tower that functioned as Alyssa's solar when suddenly Barneby, the Maester that was sent to temporarily serve at Castle Black by the Citadel and one of the few Maesters willing to learn magic, a fact he demonstrated by having mastered the Message spell, burst into the room with an uneasy look on his face.

"What is it?" Alyssa asked, all thoughts of sleep gone from her mind at the look on the man's face.

"An urgent Message from Queen Daenerys' Advisor, Lady Missandei, your grace." The middle aged man said after a moment of hesitation.

"What is it?" Alyssa asked, too tired for pleasantries.

Barneby bit his lip nervously and refused to answer. Alyssa was getting impatient when he at last blurted out the message.

"She's dead, your grace. Queen Daenerys was killed by the Night King."

Alyssa's world spun and she would have fallen to her knees if Elia had not caught her. Her Aunt was dead? Her last link to her sire's family, to her family, was gone? The sweet young woman that at once contested her right to the Iron Throne whilst simultaneously treating her as family was dead?
Anger and sadness flooded her veins but she was too tired for fire, so instead ice answered her unconscious call and a sheen of frost began to form over everything in the room as the temperature dropped dramatically. The Maester flinched back and even her Queensguard shifted uneasily but Elia just pulled her close and began whispering words of comfort.

Alyssa could not hear them clearly however as the sudden uncontrolled burst of magic had drained her of the last of her strength and her mind drifted into blessed unconsciousness.

Even as her body rested however, Alyssa's mind had no such respite and she found herself in the featureless void that Lord Nameless favored so and as expected her god stood across from her.

"My lord," Alyssa greeted as respectfully as her anger would allow.

"You are right to be angry." The featureless humanoid that her god took as his form said with a nod. "But not at me."

"I am not, my lord."

"Do not lie to me, Alyssa." Lord Nameless said with a shake of his head. "In this moment, you are angry at everyone and everything. All you feel is anger at the injustice of taking your Aunt's away from you. I forgive you for it, for it is an irrational anger. But you should direct it, my faithful follower, at those who deserve it?"

"Who then, my lord?" Alyssa snapped. "Myself? I was the one who sent Aunt Dany to Last Hearth with too little men."

"Partially. Though your reasons for doing so were sound and you should not hold yourself at fault for having made the decision." Lord Nameless agreed. "And in so doing you have for the second time caused the death of Daenerys Targaryen."

"Second time? What do you mean, my lord?"

"Alyssa I Targaryen is the third life of the soul of Jon Snow." The god explained. "The first ended in Castle Black when his Brothers mutinied and killed him. A fate that was followed by him being raised back to life by R'hllor and Melisandre."

Alyssa nodded. While she did not recall the resurrection, she could imagine the scenario playing out as such. She had not seen evidence of it but she had heard, from the Priests of R'hllor themselves, of how they could with the help of their god supposedly bring the dead back to life.

"This second life ended in the land Beyond the Wall where he'd been exiled after killing his Queen and lover, Daenerys Targaryen who had gone mad due to the manipulations of the Three-eyed Raven and became the Queen of Ashes after mercilessly burning down King's Landing and massacring hundreds of thousands." Lord Nameless continued as he conjured a projection of King's Landing being torched by a version of Aunt Dany riding Drogon.

"Despite having played a pivotal role in winning the Long Night and being hailed a hero a hundred times over, he died a broken man. Broken because he had to watch helplessly as the Three-eyed Raven possessing the body of his brother Brandon Stark, used his position as King to sow the seeds that tore the Seven Kingdoms apart after his early death and plunged it into an unending war. Just like the Children of the Forest who created the spirit, a twisted
amalgamation of all the poor greenseers the Children had duped into offering their souls to their cause, had wanted. A final post-extinction revenge against their hated human foes."

The projection had shifted as her god spoke and showed as the Realm was devastated. "On his deathbed in exile in that second life Jon Snow called out to any god who would hear him to give him the chance to change things."

Alyssa watched with a surge of pity as the man she could have become - A broken, world weary man living in poverty and obscurity in the lands Beyond the Wall - cried out desperately with his dying breath for a chance to change destiny. "I heard him." Nameless said with a grin. "And I also heard the original Alyssa Targaryen begging for someone to give her the power to change the terrible future for her family that she foresaw with her greensight. I answered that call too. And at the price of her death, I killed two birds with one stone and here you are being given the chance that they both wished for."

"Why take me from Castle Black then? Why not the version of me from after the Long Night?"

"Because I felt it would be more interesting."

"And entertaining yourself is your primary motivation." Alyssa shot back bitterly, knowing her god's motivations well enough. "Yes it is," her god admitted unabashedly.

"What is your purpose in telling me this now, my lord? If there even is one beyond gloating?"

"Oh yes, there is actually." Lord Nameless said, acting as if he'd been reminded of his true intent in visiting her dreams. "One was to tell you that this is how you fulfilled the prophecy of the Lightbringer, but that's secondary. Mainly, I'm here to tell you to go kill the Three-eyed Raven and the last of the Children."

"Why?" Alyssa asked, not that she needed any extra incentive. She would do her god's will regardless but more importantly she remembered well her god mentioning this Raven spirit being part of the reason why she had almost been raped as a child and she strongly suspected had set up the death of her Father. "Yes it was," Lord Nameless said, the edges of his form writhing in his anger. "The Raven either seeks out the broken for its potential hosts or directly breaks them before it lures them in. Some like your brother in his past life this break can physically or-"

"It can be mental like the trauma it tried to inflict upon me?"

"Yes," Lord Nameless said with a disgusted snort. "It makes it easier to sink its roots into its hosts. It cares not whether it sees it as friend or foe, once it has a grip on a victim it will dig deep and take over. However, because its plans were foiled by my intervention in the timeline and your brother's unfortunate death, they seek another means to fulfill their revenge."

"The Others!?" Alyssa guessed. "They plan to ally themselves with the Others?"

"Plan? No. How did you think the Others knew where to go to ambush your Red Priests or
knew where Daenerys Targaryen would be? Or much of the magic that they have been employing? The Others' magic is limited south of the Wall, the Children's is not." Lord Nameless said as the dream began to fade away and Alyssa blanched. It did explain things.

"So do what you must."

"I will." Alyssa assured him as his figure began to become indistinct. "I will avenge my Aunt and destroy another of the enemies of mankind. Be prepared to be entertained."

Her god laughed uproariously at her parting jab even as the dream finally ended and Alyssa jerked awake filled with the determination to render a race of humanity's enemies extinct.

The next day over the objections of Elia and her commanders, Alyssa had flown towards the cave in the middle of the Haunted Forest where the Three-eyed Raven resided accompanied by only Loras, Ser Wendel, Ygritte, and Brienne of her Queensguard. Considering that unlike the Night King there was no protections to prevent her Scrying this Three-eyed Raven, she was sure it was a trap of some kind but she was too angry at the death of her Aunt to resist.

"Looks like you were right, your grace." Loras noticed as they caught sight of the cave and more importantly the army of wights and a handful of White Walkers that stood guard around its entrance, a cleft in a wooded hillside, halfway up and between some weirwood trees. "Wherever this place is, home of the Children of the Forest or not, if the Others are protecting it then-"

"Destroying it is to our advantage." Alyssa finished for him.

"They've seen us!" Ygritte shouted, her sharp eyes spotting movement before anyone else. "Ice spears!"

A volley of ice spears were sent hurtling their way by the Walkers but Ghost flew through it unafraid, the Mage Armor she'd cast on him protecting him from the projectiles.

"Ghost, destroy the wights." Alyssa ordered as they closed. "Queensguard, kill those Walkers."

"As you command, your grace." Loras shouted enthusiastically as he drew his bow and loosed an arrow at one of the Others. The inhuman creatures had features that belied easy comprehension but if Alyssa was certain they seemed surprised and shocked at suddenly coming under attack. Strange since she was certain the Three-eyed Raven had sensed her Scrying its location.

It was a consideration for later however as while Ghost set the wights ablaze and her Queensguard felled their Other commanders with dragonglass arrows, Alyssa had her own opponents to fight.

Even as the area around it was turned into a sea of flames and a shower of dragonglass tipped arrows rained down upon it from her Queensguard, pouring out of the cave some of the last of the Children of the Forest. No more than a half dozen small humans, with the proportions of an adult shrunk down to the size of a child, with nut-brown skin, dappled like a deer with paler spots and hands with three fingers and a thumb that ended in sharp black claws instead of nails, large ears and large gold and green eyes slitted like those of a cat. In their own way they looked as alien as the Others with whom they had allied.

"Flame Strike!" Alyssa cast intent on burning them all alive in one blow.

But in an impressive display of agility they threw themselves out of the way of the pillar of flame seconds before it grew powerful enough to incinerate them and though badly burned, they
retaliated by hurling green fireballs at her. At the same time she felt a powerful mind attempt to intrude into her own.

*Come Alyssa Targaryen! Become one with us!* The conglomerate entity forged from the souls of innumerable greenseers cried out temptingly. *Let us in! Let us share our power, our knowledge with you!*

*Do you take me for a fool!?* Alyssa scoffed. *All you want is to use my body and my title to ruin Westeros! All you want is to enact the revenge of the Children. I will not fall for your tricks!*

*Lies! Who told you these lies!??* 

*My god. Now I've heard enough of your prattle! Ghost! Show it out!* 

With a thunderous mental roar, Ghost made his protective presence known in her mind. In the face of which, the Three-eyed Raven retreated like the cowardly creature that it was.

With her mind secure, Alyssa simply cast a dozen **Fire Bolts** in quick succession using the motes of flame to intercept and dispel the Children's attack.

"You lot don't know what a real fireball is," Alyssa said with a bloodthirsty grin as she sighted a cluster of three Children standing just a little too close together for their own good. "**Fireball!**"

Where the Children's fireballs were little more than orbs half a metre across, Alyssa's version was at least ten times that as it leapt from her hands. Seeing it, the three Children she targeted scrambled to get away but were too slow and the **Fireball** slammed into their midst it exploding and consuming them. The three other Children let out cries of sadness and rage. Two pooled their power and sent a particularly large green fireball at her, which Alyssa countered with a **Fireball** of her own that blasted theirs apart and left them open to the follow up **Firebolts** Alyssa lobbed at them that reduced them to ash.

The last Child of the Forest was not idle as its brethren were slaughtered however and has been gathering its power that it poured into a lightning bolt it hurled at Alyssa.

"**Wall of Ice!**" Alyssa cast, conjuring a wall of magical ice seconds *before* the electricity leapt from its caster's fingers. The magical ice thus blocked the attack and shattered, burying the Child its eyes wide in shock at the move.

"**Fireball.**" Alyssa cast to vaporize the mound of ice and the corpse underneath just in case.

"Stop!" Loras said from behind her on the howdah, an arrow nocked and pointing at her. All those of her Queensguard were. "Stop! Or I will have them kill you!"

"**Frost Nova!**" Alyssa cast, controlling the spell perfectly so as to restrain but not harm her Queensguard. It was not their fault that they had been taken over by the Three-eyed Raven.

"Please! Don't do this!" The entity begged through the voices of her Queensguard.

Alyssa ignored it. "Ghost, land."

Her dragon obeyed, landing just in front of the cave and amidst the ashes of the thoroughly destroyed wight army. Still ignoring the increasingly desperate pleas of the Three-eyed Raven, Alyssa unstrapped herself and used **Levitate** to dismount her dragon. She wanted to do this personally.
Out of the corner of her eye, an Other charged her but she still had **Levitate** active so it was child's play to float out of the way of its admittedly precise thrust, spin behind him and impale him with Dark Sister. The way he shattered into ice chunks brought a smile to her face.

*So Valyrian steel does work against them.* Alyssa thought as she turned away from the remains of the Walker to continue advancing on the cave. *Good to know.*

"I am the true face of the Old Gods of your ancestors!" The Three-eyed Raven shouted suddenly through the voices of her possessed men. "Would you destroy your gods!?"

"I renounced the Old Gods long ago," Alyssa spat unmoved. "I have no need for gods who betray their people. My only god is Lord Nameless."

"You know not what kind of dark god you deal with!" The entity cried out in horror at the mention of her god's name.

"I know enough." Alyssa shot back. "Lord Nameless may be driven almost entirely by his callous desire for entertainment, but he has truly helped me. I cannot say the same for any other gods. So until such time as he betrays me, he is my god."

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Lord Nameless appear for a moment and nod in approval but as she turned to look at him, he'd disappeared.

*Typical.* She muses of her capricious god.

"If you will not listen than you leave us with no other choice! Coldhands! Defend me!"

At this fear tinged cry, a figure that Alyssa long thought dead exited the cave. Armed with a flaming morning star, her Uncle Benjen stood before her barring her way.

"Impossible." Alyssa breathed in shock, even as she danced away from her Uncle's swing with the help of the still active **Levitate** and reminded Ghost not to interfere even as it earned her a frustrated growl from her familiar.

She was too busy puzzling over her Uncle's fate however to pay it any mind. He was dead, his pale skin and lack of breathing made that clear. Yet, the magic that animated him was also clearly *not* the same as those of a wight. A fact made abundantly clear by what he said next or more precisely that he could speak at all.

"I'm sorry Alys!" Her Uncle shouted as he swung his flail at her and forcing her to float away once more.

*I must get to the bottom of this.*

*"Frost Bolt!"* Alyssa cast, freezing her Uncle mid swing in a thick block of ice.

"Uncle, do you have enough free will to explain what happened to you?" Alyssa asked as she kept a safe distance.

"It is a long story Alys." Her Uncle Benjen warned.

"I'm not going anywhere. Tell me."

"Very well," her undead Uncle said with a sigh. "I came across an Other during the ranging in which you must think I disappeared and was fatally wounded by its ice spear but the Children
stopped me from raising as a wight. Instead, they turned him into the unwilling agent of the Three-eyed Raven. Conscious unlike a mindless wight but equally as enslaved to the will of my master. Please, sweet Niece, free me from this cursed existence."

Alyssa readied to do just that but paused.

"Are there any more Children in that cave?"

"There were three s-core Children living here." Uncle Benjen forced out. "Hurry, Alys, the Raven is trying to seize full control of me."

Alyssa nodded. "Speak quickly then. I need to know the details to know what to do."

"There are tunnels underneath. A wwhole web. Thrones of weirwood throughout, t-tombs for the R-Raven's victims."

"Those it absorbed into itself?"

Uncle Benjen nodded. "Please! I can't hold out much longer."

"I understand Uncle," Alyssa said with a sad look. While she was nowhere near as close to Uncle Benjen in this life than she had in her last, a product of having a much happier family life and thus less of a need for validation, she nevertheless loved him and always enjoyed his company. "Goodbye and rest in peace. Flame Strike!"

The pillar of flame she conjured consumed her Uncle's corpse whole and he let out a sigh of relief as he died.

"Fifty four surviving Children hiding inside a cave network of unknown complexity?" Alyssa pondered, pushing away her grief as she eyed the cave entrance with burning hatred. "How can we be sure we kill them all? Especially if any men I send down there are liable to being possessed by the blasted Three-eyed Raven."

A being that even now was still spitting desperate pleas from her possessed Queensguard to spare it and the Children.

Ghost sent her an image of her Tome of Magic and Alyssa smiled.

"Thank you Ghost," Alyssa told her friend who growled in happy acceptance of the gratitude even as she used Gate to retrieve the Tome of Magic from its current hiding place inside a hidden vault on Dragonstone.

As she stepped back out of the portal a page of the Tome was already glowing.

"Control earth?" Alyssa said out loud as she read the page. "This might work!"

Floating back onto Ghost's back and securing herself once more into her throne in the howdah, all whilst ignoring the increasingly panicked howling of the Three-eyed Raven, she had Ghost take to the air once more just in case.

"Control Earth!" Alyssa cast, referring to the Tome and pointing a hand palm forward towards the cave entrance.

The effect was immediate as suddenly the entire hillside began to collapse on itself. It was not alone. Whole tracts of the Haunted Forest began to disappear in clouds of dust as at her command,
the earth that held it up rushed down to fill the caves below. More importantly with a howl of fearful agony that must have left her Queensguard's throats sore, Alyssa felt the magic of the Three-eyed Raven be torn from the world.

*My Lord Nameless watch over you and give you peace.* Alyssa prayed for the souls of all those who had been consumed by the Three-eyed Raven's foul magic.

"Light it all on fire Ghost!" Alyssa ordered as behind her she heard her Queensguard come to their senses. She wasn't taking any chances however. "We must be sure not one of the Children or god forbid the Raven itself survived."

Roaring his agreement, Ghost flew over all the collapsed sections of earth and breathed dragonfire into the ruined earth. It took hours but when they were finally done, leagues of the Haunted Forest was ablaze. Only then did she free her Queensguard from the restraining ice she had trapped them in.

"Apologies for that, my loyal Queensguard." Alyssa said as they finally flew back towards Castle Black.

"It is fine, your grace." Loras said as he stretched his sore muscles as much as his harness allowed, glad Alyssa was sure that her carefully calibrated magical ice had not caused frostbite or other cold related harm. "We understand, right?"

Everyone expressed their agreements

"And thank your god that you killed that damned thing, your grace." Ygritte added. "If that thing was the Old Gods then I'm glad you killed it. When it was in my head I saw what it was, what it wanted. And that was nothing less than the death of all mankind! It was a monster just as much as the Others are."

"It truly was," Ser Wendel added. "I'm glad we Manderlys never converted to the Old Gods. To learn that they were in truth that abomination would break any true believer."

"That is why we must not tell them." Alyssa told them sternly as she used Scrying to confirm that none of the Children survived and was satisfied when none of her spells connected despite everything she tried. It wasn't confirmation, but it was good enough.

She was met with a chorus of agreement at that.

"You truly are a hero, your grace." Brienne complimented a moment later. "No enemy of man can stand before you."

"Not without paying a price in blood, no they will not." Alyssa said emphatically.

"Hero of man, huh?" Loras said suddenly, a mischievous air to his tone. "I must speak to Grandmother and Margey to see about having that added to your titles."

Alyssa spun around as much as her harness could allow to glare at her goodbrother. "You wouldn't dare! My titles are long enough as is!"

"And Margey is determined to make them longer." Loras told Alyssa with a smirk, causing the Queen to pale in horror. "To in her words 'reflect the true greatness of our Queen's deeds.'"

"She would say that," Alyssa said with a defeated sigh.
Loras couldn’t help it, she was sure, he laughed at the look that must have been on her face. He was soon followed by the rest of her Queensguard. Even Ghost joined in. It was at her expense but in the end even she joined it. After what they had just done, they needed the dose of levity. If the price to pay for it was yet another silly title then Alyssa could live with it.

**Chapter End Notes**

Done!

A short but necessary chapter that ties up quite a few loose ends. Hope everybody liked it despite its brevity.

And the Children and the Three-eyed Raven are evil!? Say what!! I can't claim that this is an overly original idea. But it is the most logical explanation, in my mind, for the way things played out in the last few episodes of Season 8 so I’m running with it. Basically, the Children have never forgiven humanity for defeating them during the Dawn Age, not even with the The Pact of the Isle of Faces and thus have been plotting revenge ever since. This might not have been the dominant movement among their people for most of that time but as their extinction drew nearer, the bitterness over all they had lost grew and it took over. Ever since they have been using the Three-eyed Raven as a tool for vengeance, and in some continuities where they created them the Others as well. In the world of Game of Thrones, they did so by making the Three-eyed Raven influence events to create an unstable Westeros such as things were at the end of Season 8 (the system they set up under Bran the Broken is so terrible that anybody with a casual understanding of politics or history will tell you the Realm will likely tear itself apart within years), take the throne and then continue to destabilize things even further. It might be a petty revenge but it was all they could manage. It's not like they were willing to let the Others, their other enemy win. In the Alyssaverse though with no chance of any victory unless they aligned with the Others, they have chosen exactly that.

Okay, what was the trap that the Raven was trying to spring? Simple. It was trying to take over Alyssa. I tried to allude to it in the chapter, but for those still unclear let me spell it out. It reasoned that sooner or later, Alyssa would come to it either to kill it for its many slights against her or siding with the Others or to seek its power against them. Whatever the reason, once she got there its plan was to take her over.

Having Alyssa destroy the whole cave complex like that was OP? Duh! She is OP, are you just noticing this now? As for why she could do that and the cleanup afterwards without the Others attacking her? Well, their army in the region got wiped when she first hit the cave out so they have nothing to respond to her with at the moment.

Sorry about that long AN. It's over now. So till next time hyvästi!
A day after having destroyed the threat of the Three-eyed Raven and the Children of the Forest, Alyssa found herself in Last Hearth discussing the situation faced by the castle with Lord Umber, Missandei, Grey Worm and the new leader of the Dothraki, one of her late Aunt's former bloodriders Rakharo.

"Once again, you have my sympathies for your lost." Alyssa said to her late Aunt's loyal followers.

"It is your lost also is it not?" Grey Worm said looking at her sternly. "She was your Aunt."

"She was," Alyssa agreed, looking away to hide the slight upwelling of tears the mere thought of her loss brought to her eyes. "But she was your Queen, who led you through much blood and tears. I imagine your grief far surpasses my own."

"Grief can wait," Rakharo said with a dark look. "Revenge first."

The other followers of her Aunt nodded their agreement.

"Very well," Alyssa said with her own nod. "What is the situation?"

"Despite our best efforts," Missandei said after looking for and receiving permission from her comrades to speak on their behalf. "The evacuation of the region of the region has been slow going. We have also suffered multiple attacks from the Others. This despite accounts from survivors suggesting that the Others have lost the ability to seemingly teleport through unnatural blizzards though they still seemed capable of conjuring them. Though only on the least well defended of our parties."

"Now that I've dealt with the Children of the Forest and their magical support, he is being more cautious. He's no longer seeking direct confrontation against high value targets like he had been previously, he’s switched to replenishing his army." Alyssa noted with a frown.

"With the bodies of my people," Lord Umber said with a ferocious growl. "We must make him pay for that."

"We will," Alyssa assured the large man. "Have we been able to track them down now that they can no longer teleport?"

"While the loss of the enemy's ability to teleport has undeniably been a great improvement as it
made spotting the enemy possible, the conjured blizzards still make pinning them hard as once caught inside them our men's ability to see and their mobility plummet while the enemy is not likewise hindered."

"He's also split off smaller bands," Rakharo added in surprisingly fluent Common Tongue. "Raiding villages or refugee convoys. Like you say, Queen, he is replenishing his army by slaying the vulnerable."

"What are your thoughts on him attacking Last Hearth itself?" Alyssa asked. "Would he risk it?"

"Considering his ability to rebuild his army even from practically nothing and at high speed, I would risk it." Grey Worm said with a contemplative frown. "Once he has a large enough force, he will strike. The chance to raise those sheltering in the castle and to raid its armory are prizes that will draw him in?"

"The armory?" Alyssa blinking in surprise.

"He's been putting his wights in armor." Lord Umber reported. "Even the former smallfolk. The abominations are very weak to dragonglass but it needs to make contact with their flesh, armor reduces the chance of that."

"Nine Hells! He's adapting!?" Loras, her Queensguard shadow for the day, exclaimed. "He's not an unthinking beast. Of course, he is." Alyssa told him tiredly. "Though this is a worrying development. Has he been making armor for the wights?"

"No. It's just been salvage." Missandei reported. "At least as far as we can tell from the reports."

"That's a relief," Alyssa said with a sigh. "Alright, seeing as the evacuation is unlikely to be complete before the Night King decides to attack the castle."

She looked to Lord Umber for confirmation of this and he nodded.

"Then," Alyssa continued. "We can only fortify it and prepare for his assault. Once he does, we will evacuate the civilians and stage a fighting retreat. Since we know the Night King is going to attack then we should use the opportunity to bleed his forces a little. With the Eastwatch breach secured and the countryside almost emptied of smallfolk, his ability to reinforce his army is limited for the moment so let's whittle it down as much as possible."

"How many men will we have?" Grey Worm asked, his brow furrowed as if he was already planning the battle out in his head.

"I've brought ten thousand with me from Castle Black."

"We have another ten thousand," Rakharo said with a frown. "And Lord Umber has about two thousand men."

"Against a hundred thousand or more wights," Lord Umber said with a bitter laugh. "We'll be outnumbered almost five to one!"

"We can rush in more troops by Gate," Alyssa offered. "But I doubt we'll get any more than another fifteen to twenty thousand. The attacks on the Wall have continued unabated and most of our men are still needed there."

"What about the Southron kingdoms?" Missandei asked. "They have only sent a small part of their
forces to the Wall have they not?"

That had been a sore point for Alyssa. The inability to just rally all her armies and march to the Wall. Sure, contingents from all the Kingdoms and Houses had marched North in its defense but between the continuing occupation of the Iron Islands and simple war weariness in the wake of the War of the Four Sovereigns, most of the Realm's fighting men had remained home.

"I've sent word to have them mobilize more men but it is slow going." Alyssa confessed. "Between supporting the efforts at the Wall and deployments here in the North, there are simply not enough Gate capable mages to go around. As a result, they have to mobilize the conventional way and that means months at least before significant reinforcements will arrive."

"Then we have only one option," Grey Worm said with a resigned frown.

"Yes, we must fortify Last Hearth for a siege."

To that end, an hour later found the entire group had moved to one of the towers of Last Hearth's curtain walls and Alyssa was raising both her hands over the flat, cleared land that surrounded the castle.

"Control Earth!" She incanted, activating her newest spell and causing four concentric ditches to form. The innermost becoming a moat for the existing walls while the others did the same for the walls of decreasing height she had created out of the earth that she excavated to build them in the first place.

"There," Alyssa said as she swayed a little from the exertion. The spell being a lot harder without the support of her Tome of Magic. Thankfully, she had anticipated this and she unabashedly sat down on a prepared stool while she regained some of her strength. "Now including the curtain walls and the keep we have five layers of defense. That should be enough to stage an effective fighting retreat when the Night King strikes."

"Do we have enough Wildfire to fill all those ditches?" Lord Umber asked, not hiding his awe at the feat of magic that Alyssa had just performed.

"We'll have to mix in some pitch but we should have enough to set them all alight," Alyssa reassured him. "I took how much we needed to do so into account when I created them."

"Most impressive," Grey Worm complimented.

"Thank you," Alyssa said genuinely. "I don't know if we have enough dragonglass to put dragonglass studded wooden spikes in front of the ditches though."

"We don't," Missandei told her apologetically. "Not all four. But if we use all of the reserve at hand and what we can Gate in from Castle Black we might have enough for one line of spikes in front of the innermost ditch."

"That'll have to be enough," Alyssa said with a resigned sigh. "Get it done."

"Yes, your grace." The former scribe said. "But before that might I ask why though the new walls have rooms for gates, there are no causeways over the ditches?"

"Those are what drawbridges are for."

"Ah! Ingenious!" The young Naathi girl said with an enthusiastic clap of her hands.
"Thank you," Alyssa said with a smile. "Let's get started on finishing these fortifications shall we? We don't know when the Night King will decide he's had enough stalling."

"At once!" Everyone chorused and rushed off to get to work, leaving Alyssa to finish catching her breath in peace.

"Are you alright, your grace?" Loras asked worriedly.

Alyssa considered the matter for a moment before shrugging.

"I'm tired and grieving." Alyssa confessed. "But what's new? I was much the same during the War of the Four Sovereigns and I managed. I will do the same here."

"Do not push yourself too hard, your grace. There are many who need you and await your triumphant return." Loras reminded sternly.

Alyssa nodded and stood, the exhaustion caused by her spell having faded.

"I will try, Loras." She told him stubbornly. "But thank you for the reminder."

The Lord Commander of her Queensguard frowned but nodded his acceptance. They both knew that was the best that she could offer.

"Your guess?" Alyssa asked as she, Loras and her Queensguard watched the Army of the Dead march towards Last Hearth a day later from the same tower she used as a vantage point when creating its new outer fortifications.

"More than a hundred thousand." Loras noted with a frown as he looked through a Myrish eye at the still distant army. Its advanced construction allowing him to make some sense of the approaching enemy even through the unnatural blizzard they had conjured to obscure their advance. "Maybe a hundred and twenty thousand."

More than one person in the tower sucked in an uneasy breath at that estimate.

"He's been busy." Ygritte commented. "Must've raided all the remaining villages in the region to get his army up to that size by my guess."

"Probably," Alyssa nodded.

"Thanks to the Northern lords unexpectedly enthusiastic response, we managed to bring our own numbers up to forty eight thousand but that's still more than two to one odds." Brienne said with a frown. "Can we hold them off?"

"We expected to be outnumbered." Loras said stowing the far eye away.

"Which is why we will have to rely on the new fortifications," Alyssa said gesturing to the earthen walls and ditches she'd created, the latter of which were now filled with pitch and Wildfire and in the process of being lit. "Hopefully they can negate our numerical disadvantage somewhat."

"Aye," Ser Wendel said in agreement. "We'll need to hold out at least until the remainder of the thousands of smallfolk inside Last Hearth are evacuated."

Glancing towards the interior of the castle for a moment, Alyssa saw that thankfully said smallfolk were moving as fast as they could through the large Gate she had opened for them the moment the
Night King and his army were spotted. Already most of them were gone, leaving only the castle's servants to be evacuated and even they were streaming in from across the castle carrying as much as they could lift in terms of supplies or what they might want to deny the Night King with them.

"Boulders!" Ygritte shouted suddenly, cutting off any further observation or conversation.

Alyssa spun back towards the Army of the Dead and saw that her Free Folk Queensguard was indeed correct. The Night King had indeed began the assault. This first volley of boulders were not however aimed at the defenders directly but rather at the outermost ditch.

"He's attempting to fill it!" Alyssa realized. "We can't let him. We need to get onto Ghost now!"

Putting words into action, she quickly mounted the tower's battlements and leapt off. Her Queensguard familiar with the maneuver by now dutifully followed and were unsurprised as Alyssa's **Levitate** spell caught them and they floated safely down into the howdah on Ghost's back. Her dragon who had been waiting patiently for her all this time at the base of the tower held still as they landed and hastily began securing themselves even as his eagerness for battle flooded their bond.

*Soooon, my friend. Sooon.* Alyssa sent her familiar reassuringly as she finished strapping herself into her throne.

"All ready?" Alyssa asked as she finished and upon receiving affirmative responses from everyone she turned to Ghost. "Fly!"

With a powerful beat of his wings and a push from his hind limbs, Ghost was airborne and joined the already circling Drogon and Rhaegal. He roared at the other two eager dragons and they quickly formed up around him. Drogon on his right and Rhaegal on his left and they flew towards the undead army.

The wights were being showered with barrages of Wildfire explosives and flaming pitch from the defender's siege weapons, forcing them to spread out to avoid the ignition of one highly flammable wight leading to the consumption of entire blocks of its equally flammable fellows. This created gaps in their horde that the skilled Dothraki and other cavalry rode through, cutting down and thinning the enemy numbers as much as possible. It was risky business though and soon as the main force of the wights entered the field their sheer numbers would force the horsemen off the field entirely.

That was not however Alyssa's concern at the moment however. She had to trust Rakharo and the other cavalry commanders knew what they were doing. She had her own part to play in this battle.

"Mage Armor! Mage Armor! Mage Armor!" Alyssa cast on all three dragons just as they closed on the leading elements of the enemy.

*Now, what are you going to do Night King? You know your ice spears cannot puncture my Mage Armor.* Alyssa thought as the three living dragons closed on the first cluster of boulder slinging wight giants. All of whom were equipped in crude armor from head to toe now.

*Not that it'll protect them from our dragons.*

They had barely unleashed their dragonfire, in the face of which the boulder slingers did not even flinch not even as they were incinerated, when the Night King unveiled his latest counter to the living dragons in the form of a barrage of massive javelins thrown their way. Acting on instinct, all three dragons evaded the attack.
Those things are whole trees! Alyssa noted as the wight giants hurling the oversized projectiles readied another volley. Hells! Even if the Mage Armor would absorb most of the power of the impact, the force of something that big scoring a hit would be enough to knock even Ghost out of the sky!

"Evade them!" Alyssa shouted into the speaking horn she rarely used but had been built into the arm of her throne regardless as she processed the thought, sending her voice blasting through the skies at all three dragons.

They dutifully did so, only to find themselves further embattled as the Night King flew in on Viserion. The undead dragon immediately breathing streams of dragonfire at them in a bid to force them into the line of fire of the javelin throwers.

"Dammit!" Alyssa cursed as she used Meteor Swarm to send blazing orbs of fire plummeting down from the sky to smite the boulder throwing wight giants. It was not enough however. The blasted wight giants substituting for artillery were simply too spread out and even her most spread out area of effect spell couldn't wipe them all out, not even with ample support from her own artillery. They needed the dragons!

"Good shot!" Ygritte complimented Ser Wendel as one of the javelin throwers collapsed from a dragonglass arrow to the eye. It was indeed a remarkable shot for the all damned wight giants were so thoroughly armored that the only weakness was the comparatively tiny eye slits of their helmets.

"Thank you," Ser Wendel shouted back politely as Ghost's jinxing out of the way of one of the javelins threw off his latest shot. "Your grace, some help please."

"Flame Strike!" Alyssa cast, consuming the nearest pair of javelin throwers in fire. It bought Ghost some breathing room and he strafed a group of boulder slingers before being forced back by another javelin volley.

"Where are the other dragons?" Alyssa shouted as she found herself unable to spot Drogon and Rhaegal.

"Above!" Brienne shouted in reply. "They are being held back by the Night King."

A quick glance higher in the sky confirmed the warrior lady's assessment. Rhaegal and Drogon were engaged in an aerial dance against their undead brother as they flew around with sinuous grace and breathed torrents of dragonfire at each other. Though neither side seemed to have managed to gain any advantage over the other, the mere fact that the Night King had managed to tie down two of their most powerful assets was a victory in itself.

"Dammit!" Alyssa cursed under breath. She could trying to call one of the two dragons away from the fight but she doubted they would obey and even if they did it would be unwise. Even working together they were barely able to keep up with the undead Viserion, drawing one of them away might well spell doom for the other and they simply could not stomach such a loss.

Perhaps she should join them, but if she did then who would draw the javelin thrower's fire? And who would destroy the boulder slingers or support their troops? Was killing the Night King worth that risk?

Without certainty on the last question, she simply could not risk it.

We'll just have to manage this without them somehow. Alyssa concluded as she used a Firestorm to cremate a group of boulder slingers and javelin throwers that had been forced too close together
by their evasion of friendly artillery fire even as Ghost burned another squad of boulder slingers ahead of them with a breath of his dragonfire.

Despite their best efforts however a quick glance back towards Last Hearth told her that the enemy was gaining the advantage. Already whole sections in the outer ditch had been filled in by the boulder slingers' projectiles, creating makeshift causeways that allowed their fellow undead to cross and easily overwhelm the set of low walls on the other side.

"Dammit!"

Alyssa's angry frustration at the seeming fruitlessness of her efforts was shared by Greatjon Umber as he held the gate to the last set of new walls. Despite sending hundreds of men to reinforce the first two walls, they had fallen one after another.

This whole defense is supposed to whittle down the enemy army but by my reckoning we're the ones being worn down. The Lord Umber thought as he and his men covered the frantic retreat back from the second set of walls.

"I miss my greatsword," he joked, clutching the war hammer with a head that had dragonglass shard sticking out of the hammer end and similar shards lining the spiked one that he was using today instead.

He might be in low spirits but his men need not know that and a bit of levity was exactly what they needed in the face of the disaster that seemed to be unfolding around them. The few chuckles he got from his men told him he had succeeded somewhat at least and he was glad for that.

"Stuff it, Greatjon." Lady Maege Mormont with whom he was sharing command of the last gate told him with a look in her eyes that told him she knew what he was doing. "We have more important things to worry about than your poor taste in weapons."

"You're only saying that because the mace you're using isn't much different from your usual one." The Greatjon observed. He was right too. Beyond the new bits of dragonglass studded to its head, it wasn't any different from the one the She-Bear was famous for.

The Lady of Bear Island looked ready to continue their little distraction for the men but before she could, her daughter Dacey ran towards them with a handful of her men.

"Mother! Raise the drawbridge!" The younger Lady Mormont shouted as her men began to race across.

"Raise the bridge!" The She-Bear echoed even as Lady Dacey was still running across the hastily assembled thing, the Mormont ancestral Valyrian steel sword Longclaw that the Night's Watch had returned to the family after its last owner Jeor had died clutched firmly in hand.

"The men in the second ring?" Greatjon asked the exhausted looking young woman grimly, already knowing the answer.

She shook her head between gasps as she tried to catch her breath. "Those still alive are holding back the enemy as long as they can."

Greatjon nodded grimly.

Suddenly something leapt onto the top of the half raised drawbridge and the Greatjon looked up to see an Other riding a giant ice spider. This seemed to make him a target and said monstrous
arachnid leapt once more, this time directly at the Umber himself.

Most men in his situation would panic but Lord Jon "the Greatjon" Umber was not most men. Without a hint of fear or hesitation, he swung his war hammer into it with all his formidable strength and sent the creature flying into the now fully raised drawbridge where it shattered like glass. Its rider though had leapt off before this with an uncanny grace to land between Greatjon and the two Ladies Mormont.

Both warrior women lived up their own fearsome reputations and reacted immediately. Lady Maege swung her mace at it, but it ducked and stabbed at her with its thin crystal sword only for it to be parried by Lady Dacey.

Trying to take advantage of its preoccupation with the ladies, Greatjon charged at its back bringing down his war hammer in a powerful overhead swing. To his consternation however, in another show of its absurd graceful agility the Other spun out of the way. Lady Dacey tried to stab it with Longclaw as it did but it parried the blow and bent its body in an inhuman way to avoid her mother's followup swing of her mace.

Its agility was not without limits however and before it could recover from its latest evasion, Greatjon caught it across the ribs with his warhammer. The blow sent it flying but more importantly, the dragonglass must have found some chink in its armor and did exactly as the Queen said it would. The damned monster was still midair when its body just exploded into icy chunks that rained down on the stunned defenders.

"So that's an Other?" Lady Dacey asked, as they all caught their breath after that exhausting fight.

"It would appear so," Her mother replied. "Damned tough things aren't they?"

"Tough but killable." The Greatjon said with a nod. "And the latter all that's important."

"Agreed." The two Mormont women said together.

"Enough of a break," Greatjon said as the sound of something battering at the gate suddenly resounded all around them. "There's more fighting to be done before this day is done."

The two women nodded and dispersed, shouting orders at their men to reorganize them in the gate's defense. The Greatjon nodded and turned to do the same. He would not let Last Hearth fall this day, not without fighting to his last breath first.

"Anyone sees anymore javelin throwers?" Alyssa shouted as she Queensguard as they torched what she hoped was the last of the aforementioned wight giants on the field.

A chorus of negatives were her reply and Alyssa smiled. 

Time to take the fight to the Night King.

With that thought in mind, she unleashed one last Meteor Swarm on the Army of the Dead targeting the handful of boulder slingers that remained even as responding to her eagerness Ghost flew up to confront the Night King. Something he announced with great enthusiasm by breathing a river of his dragonfire at Viserion.

The Night King seemed caught off guard by their sudden joining of the fight and did not evade the fire blast and it washed over him and his undead mount. Sadly the sphere of swirling cold winds that was his magical armor deflected the attack and he swerved out of the way. Drogon was waiting however and raked him with a stream of his own dragonfire that by the reduced speeds of the nimbus around Viserion stripped the barrier of much of its strength. Capitalizing on it, Rhaegal
swooped down on his undead brother from behind and forcing his way through the barrier to tear deeply into his back with his claws. He even tried to bring his mouth to bear to unleash his dragonfire but the Night King reacted quickly and slapped his snout with supernatural strength, knocking him off.

"Mage Armor!" Alyssa cast quickly as the last iteration of the spell on Rhaegal shattered from the Night King's blow, just in time to save him from an ice spear thrown his way from the leader of the Others as he tumbled in the air.

Seeing his brother was shaken and still trying to regain his bearings, Drogon flew in between Rhaegal and the Night King breathing a burst of dragonfire to force him back. Wary of the flames now that his magical barrier had failed, the Night King had Viserion jinx away.

"Rhaegal, fall back!" She shouted through her shouting horn at the still disorientated green dragon. "Drogon, keep him safe!"

Rhaegal whined but Drogon roared an affirmative and Alyssa urged Ghost mentally to pursue Viserion who even now was trying to flee the battlefield.

"Fire Bolt!" Alyssa cast, sending a flaming bolt at the fleeing Night King even as Ghost shot lances of dragonfire at him.

Sadly, Viserion proved agile enough to evade their efforts.

"Your grace! He's luring us away from the battlefield" Loras shouted warningly.

A look below told Alyssa that he was right.

*I'll get you next time.* Alyssa promised herself even as she sent a message to Ghost to abandon the chase and turn his attention to the wights below.

He growled his dissatisfaction, mirroring her own but did not argue as he turned from the pursuit to begin strafing the by now retreating wight armies. A task not made easy by the way they were scattering and the intensifying blizzard. He nevertheless made pass after pass over their retreating ranks, soon joined by Drogon and a recovered Rhaegal.

Their victory was pyrrhic though as a quick glance at Last Hearth revealed. The new walls she had built with her magic had completely fallen and the defenders had only barely held onto the castle's original outer walls. Even there however several large holes had been made in them from what looked liked direct strikes from boulders. Tens of thousands of loyal men had died today and there did not appear to be anything to show for it.

Hours later, Alyssa met with the Greatjon, Loras, Grey Worm, Missandei and Rakharo in Lord Umber's solar to discuss what to do next.

"Our plan failed." Alyssa said as they all took their seats. "We have gained nothing today but send our good men to their deaths."

"That is not necessarily true, your grace." Missandei said, her puzzled look a sharp contrast to the gloom that everyone else wore like a cloak. "We destroyed many of the Night King's wight giants in this battle. With the Wall secure once more, he cannot replenish those numbers and he cannot have many more of them."

"The girl is right, your grace." Loras told her sternly. "Our men did not die for nothing today."
"We almost put down at least sixty maybe as many as seventy five thousand wights." Grey Worm admitted hesitantly. "And since the Night King did not raise many of our dead during the battle, I imagine we have succeeded in whittling down his army as we planned."

"But at what cost?" Lord Umber said with a bitter little laugh. "Thousands of good men dead and my castle reduced to ruin."

"It is not quite as bad as that," Alyssa said comfortably.

"Perhaps not, but it is badly damaged." Missandei said with a frown. "We can't deny that."

"What should we do with it?" Rakharo asked bluntly.

"We should abandon the castle." Grey Worm said dispassionately. "It is, as Missandei rightly says, badly damaged and we simply do not have the means to repair it at this time."

"I could use Earth Control to patch the walls." Alyssa suggested causing a hopeful look to enter into the haggard looking Greatjon's eyes. "But I must confess that while I can manipulate earth, I have yet to master the spell sufficiently to shape it into stone."

The Lord Umber let out a defeated sigh at that.

"That won't be good enough." He said with a sad shake of his head. "But even if you could repair the castle, your grace, the surrounding land has been emptied. My people have either been transported to safety south of the Neck or turned into wights, there is no longer any point in attempting to hold the castle."

"What about the last few villages?" Alyssa asked. "We weren't able to check in with all of them before the Night King attacked did we?"

"My riders have reported back." Rakharo said with a shake of his head, his drooping black mustachios swinging with the motion and the bells in his hair ringing softly in a mournful way. "No survivors."

"Which means the Night King found them and they are wights now," Missandei said with a frown. Alyssa sucked in a breath and turned to the Greatjon with a look of compassionate understanding at the difficult position he found himself in.

"Are you sure about this Lord Umber? This is your House's ancestral seat since the Age of Heroes."

"I wouldn't have suggested it, your grace, if I wasn't sure."

Alyssa nodded and gave the order.

"Then let us begin the final evacuation from Last Hearth. I want it empty in two hours."

"Yes, your grace." All those present chorused.

Chapter End Notes
Done!

Hope you guys like the little arms race that's going on between the Seven Kingdoms and the Others. Considering to one extent or another this happens in all wars, even if the innovations are purely tactical or strategic, I don't see why the Long Night should be any different. It also adds some flavor to the battles too of course and that's always a boon.

Well that's it for this chapter. Till next time hrazhesht!
Alyssa sat in the howdah on Ghost's back as he flew out of the Gate portal that opened onto the plateau upon which Karhold set ahead of the relief force that she had mustered in response to the urgent Message from the castle's Maester informing her of an attack by an army of approximately thirty thousand wights.

A quick glance at the hordes of wights cutting their way through the Karstark's outer defenses, Alyssa judged the man had made a reasonably accurate guess as to the enemy's numbers.

At least someone in Karhold can carry out their duties properly. Alyssa thought with angry disdain even as Ghost, and Drogon and Rhaegal flying behind him, dove and began strafing the wight hordes.

At the same time, the twenty thousand men she had brought with her from Castle Black charged out of the Gate and towards the besieged castle whose defenders were putting up an admirable defense despite their overwhelming numerical disadvantage, having managed to keep the wights from even getting into its walls.

Perhaps attempting to capitalize on the dragons' distraction with immolating the wights, three dozen wight giant javelin throwers that had previously hiding in the surrounding forests made themselves known by shooting a volley of their projectiles at the dragons from concealed positions in the woods.

"Wall of Fire!" Alyssa cast, creating a barrier of flames that consumed the wooden projectiles well before they could come close to the preoccupied dragons.

Ghost sent a burst of thanks at Alyssa even as he continued to strafe the wights with the other dragons, bringing a slight smile to her face.

"Looks like this was an attempt at a trap for us," Loras commented as Alyssa used a Meteor Swarm to take out the bulk of the javelin throwers. The rest would need to be taken out separately but she was confident she could manage that before the spell even cooled down. If not? Well, she could just use it again to finish the job.

"Looks like," Alyssa agreed as she used Flame Strike on another javelin thrower even as the
dragons having largely finished with the lesser wights, the remainder now being too closely packed with their own forces to risk using their dragonfire, happily turned their attention to the pesky wight giants and burned any within the range of their breath. "He's underestimating us."

Despite what she said however the Others' plan was not without merit. Karhold's relative closeness to the coast made it an especially important castle as it defended one of the major routes by which the armies of the living was being kept supplied. Even now as the number of Gate capable mages grew day by day, the bulk of the supplies still came by ship.

Worse thanks to Lord Rickard Karstark's incompetence, he had not evacuated his lands ahead of time despite the Night King's forces being spotted just a stone's throw outside of them thus allowing the Others to reap a deadly toll among his smallfolk and adding many freshly slain to the ranks of their wights. Transforming what likely started as a small spoiling raid into a full blown attempt at taking Karhold.

Not that the last aspect of that gambit succeeded as it took less than an hour for Alyssa and the dragons to end that threat with their magic and dragonfire.

*Time to have words with Lord Karstark.* Alyssa thought, her fury at the lord burning furiously as Ghost came in for a landing as the last of the wight mobs were dealt with, leaving only stragglers to be mopped up. *I sincerely hope he is ready for what I have in store for him.*

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The evening after the short Battle of Karhold, Alyssa found herself attending a feast in Karhold thrown by Lord Rickard Karstark to celebrate the victory.

Considering Lord Karstark's incompetence had led to the battle in the first place, Alyssa felt the whole thing was a farce. It was his lack of vigilance over his lands that had allowed the wight army to reach his castle almost completely undetected, likely killing and adding to their ranks thousands of smallfolk on his lands along the way. In light of that, what was there to celebrate? Yet, her men did not think that way. To them a victory was a victory and worth celebrating. Thus here she was, sharing in their celebration.

And feeling intensely uncomfortable all the while. Not just because she thought the whole thing unjustified and little more than an attempt by Lord Rickard to buy some favor with her in the wake of the brutal rebuke she had delivered to him earlier but also because the man had seated her next to his daughter Alys and obviously told her to attempt a seduction. The very low cut dress the poor girl must have been forced to wear was telling after all, especially since it was very much *not* in the Northern style.

Alyssa was flattered and even found the tall, skinny, coltish girl as attractive as she remembered back when she had first met her when she'd come to Winterfell all those years ago but she felt none of the spark that signaled to her that her magic found the girl compatible. Perhaps worse was the fact that the girl was as clearly uncomfortable with what she was doing as Alyssa was with receiving the attention.

"You don't have to you know." Alyssa whispered to the other woman, cutting her off as she tried for the sixth time to strike up a conversation since her parents had taken to the dance floor. All whilst trying to discreetly show off her very modest bosom. Whilst they suited her body shape well, Alyssa herself had a more generous set of breasts and was thus not impressed. "Seduce me, I mean."

"I, uh, don't know what you mean, your grace." The madly blushing girl stammered out.
Alyssa just smiled at her. "If you say so. But honestly stop. Pretty as you are, I'm not interested."

"Oh thank the gods," the pale girl said with a sigh of relief.

"You don't fancy women do you?"

Lady Alys shook her head.

"I do not, your grace." She admitted. "And more importantly, I was betrothed to Daryn Hornwood, heir to the Hornwood before he-"

"You have my sympathies." Alyssa told her comfortingly. "My brother told me he was a brave warrior."

He told me no such thing since the Hornwood boy never ever came up in conversation but she does not need to know that.

"Thank you, your grace."

"May I ask why your Father asked you to seduce me?" Alyssa asked despite already having a good idea.

"He is an ambitious man, your grace." Alys said with a shrug. "I love him but even I think he is overly so much of the time. Plus, he's afraid you will punish him for his failure to evacuate our lands quickly enough."

"He expects I will make him pay the Ironborn Price?" Alyssa asked, referring to the name that had been coined for the fate she forced upon the Ironborn and had become synonymous with her cruelty.

"He fears you might, your grace."

"And you are to be his peace offering?"

"His attempt at one," Lady Alys confessed. "If I can secure my place as your Northern lady all the better."

The mention of 'her Northern lady' brought an image of the adorable Lyanna Mormont to mind but Alyssa hastily dismissed the thought.

"Your Father has no need to fear me." Alyssa assured her. "He will answer for his failure, but not to me. My brother Robb and your own smallfolk will pass judgement when the war is over."

"That is fair," Lady Alys said sounding surprised. "Thank you, your grace."

"I always try to be fair."

Alyssa was about to add more when she sensed the light presence in her mind of an incoming Message.

"Apologies Lady Alys but I've received a Message. If you'll pardon me." Alyssa said to Lady Alys with an apologetic smile.

"Of course, your grace." Alys said with an accepting nod before turning to her brother Eddard that sat to her left and drew him into a conversation.
With Lady Alys distracted, Alyssa accepted the telepathic link and an unfamiliar voice entered her mind.

*Your grace? This is Maester Tybald from the Dreadfort. I have urgent news.*

*What is it Maester?* Alyssa demanded. Considering the general mistrust most Maesters held for magic in general, few would deign to use magic, even if many had learned at least the *Message* spell by this point, unless absolutely necessary.

*Our scouts have reported a large wight army moving through the Lonely Hills towards Winterfell.*

Alyssa paled as the news sunk in.

Hours later, Alyssa was strapping herself into her throne on the howdah on Ghost's back whilst engaged in a telepathic conversation via *Message* with Robb in Winterfell. Her brother having traveled back to the Stark ancestral seat via *Gate* the moment she had notified him of the incoming attack.

*Yes, after you I contacted the rest of the commanders along the Wall. She told her brother. They'll be mustering what forces they can spare.*

*Good. I've also had Randall, the new Maester here in Winterfell, get in touch with the other Northern Houses. Those with *Gate* mages will start arriving by tomorrow, the rest-Might not make it in time.* Alyssa sent as she queried her Queensguard if they were secure and received a positive response.

*Don't be pessimistic sister.* Robb told her sternly. *We can do this. Winterfell will not fall.*

*I wish I could share your blind optimism Robb.*

Her brother was about to reply, but she cut him off.

*We can continue this in person in a moment. I'll be there shortly. See you then.*

With that she cut the link and sent a mental command to Ghost to take to the air which he did without hesitation, joined moments later by Drogon and Rhaegal. She did not know what her late Aunt's sons thought, but she imagined they shared Ghost's eagerness for battle. They must know that the urgency with which they were moving now must mean imminent action.

*I hope they aren't too disappointed.* Alyssa thought idly as she readied her magic.

"*Gate!*" She cast, opening a portal to the Kingsroad just south of Winterfell castle.

The moment the portal opened, Ghost flew through it and seconds after Alyssa was flying over her childhood home.

Seeing the majestic castle once more stirred a mix of emotions in Alyssa, many of them happy but all of them tinged with the fearful anticipation of what was to come. For this homecoming, as evidenced by the thousands of men marching abreast out of the portal far below, brought war in its wake.

"*You're a Hornwood man,*" Lord Roose Bolton said in lieu of a greeting to the rider with the sigil
of a brown bull moose on a field of dark orange emblazoned on his tunic as his and the man's force of riders stood on the banks of the White Knife. "What are you doing here?"

"Much the same as you I imagine, my lord." The man, clearly of smallfolk stock, said rather rudely. Normally Roose would have a man flogged for such impertinence but a war against the Others was hardly normal times. "Scouting for the exact location of the Army of the Dead."

Roose nodded. It seemed he was not the only one who felt the need to send scouting detachments out to ascertain the enemy's location while their Houses' main forces waited their turn to head to Winterfell using the Queen's Gate spell. Though he was happy to see, he at least had the courage to lead the dangerous mission himself.

"Did you hear that?" The Hornwood man said suddenly, looking around them suspiciously.

"No, I hear nothing but the sound of the river." Roose noted as he realized what the man meant. All the sound of wildlife that surrounded them, limited though it may be due to it being winter had suddenly disappeared. Even the sound of the river somehow seemed muted.

"Defensive formation!" He shouted as he drew his sword. Unlike the rest of his men who he had equipped with the strange dragonglass clubs, he had insisted on continuing to use his sword. He was too old and set in his ways to bother trying to master a new weapon anyways.

The Hornwood man echoed his call and it was as their men were still pulling their horses together when the abominations struck.

Surging out of the woods, they appeared from the shadows suddenly. There were hundreds of them coming at them from all sides. Far too many for their paltry hundred or so riders to defeat.

"Make a break for it!" Roose ordered. "Charge them before they can bunch up!"

The men, his own and the Hornwood riders both, obeyed. As one they galloped through the thinnest point in the enemy mob, cutting down any undead they could with their weapons as they tried to escape. Dozens of the rotting wights fell and just as many were trampled under their horses' hooves but the enemy was relentless.

Soon their charge stalled as the weight of enemy numbers created a wall of undead flesh that they simply could not cut through. A few riders had managed to get through, thankfully, but most were trapped and surrounded by undead on three sides and the White Knife on the last.

"Ride to Winterfell!" Roose shouted as those riders who had escaped the encirclement. "Warn them!"

"We're gonna die!" The Hornwood leader said fearfully as he found himself next to Roose once more.

"Aye," Roose admitted. "But let us sell our lives dearly. For the North!"

"For the North!" The living roared in defiance as they bravely dove into the final fight of their lives.

Seated on the weirwood throne at the High Seat as befit her rank as Queen, Alyssa watched as a small band of ragged looking men in Bolton and Hornwood livery was brought before her in Winterfell's Great Hall. She felt uneasy sitting in this seat, which part of her from her past life insisted was Robb's and never hers but it was Robb himself who been firm that as Queen the seat
was hers so long as she was in Winterfell.

A startled gasp pulled her from her thoughts and she turned to see the recently legitimized Lord Larence Hornwood looking shaken by the condition of his men. Seeing he had caught her attention, he quickly schooled his features though his eyes still visibly shone with concern for the new arrivals.

"What do you have to report?" Alyssa demanded of the men.

"We were out scouting for the Army of the Dead under Lord Bolton's leadership, your grace." A grizzled Bolton, apparently the leader of the men, said as he stepped forward. "But we were ambushed by the enemy and massacred. We are the only survivors."

*That means Roose Bolton is dead.* Alyssa realized even as part of her cheered. While she had spared him her wrath due to his talents and a desire to not destabilize the North, Alyssa had never forgotten his role in the Red Wedding during her past life and thus she reveled in his demise. *But I can celebrate later. For now, I need more information.*

"Where did you encounter the wights? And how many of them were there in the group that attacked you?"

"We only lost our pursuers about two days ago," The Bolton man said causing uneasy murmuring to engulf the gathered nobles of Alyssa's court. "And the force that ambushed us along the White Knife a week ago must have been at least a thousand strong.

*Too small for the main force.* Alyssa mused. *A vanguard or scouting force perhaps? Or a 'recruiting' force?*

If it was the latter, then the Night King would be sorely disappointed. Unlike Lord Karstark, Robb was no fool and had used every resource at his disposal to evacuate the countryside ahead of the Army of the Dead. Even redeploying Gate mages from the task of mustering warriors to do so. He would find few victims to add to his ranks.

"Pardon my impertinence, your grace." Lord Larence Hornwood suddenly said as he stepped forward to look at Alyssa with a determined glint in his eyes. "But the men are tired. They need their rest."

Alyssa privately approved of his concern for his men. *As expected of a former bastard. He has a closer connection with the smallfolk than most pampered lords. I should give him some sign of my approval later.*

"Very well, Lord Hornwood." Alyssa said nodding towards the young lord. "Please arrange for their care."

"Robb, as Warden of the North what would you do with the Dreadfort now that Lord Bolton is dead." Alyssa asked, turning away from Lord Hornwood escorting the scouts away. "The castle cannot be left leaderless. Is there anyone who can inherit the title?"

"No," Robb said with a frown. "Lord Roose has no more surviving children."

*A shame I couldn't save Domeric Bolton by killing Ramsay sooner.* Alyssa thought sadly. *Word had it that he was a good man.*

"Considering that we can either select some distant relation to inherit or gift it to another House."
"There is no time for that. Not now." Alyssa told him with a frown before turning to Maester Randall. "Maester, contact Maester Tybalt at the Dreadfort and inform him of the news. Tell him also that by my authority as Queen I appoint the captain of the castle's garrison."

She looked to the leader of the Bolton detachment that had arrived via Gate the day before expectantly.

"Steelshanks Walton, your grace." The small and round man going by Nage supplied. "He's the captain of the household guard."

"Thank you," Alyssa said with a nod to the man before turning back to Maester Randall. "Tell Tybalt that Steelshanks Walton is appointed by my authority as temporary lord of the castle."

There were shocked murmurs at her decision from the gathered lords but Alyssa didn't care.

While she did not know the man by name, she had researched the Boltons and their household in the past. How could she not considering the grief they caused her family in her past life? And she knew that he was known to be loyal and brutal, but not cruel.

And most importantly known to the people of the Dreadfort and its lands. Alyssa thought. That makes him an infinitely better choice as lord than an outsider. As such, so long as he does not betray me, after this war I might just ennable him and grant him the seat permanently. But those are matters for another time.

"That I think is all the business I have time for today," Alyssa said as she stood. "I still have troops to Gate in. Robb, you have your court back."

Robb rolled his eyes but still managed to rise and offer her a courtly bow as Alyssa walked off, waiting till she left the hall to retake his seat and continue with receiving audiences.

An hour later, Alyssa looked down from a window in the Library Tower as troops form Sunspear arrived through one of her Gate portals and were met in the courtyard below by Prince Oberyn and those of the Sand Snakes that had accompanied him North all those months ago. The lot of them having traveled down from Castle Black via the same method earlier.

"Not going to join your Father in welcoming them?" Alyssa asked Elia as her lover wrapped her arms around her from behind and rested her head on her right shoulder.

"My Father has it handled," Elia told her sweetly. "I'd rather say hello to my wife."

"We're not married." Alyssa reminded her.

"Not yet," Elia said cheekily. "I expect that to change shortly after this war."

"Over the objections of the Faith?"

"The High Septon is our man isn't he?" Elia said with a shrug that Alyssa felt. "He won't stop us."

"You've spent too much time with Margey and Jeyne." Alyssa said with a sigh. "They've corrupted you."

"They aren't the only politically minded woman who I share a bed with." Elia said with a giggle.

"Speaking of that-"
"Not now," Alyssa said with a shake of her head. "I still have a dozen different forces to Gate in by day's end."

Even if I desperately want it! I need a break from everything!

With everything progressing so quickly since she had left Castle Black for the Battle of Last Hearth, she had not had the chance to truly relax. Much less spend time with her lovers.

"You're working too hard." Elia said as she pressed a kiss to the side of Alyssa's neck, causing the Queen to tilt it upwards to give her more access. "Besides I'm sure you, of all people, can multitask."

"I might," Alyssa admitted as she fought the urge to mewl in pleasure as Elia showered her neck with kisses.

"Then let us test it." Elia breathed into her neck.

"Here?" Alyssa asked, her breathing picking up speed especially when Elia grabbed her breasts and squeezed them gently.

"If you want," Elia said as she began biting lightly at the flesh of Alyssa's collarbone that the dress she had chosen for today had left exposed.

That'll leave a mark. I'll need to wear a high collared dress tomorrow. Alyssa thought idly as she allowed herself to melt into her lover's touch.

"I always liked the library," Alyssa said half-seriously as memories of childhood fantasies of laying with someone in the very place she now stood played through her mind. "Ravish me, Elia. Ravish me!"

"As my Queen commands."

Chapter End Notes

Done!

Rickard Karstark is ambitious? Which lord isn't? Alyssa doesn't have a Northern concubine yet and he has an available daughter, what mildly ambitious lord wouldn't at least try to nudge their child at her in the hopes of their child getting the position? Sure encouraging Alys to actively seduce Alyssa might have been OOC but as was pointed out in the story, he just screwed up so there was an element of desperation in his actions.

Yay! Roose is dead! You didn't think I'd let him live did you? He might not be Ramsay Snow but he is still guilty of some very heinous crimes. Did you think Nameless (aka me) would let him go that easily?

Why the smut at the end? On a personal level because I wanted it there. On a narrative level it's because Alyssa needs it. She has been working herself to the bone since the Battle of Last Hearth without any chances to relax and she needed some time to unwind.
Well that's it for this chapter. Till next time rozlúčka!
"You need to eat!" Elia demanded as she dragged Alyssa away from the South Gate guardhouse where the Queen had been using Earth Control to create new fortifications for Winterfell.

"I can eat and work at the same time." Alyssa insisted.

"Not when you're using Earth Control." Elia shot back just as insistently. "You know how draining it is for you."

Alyssa was prepared to continue the argument but a pair of unexpected voices calling out her name caused her to pause.

"Shireen, Myrcella?" Alyssa asked, thoroughly shocked by her two youngest concubines' presence.

"What are you two doing here in Winterfell?"

"We came to see you obviously." Myrcella said with a giggle.

"We traveled with the latest reinforcements from King's Landing. Margaery made the arrangements for us." Shireen explained more helpfully.

"Why are you here?" Elia asked, radiating knowing amusement.

"To have you finally bed us of course, Alys." Myrcella said shamelessly. "You've lain with all our sister concubines but us by this point. It is time that changed."

“Yes, we've waited long enough." Shireen added just as brazenly. "You could die any moment in this war with the Others and we refuse to let that happen without having lain with you!"

It was not just Alyssa who thought the two young ladies were being ridiculously forward. All the guards, servants and ladies in waiting that stood around them were shooting the two young girls incredulous looks as well.

"You're too young." Alyssa said with a shake of her head.

"That is not true." Shireen said with a frown. "I am two and ten and even if Myrcella is still only one and ten, we have both flowered. Many other noble girls in our position are mothers already."
Alyssa couldn't disagree with that. Nor that they were growing into wonderful women. Myrcella was already showing the beginnings of a slender, graceful figure and while Shireen was no great beauty, with her grayscale scars now fully gone she was a pretty girl. More importantly, at least for Alyssa, the intensity of the magical bond that bound them was sparking with a fervor that just talking to them was stirring her loins in a way that she usually only felt in bed with her other lovers.

_I dearly hope I am not staining my skirts._ Alyssa thought as she felt the dampness grow between her legs.

"And like Shireen said earlier," Myrcella said, picking up the conversation. "You could die in this war Alys. We refuse to be widowed without even having consummated our marriage to you."

"But we are not married." Alyssa pointed out.

"Alys, did you forget our conversation the other day?" Elia asked with a grin. "About us getting married?"

"Oh, I want to hear the details about that." Myrcella said with a grin. "But that can wait."

"Indeed," Shireen said with a firm nod. "As for your argument, Alys, while we might not be married under the letter of the law we are practically so. All that separates us from those bound in matrimony is name and deed."

"And we need to change that." Myrcella added with a coy grin.

"I don't th-"

"Oh, stop being so stubborn Alys." Elia said nudging her shoulder. "We all know you want to say yes."

Myrcella and Shireen's pleading looks did not help Alyssa's crumbling resolve. As such it surprised no one when she sighed in resignation.

"Alright," she said in a whisper.

It was more than loud enough for the two girls though. Cheering happily they grabbed her hands and began to drag her away.

"I'll have your midday meals sent to Alys' bedchambers." Elia shouted after them. "Make sure she eats."

"We will!" The youngest of Alyssa's concubines shout back together.

"Ays," Robb greeted with a cheeky grin as she took her seat next to him at the High Table in the Great Hall. "Could I ask you a favor?"

"What is it?" Alyssa asked tiredly. As enjoyable as the many rounds of lovemaking she had shared with Shireen and Myrcella since midday yesterday had been, they had nevertheless left her exhausted.

"Would you give your approval for my wedding to Lyra Mormont later this evening?"

"This evening!?" Alyssa asked, flabbergasted.

Robb shrugged.
"We might well all die tomorrow or whenever the Night King attacks. Might as well find what happiness we can beforehand, isn't that what you did with Shireen and Myrcella last night?" Her brother said, gesturing to her two young concubines who were practically glowing in contentment.

"I suppose," Alyssa conceded. "But Lyra Mormont? I didn't even know you were courting?"

"I'm not surprised, sister. You were too distracted by the war."

"I suppose. Still I feel bad. You're my brother, I should've at least kept my ears open for news like this."

"I'll forgive you if you give your approval like I asked. So how about it?"

"Certainly, brother."

The ceremony as all proper Northern weddings was held in the Godswood and Alyssa found herself standing beside all her concubines. Something that had started when Shireen and Myrcella had tried to use the excuse of the wedding to stay when Alyssa had tried to send them back to King's Landing after the midday meal via Gate. Not only had their pleas been successful, they had somehow even managed to convince her to transport all her other concubines and even Arya to Winterfell to attend the ceremony. Thankfully though she had managed to draw the line at Ned. For various reasons she did not want her son here in Winterfell.

*I'm weak when it comes to my women.* Alyssa thought as they all gathered before the heart tree. It was so true as well, after all, even before they had managed to convince her into summoning their sisters the two minxes had already managed to tempt her into one long tryst that occupied them all morning and which they had even dragged Elia into.

Shaking her head, she tried to dispel such thoughts. *Today is not about me, it is about Robb. The least I could do is give him the attention he deserves.*

Even if said attention was being sorely tempted by her concubines who had all dressed up for the occasion and were looking resplendent.

*No, bad Alyssa! Robb! Today is about Robb!* She scolded herself, tearing her eyes away from her lovers and to brother.

He stood before the heart tree looking handsome in a new tunic, trousers, furs and a cloak lovingly stitched by Stepmother that was emblazoned with the Stark direwolf sigil.

*Stepmother has outdone herself.* Alyssa thought as she took a moment to admire the truly impressive marriage cloak. If there was one skill that she never mastered it was embroidery. In that one field even *Arya* was better than her and her little sister eschewed all womanly arts.

Her observations were cut short when Margey tugged on the sleeve of her gown and pointed towards the far side of the gathered guests where Lady Lyra Mormont had arrived. She looked beautiful in her gown and her own well made marriage cloak. Despite that, Alyssa's eyes flowed off the bride and were quickly drawn instead to her little sister Lyanna who had followed her in and was now taking her place among the guests. The little Lady Lyanna looked as adorable as she remembered and she sent her a smile which she was pleased to see returned with a blush.

"Who stands before the Gods?" Lady Lyra's mother, Lady Maege Mormont, shouted to begin the ceremony and pulling Alyssa away from her leering, even she could admit that much, at the woman's youngest daughter.
"Lord Robb Stark, Lord of Winterfell, and Warden of the North." Robb's voice was firm but with a tinge of palpable excitement. "And you?"

"Lady Lyra Mormont, and her mother Lady Maege Mormont, Lady of Bear Island." Lady Maege said before she guided her daughter to stand beside Robb before the heart tree.

The would be husband and wife exchanged a smile, before Lady Maege turned to address her daughter. "Do you take this man as your husband?"

"I take this man." Lady Lyra said solemnly and her mother gave her hand a squeeze before handing the arm she was holding to Robb before stepping away, leaving the happy couple to stand alone before the heart tree now hand-in-hand.

Together Robb and Lady Lyra knelt before the heart tree, and bowed their heads in token of submission to the Old Gods. Alyssa had to fight the urge to sneer at the sight but for her love of her brother she kept her opinions to herself.

After a moment of silent prayer, the couple stood and Robb reached over and removed his wife's maiden's cloak. Stepmother stepped forward then and took her new gooddaughter's maiden's cloak. Robb offered his mother a grateful smile before proceeding to remove his cloak and placing it around his wife's shoulders.

He offered her another smile before he picked her up in his arms and began to carry his wife to the Great Hall for the wedding feast as the gathered guests applauded and offered their well wishes, Alyssa's included, before filing in behind them as they followed them towards the feast.

Hours later at the wedding feast found Alyssa dancing with Arya. Though considering her sister's youthful enthusiasm and lack of any skill at dance, it was more an exercise in not having her feet be crushed by her sister's terrible footwork.

_For someone with such talent at the Water Dance, I can't believe she's this bad!_ Alyssa thought as the dance finally ended and she could let Arya go.

Despite all that, she offered her sister a polite curtsy for the dance as her sister did the same. She wasn't about to spoil her sister's mood on the festive occasion over a few bruised toes. She was not however going to risk anymore injury and as the hired bards picked a jaunty song for the next dance, Alyssa begged off and hastily retreated to the High Table.

Once there, she collapsed into her chair with a sigh of relief as she watched Arya scurry off to find another victim. Other than Arya, Alyssa had danced with Robb, her new goodsister, and all her concubines already, so it was perfectly polite to take a break and rest her abused feet.

"You have no stamina," Myrcella teased as she and Shireen returned from the dance floor as well. The two having just finished a song dancing with each other.

"I have plenty." Alyssa shot back coyly. "Or don't I prove that every time I lay with any of you?"

"That's true." Margey said with a giggle that was shared by all of her lovers. "Alys has _plenty_ of stamina when the mood calls for it."

The way the Queensguard shadowing them all shifted uneasily at the direction the conversation had taken was amusing in its own right and more than one member of the royal family burst into another round of giggles at that alone.
Apparently deciding to have pity on their poor guards, Gwyn changed the topic.

"This wedding has been quite the experience," the Ironborn woman noted. "I wonder what our wedding will be like?"

"Grand," Jeyne said with a shrug. "It will have seven brides."

"Don't forget that it will be the marriage of the Queen and her consorts as well," Margey added. "So it will be doubly grand."

"Has everyone already heard that Elia convinced me of this?"

"Of course." Mya told him with a shrug. "It is arguably the most important news in regards to our relationship after all. Did you really think we wouldn't share it with each other immediately?"

"I suppose not," Alyssa said with a sigh.


"Yes, thanks Elia!" Shireen said with a grin, prompting everyone else to offer their thanks as well.

Elia just smirked in response and Alyssa just knew she would be milking her accomplishment for favors from her sisters for years to come.

"Bedding!" A very drunk Greatjon Umber said suddenly, cutting Alyssa's conversation with her concubines short. "It's time for the bedding!"

The call was soon picked up the other Northern lords and quickly afterwards the remainder of the guests as well.

"You're not going to do anything?" Jeyne asked Alyssa, as she took a sip from her cup of wine.

"I asked Robb and Lyra about it before the wedding. They didn't want to disrupt the tradition." Alyssa explained.

"So we're going to help strip your brother?" Shireen asked with a pout.

"You just want to strip the Lady Lyra, don't you Shireen?" Myrcella asked with a laugh even as Shireen blushed.

"I won't deny it." Shireen said with a shrug despite her rosy cheeks. "I prefer women, that's no secret."

"Considering our preference, I think we can join either side." Gwyn opined. "Can we not?"

"If the couple are concerned with tradition though, I think it best that we respect the gender roles and join the ladies' party." Mya countered with a frown. Clearly she wanted a part in stripping Alyssa's goodsister as well which was quite the departure seeing as the Valewoman had initially preferred men to women.

"Alys, what do you think?" Elia asked, turning to the only Northerner among them for guidance.

"I think Mya has the right of it, but everyone is so drunk I doubt the men will mind if you join them." Alyssa said as she made a sweeping gesture over the hall and the many stumbling drunks that occupied it.
"Whichever party you lot want to join, you better go soon." Jeyne said, gesturing to the clusters of men and women who were already dragging the half naked bride and groom out of the hall respectively.

Everyone but Jeyne and Margey looked to Alyssa for permission which she happily gave with a wave of her hand. Moments later, Shireen, Myrcella, Mya, Elia and even the usually shy Gwyn had joined the lords as they stripped and guided Alyssa's laughing goodsister to her marital bedchamber.

"Remember to come back here when you're shown Lyra to the bedchamber!' Alyssa shouted after her excited lovers. "I'll be waiting."

She got a chorus of distracted affirmatives in reply and shook her head in fond amusement.

"They're having fun." Margey noted with a sip of her drink.

"They are," Jeyne agreed. "Though I think Gwyn might be a little drunk. She's usually not so forward."

"Don't worry," Alyssa assured her. "Brienne and Ser Wendel went with them. They'll keep them safe and from embarrassing themselves too much."

"Too much?" Margey asked with a raised eyebrow.

"It's a wedding feast. The odd little embarrassing act due to overindulgence and the festive mood will be overlooked."

Their conversation was interrupted when Arya walked over with a pale cast to the face, her constant shadow Ser Cuy following behind her.

"Sister? Is that how a bedding is like?" She asked, her usual fire missing from her voice.

"Yes, it is." Alyssa told her with a worried frown. "Though, the bedding ceremony is optional."

"But expected of a highborn lady of the North," Margey added shooting Alyssa a look. "Don't leave that out, Alys."

"That is true." Alyssa added.

Arya paled at that news and promptly ran off.

"I'm never getting married." Alyssa's little sister shouted as she fled the hall.

"See what you've done?" Alyssa asks as she shot Margey a look, even as Jeyne giggled.

"Better she make an informed choice than a foolish one," Margey said archly.

"I suppose," Alyssa conceded. "But if Arya remains unmarried, I'll be blaming you."

"Fair enough."

"Do I want to know what's got Arya so flustered, Alys?" Stepmother asked as she came over even as she shot the direction her daughter had fled a confused glance.

"She's shaken up by seeing what a bedding actually entails." Alyssa explained with an unhappy look at Margey. "And the reminder that she will likely have to endure such at her own wedding."

Stepmother just sighed. "I don't know what we'll do with that girl."

"You needn't worry so much Stepmother," Alyssa assures her. "I'll take care of her."

"I'm sure you will Alys," Stepmother told her sincerely. "You always have. But I'll go have a word with her nonetheless. Honestly! She's almost a woman grown by this point yet she still behaves like such a child. She should learn from her sisters more!"

"Don't be too harsh on her," Alyssa urged her Stepmother as she walked off in search of Arya.

"I don't think she can hear you," Margey noted. "She looks a little too distracted working herself up for a good scolding."

Alyssa winced in sympathy for the tongue lashing her little sister was likely about to endure.

"Don't worry about it Alys. I'm sure Arya will be fine. Let's just drink and enjoy the mood, shall we?" Jeyne suggested.

Alyssa and Margey nodded, the former a little more hesitantly than the former, raising their cups and all three of them.

"To Robb and Lyra." Alyssa offered in toast as they tapped their cups together.

"To Robb and Lyra." Margey and Jeyne echoed as they all took a sip of their drinks.

Half an hour later, Alyssa led her lovers as they headed back to her bedchamber. They had planned to spend the night together, all seven of them, to make the best of their time together before most of them had to return to the safety of King's Landing. However, with how a good number of them were swaying uneasily from a little too much drink at the feast, Alyssa had doubts they would manage much.

*That does not mean we should not try though!* Alyssa thought with a lustful giggle as she stepped into the bedchamber after Loras, her goodbrother clearing the room ahead of her as was his duty as the Lord Commander of her Queensguard and one of her shadows for the night.

"Alyssa." Lord Nameless' unmistakable voice said the moment that Alyssa stepped into the room.

"My lord!?” Alyssa shouted in surprise as she caught sight of the humanoid white void that was her god sitting on her bed and waiting patiently.

"Who is it, Alys?” Jeyne asked as she walked in only to freeze at the sight of the god.

"It's Lord Nameless," Alyssa said, looking at her Riverwoman lover in shock. "You can see him?"

"We all can," Margey said as everyone else filed into the room. "Right?"

There were nods from everyone. Any sign of intoxication that they might have shown now having vanished, just as Alyssa's own mild drunken buzz had likewise disappeared without her immediately noticing.

"But how? Usually only I can see him when he visits."

"I have chosen to appear to your family this time," Lord Nameless. "It is best that they see what I intend to show you as well."
"We are honored," Myrcella said, recovering from the unexpected turn of events first and offering
the god a curtsy prompting everyone else to likewise offer their own signs of respect, even Loras
and Nymeria.

Lord Nameless looked pleased and turned to Alyssa radiating amusement.

"Why is it, Alyssa, that your wives are more polite to me than you are?"

"You prefer me this way," Alyssa told him with a roll of her eyes, unfazed by her god's teasing
even as everyone else looked shocked at what to them appeared as disrespect.

"That is true," Lord Nameless admitted with a laugh. "Enough pleasantries. Follow me."

With that the god led them out of the bedchamber.

"I think I know where you get your abrupt nature from now, Alys." Margey whispered as they
followed after Lord Nameless.

Alyssa just blushed as they walked out into the hall, where the guards standing there looked
frozen. No. Not just the people. Even the flames of the torches which should have been flickering
were frozen as if in a painting

"I have frozen time," her god explained absently as he led them out of the Great Keep where
Alyssa's chambers were and across the castle into the crypts.

The descent to the lowest level passed in a strangely short period of time and they soon found
themselves before a blank wall,

Alyssa opened her mouth to question why Lord Nameless had brought them to a dead end when he
suddenly just walked through the wall.

Sighing at her god's penchant for not explaining himself, Alyssa followed. On the other side of the
wall, she found a large round chamber that was dominated by a massive fossilized weirwood tree
whose bone white roots formed a bowl shape and which had a grim looking face carved into its
trunk from the eyes of which ran crimson trails of long dried sap.

"This," Lord Nameless said once everyone had entered the chamber. "Is why the Night King is
coming to Winterfell. This is where the First Long Night was defeated by the combining of
the magic of the First Men and their allies among the Children of the Forest. It is thus a place
of great symbolic power that the children of that alliance, the Starks, have hidden and
protected since those ancient times. If the Night King seizes it, he can use it to great effect."

"Like what, my lord?" Alyssa asked, fear running through her veins as she surveyed the fossilized
tree.

"Like bringing down the Wall and giving him full access to his magic." Lord Nameless said
with a meaningful look at her. "You can imagine some of what he'll be able to do with his full
power but you that is but a fraction of what he is capable of. If the Wall falls, the Night King
will become powerful enough to bring back the Age of Frigid Night."

"The Age of Frigid Night? Is that what the Night King and the Others seek?" Alyssa asked, with a
frown even as she suppressed the shiver that went down her spine that speaking the name of the
Others' goal made her feel.
Lord Nameless laughed at that and clapped his hands.

"Bravo Alyssa, for being one of the few persons on this world to have asked that question."

"Surely that can't be true." Loras noted with a frown. "The Others have been around for ages surely many have questioned their motives."

"You give your fellow mortals too much credit Loras Tyrell." The god said with a malicious smirk. "To most of them the Others have been nothing more than a force of destruction which sought nothing more than to cleanse the world of life. They needed to ascribe no other motive to them than that."

"Why then do they do what they do, my lord?" Alyssa asked.

Lord Nameless snapped his fingers and suddenly the hidden chamber in the crypts of Winterfell was gone and they found themselves floating over a lightless featureless frozen plain dominated by a magnificent city of enchanting alien architecture made entirely of ice that was inhabited but thousands upon thousands of White Walkers.

"This is the Age of Frigid Night." Lord Nameless said with a sweeping gesture to indicate the vista before them. "The Age of the Others. A time before the Children of the Forest and long before Man. This was your world in the earliest days of intelligent life."

"The Others were the first intelligent life in the world?" Jeyne asked, expressing everyone's shock.

"Yes," Lord Nameless nodded. "But their Age did not last. As time passed, your world changed and the cold that the Walkers needed to survive faded."

Suddenly the image of the frozen plain changed. Years passing in seconds as it transformed into lush grassland and the Others' and their city literally melted away.

"Some though survived by fleeing north to the place you call the Lands of Always Winter. But even there it was too warm." Lord Nameless said as the image shifted once more. This time it showed Others, some half melted, staggering through a frozen wasteland as the sun beat down heavily on them. "To survive, they slept."

One by one, the handful of remaining Walkers - No more than a few thousand out of a whole civilization - transformed themselves into frozen sculptures of ice.

"But while they slept, they did not dream. For such was not their kind's way. Instead they labored, mastering magics even in their slumber so that they could restore their world. And then when the world turned cold once more, they awoke"

Clouds of icy energy swirled in a mesmerizing dance all around them before slowly the disparate clouds slowly but surely joined together and transformed into a collection of brilliant blue stars joined together by a complex web. Stronger than before, especially the star at the very heart of the web. It seemed utterly incomprehensible but somehow they all understood. This was the Others pooling their powers together, growing stronger by becoming separate but one. Of them imbuing the strongest of their number with all their strength, to transform him into their anchor. To be their King.

"The birth of the Night King." Shireen gasped and Lord Nameless nodded even as the image changed again and this time they saw the Walkers awakening from their hibernation and venturing
"But their home was no longer theirs. In the eons in which they had slumbered, others had come. The Children of the Forest, the First Men. They had no mercy for these usurpers though. For to the Others these creatures were not fellow intelligent beings."

A rapid burst of scenes of utter brutality as the reawakened Others ravaged the Children and First Men in what could only be the First Long Night. Of them learning the magic of warging from their victims and twisting it to create the first wights. Of them creating the giant ice spiders as the only success out of their thousands of experiments to recreate the alien and long lost life of the world as they knew it.

"For to them they were not. As the Others are alien to you, so too are you alien to them. Most importantly, where you younger races are flexible and can empathize with other races, they simply cannot. Their minds do not work that way. Once they might have over time learned to, but what they did to themselves in their long sleep has stripped all that away. To them all that is not like them are not alive."

"And that is why they want to destroy us, my lord?" Myrcella asked with a shudder. "Because they do not see as equals?"

"Because they do not see you as living beings." Lord Nameless corrected as the visions faded and they returned to the crypts below Winterfell. "For by their understanding you are not. To them you are merely stains on their world that needs cleansing before they set the world back to rights."

"Back to rights?" Gwyn asked nervously.

"Before they bring back the Age of Frigid Night." Lord Nameless said as he showed them a potential vision of the future where the Night King used the magical circle within which they stood to enshroud the world in an eternal blizzard that blocked out the sun and sealed in the cold.

"Then why don't we just destroy this tree?" Elia suggested.

"This circle is an important node in the magic that sustains the Wall. The only seal on the Night King, the Others' powers. Destroy it and it will collapse, granting them their full powers. Powers they will use to seize another powerful circle. Or create one of their own. So long as they use one such circle south of where the Wall now stands they can complete the ritual they need to return this world to the Age of Frigid Night."

"Why show us all this?" Alyssa said as she gulped at that very prospect.

"So you may know the true stakes. You cannot let him take Winterfell or you might well have lost this war and my precious entertainment will be cut short prematurely." The god said before he vanished and their entire party found themselves back in Alyssa's bedchamber.

"Speaking of entertainment. I have restored your vitality and that of your lovers. Use it well, Alyssa." Lord Nameless added with a laugh as his presence withdrew.

"Is he insinuating what I think he is!?" Gwyn asked, blushing bright red and breaking the tense silence at what they had learned.
"Of course, he is." Myrcella said with a laugh. "He's the one who got us together isn't he, Alys?"

"He said it was my magic but I imagine he had a hand in the matter since he was the one who granted me access to it in the first place."

"He's been watching us then?" Mya said, looking around the room nervously.

"He's a god, he can see whatever he wants." Shireen said with a resigned sigh.

"What are we but entertainment to the gods in the end? Is that not what the some faiths in Essos teach?" Jeyne asked with a chuckle. "I wonder how they will like learning just how correct they are."

"Enough! We can ponder the workings of Lord Nameless all eternity and I doubt we would fathom a fraction of his nature." Margey said firmly. "He wants entertainment? Who are we to deny our god?"

With that she marched up to Alyssa and pulled her into a kiss.

Things predictably devolved quickly from there and Loras and Nymeria hastily fled the room as Alyssa was soon pounced on by her lovers and fabric flew as they all began undressing. Much passionate lovemaking followed and lasted for the rest of the night, leaving, Alyssa hoped, Lord Nameless very entertained.

Chapter End Notes

Done!

So Alyssa has consummated her relationship with Shireen and Myrcella at last. This despite their young age. It should be noted that while their ages are uncommonly young for marriage/motherhood/sexual relations for medieval noble children, however it was not unheard of especially among royalty and when the need for heirs was pressing. It was not however common even among most of the nobility, much less the smallfolk. At least as far as I can tell from my research on the topic. It is however typical to Canon though probably because of its focus on high nobility and turbulent times where Houses would push for as many possible heirs as quickly as was able. While heirs are not a consideration in Alyssa's situation, she is borrowing norms for age of consent, as it were, from relationships which do so as such to her while she is somewhat uneasy with doing it, because Shireen and Myrcella are young even by those terms, she went ahead with it. That and the magical influence, can't forget the role of that. ;)

Why did I allow the bedding here? Simple. Not everyone will seek to reject tradition. Robb, as a Stark with a decidedly Tully look, least among them. If he wishes to be respected as a proper Lord of Winterfell by his bannermen then he will have to embrace their traditions even if he finds them disagreeable. That his bride is a thoroughly Northern woman and Northerners are generally quite traditional, she is unlikely to object either just makes its inclusion more logical.

Hope you guys liked the backstory I gave the Others and the Night King. I was inspired to do this by two things: i) the popular critique (at least on Youtube) of the
Night King in the show having little in the way of a motivation for his actions or backstory and ii) the hints George R.R. Martin gave about the Others in the books as being alien creatures. Do let me know what you guys think of my attempt at giving the Others and the Night King some depth.

Why tack on the last bit leading into the orgy? On a narrative level it is to explain why Nameless set up the harem i.e. he derives entertainment from being a voyeur. On a personal level, because I wanted them to have a big, everyone involved orgy before the climactic battle.

That's all for this chapter so until next time valeo!
Two days after Robb's wedding, Alyssa and Robb were in Winterfell's courtyard seeing the last of the noncombatant dignitaries off as they returned to the safety of their own castles via Gate.

"Goodbye, your grace." Adorable little Lyanna Mormont said with a curtsy.

"Goodbye, Lady Mormont. May we meet again soon." Alyssa said as she took her hand gently and planted a kiss to the back of the startled girl's hand.

"You are a charmer, your grace." Lyanna's elder sister and guardian Alysane said with a laugh as she guided the bewildered and speechless but gently blushing Lyanna towards their portal back to Bear Island. "I am sure that Lyanna will visit you in King's Landing once this war is won. Won't she, Mother?"

"Perhaps," Lady Maege, who was staying behind to command the Mormont contingent said with a wave of her hand. "But for now back to Bear Island with the lot of you."

Chuckling, Alysane led the rest of the Mormont household returning to their seat walked through the portal. Lady Maege waited till the portal had closed before she turned to look at Alyssa.

"Should I know what is going on between you and my youngest daughter, your grace?"

Alyssa just offered her a mischievous smile.

"We'll speak of it once the battle is over."

The mention of the battle turned Lady Maege solemn and she nodded. Robb however was not so easily quelled and unlike his goodmother turned to Alyssa with a teasing smirk.

"You are insatiable aren't you, Alys?"

Before Alyssa could respond, Maester Randall ran towards them from the direction of the Maester's Turret.

"Your grace, my lord," the middle aged Maester said as he caught his breath. "There's been an urgent report."

"What is it?" Alyssa asked, dreading the answer.
"Our scouts have sighted the Army of the Dead." The Maester said in between deep gulps of air. "It has been swelled with fresh numbers from their successful scouring of the Karstark lands, and now number almost a hundred and thirty thousand wights."

Alyssa seethed at the news even if it was expected. Especially since the news meant they would likely be outnumbered somewhere in the region of two to one. For despite their best efforts they had only managed to gather seventy thousand men into Winterfell so far.

"How far away are they?" Robb asked in her stead.

"Close, my lord. They will be here by the end of day."

That evening Alyssa and Robb were in the gatehouse of the South Gate looking over the new fortifications that Alyssa had used Control Earth to create so as to greatly expand Winterfell's defenses. Defenses that had been built over Winter town for as much as it was necessary for the smallfolk to weather the winter, all of them had been evacuated south and fighting in the cramped confines of a town was foolhardy. So with her magic she had crashed the entire town with the same of waves of earth that she then used to build the new fortifications.

She had wanted to create more more than three rings of walls and flaming ditches like she had at Last Hearth, but due to Winterfell's much greater size she had barely managed three rings this time. However, to bolster the defenses she had split each ring into smaller sections with gates protecting the entrances and exits to each and placed the gates leading to the next ring in as different a direction as possible. All these elaborate fortifications were now blanketed by a thick layer of snow which would have made for a picturesque sight if not for the snow being courtesy of the blinding blizzard the Others had conjured to herald their arrival.

"They've started running," Robb said as he looked through the Myrish eye and looking out at the incoming Army of the Dead.

"Message Rakharo to send out the cavalry and thin out the runners!" Alyssa shouted at Maester Randall and a group of Message capable casters who stood nearby to relay orders. "Inform the commanders to light the ditches! Have our siege engines open fire!"

"Alys, take care out there." Robb said as he put the far eye down and nodded at Alyssa.

"I will," Alyssa said with a nod of her own as she raced down the tower stairs and out the South Gate, Ser Wendel and Brienne pushing their way through the crowd of men rushing to and fro through the gate for her as she hurried to where Ghost waited just outside.

Really wish the tower had bigger windows than just arrow slits, it would be so much easier to just jump down and use Levitate. Alyssa thought as she used the aforementioned spell to float herself and her two shadows up into the howdah on Ghost's back where the rest of her Queensguard waited.

"Everyone ready?" Alyssa asked as she quickly began strapping herself into her throne.

"We are," Loras confirmed.

"Then," Alyssa said as she finished securing herself. "Ghost! Fly!"

With a powerful beat of his wings and a mighty push of his hind limbs, her familiar took to the air with Drogon and Rhaegal following soon after and taking position on his right and left
Even as his Queen took to the air, the newly installed Lord of the Eyrie and Defender of the Vale, Harrold Hardyng led the knights of the Vale as they, along the Dothraki and other cavalry, tried to thin the wight hordes through massed charges through the running swarms of undead.

*Thank the gods that the fire arrow and siege weapon fire forces the wights from massing together. If not we cavalry would be completely useless.* Harry thought to himself as he and his squadron of knights kept a close wedge formation and galloped through the undead ranks. Even if the enemy ranks was full of gaps, they had to keep moving. As they had learned at great cost throughout this war, slowing whilst surrounded by wights was deadly. The damned things were slower than a horse at anything more than a walk but they were fast enough to catch a rider if they slowed their mount and more than strong enough to pull a man from a horse with contemptuous ease. Add to that their tendency to swarm and they were truly deadly foes to cavalry.

Nevertheless, he and his knights along with the other horsemen on the field were doing an admirable job of thinning the enemy hordes. Harry himself had put to final rest at least a hundred wights, having lost count somewhere in the eighties. His counting having been hampered by the low visibility created by the magical blizzard that the enemy had conjured. For the longest time the only real illumination had been provided by the torches some of his men carried or the occasional bursts of dragonfire from the dueling dragons in the sky above.

Harry had just given the peace of death to a wight that had once been a Karstark men-at-arms when suddenly a scream from the rear of his formation had him leading his squadron wheeling around. They turned to see giant ice spider mounted Other pinning one of their fellows, horse and all, to the ground with a crystal lance piercing through the knight's chest.

"Kill it!" Harry ordered as he urged his own horse around to charge the inhuman creature.

Immediately the wights all around them, acting on their master's orders most likely, attempted to swarm towards him and his men, but the combination of the speed of their gallop and the efforts of the riders with lances tipped with flaming rags that Harry kept at the edges of his formation for just such an occasion easily fended them off and the wedge galloped towards the Other.

The inhuman creature looked at them with contemptuous disdain as it had its mount leap at them, knocking the rearmost knight in their squadron to the ground just like he had its first victim. It prepared to leap again but the nearest knights stabbed their lances at it.

Their blows killed its mount which shattered like glass but the accursed Other simply leapt off and onto the back of one of the horses of Harry's knights, knocking its rider off in the process. Again the nearest knights lashed out with their lances, but in a display of remarkable agility it either parried or ducked away from the strikes. It however failed to account for the dragonglass throwing knife Harry tossed its way.

Harry thus had the satisfaction of seeing the monster's stunned face with his throwing knife sticking out of its right eye seconds before it shattered like its mount had just moments earlier, causing all the surrounding wights to collapse.

A cheer went up among Harry's knights at that and he unashamedly joined in, but their joy was short lived as a horn signalling the retreat of the cavalry was sounded.

Harry chanced a glance over the battlefield and even as much as he hated to admit it was the right move to make. Even through the limited visibility of the snowstorm, he could see that the enemy's
main forces had already managed to run past the gauntlet of the flaming projectiles and cavalry to mass against the outermost walls and were pressing against them like an undead tide. Only stragglers remained for the cavalry to cull and his men would be of better use elsewhere.

"We'll wheel around to the North Gate," Harry ordered his men as he slowed down to a trot. "Once inside the walls we'll dismount and fight on foot. They'll need every man they can inside."

"Yes, my lord!" His men shouted loyally as they followed him.

Whilst her men fought valiantly on the ground, Alyssa flew out on Ghost with Drogon and Rhaegal to face the Night King and Viserion,

*The visibility is terrible, even more so than normal when fighting the Others. They must be pouring more magic into the blizzard than usual. Alyssa noted with a frown. Is that why I see no signs of boulder slingers? Or did we manage to finish of the wight giants?*

Ghost's warning roar and his hasty evasion answered that last question easily enough as a volley of massive ice spears flew up at the three dragons, all of which managed to evade the attack that a quick glance below came from a set of wight giants.

*He's upgraded his javelin throwers. Alyssa cursed as she grabbed her speaking horn.*

"Rhaegal, Drogon! Be careful of those spears! I do not know how the Mage Armor I cast on you will hold out against them."

The two dragons roared their understanding just as Viserion flew out of the falling snow and breathed a torrent of his twisted blue dragonfire at his black scaled brother. Drogon evaded but, perhaps in a moment of confusion or forgetfulness, he dove down and put himself directly into the line of fire of the javelin throwers below. Rhaegal screeched at him even as he charged at Viserion, forcing him away and Drogon hastily tried to fly back up to safety.

He was too late however and three of the oversized ice spears found their mark. Shattering the Mage Armor protecting him like it was little more than glass. Two shredded his left wing, causing him to list to the right and directly into the path of the third which blasted a hole directly through his chest killing the great beast instantly.

"Drogon!" Alyssa cried out in dismay as her late Aunt's mightiest son died.

Ghost let out his own mournful cry but he did not hesitate to breath his dragonfire over Drogon's falling corpse, incinerating it before it ever reached the ground and denying it to the Night King.

Rhegal's heartbreaking screech however was the most intense as was befitting a creature that had just seen the last of his brothers die. It however immediately turned this grief into unbridled fury as it slammed into Viserion. Completely ignoring the barrier of cutting winds that the Night King kept around his mount and despite the grievous wounds he suffered from doing so, he tore into his brother's animated corpse with such viciousness that it knocked the Night King off.

Unwilling to let this chance escape them, Alyssa shouted out an order. "Ghost, Dracarys!"

Roaring his assent, Ghost unleashed his dragonfire and bathed the two dueling dragons as they tumbled through the air. With his protective wind barrier having been compromised by his brother, Viserion ignited as the wight he had become.

"Ghost, stop!" Alyssa shouted almost at the sight and as the flames faded, she breathed a sigh of
relief to see that Rhaegal had survived. He was wounded, both from his fight with Viserion and Ghost's flames, but he was alive.

*At least I didn't get all of Aunt Dany's sons killed.* Alyssa thought as she finally gathered herself enough to use **Meteor Swarm** to incinerate the remainder of the javelin throwers massed below.

"Anyone see the Night King?" Alyssa asked the Queensguard once she was certain of Rhaegal's survival and with the threat of the javelin throwers eliminated, his immediate safety.

A chorus of negatives was returned by her Queensguard.

"Hells," Alyssa cursed. "Keep on the lookout!"

"Yes, your grace!"

Ignoring her men, she turned to her speaking horn.

"Rhaegal! We have lost the Night King, we'll have to focus on supporting the men on the ground and destroying any wight giants till we find him. Are you able to do that or do you need to leave the field?"

Alyssa was not entirely certain if the green scaled dragon understood her, at least not fully. Her Aunt's dragons were smart but just how intelligent they were was a subject of debate, they were definitely seemed less mentally capable than Ghost or at least were less able to express it in a way humans could observe. Nevertheless, Rhaegal seemed to catch the gist of her meaning and let out a defiant roar before winging off to strafe a nearby group of wights.

*Guess, that's his answer.*

"Ghost, stick close to him." Alyssa urged. "We need to support each other."

Ghost sent back an affirmative burst across their mental link even as he flew off in pursuit of the other dragon, breathing dragonfire on any unfortunate wight below him as he did.

As the Queen was fighting in the skies above, Greatjon Umber was trying to hold the outermost gates of the new fortifications that Queen Alyssa had created. An almost impossible task that was made all the more difficult by the enemy's use of wight mammoths laden with rocks which they sent rushing towards the flaming ditch below the walls.

"Kill them! They're trying to fill the ditch!" Greatjon roared from where he stood atop the wall and his archers obeyed, shifting their fire onto the mammoths. But between the rocks and plates of makeshift armor that covered the undead beasts' bodies, they were heavily protected. Thus only two of the half dozen fell before they made it to the flaming moat.

Once there, the undead mammoths without a moment of hesitation sacrificed themselves by throwing their bodies into the ditch, whilst their undead flesh burned away quickly, the rocks they carried did not and proceeded to create a makeshift causeway over the flaming ditch. Three were enough to create the bridge the undead hordes needed and the last mammoth led the rest of its unnatural ilk across it and towards the gate. Where it immediately proceeded to batter the sturdy oak with its tusks acting as rams. All whilst other lesser wights swarmed over its bulk and attempted to use it as a makeshift ladder to climb atop the battlements.

"Defend yourselves!" The Greatjon ordered even as he smashed the head of a wight wearing Hornwood colors in with his dragonglass tipped warhammer, only for it to be replaced with another
in Bolton livery.

This wight though had not been a mere man-at-arms. For standing before the Greatjon as a slavering undead abomination was no less than the plain faced, beardless Lord Roose Bolton whose distinctive pale eyes now shone with an unnatural blue light. Despite their acquaintance from being fellow lords of the North however, the Lord of House Umber showed the other man's animated corpse no respect whatsoever as he caved in its chest with a powerful blow from his hammer and allowing the dragonglass to work its magic to put it to rest once more.

"Good riddance!" The Greatjon spat as he impaled the wight that followed on the spike of his hammer. "Never liked Bolton in the first place!"

A great blaze from the direction of the gate caught the Greatjon's attention and a quick glance as he knocked the head off a wight showed that the wight mammoth acting as a ram had finally been dealt with thanks to a lucky fire arrow slipping through its armor and igniting its rotting flesh.

The sight of its rapidly disintegrating corpse elicited a cheer from the men but this was short lived. For even as it died, another three similar undead mammoths lumbered out of the increasingly violent blizzard and towards the gate.

"Hold your ground!" The Lord of Last Hearth shouted defiantly even as streams of dragonfire in the distance lit up the otherwise pure white sky. "We hold as long as we can!"

Garlan Tyrell watched his goodsister and the dragons successfully finish off the dragon wight in the distance, or at least that's what he could gather by the prolonged lack of any streams of blue dragonfire from the undead dragon as he looked out into the distance from atop one of the short earthen towers bracketing the gate to the second ring of defenses.

"Ser Garland!" One of the men he had assigned as a sentry shouted. "Northmen! The Northmen are retreating!"

"Already?" Garland said in alarm. They had barely begun fighting and already they had lost the first ring!?

"Relax Ser Garland," Lord Randall Tarly said from next to him as he looked through a Myrish eye. "It seems to be them rotating out their wounded."

Garland breathed a sigh of relief but nevertheless remained tense, even as Lord Tarly gave the order to lower the drawbridge, though the crudely strapped together set of roughly hewn logs barely warranted the name, to let the Northmen through.

"Should we send men to reinforce the first gate?" Garland suggested.

"No," Lord Tarly said with a shake of her head. "Not unless they request it, we must not reduce our strength. Not when our entire plan is centered around a defense in depth."

"I understand your frustration, Ser Garland." Dickon Tarly, Lord Tarly's second son and heir said commiseratingly. "However, Father is right."

Garland just nodded, even as she tightened the grip on his sword in frustration.

Half an hour later, Garland wished that sense of frustration had lasted longer as the army of wights began to smash into the gate he and his fellow Reachmen were guarding.
"Retreat!" Dickon shouted. "Maintain order and retreat!"

It was something easier said than done especially when dozens of giant ice spiders were leaping all over the place, taking men down. Some were even being ridden by White Walkers and the monsters were even more dangerous as they lashed out with their crystal weapons. And that was not even accounting for the seemingly unending horde of wights, the latter of which had included a group of undead mammoths that had filled the flaming ditch and smashed the gate open. Thankfully, they had been taken out by a Pyromancer's fire magic soon afterwards though it had made him a target for an ice spear that had killed him seconds afterwards.

Amazingly, though their lines while steadily being pushed back were largely holding, mainly Garland noted due to the defiant Northmen whose seeming unending bravery saw them hold despite everything.

"Die you monster!" The giant of a man that Garland knew to be Lord Umber screamed as he swung his warhammer at a White Walker which just gracefully spun out of the way.

Garland cut down the dozen or so wights between them as quickly as he could with his dragonglass sword, an improved more slender version of the standard club version of the dragonglass weapons, and rushed over to help the man.

He was too late though and the Other spun around another of Lord Umber's wild swings and got under the Northman's guard. Before the Lord of Last Hearth could react, the inhuman creature slid its crystal sword into the massive man's heart. All in one graceful move.

Garland was however able to avenge the man and ran the Other through moments afterwards, causing it to satisfyingly shatter into icy shards. Though he was much less pleased with having to stab Lord Umber's corpse with his sword almost immediately after that as it began to rise as a wight.

The second Tyrell son had no time to contemplate the matter however as his destruction of one of their ilk seemed to make him a target for the rest of the Others in the area and they all moved towards him.

"Need some help?" An older woman armed with a mace and dressed in the livery of House Mormont shouted at him as she arrived at his back with a fresh looking squad of men.

"I would appreciate it," Garland said as he parried a crystal lance and the overextension this caused in his opponent allowed him to send a thrust into its neck, shattering the White Walker.

"You're good." A younger woman who shared many of the older woman's features, her daughter perhaps, that was armed with a Valyrian steel sword said as she killed a Walker that had been trying to attack his exposed back.

"Thank you," Garland replied as he crossed blades with another of the monsters. "But perhaps we can continue this later?"

"Listen to the man Dacey," the older Mormont woman said as she smashed one of the Others with her mace and it fell to pieces as their kind did upon death.

"Yes, mother!"

Whilst Garland Tyrell and his Reachmen had largely been able to maintain order as they retreated, the same could not be said of all fronts on the increasingly chaotic battlefield. Thus it was in the
wake of a disorganized rout of mainly Riverlands troops that had eventually replaced the Reacheb men that Prince Oberyn Martell alongside his daughter Obara Sand and the Dornish spearmen they led found themselves encircled by a swarming mass of Wights as a pair of Others look on from atop their giant ice spider mounts and with their backs to the flaming ditch behind them.

"When I get my hands on those Rivermen, I will-"

"Save your anger for the enemy before us, daughter." Oberyn told Obara as he put a wight to rest with a thrust of his spear. "Besides if you want to get those cowards an accounting then we will need to survive this first."

"Yes, Father." His adult daughter returned with all the contrition of a scolded child even as she swept her spear at eye level and cut deeply into the exposed flesh of the helmetless faces of the otherwise armored wights in front of her, the magic of her dragonglass spear tip doing its work and putting them to rest despite the relatively minor wounds.

Despite their efforts though and those of their men, their little defensive circle just kept shrinking. It only took a small misjudgement after all to lose a man. Thrust a spear too far or be too slow in drawing it back and the wights would seize it by the shaft and pull a man to his death. Or they would allow one of their fellows to impale itself on a spear, rendering its wielder open for a moment in the confusion and allowing its fellows to murder him. There were a hundred and one ways for the wights to kill a man and they were employing all of them, except archery which thank the gods the undead seemed utterly incapable of. Even their spear throws were pathetically off target.

I can see why they need massed volleys just to harm the dragons. Oberyn thought as he knocked a spear wielding wight's weapon to the side with his own and pricked the unarmored underside of its arm, putting it to rest.

Though for all their weakness with ranged weapons, the wights were proving a truly deadly foe as they slowly but surely whittled down his men. So confident in victory were they that the two Others who commanded the batch attacking them had not even so much as deigned to do more than simply watch. Arrogant bastards! Oberyn thought with disdain even as the circle of Dornish spears shrunk even more.

The arrogance proved to be the monsters' undoing however as suddenly there was a mighty explosion of a Wildfire from a catapult shot directly to the Others' right. It did not harm the creatures but it did immolate the entire mob of wights that had been protecting that flank and cleared the way for the charge of knights that poured out of the friendly lines just beyond.

"For the living!" Elia shouted at the hand of the charge, her lance lowered. Nymeria following close behind her and watching her back.

Both Others spun to meet the charge but they were too slow and his little Lady Lance impaled them both on her dragonglass studded lance, shattering them both even as her well trained filly trampled their spider mounts under its hooves. Immediately, the surrounding swarm of wights collapsed like the puppets whose strings had been cut that they were.

"Burn them!" Oberyn ordered even as he moved to welcome his daughters, Obara at this side. "Before another Other raises them again!"
His men hurried to obey, putting any corpse they could find to the torch. They were careful not to push any into the ditch though so as to avoid filling it in and making the job of the Others easier.

"Father, Obara, are you alright?" Elia asked in concern even as behind her the ragged looking line of defenders pushed forward beyond their position with the aid of more catapult fire and retook some ground, buying the family a bubble of safety within which they could talk.

"We are fine." Obara assured her. "What are you two doing here? Especially you, Elia?"

"You sound like my wife," Elia told her sister with a raised eyebrow. "Always trying to convince me to stay behind the frontlines."

"She is being as a wife should be," Oberyn told his exasperated daughter. "She merely worries about your safety."

"I know but- Wights!" Elia shouted. "The dead are rising!"

Oberyn spun around and discovered that his daughter was right. All around them, the dead were once more rising. Some were simply old wights that the men had not yet got around to setting alight but some, heartbreakingly, were his men that had previously fallen to the enemy.

"The dead are rising!" Oberyn shouted, repeating his daughter's call. "Be on guard!"

The skirmish that followed was the epitome of chaotic. With the living having broken formation after thinking they had secured the area already, it was all close and brutal combat. Just the kind where the wights excelled. Despite that, there were more living than the dead and they knew what to expect, so it was not quite as disastrous as it could be.

*Still messy as the Nine Hells though,* Oberyn thought as he used a sweep of his spear to force back a trio of adult wights. Putting two doing in the process as he cut them along the neck with his dragonglass spear. He had however not accounted for the child wight that ran through the legs of its adult counterparts, under the reach of his spear and into his guard before it proceed to stab his thigh with a knife.

"Argh!" Oberyn cried out as he dropped one hand from his spear and drawing a dragonglass dagger with his now free hand stabbed it into the child wight's head, all whilst he shoved his spear into the eye slit of the last of his adult attackers thus silencing them both.

The damage was done though. He knew that much as he pulled the dirty blade out from his leg and tossed it aside, his daughters forming him into a protective ring as he did so.

"It's poisoned." Oberyn gasped.

"What it didn't look-"

"Not all poisons are what we know as poison." Oberyn told Elia with a wince. "That knife which stabbed me was rusty and covered in dried viscera. It will almost certainly lead to infection."

"I will have Alys heal you later." Elia said as she pulled him onto the back of her horse. "Or one of the Red Priests, some of them have picked up some of her healing magic. For now let us get you to the healers."

Oberyn just offered her and the rest of his daughters a grim look.
It had taken some hard fighting, but eventually his daughters had led him and his men back into the relative safety of Winterfell's ancient walls where he and the other wounded were helped into its Great Hall which had been transformed into a makeshift hospital.

"Leave Father to me Sisters," Tyene said as she gestured for Elia and Nymeria to put him down on an empty cot. "You two are needed elsewhere."

"Go," Oberyn said when they both looked hesitant. "As much as I want you both safe, Tyene is right. Go!"

Still looking reluctant, his two daughters nevertheless obeyed.

As they did Tyene used her skill at healing, something she had picked up alongside her formidable skill with poisons, to examine him.

"The wound is deep but it avoided anything vital." His blonde daughter said as she reached for a bottle of what he could only imagine was alcohol which she poured over the wound, causing Oberyn to give an involuntary hiss of pain. "But it will hamper your movement. There will be no more fighting for you today, Father."

"I refuse to be useless," Oberyn said defiantly. "If I cannot fight, then bandage me up and I will assist the healers. I do not need my full range of motion for that."

Tyene looked torn but a quick look at her fellow overworked healers made up her mind.

"Very well," his daughter said with a sigh. "But do not overdo it, Father. Your injuries are not minor."

"I'll be fine." Oberyn assured her even as she began bandaging his leg.

The rest of the battle was a blur and Oberyn eventually got separated from his daughter even as he began to feel himself burning up. Perhaps there was a poison on that blade besides the rust and dried offal, for if this was an infection it was coming too fast.

Some magic perhaps. Oberyn thought as he bandaged the deep gash across the chest of his latest patient, a Riverman from House Darry. *Not that it matters.*

Ignoring his growing weakness, he continued doing his part to secure the future of Ellaria and his daughters. Of Doran and Dorne. Of the living.

*I will play my part to the very end.* Oberyn told himself. *I will not be a burden.*

It was with this last thought that the Red Viper collapsed whilst moving from one patient to the next. He heard cries of alarm and someone calling out his name, but only faintly as his world disappeared and was replaced with darkness.

Elsewhere on the battlefield, Grey Worm commanded his Unsullied brothers as they held the gate into the last of the new defensive rings. A task they had proven most adept at as their disciplined formations successfully fended off wave after wave of wights and even a few Others.

*If this continues, we might just hold.* The Unsullied commander thought hopefully.

"Giants! The giants are coming!" One of the many men retreating into the inner ring to regroup shouted and Grey Worm cursed his earlier thought for jinxing them.
"You heard the man!" He shouted at his brothers. "Ready yourselves! Remember your training!"

As five wight giants stalked out of the Others' conjured blizzard decked in crudely forged armor and armed with massive spears of ice in hand, Grey Worm could not help but think his earlier words tasted like ashes. Nothing in their hellish training prepared them for this. Nonetheless, his brothers did not break not even as the giants began sweeping whole blocks of them to their deaths. Even in the face of such, they doggedly jabbed their dragonglass spears at the massive wights seeking out chinks in their armor.

At last, one of the giants fell but already Grey Worm had lost a third of his men.

_Damn it, I need to retreat._ He realized bitterly.

Just as he was about to give the order however a trumpeting warcry sounded behind him and suddenly eight living giants, two riding mammoths and the others running on foot, surged out of the gate swinging massive axes lined with dragonglass shards. In the face of their fury, their undead kindred stood no chance and within moments of vicious hand to hand fighting they were put to rest at last.

"More wight giants!" Someone shouted and Grey Worm's slightly buoyed mood plummeted once more.

"Form a line! Reform our formations!" He shouted as the first of the wight giants came into view as they tossed their ice spears, killing a pair of their living kin.

_Ten of them!?_ Grey Worm counted as cold fear gripped him as the monsters lumbered forward, slowing drawing new spears from the quivers they wore on their backs. _How can we hold against that!?_

 Salvation came as a green shadow suddenly burst out of the snowy whiteness of the sky and Rhaegal unleashed his green dragonfire on the wights incinerating them.

Unsullied were too disciplined to cheer but their giant and human allies cheered hard enough to make up for it at the sight. Even more so as Rhaegal swept his flame across the fallen sections of the defensive ring, silencing thousands of wights in the process.

Grey Worm, pull back into the inner ring. Missandei's voice entered his mind suddenly courtesy of the **Message** spell she had learned.

"What? Why?" The Unsullied commander muttered aloud, too confused to keep the telepathic conversation purely mental.

_The enemy has breached the walls elsewhere._ The Naathi scribe told him with surprising calm. _You need to fall back before you are cut off._

_Curses. Understood._ Grey Worm sent back even as he began to shout the order for a retreat.

Robb Stark stood behind one of the barricades set up in the Wintefell's courtyard as he saw streams of men pouring through the South Gate and past him as they hurried to regroup. It had started with a trickle at first but as the battle dragged on, it had become a steady river of men as they lost one section of the outer walls after another to the relentless enemy.

Soon as Lord of Winterfell and commander of the defense of the castle proper, it would be up to him to hold the tide. Looking at the many barricades set up in the castle's courtyard he felt some
hope. They were manned mainly by Stark men but had been bolstered by men from all over Westeros that had fallen back from positions beyond the walls. There were even groups of Unsullied and Dothraki among them. Most notably however, and perhaps ironically considering the history between the North and the Iron Islands, most of these non-Stark men were Ironborn archers from House Harlaw. If the people of the Seven Kingdoms, so long divided, could now stand united then surely they stood a chance at victory.

Despite this hope though, he was not without complaints.

"I should up in the guardhouse for the South Gate." Robb gripped to his wife. "The men there are in the most danger, I should stand with them."

"Fighting alongside our men on the battlefield is admirable but being foolishly reckless is not," his beautiful warrior woman of a wife told him chidingly.

"Listen to your wife, Lord Stark." Alys' goodfather, Lord Rodrik Harlaw said, as he eyed the South Gate warily. "My gooddaughter would be quite upset if you get yourself killed, especially if you die because you were being stupid."

Robb sputtered in indignation even as Lyra laughed. Even the traitorous Grey Wind barked humorously at his expense.

The levity did not last as suddenly something massive literally shot through the South Gate. Robb glanced at the projectile as it landed and saw to his horror that it was one of the massive ice spears the Others had equipped their remaining wight giants with.

"Robb! They're coming through!" Lyra shouted and Robb turned back to the gate to see wights, including freshly risen ones, pouring through the breach in the gate.

Thankfully by the sound of a blazing flame just outside the gate, the giant had been taken out.

Now if only we managed that sooner. Robb thought even as he raised his voice to rally his men.

"For Winterfell and the North! For the living! Fight to the last!" Robb shouted at the top of his voice as the first wave of wights slammed into the barricades in front of the South Gate and his brave men-at-arms fought them off with their dragonglass spears whilst his archers and mages sent flaming projectiles to thin their ranks.

Two more waves came and went and Robb was starting to feel confident they could hold when suddenly the Night King himself emerged through the ruined South Gate and with a wave of his hand sent a blast of frigid air that sent an entire line of defenders flying.

"Sard!" Robb cursed even as he spun towards a nearby mage. "Use Message and inform my sister that the Night King is here now!"

He barely finished speaking before the wights reached the barricade he was hunkering behind and one scrambled over the edge, forcing him to silence the animated corpse of the Reacher with a swing of Ice. At the same time Grey Wind had pinned another, allowing Lyra to bash its snarling head in with her dragonglass studded mace. For his part Lord Rodrik was shooting arrows downrange at the wights so fast that Robb could barely keep track.

"Hurry!" He urged the mage as he turned to join his wife and the other defenders in fending off the attack.
Alyssa was thinning the wights' numbers by immolating the rear of their forces. A task that between the dragonfire of the two remaining dragons and her magic they had managed to make great progress at, for although the enemy had broken one defensive line after another. Their plan had worked and the Army of the Dead had been slowed down, giving time for them to be burned to ashes. As such she estimated that less than twenty thousand wights remained whereas she still had over forty thousand men still able to fight.

*Your grace,* a flustered sounding man said suddenly as he contacted her with a Message spell. *The Night King is in Winterfell! I repeat! The Night King is in Winterfell!*

*Understood. I'm on my way.* Alyssa returned even as Ghost was already turning towards the castle.

"Rhaegal!" Alyssa shouted through the speaking horn. "Stay here and continue with what we were doing"

The green dragon gave a questioning roar, but Alyssa would have none of it.

"Stay!" She barked and her Aunt's dragon let out a whine but obeyed, turning to unleash a burst of his dragonfire on a particularly thick block of wights.

Meanwhile, Ghost neared the castle and was forced to suddenly climb sharply as a volley of giant ice spears were thrown his way.

"You won't keep us away with just that, Night King." Alyssa declared as she primed her magic. "Meteor Swarm!"

As the conjured balls of blazing flame created by her spell fell to earth and incinerated what she hoped to be the last of the javelin throwers, Ghost dove down towards Winterfell. Or more specifically the Night King as he made his way through the Godswood towards the crypts.

"Dracarys!" Alyssa shouted, a second behind Ghost unleashing his breath and bathing the Night King and his escorts in dragonfire. The wights were burned away into nothing and even the Others stumbled around as if injured, but the Night King was unscathed. His only response being to look up at Ghost as he circled around for another attack was raising his hand and conjuring a massive ice spear that he proceeded to toss at them.

Her dragon tried his best to evade the unexpected attack but the frozen projectile still tore through his right wing, completely shattering the *Mage Armor* that Alyssa had clad him in as it did so. Thankfully the wound was minor.

*We can't win this from the sky.*** Alyssa thought with a frown as Ghost pulled away from the Night King. *And I can't risk Ghost by landing.*

"We'll have to face him on the ground." Alyssa declared as she began to unstrap herself.

"Your grace, you can't be serious!?!" Loras shouted in alarm.

"Do you have any other ideas?" Alyssa shot back as she continued unstrapping herself and causing Loras to growl in exasperation but he did not issue another protest. "Ghost, bring us close but watch out for those spears."

Ghost roared his affirmative, swerving to avoid another ice spear thrown his way by the Night King. He breathed a stream of dragonfire and as he passed, Alyssa leapt off his back with her Queensguard all of them under the effect of her *Levitate* spell.
"Ghost!" She shouted at her dragon as they floated down to the ground. "Go support the defenders. I will handle the Night King."

Her friend growled his frustration but sent a burst of assent in reply and winged away.

Moments later, Alyssa and her Queensguard landed directly in front of the Night King and his Others inside the clearing in the godsdower Ghost had created with his dragonfire.

"Keep the other Walkers at bay," Alyssa at bay as she drew Dark Sister. "I will deal with the Night King myself."

Ser Raynald Westerling, one of the commanders charged with leading the Westerlands contingent to the War of the Long Night by his liege, Lord Tyrion, led a group of his House's men-at-arms out of the courtyard where the fighting was turning in their favor as a squad of Red Priests and Alchemists arrived to lend the aid of their fire magic to the mainly Northern defenders alongside a mostly fresh contingent of dismounted Valemen knights.

Everyone had seen the Queen and her Queensguard leap off her dragon in the godsdower and the only imaginable reason she would do that was to face the Night King. There was no way in the Nine Hells Raynald would let her face that monster with just her Queensguard though, thus he led a squad of his House's men-at-arms to her aid.

It was easier said than done though and he and his men had to kill their way through a throng of wights barring their way before they finally burst into a clearing in the godsdower where the Queensguard had formed a ring around the duel between the Queen and the Night King, protecting her from the dozens of Others trying to break through to assist their monarch.

"For the Queen!" Raynald shouted bravely as with his dragonglass sword raised high, he charged into the fray.

He and his men caught the Others by surprise it seemed and Raynald quickly shattered one with a powerful overhead slash, though its fellow on the right quickly tried to skewer him with a crystal lance that required him to back away.

This however left it open to an arrow from the red headed Wildling - *Free Folk! They call themselves Free Folk!* - Queensguard that shattered it as well.

This bought him a breather and he used it to survey his surroundings a little. He was pleased to see men were fighting hard against the Others and more importantly, that more of the living were coming to their aid.

"Help the Witch Queen!" The giant of a man that led the Free Folk roared as he and a band of his warriors ran towards them. They weren't alone as just behind them a group of men in plate armor in the livery of Houses Tully and Harlaw ran in from another direction.

"For the Queen!" The Tully and Harlaw men shouted as they slammed into the Others from the flank moments after the Free Folk.

Their arrival marked the end of Raynald's reprieve however as a White Walker seemingly floated away from a Free Folk warrior's spear and in front of him. Screaming a wordless war cry, he charged the monster and rejoined the fray.

"Flame Blade." Alyssa cast, channeling the spell through Dark Sister and setting the ancient
Targaryen blade ablaze even as she raised it in just in time to block a slash from the Night King and his conjured blade of crystalline ice.

"Fire Shield! Frost Armor!" She cast on herself, enshrouding herself in an aura of flame and a suit of plate armor made of ice even as she used the still active power of her Levitate spell to float out of the stalemate created by their locked swords.

The Night King stumbled forward at this and Alyssa took the chance to hit him with a Fire Bolt. Much to her chagrin, he merely raised a hand at the incoming flaming mote and cancelled it out with an arrow of frost not unlike her own Frost Bolt spell.

He capitalized on the momentary distraction as she made this observation however to spin on his heel in a way a human never could to come in at her from the side. If she had not been literally floating off the ground thanks to Levitate she would not have managed to parry the blow. As both their swords were out of position, they both switched to magic to attempt to exploit the opening.

"Flame Strike!" Alyssa cast, consuming the Night King in a pillar of white hot flame even as he sent a blast of spiraling frigid winds that send her flying back though she quickly corrected her flight and floated to the ground once more.

As her pillar of fire faded, it revealed the Night King looked just slightly worse for wear. Where he seemed completely immune to damage up till now this time it seemed his durability had reached its limits as his inhuman blue skin showed patches of blisters and discoloration that might have been burns. The leader of the Others touched these wounds with an expression that Alyssa could only describe as shock. It seemed it had been a long time since the monster had ever been injured and as the thin panes of almost invisible ice that covered his body fell to the ground and shattered, Alyssa could easily imagine that was the case.

So that is how he has avoided injury so far. Alyssa thought as the incredibly magic dense sheets of thin ice that served as the Night King's personal magical armor shattered.

Even as she made this observation, she also simultaneously glanced at their surroundings and saw to her satisfaction that her Queensguard had formed a ring around her duel with the Night King and were holding the rest of the Others at bay. An endeavor in which they were helped along with by men from across the varied armies under her command. Ironborn fought side by side with Riverman, Northmen with Free Folk, Unsullied stood shoulder to shoulder with Dothraki. All the armies of the living were fighting as one against their common enemy.

"See that, Night King?" Alyssa could not help but taunt. "See how you have united us?"

The Night King simply sneered and in a burst of supernatural speed charged at her. Alyssa however simply floated above him, spinning around in midair as she did so thus allowing her to lash out at his exposed back. The Night King spun around too, managing to block her slash but a physical attack had never been Alyssa's plan.

"Fire Bolt!" She cast, launching a flaming bolt shooting out of Dark Sister that slipped through their crossed blades and hit her opponent directly in his face.

The blow had the Night King stumbling back, though much to Alyssa's disappointment he did not howl in pain instead maintaining the perpetual silence that seemed to characterize its kind. Worse, even as it staggered from his head being on fire, it managed to swing its sword and unleash a gale full of razor sharp hale that blasted her away from her but more importantly sent the deadly projectiles flying at her men.
"Wall of Fire!" Alyssa cast hastily, creating a protective barrier between the duel and her men. Her focus on her men was costly though as she was distracted long enough for the Night King not only to recover but to counterattack. Charging at her with supernatural speed once more he thrust his sword at her. Alyssa, despite her distraction, was able to float back and avoid getting stabbed but she was caught completely off guard as the length of the leader of the Others' blade suddenly grew as it transformed into a lance.

Her armor slowed the blade down just enough for her to desperately spin away but not before it had grazed her arm and causing her to hiss in pain. A wound that reeked of his hostile magic.

"Purge!" Alyssa cast one of her rarely used spells, causing a golden aura to surround her body for a moment that cleansed it of whatever foul magic that the Night King had tried to curse her with. She was not done however.

"Regenerate!" She cast, enhancing her natural healing ability tremendously which almost instantly closed the shallow wound.

That was all the breather the Night King was willing to allow her however and he blurred towards her once more and tried to impale her on his lance, but even as he moved Alyssa cast another spell.

"Haste!" Alyssa incanted, casting a spell she had learned specifically for the possibility of a direct confrontation with the Night King.

With her movement speed and reaction time enhanced by the spell, she could now move at a speed that matched her opponent and so she easily evaded his first thrust but that was not all she did, chopping down with Dark Sister she cut the lance in half. This shocked the Night King and he pulled back but Alyssa did not let him as she pressed the attack. To his credit, he brought up his weapon in time to block even as the lance was still midway through reshaping itself back into a sword.

What followed was a exchange of blades so quick and so furious that to the human and even the White Walker observers seemed more like a blur than anything else as both combatants pushed their magically enhanced bodies to the absolute limits to gain the upper hand.

_He's a better swordsman than me._ Alyssa noted as she barely blocked a slash that sought to decapitate her and counterattacked with a thrust aimed at where her opponent's heart would be should he have been a human, only for it to be parried. _But with the help of Haste and Levitate we are evenly matched._

That was a little too generous of an assessment to be honest as the Night King's blade slipped through her guard and stabbed her shoulder.

_Okay, even with them I am outmatched._ Alyssa confessed to herself as she pulled away quickly and poured magical power into her Regenerate spell which caused the wound to seemingly boil away even as she used Purge to cleanse her body of the taint that was inherent to her opponent's weapon.

Pressing the attack, the Night King released one hand off the hilt of his sword and conjured a second blade but Alyssa simply followed suit and used Flame Blade to create a scimitar of pure fire that blocked it. With a look of irritation on his face, he dismissed the second blade and Alyssa did the same for hers. He was slightly faster in returning to a two handed grip on his weapon and it allowed him to unleash a few powerful cuts that Alyssa barely blocked before and which forced her back but she recovered quickly enough that he was unable to exploit it fully. Thus things
quickly returned to the stalemate.

*My body is starting to show the strain of so much enhancement magic though.* Alyssa thought as she felt her body temperature begin to rise well beyond what pure exertion would have caused. *I need to end this.*

"Earth Control." Alyssa cast, turning the ground under the Night King's feet into quicksand.

This caught the inhuman monarch completely by surprise and his attack faltered entirely. Worse for him as he struggled to make sense of what happened, his guard was full of holes. Thus it was that Alyssa could send Dark Sister thrusting at its heart. The leader of the Others recovered enough to attempt to parry, but this was merely a feint and moving with the full effect of Haste Alyssa changed targets and instead thrust downwards into her opponent's thigh. His sword completely out of position, the Night King could do nothing as the ancient Valyrian steel sword of House Targaryen pierced the flesh of his right leg.

He swung his sword wildly in retaliation but Alyssa had floated out of the way. It was too little too late anyways as his sword was the first thing that shattered into harmlessly particles of ice, soon followed by the rest of his body. The other White Walkers followed him into death, each of them exploding into icy chunks and with their demise the wights too collapsed into the inanimate corpses they always should have been.

"I did it." Alyssa said disbelievingly as she stared at the pile of slush that had been the Night King. "I did it! We won!"

Her exuberant cry was soon picked up by the rest of the living and soon all of Winterfell erupted into cheers. Even the weather seemed to share their joy as the perpetual blizzard lifted and the rays of dawn light pierced through the dissipating clouds.

They had plenty of reasons to celebrate, the Second Long Night had been won!

Chapter End Notes

Done!

I was sorely tempted to take the lives of even more characters in this chapter than I actually did but in the end I just couldn't bring myself to do so. Hopefully that does not rob the battle of its gravity. I was aiming for an epic battle and am reasonably sure I managed it somewhat, though if you disagree feel free to let me know. Do explain why you think so though so I might improve when writing such battles in the future.

That final duel between Alyssa and the Night King was hard to write. I wanted to show that the Night King was a serious threat but maintain that Alyssa was roughly evenly matched with him. It was a delicate balancing act that I'm not sure I got right. Hopefully I did. Either way, I hope it was enjoyable to read regardless.

Well, that's the climax folks. Only the epilogue left.

Till then hüvasti!
Alyssa opened her eyes as the gentle rays of the sun began playing across her face through the windows of her bedchamber in the Red Keep as she laid alone in her bed. For a long moment she luxuriated in the warmth it gave her. It helped fight the chill of certainty that had settled into her bones.

"Today's the day huh?" She said in a whisper both verbal and mental to Ghost in his lair in the Dragonswood.

Yes, it is. Her dragon sent back solemnly.

"Then I must have my affairs in order." Alyssa declared as she pushed herself up and got ready for the day.

Alyssa intended to tour the Red Keep to do just that. She was still Queen however and so even as she allowed her servants to dress her still magically youthful body she had word sent to her current Hand, a grandson of Sansa and the Imp's going by Rickard Lannister, to let him know to handle the matters of state today.

Speaking of her sister and her husband. The two of them had actually come to like, if never truly love, each other over their long reign as Lord and Lady Paramount of the Westerlands even managing to produce three children during that time. Ser Bronn of the Blackwater, as the former sellsword who was the captain of their guard came to be called serving as their loyal protector all their lives and setting the trend of loyal service to the Lannisters of Casterly Rock for the House he founded, House Blackwater, for generations afterwards.

"Not that one," Alysssa said as one of her ladies brought over an overgrown in the latest Myrish fashions that were all the rage in King's Landing lately. "Bring me a Northern gown in Stark colors."

Today of all days, it is only fitting that I wear the colors of the House which raised me. Alyssa thought as the lady-in-waiting curtsied and hurriedly picked out a replacement overgown.

Thinking on her Stark roots, reminded Alyssa of the fate of Robb, Lyra and Stepmother. After the Second Long Night, Robb suffered none of the troubles caused by his bannermen thinking him too Southron that had been a constant worry of his as a child. His leadership in the war had earned him their loyalty, though he still actively reinforced his Northerness all the way till his death. And it
was a happy death as he and Lyra had lived a fulfilling life that was marked by a gaggle of a dozen children. Children which Stepmother had spoiled rotten, if Robb's complaints on the matter were to be believed, till the end of her own life.

Though she had died with one regret and that was Arya. Much to Stepmother's eternal regret, Alyssa's wild little sister never did become the lady her mother dreamed she would be. Instead her youngest daughter had upon completing her training in the Braavosi Water Dance became a part of Alyssa's Queensguard wherein she would serve multiple terms of service. Even becoming its Lady Commander at various points and playing mentor to many of its famous members during those times.

On the personal level, her sister remained unmarried her whole life. She did however give birth to a bastard son named Brandon after their late brother. A child sired by a father she refused to name. It had taken Alyssa mobilizing Varys' little birds to learn of Arya's years long affair with a smith at Harrenhal before and during the man's marriage. Alyssa disapproved greatly, her sister could do better than a man who wouldn't marry her. Oh! She knew the issue lay with her sister in that regard but a man unable to convince her into a marriage just didn't deserve her. That didn't stop her from legitimizing her nephew though. The boy was her blood and blameless of his parents' foolishness, he did not deserve the burdens of being a bastard.

Speaking of Lord Varys, the venerable Master of Whispers surprised everyone by living to almost a hundred years and working all the way till he lay on his deathbed. Only handing over the reins of his hard won intelligence network to his protégé and one of Alyssa and Gwynesse's own grandsons whose mother had married into House Waynwood of the Vale named Daeron. However, despite the competence of her grandson, Alyssa had to admit that he was a far cry from the Spider in terms of his skill as Master of Whispers.

"How is it, your grace?" Joy Martell, Alyssa's chief lady-in-waiting and one of her great granddaughters by Mya, asked pulling her from her wandering thoughts.

Alyssa examined herself in the mirror and was satisfied. The dress with its Northern style and Stark colors was perfect, her hair styled as she preferred in flowing locks down her back was decorated nicely with subtle accessories shaped to look like Ghost.

"Perfect as always, Joy." Alyssa told her great granddaughter and earned a smile from her descendant that brought a smile to the Queen's lips as well.

After breaking her fast in the privacy of her rooms, Alyssa began her tour of the Red Keep and almost immediately her idle wanderings brought her to a display hall containing a host of gifts that had been presented to her over the years.

As she walked between the displays, a finely decorated bronze axe of Free Folk make caught her eye and she thought back on the fate of their creators.

After the Long Night, the Free Folk had mostly decided to stay in the Gift where they had been resettled when they'd been first allowed to cross the Wall, too haunted by their flight from the Others to want to return to their homelands. Many even had, rather ironically considering their people's long enmity with the brotherhood, joined the Night's Watch, to keep watch in case of the Others' return.

Some brave souls led by Tormund Giantsbane though had crossed back beyond the Wall in a bid to reclaim their homelands this despite Alyssa making it clear that they understood that doing so would put them beyond her protection. This suited these particularly free spirited Free Folk fine for
as Tormund explained laughingly all those years go that with the threat of the Others passed, they saw no need to bend the knee to 'the Kneelers' any longer. So it was with a heavy heart that she let them go.

And if word from Beyond the Wall lately is anything to go by they are doing well enough. Alyssa mused as she turned away from the axe and her eyes fell on a set of Unsullied armor and she winced slightly. At least better than Aunt Dany's Unsullied did.

Shortly after the Battle of Winterfell, Grey Worm and Missandei had declared their intention to lead the majority of the survivors among Dany's Unsullied to the Isle of Naath, Missandei's homeland, with the intent to settle there among the Naathi and protect them from the slavers that regularly raided them. This in spite of the deadly Butterfly Fever that was endemic to the Isle and was fatal to most, if not all, outsiders. As a final tribute to her late Aunt and to honor their heroic contributions in the war, Alyssa had provided them the ships they needed and even sent along a number of Maesters, admittedly consisting entirely of those whose loyalties she was uncertain of, to assist them with coping with the Fever.

The results were mixed. The Unsullied suffered severe losses from the Fever, but enough survived that they managed to establish a permanent presence on the island and had begun taking in some of the Naathi to train in their ways of war.

I wish more of them had stayed. Alyssa thought as she turned away from the armor and glanced at soldier in Targaryen colors standing guard nearby. He was a Dragongaurd, a member of an elite force formed to supplement and serve under her Queensguard. I would have been happy to have them in my Dragonguard.

On the wall next to the man was a Dothraki arakh made of Valyrian steel that had at one point belonged to a particularly notorious sellsword known as Caggo Corpsekiller and had been gifted to her by Rakharo to commemorate twenty years of friendship between the Seven Kingdoms and the Dothraki people. Said horse lords had mostly returned to Essos and the Dothraki Sea via ships she provided them where instead of splitting off into separate khalasars as many had expected, they had instead united into a new nation under Rakharo. One that despite its fractious nature lasted till this day and now dominated much of Essos.

The handful of Dothraki that have chosen to remain in Westeros had over time mostly integrated into Westerosi culture, using their mastery of the horse to revolutionize horse riding and their care in the Seven Kingdoms. Those that did not either eventually returned to Essos of their own accord or for those foolish few who tried to return to their old ways in Westeros were hunted down as the criminals they were before being dealt with accordingly.

As all criminals should. Alyssa thought as she stepped out of the weapons section of the hall and into the one that held the various paintings she had commissioned or had been gifted over the course of her reign.

As she entered the area, she was immediately drawn to a realistic portrait of herself and her wives that depicted herself seated on the Iron Throne surrounded by her wives in their own lesser thrones that hung pride of place at its entrance.

In keeping with the promise she had made to Elia in Winterfell during the Long Night she had married all her concubines in a lavish public ceremonies in front of the heart tree in the Red Keep's godwood and exchanged private vows in the name of Lord Nameless. And then went on to enjoy many years of wedded bliss that was made all the richer by their children.

Yes, children. As within a year of the end of the Battle of Winterfell, Alyssa had managed to
develop a means to use her magic to conceive children by her wives, however even magic has limits and they all end up being daughters. Not that her wives minded.

Wives which eventually included Lyanna Mormont, who as an adult, as seen in the painting, had taken after her eldest sister Dacey and grew into a lanky woman with long features who was at ease both in a lady's garb or in leather armor. Stern to outsiders and fiercely protective, she more than lived up to her House's symbol of a bear. In private though, she was surprisingly sweet. This dichotomy made her perfect as the primary caregiver for the family's children, a role that she embraced wholeheartedly. Though she appreciated the fact that Alyssa and her sister wives found this dichotomy of hers incredibly amusing and teased her about it at every opportunity. Especially Shireen and Myrcella, who perhaps due to their close ages to her were among her sisters with whom she got along especially well.

Speaking of Shireen. Despite her Grayscale scars completely disappearing thanks to the application of healing magic, she was never beautiful even as an adult, but her warm and loving personality more than made up for it. At least it did for Alyssa and her sister wives. Though perhaps due to the great help that magic had done for her, Shireen had become deeply interested in magic. After the Long Night, with mentoring from Alyssa and access to her Tome of Magic Shireen quickly became a powerful mage. Specializing in healing and perhaps to be expected considering her heritage as a Stormlander lightning magic as well. Skills that she used to help in the founding of various colleges of magic and the promotion of magical education in general.

Whilst Shireen focused on promoting magic, Myrcella took a slightly different path to her life. As she grew older she developed a slender, graceful figure as an adult and many comparisons were made between her and her mother. None within earshot of the Crown however, who took these as insults considering the crimes Cersei Lannister was guilty of. Thankfully, Myrcella had none of her mother's spite and while she did eventually learn much of the legendary Lannister cunning, she never used it for ill. Instead choosing to use it to covertly but very successfully spread the Church of Nameless. Though her efforts were something of an open secret.

Seated next to Myrcella in the painting was Mya, who was wearing a come hither look on her face and was less sitting on her throne as she was draped across it in sensuous invitation. It was classic Mya though, for she would develop a reputation for having a lustful nature. This led to many rumors that she was unfaithful, but Alyssa could attest that Mya never strayed. Though she was not above satisfying any urges she might have when Alyssa was unavailable with any of her willing sister wives if the need arose. Perhaps to excess if some of the occasional teasing complaints Alyssa heard from the others were any indication. This, at least in part, was due to Mya missing the company of men, but she angrily refused any time Alyssa offered her permission to take lovers, male or female, outside their family. This despite plenty of opportunity. For perhaps due to her experience being a mule handler at the Giant's Lance when she was younger, Mya championed the improvement of transportation throughout the Seven Kingdoms. She thus travelled widely throughout the Realm actively campaigning for such. It was her efforts that led to the refurbishment of the Kingsroad and many of the other major thoroughfares throughout Westeros and the proliferation of new ports and the expansion of old ones all along the coasts. Thus resulting in a boast to trade that Gwynesse was quite vocal in thanking her for.

Mya was also instrumental in the compilation of a new set of maps of the Seven Kingdoms including a new updated and improved version of the Painted Table that was installed in a chamber reminiscent of its counterpart in Dragonstone atop the newly built Cartographer's Tower in the Red Keep. Gwynesse, ever money minded, had seized on the coin the Crown could make from the sale of these maps and began selling them in various qualities to all who could pay for them, though at Jeyne and Elia's insistence reserving the most detailed and uncensored versions for state use alone. Thus creating a thriving source of income for the Crown to this day.
Speaking of Elia. She proved herself quite difficult to handle for Alyssa over time. Margaery attributing this to them being too alike, both strong willed and passionate women determined to be stronger than any man or woman whilst simultaneously desiring to do everything in their power to protect their loved ones. Much to Alyssa's chagrin she was wont to agree with her first wife. She had often been Alyssa's sparring partner in the training yard. Quickly proving herself more skilled as a warrior than Alyssa herself was, though she more than made up for it with her magic. And Ghost. Nevertheless, Elia's skill had led to her developing a deep bond with the Dragonguard. She thus played a key role in helping the force expand beyond the founding nucleus of Unsullied. A fact alluded to by the pair of Dragonguard that stood behind her throne in the painting.

Guards that made Gwyn, who was sitting next to Elia, slightly nervous and causing the pinched look she wore in the painting. Not that the woman had anything to fear from them, considering she largely controlled their pay making them as loyal to her as they were to Elia. For Gwyn had also proved herself extraordinarily skilled with numbers and used this talent to assist Alyssa and Jeyne in running the court. So much so that while she never officially held the title, she was regarded as the de facto Master of Coin for much of her life often in spite of others holding the title.

She had, of course, also played a great part in helping her fellow Ironborn cope with their new place in the Realm. Most of the reavers had refused such efforts though choosing instead to become pirates, many of them getting killed for those crimes. The majority of the Iron Islanders however, which had never been involved in the raiding in the first place, had accepted it surprisingly well. There was resentment of course but the threat looming over them in the form of military occupation alongside the benefits of generous economic incentive and increased wealth from greater integration with the rest of the Realm eventually bought them over. Now, years and years later, they reviled their reaving ancestors just as much as the rest of the Realm did.

But while Gwyn had been the shadow Master of Coin, Jeyne had very publicly assumed Lady Olenna's position as Hand after she retired. This had created some consternation among the nobility as Jeyne was one of Alyssa's concubines and they thus saw this as a centralization of power by Crown. Many of them claimed that they deserved the post instead as a reward for their efforts in the Long Night. Alyssa had however silenced them by reminding them that the appointment of Hand was at her sole discretion as reigning monarch, adding that Lady Olenna had already taken Jeyne as her protégé during the war and she had been assisting Lady Olenna with the running of the Seven Kingdoms' domestic affairs for its entire duration.

Perhaps the most surprising of her wives however was Margaery. Despite being a granddaughter of the infamously politically savvy Queen of Thorns and having been trained for politics since she was a child, Margey had instead chosen to 'retire' from political maneuvering and leave such matters to Jeyne. In her own words, she had quite enough politicking to last many lifetimes. She instead chose to live up to her role as Alyssa's first consort, even before they'd married, and took charge of the household management side of their affairs.

It was this focus that led to her carrying the most daughters of any of Alyssa's wives, having birthed eleven daughters between ten pregnancies. Beating out Mya's ten despite the Valewoman's playful competition with her in that regard. Both having beat out Alyssa herself who had promised to carry a child with each of her wives and stopped thereafter, which with Eddard meant she endured eight pregnancies, including Ned, over the course of her life. Thankfully for Lyanna, who cared for their children, the rest of the family were nowhere as invested in the competition. Lyanna herself having had only one pregnancy that led to identical twins. Jeyne, Myrcella and Shireen having bowed out after three daughters each. Gwyn had stopped after a rather difficult labour for her only child. Elia, in turn, had always expressed a distaste for the entire concept of pregnancy but eventually relented and birthed herself a single little girl in her early thirties.
It was not just House Targaryen whose numbers grew greatly under Alyssa’s reign, the dragons did as well. Alyssa mused as she saw a neighboring portrait of the Dragonswood, the section of the Kingswood that had been given over to the dragons to lair in.

Thanks to the many clutches of eggs laid by Rhaegal, and the hatching of long fossilized eggs by magic, every Targaryen now had a dragon of their own. Though the latter process had proven more tricky than expected. It seemed that without the direct help of a god, it wasn't as easy as following the same steps that had hatched Ghost.

But we still managed it in the end. Alyssa thought as she looked away from the painting of the dragons.

Next to the painting of the Dragonswood was a stylized tribute to her promotion of religious tolerance that showed her sitting on the Iron Throne and bestowing patronage in the form of equally sized piles of gold to the four major faiths of the Realm. This being the Faith of the Seven, the worship of the Old Gods and the Drowned God as well as the Church of Lord Nameless, all of whom she granted equal protection in the eyes of the Crown and law. Though despite this the followers of the Old Gods and the Drowned God were in steep decline and even the Faith of the Seven saw a shrinking number of adherents as many flocked to the new faith, especially once it became known that Alyssa was a follower.

As a result of this, the Faith of the Seven had lost much of its influence and thus their objections to Alyssa’s marriages were largely disregarded by the populace. Especially as it was the lone faith that took any issue with it.

Which was an unnecessary and unexpected but welcome benefit. Alyssa thought as she continued through the gallery.

Alyssa eventually settled down for the midday meal on a balcony atop one of the Red Keep's towers that gave her a remarkable view of King's Landing.

The city before me is a far cry from the one of my youth. Alyssa thought as she surveyed it after she had finished her meal. I suppose I can thank all the improvements I made to it over the years for that.

Using her increased mastery of the Control Earth spell after the Long Night, Alyssa had built her capitol a new set of walls made out of solid granite and which was much further out from its original outer walls thus greatly expanding the city. Showing her precise mastery of said spell, she had also simultaneously extended the sewer systems to the new areas of the city. She could not however, despite her best efforts, single handedly clean the old sewers, so instead she had set up a permanent body and given it the task alongside the longer term duty of maintaining the sewers in general.

This new expansion allowed her to build an entirely new port district several times bigger than the old port to which her eyes now moved over to admire. It was a bustling place as always, with literally hundreds of masts visible even from the distance. Its success having been born from a combination of aggressive policies to promote trade that Gwyn suggested and the construction of new or refurbishment of infrastructure across the Seven Kingdoms that Mya championed. And was the sign of the new age of economic prosperity that her reign had ushered in.

Tired of the busy port, she let her eyes wander over to the Great Sept of Baelor and the religious district that had formed around it when the city had been reorganized. Next to the venerable Sept now stood a patch of forest that was the Great Godswood of King’s Landing. It had originally been
proposed to name it after herself in honor of her granting the land for which it was planted, but since she no longer followed the Old Gods, having discovered they were little more than a front for the Three-eyed Raven, she had refused and it had ended up with it current more generic name instead. Across the street from it was the Grand Cathedral of Lord Nameless that had been built using funds raised from believers and non-believers alike. It was a architectural masterpiece that many said surpassed even the Great Sept of Baelor in its grandeur. The only one of the major faiths of the Realm that lacked a temple there was the faith of the Drowned God, but that was understandable as it had no temples though a cove along the cove and within the city's walls had been set aside for any ceremonies the Drowned Men chose to perform. Even the followers of the Red God, foreign faith though it remained, had been granted a small patch of land in the religious district on which to erect a temple to R'hllor at which Melisandre had served as high priestess until her death.

Not far from the religious district was the Grand University, a center of learning Alyssa had founded that over time had come to rival the Citadel but to which entry was open to all regardless of birth or social standing so long as they showed merit. It along with the smaller, more exclusive Grand College of Magic founded by Shireen that stood next to it were the pinnacle of her efforts to promote meritocracy in the Realm. A drive further complemented by the opening of schools across the Seven Kingdoms for everyone, including smallfolk, girls, and more.

To her own surprise, despite these new opportunities she found that while there had been an increase in the number of women who took up leadership roles, men still made up the vast majority of the Realm's leaders across all but a handful of fields. The societal ideal that women governed the domestic sphere while men deal with the external be that political, military or whatnot was simply too deeply embedded.

That and most women simply prefer to keep such an arrangement if they can manage it. Alyssa reminded herself with a wry grin. The inherently feminine maternal instinct that pushed most women towards caring more for the home than a career is built into our very nature as human beings. I was a fool to think otherwise.

The realization had come as quite a surprise to her, seeing as she herself was not such a woman. Though in hindsight, the majority of women around her were and she had simply not noticed, Margey being a prime example. She was blind to it though and was honestly a little perturbed that she could not change this mindset especially in light of the great societal change she had managed to bring about in regards to homosexuals. Her long happy marriages and her ability to produce children, a spell that had eventually disseminated among the masses, had led to significantly greater acceptance. Though they continued to remain a tiny minority of the population and were firmly considered the exception rather than the norm, they were no longer discriminated against as they were in her youth.

Though I suppose it worked out. For in the end what goes gender matter when it comes to leadership? All that matters is having the drive and the ability.

"Admiring the view, your grace?" Joy asked and Alyssa nodded.

"That and reflecting on all that has changed since I was a child."

"Much of those changes were due to your reforms was it not, your grace?"

"Yes, they were." The ancient but still youthful looking Queen said with a smile. "Ruling for a hundred and ninety one years has given me plenty of time to ensure my reforms have stuck."

"I suppose it has." Joy said with a nod. "Though I cannot imagine a dragonrider not living as long
"That is because you have only known dragonriders like me, Joy. Our predecessors were not like us. They did not bond with our dragons like we do and thus could not share in their longevity as we do."

"I cannot imagine," Joy said with a grimace. "Not being able to share what I do with my Meraxes… It seems unimaginably horrible."

"Perhaps," Alyssa said with a shrug. "But sometimes, especially in recent years, I find myself envying my ancestors."

For her unnaturally long life meant she had outlived all her wives, many of her non-dragonrider grandchildren and even a good number of her great grandchildren. Even with life extension magic keeping them youthful to their deathbeds, it could not keep death itself at bay forever and even Lyanna had passed two years ago.

"I am sure Grandmother Mya would not want to hear you say that," Joy said sternly.

"No, she would not." Alyssa said with a giggle as she imagined Mya's likely reaction. "She would scold me silly for speaking so."

"Then please do not do so, Grandmother." Joy said, emphasizing their relation in a way the proper girl only ever did in moments of high emotion. It seemed she had worried the poor dear.

"Be at ease, Joy. If it upsets you so, I will not."

"Thank you, your grace." The olive skinned girl said with a relieved sigh.

After her midday meal, Alyssa retired to her solar and withdrew a secure box from a hidden compartment in her desk. Unlocking the three locks on the chest, she opened it and pulled out her last will and testament.

Skimming over the document, she zeroed in on the section which named the most capable of her great, great grandchildren, and a descendant of both her son Eddard and Mariah, one of her daughters by Jeyne by the name of Lyarra Targaryen to be her successor as Queen. The girl was currently on a tour of the Realm in the guise of an inspection but which in truth was Alyssa's attempt to have her familiarize herself with it for the time she ascended to the Iron Throne.

Her succession was in line with the new system Alyssa had set up whereby the default remained by male primogeniture but where a reigning monarch could select a successor from their descendants regardless of sex if they so choose. A selection that had to be made clear via a document attested to by at least three Lord Paramounts of the Realm and/or the Small Council. It was not a foolproof system to prevent the bloody succession disputes that had so plagued her House in the past, but it was hopefully a step in the right direction.

It will keep the peace. At least into Lyarra's reign. No one in all the Realm has any doubts that she is my heiress. Alyssa thought as she sealed the chest once more.

"Lord Commander," Alyssa said once she was done and returned it to its hiding place.

"Yes, your grace?" The current Lord Commander of her Queensguard, Ser Raymund Dayne and her shadow for the day asked, his voice tinged with curiosity.
"I know this is a formality but when the time is right, please ensure that the Lord Rickard receives and opens the box."

"I will, your grace." Ser Dayne said, a slight wobble in this voice. "I swear it on my life."

"Thank you, Raymund."

It was late evening and the sun was about to set when Alyssa used Gate to visit her last stop for the day. Exiting the portal she stepped into Ghost's lair in the Dragonswood. It was a massive clearing of scorched earth surrounded by walls of magically enchanted ice he had created with his freezing breath that marked the border between his lair and the verdant forest beyond. It was at the center of this that the now truly immense dragon was curled in on himself like a snake.

*Done?* He asked.

"Yes, old friend." Alyssa told him as she moved to sit by his head where it rested on the ground and she leaned into it. "I am done."

*Then let us rest at long last, my rider.*

"That sounds good, Ghost." Alyssa said as she closed her eyes for the last time.

Thus side by side with her dragon and friend that she had shared her life with for so long, Alyssa I Targaryen, the Second Conqueror, the Mother of Mages and the first monarch of the Seven Kingdoms to ever earn the moniker of "the Great" died.

---

Alyssa had expected many things upon death and much to her disappointment she was thoroughly unsurprised when she found herself in the familiar void Lord Nameless often used when he visited her. Though she was pleasantly surprised to find Ghost, now shrunk down to the size if not the appearance of a hatchling curled on her shoulders.

"Greeting Alyssa," Lord Nameless said as he appeared before her.

"Greetings, my lord." Alyssa returned with a curtsy even as Ghost bowed his head. "Is this to be my afterlife? This void?"

Lord Nameless laughed.

"You truly were a wonderful choice for my champion. Even now you amuse me." Lord Nameless said even as he chuckled. "No, Alyssa, this is not your afterlife. Did you think I would reward the years of quality entertainment you have provided me with this? No, my champion, I merely brought you here so that I might personally escort you to your eternal rest."

At his words, the void disappeared and was replaced by what could only be considered a paradise. All around her was the most wondrous land she could imagine, a perfect, impossible mix of all the most beautiful places she had ever known. But the land paled in comparison to who now stood before her, for standing before her looking unbelievably resplendent were her wives.

"What took you so long, Alys?" Margey said with a teasing grin that Alyssa had missed so very much.

Without hesitation, Alyssa threw herself at her first wife and pulled her into a hug. One that soon
included all her wives as they happily piled themselves on each other.

*This is truly heaven.*

Chapter End Notes

Done!

I had a lot to cover in this epilogue and struggled quite a bit with how to frame it all. Not sure if what I did in the end was up to par but it's not too bad I hope.

On another note, there will invariably be small details that I missed in the epilogue. Fates of certain people or groups that were not covered. This was unfortunately unavoidable I think as there was simply too many of them in the ASOIAFverse. So I decided to limit myself simply to those most important or would most obviously come up within the frame I chose to use to write my epilogue i.e. what Alyssa would likely to reflect on as she wandered the Red Keep knowing it was her last day alive. Apologies for leaving out a particular person or group that anyone wanted to know the fate of.

Just a little extra left. So till then dovidenja!
Extra: Character Sheet

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Disclaimer: I don't own Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire

Alyssa I Targaryen

Extra

Character Sheet

Beta:

Name: Alyssa I Targaryen

Aliases:

Mother of Mages

The Second Conqueror
The Bringer of the Dawn

Alyssa the Great

**Gender:** Female

**Appearance:**

Alyssa is described by most people as beautiful. She is slim of frame and possesses waist length brown hair. She has a long face with a prominent chin and grey eyes.

She is almost always dressed in dresses that emphasize her femininity with her hair down and occasionally styled with various accessories. Due to the time period from which she comes from, her dresses generally mirror the styles of the Medieval or Renaissance period of Earth though she might be convinced to wear other styles if provided good reason. Her dresses often have skirts that hide the sheath for Dark Sister in various ingenious ways.

**Personality:**

Ruthlessly pragmatic, Alyssa is not above being incredibly cruel to others in pursuit of her goals. To the point of being willing to commit genocide, both cultural and not, in pursuit of her goals. She also has a tendency to be prideful to the point of arrogance and complacency. Despite this she is generally considered a kind and caring person to those who she considered her loved ones. Another of Alyssa's major defining traits is her stubbornness. Once set on a course of action, she will follow through to the end in spite of any personal costs she must pay to reach the outcome she desires.

**Strength:** E+

**Agility:** C+

**Endurance:** B+

**Luck:** C+

**Mana:** A+ (EX)

**Skills:**

**Animal Communication:** E

Alyssa has an above average ability to understand the intention of animals thanks to her connection with Ghost.

**Breaker of the Ironborn:** D

A perception of Alyssa seen by many, particularly of the Ironborn, in the wake of the cruelty with which she treated them. The low rank is a reflection of the limited number of individuals who held such a view of her especially over time. It causes all who would subscribe to the Ironborn lifestyle or those with similar values (i.e. those in favor of being reavers and slavers) to be instinctively intimidated by her presence.

**Champion of a God:** A

Alyssa is the chosen, and highly favored, champion of the Outsider god Lord Nameless. This Skill
allows her to invoke him and call upon his aid.

**Dragon Riding: A**

A superior version of the Riding skill that reflects Alyssa's ability to ride the most mighty of beasts, the dragons. Having overseen the revival of the species in Westeros and trained many dragonriders in her time, Alyssa has an exceptionally high level in this skill.

**Eye of the Mind (True): C**

Alyssa is surprisingly capable of calm analysis of the abilities of the opponent as well as the battle conditions even when in danger and deduce an appropriate course of action after considering all possibilities to escape from a predicament.

**Founder of the Faith: A**

A Skill that reflects Alyssa's founding of the Church of Lord Nameless. It grants her a host of boost to all her abilities, adding a "+" to all her parameters as a manifestation of the followers of the faith's belief in her as a superior being due to her position as its founder.

**God-Slayer: A**

A reflection of Alyssa's slaying of both the Three-eyed Raven and the Night King, both of which were considered gods by the people of Westeros. This Skill gives her bonuses should she face opponents with divine traits such as the **Divinity** Skill.

**Golden Rule: A**

A Skill that refers to the fortune Alyssa acquired through her reign as Queen of Westeros. This translates into an uncanny ability to be able to generate wealth.

**Imperial Privilege: A**

An ability that, due to the insistence of the owner, Skills that are essentially impossible to possess can be obtained for a short period of time. It is derived from being the uncontested ruler of the Seven Kingdoms.

**Instinct: C**

The ability to instantly identify the best personal course of action during combat as a result of her ample combat experience.

**Magic: A**

Alyssa is knowledgeable in multiple schools of magic, especially notable is her mastery of the schools of Fire, Ice, Arcane, and Illusion magic.

**Martial Skill: C**

Alyssa possesses a high level of mastery in a host of martial skills, including the mastery of various weapons. She is especially adept with a sword.

**Pioneer of the Stars: EX**

A unique Skill given to heroes that became turning points in human history such as Alyssa's defeat
of the Night King. It allows all difficult voyages and challenges which are considered impossible by others are to Alyssa events that can be overcome.

**Reformation of the Seven Kingdoms: A**

A reflection of her the prosperity that she brought her lands of people through her formidable skill as a ruler. It allows her to handle matters related to being a ruler such as leadership, political maneuvering, administrative management, etc. with exceptional skill. This Skills is equivalent to having Skills such as Charisma, Discernment of the Poor, Military Tactics, Strategy all at once at the same rank as Reformation of the Seven Kingdoms.

**Riding: C**

This Skill denotes Alyssa's ability to ride mounts and vehicles.

**Valor: B**

A Skill that is the ability to negate mental interference such as pressure, confusion and fascination. It is a reflection of Alyssa's demonstrated bravery.

**Noble Phantasm:**

![Ghost, the Dragon of Fire and Ice](image)

**Ghost, the Dragon of Fire and Ice**

Rank: A Type: Anti-Army

Ghost is Alyssa's faithful familiar and friend. He is a massive wyrm that is bigger than even the
legendary Balerion the Black Dread with snow white scales, the small gaps between which glow with the heat of magma. His horns are razor sharp spires of ice and the membranes of his wings an ever changing net of raw magic. Most striking however were his eyes which are blood red orbs that shone with a baleful red light that spoke of his eldritch power. This departure from the standard form of a dragon of his kind is a result of magical bleed which caused him to mutate into his current form.

His breath is a white flame that freezes as it burns that leaves scorch marks and frost in equal measure in its wake. He can also freely change it to simply be a white flame shot with red hot enough to melt steel and stone or a cone of frost.

Alyssa's familiar bond with Ghost allows them to communicate telepathically irregardless of distance so long as they're on the same plane. Ghost can comprehend and even speak Westerosi due to bleed via their link, however he mainly communicates via imagery and bursts of emotion. It does not allow them to enter the other's skin and control the other like warging allows. The link also protects against attempts to warg or other similar mental intrusions into the minds of either Alyssa or Ghost.

The familiar bond also greatly enhances Alyssa's mana raising it to EX, by giving her access to his nearest limitless mana pool created from the immense rate at which he both produces and draws magical energy from the environment. This mingling of their souls also means that Alyssa and Ghost will live so long as the other does which translates into them the both have a lifespan measured in centuries.

Tome of Magic

Rank: A Type: Magecraft
A grimoire of magic gifted to Alyssa by the Outsider Nameless. It grants her the potential to cast all magic and with it in hand, the ability to actually cast it even without even properly learning the exact details of the spell/ritual/etc. It responds to her circumstances, flipping its pages to present her with the spell/ritual/etc. that most meets her need for the occasion. Though it generally tends towards defaulting to versions of spells from the multiverse of the Forgotten Realms. Stories abound that through the use of this powerful artifact the Queen could construct the most wondrous of magical items and even create whole worlds with her magic.

Dark Sister, the Killer of the Night

Rank: A Type: Anti-Unit

Dark Sister is a famous longsword with a slender blade designed for a woman's hand and one of the two ancestral swords of House Targaryen. Made out of the mysterious and legendary Valyrian steel, Dark Sister is a powerful magical catalyst that can significantly enhance any spell Alyssa casts through it. Legends say this storied blade has the power to slay even the most powerful beings, even gods, without exception.
Alyssa the Great, First of her Name, Queen of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men and Lady of the Seven Kingdoms

Rank: EX Type: Anti-World

A crystallization of all of Alyssa's achievements as arguably the greatest monarch in the history of the Seven Kingdoms. This powerful Noble Phantasms grants Alyssa access to all of that which she ruled over as the Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. Rumors tell how she can summon any resource, person or place from the lands that were once under her dominion to her aid with but a single word.
It is even said that with sufficient power she is able to manifest the totality of her Seven Kingdoms to serve her whenever and wherever the need should arise.

Chapter End Notes

Just a little extra for loyal readers of this project borrowing a modified version of the Servant format from the Fate franchise.

Yes, the Skills and Noble Phantasm list is absurdly long for the format. However, keep in mind this is not an actual Servant character sheet and if anything is closer to what a sheet for her as a true Heroic Spirit would be. So since the Servants are Heroic Spirits squeezed into lesser vessels created by the Holy Grail that does not have full access to their abilities, so this excessive list is more of what she could have access to as a Servant rather than what she actually does.

Also for those of you who might be interested in how what classes Alyssa might be hypothetically summoned as during a Holy Grail War, it would Caster, Rider and Saber. She'd derive the Item and Territory Creation skills she is missing for Caster from Tome of Magic and her Magical Resistance from Ghost. As this character sheet is not an actual Servant sheet I did not list the full range of effects these Noble Phantasms would have if she ever became one. Note that Dark Sister only ever becomes a full on Noble Phantasm if she was a Saber and Alyssa the Great is accessible only ever as Rider. Ghost and the Tome of Magic are constants though.

I was tempted to add Alyssa's spell list but decided against it because during the course of her long life there is no doubt she would learn many, many more spells than what appeared in the story. Including a list limited to the spells she was only shown to have used would thus feel incomplete. At the same time, including a full list would just seem like an unnecessary inflation to her character sheet.

Hope you guys liked this little extra.

Before I leave this work behind, I just want to reflect on this project and say that while writing this project was fun, publishing it was deeply unpleasant. Especially here on FFN. Having written in multiple fandoms, though that's not saying more considering how relative unknown I am, I can say with certainty that this was probably the most unpleasant fandom I've published in ever. There were people demanding I change major plot points in my story to fit their expectations of what they wanted. Its one thing to find flaws in the story's coherency/narrative/etc. then point them out and discuss it with the author so that the latter's vision comes out better. It is a whole other thing to demand they abandon their vision and adopt yours, refusing to take no for an answer when they resist. People who instead of being the mature adult and dropping the fic as a result of divergence tastes/expectations, proceeded to misrepresent the story in the reviews often ignoring details written within the story to do so. Now, I will admit this is entirely my subjective take on events but since this is my reflection and this is my story, it is my experience that counts here. Especially when I can say that my unpleasant experience with these people are making me seriously consider not writing another solo fic again. I can now empathize with all the aspiring writers, fanfic or otherwise, who chose to quit the hobby/profession. When people try to hijack your vision in the guise of helping you make it better (because isn't that what reviews are
supposed to be about)... It makes you feel terrible. And yeah, I'm totally expecting that people will come out and say just grow a thicker skin and yeah, I know, but everyone has a limit of tolerating this kind of nonsense and I am close to the limit of my tolerance.

So it seems this terrible story, at least according to the reviewers, is over. Hope those of you who did enjoy it were entertained.

Well that's it for this project I think. Till next project farað gesunde!

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