Jon Snow was dead, betrayed by his own brothers. Ghost had tried to avenge him but was eventually taken down by the same men. Wargs don't truly die however so Jon finds himself reincarnated in the body of the animal he has the next closest connection to, a dragon he's never met. Specifically Daenerys's dragon, Rhaegal. RLJ
AN: This story like the books will shift perspectives every chapter, although the majority of the chapters will be told from Jon or Daenerys's perspective. For the most part, this follows the show cannon for events leading up to Jon's death but there are a few exceptions that will be revealed as the story progresses. This story despite being built around the show and the events of it, follows much of the lore established in the book series (mostly around wargs) and will borrow elements of the books that never appeared in the show. I have already rewritten the first ~30K Words or so and chapter-length will progress as the story does. The plan is to update this weekly but we'll see how things go and where we're at once the Stay at Home Order is lifted.

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Jon I

Chapter Notes

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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jon sighed. He had no idea how they were going to defeat the Others and their army of the dead. They had one hundred thousand wildlings at Hardhome and while maybe most of them weren't fighters, they had been helpless to do anything against them, only one Other had died. The only things that could destroy them were Dragon Glass which no one knew where to find and Valyrian Steel, the rarest metal on the planet. Fire at least stopped the wights but that wasn't a practical solution, it was too difficult to control and killed as many of their men as the wights as it needed to be used in large quantities not just a flaming arrow to actually stop them. *1

The watch, even with the help of the wildlings was still not at all equipped to handle the numbers of the dead army, even if they all had Valyrian Steel weapons. Stannis had come last time he had asked the five kings for help, but Stannis was dead now, at the hands of the Bolton's.

Jon sighed again. He knew he would have to ask the Bolton's for help as much as it pained him to do so. Maybe King Tommen would be more likely to heed his request then Joffrey. He hated them both for what they had done to his family but the Night's Watch took no part in the wars of men and they needed the help too much to be picky. Even if both of them sent men it still probably wouldn't be enough. The army that had attacked Hardhome had been probably close to 100,000 and they had almost doubled their forces there. *2

Jon picked up his quill and grabbed a piece of parchment, beginning to pen a letter.

Lord Roose Bolton,

The Night's Watch have come to ask the Warden of the Nort

The quill tip broke off, an inky splotch blotting out the most of the message. Jon knew he had to ask Roose Bolton for help but that didn't mean it was easy to call him by his Lord Father's title, still, formalities had to be observed. He rubbed his brow and reached for another quill to begin again.

Lord Roose Bolton,
The Night's Watch have come to ask the Warden of the North for aid. The Others are very much real and marching on the wall with an army of the dead, we know they have at least 100,000 wights in their army for sure; including undead Giants, Mammoths, and Ice Spiders. They likely have more than that, that is only what we have seen from them. In this time of crisis, we need all the help we can get. We need all able-bodied men and women-

Another quill snapped and Jon groaned. They needed the help even if it hurt him to ask his brother's murderer and sister's rapist for it. He crumpled up the piece of parchment and tossed it across the room.

The door to his office was thrown open, slamming into the wall with enough force that the door would have closed itself if Olly wasn't standing there.

"It's one of the wildlings you brought back. Says he knows your Uncle Benjen. Says he's still alive." Olly explained excitedly.

Jon shot to his feet, he had long since given up hope that Benjen was alive. "You're sure he's talking about Benjen?"

Olly nodded rapidly, his hands twitching with excitement. "Said he was First Ranger."

Jon nodded briefly and rushed out the door with Olly sprinting ahead of him. He descended the stairs into the courtyard faster than ever before. His Uncle Benjen had always treated him as well as any of the trueborn Stark children. He had been why Jon joined the Night's Watch.

Ser Alliser Thorne was waiting at the footstep of the stairs for them. "Man says he saw your uncle at Hardhome last full moon." He said in place of a greeting.

Jon tried to temper his excitement as they walked together to the corner of the yard where a bunch of men in Night's Watch black were clustered around who Jon assumed was the person who spotted his Uncle Benjen. He estimated there was around 30 people there, a combination of men of all orders. "Could by lying," Jon muttered.

"Could be," Alliser agreed. "Or maybe he is mistaken. There are ways to find out."

"Where is he?"

Alliser jerked his head to the crowd confirming his suspicions. "Over there."

Jon pushed through the crowd to where he expected the wildling to be. There was no one there. He looked around wondering where he might have gone. Written on the wall was one word in the Night's Watch's signature black ink, TRAITOR. Jon turned around in confusion to see Ser Alliser standing a step ahead of the rest of the crowd.

"For the Watch."

Realization dawned on Jon at about the same time the first knife, this one from Ser Alliser found his stomach. This was why Olly had been so excited.

"For the Watch."

Another knife hit his abdomen, Bowen Marsh he dimly recognized. The lie hadn't even been believable, Olly wouldn't have talked to the wildlings voluntarily and why would they know he was the First Ranger?
"For the Watch."

The third knife punctured one of his lungs, Othyll Yarwyn, it was hard to tell at this point, his vision blurred as it was from the blood loss. His fingers grabbed at longclaw in its scabbard on his hip but he didn't have the strength to draw it.

"For the Watch."

Jon fell to his knees as the knife just barely missed his heart, low and to the right by a few inches. This was how he was going to die? Betrayed by his own men, his sworn brothers for saving innocent lives and recruiting wildlings to his ranks? He should have listened to Stannis and sent Ser Alliser to a different castle on the wall.

Olly stood in front of him with tears in his eyes and fierce determination to do what he thought was right.

"For the Watch." Olly said plunging his dagger into John's heart. He twisted the blade and Jon knew no more. *3

Packmate slumped to the ground and Jon could only watch as the light left his eyes.

Jon leaped out of the shadows and snarled going for the fat greasy-haired older man who had stabbed packmate. His teeth locked around his throat before he could even turn around. The man was dead before he hit the ground. Whittlestick packmate had called him.

They had killed packmate, they would die.

All the men in the crowd drew their metal sticks as Jon leaped into action. He ignored most of them only focusing on the ones who had killed packmate. He lunged at the smallest boy who packmate had trusted, the one who had betrayed him.

A metal stick plunged into his hind leg and he whimpered. Another metal stick caught his back. His jaws locked around the leg of the small one who screamed in pain as he tore off the foot. He dove back in again on the boy now lying on the ground, his face was wet with water. He tore the throat out and stopped his noise as a metal stick stabbed into one of his front paws.

Jon dashed as quickly as he could towards the one packmate had called thorn. He leaped off his hind legs ignoring the pain it caused with his claws outstretched and his teeth bared.

The man took a step back and thrust upwards with his sword into Jon's stomach. Jon fought with his paws as he hung on that sword and bashed the man in the head. Another metal stick hit his back as he fought to get the one called thorn. Blood ran down thorn's face as he pulled out the same knife he had used on his packmate and thrust it into Jon's eye.

Jon fell to the ground, feeling the cold embrace of the snow that was now washed red with blood and could do nothing but whimper next to his packmate as he watched his murderers walk off.

Jon was in the dark. It was quiet besides the sound of the dripping water from overhead. Was this death? Eternal darkness with nothing but his own thoughts to occupy him. Surely it was, his brothers had killed him. It was hot too, hotter than Jon had ever been in his life, but it didn't hurt or even feel at all unpleasant.

No not brothers- he only had two siblings. Wait, that was wrong Jon had three brothers and two sisters and all his brothers were dead. For the Watch, Jon wasn't sure what that meant anymore but they had said that when they killed him.
Or was it the men with metal sticks who had killed him? He had killed two of them to avenge packmate but then the thorny one got him.

Jon roared in anger. There was a bright light almost instantly, a fire coming from his mouth but it did not burn. In the light he had breathed, he saw where he was. He was in a cave, with a large stone rolled in front of the entrance. Besides him, there was a magnificent giant lizard.

The creature was bone white, a sharp contrast to the darkness that surrounded them. The creature had long thick horns that were golden in color and curled slightly on the end and it had a long tail with a black spike on the end. It was gaunt, clearly being starved and he could see all its golden bones, including the ones on its wings.

Wait, wings? Dragon! His mind screamed and Jon scampered away from it.

Or he tried too but a sharp pulling on the chain around his neck stopped him from running away. Jon was going to die again, he was trapped with a dragon.

He sat in the quiet awaiting the end but the dragon did not attack him. Brother, his mind said of the dragon. Viserion it was called Jon knew somehow.

Jon snorted, he was imagining things he didn't know any dragons. At his snort yellow flames spewed in front of his face illuminating his snout to him.

Was he a dragon? The thought sounded ludicrous, those were only rumors and there were only three in the whole world, and all of them were in Essos with Daenerys Targaryen.

At the thought of her name, his body whispered mother to him. She had betrayed Jon and locked him up in the dark, put a chain around his neck. She hadn't visited for at least a week, instead sending her servants to bring him and his brother food.

Oh fuck. Jon was actually a dragon.

Chapter End Notes

*1 The idea that a flaming arrow was enough to kill a wight never sat with me so in this it's not. To kill one with fire it can't just be nicked but actually killed by it like it would take of a normal person to die from fire. A burn on the hand won't kill them nor will brief contact with their head or heart or whatever, it's not Kryptonite. Also, I'm calling the White Walker by the only name they are referred to by in the books, the Others and the Night King is supposedly The Great Other (Or is it the Three-Eyed Raven?). White Walker sounds too much like the walking dead and The Others sounds more ominous to me at least.

*2 The fact that the army of the Others was listed as 100,000 at Hardhome and then they only managed to save 10,000 of the reported 100,000 at Hardhome would suggest that the 100,000 figure listed in season seven is not actually their full force since they should have at bare minimum 200,000. If the Wildlings were really as numerous as they are listed at Hardhome and if the Great Other brought back all of the dead north of The Wall then his army should be in at least the millions possibly even billions.

*3 In the show Jon has seven scars that don't look like they ever healed presumably
from this attack despite him only being stabbed five times and hanging five people for his murder, in this, it's only five like they showed not the seven he has scars from.

Please read and review.
Jon II

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jon roared as he flew through the open skies shooting off a burst of flames up above him, he was finally free! Flying was incredible, nothing could ever compare to the experience and it almost made his death worth it.*1 His heart felt like it would burst through his chest as he soared above the world. He did corkscrews and loop de loops roaring with glee. All of the worries and anguish he had experienced in the cave were gone now that he was free.

Looking down on the world from hundreds of feet in the sky was awesome. The great pyramids of whatever city lied down below looked as small as a mouse from his vantage point. He could see the kids in the streets playing with their dolls of his mother, and him and his siblings. They would spot him and jump up and point. Some kids ran in terror, more adults ran in terror. Others would dance around and celebrate when they spotted him. They spoke in a foreign tongue that Jon did not understand but even hundreds of feet up in the air he could see and hear them with incredible precision.

For what felt like forever but was really probably only two or so days. Jon was brought five meals in that cave so he could estimate that it was only two- maybe three days that he was imprisoned but it could have even been five. He had quickly learned that dragons had peculiar tastes, his food tasted awful if he didn’t burn it to a charred husk that would look unedible to any human. He would eat his blackened and crispy meal and go back to trying to escape. That had been his daily routine while he was trapped.

Jon when realizing that he was shackled had been so determined to use his human mind to escape. He had tried to slip loose of his collar but it was too tight and steel was unyielding to his movements. He had tried to pull the pin that held the collar around his neck but he didn’t have the needed precision to pull it out with his tail despite spending at least one hundred attempts doing so. He had just needed to stop thinking like a human and trying to escape as a human would and remember that he was a dragon now.*2

He had tried the obvious solution of biting down on his collar almost immediately, his teeth were strong- stronger than steel even but not enough that he could bite through castle forged steel. His jaws didn’t have the strength to rip through the material.*3 He was a dragon not just a giant lizard but a Fire-Breathing Dragon! It had been all too simple to burn the collar to the point where his teeth could break through it easily enough. Perhaps he could have burnt it into nothingness and might have tried it next but he didn’t want to risk the cave collapsing from the intense heat destroying its foundations.*4 There were some bits of steel that had hardened to his teeth but it was more than worth it to be free.
He had tried to free Viserion once he was free but when Jon had spat fire at him he had hissed and slunk as far away as he could get. When he had done so again, Viserion had spat his own fire at him and refused to let Jon get close enough to free him. So he had reluctantly left his brother behind in the cave. Once he found a trustworthy human, he would return to have them free Rhaegal. Perhaps he could find Sam on his way back to the wall, he might be the only person Jon trusted right now.

Jon hated the Night’s Watch right now, they had betrayed him and murdered Ghost but he still had to return. Winter was coming and the army of the dead with it, Jon wasn’t selfish enough to let thousands or potentially even millions die for his own pride. They needed Dragons at The Wall to have a chance of survival and as one of the only three dragons in existence, he had to swallow his pride for the good of the many. He wasn’t a monster. He wasn’t his father.

Jon had always prided himself on his observational skills and deductive reasoning. He was a dragon now, it was highly likely that he had some blood tie to the Targaryen’s. He doubted the honorable Ned Stark would sleep with a Targaryen, the thought of him cheating on his wife at all was insane, let alone with a Targaryen when he was waging war on the Targaryen’s and trying to overthrow The Mad King. The logical conclusion for why he would claim a Targaryen as his own was pretty simple, he was the son of Eddard’s sister Lyanna. *5

The same Lyanna his presumptive father, Rhaegar Targaryen had kidnapped and raped. The one who the Starks had fought a war to get back from his father. The one who had started a war because he couldn’t control his lust and had decided he needed to have Lyanna. His father had lead to thousands of needless deaths and toppled a dynasty because he wanted a woman he couldn’t have. Maester Aemon’s wise words rang forever true.

“Love is the bane of honor, the death of duty. What is honor compared to a woman's love? What is duty against the feel of a newborn son in your arms ... or the memory of a brother's smile? Wind and words. Wind and words. We are only human, and the gods have fashioned us for love. That is our great glory, and our great tragedy. Sooner or later, in every man’s life, there comes a day when it is not easy. A day when he must choose.”

His father had chosen wrong, he had chosen his own self-interests over his duty to the realm as crown prince and it had cost him everything. Jon would not repeat his mistake, he would prioritize the greater good over his own pride. If there was any doubt left in his mind over who his parents were it was erased when he discovered the name of the dragon he shared a body with, Rhaegal. He was named after his father cause of course he was.

Jon’s connection to Rhaegal was different for lack of a better term from his relationship he used to share with Ghost. The dragon’s mind was much different from that of his direwolf. He was both smarter and more animalistic. He wanted to fly over to Castle Black and eat the traitors who had killed him and Ghost. Tear, burn and kill were his three most primary instincts that drove him, but
he could resist them for the most part, he wasn’t a slave to the dragon’s whims. He couldn’t do something that the Dragon didn’t want to do at all but as long as their desires were somewhat aligned he had complete freedom. As a dragon he wanted to rule, he liked seeing below him and was extremely prideful. Jon had been the opposite but Jon had been a human and Jon had died. The dragon wanted attention and men to grovel, it was the nature of being a dragon. There was a reason Targaryens became kings, they were dragons, not wolves content to lay low and protect the pack.

He was Ghost when he was Ghost, he thought like Ghost, he wanted what Ghost did, he was still Jon then but he was more Ghost then Jon. Ghost was his best friend, not his other half like Rhaegal was. He never was truly Ghost, more so just a passenger tailing along for the ride and seeing through Ghost’s eyes. As Rhaegal he was not Rhaegal, he was Jon and Rhaegal. He had more individuality, he was two separate people working in symbiosis. He still had his individuality and thought like a human while he wielded the power of a dragon and that was a combination that could maybe stop the Long Night.

Jon had chosen to fly north once he was free, he would either hit the wall if he was in Westeros or if he was in Essos then he would find the Shivering Sea and know to turn west. He was fairly certain he was in Westeros but it would be better to head North first anyways, that way he wouldn’t get lost. He knew the lands of the North, he didn’t know the lands of the south and if he went west first he would not know when he was no longer in Essos and might overshoot. Not to mention, he really didn’t want the Lannisters knowing that there was a dragon in Westeros.

Jon almost fell out of the sky as a wave of terror gripped him. Why was he scared? He was not in any danger, he was alone in the skies. No, it wasn’t his fear he was feeling, it was his mother’s. He was furious with her for having locked him up and if it was just Rhaegal here he probably would have ignored her. He was not just Rhaegal here though, Jon Snow wouldn’t leave anyone to die when he could easily stop it and his mother was not just anyone. He was angry with her but Rhaegal still cared about her. *6

It was instinctive as he dove down into the sea of green grass, somehow knowing exactly where she was. He knew she was in danger and could feel her fear and simply followed that feeling to where she was.

As he got lower he could see why she was afraid. There was a man on top of a horse looming large over her naked form. She didn’t look afraid though and if Jon hadn’t been able to feel her fear he would never have believed she was afraid. She stood firm and almost looked in control of the situation as she stared down the man on the horse.

“Drogon.” He heard her whisper as she caught sight of him. Jon was annoyed that she had called him by his sister’s name but still she didn’t know he was free now.
Details were becoming clearer now as he got closer. His mother was hurt, there were red bumps all over her arms and legs and her thighs were sticky with blood. Her hair was a mess of knots, tangled, and frizzy. Her usually pale skin was an ugly gray due to the ashes and dirt she was covered in. The man on the horse had dismounted. He had long black hair, in a braid. He was holding a blade in his hand, curved in a C shape, an arakh Jon believed it was called. They were a much more popular blade in Essos than Westeros where the knights favored a more traditional sword.

He landed with a mighty roar and spewed fire on the man who had dared to get near his mother. He did not scream as he died, it was over before he could, his flames leaving the man a shriveled husk on the ground. Completely devoid of any resemblance to a human.

He looked at his mother- really looked at her for the first time. Even in her sorry state, she was the most beautiful person Jon had ever seen. Her eyes almost glowed purple, her pale blonde- almost white hair was covered in dirt and grime making it look almost a brown color, it was a tangled mess with tufts of hair sticking up everywhere but it still entranced him. Her figure was very curvy, her body the envy of every woman and the desire of every man.

“Rhaegal?” His mother whispered, obviously confused. “How? I-I.” Her voice was cracked, weak, and low due to her obvious thirst.

Jon ignored her for a moment as he ripped the head off the man’s horse that was trying to escape and swallowed it, burning it well it was in his mouth. He had not made any stops in his flight to The Wall before now and was getting hungry.

His mother crawled over to the horse’s carcass and dug her hand into the headless hole of its neck that he had ripped open with his teeth. She brought her shaking hand, covered in horse meat into her mouth, and licked herself clean. Jon wondered when she had last eaten, she was clearly starving.

Jon knew from when he was a human that raw meat could kill them and he didn’t want his mother dead despite her cruelty to him earlier. Besides Jon was hungry and needed the food too. So Jon snarled and pulled the carcass away from her with his snout. This was his meal not hers, she could have it when he was done with it.

His mother whimpered a soft whiny noise that might have been inaudible to a human. She was thin- perhaps unnaturally so, he could see her ribs and Jon wondered when she had last eaten. Perhaps, Jon didn’t need the food, at the very least, she needed to eat more then he did. Still, raw meat, was bad for a human so he couldn’t let her eat it. He breathed fire on the carcass for only a split second, a short burst of a light flame to only cook it a little, he doubted that she wanted meat that was as black as Drogon’s scales. He had overdone it, the horse was almost entirely black and
crispy although there were a few spots on the feet that looked that would maybe be considered edible to a human’s taste. He shoved the horse back towards his mother and looked at her, trying to convey it was for her.

She looked at him with the beginning of tears in the corner of her eyes. “Y-You cooked it for me?” She asked puzzled, her voice hoarse and quiet enough that human ears probably wouldn’t have detected them.

Jon nodded and she laughed, it probably did look a bit comical to see a dragon nod.

She said something in a foreign dialect he couldn't understand but he could feel her gratitude rolling off her. She broke off one of the horse’s legs that was one of the least burnt pieces of meat. He watched as she scarfed it down all manners completely lost in her need to eat. Not very Queenly, Jon thought to himself as he admired her ravenous eating habits. She finished that piece far faster then he had thought possible and gave a big smile, chunks of black meat still stuck to her white teeth. His heart fluttered and Jon knew if he was still human her smile have made his blood go south.

Jon still wanted to eat, maybe mother would leave him some of the horse but with how quickly she scarfed down her first portion of the horse, he wasn’t sure there would be enough leftovers for him. The smell of the burnt flesh drew him in, he had killed a man to save mother and he looked like a large enough meal. The human part of Jon was reviled by the idea of eating his own kind but he was a dragon now, not a human anymore. So with only a moment of hesitation, he tore off the man’s blackened arm and swallowed it whole.

That first arm was somewhat bitter, part of him wanted to vomit it back up but he forced himself to keep it down. That was just the human part of him not being comfortable eating his own kind, the taboo of cannibalism speaking. So he took another bite, this time a leg. Why did he ever think it was bitter? This was as sweet as honey, sweeter even. Human flesh was delicious. He still preferred a good sheep, pig, or even a horse, simply because it didn’t carry the taboo that his human mind despised but humans tasted good. He consumed the rest of his meal with an eagerness that wasn’t present before, leaving behind only a few blackened bones that he hadn’t bothered to incinerate with his meal.

He wouldn’t needlessly burn humans to eat them, he still cared about them living but when there was a dead human why should he stop himself from eating them? They were food, he was no human anymore. He was a dragon now and dragons don’t bow to anything, be it social taboos or the commands of men.

He roared triumphantly as his mother clambered onto his back. “Take me home, Rhaegal.” She muttered into his neck. “Soves.”
Jon did not know what that word meant, but Rhaegal did. Soves meant to fly so he took to the sky with a flap of his wings, leaving the half-eaten remains of the charred horse and the man’s blackened bones behind him.

Chapter End Notes

*1 Daenerys literally says in the books when she first rides on Drogon that if she falls it would still be worth it to fly and when she's starving and dying in the desert that she would still ride on Drogon knowing where it put her. Clearly flying is incredible and while Jon isn't Daenerys and he actually died it's still not a stretch for him to share a similar sentiment.

*2 In the original draft of this chapter I had an overly complicated scene of him trying to pull out a child lock safety pin kind of collar with his tale and wasting a ton of time trying to finest it until I did some research and found out just how stupidly overpowered Dragons are in Game of Thrones.

*3 “Dragonbone is black because of its high iron content. It is as strong as steel, yet lighter and far more flexible, and of course utterly impervious to fire.” - AGOT Tyrion II. The teeth are the strongest part of the body in most animals meaning if the same is true for dragons (Which it almost has to be with the fire it constantly comes into contact with) then his teeth are probably stronger than steel.

*4 In the show we see Drogon turn humans in full suits of armor into dust in the blink of an eye during the supply train battle mess. The only recorded instance of a human being vaporized that quickly was at ground zero in Hiroshima where the temperatures reached 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Scientists have estimated that theoretically it could be done at as low as 6500 degrees Fahrenheit but that is solely theoretical. At Hiroshima the men vaporized weren't wearing full suits of armor. Iron doesn't even reach a gaseous state until it heats to 5180 degrees Fahrenheit so Drogon's flames are at least that hot if not twice that.

Yes, that is as hot as the surface of the sun but it wouldn't destroy the earth or even have that much of an effect on the area around the flames as the size of the flames is minuscule in comparison which is more important than raw temperature when looking at the damage caused. Lightning is hotter than the sun but the earth still stands today because of size.

As a slightly off-topic note, Drogon burning people alive being considered inhumane is laughable. The person subjected to his flames would be dead before their body even feels the pain, it might be the best way to be executed- certainly less painful than a beheading or hanging. Daenerys burning people alive with Drogon did not show she was going mad or reveled in others suffering, if anything it was the opposite.

*5 This will be a common theme in this story, people will be capable of being logical and having sound deductive reasoning. If Jon becomes a dragon his first assumption will be that he's related to the family of dragons. Rather than think that his mother must be a dragon- that somehow had an affair with Ned Stark that no one knew about,
he is smart enough to realize that Rhaegar and Lyanna Stark, the relationship everyone knew about is the likely parents. He will not be the only person to draw this perfectly reasonable conclusion.

*6 There is definitely some empathetical link between Dany and her dragons considering how conveniently they show up when she needs them and how Drogon immediately knows when she dies. It's very simplistic but there is some sort of magical homing in there.

I made some edits to the first chapter as well to try to more realistically convey how easily Ghost went down to the Watch, sheer numbers left him hopeless basically.

Next chapter is the first one from Daenerys's point of view.
Please Read and Review
Daenerys clung tight to Rhaegals neck as they soared through the sky. Her grip was weak but she clung on as tightly as she could to his bronze-colored spinal ridge. Her legs were locked around his neck to keep her from falling off.

Rhaegal was flying slowly making it easier to keep her grip, he knew his mother was in pain she thought with pride. Internally she wondered why Rhaegal had been the one to come, she was closest to Drogon even if he was a bit unruly oftentimes. But Drogon had left her there in the heat of the sun to starve. Rhaegal had come for her, and even cooked her food for her. He gave her the horse meat and waited for her to finish before leaving with her. She had needed the whip to ride Drogon but Rhaegal had bowed to her commands without hesitation. She had ridden him with just her voice to command him.

Everything Daenerys had ever read had said that Dragons only had one rider, they would bond with one person- yet she had ridden two of her dragons. It was most peculiar, but she was the Mother of Dragons, it was only natural that she would be the first to bond to two dragons after all.

This dragon ride didn’t have the same thrill that riding on Drogon had for her, it was enjoyable but it was hard to enjoy it the same as she did when she wasn’t starving and dying of thirst. Still, there was nothing like the feeling of looking down on the world from atop a dragon. The heat had long since gotten to be too much spending so much time outdoors, so long on her own in the wild so the dragon’s superheated scales were rather than being comforting, almost painful.

She had been out in the wild for almost a fortnight and Daenerys was sure she was going to die before the Dothraki scout showed up, be it by starvation, heatstroke or wild animal. Then she had thought she would be raped and killed. Best case scenario, she would live out the rest of her days among the Dosh Khaleen with all the other Khaleesi of the dead Khals. She knew her time as Queen of Meereen was coming to an end, she knew that she would never return to Westeros.

But then out of nowhere Rhaegal had shown up and killed the Dothraki scout. At first, when he had roared she had thought he would kill her too. She had chained him, he was right to be angry but instead, he had given the horse to her and even had tried to cook it well for her, the meat was tough and crispy, definitely overcooked but still it had been wonderful and it wasn’t completely black like everything the dragons usually eat, like what she had salvaged from Drogon’s leftovers. He had waited for her to finish eating before letting her on his back and then finally flying. His behavior was odd, she had no clue her dragons were so intelligent.
Rhaegal was descending for some reason, despite them still being in the Dothraki sea. “Higher.” She urged. “Meereen.” She begged but he would not listen. They were descending at a very gradual pace as if he was afraid she would slide off.

He landed with a swoosh of his wings as he lowered his back, pressing his neck to the ground so he layed flat so she could slide off. Daenerys was scared that like Drogon he would leave her in the middle of nowhere but she obliged his request. *You can not tame a dragon* Daenerys knew. She had been told it her entire life by Viserys and had repeated it to herself when she had chained Rhaegal and Viserion, to convince herself it was the right thing to do.

So she dismounted and took a look around. There were a few trees here and there, not very large ones but a few palm trees that provided some semblance of shade. She walked over to one, half staggered, desperate to get some measure of coolness. She tripped over a stump and crawled the rest of the way to the shade.

The slight relief from the extreme heat would never be enough but it was certainly an improvement from the open sky. So she laid there on her face until she felt Rhaegal prodding her butt with his snout the warmth scorching her out of her relaxed state.

She rolled over and glared at the dragon that was hovering over her stomach. “Go away” she mumbled. “To warm,” she complained.

Rhaegal jerked his head at her and then to the left. She rolled back over ignoring him. He prodded her back with his snout again until she rolled over. “What do you want.” She murmured, probably completely incoherent by this point.

Rhaegal once again jerked his head to the left of him. Was he trying to get her to look over there? Surely not, dragons weren’t intelligent enough to play gestures. Still, she humored him and looked to her left.

A gasp left her mouth at the sight of the pond he was guarding and she was sure she was hallucinating. *Water*. Actual freshwater, it had been too long since she had last quenched her thirst. She dragged her broken body towards the pond and plunged her face into it, lapping at the water like a dog.

The water was a balm to her soul and she felt some of her strength return to her. The water was a bit dirty, specs of dirt and grass in it but Daenerys didn’t care as she drank it up. It could have been green and covered in beetles and she still would have drunk it without hesitation, thinking it was better than the sweetest wine.
She heard Rhaegal shuffle and looked up in fear that he was leaving only to find him lifting his wing to give her shade as she drank the cold water from the pond. He was so sweet and caring now, it was odd, undragonlike of him, almost a human action.

She looked at her arms covered in soot and mud, she was filthy. She had twigs in her hair and horse meat under her fingernails. She needed a bath. She lowered herself into the water, even if it was dirty she would at least be cleaner then she was, not so caked in filth when she returned to Meereen.

Rhaegal’s eyes stared at her as she lowered herself into the water slowly and she knew he wouldn’t leave her. The water was cold on her skin, a very pleasant feeling in the blistering heat of the summer. She rubbed at her skin until it started to peel, blood and dirt coming off with it. Rhaegal’s glowing bronze eyes following her the entire time. Her skin was raw in the wake, a bite of pain came with a strong breeze. She lathered her hair with water, pulling her hands through her hair to try to brush it with her fingers. The white was returning to her hair now that it was somewhat clean, no longer that ugly dirty darker blonde it had been.

She wasn’t sure how long she spent relaxing in the cool water, she had lingered in it long past the time needed to get clean- well as clean as she would be getting in the wilderness. She had spent most of that time staring into Rhaegal’s magnificent bronze eyes.

There was an intelligence there she hadn’t seen before with him or any of his brothers. She knew he somehow understood her and wouldn’t leave her. So she had told him stories, confessed her concerns to him, she was his mother so she treated him as her child, a human child almost. She had stroked his snout and he nuzzled her hand every time she did. He was oddly affectionate and Daenerys couldn’t help but wonder if captivity had somehow tamed him. She hated herself for being grateful if it had.

He seemed to be listening intently to every story she had told him. Her freeing of the Unsullied in Astapor, Her escape from the warlocks in Qarth and how she had locked Xharo in his empty vault, how the slaves had freed themselves in Meereen and how she had taken the city. She told him of her life before she had been sold to Khal Drogo, how she still considered the red door with a lemon tree in Bravos her real home. She also told him of her failures in Meereen how she didn’t know what to do to stop the Harpies, how her city was falling apart and how she was trying to be merciful but the dragon demanded fire and blood. She told him of all her worries, talking with him until the sun had fallen and the cool night air had finally gotten her out of the water.

She wasn’t sure why she was talking to him about everything, maybe just having someone to speak to and listen to her concerns. Someone she could trust wouldn’t betray her, it’s not like Rhaegal could share her fears with anyone. They were in the middle of nowhere and no one could overhear her speaking to him so it was oddly therapeutic to talk out her concerns for once. The stress of the last week on her own had caused her to just let it out where she knew she was safe.
She leaned against Rhaegal’s body now, in between his legs and where his wings came out from his body. The heat from her skin touching his scales kept her warm and Rhaegal tucked his wing over her body, the soft leathery skin serving as a blanket, his wingbone resting just under her neck, on the collarbone. It was very odd but Daenerys was glad he was behaving this way. At least one of her children was not tame— that wasn’t the right word. Rhaegal was just different— not as willful as his brothers and it was a bit odd considering Rhaegal had once been the most spirited one, captivity had changed him she knew. She wondered if Viserion would behave like this too when they returned to Meereen.

She sighed in contentment with the warmth and comfort that he had provided her. She decided to tell him another story. He had seemed to like them all so far, she wasn’t sure that he knew what she was saying but talking about her problems helped her and he seemed to enjoy her talking at the very least even if he doesn’t actually understand what she’s saying. “I named you after my brother Rhaegar.”

The dragon’s eyes snapped to her craning his neck to look at her eyes as she spoke. He was transfixed from the first word. She smiled at him, patted his snout and continued her tale. “I never met him as the Usurper killed him before I was born but from what I heard from Ser Willem Darry, Ser Barristan and Viserys he was a great man.”

Rhaegal growled lowly as if disagreeing. “He was.” She protested. It was the first time Rhaegal had growled at her during any of her stories, still, she pressed on with her tale. “He was a singer, Ser Darry tells me. He played the harp as well as anyone in all of the seven kingdoms and was a great swordsman also. He fought a war for the hand of his paramour, the sister of one of the Usurper’s dogs, Lyanna Stark.” Her voice was hollow, lacking much in the way of emotion as she told her tale, her mind not entirely present.

“Her hand was promised to the Usurper but he loved her and her him; they ran off together, Ser tells me.” Rhaegal narrowed his eyes and Daenerys stared at him unflinching, she knew Rhaegal wouldn’t hurt her and when he relaxed she continued her tale.

“Rhaegar gave her everything as the two lived happily together in a tower in Dorne, the Tower of Joy they called it. Alas, all good things had to come to an end and with war brewing, Rhaegar left to go fight the usurper. He took off with Ser Willem’s brother, Jonothor to fight the Usurer at the Trident, to kill Robert Baratheon and finally be free to wed his beloved. He left both her and her unborn child with Ser Arthur Dayne, Ser Oswell Whent and Ser Gerald Hightower behind to go fight in that war, vowing to return to her to hold his newborn daughter in his arms. Visenya he had planned to name her, Darry claimed.” Her voice hitched as the painful memory tried to overwhelm her; she wasn’t sure why she felt the need to share this with Rhaegal but she did so she pressed on.
“He was confident that she would bear him his second daughter. For the dragon must have three heads, his children would be the ones who were prophesied and they had to be named after Aegon and his sisters.” Her voice was somewhat bitter, she did not believe in prophecy herself- all it had ever caused her was pain.

She frowned, a single tear going down her cheek. “The Usurper killed him on the trident, his war hammer smashing his ribcage and destroying his lungs. The hit wrecked his breastplate and sent the rubies lining it clattering into the river to be found by foragers. In the house of the undying, I saw it happen, the last word he uttered was the name of his paramour. Lyanna. Ser Jonothor was killed and neither ever returned to the Lady Lyanna.”

The Kingsguard who had stayed loyal to Rhaegar even after his death stayed with the Lady Lyanna. They all died at the hand of Stark and his companions. Seven went to that tower and only two returned, Lord Stark and a companion with the corpse of Lady Lyanna. Stark claims that Rhaegar had killed her or his Kingsguard maybe as she was dead when he arrived but that can’t be true. Rhaegar loved her, everyone said he did.” She argued. “I never knew my unborn niece nor the ones who were born, all killed by the usurper and his dogs.”

Rhaegal tore away from her without a second glance and leaped into the night’s sky, flying up, up and away out of sight.

“Rhaegal!” She screamed after him. She was alone again.

She began to cry in earnest, she was back to where she had started, Alone and going to die. She wondered what she had done to make him so angry enough to leave. She continued to scream into the blue for Rhaegal but he did not heed her call. She was alone and going to die.

No, she would not lay down to die. She would not cry. She was The Dragon. She was The Last Dragon. She was Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, the first of her name, The Unburnt, The Breaker of Chains, Queen of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Queen of Meereen, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Lady Protector of the Realm, Lady Regent of the Seven Kingdoms and The Mother of Dragons. *3 She would overcome as she always did and she would conquer Westeros like Aegon did, by fire and blood.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, I hate this chapter too, I might rewrite at some point. If you can believe it the next chapter is actually worse. Most the things that happened in this chapter happened for plot purposes more so than making sense logically, there is some sense to them but also her character is kind of inconsistent here but uh traumatic experiences have odd
*1 The story we are told of Jon's birth logically makes zero sense. There are seven men in the Kings Guard and three of them did not go to fight on the Trident instead staying at the Tower of Joy with Lyanna. Rhaegal would not have been allowed to travel on his own considering the risk so at least one person would have to accompany him probably of the Kings Guard. If he had a small army at the Tower of Joy with him there is no way it could have stayed a secret which realistically means Rhaegar had over half the Kings Guard with him leaving Aerys defenseless? He shouldn't have been a priority over Aerys which means that either Ned did not see them at the Trident and they just fled after Rhaegar died (And lied about not being there) or that at least some of them were with Aerys and fled after he died or bent the knee to Robert ("Our knees do not bend easy" does not mean they don't bend) and were sent by Robert to kill Jon when he was a babe (Which explains attacking Ned since if they were protecting Lyanna/Baby Jon surely they would have tried to talk first. Alternatively, the Raven saw wrong/intentionally lied to manipulate events. Point is what we see is obviously not entirely accurate. For this, I just went with Ser Jonothor Darry (Who cannonically died in the Battle of The Trident) also being with him and traveling with him to the Trident for the battle but that is maybe the least likely explanation just the easiest one. I also presumed he told his brother about where he was and why because we know in the books Daenerys knows Rhaegal and Lyanna were in love (Before her wedding she fantasizes about Daario taking her away like Rhaegal did with his Lyanna) so she had to have heard it from somewhere.

*2 I know people like to say that Rhaegal named Jon- Jaehaerys, Aemon, Aegon or whatever but there is no reason to believe he would have known it was a boy. In fact, considering Rhaegal's names for his other two kids being Rhaenys and Aegon and his obsession with the three headed dragon and prophecy I would be astonished if he even thought there was a possibility Jon would be a boy and would have named his daughter Visenya for obvious reasons.

*3 Daenerys calls herself Khaleesi of The Great Grass Sea when she first arrives in Meereen and the title doesn't change after she gets 100K Dothraki in her Khalasar. There is a second chapter as well today because they both are short and are terrible.
Jon took to the sky the moment her tale was done. He needed to think and be away from her to do so, he had always done his best thinking alone. He could feel her pain at his leaving through their connection but he needed to be alone right now so he shut it out.

He had already suspected he was Rhaegar and Lyanna’s son, but now that he knew Lyanna was pregnant when Rhaegar had left his fears were confirmed. He didn’t know what to think of his father, Rhaegar Targaryen. The common tale that was told in the North was of Rhaegar kidnapping Lyanna and raping her. In Dorne, where he was apparently born they told a tale of Lyanna seducing Rhaegar away from his wife and stealing him away in search of power and the position of Queen. Daenerys spun another tale of love and heartbreak. All the sources were obviously biased and Jon had no clue who to believe.

He wanted to believe Daenerys’s version of the story and it made the most sense for why Lord Stark had raised him as his own son, why he had wanted to protect him rather than see him dead as he surely would have if she had actually been raped. Ser Darry was supposedly an honorable man, surely he would have told her the truth, right? Jon wanted to believe his father had been a good man but it was hard to hear that all the tales he had heard, the history that they taught in the North was false.

Truthfully it didn’t really matter if his mother had consented and wanted to be with Rhaegar. His parents had been selfish and the entire kingdom paid for their dalliance. They had chosen their own desire to be with each other over hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. They had been completely selfish and his father had ended the greatest dynasty in the world because he was foolish enough to let himself love his mother.

He was glad to finally know the truth regardless of how ugly it was, Lord Stark had denied it to him for so long. He understood why now but it still hurt to have been lied to for so long. His mother had been under his nose, her statue in the crypts the entire time and he had never known. It did explain why his Lord father-uncle he corrected himself, often took him with to go pay his respects to her though.

Jon had been flying for a while mostly in circles with no direction in sight. He had calmed down
enough to return to his mother-aunt-Daenerys? He didn’t know what to call her anymore, regardless he could return but he still felt guilty for leaving her. Perhaps, he could bring her a peace offering, something to eat maybe, she hadn’t eaten in a while he knew, since that horse earlier and that had been hours ago.

Jon resolved to find her a nice rabbit or pigeon that he would cook to human’s standard for perfection for her to enjoy. She deserved only the best food after all, and despite his taste for only the blackest food he knew that humans preferred their meat well done, not raw or burnt but in the middle of the two.

Jon spied a deer in the grass, lounging there with her young lying underneath it, suckling at her breast. That could be Jon’s meal, he needed to eat as well and it was oh so fun to kill it. He burnt the thing and it’s young to a crisp devouring them, both doe and fawn with savage glee. Once Jon had ate his fill he took to the skies, flying low scanning the ground for any sign of a meal for her.

He caught a rabbit with his paws, hard claws crushing its head. He tossed it back on the ground and breathed on it. His hot breath incinerated the beast engulfing it in flames and turning it black. Far too crispy and burnt for any human to enjoy. That would not do at all, time to find a new rabbit for her.

The sun was rising in the east by the time Jon finally had a rabbit cooked to his satisfaction for mother. He had exterminated most of the local rabbit population in his search, roasting too many of them to a crisp until he finally learned to control his flame to an extent where he had some control over the temperature and length of the blast. He hoped that a well-cooked rabbit, almost fit for even a queen to eat would satisfy her and make up for his abandoning her.

Daenerys had moved from where he had left her, she was a few miles southeast from where he had left her now and Jon couldn’t help but feel guilty. She thought he had abandoned her, maybe he had left but he had always planned on coming back. He had been a fool when he went hunting for her, they could have been back in Meereen and she could have eaten a real meal. His stubbornness to get the rabbit perfect for her had made her suffer needlessly.

He landed to find her glaring at him. She was standing strong and firm, much different from the weak and somewhat clingy girl she had been when he had left her. She looked every bit the part of the Queen she was proclaimed to be, even if she was naked and her legs were caked in dirt. “Finally came back, did you?” She sneered at him with hands on her hips and Jon felt ashamed of his behavior. Her voice was condescending yet also showed her love for him. He had betrayed her, her tone said. He meekly threw the nicely cooked rabbit at her feet and layed down on the ground, baring his neck for her to climb on his back.

Her gaze softened somewhat. “Did you leave for me? To get this?” She asked him her voice was
firm but he could detect the underlying emotion and love in her words.

Jon nodded his head before shame filled him for kind of lying, so he shook his head and tried to shrug his wings. He didn’t know how much of his signs she had understood.

She bit her pale upper lip between her front teeth and then laughed. Her laugh was beautiful, like music to his ears and he needed to hear it more often from her. He would dedicate his whole life to her if he could. She was his mother, his aunt, and something more. He was a dragon now and would never leave her side, she would be Queen of all the Seven Kingdoms and from his back, she would conquer the world.

Her reply was curt and toneless. “Thank you, Rhaegal.” She tore into the rabbit with her bare hands and he watched mesmerized as she brought chunks of meat to her mouth, a pleased smile on her face as she swallowed each bite. His eyes were drawn to her small pink tongue as she greedily licked her fingers clean with all sense of decorum gone with no one watching her here other than him- her dragon.

When she had finished the rabbit she climbed aboard his back and grabbed tightly to the Bronze spines on his neck. “Go straight to Meereen Rhaegal, no stopping this time,” she told him her voice soft but commanding.

Jon rushed to obey her command, still feeling somewhat ashamed at his earlier behavior. He had been trying to be kind by stopping to let before but perhaps really he had been selfish, wanting to have her all for himself, back in Meereen she would have to spend most her day ruling- not with him. Jon would miss this- all the time they had to themselves, just he and her against the wild wilderness.

They took to the skies, Daenerys laughing as he ascended and he couldn't help but roar triumphantly. The flight was a long one to return to Meereen- probably about eight hours they flew for. For most of the flight, she told him some more stories well they flew to Meereen, she would speak into his neck and it was only his widely superior hearing to that of a human that allowed him to hear what she was saying over the roar of the wind. With every tale she told him of herself he became more and more enamored with his rider. She had also told him more second-hand stories of her brother, his human father, and draconic namesake, Rhaegar. He still had somewhat mixed feelings about him, he wanted to learn more about him but it still felt like a betrayal of everything he had ever known. He much preferred the tales about his rider, they were less conflicting and she was more interesting anyway.

When he descended towards the city she had stopped talking to him instead just basking in the joy of finally being relatively safe, as close to home as she had been in a long while. There were kids shouting in the streets of Meereen, some running in terror, others laughing and pointing as he flew
overhead. Many of the smallfolk had stopped what they had been doing to look up at him and their Queen on his back. He could hear frantic conversations amongst the smallfolk in what Jon believed to be some form of Valyrian. Many of them were crying out Mhysa at them as they spotted his mother. Jon was tempted to roar in celebration as he felt through their bond his mother’s joy of finally being home but he refrained knowing that doing so might cause him to shoot flames in his excitement and that would almost certainly anger her.

“Mhysa!” Voices cried out to their Queen on his back, Jon didn’t know what that meant but he could feel his mother’s pleasure and she smiled prettily at the small folk. She waved her hand at them below and they all waved back at her, their cries of Mhysa only growing louder the closer they got to the ground.

He landed on top of the largest temple where she had pointed him to and craned his neck down to the balcony of what Rhaegal knew to be her room. As she dismounted Jon stared at her completely transfixed. This was the end of their journey together, he had taken her from the wilderness that she called the Dothraki Sea and took her home. He had grown to care for her, to believe in her, as they traveled together. He would miss hearing her stories of her life, and riding with her on his back.

She held his head in her hands and pressed her face to his. She gently placed her lips on his maw, above the nostrils, and between his eyes. Her cool moist sweet lips dried up on contact, his heated scales evaporating all the moisture in her mouth. The kiss was brief and all too soon the moment was over. She turned inside and left him there to all the peoples’ voices calling out for her.

He watched her as she receded from him and into her pyramid. She was in her Queen mode the moment she had turned from him; the tender woman he had journeyed with was replaced by the passionate leader and Queen she was. She demanded news of what had happened in her absence and a voice Jon recognized as Tyrion Lannister among others he didn’t recognize had answered her commands. That was an odd companion that he hadn’t expected her to have. She was a true leader and the right Queen for Westeros Jon knew. Jon Snow might be dead but he knew that she would do Westeros proud, somehow he would tell her about The Great Other and his army and she would save the seven kingdoms from The Great Other. And Jon would be by her side when she took the Iron Throne from the Lannisters with fire and blood.

Chapter End Notes

Yeah, I told you this chapter sucks. I needed to have this chapter happen but yikes it did not come out well at all.

No Dothraki for Daenerys, giving her 100,000 Dothraki screamers was stupid and made her conquest of Westeros all too easy. The North had only 15,000 men when
Robb was proclaimed King, the Lannisters had maybe 30,000. Giving Daenerys enough men to match all the armies of Westeros and three dragons was an absurd decision that made her waiting to take King's Landing extremely illogical. She also had Dorne (Which in the books the 50,00 men is a complete lie, they're the least populous of the eight Kingdoms), the reach, the North, and presumably the Vale. There is zero chance that Cersei even if the Stormlands supported her along with the Iron Islands and the Golden Company could have posed any threat at all. This will not be the comically easy conquest that it was for Daenerys in the show.

Next chapter we get to see what is happening on the wall and the quality and length of chapters drastically improves from there on out.
Ser Davos had not found rest easy this night, the red woman had returned to Castle Black and brought terrible news with her. He had paced back and forth in his quarters for many hours trying to contemplate what she had told him. King Stannis was dead along with his sweet daughter Shireen, a girl he had loved as if she were his own. His King was dead, Shireen was dead, and all of his sons were dead. Stannis had named him his hand and he had failed him. What did he have left? Tomorrow he would ask the Lord Commander Jon Snow to take the black. He needed to atone for his abandonment of Stannis, the role he had played in Shireen’s death. He needed to fight for something he believed in, somebody he believed in. That had been Stannis but Jon Snow was as good of a man as any. He was committed to doing what he thought was right even when it wasn’t easy. He had a good heart and Davos believed in his cause. *1

The sound of a wolf howling off in the distance brought him out of his melancholy. Jon Snow also had a wolf, a direwolf he knew and it was as big of a bear. The wolf howled again and again in the distance. It’s cry was a sad one, full of mourning. The somber song matching Davos’s feelings at this moment.

He should have insisted more that Shireen stayed back with him, then at least she would still be here. He prayed that she had met a quick painless end at the very least, his worst fear was that the Bolton’s had captured her and were torturing her, flaying her, and raping her for their amusement. He knew she no longer had any value as a hostage what with House Baratheon extinguished and the Lannister’s well technically kin would not lift a finger to save her. Yes, it was for the best that she was truly dead even if part of him hoped she still lived.

He needed fresh air, Davos had decided. The bitter cold of the North had always been good to numb his pain and clear his head. It was a grounding presence to him. He stepped outside and found the courtyard unsurprisingly empty, it was the middle of the night after all. He descended the steps as the wolves continued to howl in the distance, he wondered if one of their pack had died tonight.

The snow was past his ankles when he reached the bottom. His breath smoky and visible in the cold of the night. The words of Jon Snow’s fathers’ house ringed true for all to hear. *Winter is Coming.* His eyes drifted around the courtyard, trying to figure out a path to walk, and then his eyes came upon it.

He could hardly believe what he was seeing, surely the gods could never be so cruel. Lying on the ground in the corner, was Jon Snow half-buried in the snow, unmoving. A little boy with his foot torn off lay beside him and the third man with his throat torn open was also there. The snow was a
light pink that was quickly fading as fresh snow fell on top of the blemished layers. He broke into a sprint, his gait uneven and slow. Even after all this time up north he still hadn’t figured out how to move properly in such deep snow.

There was no mistaking it, Jon Snow was dead. Along with his steward, a bloody mangled mess and another watchman he didn’t recognize. His wolf as well, he had been almost unnoticeable with his snowy pelt that had since been blanketed by even more snow. The Lord Commander had five holes in his vest, stab wounds no doubt Davos knew. His eyes were glassy and rolled over, no signs of his usual liveliness in them. His long black hair was fanned out around his head, covered in white snow and red with blood, an odd combination that looked way too festive for the occasion. Nailed above his resting place was a signpost with one word in all caps. TRAITOR.

Davos knelt by Jon Snow’s corpse and checked him for a pulse already knowing but fearing the answer. To no surprise, Jon had none. The gods’ cruelty apparently knew no bounds and were paying him back for his assistance in Renly’s assassination, the kin-slaying he had partaken in. Davos had nothing left for him, his sons were all dead, perished by the Wildfire in the Battle of the Blackwater. His King was dead, killed by the Bolton’s in a foolhardy battle. The girl he had thought of like a daughter was dead or even worse off. Now, the man he had been willing to vow his life to his cause, the man he had hoped would be his new Lord was also dead, killed by his own men. The men that Davos only a few minutes ago had planned on calling his brothers had killed Jon Snow, possibly even Lord Snow's own steward judging by the savage way he was dismembered.

Davos had never been a man with much of a temper nor a need to rage but right now that was exactly what he needed to do. He wanted to scream into the great beyond the wall where no one could hear him. He wanted to bang his first against the wall until he broke his hand and then a few times more for good measure. None of this was fair.

He wasn’t sure how long he had knelt by his body before a crowd of crows flocked around him and the body of the Lord Commander. “Bring him inside.” Ser Davos ordered, his voice emotionless and hollow. “The wolf too.” He added as an afterthought. Snow would want his wolf to be burnt along with him so they didn’t join the others as wights.

He watched still unmoving from where he sat kneeled to the Lord Commander as they brought the body into the Lord Command’s office. Three of them carried him inside, one grabbing his legs the other two took a shoulder. A fourth man hauled Ghost over his shoulder. He shared a solemn look with Dolorous Edd, he looked even more upset than Davos was. His eyes looking past Davos and at the word TRAITOR nailed to the wall. The determination in his eyes told Davos more than words ever could. They promised revenge, and payback to whatever traitors had done that, a sentiment Davos himself could agree with.
It was just him, Edd and three others he didn’t recognize, Edd had been visibly angered and scared off everyone else. He had watched as with a tenderness rarely seen from him had closed Jon’s eyes. He had then whirled around to Davos and spat with all his usual fiery tone. “Thorne did this.”

Davos silently agreed, they needed to avenge the Lord Commander and stop Thorne from undoing all of Jon’s work. “How many of your brothers do you think you can trust?” He asked him his voice low, in case anyone was listening in.

Edd surveyed the room, looking at the other three brothers. “Trust?” He laughed bitterly. “The men in this room. That’s it.” He paused for a moment then added. “Sam too but he’s not here.”

Davos frowned, this was not going to be easy to overthrow Thorne. They needed all the men they can get if they were to have a chance at this. “Is there-” He was cut off by a knock on the door.

Every single one of the men in the room besides himself unsheathed their swords. Their blades all were held out in front of them, ready to die with their Lord. Davos felt naked without a sword of his own, perhaps he should grab Jon’s sword and use that for now.

“Ser Davos.” A women’s voice called. He would recognize that octave anywhere, it was the Red Woman, the Lady Melisandre who he partially blamed for Stannis’s defeat and his sons’ death. Still, they needed all the help they could get and she certainly wielded tremendous power. He had seen it himself when she had given birth to that shadow thing that killed Renly. Magic could give them the edge they needed to overcome Thorne and his men. He hated her magic but it was power.

Edd who had been standing by the door looks over at Davos who nods in return. “Let her in.”

Edd opens the door and watches as Melisandre enters the room, his eyes mistrusting. Melisandre looks at Jon Snow’s corpse and purses her lips, the disbelief clear in her red eyes.

“This is impossible.” She stated adamant as she inspected his wounds. “I saw it in the flames, he was fighting at Winterfell.”

Davos swallowed his voice was tense and filled with emotion. “I can’t speak for the flames but... He’s gone.”

Melisandre still in denial cupped his cheek in her palm. “There is no warmth. He can’t be dead, he
Davos didn’t know what she had meant by that but it didn’t matter.

A horn sounded outside, calling everyone to the great hall for a meeting. None of them moved an inch, they knew they would find no quarter at the meeting where Thorne took over. “They’ll see we didn’t come. Thorne will have made it official by now. Castle Black is his.” Davos said stating the obvious aloud.

“I don’t care who’s sitting at the high table. Jon was my friend, and those fuckers butchered him. Now we return the favor.” Edd spat venomously at no one in particular.

“We don’t have the men,” Davos argued a plan already coming to his mind. They weren’t the only ones loyal to Jon Snow after all.

“It doesn’t matter,” Ed shouted banging his fist against the wall in frustration. He unsheathed his sword and stomped over to the door.

Davos blocked his way. “It’s not enough,” Davos repeated a little more firm this time. “I didn’t know Lord Commander Snow for long, but I have to believe he wouldn’t have wanted his friends to die for nothing. We need a plan.”

Ed spun on his heel and glared at him brandishing his steel. “If you were planning to see tomorrow, you picked the wrong room. We all die today. I say we do our best to take Thorne with us when we go.”

“Aye.” Davos agreed. “We need to fight, but we don’t need to die. Not if we have help.”

“Whose going to help us?” The stocky and short man asked confused.

Davos only smiled in return, his first smile since finding the Lord Commander dead. “You’re not the only ones who owe your lives to Jon Snow.”

Ed laughed when he realized what Davos was planning of course. “Bolt the door, Toad.” He said addressing the same plump watchman. “Don’t let anyone in. I’ll be back as soon as I can.”
He threw open the door only to be met with a crossbow pointed at his chest. He immediately slammed the door shut. “So much for that plan,” Edd muttered as he leaned back against that door.

They had spent the last hour or so going in circles. Many plans were discussed but none were at all viable. They couldn’t get to the wildlings so gaining them as allies would be an impossible task, they were stuck with who they had.

There was a knocking on the door and once again every man drew their sword sans him who did not have one.

“Ser Davos, we have no cause to fight. We are both anointed knights.” Alliser Thorne called through the door the sound was too hollow, he was at least a few paces away from the door.

Ed stepped up to the door to whisper in Davos’s ear. “This is our chance, Thorne is here. Let’s open that door and butcher him before he can move.”

Davos shook his head in the negative and pressed his ear to the door. He spoke loud enough that he knew Thorne could hear him on the other side. “Hear that, lads? Nothing to fear.” There was a couple of chuckles from the men with Thorne- he had counted three different laughs. At best they had one more man- realistically they were outnumbered.

“I will grant amnesty to all brothers who have thrown down their arms before nightfall. And you, Ser Davos, I will allow you to travel south, a free man with a fresh horse.” Alliser offered his voice filled with some annoyance. Good an angered foe was easier to defeat than a calm one.

“And some mutton. I’d like some mutton.” Davos added. Another two different laughs answered his call, Thorne had at least five companions.

“What?” Thorne asked completely oblivious to Davos’s scheme.

“I’m not much of a hunter. I’ll need some food if I’m gonna make it south without starving.” Davos replied honestly. Another new man giggled make that six.

“We’ll give you food. You can bring the Red Woman with you if you like. Or you can leave her
here with us, whichever you choose. But surrender by nightfall or this ends with blood.” Ser Alliser swore.

“Thank you, Ser Alliser. We’ll discuss amongst ourselves and come back to you with an answer at nightfall.” Davos agreed.

They heard the footsteps receding as Thorne and his men walked away. As soon as they were gone Ed turned on Davos. “What was that? We could have had him.”

“There were at least seven of them, likely decked in full armor. We would have been slaughtered if we had tried anything.”

“We could have got Thorne first!” Edd exclaimed louder this time. His face was slightly red with the passion he was showing, his anger boiling over.

Davos once again shook his head in the negative. “Thorne was at few paces back from the door, likely surrounded by his own men. We wouldn’t have reached him.”

“How did you know that?” The tall watchman with a handlebar black mustache and a bald head asked.

“I was a smuggler. I’ve been running from men like that my whole life, it’s one of the things you have to know to survive. In my learned opinion, if we open that door-”

“They’ll slaughter us all.” Toad finished for him.

“Aye.” Davos agreed. “But we don’t have to make it easy on them.”

“So what?” Ed spat. “Do we just pray and hope that Tormund decided he wanted to visit Jon today? Can the odds even get better for us?”

“There’s always the Red Woman,” Davos interjected.
“What the fuck is one Redhead going to do against 40 armed men?” The biggest of the men in the room asked he was nearly seven feet tall and extremely muscular. His voice was surprisingly high pitched, almost a woman’s tone. He had short brown hair and a large nose that drew the eyes.

Davos smiled. “You haven’t seen her do what I’ve seen her do.”

“And what’s that?” Edd demanded impatiently.

“Magic.”

Nightfall had come and the brothers still had no plan of attack. They would fight to the last man but they knew the battle would be hopeless. They would all die today. He had asked Melisandre if she could do anything, any spells that could help them but she had nothing that would help, and didn’t require extensive preparation.

Ser Alliser Thorne knocked once on the door right on schedule. “Nightfall has come. It’s time, Ser Davos. Open the door and the men inside can rejoin their brothers in peace.” He addressed them still standing a bit of the way back from the door. “Nobody needs to die tonight.”

Davos turned to look at the brave men gathered with him in the room. “I’ve never been much of a fighter.” He picked up longclaw from where it laid by Jon’s side. He ran his thumb over the wolf pommel that looked so much like Lord Snow’s direwolf. “But today we fight.” He declared.

All at once Davos and the rest of the men unsheathed their swords. Melisandre even had a pair of spare knives from one of the watchmen, the mustached one he had recently found out was named Ulmer.

He heard Ser Alliser sigh faintly on the other side of the door. “I’ll give you another twenty-four hours to decide. We’ll see if the hunger changes your minds. I have no desire that any of you die.” *3
Once again Nightfall was upon them and they stood ready to fight when Ser Alliser knocked on the door. “Have you made your decision yet?”

Their resolve was unchanged but Davos knew that they would not be as much of a challenge for Ser Alliser’s men. They were weak and tired without food to sustain them. Thankfully, Lord Snow’s water basin had been filled recently so they weren’t yet dying of thirst but the hunger would do them in, Davos knew it was only a matter of time.

Ed answered for Davos. “You murdered your Lord Commander. The only reason we’d come out is to take your head on a spike.” He spat at him his voice filled with venom.

Ser Alliser Thorne chuckled. “Aye. I did kill my Lord Commander.” He agreed. “So did Bowen Marsh, and Othyll Yarwyn; As well as Wick Whittlestuck and even little Olly, may the gods rest their souls. We’ve committed treason, all of us. Jon Snow was my Lord Commander. I had no love for him. That was no secret. But I never once disobeyed an order. Loyalty is the foundation on which the Night’s Watch is built, and the Watch means everything to me. I have given my life, we have all given our lives to the Night’s Watch.”

“That was not why I killed him. I killed him because Jon Snow broke his vows. The same vows we all swore when we joined the Night’s Watch, Jon Snow let wildlings settle our lands, put our peoples at risk. Put the entire north at risk. Only a few months after so many of our brave brothers died defending our lands from the wildlings- he let them in. Jon Snow layed with a wilding woman.” Thorne declared loud enough for all the brothers to hear, both in this room and in the courtyard.

“The Night’s Watch is sworn to take no part in the wars of men. Jon Snow broke that part of his vows as well. The Lord Commander advised Stannis on battle strategy to help him take the North back from the Bolton’s for his loyalty was still to his father’s house even after swearing his vows. He housed and fed Lord Stannis’s men, again violating his vow.”

“Yes, I committed treason. I killed my Lord Commander but it was not murder but an execution. If the next Lord Commander wants to execute me for this then I will walk to my death with my head held high. I did what no one else would because my loyalty is to the Night’s Watch and not dead men or myself. I do not want any of my innocent brothers to die for a dead man and a traitor.”

The crowd outside the door broke into a smattering of applause at the end of his speech. Some people shouted out nominations for him to be Lord Commander. Davos couldn’t help but to frown. Gathering enough people loyal to Jon Snow had just gotten much harder. Thorne would undo all of Lord Snow’s good work if he was made Lord Commander.
“I’ll give you another day to decide; I pray you make the right decision.

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Again Ser Alliser had shown up and again they had refused him but Davos knew this wouldn’t last. It was only the stubbornness of Edd and the fear of his wrath that had stopped Toad from giving them up.

Davos sighed running a hand through the little hair he had on his head, completely grayed over that made him look much older than he really was. He was on watch duty right while the others slept. Also on watch with him was the Lady Melisandre who stood forlornly over the Lord Commander’s corpse. It had started to reek, the stench of death and rot in the room had only made the hunger worse. At one point Halder, the big and brutish fool that he is had offered up the idea of eating Ghost. The others had all shot down his idea but Davos had to admit if Thorne kept this up then they would likely end up doing just that.

Melisandre had her hand on Jon’s chest drawing little circles on it. He knew she was struggling to come to terms with the Lord Commander’s death. She had decided after Stannis’s death that the Lord Commander Jon Snow was Azor Ahai reborn after she had seen him fighting in Winterfell in her flames. Now he was dead, again. Twice now she had been wrong about her prophesied prince. Davos thought it was all a load of hogwash but she did have real power. He knew that much. It was a longshot but what other choice did they have?

“Pardon My Lady, I don’t mean to interrupt.” He spoke softly to her so the others currently sleeping in the room would not be disturbed.

She didn’t glance away from the Lord’s pale figure. “You interrupt nothing.” Despite the rest of their companions being staved half to death, she looked as healthy as ever, physically at least. Mentally, she looked like she had aged a thousand years. She now longer was as bright and perky as she always had been. Before, she would have proclaimed for all the world to hear the truth of her god, now she sat silently staring into the fireplace or at the body in the middle of the room.

“It’s about the Lord Commander.” He whispered to her.

“The former Lord Commander.” She corrected him putting extra emphasis on the word former.

“Does it have to be?
She finally glanced away from Lord Snow to look him in the eyes. “What exactly are you asking?” He had her attention now and Davos had the feeling she already knew his answer.”

“Do you know of any magic…” Davos trailed off unsure of how to phrase this. “That could help him? Bring him back?”

She frowned and looked away from him casting her gaze back at Lord Snow’s corpse. “If you want to help him at all, leave him be.”

Ed had apparently woken up at some point during their conversation as he spoke next. “So there is a way?”

Her tone was blank when she responded. “There is some with this power.”

“How?” Edd and Davos demanded sharply in unison. “Whatever the price is I’ll pay it.” Edd swore to her.

“I don’t know.” She turned away from the Lord Commander and back to the fireplace that provided the only heat in the room.

“Have you seen it done?” Davos prodded. She had given them hope and he would not let it go.

“I met a man.” She paused her thoughts in another place. “He came back from the dead, but the priest who did it- it shouldn’t have been possible.”

“But it was. It could be now.” Davos insisted.

“What was?” Toad grumbled sleepily he had woken up as well from their conversation.

“Not for me.” Melisandre insisted, standing and walking to the fire, she stared into it a tear running down her cheek.
Davos followed her and grabbed her hand, spinning her around to face him. “Not for you? I saw you drink poison that should’ve killed you. I saw you give birth to a demon made of shadows.”

Melisandre pulled her hands from his grip and looked back towards the fires. “Everything I believed, the great victory I saw in the flames, all of it was a lie.” Her voice was hollow and passionless. “You were right all along. The Lord never spoke to me.”

Davos knew he was being hypocritical, he had cursed her god and her evil black magic more times then he could remember and now he was turning to him, to her for help because they needed it. He still partially blamed her for Stannis’s defeat, he had foolishly followed her visions in the flames and had lost because of it. Still, he knew she wielded real power. “Fuck him, then. Fuck all of them. I’m not a devout man, obviously. Seven Gods, drowned gods, tree gods, it’s all the same.” He grabbed her hand and pulled her to face towards him. “I’m not asking the Lord of Light for help. I’m asking the woman who showed me that miracles exist. The women who showed me that magic was not as dead as the Maesters think. The one who did the impossible.”

Edd chipped in. “I don’t believe in gods, but I do believe in men. I believe in Jon Snow, he was the best man I’ve ever known and we need him. If you can bring him back, whatever the cost then do it because he’s the closest thing to a god in this world.”

“I never had this gift,” Melisandre repeated.

“Have you ever tried.” Davos quiered.

She sighed in resignation. “I’ll try but don’t expect anything.”

“That’s all we can ask.” Davos agreed.

Melisandre pointed at Edd. “Bring me the Water basin and some rags.” She commanded and Edd immediately went to go fetch them with toad trailing behind him. She then turned to Davos. “Help me undress him.”

Davos nodded and they all went about their tasks. At some point in the process, Ulmer and Halder had also woken up. They had asked what was going on and Edd had quickly explained that they were trying to resurrect Jon Snow. That had shut them up pretty quickly and now they like everyone else stood still watching as the Lady Melisandre ran a wet washcloth over Jon’s skin wiping the blood away from his wounds.
Davos wanted Jon back as much as anyone but if this didn’t work then they were wasting much of their very limited water supply. Once she had washed his entire body and cut their water supply in half she moved onto his face. She took a knife offered to her by Edd and roughly cut at his hair and beard trimming them to a respectable length. All the hair she had cut off was then tossed into the fire pit along with the blood-soaked rags. The fire sizzled and steamed in protest as the damp rags were burned by the flames.

Once all that was done she leaned over him and pressed her hands over his heart. Zŷhys ōñoso jehikagon Ąeksio Ėpi, se ĝiš hen sŷndrorro jemagon. Zŷhys perzys stepagon Ąeksio Ŭno jorepi, se morghūltas lŷs qēlītsos sīkagon. Hen sŷndrorro, ūnos. Hen ŋuqũr, perzys. Hen morghot, glaeson.” She chanted in what Davos believed to be Valyrian.


Again nothing happens. “Please.” She begged, tears running down her face. Davos could not say if she was begging her god or the Lord Commander.


Again Jon Snow did not move. She shook her head and walked back over to the fireplace never once looking back. Halder scoffed and walked away but Edd and Davos stood where they were still staring at the Lord Commander. There was no denying the truth, Jon Snow was dead.

The last few days had been rough for the men loyal to Jon Snow so it was only natural that something had to go their way eventually, that thing had come in the middle of the night that fourth day of being locked in that room. While Toad and Halder had been on watch, Hobb had come by bearing a basket of food and a jug of water. If it had been Davos who had been on watch he would have almost certainly turned him away thinking it was a trap but it was a good thing he hadn’t been on watch.

Hobb was one of the cooks at Castle Black and he had apparently put Milk of The Poppy in the
scheduled guards for the 1:00-3:00 AM window and the window before and after them were apparently mostly made up of people loyal to Jon Snow and against Thorne, they had more allies then they knew. Davos had asked Hobb to have one of them go to the Wildlings- specifically Tormund and tell them the news of Lord Snow’s death but Hobb had told them that the wall was in emergency lockdown until the current situation was resolved. Hobb said he’d try to bring them more food again but to ration it as he wasn’t sure when they would get the chance again.

They had overindulged the first night, breaking their fast with a rather large serving of bread, a handful of grapes and some nuts but since then they had rationed well and they had enough to survive a week longer. The Lady Melisandre had refused to eat any of the food brought before her, not even a nibble. The failure to bring back Lord Snow had hit her hard and she was wasting away. Davos would admit he felt slightly guilty- having persuaded her to try it in the first place. Davos was sure she would die if nothing changed.

Occasionally, Davos would think he saw the Lord Commander’s fingers twitch or his chest rise but it was only his imagination. Jon Snow was dead and Davos was directionless. He sighed, wondering what was next, was revenge all that was left for him? They wouldn’t even get that since Thorne could just starve them out, even with Hobbs helps they were at a disadvantage, this was a battle that they couldn't win. Still, they couldn't betray Lord Snow by giving up.

They knew they needed to burn his body soon or else he might come back as a wight and that would be a terror he wouldn’t wish on his worst enemy. They couldn't burn him here though, he was much too large for the fireplace and burning him in the open would risk burning them all alive. He knew they needed this standstill to end and soon, but how?

Davos had asked Lady Melisandre again if she knew any magic that could help them win but she had not responded at all instead just gazing at him blankly. The other watchmen wanted to go out in a blaze of glory, taking Alliser Thorne with them when they die but that was almost impossible at this point. He was too smart to actually endanger himself when he came to the door. The wildlings weren’t coming to help them either evidentially. They were all on their own.

Davos sighed and crouched against the wall closest to the door. They needed to come up with something soon. On the floor, there was a crumpled up note not too far from where Davos was, he could reach it if he stretched a little. Partly because he was curious but more so because he was bored he picked it up and unfurled the paper. It was a letter or at least a draft of one from the late Lord Commander Jon Snow.

Lord Roose Bolton,

The Night’s Watch have come to ask the Warden of the North for aid. The Others are very much real and marching on the wall with an army of the dead, we know they have at least 100,000
wights in their army for sure; including undead Giants, Mammoths, and Ice Spiders. They likely have more than that, that is only what we have seen from them. In this time of crisis, we need all the help we can get. We need all able-bodied men and women-

Jon Snow had been willing to break bread with the men who butchered his brother at his own wedding. Perhaps, they should do the same. They had bigger issues to worry about then revenge, the dead were coming and they needed to be united. He sighed and walked over to Dolorous Edd, handing him the letter.

“What’s this?”

“Read it.” Was all Davos said in response.

He nodded and took the letter from Davos’s hand. As he began to read he frowned, the deeper he got the deeper his frown had grown. When he finished the letter- he handed it to Ser Davos with a sigh. “He wouldn’t want us to do this, would he?”

Davos nodded.

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“Nightfall has fallen yet again. You’ve been locked in there a week, ready to give in yet? The party from Shadow Tower arrived yesterday and the group from Eastwatch should arrive in the next few days, you’re going to miss the choosing of the next Lord Commander.” Davos thought that there was a hint of mockery in his voice, as if he couldn't help but rub it in that Lord Snow was dead.

“We have,” Davos said the tension in the room was suffocating them all. “But we have conditions.”

Ser Alliser Thorne sounded unbelievably smug when he replied. “Name them. Perhaps you would like some cheese to go with your mutton? A loaf of bread maybe.”

“The Wildlings will be allowed to attend Jon Snow’s cremation ceremony. They deserve a chance to mourn the man who saved them from certain death just as much as any of us.” More then most of you Davos couldn’t help but think darkly.
“Go on,” Thorne added, his tone giving no hint of his feelings on that matter.

“You will permit any man not comfortable working in Castle Black with Lord Snow’s murderers to relocate to another location where they are not.”

“That sounds acceptable.” Thorne agreed. “Anything else?”

Davos couldn't help but swallow nervously and glance at all his other brothers in the room. “You claim you did not kill your Lord Commander for personal gain but justice. Prove it, you and your co-conspirators will not run for Lord Commander in the choosing for his replacement.” He spoke loud and clear, making sure that all the other men outside the door could hear him. The goal was to pressure them into accepting that demand or at the very least lose them support when they ran for the position. They needed people to doubt that Ser Alliser’s intentions were as noble as he claimed.

This was the demand that would make or break their entire deal; Edd had wanted to demand Thorne’s head but that would have gotten shut down immediately. This was their compromise, they could get someone who wasn’t Thorne’s lackey in as Lord Commander and he could execute them for their treason.

“Is that all?” Thorne barked, there was a steel in his voice that hadn’t been there previously, that last demand had gotten to him.

“Yes, that is all. Just three small requests.”

“Give us the night to discuss this amongst ourselves, we’ll give our response at Dawn.”

“Seems fair to me,” Davos agreed.

Dawn had taken far too long to arrive. None of them had slept a wink last night, too nervous to sleep. They had feasted- comparatively speaking on the basket of food from Hobb last night, barring them refusing all of their demands they would be leaving this room tonight. It was about time too because Ghost was noticeably rotting at this point. He was bloated and swollen, his skin
taking on a bit of a greenish hue. Oddly enough, Jon Snow’s body had yet to show any signs of decomposing, he supposed it was a side-effect of Melisandre’s failed attempt at resurrecting him.

There was a light rapping on the door. “We’ve come to a decision.” The gruff voice of Ser Alliser Thorne declared.

Davos who had been somehow nominated the spokes-person for the group answered him. “Alright. Let’s hear it.”

“We will not permit the wildlings to enter Castle Black under any circumstances.” Davos sighed and Edd snarled. “However, we will allow you to take his body into their lands and you along with any brothers who wish to come along will go there to have his cremation ceremony.”

Davos nodded to himself. That was probably as good as they would get with that one.

“As First Ranger, I am acting Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch until a new Lord Commander can be chosen. I will grant your request of relocation until a new Lord Commander is chosen but I can not control or make promises on whoever’s behalf that is.”

Davos looked at his companions and they nodded to show their acceptance of that term. “And the third demand?”

“I agree with the sentiment of your condition but I cannot accept it. I do believe that I would be the best choice for the role of Lord Commander and will not allow the Night’s Watch to fall to ruin when I could have saved it. I and my comrades have agreed that we will not run for the position of Lord Commander for the first night of the choosing. All nights after that we are free to run for the position.”

Davos looked at the men beside him and slowly they all nodded their heads in acceptance with the terms, albeit somewhat reluctantly. The ball was in their court now, they had gotten enough of their demands to maybe put a stop to Ser Alliser Thorne. The new Lord Commander was never going to be chosen in the first choosing, for Jon Snow to get the position it had taken eleven choosings and that one had only been so fast due to Stannis threatening to choose one himself if they hadn’t elected one. Choosings had taken up to two years in seasons past. The goal of accepting that condition had been not to stop him from being chosen but to give them slander material with which to hurt his campaign. His decision to only withdraw for one day would be all too easy to frame as selfish and the idea that he killed Jon Snow to become Lord Commander would completely kill his entire campaign. Thorne had just unknowingly crippled his and his co-conspirators’ chances at becoming Lord Commander.
“Very well Ser, we accept your terms.”

Chapter End Notes

*1 Ser Davos has lost everything which is why in cannon he so desperately clings to Jon and makes Melisandre bring him back. He's a follower by nature and believes in Jon, enough to stand by his side when he comes back despite having a wife in the south. If Jon wasn't killed, I'm almost certain that Davos would have taken the black. He is committed to Jon and believes in him.

*2 There is no way Ser Davos was just telling jokes to lighten the mood, or for small talk. Lots of people can't control when they laugh and laughs are distinctive and unique. It gives him a rough estimate of how many are outside the door waiting for them, and what their odds are.

*3 Despite how he is portrayed in the show, I refuse to believe that Ser Alliser is stupid. He can maybe sell people on Jon's death being due to breaking his vows but killing anyone else, for refusing to open a door of all things is not something you can sell as justice. His grudge was with Jon Snow, not the rest of them.

*4 Jon Snow did break his vows, that is a fact. Thorne is arguably justified in killing him for that as the punishment for that crime is death. We can debate if Thorne killed Jon because he hated him (For the Starks aid in usurping the Targaryens?), because he let the wildlings through the wall or because he broke his vows. The latter is the only one that he can admit to publically, whether it's the truth or not.

The Night's Watch handling in season six and was completely awful. Thorne made completely illogical decisions entirely motivated by his irrational hatred of Jon Snow that the entire watch just went along with aside from FOUR men. Completely, absurd. Thorne elected himself as Lord Commander without a choosing as a dictator and everyone else just went along with it. Then, Jon came back from the dead, executed the men who killed him all while claiming he was not a member of the Night's Watch anymore which meant that he should not have been able to punish them. To make matters worse, rather than a choosing (Which the show botched up the first time as well) Jon just chose Edd as the next Lord Commander which is not how things work but everyone decided to go along with it. Complete stupidity.

As this chapter shows the Night's Watch will be much more political in this story. People will manipulate and play word games as they do everywhere else in Westeros, it will not just be rash idiots doing things without considering the consequences like it is in the show.

Completely unrelated to this chapter but in the Hardhome episode, the wildlings kill wights without Dragonglass or Valyrian Steel or even fire. It's not just hurting them either because it specifically says in the script "He pins a wight to the gate with Longclaw as Tormund and Karsi kill the wights that have already gotten through. The archers take out the wight Jon pinned to the gate, and then the men cover the hole the wights had been escaping from with a sled. Fighting continues. A group of wights tear into a Crow. Loboda and Karsi continue to kill the wights." They just randomly
decided to retcon that wights can be killed through normal means. Too much of my outline is dependent on wights being as invulnerable as walkers to normal means for me to change it to what they originally said but just wanted to point it out. Only white walkers are unkillable.

Also on an even more unrelated note but how do D&D not know how many kingdoms their are? They wrote the show for eight seasons and never learned one of the most basic aspects of the world? The North seceding still leaves seven, arguably eight kingdoms if the Iron Islands are their own kingdom like implied in the show. The seven Kingdoms are a traditional name from when Aegon conquered, before Dorne not the actual number of kingdoms. Bran is still king of the Seven Kingdoms, not six.

Next chapter we go back to Daenerys and dive what has been happening in Meereen in her absence. The next chapter is another long one.
Daenerys II

Chapter Summary

Daenerys addresses what happened in her absence from Meereen and tries to save her city.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Daenerys wanted nothing more than to bathe and have a proper meal after her journey through the wilderness with her dragons but she, unfortunately, had other responsibilities she needed to take care of. Tyrion Lannister had been given run of the city in her absence and things were in a very similar state to where they had been when she left which was to say- not good. The Harpies were more aggressive than ever during her absence. Every night they would wake up to find dead men-slaves turned free men and her unsullied. The city was in chaos and there was very little Daenerys could do to keep it together.

As bad as things were in Meereen though, they were a thousand times worse outside her walls. Astapor and Yunkai had both fallen back into the hands of the masters. All those people she had freed from captivity were now back in slavery or dead. Her heart bled for them but she couldn't do a thing to help them- she could barely even hold Meereen. If she failed to hold three cities then how would she ever handle seven kingdoms?

“Your Grace, One of my little birds may have found for me who's been funding the Sons of the Harpy,” Lord Varys said to her in his soft velvety voice. He had apparently served as Master of Whispers for her father and the Usurper along with his son Joffrey. He was a rather plump individual who smelled of Lavender and didn’t have a single hair anywhere on his body. He had the kindest voice like honey to draw any unsuspecting creature into his trap.

He had served as Master of Whispers for three kings who had all been murdered by members of their own court and had changed his loyalty numerous times to whomever he thought was best fit to rule. Despite him helping Tyrion escape, she had to agree with Ser Barristan. Varys was not to be trusted at all but he was useful. She had only just met him as he showed up in Meereen while she was gone but Tyrion had decided to let him into her council.

“Enlighten us.” She ordered of him.

“The good masters of Astapor. And the wise masters of Yunkai. With help from their friends in Volantis.” He replied. “If my source is to be believed they fear that the dragon queen will turn to
them next if they do not end your threat now. They are most eager for you to return to Westeros so the slave trade can resume here in slavers bay.”

Daenerys nodded to herself that made sense, they had always wanted her gone. They had even offered her ships to return to Westeros if she were to give them back Meereen. Before she had gone to Astapor and saw the horrible treatment of their slaves she would have jumped at such an offer but now she could not leave her people to suffer.

“We conquered Asatapor and Yunkai once. We will do it again and execute the Masters.” Greyworm said. His voice as always gave no hint of his emotions. He, like all the unsullied, had been trained to have no feelings- or as Daenerys was quickly discovering to not show any emotion, they still did have feelings.

“That would be treating the symptoms, not the disease. If the Unsullied march off to reconquer Asatapor and Yunkai, who remain to defend the free people of Meereen?” Tyrion argued. “We can not expect to hold Meereen if our army is Astapor. We would be completely vulnerable to attack from the Harpies.”

The dwarf of House Lannister was an odd fellow. His brother had murdered her father, he might have been mad and needed to die but Ser Jamie was sworn to protect him, someone else should have done it. His father had served as hand to her father for a time and was as evil as her own father. He had ordered the death of her good-sister, along with her niece and nephew. Her niece was only three when she had slaughtered and her nephew was not even two yet. His sister had married the Usurper and according to Tyrion was a vile evil woman. Tyrion was unlike his family, and had killed his own father. She didn’t trust him yet but she valued his counsel. He was extremely intelligent and knew the Houses of Westeros better than she or even Ser Barristan did.

“We cannot do nothing.” Greyworm insisted. “If we do not fight them, how can we stop them?” He might not give any clue in his voice but Daenerys knew he was frustrated by his words.

“We cannot. The Masters only speak one language. They spoke it to me for many years. I know it better than my mother tongue. If we want them to hear us, we must speak it back to them. May it be the last thing they ever hear.” Missandei declared. She rarely gave her opinion without being directly asked and it was very clear how strongly she felt about this issue.

“If we answer in violence then how can we expect them not to do the same?” Ser Barristan interjected. “All we would be doing is contributing to an endless cycle. I’ve seen this happen too many times before, death and revenge only leads to more death.”
Ser Barristan was probably the most trusted of her advisors and was her sworn shield. He had experience serving with and sitting on the counsel of three kings—the latter two were awful kings but he had learned from their mistakes and she would learn from him. He had already nearly died once already, defending her city from the sons of the Harpy and had been bedridden for weeks afterward. He would likely never be able to fight again, he needed a cane to walk now and was easily fatigued. Daenerys was planning on naming him her hand when they returned to Westeros. She might have to do that sooner, in case she got called away from Meereen again.

Tyrion was the one who spoke next. “Which is why we do not go to war. We take hostages from all the Masters. A child from each family to ensure their compliance, there is little more powerful than a parent’s love for their child. If they step out of line we execute their child.” He explained.

Daenerys was horrified and glared at him. “I will not butcher children.” She declared firmly. She would stand by that and not be moved. She refused to be a monster like her father or the Usurper. Children were innocent of their father’s crimes and should not be punished for them.

Tyrion was stubborn. “You would likely only have to execute one before they take the threat seriously and stop endangering them by working with the sons of the harpy.”

“I will not butcher any child, they are innocent. I will not punish a child for their father’s sins.” She repeated firmly with a glare at him, daring him to oppose her decision.

Tyrion frowned but nodded his acceptance. He turned to Varys. “Tell me, can the little birds get a message to the good Masters of Astapor, the Wise Masters of Yunkai, the benevolent enslavers of Volantis?”

Varys smiled. “Of course. Man can be fickle but birds always trust.”

Tyrion nodded once again looking back at her. “Perhaps we should meet with the masters and negotiate for peace.”

“What can you offer? Masters want slavery back.” Greyworm countered. Daenerys privately agreed with him but she knew it wasn’t yet her place to say anything. She would hear what her council had to say before making a decision as her saying something would be seen as final and the idea would be dropped.

“The Masters are not evil people,” Tyrion stated causing everyone to stare at him with wide eyes
and an open mouth. “They do not want slavery because they enjoy causing people pain—while most of them,” he added with a dry laugh. “They want slavery because it makes them lots of money and they spent money to buy those slaves. We simply have to show them that there are other ways they can make just as much money.”

“And how would we do that?” Daenerys asked with a raised eyebrow.

He took a long drink from his goblet of wine and reached for the pitcher to refill his cup before speaking. “We seize the assets of all the masters who have died serving the Sons of The Harpy. Offer to pay all the freed slaves personally who take jobs as free men under the Masters. Slowly decrease the percentage we pay by say—20% each year and raise the minimum wages. Within five years the Masters will be paying all of their workers a fair wage.”

“The Masters will not agree to pay ever. They will not treat workers fairly. They cannot be trusted.” Greyworm argued.

“Wars are expensive, they would lose more by waging war on us—on hiring companies of Sellswords to fight for them.” Tyrion smiled and took another long drink of his wine. “We do not need to trust them to work with them. There will be rules regarding the treatment of their workers, if they violate them they will lose all their lands, titles and money. They would not risk themselves just to abuse their slaves.”

Daenerys stood up from her chair raising her hand to ask for silence. “We will try Lord Tyrion’s plan.” She looked over to Varys who looked positively delighted. “Send your birds to Yunkai and Astapor with a message summoning the leaders of each of the Masters to Meereen to discuss peace.”

“Not Volantis, Your Grace?” Varys asked. “They too are funding the Sons of the Harpy.”

She shook her head. “Not Volantis. Send word to them separately, let them know that if they cut all of their funding of the Sons of The Harpy then I will let them be in peace.” *The for now part of her statement went unsaid.* She swallowed nervously. She didn’t want to do this—she hated letting them do this but she knew they couldn’t go to war with Volantis— it was the richest of the three cities that they were warring with and fighting them was too risky. She needed to be smart. “For now, I will let them continue their slave trade just not with my cities.”

She heard a sharp intake of breath from Missandei. Missandei felt betrayed by her decision. As a former slave herself, she was very much against allowing slavery to continue in any form. They had mistreated her even as a child and she had two brothers in the unsullied— one of whom had been killed by the Sons of The Harpy. She wanted revenge and to liberate others.
“You are dismissed. Missandei stay behind.” She commanded the room and they all rushed to obey. Tyrion clearly drunk staggered a bit as he exited.

“Your Grace-” Missandei started to say but Daenerys raised her hand and she trailed off.

“You disagree with my decision.” Daenerys addressed her. It was a statement, not a question.

She nodded. “I do. They can’t be trusted. They betrayed you before, this killed your men and you’re letting them off free. You’re even letting Volantis keep their slaves. We should just kill all the Masters, the world would be better off for it.” She was passionate, her voice filled with an edge Daenerys had rarely seen from her before.

“I do not trust them and I don’t plan on letting them off free. We can only hold Yunkai and Astapor if they don’t have the support of Volantis. If Volantis feels they are safe then they will not aid them. I want to end slavery in all of the world…” Daenerys explained trailing off wistfully. “That is not practical, once I reclaim my throne in Westeros I will return and end slavery in all of Essos as well. I do care for their plight but I have to be smart about this. I cannot fight a war on two fronts.”

“I understand, Your Grace,” Missandei replied with a slight bow of her head. Good Daenerys thought to herself. She’s not happy about it but she’ll accept it. She could work with that.

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Her bath had been splendid. She had ordered the water to be so hot that it was nearly boiling and had lingered there until the water had gone lukewarm. The pond Rhaegal had taken her to had been wonderful but the water was freezing and the sun was hot beating down on her head- it wasn’t the same.

She laid back on the edge of her lavish bed and sighed in contentment. After sleeping on the hard ground for the last fortnight being on something soft was wonderful. She missed Daario, he and Ser Jorah had gone out looking for her to bring her home so they weren’t here when she returned. She really needed a good fucking but her partner was nowhere to be seen. She didn’t love Daario but he was a good lover- better than her husband had been and she liked having someone in her bed with her.

She stood up and slipped on a bathrobe not bothering to tie it shut. She needed some fresh air and a drink to clear her head. She stepped out onto the balcony and looked out at the city below. The city
was quiet at night, many families locked themselves inside too scared of the Sons of The Harpy to leave their homes. Daenerys hated it, her city was suffocating and she was almost helpless against it. She had dragons and an army but somehow they still hadn’t been enough to stop the Harpies reign of terror.

She felt a prodding at her lower back and turned around to see Rhaegal’s head looking at her from the pyramid he was wrapped around- still after she had dropped him off. He was clearly happy to see her. She stroked his head with her soft hands and smiled at him before sitting in a lounge chair and placing his head on her lap. He purred in contentment as she pet him.

Perhaps it was just the ability to confide in someone who couldn’t betray her or the need to talk to someone but she told him of her day. She had told him so much already of her but she enjoyed spending time with at least one of her children, the dragons growing up and away from her had been hard for her. Having Rhaegal happily come to her and cuddle with her, seemingly listening as she told him stories was wonderful and a dream come true.

“Missandei disagreed. She thinks I should take all the Harpies and execute them and all of the masters. The Harpies and their stupid gold masks are tearing apart my city, the Targaryens have always been about fire and blood. Vengeance. But I do not innocents to be caught in the crossfire, I don't want to cause a civil war by doing so. Am I being weak by trying to find peace?” She asked her dragon not expecting a reply.

Rhaegal surprised her yet again and lifted his head off her lap to shake it side to side as if saying no before putting his head back on her lap. Did he really understand her? Surely that was impossible. She stood to her feet and Rhaegal growled lowly in displeasure.

“Kostagon ao shifang nyke?” She asked of him in Valyrian. He looked at her obviously confused and made no sign of having understood what she was saying. It had been foolish to think that he could. Still, her stories she had told him were in the common tongue so she asked again in that language. “Can you understand me?” She asked, speaking slowly so he could understand better.

Rhaegal actually bobbed his head up and down. Daenerys laughed in disbelief, surely she was going as mad as her father. For some reason, she asked him again.

“Are you nodding intentionally?” Another nod answered her question. “Shake your head no” He did so at her command. Somehow Rhaegal actually understood what she was saying. She laughed and hugged his head to her chest. Turns out, dragons are extremely intelligent- not dumb beasts like most the books said. They were the most intelligent animal she had ever seen.
Daenerys woke up to the sound of a man screaming. She stood up and threw a robe on as Greyworm burst into her room. Ser Barristan came hobbling in behind him and not long after came Lord Tyrion and Varys.

The sound had come from her balcony and had since gone quiet. Daenerys walked over to the balcony but found her path impeded by Ser Barristan. “Let Greyworm go first, it might not be safe.” He warned her and she grit her teeth but nodded to show her acquiescence.

Greyworm came back inside less than a minute later. “Your Grace, you should come see, it’s your dragon.” He told her, his face like always giving her no hint of the problem.

She stepped onto the balcony and nearly vomited. There was a pile of bodies- human bodies ripped apart- some of them in half and leaning over them was Rhaegal who was eating one man’s entrails. Some of them were burnt beyond all recognition, their skin torn in a number on places. She looked at Rhaegal and looked up from his meal. He looked triumphant and he seemed to be trying to tell her to be proud of him.

She was horrified. “R-Rhaegal why? Why would you..” She trailed off in disbelief. Only a few hours ago he had been intelligent and she had cuddled with him. He could understand her. What had happened?

He snorted, black smoke coming out of his nostrils. He nudged the corpse he had been eating and turned it over so she could see the other side. On his face there was a golden mask, he was one of the Sons of the Harpy.

She turned to Greyworm. “Turn over all of them so I can see their faces.” There was no way Rhaegal had actually strategically hunted all of the Harpies, right? Yet when he complied and all four dead men were flipped over they all had golden masks on.

She looked back at Rhaegal still stunned and patted his head. “Good boy, you are so incredibly smart.” She looked at the bodies once more. “Thank you, Rhaegal.”

“Your Grace?” Ser Barristan asked not knowing what to say. No one did, this was a completely unprecedented situation.
“Rhaegal found the Harpies and stopped their attacks. I will not punish him for executing traitors.” She said before glancing at their bodies again. “They got what they deserve. Find someone to clean up this mess.”

“This is madness, you can not be okay with this! Burning people alive and ripping people limb from limb will never be okay.” Tyrion Lannister argued. She wasn’t sure when he had followed them outside. She also wasn’t sure why he had an issue with this, he had done the same in defense of King’s Landing according to Varys. The same person who wanted to poison all of King’s Landing. This seemed extremely hypocritical of him.

She looked at him coldly and then back at the bodies. “They got what they deserve,” She repeated to him before turning away to head back inside leaving her advisors there staring after her.

She walked back inside but rather than go back to bed she instead went back out through the exit with two unsullied coming with her as guards. She had something she needed to do and sleep would not come easy after that gruesome sight. She agreed that it was a good thing for Rhaegal to kill the Harpies but seeing a pile of bodies on her doorstep would never not be alarming.

Once she was outside she called out to Rhaegal with a shrill whistle and he came to her immediately flying over her head. She smiled, it was nice to have one of her children so obedient and caring. It was time to get her second child back.

She walked towards the pit where she had chained her dragons. That had been a mistake, Dragons are not dogs they do not belong in chains. They are kings and they deserve to be free, they do not kneel to any man.

Rhaegal landed beside her as she gestured for the guards to roll the stone away from the entrance. He hissed at her, he was scared and did not want to return. He fluttered his wings making to leave and Daenerys touched his head. “I will not chain you again. Ever. We’ve come to free your brother.” She whispered to him. He calmed down instantly and sat down to wait for her.

“You are not to interfere or enter after me under any circumstance, no matter what you see or hear.” She commanded the unsullied who were guarding the place and her person.

She turned away from Rhaegal and slowly descended the steps down into the dark, a torch in her hands. She was engulfed by fire, flames surrounded her and the heat was unpleasant. But she was a dragon and dragons cannot be killed by fire so she pressed on through her sons rage and his breath of death.
She placed her hand on Viserions’s snout even as he continued to roast her. “Shh.” She whispered soothingly. “I’ve come to free you.”

He finally stopped trying to roast her but still glared at her as she moved to his side. She gently caressed his bone-white head, it was hard as a rock and there was little in the way of flesh over his bones. She could see his skeleton underneath his scales, he had always been thinner and more bony then his brothers but he was unhealthily frail and looked half dead. She had done this to him, she had chained him for Drogon’s crime. Not for the first time, she raged at Drogon for his behavior. He had always been the problem child of the bunch, the one with attitude yet he was her bonded. She loved Rhaegal more than anyone but she knew it was Drogon she was destined to ride despite his abandonment of her in the Dothraki sea.

Still keeping one hand on Viserion’s head she used the other hand to push the pin down and slid it out of the collar. The moment the collar fell off his neck, Viserion dashed outside. He moved quick enough that his hard scales cut open the hand she had placed on his head.

She followed him out of the pit at a much slower pace. She was naked now. Her robe was completely incinerated by Viserion. The cold night’s air cut at her bare skin causing her to shiver. She stepped outside and looked up to see Rhaegal and Viserion circling above her.

They appeared to be fighting about something, likely her. Viserion shot fire at Rhaegal and the two growled at each other for some time before Viserion flew off somewhere to the northwest of Meereen and Rhaegal descended back down to her.

She smiled at Rhaegal. “Thank you for explaining things to him. I never should have chained you in the first place.” He nuzzled his head into her hand and purred happily.

Daenerys was tired of telling people that Rhaegal was safe and wouldn’t eat them. After last night’s incident, all of her petitioners seemed to be people who were scared they would be eaten by him as well. The Masters begged her to kill her dragons or send them away from here for they did think it was safe. Some had dared to call their friends who Rhaegal had killed good innocent men who did not deserve such a cruel fate. She had made it very clear to everyone that Rhaegal would only attack the Sons of The Harpy and every person he brought to her had been wearing the golden mask of the Harpies.
She had just told a particularly vindictive master the same tale. One of the men Rhaegal had mutilated was his father apparently. He had come demanding justice and left with his pants soiled after she had calmly explained to him that his father deserved to die for his crimes and that if he followed in his father’s footsteps then he would find himself also dead. She waved her hand to bring in the next petitioner.

In walked a young woman; probably not even yet twenty and a small boy who was maybe three clinging to her hand. She had frizzy brown hair and was almost all skin and bones. The boy she presumed was her son had more aristocratic features, darker straight hair, and a sharp jawline. He too was very haggard. Their faces were gaunt and it was clear to her they were struggling to find enough food to eat. They wore simple sack clothes on their body with arm holes cut in them and an open bottom just above their knees. These were obviously citizens of what had been the lower class. Former slaves.

Missandei greeted them and stood. “You stand before Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Queen of the Seven Kingdoms and Meereen.” At first, they had used her full list of titles every time a petitioner came forth but it had been ineffective. Many of the former slaves who petitioned her became too intimidated to actually ask what they came for after hearing all her titles and many more would prostrate themselves before her and worship her. She had told Missandei to use the shortened titles unless Missandei felt the situation warranted the full version. Most of the time, it would be the short version for the free men and the longer version for the Masters.

“Her Magnificence..” The women trailed off clearly trying to hold back tears.

Daenerys sighed another person scared of her dragons. “I assure you Rhaegal will only hurt the Sons of The Harpy. He was only hunting down criminals. Your son is perfectly safe.” She assured the woman, gesturing for her to be brought out and the next petitioner brought in.

“M-my former master had k-killed my husband.” She said in bastard valyrian her eyes downcast refusing to look up. Her voice was shaking and it was obvious this was still a very recent thing that still hurt. “He h-had my son…” She trailed off again. “He had s-stripped me and planned to r-rape me and m-murder my s-son while I watched.”

The son interjected. “Then the dragon swooped in and took the bad man away!” He exclaimed happily making a swooping motion with his hand that wasn’t clinging to his mother.

The mother nodded, still refusing to look up at her. “We came to thank you and your dragon. W-without it my son would be dead.” She sobbed uncontrollably.
Daenerys smiled. This was a welcome change. It was reassuring to know that Rhaegal had targeted actually terrible people and not just people in gold masks. Someone other than her appreciated what Rhaegal had done, even her advisors weren’t happy with how brutal he was; Lord Tyrion especially. She stood from the bench she had been sitting on for the last couple of hours. “How would you and your son like to meet Rhaegal and thank the dragon personally?”

The son nodded eagerly and jumped up and down. “Can we mama? Please oh please!”

“Your Grace, I’m not sure-” Ser Barristan interjected.

She held up a hand and he fell silent. “I trust Rhaegal, he won’t hurt them.”

Lord Tyrion spoke against it next. “I’m not sure it’s safe either.” She held up a hand for him to stop but he ignored her. “Dragons only respect those of Valyrian descent, it’s possible he becomes hostile when faced by someone with common blood.”

She frowned at him. “Thank you for your input, Lord Tyrion. But I trust Rhaegal to behave himself.” Her voice had an edge to it, warning him not to speak against her again.

“Lady..” She trailed off asking for the woman’s name.

“Mara, Your Magnificence.” She replied.

“And your son?”

“Tyto.”

“Would you Lady Mara and your son, Lord Tyto like to visit Rhaegal with me?” She offered again and this time none of her advisors spoke against her. Tyto puffed up his chest at being called a Lord and strutted around like a peacock before falling over. Daenerys couldn’t help but let out a small giggle at the sight.

Her son got up and ran to his mother and tugged on her arm, begging her to let them go. “If it pleases Your Magnificence, we would like that very much.”
Danaerys smiled and told them to follow her. They did so although her Unsullied guards tailing them. She went to her rooms where she had just assumed Rhaegal would be still perched on the pyramid. “Come,” she beckoned to them as they entered the room.

She walked out onto the balcony that was now cleaned up from the bloody mess that Rhaegal had made there last night. She looked up and was happy to see him still on the pyramid, perched above her balcony, with his eyes closed, he was clearly dozing right now. “Rhaegal!” She called to him, if he waked then great, if not they could see him sleeping, it was probably safer anyway.

Rhaegal’s head shot up and he dove his head down to her placing it at her chest. She gently stroked the side of his head before gesturing to Mara and Tyto to come out. She kept her hand on Rhaegal’s head to calm him as he growled briefly. “This is Lord Tyto and Lady Mara.” She explained to him never ceasing her stroking. “They came to thank you for saving them last night.”

Lady Mara gave a bow and Rhaegal preened. She thanked him and seemingly losing interest he turned back to her rubbing his head into her bosom.

Tyto reached out to touch Rhaegal and his mother smacked his hand away, scolding him. Rhaegal hissed letting out small puffs of smoke. “Don’t touch him Tyto, it’s not safe.” She hissed at him.

Daenerys smiled and Rhaegal looked away from her to look at him. She crouched down next to Tyto and grabbed his hands. “Do you want to pet Rhaegal?” She asked him and he nodded eagerly. She looked back at the mother who reluctantely gave a small nod as well.

She picked Tyto up with one arm cradling him to her chest so he could reach Rhaegal. Rhaegal lowered his head and rubbed it into her unoccupied shoulder so he could pet him and he did. “It’s hot.” He said as he quickly pulled his hand away.

She nodded. “My brother told me that dragons are fire made flesh.” That was back before Viserys went mad- back when he had been a good brother. She had been as little as Tyto back then.

“Thank you, Lord Dragon,” Tyto said as he resumed his petting of the dragon with a shy smile.

“His name is Rhaegal.” Daenerys laughed at that- the innocence of a child. Her own Rhaego would have been about as old as Tyto is now. He was dead, never born because she had made the mistake of trusting a witch doctor. It should have been Rhaego, not Tyto who she was holding as he pet
Rhaegal. She would never have children of her own now.

She set Tyto down and spoke with a heavy voice. “I’m afraid I have other business to attend to. My unsullied will show you out.”

“What do you say.” Mara hissed at Tyto.

“Thank you Lady Daneriesis.” He butchered her name horribly and while only a few minutes ago she would have laughed that; she instead grimaced. Rhaego should have been the one struggling to say her name. She watched blankly without saying a word as they exited the room and the unsullied escorted them outside the temple.

Rhaegal as if sensing the change in mood looked at her, notably concerned and butted his shoulder with his head.

She took a moment to gather herself before going back to the throne room to answer more petitions. For the next few hours, she had spent them much the same as she had before Mara and Tyto had come. She had told people that Rhaegal was safe and would only hunt the masters more times then he could count. She had told people that she wouldn’t punish Rhaegal for killing murderers even more. There were a few common squabbles, things like disputes between a master and a freeman over who should profit from the masters selling off the wares the former slave had made for them while in the masters employ. She had let Lord Tyrion and Ser Barristan handle that one. For the most part, however, they were just about Rhaegal.

When all of her petitioners were gone for the day she rushed back to the privacy of her room. She had sent both her handmaidens away along with Missandei in order to be alone. She poured herself a glass of wine and sat down on her balcony. Rhaegal’s head was in her lap instantly, comforting her.

“I lied when I said I named you after my brother Rhaegar.” She spoke softly to the dragon, she wasn’t sure why she was telling him this- perhaps she just needed to speak to someone and she was a Queen she couldn’t confide in anyone like she wanted to. She was a Queen and a Queen had to be strong at all times- couldn’t show weakness to anyone. “I lied to myself as well. I didn’t name you after Rhaegal but Rhaego. My son.”

She took a long sip from her glass of wine. “Rhaego was to be my son with Khal Drogo. The Stallion that mounts the world they called him, the Dothraki were going to cross the poison water for him. To give him the Iron Throne.” She took another drink.
“I was a fool. My Moon and Stars was hurt in a fight and...” She was crying now as she rubbed the top of Rhaegal’s head. “I had stopped a girl, Mirri Maz Durr from being raped by my Khalasar.” She spat with extreme venom. “I thought she was trying to help, to repay me. She offered to heal my Khal.” She sighed and took another drink. “I was a fool. She didn’t heal him but killed him.”

“When he was dying I trusted her again.” The words were just tumbling out of her mouth now along with her tears. She had never truly gotten over this. She knew she never would. “She promised to save my Moon and Stars with a sacrifice.” She smiled bitterly. “I gave her my horse, my Silver that Drogo had given me for our wedding. To the Dothraki, there was nothing more cherished than their stallion.”

“She took my baby, my precious Rhaego as her price. For only death can pay for life.” Daenerys proclaimed to Rhaegal. “My baby was stillborn, hideous with scales, the tail of a lizard and the wings of a bat. Filled with grave worms as if he had been dead for years.” She wept. “My Moon and Stars lived but not really. He was a shell. He could not talk or ride a horse. He could not feel, he was a corpse, not a man.” She wiped away her tears and took another drink from her wine. “I killed him myself. I smothered him with my own pillow.”

She had told herself that for so long yet she couldn’t stop herself from looking back now.

“The witch gave me a prophecy,” She recalled. “When the sun rises in the west and sets in the east. When the seas go dry and mountains blow in the wind like leaves. When your womb quickens again, and you bear a living child. Then he will return, and not before.” She squeezed her wine glass and stopped her stroking of Rhaegal instead just resting her hand on his crown. “I will never have children of my own. It should have been my Rhaego here, not Tyto who was meeting you.” She snarled.

“I got that bitch back. I burnt her alive for her crimes.” Daenerys chuckled to herself. “She was calm and accepting of her death when the fire started but in the end she screamed, the fire always makes them scream. She died on the funeral pyre with my Moon and Stars and my dragon eggs. I walked into the fire and came out with three dragons.”

“I named all three of you for Rhaego. Drogon was named after his father who gave him to me. Viserion after the brother who made me realize just how much I loved Rhaego. He threatened to kill Rhaego and I watched as he died by a crown of molten gold. I did not feel any sadness for he had threatened my son.” She smiled a sad smile and resumed her caressing of Rhaegal’s head. “I named you for my darling Rhaego, the son that was lost to me. For the longest time, I thought that the witch’s death bought me my dragons but I was wrong. I wasn’t the first person to burn people alive in an attempt to hatch a dragon. It was my darling Rhaego’s sacrifice that was the price I paid for my dragons. A mother willingly sacrificing her children was the cost.”

She laughed and emptied the last of her wine glass. The glass dropped to the floor. “My children were born of Fire and Blood; as the witch said only death can pay for life.”
Daenerys lifted Rhaegal’s head off of her lap and went back inside to go to sleep. When she awoke in the morning, Rhaegal was not there.

Chapter End Notes

So quite a few things happened in this chapter. Ser Barristan is not dead in this, his cannon death was a disgrace and completely needless. He is crippled because I have other plans for him than simply being Lord Commander of the Kingsguard and there should still be consequences of the Harpy attack but he is not dead. (Yet)

I don't like the proposed solution for dealing with the rebellious masters, at all in fact but there has to be some compromise. Bringing Slavery back is more stupid than abolishing it in one day was and there has to be some give on both sides in a proposed deal to avoid war. Obviously Daenerys is very big on not punishing children for the sins of their father and by seizing the assets of all convicted Harpies she is doing just that but there is no good moral alternative.

Jon does not know Valyrian now that he is Rhaegal, only the specific commands she taught Rhaegal. Jon does not speak Valyrian in this story, except maybe way later on if he decides to learn.

Yeah, Tyrion is a hypocrite that might just be my frustration bleeding through. We'll understand more of his actions and what causes such a bipolar personality in him when we eventually get to the first Tyrion chapter at like chapter 20.

We know Daenerys is brutal. Despite what the oh so moral northerners and randomly Tyrion would have you believe that is a normal thing in war. The war against the Harpies is a war by all accounts. The Harpies do deserve to die and she won't ever apologize for their deaths. Daenerys doesn't want innocents caught in the crossfire but she has never had any qualms about hurting the people who are guilty. Being brutal and savage does not mean mad or evil. (And both are theoretical constructs that don't actually exist)

Jon Snow would obviously prefer not to be so brutal in dealing with the Harpies—probably. Jon is not a Stark anymore and he can not do anything other than savagely kill the Harpies. He doesn't speak Valyrian so he can't spy on them, even if he could he couldn't tell her what he finds. He is a dragon (literally) and by nature, Dragons are brutal beasts who enjoy killing and burning. Jon would obviously never do nothing when he could help so he kills the Harpies that he finds on the streets that night.

There is zero chance Daenerys is the first Targaryen to try human sacrifice to awaken dragons. In the books, we see that human sacrifice has power, especially the sacrifice of important people and willing sacrifices. That will be a re-occurring theme of this story.

I honestly when I first read Rhaegal's name had forgotten about Rhaegar ever existing and thought she named him after Rhaego.
Next chapter we get the beginning of what should be a better Dorne plot than the show and should be a somewhat original take on Dorne's story as a whole with Jamie's first chapter of the story.

Read and Review. If we reach 100 Kudos on this before next Tuesday I'll post an additional chapter this week.
Jamie I

Chapter Summary

Start of a new, hopefully, better Dorne Plot.

Chapter Notes

Since we passed 100 Kudos on AO3, here's a bonus chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jamie wasn’t sure what he had been thinking when he had offered to go bring Myrcella home. Perhaps he had wanted to finally be a father to his daughter. Perhaps he had wanted to just make Cersei happy again, the death of Joffrey had broken her. Perhaps he had simply felt useless sitting on the sidelines while everyone else did something. Maybe he had wanted to relive his glory days and without his sword hand felt the need to prove to himself he still had it. Whatever the reason it had been a stupid plan from the start.

He had underestimated how much the Dornish hated the Lannisters, he had been a fool who thought a bag of gold would be enough to buy the mariner’s silence. He had misunderstood the greed of the small folk, they weren’t a lord whose faux honor stopped them from reneging on a deal. They already had gotten their money from Jamie and without the promise of more they had nothing to lose by selling him out. They had likely been rewarded for that by Prince Doran for that as well.

They had never even reached the Water Gardens, only two days after they arrived in Dorne they had been accosted. Bronn had fought hard but Jamies assumed he had lost, he was without armor as they were trying to blend in and three on one would be a tough ask for anyone even with armor.

Jamie looked down at his golden hand and cursed it. He had been completely useless, unable to even defeat one woman in single combat. He had been felled with complete ease by a girl with a whip. He was too incompetent without his good hand that he failed to land even one blow against her before he was knocked out.

Jamie was alone in a dark damp cell now. He had been there for what felt like a moon by now. He had neither seen or heard Bronn during that time, he was probably dead. His only visitor was a mute steward who brought him meals, never answering any of his questions or saying even a single word to him.
Jamie had been in captivity before when the young fool, Robb Stark had taken him captive. He had been there for eight moons before Lady Catelyn released him and had Brienne escort him back to Kings Landing. He had been treated horribly by the Starks, they had given him little food, kept him shackled the entire time and had not even given him a chamber pot. There were guards on him at all times and he never had a moment alone.

The Dornish captivity was comparatively a vacation to his time as the Stark’s prisoner. He received three meals a day, and it was not scraps but luxurious fine dining. He wasn’t given silverware with his meals so he had to eat with his hands but he was given a freshly filled water basin every morning to clean himself. He had a chamberpot of his own as well as a bed to sleep on. He was not in shackles at all either, just in a barred cell.

Jamie wasn’t stupid, he knew that they weren’t treating him so well because they were kinder then Robb Stark. When he was a hostage of the Starks, he was the most feared warrior in all of Westeros and possibly the known world. He was such a danger that he had to be kept weak and in chains or else he would escape. Now he was without his hand and less of a threat than the average squire.

He could probably escape if he wanted too, they did open the door to his cell when they brought him a fresh water basin and he was sure he could overpower the steward if need be. But what was the purpose? He would be immediately recaptured by the first guard he came across, he would be weaponless and helpless with only one good hand. All escaping would do was cause the death of a steward girl and the wounding of his last bit of pride.

There were footsteps on the stairs outside his cell, someone was descending them and coming to visit him as he was the only occupant of this particular dungeon. It was a single small room with his cell occupying most of it with bars in place of a wall to stop him from attacking any visitors. He had sworn that his breakfast had been only a short while earlier, maybe an hour or two. Was he receiving an actual visitor? The footsteps were louder than the stewards usually were and there was clacking to the steps. His visitor was likely someone of nobility as the rich favored thick soles on their shoes that did not wear out.

The door opened and a woman walked in. She was beautiful there was no denying that. Her figure was buxom and she had curves in all the right places. Her skin was olive with a perfectly symmetrical face and dark tempting eyes. Her black hair was thick and long, wavy and hanging loose. She looked like sin incarnate and if it wasn’t for her jewelry he might have believed she was a whore.

She wore a skin-tight black dress of the finest silk, her neckline was low and teased plenty of cleavage and the skirt was short- not even reaching her knees. She had high heels on her feet, odd
for a whore but not entirely impossible. She wore an ornate necklace with rubies hanging on it, one lying directly between her breasts and tempting many eyes. The most important identifying feature for her, however, was the crown on her head. A simple band with only one ruby shaped like the sun resting on her forehead. There was no question who this was, she was the ruling princess of Dorne, Arianne Martell. Her father must have passed recently for when he had left for Dorne it was Prince Doran in power.

Jamie stood to his feet. “Princess Arianne,” he greeted her with a slight bow. “What brings the ruling Princess of Dorne to visit me?”

She ignored his greeting and sat on a stool outside his cell. She crossed her legs and Jamie could almost see under her dress. “My dear cousins have a plan to kill Myrcella Baratheon, as vengeance for Prince Oberyn. They want your head as well.” She examined her immaculately cut fingernails and spoke plainly as if she was just discussing the weather not plotting murder.

“Why tell me this?” Jamie growled lowly. There was no reason for her to share her plans, if she had murdered her father like Jamie was inclined to believe then surely she wasn’t foolish enough to monologue for no reason. She wanted something from him.

She ignored him. “I have no desire to enter a war with the Crown and let so many Dornishmen die. However, I too desire revenge for Prince Oberyn and I will have that revenge, the only question is how.” Her eyes gleamed and Jamie knew that he would not like her plan at all.

“I do not want revenge against Cersei Lannister but House Lannister. Killing Myrcella, an innocent child would bring me no pleasure but I will do it if need be.” She smiled at him and flashed her sparkling white teeth. “You will leave the Kingsguard and take up your rightful position as Lord of Casterly Rock. You are unfit to protect the King when you can’t even defeat one measly woman.”

Jamie’s jaw clenched and he balled his good hand into a fist. That defeat irked him and she was only repeating the hard truth that Jamie refused to admit to himself. He was not fit to guard the King. He did not know why she wanted him lording over Casterly Rock but he probably would end up there without her influence anyways, if that was the price to pay for Myrcella’s freedom then he would accept it gladly.

“You will declare Myrcella as your heir and her children will inherit Casterly Rock. House Lannister will die, there might be Lannister blood sitting the Iron Throne and lording over Casterly Rock but they will not go by the Lannister name. House Baratheon and House Martell will reign eternal and no one will remember the Lannister name in history. No one will owe fealty to house Lannister and they’ll have no armies. House Lannister will die with you.”
“Why on earth would I ever accept that? You expect me to spit upon my father’s grave and give away his legacy? Do you really think I’m selfish enough to value my own life over my house? You’re mad!” Jamie laughed, her plan was completely absurd.

The Princess smiled at him. “Yes, I expect you will. Tomorrow at the wedding of the Princess Myrcella and Prince Trystane you will share the joyous news that you have left the Kingsguard and are taking up your rightful position at Casterly Rock. You will declare Myrcella Baratheon as your heir in front of all the Lords and Ladies who have traveled to see the wedding of the Princess.”

Her smile widened and Jamie could see it for the trap that it was. She might look pleasing but only on the outside, she was rotten to the bone, cruel and unfeeling. “If you do not share the news then Myrcella will die at her own wedding.” Jamie tried to hide his reaction to that tidbit but wasn’t sure he was successful.

Still, he tried to hide his true feelings on the matter and appear cold and uninterested in what happened to her. “Why would I ever choose my niece over the rest of my house? You’ve lost your mind, Princess.”

What she said next made Jamie’s blood run cold. “I find there’s very little a father won’t do for their children.”

Jamie did a fairly good job of concealing his reaction, only tightening his fist which he didn’t think she noticed. “Those are just rumors, we’re not Targaryens. My sister was faithful to her husband, her children are all trueborn Baratheons.”

Arianne laughed out loud, both a beautiful and vile sound. “Your sister is being held by the faith until her trial for her infidelity to her late husband King Robert. One of her key witnesses against her is Lancel Lannister.” She explained, talking slowly as if Jamie were a small child. “He testifies that Cersei fucked him while you were held captive, she would moan your name while she did.”

Jamie wanted to deny it but Tyrion’s parting words to him echoed in his head. “Cersei is a lying whore, she’s been fucking Lancel and Osmund Kettleblack and probably Moon Boy for all I know.” He knew she and Tyrion were right and it hurt to accept it but he could no longer deny it. Tyrion, the brother who hated him after Jamie finally told him the truth. The brother who had murdered his own father.

Jamie’s jaw clenched, there were worse things in the world than letting his daughter inherit Casterly Rock, right? He couldn’t let her die. He sighed audibly. “Will you permit Myrcella to
“leave Dorne with me if I declare her my heir?”

Arianne grinned at him, she knew she had won. “Of course, Myrcella and Trystane would return with you to Casterly Rock. They would be allowed to live out the rest of their days peacefully and safe from harm.”

Jamie sighed yet again, he really never had any choice in this. He wouldn’t let Myrcella die when he could do something to stop it, he would not lose a kid again before he had even known them. If that meant that the greatness of House Lannister ended with him, that his father Tywin never had a legacy of his own then so be it. House Lannister had a lot of debts for the awful things they had done- that Jamie had done and a Lannister always pays their debts. “Fine, I’ll accept your terms.” He agreed, feeling like he had just made a deal with the devil. By the smile on her face, he probably had.

Chapter End Notes

The plan to kill Myrcella never made any sense in the show, was it Cersei Lannister they wanted revenge from? Why? Myrcella wasn't even a Lannister so all the sand snakes did by killing her and the rest of the Martells was destroy Dorne in a civil war and what realistically should have started a war with the crown. Tyrion or Tywin should have been the targets of their wrath or at the very least someone who is actually a Lannister (Like Jamie who they just let leave Dorne). With the insight of Arianne, they choose to cripple House Lannister permanently when Jamie falls into their laps, by stealing their most prized land from the Lannister name forever.

Would Jamie choose Myrcella over the Lannister name? After losing his first son without having ever known him at the hands of his brother (As he believes) and watching that loss nearly destroy Cersei, it is entirely possible that he would. Jamie is trying to be more honorable and letting an innocent child die for a name is not that. Additionally, Jamie wants to be a father to his remaining children, and having Myrcella as his heir would not be completely awful even if she's not actually a Lannister.

Jamie is forced to realize that without one hand he can not be an able protector or knight and certainly not kingsguard as he is nowhere near the same warrior now. I think leaving the Kingsguard is a logical character progression for him at this point when he is so easily defeated and realizes she can no longer do his duty even without the blackmail from Arianne Martell.

The whole Loras being imprisoned for being gay thing and Cersei on trial for incest is stupid and not actual issues in the books. No one cares about those things in the world of ASOIAF, it was just the TV show trying to bring modern issues in for the sake of the ratings that would plummet if they didn't make incest out as evil. Margaery was imprisoned for the reasons she was in the books, infidelity to Tommen and Cersei was imprisoned for infidelity as well to her late husband. Jamie is not being prosecuted for sleeping with Cersei because the only crime that breaks is oathbreaking since the
world of ASOIAF is very sexist and no one cares if he sleeps with a whore. Also because Cersei is not just being prosecuted for fucking him but Lancel, Kettleblack, etc. Men she was not married to. The capital plot will more closely follow that of a Feast for Crows since the show one was completely moronic.

In this, the Tysha confession and the ensuing conversation where Tyrion says he murdered Joffrey and Cersei is a whore does in fact happen since it's extremely vital to both of their character arcs and leaving it out was incredibly stupid by the writers. Again more on that when we get the eventual first Tyrion chapter in like chapter 20.

Side note: How does Myrcella go from not having yet flowered in season 2 (And in the books at least being 9 years old) to being 19 when she died according to the wiki and not yet being married. When the heck would she be considered old enough? The wikis incredibly impossible one year per season timeline would mean that she was at least 16 when she left and not considered old enough for marriage when Sansa was married at 15 to Tyrion in the same timeline. Yeah, show Timeline is stupid so I'm using the Vandal Proof Book timeline spreadsheet one based on moon positioning described in the books and travel times. So from the start of the saga, it's only been four years, not six and Myrcella has only just turned 14 at this point in the story mostly for the sake of the plot.

Next chapter we have another short one with the first chapter of the saga from my least favorite character in the show, Sansa. (Book Sansa/Alayne is great though)

Read and Review.
Sansa I

Chapter Summary

Sansa arrives at Castle Black

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Chapter 7: Sansa I

Sansa could scarcely believe the talk of the wildlings who were now settled into the gift, a land that had been uninhabited for centuries was now overflowing with the people north of the wall. Savages, who raided, raped, and murdered the northerners for as long as anyone could remember. Those same savages considered Jon to be some sort of god almost.

All of the wildlings held the Lord Commander Jon Snow in the highest respect after he had apparently saved them from the Others and an army of the dead? Sansa doubted that the dead really had attacked them but Jon had brought them all south of the wall for whatever reason. What mattered wasn’t why he brought them over but that he did and now had an army entirely loyal to him. They could retake Winterfell from the Bolton’s and get back their home.

They would be arriving at Castle Black within the hour, herself, Brienne, and Podrick. Sansa had never expected to see her first husband’s squire again. She had presumed him dead when he didn’t testify at Lord Tyrion’s trial but apparently Ser Jaime Lannister had given him to Brienne to go find her and her sister and protect them. Podrick was still a bit shy and not very talkative but he was growing into his own person and at least trying to learn to fight for himself now. He was someone Sansa could trust to always tell her the truth, not just because he was an honest person but because he was an awful liar.

Lady Brienne isn’t really a lady- she is brutish, big and ugly with no interest in finding a husband. Brienne was everything the stories said about knights even if she wasn’t officially one. She follows through on her word even when her task seems impossible. She actually cares about defending the innocent and protecting the weak. She is gallant and strong. She had stayed loyal to the Stark women even after they had all rejected her services. Brienne was a lot like Arya was and apparently they had found her in the company of the hound last year but had since lost her. A few moons ago she had thought herself to be the last trueborn Stark but now it was at least possible that Bran, Rickon, and Arya were all still amongst the living.

It was an odd experience for Sansa to have someone loyal exclusively to her, like Brienne
supposedly was. She had thought Ser Dontos was that person but she had been wrong, he had been a puppet to Lord Petyr Baelish; to murder the King and smuggle her out with him to the Vale. She had thought Lord Baelish was acting in her best interests and cared for her but he had sold her to the Bolton’s to further his own agenda. He had wanted her to poison Lord Ramsay and take control of Winterfell and the north by extension from within in the name of their child, a union between Bolton and Stark, a child that neither northernman nor southerner would be able to contest their claim to being the Warden of The North. He had grossly overestimated the freedom she would have with Ramsay as her husband and underestimated the cruelty she would endure. She was glad his plan would never bear any fruit. There was no one she could truly trust to put her first always except for herself.

And Jon her mind traitorously whispered to herself. She wanted to trust her brother she really did but why would he put her interests first after how she had always treated him as children like he was the lowest of dirt. She was terrified to meet with him today; he would be perfectly justified to return her to her darling husband. That’s what would be expected by the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. They were sworn to take no part in the wars of man. She didn’t think he would- he had hosted Stannis’s army and provided them with food and supplies for almost a whole year after all. But still- she couldn’t trust anyone but herself.

Even if she couldn’t let herself trust him, she was still excited to see her brother again. She hadn’t seen him in almost three years and the last time they actually had a conversation with each other had been at least twice that. She hadn’t even said farewell to him in Winterfell when he left to the wall and her to Kings Landing. To Sansa, Jon was always just the bastard. The shame of House Stark. She had let her mother poison her opinion of him without any justification. She barely even remembered what he looked like. In her head, she often pictured him as a younger version of their father, with his grey eyes and brown mousy hair.

“They killed the Lord Commander and expect us to do nothing to retaliate?” She heard a voice hiss. She couldn’t tell who said it, drowned out as it was in a sea of noise.

“We are not fucking kneelers!” A woman proclaimed loudly. “We avenge our fallen!”

Sansa pulled hard on the reins of her horse forcing it to a stop. She turned the horse towards the large cluster of people that the voice had come from.

“Lady Sansa,” Brienne called after her as she ventured away from Castle Black and towards the gathering. “We’re almost to the Castle- probably a half-hour away at this point. Where are you going?”

Sansa ignored her as another voice added their own complaints. “Snow saved our lives and those fuckers killed him, we should return the favor!” A man called out from the crowd and cheers
answered his declaration.

Sansa dismounted from her horse and pushed her way through the crowd, caring very little about who she shoved out of the way. They couldn’t be talking about Jon. They had to be talking about someone else - some wildling commander named Snow. Jon couldn’t have died not now. Not when she was so close to being reunited with him.

“Jon wouldn’t want this!” A man with a strong eastern accent shouted. “He was trying to make peace with his enemies, we have to be united if we want to win against the Others when they come!”

She rudely shoved people out of the way to see what they were gathered around - praying she would not find her brother’s corpse at the front of the crowd. She shoved a little girl - probably around four years of age to the ground in her rush. She trampled an old man - her boots slamming into his back with a sick crunch. She was surrounded by people all jockeying with her to get to the front of the throng. Yet despite how much shoving and stronger competition there was it was her who stumbled out the front of the congregation; falling on her face with no bodies in front of her to shove off of.

She didn’t feel like a winner when she saw what they were crowded around. Or rather who. With all the onlookers behind them, there was a group of seven at the front. Four of them wore the signature all-black outfits of the Night’s Watch. A fifth wore more noble clothes with an Onion embroidered on his chest - the sigil of House Seaworth, Sansa knew. He too wore a black cloak and black pants but his shirt was a dull grey. He was an older man but still looked to be quite fit. At his hip, he held a sword with a wolf pommel. Unless Sansa was mistaken this was Stannis’s former hand, Lord Davos Seaworth. The sixth person up there was a woman dressed in Red. She had red hair with a golden choker and a ruby on it. If Sansa wasn’t mistaken she was one of the mystical red priests who followed the Lord of Light. The seventh man was obviously a wildling. He was huge with broad shoulders and would rival Brienne even in height. He had a giant red beard and wild untamable red hair. His face was very masculine with hard and high cheeks and a sharp jaw. His appearance completely paled in comparison to that of the man chained to a wooden platform behind him.

Lying on the platform was Jon Snow, the only clothing on his body was a metal chain coiled around his chest as if he was going to get up and run away. That was what he had looked like, Sansa remembered upon finally seeing his face again. He had long black hair that naturally curled even in death. He had a thin patch of stubble on his jaw and chin that made him look much older than his seventeen years that she believed he was. His face was haggard and follow with a very sharp jawline. Not at all like she remembered of her father - the hair and maybe the eyes made him look the same from a distance but the similarities were mostly at the surface level. His eyes were narrow and closed and Sansa wanted to pretend he was just sleeping.
His chest was gruesome and littered with scars. The years had not been kind to him. There were five open wounds on his chest; one was just to the left of his belly button there was small cut, likely made by a small knife, bad but certainly not lethal. On his abdomen, again the left-handed side, directly beneath his rib cage there was another gash. This was the widest of all the scars but also the shortest- the blade that had done that one had stabbed deep. There was a pair of parallel slash marks on his ribs that had likely punctured his lungs. The final open wound was one directly over his heart. A twisted crescent shaped cut that went deep enough to see his ribcage had almost certainly been the blow that ended him.

Sansa tried to stay strong but it was hard after seeing all her hopes come crashing down. She had needed him to let her stay at Castle Black or more optimally, come with her to take back their home. She could not survive on her own, on the run from Ramsay forever. She had needed to have her brother back- to have some part of her family with her again. Now that was no longer possible. She hadn’t known Jon well enough to truly mourn him. She mourned what he might have become to her, that he was her second chance and what he represented for her not what he was. She mourned that she could not rely on him to help her get her revenge. She could no longer turn to him to claim back her home.

“You’re Sansa Stark, aren’t you?” The man she thought was Davos Seaworth asked her with a heavy southern accent as she laid on the ground staring up at Jon’s body in the wildlings arms.

She nodded feebly in return. She was crying in earnest now, no longer caring who saw her weakness.

“Your brother and his wolf died at the hands of his brothers, betrayed by his own men- eight days ago.” The old man explained, his voice shaking with pain at the still very recent memory. “We’ll be doing his burning in about an hour. If you want to say a few words about who he was...” He scratched behind his ear, a nervous tick Sansa knew. That was one of Lord Baelish’s many lessons he had given her. Learning to read deeper into the smallest of actions and movements was a vital skill in the Game of Thrones he had taught her.

Sansa stood to her feet and looked at Jon’s cold body wrapped in a blanket of snow before turning her gaze back to Davos. “He won’t be burned.” She told him with a tone that conveyed much more confidence than she felt. “He is a Stark, his body belongs in the Winterfell crypts with his ancestors.”

The red-headed wildling laughed and clapped one of the men of the Night’s watch on the back causing him to stumble into the snow. “We burn our dead here, so they don’t come back.”

Sansa didn’t quite understand what was going on, why they were all so insistent on believing that the dead could come back but she knew a lost cause when she saw one. Besides, it’s not like she
could get back into Winterfell in order to bury him any time soon. “Very well. I’ll be there.”

Sansa was shocked at the turnout for Jon’s cremation, she knew he was popular among the wildlings but the crowd that had gathered around his pyre went as fast as the eye could see. There were thousands there to watch him be burned- the majority of them wildlings but there were a few hundred men of the Night’s Watch there as well along with some of the last remnants of Stannis’s army.

Ser Davos had asked her to do the eulogy for Jon but she had declined the offer. She didn’t really know him or who he had become since they all left Winterfell. He had then tried to push the job onto the Night’s Watchman Sansa had learned was Eddison of House Tollett but he had also refused the role citing that he would not be able to stop himself from turning it to a war rally to avenge Jon. The red-headed wildling, Tormund had also declined the offer for similar reasons to Sansa and Edd both. So despite knowing him for little over a year, it was Ser Davos who was giving his eulogy.

Ser Davos ached and the crowd silenced as he stood up from behind the funeral pyre. “We’re here to remember the life of the late Lord Commander, Jon Snow.” He called out to the men and women congregated below. His voice was loud and clear but he wasn’t yelling. “Some of us knew him as the Lord Commander, some as a friend, some as family, and some as a savior.” He looked around the room at the people each one was applicable too when he said it, catching Sansa’s eyes when he said, family. “Some of us knew him our entire lives, some served with him for three years, others- myself included only knew him for a short time. One thing we can all agree on whether we knew him for five minutes or five years is that Jon Snow was a good man.”

“Jon Snow always had a good heart, he always did what he thought was right regardless of how it would hurt him. Jon Snow always put the needs of everyone else over his own self-interests or personal vendettas.” Sansa knew that people’s goodness was always over-exaggerated at funerals but the little Sansa remembered of Jon a few years back he always was out for others first before himself. When Jeyne had taken to calling Arya *Horseface* for a time, Jon had always distracted Jeyne when Arya was around by doing something that made her insult the bastard instead.

“I can’t claim to know Jon Snow my whole life or even enough to call him a friend but he was a great man. The kind of man whom we should all aspire to be.” It was easy to see why Stannis had appointed Davos as his hand. He had a way with words and a passion in everything that he said that one couldn’t help but be captivated by.

“Jon Snow never wore a crown or fought for any glory. He fought for the survival of all of mankind. He was the sword in the darkness. He was the watcher on the walls. He was the fire that
burned against the cold, the light that brought forth the dawn, the horn that woke the sleepers, the lone shield that guarded all the realms of men. He lived and died at his post. Jon Snow pledged his life to the Night’s Watch for all the nights to come.”

Lord Davos Seaworth lowered his torch to the first column of the pyre. “And now his watch had ended.” The crowd parroted the words back at him- at least the black brothers did, only some of the wildlings partook.

He passed the torch to Eddison Tollett who repeated his words and lit the second column. He handed the torch to Tormund who snapped the same message as he lit the third pyre and held the torch out to her.

It was Sansa’s turn now, she took the torch from Tormund in her trembling hands. With both hands, she lowered it down to the final column. “And now his watch had ended.” She said softly as she lit the final spike, the crowd echoing her words.

Her brother’s body went up in flames as the oil he had been doused in burned brightly. Her proximity to the blaze caused her tears to evaporate on her cheek with a hiss as they turned into nothing but steam. There was no more denying the truth, Jon Snow was dead and she was once again alone.

Chapter End Notes

The relationship between Sansa and Jon is so comically over-romanticized by most fans and the show itself. Jon and Sansa don't even say goodbye to each other before Jon leaves for Castle Black and her for Kings Landing. Sansa in the books never even thinks about Jon during her chapters and I'm not sure Jon ever thinks fondly of Sansa either. At this point they're clinging to each other because they're the last Starks* but they never had an ideal relationship and the idea that Sansa would remember much about him is stupid.

TV shows and books seem to think that you never forget a face and they instantly recognize people after years of not seeing them and can recall their image perfectly. That's not actually at all how the brain works, seeing someone you've never been close to after years apart you might vaguely recognize their face upon seeing them but most of the details beyond coloring are completely forgotten. People not recognizing Arya is Jeyne in the books is logical because they don't really know each other and as such don't actually remember her face (Or voice).

I'll be switching to updating bi-weekly now since I'm so far ahead right now so expect the next chapter on Friday. Next up is probably my favorite chapter so far with Arya I
and a very original interpretation of the faceless men.

Read and Review.
Despite the fact that Arya will be identified as people other than Arya in most of her chapters they will still be titled Arya for organizational purposes.

Once, a girl had dreamed of being a wolf, of hunting with her pack under the light of the moon. Once she had enjoyed the taste of deer in her mouth and howling at the moon when she closed her eyes. A girl once dreamed of a family in the north, of an older brother who she would go riding with. A half-brother who she had played with, a brother who protected and taught her despite the outrage of her Lady mother. Of a little brother, she had always beaten in archery practice. A pretty sister who did needlework and made fun of her, who had gotten her wolf killed. A smaller brother who she had held with a smile. A father who had been good to her and had been executed by the cruel child king. That girl had been given to the Many-Faced God when she gave a man to the Many-Faced God who had not been chosen by him.

A girl no longer experienced those things. Now when a boy closed his eyes to sleep he would see his father beat him until there were bruises on his dark brown skin. He would wake up and find his pale skin unblemished from the man’s abuse. His smashed face and a broken jaw, smooth and fully functioning. The boy had been killed by his own father as he had asked of the Many-Faced God to end his suffering and abuse so the Many-Faced God had given him what he wished.

A girl would see her brother rape her, his meaty hands untangled in her long blonde hair as he mercilessly thrust himself into her. His hips slapping into hers with a loud smack as a girl cried out in pain at the penetration. Day and night she had been raped for years until the girl had gone to the Many-Faced God and given him her life to escape his cruel grip on her.

Now a girl would cradle her own child dead in her arms, their skull having been smashed by a mountain of a man. Their head an unrecognizable splatter of bone and blood. Her child had been only a year old and he had died so brutally in front of the mother. A girl could feel the woman’s pain the loss of her husband and son. She mourned for them but she did not know them. The woman had taken her own life to be reunited with her family.

A boy would remember as he had his skin removed from his arms as a man stood over him with a cold knife and a cruel smile. The boy had taken his own life, running into the embrace of the Many-Faced God to get away from the torment the cruel man had inflicted on him. He could still feel the pain of the bitter steel on his tender flesh as he was flayed alive. The man had not had the mercy to let a boy die quickly, he had left him in the cell, torturing him for days on end as he starved. A boy had smashed his skull into the floor until he had died.
A girl remembered life as a whore made to serve the whims of rich white men. She would fake her pleasure as she rode the man until he was spent and then was immediately sent on to another fat man. She would earn her master more than enough money to feed and house herself daily but she would see no coin for her services. She had gone to the Many-Faced God and begged to be free of her master. She had gotten her wish.

A boy remembered his time as a farmer working the land for the rich master who had beat him every time he stumbled or slowed his pace. He remembered the hot sun beating down on him as he slaved away and suffering from heatstroke as the master beat him for not working hard enough. He had begged for death through his sickness and the masters’ cruelty because of it. The Many-Faced God took his life as well and freed him from his torment giving him to the void.

A girl remembered being blind and spending his days on the street begging for coin. A girl would go to bed hungry after her bowl was emptied by a gruff man. A girl would sleep on the stone steps and pray that she was not attacked while she slept. A girl had been raped, helpless to do anything against her attackers. She had been beaten daily until she was on death’s door begging to enter the arms of the Many-Faced God.

Once a boy had been a rich wise master in Meereen. He had slaves to attend to his every whim and serve him. He had never worked a day in his life, then the Dragon Queen had come. The Dragon Queen had crucified him after he watched as his slaves rebelled against him and killed his wife and children. As she was nailed to that cross in the hot sun, he had begged the Many-Faced God to come for him and free him from his torment. His wish was granted.

Not all of the dreams were horrible, but most of them were. Some of the faces she wore had been happy most of their lives. She remembered being in love with many husbands and wives, she had birthed dozens of children. In all of a girl’s lives, she had died when she begged the Many-Faced God to take her.

The deaths did not reflect the life that they had lived always, some men died on the battlefield, injured and bleeding out- begging for themselves to hurry up and die to escape the pain, slitting their own throats even to do so. Women died on the birthing bed in complete agony, screaming and in pain begging for their death to deliver them from the pain. The Many-Faced God welcomed them into his embrace as he did everyone who begged for his gift.

Every day a girl would wake and put on a new face. She would live the life of that face for a day, be that as a merchant, an actor, a beggar, a sailor, a janitor, or even a whore. When the day was done she would return to the House of the Black and White to share three things she had learned as that person- never about that person but the people she overheard or spoke too. The people around her were the focus never herself. She was no one.
When a girl had been given her first face he had been Cat of the Canals. Cat had been a merchant girl, who had sold oysters clams and cockles. She had done so on the docs of the city pushing her cart around offering her wares to the sailors. She had been given her first name by the Many-Faced God and had failed in her task. She was supposed to take the thin man’s life but she had been incapable. She had instead chosen to take the life of a different man, for personal vengeance.

She had lost that face but the Many-Faced God had given her a second chance, she had been a blind beggar next. She had realized that she was no longer Arya Stark when she was forcefully humbled and made to beg in order to survive. That girl was no longer the daughter of a Lord but a commoner and a blind one at that. When she regained her eyes she hadn’t gone back to being Arya Stark. She was not Cat or the blind beggar either. She was no one. Or at least she had thought she was when the Many-Faced God had let her play the game of faces.

Every day now a girl would wear a new face and answer three things the girl had noticed during her day wearing the face of another. She would then answer the same series of questions and be smacked by a stick for her answers, no matter what she answered. She had not been given another chance to take a life after the girl had failed her previous chore. Perhaps it was because of her answers or perhaps she was ready and there were no names from the Many-Faced God.

At first, she had chewed on her lip when she thought and had been hit for that, a habit a girl picked up from when he was Arya Stark but he had stopped that forever ago. Her brow no longer furrowed when she lied nor did her ears redden as Mercy or Thom’s did. She could keep her face perfectly passive and show no outward signs of her emotions. Yet still, a girl was hit for her answers. They were true but they weren’t enough.

“You have returned to us.” The kindly man wearing the face of the one Arya Stark had called Jaqen H’ghar said in greeting to her as she entered the House of The Black and White.

“The moon is black.” She replied as was their custom, she was not hit for that answer so the boy assumed that it was the correct response. The face she had once worn of a girl named Lysi had told her that it was the Braavosi custom for saying it was past nightfall.

“It is.” He agreed. “What three new things do you know, that you did not know when last you left us?”

Today a girl had been a boy named Roryn, he was seven years of age. A boy had three sisters and no brothers. His father served as a chef at the local inn and his mother was a maid at the same inn. The boy shared a room with all his sisters and parents, they all shared the same bed even. The boy had prayed to the Many-Faced God to no longer have to share with his family, for a space to call
his own. His wish had been granted and now a girl wore the face of Roryn. He was the only one in his grave after all.

The boy would have been nine now if he had not given to the Many-Faced God, the face he wore was also nine now. Roryn spent the day playing with a sailor’s son named Skyte, a boy of only eight years of age. Roryn and Skyte had played with dolls while Skyte’s father had gotten drunk and lost his earnings at poker. The game had been rigged but that did not matter to Roryn. Roryn had listened to everything people said in that pub and many had taught him new things. Roryn knew that Skyte would probably end up going to bed hungry and the father would out his losses on the son possibly driving him into the embrace of the Many-Faced God but that was none of the boy’s concern. They like everyone else were no one.

“I know that Alaquo’s ship went down, and he had been arrogant enough to not take the thin man’s wager. His wife does not work and his son is a cripple.” She told him, giving the man fully detailed truths. Once a girl had needed to use that truth as three separate things but a girl had gotten better at finding out new things. The kindly man somehow always knew when she tried to use truths from the previous day so there was no benefit to not telling all.

“That is one.” The man said.

“I know that Orbello had been having an affair with Barbara. Her youngest son is secretly Orbello’s not her husband’s.” A girl told him.

“That is two.”

“The pub owner, Peren had to take a loan from the Iron Bank to cover his losses at gambling. He cheated Skyte’s father with a rigged game to pay off his debt and make him go bankrupt instead.” The girl showed no emotion despite how fond Roryn had been of Skyte and how much fun they had together. Roryn was just another face for a girl to wear.

“That is three.” The man said. “Now tell me, who are you?”

“No one.” A girl said as always.

Her cheek was smacked by the man’s stick but a girl did not flinch despite being hit hard enough that there was sure to be a purple welt on her skin in the morning before she put on a new face for the day to hide the mark but not the pain that came from it. She was too used to the pain by now to
be bothered by it.

“You lie.” The man said.

A girl said nothing in reply. She knew she hadn’t lied and she was fairly sure she kept her face passive so there should be nothing that told him she lied. Yet still, he insisted that she was lying when she wasn’t.

“Who were you before you came here?” He said his voice as flat as ever with no emotion.

“No one.”

Another smack from the stick this one on her other cheek. It stung and a girl’s eyes burned, tears threatening to spill out but she forced herself to contain them.

“What is your name?” The man asked.

“A girl has no name.”

A third smack to the top of her head and this time a girl couldn’t contain her tears as they slipped down her cheeks but even still she didn’t so much as wince.

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Today a girl had been a girl. The girl had been a whore, she had served in Lord Vencyr’s Brothel in Pentos to earn enough coin to feed her newborn son. She like all the faces a girl wore was dead. She had given her name to the Many-Faced God begging him to take her and let her son live. The Many-Faced God granted her request, her son had lived for a whole nine days after her death before he too was killed and eaten by a starving man. The man had been so desperate for nourishment after going three days without any sustenance that he turned to cannibalism and ate the child. Even newborn children could beg for death and be given to the Many-Faced God.

The girl had spent the entire day in Lord Mertio’s Brothel today. She had fucked six different men today. Men had no secrets to a whore who knew how to make a man talk. The sex hadn’t been at
all pleasant but the secrets she learned more than made up for the pain she had felt. She would be able to given the man eighteen truths this day with ease if she wanted too, three from each man.

“You have returned to us.” The kindly man greeted her.

“The moon is black.” She replied.

“It is.” He agreed. “What three new things do you know, that you did not know when last you left us?”

“The sailor’s wife was once married to a Westerosi Lord.” She told the kindly man. Once when she had still been Arya Stark and had been made to play the part of a whore she had snarked that sex hurt when he asked what she had learned. Arya Stark had been hit by the stick for that.

“That is one.” The kindly man said.

A girl had the urge to smile but repressed it. “The High Sparrow has arrested the Queen of Westeros, Margaery Tyrell on the charges of infidelity to her husband, the King Tommen Baratheon.”

One of the men that Ryanne had slept with today was a Septon fleeing from King’s Landing after the High Sparrow had shown that he had no limits and was okay going after the queen. He had feared that the faith militant would deem him corrupt and punish him like they had the previous High Septon.

“That is two.” The man said. If he was at all surprised by the news he showed no sign of it.

“The Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch, Jon Snow let the wildlings south of the wall and settle in the gift.” A man from Eastwatch by the Sea sailing her on a trade route had told her that one. While he had fucked her he had raged about the Lord Commander, Jon Fucking Snow letting the savages have their lands.

Arya Stark had known Jon Snow. Arya Stark had loved him, he had given her a sword even. But a girl was not Arya Stark he was no one. Arya Stark was just another face a girl had worn.
“Who are you?”

“No one.” She was smacked for her response.

“Who were you before you came here?”

“No one.” She replied again and was again swatted by his stick.

“What is your name?” He asked of her.

“A boy has no name.” She replied and was smacked a third time.

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Today a boy had been the apprentice to a woodcarver. A boy already knew what he was taught today, he had worn the face of a slave who made elaborate carvings for his master before giving himself to the Many-Faced God in order to escape slavery.

A girl was not tasked with learning how to carve, she was tasked with being his apprentice and observing the secrets of the clients. The client they worked with today was from Volantis, they had come searching for a carving of the Harpy God of Meereen before the Dragon Queen had taken over and burnt their gods. From that client, she could draw many conclusions from the faces he made when he had asked for her master’s services.

“You have returned to us.” The kindly man greeted her.

“The moon is black.” She replied.

“It is.” He agreed. “What three new things do you know, that you did not know when last you left us?”

“The Volanteese are looking to kill the Dragon Queen and her dragons.” She had figured that one out by the man’s request for the wood to appear scorched as if it had been burnt by flames but to
still stand strong and be firm as if it had survived the blaze.

“That is one.”

“The Volanteese are funding the Sons of the Harpy.” She had figured that one out by the way his lips twitched when he spoke of the Harpy and how he had demanded the Harpy Statue wear a mask of Gold. He had even provided the gold himself. His excitement in his voice at the statue was so clear that a girl was sure that even foolish Arya Stark would have realized that thing.

“That is two.”

“The Iron Bank is also funding the Sons of The Harpy.” Admittedly she didn’t know that just suspected but she was fairly confident. She had followed the man after he had left her shop, he had gone to the Iron Bank and come out looking extremely satisfied with what had happened and his eyes showed his hunger for blood along with his confidence that he would get it.

“A girl thinks or a girl knows?” The kindly man asked.

A girl did not reply, she knew it was pointless. The man’s stick smacked her cheek hard enough to draw blood.

“That is still only two.” The man said.

A girl had been foolish by speaking what she theorized rather than what she knew to be true. A girl should not have spoken without knowing. She decided to tell a simpler truth that he knew for sure to be true, a girl did not want to be hit again. “Lord Dyros’s favorite color is blue.” That wasn’t a secret or anything truly revelational but apart from the Volanteese noble all the woodcarver’s clients had been boring today and she was certain that was a true statement.

“Who are you?” The kindly man demanded.

“No-” A girl stopped herself from giving the same answer. She felt the blood on her cheek over the bruises from the weeks of beatings she had suffered. She did not want to be hit again and answering no one would almost certainly see her hit by his stick again. “I don’t know.” She answered honestly, he always said she lied so she would tell him the full and complete truth. She thought that she was no one but if she wasn’t no one than she did not know who she was.
He did not hit her with his stick this time. “Who were you before you came here?”

A girl was elated, was that what he had wanted? Her to just be completely honest? Emboldened by her success with the last question she had answered truthfully. “I was Arya Stark, daughter to Eddard Stark, Lord of Winterfell.”

His stick slammed into her temple hard enough to knock her to the floor. Apparently that was not the correct strategy.

“What is your name?” The kindly man asked.

A girl considered answering with something new but a girl had no clue who to say so she settled for the same thing as always, resigned to her fate. “A girl has no name.”

His stick slammed into the top of his head with a loud thwack and a girl crumpled on the floor.

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Today a girl had been a beggar once again, an old man- cripple and broken sitting on the steps of the Iron Bank begging for enough coin to feed and clothe herself. He too had asked the Many-Faced God to take him since he found his life unfulfilling. He had drowned himself in the harbor one night. He had pleaded with every passerby for some spare coin but no one had much to spare. No one cared about an old man. He had collected only two small coppers from the people who passed by but she had gotten much more in secrets. No one was careful around the homeless, they were beneath them- the wealthy Lords and often they would not worry over them overhearing, who would they tell after all?

“You have returned to us.” The kindly man greeted her.

“The moon is black.” She replied.

“It is.” He agreed. “What three new things do you know, that you did not know when last you left us?”
“Brusco had to take a loan from the Iron Bank after Cat from the Canals killing a man had cost him much of his business.” A girl told him. Once a girl had been Cat from the Canals and had killed a man but a girl was no longer Cat and she felt no guilt for Cat’s actions.

“That is one.

“The theater will be in Sheelba Square next week, they will sell a tale about the good innocent King Joffrey, the war of five kings and his death at the purple wedding.” She had heard that one from Lord Sheelba himself as he had advertised outside the bank and even invited the old crippled beggar to attend- if he had enough coin of course.

“That is two.

“King Stannis sent Lord Florent to Braavos to hire him some sellswords before his death, although he did not have the gold for it with King Robert’s debts to the Iron Bank.” A girl had heard that one on the steps of the Iron Bank as Lord Florent had cursed the bank on his way out and had cursed Robert Baratheon for being so foolish.

“Who are you?” The kindly man demanded.

“I don’t know.” A girl had replied that had worked yesterday and a girl didn’t know who he was anymore. She thought he was no one but was she truly?

“Who were you before you came here?” The man did not hit her once again for her previous answer.

“Arya Stark.” The man lifted his stick to hit her but she continued speaking. “And Cat from the Canals, and Roryn, and Mercy, and Arry and Serra, and Ryanne, and Weasel, and Lanna, and Tyson and Thom and-”

The man cut her off with a raised hand but did not strike her. “What is your name?”

“A girl has many names, her name is whatever it needs to be.” A girl spoke calmly. If answering in the multiple had been the correct response for the last question maybe that was again the solution
to this question.

“Who is Arya Stark?” The kindly man asked. Finally, she was getting a new question after she went the first three without being struck at all.

Flashes of a girl’s life when she had been Arya Stark flashed before her eyes. She had been a wolf, the lone wolf might have died in Kings Landing but the pack survived. But a girl was not a wolf she was a girl. She remembered her brother giving him her needle and being told to stick them with the pointy end and don’t tell Sansa. But a girl was not Arya Stark any more than she was any of the other faces that she wore.

“Arya Stark is just another face that I wear.” She replied after a moment and waited for the blow to come but it never did.

The man nodded, the only outward reaction she had ever coaxed out of him. “Even no one is a someone, names are just masks we wear to play a part. All men are the same, they all live and they all die. Only when you don’t know why you are, are you truly no one. A girl has finally given herself to service the Many-Faced God and is ready to carry out his will. A girl will finally be given a name from the Many-Faced God.”

“What is that name?” A girl asked unable to contain herself, she was finally going to do something for the Many-Faced God. She would finally get to prove himself.

“Daario Naharis.” A voice whispered in her ear.

Chapter End Notes

So yeah very different faceless men then what we see in the show, will probably see in the books and what we see in most fanfiction. The faceless men are according George RR Martin himself is a death cult of assassins, that is not meant to be the good guys. They worship death and what better embodies death cults than suicide.

It is very easy for the faceless men to become overpowered or a deus ex machine where Arya kills someone and then removes their face and pretends to be them or in some cases doesn't even kill them just magically becomes them. I wanted to do things differently and limit the people the faceless men could choose to become to those who choose to die, for those who beg to die. No longer can Arya just take Jamie's face and kill Cersei like she so often does in fanfiction, now she's limited in who she can use. Could she torture someone until the point where they kill themselves? Of course, she could but that takes significant time for them to choose death.
Human sacrifice is a powerful magic in the world of Game of Thrones, and a mother sacrificing her child/husband enables Daenerys to birth dragons. For the faceless men, their magic is powered by people choosing to sacrifice themselves.

In Dance with Dragons we see during The Ugly Little Girl chapter that Arya when she first receives the face experiences the girls death and she dreams of the girl's life. We also see that the girl begged the Many-Faced God to take her life. This is largely based off of that.

I imagine that receiving memories from two lives would lead to confusion of your identity and we see that in DwD. In the Winds of Winter Mercy Sample chapter, we see Arya hardly remembers who she is anymore with the memories from multiple lives clashing. In this, she's worn dozens of faces and lost all sense of her identity so she can finally be no one and be able to become anyone for a time.

Realistically, she would probably wear each face longer than a die but if she were to wear them for even a week then her story would be way out of sync with the rest of the characters and she wouldn't even return to Westeros until after the story ended so it's vastly accelerated for plot convenience.

As to why she was given the name of Daario that will be revealed eventually.

On Tuesday, we go back to Jon's perspective once again.

Read and Review.
“I named all three of you for Rhaego. Drogon was named after his father who gave him to me. Viserion after the brother who made me realize just how much I loved Rhaego. He threatened to kill Rhaego and I watched as he died by a crown of molten gold. I did not feel any sadness for he had threatened my son.” His Daenerys smiled a sad smile, tears in the corner of her eyes, and she resumed her caressing of Jon’s head. “I named you for my darling Rhaego, the son that was lost to me. For the longest time, I thought that the witch’s death bought me my dragons but I was wrong. I wasn’t the first person to burn people alive in an attempt to hatch a dragon. It was my darling Rhaego’s sacrifice that was the price I paid for my dragons. A mother willingly sacrificing her children was the cost.”

His Daenerys laughed and emptied the last of her wine glass. The glass dropped to the floor. “My children were born of Fire and Blood; as the witch said only death can pay for life.” She lifted his head off of her lap and walked back inside without a backward glance.

He stared after her retreating form, his mind a whirl. His Daenerys had gone through so much and was still so strong. She had lost her child and if the witch’s prophecy was to be believed any chance at having children in the future. She had traded her most precious connection unknowingly for three dragons. Jon wondered if he would have been able to make the same choice, if he would trade Arya or any of his other siblings-cousins for three dragons. They might be enough to tilt the scales in the living’s side in the war against The Others but that was still such a high price.

Daenerys could never have kids of her own so Jon, Viserion, and Drogon would have to be her children. They would win her the seven kingdoms like she wanted but it would still never fill that hole in her heart. He could be by her side until the day they died and comfort her in whatever way she had need of but he wouldn’t ever be what Rhaego was to her. It was a miracle that she was still as sane and strong as she was after going through that. Jon thought he himself might have broke if that happened to him. She was the strongest and best person he knew.

He was proud of being her dragon and would do whatever he could to help her accomplish her goals, even if it meant doing things he would rather not do and embracing the beast within him. That was why he had hunted down the men in gold masks for his Daenerys. He couldn’t understand what the men were saying, they had spoken in a foreign tongue. He had seen the gold masks that Daenerys hated while flying around the city and stretching his wings. Jon knew if he was still human he would have likely just abducted them and brought her prisoners, that had been his intention at first. He had misjudged how much the anger would grip him when he got closer and saw the men who caused his mother so much pain. He had just reacted on the dragons desires to tear, burn and kill. He hadn’t regretted it after the fact either, he still didn’t regret his savagery despite how he knew his old self would have reacted. His Daenerys had been proud of him, and he would do it again if it made her happy despite his knowing it was wrong.
All of a sudden, it was both hot and cold at the same time, he felt like he was on fire but the air
around him was freezing- but that was impossible, he was a dragon- he could not be on fire.
Maybe Viserion had gotten pissy again and decided to burn him in anger. He hoped not- he knew
his Daenerys couldn't be burnt but she and her people would be upset if the pyramid he had been
lounging on was destroyed and innocent people died in the crossfire. He was almost certain it
wasn't that regardless as the fire was much colder then Viserion's flames and the air was too chilly
to be in Meereen.

He opened his eyes and looked around him. All he could see was fire, and a cloud of thick smoke
that obscured his vision, odd considering as a Dragon his eyesight was vastly superior to that of a
human and he couldn’t remember smoke ever affecting his sight. His eyes were designed to pierce
any of the haze caused by fire and it's byproducts.

He rose in an effort to get up and above the blaze so he could accurately assess his predicament but
found his way blocked by shackles bound around his belly. Had his Daenerys chained them again
while he must have been sleeping? Surely, she wouldn’t not without any provocation. Had
someone somehow taken him captive?

He tried to furl his wings only to find out he had none- he had arms? He lifted his head to look at
his body, it was hazy even in the close proximity but he saw human chest? He was somehow a
human again?

“Talk about perfect timing.” A man’s voice that sounded somewhat familiar chuckled. “We burn
him right before he comes back as a wight.”

“The dead really come back?” Another familiar voice this one belonging to a woman asked in
disbelief.

“They do, and there is an army of them marching towards us. King Crow saved us by letting us
settle in the gift.” The man proclaimed again.

It took only a moment to place that voice, only one person called him King Crow. “Tormund?” He
coughed in disbelief, his voice raspy and dry. Was he somehow back as Jon Snow after he had
died?

“Jon?” He heard the woman from earlier ask.
“Lord Commander?” A voice he believed to be Dolorous Edd questioned.

“You’re alive?” He believed that one was Ser Davos.

“King Crow? Is that you?” The one he had previously identified as Tormund asked. “You’re not a wight are you?”

“Yes!” He yelled as loud as he could over the roar of the flames that licked at his skin but did not burn. “I’m somehow still alive!”

“Quickly get him out of there!” Tormund yelled as pandemonium exploded wherever they were. Everyone was shouting, too many voices to be decipherable. Snow was thrown onto him- most of it not ever reaching him as it turned into steam with a hiss. The process continued for what felt like an hour but was probably only actually a minute or two.

Eventually, the flames were quenched and he was just cold now buried completely in snow. He couldn’t breathe- he couldn’t see as only snow was in front of him. He opened his mouth and found it flooded with cold snow. Did he come back from the dead just to die again after he was buried alive in the snow?

Apparently not as now that the flames were gone people set to digging him out. Within a few seconds, his face was free and he could see. Wun Wun stood towering above him holding a bucket larger than Jon was upside down. The snow was cleared from his body leaving his naked figure open to all prying eyes.

Wun Wun reached down and tore off the chain around his belly with a roar. Jon rolled to the side and fell face down in the snow. He was freezing. He had always been in the cold as a child but never this bad and never naked. Compared to Meereen as a Dragon and laying in the middle of a great fire, this was the coldest he had ever been and Jon was sure he would freeze to death. Jon shakily pushed himself off the ground and to his feet, he needed to get to some form of warmth.

He was dragged the rest of the way up and was immediately crushed in a hug by a rather large man who smashed his lips into his own briefly. “You’re alive, King Crow!” the man he now recognized as Tormund laughed.

He was let go of and immediately crushed into a hug by another much smaller man. “How?” Edd
wondered aloud as he crushed Jon into his chest. When he let go he took note of Jon’s nakedness and draped his own black cloak over his shoulders, finally giving him some measure of warmth even if it wasn’t much.

He took a step back and looked out on the onlookers a few paces back. He was in a wildling camp that was for sure, he could tell by the furs they wore. There were thousands of them gathered here, possibly the whole of the group that they had been able to bring North of The Wall. Some on their feet but the majority of them on their knees or even their bellies, prostrating themselves before him like he was some sort of god. Not fucking kneelers indeed. The dragon in him reveled in their worship, they were inferior to him, it was only proper that they kneel.

“Jon.” The voice was soft and feminine but he still heard it over the camp that had fallen silent when he stood up, alive and unharmed by the flames.

His head turned towards the noise and it took him a moment to place who the face belonged to, it had been years after he had last seen her at all and she had grown up a lot since then. If it wasn’t for the Direwold sigil on her cloak he wasn’t sure he ever would have recognized her.

“Sansa,” he exhaled and sprinted towards her. The cold snow on his bare feet made him lose his footing a few times. She took a few steps forward of her own and he practically fell into her arms. “You’re really here?” He said into her thick auburn hair in complete disbelief.

She laughed and sobbed into his shoulder. “I should be the one asking you that. You were dead Jon.” She pulled her head back slightly so she could see his face and Jon noticed that there were tears running down her cheeks.

“I thought I’d never see you again,” Jon confessed. “I wanted so badly to go to Winterfell when I heard the Bolton’s had you but I couldn’t. Stannis promised to bring you back to Castle Black but then he lost.” He kissed her forehead tenderly.

She buried her head into his shoulder once again. “I’m so sorry for how awful I was to you. I’m sorry that I’m the one you finally get to see again.” She cried.

“Shhh.” Jon tried to calm her, the rest of the world forgotten. “We were children Sansa, there is nothing to forgive.” He swallowed. “We’re the last of the Starks, we have to stick together.”

Sansa pulled herself from his arms and grabbed his hands in her own soft hands. Not as soft as his Daenerys’s though. She shook her head. “No, we’re not. At least probably.” Jon looked at her
completely shocked and he squeezed her hands, his eyes begging to know more. “Lady Brienne ran into Arya last year in the company of the hound. While she fought him Arya fled.” Sansa explained.

Jon wasn’t sure who Lady Brienne was but if they had seen Arya he needed to meet them. “And Theon-” Jon’s grip reflexively tightened at the mention of that traitor. “Didn’t kill Bran and Rickon but two stable boys, they escaped. Theon escaped with me and saved me.” Jon was elated, he had Sansa with him and somehow all of his siblings sans Rob were still possibly alive.

Jon was about to reply when he felt an unnaturally warm hand on his wrist. He pulled one hand from Sansa’s grip and turned to face the offending party. He hardly recognized the Lady Melisandre dressed in a black gown rather than her usual red ensemble. “I thought the Lord of Light-I lost faith but it worked. Of course, it would need fire and blood to complete the resurrection.”

Daenerys’s last words to him echoed in his mind. Fire and Blood; as the witch said only death can pay for life. “What did you do?” He snarled at her.

Ser Davos stepped between them and placed his hand on Jon’s shoulder. “She brought you back, somehow. She did some valyrian spell on you four days ago and now you’re back- after being dead for seven going on eight days now.”

Jon nodded- he had already guessed at most of that- not the exact time table but the general premise of what happened. He shrugged off Davos’s hand and stepped towards her, grabbing her wrist. “Yes I’m back and only death can pay for life, so tell me who did you sacrifice?” He demanded of her.

Davos tried to calm him again. “I was there, there was no sacrifice. Just a bunch of nonsense where she said some things in Valyrian and tossed your hair and blood in a fire.”

“Of course wake dragons out of stone... he’s unburnt.. he’s Targaryen of course… she was a girl of stone... I asked the Lord to give Azor Ahai victory...” Melisandre rambled incoherently seemingly lost in her own thoughts. Well shit, was it that obvious to everyone that I am a Targaryen?

Jon put the dots together pretty quickly as Daenerys’s words still haunted him. Shireen Baratheon had greyscale, and those infected were often called stone men. His hand that had been in Sansa’s pulled free and wrapped itself around the Red Witch’s neck. “You sacrificed Shireen Baratheon.” He grit his teeth. A mother willingly sacrificing her children was the cost. To think he once respected Stannis. “And Stannis gave his consent.” This had to be a nightmare coming from him
hearing Daenerys’s nightmarish tale of his birth.

Ser Davos stepped in, obviously in shock at what Jon had just revealed. He grabbed her by the shoulder, out of Jon’s grip and turned her towards him. “You sacrificed Shireen?” He demanded harshly.

The Lady Melisandre nodded dumbly, still in too much shock to actually think about her actions.

“How could you?” Davos roared spittle flying everywhere. “I loved that girl like she was my own. She was good. She was kind. And you killed her!” His voice dropped a couple of octaves and the quiet declaration was more intimidating than his yelling had been. “You burned her alive.”

“I only did what the Lord commanded to save Azor Ahai, I thought it was Stannis but it was Jon Snow all along. It took the sacrifice of a stone girl to bring back a dragon from stone.”

“If your Lord commands you to burn children, your lord is evil!” Davos raged.

“Jon Snow stands here alive today because the Lord willed it.” She argued calmly.

Jon Snow chuckled darkly. “Who gave you the right to play god? To decide my life is more valuable then Shireen's?”

She said nothing in response, firmly set in her belief that she had done her Lord’s will.

“Lord Commander, I ask your leave to execute this woman for murder. She admits to the crime.” Davos asked, his hand gripping the ever-familiar wolf pommel of Longclaw at his side ready to pull it on the witch, in a moment's notice.

“Denied,” Jon replied after a moment.

“What?” Davos screeched as he pulled the valyrian steel sword partway out of the scabbard.
Jon held up his hand. “She does not get to die a quick death.” He looked at the torch in the hand of one of the Wildlings. “She gets to die the same way so many of her victims did, being burnt alive.” If he was going to dream of some parallel to Daenerys’s tale then he might as well give the witch the same death. Yet part of Jon didn’t think this was really a dream, he had never had this vivid of dreams and no one ever wondered if they were in a dream in an actual dream. Regardless, the dragon demanded she suffer and burn before she died whether this was real or not.

He looked towards where a bunch of the men of the Night’s Watch were clustered. He flinched slightly at the sight of their black cloaks. The Night’s Watch had betrayed him, he couldn’t trust them again. “Detain her and tie her to a stake. She burns tonight.” He ordered of them and well some of them looked hesitant three men stepped forward to do as he bade.

Val, the sister of Mance’s late wife who had died in childbirth stepped forth and rapped him on his shoulder. “Snow, we have some furs in that tent collected for you if you want to change into something warmer.” She winked at him. “Not that we don’t enjoy the view.”

If it hadn’t been so cold out Jon was sure that his face would be red. He nodded and thanked her stepping into the tent she had pointed out. The furs were a bit tighter then he might have liked and itched a bit but it would serve until he could find an outfit better accustomed to him.

He stepped outside the tent and immediately grabbed a torch from one of the wildlings stationed just outside the tent. He walked towards a now bound Melisandre tied to a wooden post with his torch in hand. She looked as calm as ever he approached her, despite knowing she was about to die much like Daenerys had told him Mirri Mazz Durr had been when she burnt her. Jon knew that just like the other witch had, Melisandre would too scream as she slowly burnt alive.

One of the men of the Night’s Watch- he believed it might have been Albett but it was hard to know for certain in the torchlight. Whoever he was stepped forward to douse the Red Witch with oil as Jon advanced on her with a torch. “Stop. What are you doing?” Jon demanded already knowing the answer.

The man flushed and turned towards him. “Dousing her with oil, Lord Commander.”

“Did she douse Shireen Baratheon with oil when she burned her? What about Mance Rayder?” Only silence answered him. “And I’m not Lord Commander anymore, my watch ended with my death.” He stated plainly. He couldn't afford to be stuck up at the wall or let his vows keep him from his Daenerys. He couldn't trust the men of the Night's Watch and would never be one of them again.
He put his hand in the flame from the torch and felt the warmth of it but he did not burn. The warm flames soothed him, they felt nice in the absence of pain. He wondered how his Daenerys went so long without being cloaked in fire. He was a dragon now so it only made sense he could no longer burn, that was the way of dragons after all.

He stepped towards Melisandre and bent down to light the grass and branches piled at the bottom of the stake, around her feet. He stopped, stood back up and turned to Ser Davos “You may have the honor, if you would like it. You were closest to Shireen.” Davos nodded his thanks and took the torch from Jon. He lowered it down with a blank face and lit the pyre.

“For the Night is Dark and Full of Terrors,” Dolorous Edd proclaimed in a mocking lilt. He had always had a dark sense of humor.

Jon was impressed at how long Melisandre held out before finally screaming. She did not break right away like most people did, instead, lasting until almost a whole minute. The sound of her screams as she burnt alive made Jon’s blood sing and he couldn’t help but smirk in triumph. He like his Daenerys had burnt the with who had dared to murder an innocent child in order to play god; he couldn’t pretend to understand the pain his Daenerys felt when she lost Rhaego but he could understand how she took such joy in watching the witch burn. The fire was truly beautiful, as it burnt away life itself consuming all in its path. As it burnt away even the greatest evils, leaving nothing but ashes in its wake. Everything in the world had to bow down to fire, man, woman, wights, others, and every kind of animal. Everything but Dragons. Everyone but him and his Daenerys.

He turned away from the flames and looked at the crowd looking on as Melisandre’s screams sang the song of the night. Sansa had a slight grimace on her face but she did not flinch away from the flames. Edd had a slight smirk and Davos’s face was blank, an emotionless mask in place. Tormund and a good portion of the rest of the wildlings who had come to see Jon burn had vindictive smiles on their faces; Melisandre had burnt their king after all. The majority of the crowd, however, had turned their faces away or looked towards her burning body horrified.

As he screams faded away and her light faded into a dim flicker, Jon allowed himself to smile. Now it was time for Thorne to get his just desserts.

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It turned out that Thorne would not be getting his just desserts. Jon had wanted to murder the bastard for killing Ghost and himself but he could not as much as he wanted too. If Jon wanted to claim he wasn’t Lord Commander anymore and he definitely did then he couldn’t dispense justice as the Night’s Watch was protected from any outside authority. As much as he wanted revenge, that was up to the next Lord Commander to take it- he could not do anything against them for the
Night’s Watch was protected from outsiders and Jon was now an outsider.

However, that did not mean he couldn’t neutralize him another way. When he had come back to Castle Black, he publicly accused Ser Alliser, Bowen Marsh, Othyll Yarwyck, Wick Whittlestick and little Olly of committing treason and killing their former Lord Commander. Putting extra emphasis on the word former. He, of course, knew the latter two were dead, he had killed them himself as Ghost but it was better that no one else knew about his other lives after his human death.

From there, Ser Dennys Mallister once he got over the shock of seeing Jon Snow alive had ordered Thorne, Marsh, and Yarwyck to be thrown into the ice cells to be held until the new Lord Commander had been chosen. He had also had Jon placed in the Kings Tower for the duration of his stay at Castle Black. He also left not so subtle hints at what he would do with Thorne and his posy if he was named Lord Commander.

Jon knew that Mallister held no love for him or the Free Folk despite his actions. He was acting in hopes that Jon would endorse him as Lord Commander. Jon didn’t have a say in the next Lord Commander officially. However, his word still meant a lot to many of the men here, especially after he had conquered death and been outed as a Targaryen. If he were to give someone his support their odds of getting the position, especially someone like Mallister who already had lots of support would see their odds drastically increase and if Jon supported him, he would likely be the 999th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch.

Jon wouldn’t support him though, he didn’t know who he would support but Mallister was too hostile and believed in placing their vows above all else. He was too by the book to be an effective option in such troubled times. They needed peaceful negotiations with the Free Folk and to bend the rules with the Others marching on the wall, they had to be united to stand against the real threat when Winter came. Mallister was a good soldier and a great leader but he would have them divided and they would lose with him at the helm if they tried to play by the rules.

Cotter Pyke, the other leading candidate who wasn’t currently being held for treason would be even worse, however. He was illiterate at a time in which Castle Black held no Maester and they needed diplomacy and a sweet tongue now more than ever. Pyke was bold and a good a fighter as any sure but he lacked in the ability to handle more gentle manners. He was rather dull and slow on the uptake as well. He would likely wage war with the wildlings once more and they would gain no allies under his leadership.

Jon wasn’t sure that Dolorous Edd would get the needed support or even be a great Lord Commander but off the top of Jon’s head, he was the best option. He had some issues with his temperament and might not necessarily be the sweetest talker but Jon knew that at the very least his heart was in the right place. He was willing to ally with the Free Folk and would stop the Night’s Watch from waging war on them, again.
But who else was there? Hobb? Hobb was no leader and didn’t have any experience in battle. He was the cook, not a warrior. Endrew Tarth maybe? He was a good archery instructor and had some experience commanding men in battle. He was not at all charismatic, however, and he was more of a follower than a leader. He would take too much advice from his men and lacked the firm hand needed to rule.

The best option if Jon was honest with himself was Ser Denner Frostfinger. Denner had been master of arms alongside Tarth after Thorne had been promoted to first ranger. He was a good leader, charismatic, and an amicable fellow. He was no fool either, he would not wage war with the Wildlings. He would reluctantly work with them for the sake of the watch if it was needed and he had no notable biases against any of the Lords and Kings they would have to work with. He was a simple hedge knight with no family of his own before coming to the wall.

The issue for Jon was that Frostfinger had been in the crowd that watched as he was betrayed and murdered. He doubted it was personal, Frostfinger rarely was. He was the consummate southern Lord. He was ambitious and would sacrifice pawns to get what he wanted. Frostfinger had acted against Jon because he saw an opening to seize power or because he did believe Jon broke his vows as Thorne claimed— to make an example that none were above the law. Or perhaps he had thought Jon would not be able to set aside his personal vendetta with the Boltons and Lannisters for the good of all mankind and to survive the incoming winter. He had gone with Jon to Hardhome and seen the threat first hand, he had also gone to Jon’s cremation ceremony and witnessed his resurrection first hand. He would be a good choice but he would also likely let Thorne off for killing him or at the very least Marsh and Yarwyck off with at most a demotion, claiming their services were too valuable to the watch or whatever to execute them.

He sighed and rubbed his brow. The choosing started tomorrow so he had to figure something out tonight. He would have to follow his head and not his heart. He couldn’t give in to the dragon in him that demanded vengeance for Ghost’s murder, he had to put the good of the watch and all of the living first.

He could feel a connection to Rhaegal, even as a human again, similar to how he felt with Ghost but so much stronger. Even knowing that Rhaegal was still in Meereen he could feel him, and his emotions to a sense. With the greatest of ease. He could slip into Rhaegal’s skin and be flying over the Dothraki grass sea. He wanted desperately to pull on his connection to Rhaegal and call him to the wall where Jon was but he wanted, even more, to be able to slip into his skin and still visit his Daenerys well he slept or when he had some time to spare. Besides, Daenerys would panic if Rhaegal went missing, and having a dragon by his side now would create awkward questions he wasn’t yet ready to answer.

He looked down at the familiar sword on his hip, Davos had returned Longclaw to him after they had burned Melisandre. A lot had changed since he had first saved the 997th lord commander of the Night’s Watch, Jeor Mormont from the wight, and been given House Mormont’s ancestral
sword as a reward. The wolf pommel on the hilt mocked him, the lie his father told him his entire life he couldn’t help but be reminded of. His mother might have been a Stark and maybe he was a part wolf as well but he was more of a Dragon then anything else.

A knock on the door interrupted his musings. “Jon?” Sansa called through the door.

Jon gave a genuine smile and rose to let her into his room. When he opened the door he hugged her briefly before escorting her to the desk he had been at. He took a seat across from her and reached for her hand. He could hardly believe that she was actually here with him.

She shuddered. “Your hands are so warm. How? It’s freezing.”

Jon shrugged. He would presume it was an aftereffect of his bond to Rhaegal but he had no intention of sharing that information with anyone right now. So instead of him answering the question he simply said, “It’s good to see you again.”

She nodded in agreement. For a while, they sat silent, just happy to be together again after so long apart. He clung to her hand tightly as if afraid that if he let go she would vanish but eventually, Sansa broke the ice.

“You’re a Targaryen.” She said simply and Jon knew he could not deny it. He was unburnt, anyone who knew that could figure out pretty quickly that he was a Targaryen. Only they had ever withstood fire in the seven kingdoms.

Jon nodded, he couldn’t deny it. “Seems so.”

“You’re not our father’s son, are you? You’re the son of our Aunt Lyanna and Rhaegar Targaryen.” She spoke softly and Jon had a hard time telling her feelings on his parentage. He wasn’t surprised she had figured it out, it was the obvious conclusion when you knew Jon was a Targaryen, she would be far from the last one to draw that conclusion. Ideally, he would be able to keep his parentage secret for a while longer, at least until they defeated the Boltons so the crown would stay uninvolved but that was a pipe dream.

“Seems like that is the case.” He agreed.

“You’re still my brother.” She reassured him and Jon smiled giving her hand a small squeeze.
“You have a claim to the Iron Throne.” She pointed out calmly, as if she was just discussing the weather.

Jon grit his teeth and tried to calm himself before replying. “I’m a bastard, I have no claim.” The throne belonged to Daenerys not him, he could never be King. The dragon might love people kneeling before him but Jon didn’t want power, he never had. He had only become Lord Commander because Sam had thrust him into the position. Jon hated leading and being a King would be his worst nightmare.

Sansa smiled at him but it didn’t reach her eyes. “The current King is a bastard with no blood ties, as the last Targaryen, even as a natural-born one you have the best claim.”

“I don’t want it,” Jon protested feebly. “I’m not the last Targaryen, anyways.” As soon as he said that he realized it was a mistake by the slight narrowing of Sansa’s eyes, it was brief as she quickly composed herself after the slight drop of her mask.

“Who else is there? Is Cersei Lannister secretly a Targaryen now?” She scoffed in disbelief.

Thinking quickly Jon told the truth.“The late Maester, Aemon Targaryen told us tales of Daenerys Targaryen in Essos, the breaker of chains and rightful Queen of the seven kingdoms.”

“A sailors tale,” Sansa said dismissively. “They also claim she has real-life dragons.”

She does, Jon knew that for a fact but he wisely stayed silent. The Dragon part of him wanted vengeance for the words against his Daenerys but he forced himself to stay calm, he would do something he would regret if he tried to rebut her points. He wondered what had happened to the Sansa who believed in songs and fairy tales and had seen the world in black and white. That innocent girl was gone and she was cold and cynical now.

“Don’t leave Robb and father’s deaths in vain, they didn’t want the Lannister bastard to sit on the iron throne; they died to get the throne from the Lannister’s claws. Stannis is dead, if not you then who?” She pressed on, undeterred by his lack of response.

Jon knew he was being manipulated, he was no fool. She was just using him to further her own ambitions, she still wanted to be queen, just like she had desired when they were children. He was her ticket to the top. “And I suppose you want to be my Queen?” He snorted.
She frowned and looked at the floor. “I won’t ever marry again.” Her voice was low and she was openly hostile at such an accusation.

Jon frowned, that had been insensitive of him to dredge up what was obviously a painful experience for her, whether Tyrion or Ramsay or someone else entirely was responsible for her pain. If Tyrion was responsible, he would warg into Rhaegal and eat him, consequences be damned. He hadn’t realized how awful things were for her, how much she had suffered while he was gone.

“I feel like we barely know each other, as children, we were never close and we haven’t seen each other for three years. I want to get to know you- really get to know you, I want to know all about what you got up to in the three years since we last spoke, and in return, I’ll do the same. I’ll tell you everything up until my death.” There was little harm in sharing information that many people already knew after all. He wouldn't ever trust her with what had happened while his human form was dead but he could tell her the rest as he had offered.

Sansa shook her head, “I’ll tell you, if you promise to get the north back from the Bolton’s. If you won’t then I’ll leave and find someone else willing to do so.”

Jon scowled, he had already planned on getting the north from the Bolton’s. They couldn’t be allowed to hold it, not after what they had done, they had spat upon the north and they would pay with fire and blood. Jon wouldn’t deny it was personal but it also was about all of their survival, if the Bolton’s held the north it was unlikely the watch could expect much aid. If he held the North then he could send all of the northern armies to the wall when the Others came and maybe they would stand a small chance at survival.

“I’ll fight to get the north back.” He agreed and she sighed in relief. “If you don’t want to talk to me I won’t make you, please don’t try to use that to manipulate me into fighting for the North.”

Sansa had the decency the look abashed, she looked away from him and to the fireplace on the other side of the room from where they were. “I’m sorry, I’m used to dealing with selfish Lords where you have to give something to get anything in return, even when that something benefits them.” She looked back at him and briefly squeezed his hand before letting go. “I want to get to know you, really I do. It’s just difficult for me to be able to trust someone, to have someone who wants to help me for me and not their own self-interests.”

Jon nodded in agreement, what she was saying seemed to make sense. He too was reluctant to trust anyone, even Sansa he didn’t plan on telling everything. His and Arya’s mantra had always been Don’t trust Sansa or Don’t tell Sansa. The circumstances were different now but the sentiment
remained. He could not allow himself to trust her. He had been betrayed too many times and perhaps she had seen her fair share of betrayals as well. He was still angered by her attempts at manipulating him but he wouldn’t judge her until he understood her. He smiled at her, only somewhat genuine. “Would you prefer that I go first?”

Sansa blinked twice, confusion clear on her face before she remembered what he was asking. She nodded relief clear on her face. “If you would like so, then you can.” She replied diplomatically. She still wasn’t comfortable trusting him or used to having someone freely give information. Still, baby steps.

“Where do I start?” He mused aloud. “We’ll start at the beginning when I left for the wall.” The beginning was a logical place to start but that wasn’t why he was starting there. He was staring at his journey with Tyrion because he needed to know if he was the one who hurt her. He needed to know if Sansa who likely knew Tyrion better than anyone thought Tyrion was trustworthy or if he was a snake like the rest of his family. If he had hurt her or if Sansa thought he might betray his Daenerys then Jon would eat him, consequences be damned.

“When we departed Winterfell, there were five of us in our party. Myself, Uncle Benjen, Lord Tyrion, and his two bodyguards.” He watched her face as he said Lord Tyrion but aside from a brief flicker of recognition at his name she stayed impassive.

“When I left I was a foolish green boy who believed the Night’s Watch was a noble calling, a place full of people like Uncle Benjen. When we stopped to add two more to our party, I started to see things differently. A few days into our journey we met up with Yoren picked up two rapists from the Fingers-” He took notice of Sansa’s slight flinch at the mention of the Fingers, if he hadn’t been looking for such a thing he would have missed it.

Did Lord Baelish do something to her?

He continued with his tale after only a very brief pause. “- they had chosen the wall over castration. I struggled for some time with the reality that terrible men would serve at The Wall and how that did not line up with the noble calling that had been drilled into my head.”

“Lord Tyrion disabused me of that notion and forced me to accept reality. The wall was not a noble place for men of honor. The wall was a place for the misfits of the realm to be banished. A place for sullen peasants, debtors, poachers, rapists, thieves, and bastards.” He smiled fondly at the memory, partly genuine but also to see if it induced any sort of reaction from Sansa. She smiled slightly but Jon couldn’t tell how genuine it was.

“Of course, Lord Tyrion wasn’t right about everything. He told me that The Wall wasn’t dangerous work, that The Others, grumkins, and snarks weren’t real.” He laughed dryly. “He then added a snarky comment about how I would freeze my balls off but since we are forbidden from breeding it didn’t matter.”
Sansa was smiling more openly now and Jon could tell it was somewhat genuine at least. She didn’t appear to hold any resentment towards Tyrion at least. He finished his tale and was much laxer, he told her up to his arrival at the wall leaving very little details out of their journey. He spoke to her about the easy companionship he had with Tyrion and Uncle Benjen’s deep hatred for him simply because of his family name. The tale was light-hearted and revealed little of his character or the life he had lived before his death, that was not the purpose of his tale. He told her of that particular moment because it meant nothing in the grand scheme, people don’t become friends from hearing stories everyone knows, but from the meaningless things.

When he had finished his story, she had sat silent for a few moments. Jon had claimed she should get some rest and dismissed her without making her utter a word about her own life. He wanted to know her but she needed to be comfortable telling him and not just pressured into it. Trust took time and Jon could wait until then, he wouldn't trust her but she would trust him.

Once she had left, Jon turned back to more urgent matters. The next Lord Commander and the Northern conquest. He needed to have a plan by tomorrow when the choosing began. He sighed, visiting his Daenerys would have to wait for another day, he had a long night ahead of him and he would not be getting any sleep tonight.

Chapter End Notes

Yay Jon is finally not dead anymore. Hopefully, the public resurrection lived up to all of your expectations. I can't be the only one who was convinced of R+L=J when Melisandre's resurrection ritual failed at first and thought he would wake when they burnt him.

Hopefully, Jon figuring out how Melisandre killed Shireen wasn't too unbelievable. He had just heard Daenerys's story about how she sacrificed Rhaego for her dragons and specifically that only death can pay for life so it made sense for him to already be thinking about the cost to bring him back. Melisandre is rather incoherent when Jon first comes back in the show and after she failed she's lost faith so her rambling incoherently is somewhat in character. The prophecy about the Prince who was Promised mentions waking dragons out of stone and her realizing that her sacrifice of a girl with greyscale to bring back a dragon is a literal manifestation of the prophecy is somewhat in character and like when confronted with Shireen's death in the show she doesn't bother trying to deny it.

The Free Folk are human and like every other human they would probably kneel when they saw someone come back from the dead and walk out of a fire unharmed. In the books they kneel because Stannis has a sword that glows lol. Not fucking kneelers indeed.

Jon can't kill Ser Alliser and his goons. I want him to as do all of you I'm sure but since
they took the black, they are outside of Jon's authority unless he wants to go back to
the Night's Watch. Ser Alliser will die but it won't be by Jon's hand.

He also can not choose the next Lord Commander like he stupidly did in the show. He
has an insane amount of influence as the dude who didn't stay dead, the former Lord
Commander of the Night's Watch, and now a Targaryen when a good portion of the
watch is made up by Targaryen loyalists, captives from Robert's Rebellion.

Side note, I read the bio's on awoiaf.westeros.org and the game of throne TV show
wiki of every single named member of the Night's Watch, and they literally all sound
like horrible leaders and even worse people. Ser Denner Frostfinger is probably the
best choice but he for whatever reason has two separate pages on the TV show wiki
when labeled Denner Frostfinger and one just labeled Ser Denner. They both refer to
him as Ser Denner Frostfinger at some point in the wiki so why they are separate
pages I couldn't say. Turns out according to the Ser Denner page ONLY he was one of
the dudes who murdered Jon, not Wick. In this, he didn't murder him but was present
in the cluster that watched the event because I had already mapped out a plot for him
when I found this out so in this story it's Wick who murders Jon in his place.

The Jon and Sansa conversation is very awkward and probably the worst and cringiest
dialogue I've ever written but this also might be the first time they've ever had a real
conversation so it kind of fits. Jon is trying to poke at Sansa to figure out what
happened to her without directly asking and Sansa will do the same later. Their
dynamic is one full of mistrust and mutual using of the other but they do care about
each other at least a little.

On Friday we have Jamie II and the wedding of Myrcella.

Read and Review.
Chapter Summary

The wedding of Myrcella Baratheon and Trystane Martell

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jamie looked into the mirror in disbelief. He was really going through with this—leaving the Kingsguard and taking up his Lordship over Casterly Rock. All the years of his father demanding it of him, of being torn apart between his duties and now he was finally going to do it. Not for his father, his family, and especially not his house. He was doing it at the request of Arianne Martell. He was doing it to save his daughter's life. The whole thing was completely surreal.

He was dressed in the signature crimson red of House Lannister. His double-breasted vest was red leather with gold stitching and buttons. His pants were also crimson. On his back was the sigil of House Lannister. His long curls were slicked back and his face was clean-shaven. He had his sword at his hip, Widows Wail as his dead son had called it. He hardly recognized himself when he looked in the mirror without his full set of armor and the white cloak he had always worn while serving in the King’s Guard.

Myrcella was getting married today to Trystane Martell. Today Jamie would give his daughter to another house— to another name. Today he would betray his house and cause Casterly Rock to be the seat of the Martell’s, the Lannisters no longer would rule the west. His father had wanted him to be the Lord of Casterly Rock for so long and now his father, if he was still alive, would beg him not to take it.

Jamie had broken too many oaths in his life. He had vowed to keep the King safe and killed him. He had vowed to defend the innocent and watched as the King killed, raped, and mutilated innocents. He had vowed to be just and he had pushed a little boy out of a tower for no crime. He had vowed to return Sansa and Arya Stark to their families but instead had returned neither. He had vowed to return their daughter to Kings Landing and he knew he would fail there. She might not be in Dorne anymore but Casterly Rock was still not Kings Landing.

Jamie had tried to be a man of honor after losing his hand but he had failed. Jamie Lannister was an oathbreaker and the Kingslayer, he was no fairy tale, knight. It was time to stop pretending he was one. If he had to use dishonorable methods to save both his daughter and the Lannister name from certain death then so be it.

They could threaten to kill Myrcella all they want but Jamie could do the same to Trystane to free his daughter from the noose around her neck. Once they were at Casterly Rock she would be safe from the Martells retaliation. Or maybe Jamie could marry someone for himself once she was safe and have a child of his own to replace her as his heir. He would hate sleeping with someone other than Cersei for the first time but he would make all the sacrifices he needed to, in order to save his daughter and his house.

There was a knock on the door to the room that Jamie had been given once he had agreed to her terms. Jamie sighed and walked over to open it, the day had gone by much too quickly.
In the doorway was a woman, a beautiful one at that. She wore a close-fitting lilac dress that clung tightly to her slender body with a décolleté cut that showed plenty of tantalizing skin. Her black hair was pulled back in a long elegant braid that almost reached her hips. Her face was soft with high cheekbones and a small attractive button nose. Her eyes were a dark brown, alluring and seductive. Her skin was porcelain, a pale olive color not too dissimilar from Arianne’s own shade. Her lips were red as wine and curled in a sinister smile, tempting every man to taste the poison she was.

“Lord Jamie,” The woman greeted him with a smile, she made no move to dip her head or bow like most servants would when speaking to a knight or a lord. “The princess requests your presence, I’m to escort you to her.” He glanced at the whip on her hip, was this the woman who had defeated him so easily? She had been wearing a hijab wrapped around her head at the time and that had made it hard to identify her. Still, she was about the right size and had a whip so it was probably her.

Jamie sighed. He really didn’t want to deal with the headache that was Arianne Martell right now but he knew he didn’t have a choice either way so he nodded his head and followed the woman down the corridor.

She knocked on the door and pushed it open without waiting for a response. She walked in without a care in the world but Jamie lingered in the doorway. “Princess,” She called sweetly. “I’ve brought you, Lord Jamie, as you requested.”

“Thank you, Nym.” A familiar voice called and Jamie felt his heartbeat spike. His suspicions were confirmed when Myrcella took a step into his view to hug the woman apparently named Nym.

Myrcella was every bit as beautiful as her mother was when she had been her age. Her blonde hair hung in ringlets with pins holding it back from her unblemished face. She wore a golden gown with a plunging v-neckline that showed hints of the skin beneath her dress. Her dress frilled out at the hips and there was a long train that trailed behind her as she walked towards him.

“Leave us,” Myrcella ordered Nym who nodded her consent, and soon it was just Jamie and her alone in the room.

Jamie stared- she had changed a lot since he had last seen her two years ago. Her face was more mature now, her baby fat was completely gone now and in its place was the face of a woman grown. Her breasts were no longer pudgy but now they were alluring and sizeable. Her eyes had darkened a shade and there was an intelligence there that wasn’t always present. She had also shot up a foot but that might be due to the heels she had on her feet.

“Uncle Jamie,” She greeted him with a smile pulling him into a hug and out of his stupor. “I’m so glad you came.”

Jamie awkwardly patted her back and pulled her into his chest. “Your mother wanted to come but was unable to so I came instead.” Jamie lied. Her mother had wanted her to come home and to break the betrothal not participate in her wedding.

She pulled away from his arms and grabbed his hands in hers. “Would you walk me down the aisle?” She pleaded, her eyes wide and gazing up at his own. “I was going to have Uncle Damion do it but now that you’re here I would rather it’s you.”

Jamie forced himself to smile. “I would be honored.”

They stood in silence for a while- not knowing what else to say to each other after so long. They had never been particularly close, something Jamie vowed would change. She was his daughter
after all.

“Are you happy?” Jamie blurted out. “Marrying Trystane? Is that what you really want?”

She smiled and her eyes were alight with happiness. She nodded eagerly bouncing on the balls of her feet. “I am.” She sang happily with a dopy smile. “I love him. He’s so sweet, gentle, kind- and handsome.” She got a dreamy look on her face as she sang her betrothed praises.

Jamie smiled, at least she would be happy with him. He wasn’t trading Casterly Rock for her to be a glorified slave but for her to be with her beloved. “What about the rest of the Martells? Do you get along with the Princess Arianne? What about her cousins?” He pressed.

She let go of his hands and took a step back putting her hands on her hips. “They’re good to me.” She said and Jamie could hear her amusement in her tone. “Princess Arianne has been very kind- if distant. Obara doesn’t like me, Tyene is a bit rude at times but still fun. Nym is wonderful and a dear friend.”

Jamie forced himself to smile. He couldn’t hurt her by telling her how all of her dear friends were plotting to murder her if Jamie didn’t give Casterly Rock to House Martell. Let her be happy at least even if she was living a lie. He couldn’t murder her husband if Myrcella loved him and he couldn’t change the heir to anyone else without putting her at risk. If her husband was in on it like he suspected then she would never be free from the noose around her neck.

“That’s good,” Jamie mumbled. He almost wished they were awful to her, then maybe he could keep his daughter happy and save his house.

“Do you think Mother will like him?” Myrcella asked shyly, her eyes drifted down to look at his shoes.

Jamie forced another smile, that was becoming a regular occurrence. “If she sees you happy, I’m sure she will.” Jamie lied.

Myrcella laughed. She hadn’t bought his lie at all. “And you really believe that?”

“Have you ever known mother to like anyone besides her children? Jamie chuckled. “I’m sure she’ll like him more then she does Margaery at the very least.”

Myrcella frowned. “How is Tommen? I haven’t seen him in so long. Does he like his new wife? Is she nice?”

Jamie smiled at easier topic of conversation. “Tommen is doing really well, being king has been a bit of an adjustment for him but he seems happy. He adores his wife from what I can tell, they are rarely apart when they have the choice to be together.” He paused and took a deep breath wracking his mind for what he knew of the Queen. “Queen Margaery is very kind from what I’ve seen of her. She likes to visit with the common folk, bring the poor food, and play with the orphans.”

He sighed audibly. “When I was last in Kings Landing the High Septon was holding her for infidelity. I don’t actually believe it but apparently there is enough evidence for a trial.”

Myrcella nodded content with his response. “What about Uncle Tyrion?” She spoke softly, afraid of anyone overhearing. “They say he killed Joffrey and Grandfather.”

Jamie froze and looked off in the distance past her shoulder. “I don’t know,” he told her honestly. “He was convicted of killing Joffrey but I doubted it. He played a part in my father’s death.” He ran a hand through his hair. “He’s alive though, or at least he was.”
Tyrion had, of course, told him he had murdered Joffrey. He had assumed that he was just trying to hurt him after he had told him the truth about Tysha but now he wasn’t so sure. *You poor stupid blind crippled fool. Must I spell every little thing out for you? Very well. Cersei is a lying whore, she’s been fucking Lancel and Osmund Kettleblack and probably Moon Boy for all I know. And I am the monster they all say I am. Yes, I killed your vile son.* If Cersei was actually fucking Lancel as Arianne had claimed then was the rest of that also true?

Jamie had no doubt that Tyrion had been the one to fire the crossbow that killed their father but Jamie blamed himself for Tywin’s death as much as he did Tyrion. If he had never told Tyrion the truth about Tysha, about what he and his father had done to her, the lie he had told; then Tyrion would have left without killing him first.

She hummed and leaned over to whisper in his ear. “You helped him escape?” She didn’t wait for confirmation before continuing. “When you see him again, will you thank him for me? I hated him for arranging my marriage to Trystane but I was wrong. He gave me to the man I love. Regardless of what else he’s done, who he killed; he at least did that one thing right.”

Jamie forced another smile. “I’m glad you found him. You’re lucky.” He lied. “Arranged marriages are rarely so… so well arranged.”

She smiled brightly and they fell into another awkward silence. This was the longest conversation either of them had ever had with each other. Jamie vowed that would change, he would be there for his daughter. If he was going to doom House Lannister for her then he would be there for her as a father, there wasn’t much of a way the consequences could be worse than the present.

Jamie fished into his pocket and pulled out the golden lion pendant that had drawn him to Dorne in the first place, the threat of retribution for Prince Oberyn. “Try not to lose this again.” He lightly chided her.

She twirled so her back was to him causing the train to puff up as she did and slap against his shins. She gently lifted her hair so he could clip the necklace around her neck. He did just that and she twirled again so she was facing him. She had a slight frown on as she rubbed her thumb on the lion on the pendant. “I didn’t lose it.” Myrcella protested. “Ellaria took it, she was trying to incite the King into a war with Dorne. Arianna when she took over as the ruling Princess she reprimanded her and told her how foolish she was being. She apologized to me already, she was just blinded by her grief.” She explained. “Arianna let me choose her punishment for the crime but since no one was actually hurt by it, I let her off without any consequence besides agreeing to replace it and write an apology to Tommen.”

Jamie nodded, not entirely convinced that what she said was entirely true. Princess Arianna had indeed scolded her but that had not been for getting revenge but rather for her reckless plan. Jamie was certain that Elaria had felt no remorse for her hostility towards Myrcella.

“Listen, there’s something I need to tell you…” Jamie spoke softly, his voice quivering as he finally voiced the truth that could destroy the kingdom. “Something I should have told you long ago. So l-” He trailed off, was he really doing this? Now? “Now that you’ve seen more of the world, you’ve learned how complicated things can be. People can be. The Lannisters and the Martells have hated each other for years, but you’ve fallen in love with Trystane. It was an accident, really, I mean what were the chances? You happen to fall in love with the man you were assigned to marry?”

She laughed and grabbed his still organic left hand. “I know.” She said quietly squeezing his hand. Jamie laughed nervously. “Love is complicated. My point is… we don’t choose whom we love.
We just… It’s beyond our control.” He groaned out loud. “I sound like such an idiot.”

Myrcella shook her head causing the few loose curls that hung around her face to brush against her pink cheeks. “No, you don’t.” She argued. “We don’t choose whom we love.” She parroted back at him.

Jamie smiled slightly and lifted his golden hand to run it through his hair before remembering that he couldn’t do that anymore. “What I’m trying to say. What I’m trying and failing to say…”

“I know.” She said yet again. She leaned in next to his ear and whispered one word. “Father.”

“How?” He breathed. He was unable to stop the word from slipping past his lips. Jamie didn’t know why it surprised him so much that she knew, everyone else did. From the rumors spread by Stannis, to the High Septon’s holding of Cersei for infidelity, to the obvious lack of Baratheon features in his children. His and Cersei’s relationship might be the worst kept secret in all of the seven kingdom’s.

She pulled away from him and looked at his eyes. “The signs are there when you are looking for them. The constant glances at the other, the longing in your eyes for the other when you’re in the same room. The frequent touches when you think no one is looking. I didn’t understand what it meant before, but after experiencing love for myself, it’s not hard to look back and notice it.”

Jamie nodded and pulled her into his arms, her head against his breast. He gave her his first real hug as her father. “I know I haven’t been there for you.” He spoke softly, this was new territory to him. “I’ve barely even spoken to you before today. Moving forward I’d like to be there for you. Actually be your father for once.” He pulled away and grabbed her right hand tightly in his left hand. “Is that okay with you?”

She nodded with a smile and blushed brightly. “I’m glad you’re my father. I would love to have you present in my life moving forward.” Jamie rewarded her words with another long hug.

He pulled back and grabbed her right hand again. “I’m resigning from the King’s Guard, with only one hand I can’t adequately protect the king. I plan on taking up my Lordship over Casterly rock.” He stared deep into her eyes and steadied himself. He was actually doing this. “I would like to name you as my heir, your children will inherit the Lannister lands and rule the Westerlands.” Saying that aloud had only just made the situation more real to him.

She smiled brightly up at him. “Are you sure? What if you have legitimate children of your own?” She countered. “Why not give the lands to Tommen’s sons?”

“You’re my only daughter, the only child I have who even knows I’m their father. I will never have any more children. You and Tommen are all I need.” He answered surprisingly honest for once. “I am your father, it’s my job to provide for you. Let me make up my earlier failures as a father and give you this one thing. Tommen will inherit the Baratheon lands.”

She smiled brightly once again and pulled him into another hug. “Thank you, father.” She whispered to him.

“I’d like for you and Trystane to come home with me to Casterly Rock, learn about the land that you will one day rule. Princess Arianne already gave her consent.” She nodded and quietly gave her consent but did not move from his arms. They stayed there holding each other for a few minutes before a bell rang outside marking the passing of the hour.

She pulled away from him. “I still have to finish getting ready for the wedding. Thank you for
coming father, for being there for me on this day.”

Jamie smiled genuinely for once. “I’ll leave you to it.” He told her stepping outside the room. As soon as he was outside four women, Nym and three he didn’t recognize but he assumed they were handmaidens entered the room to help Myrcella get ready.

Jamie tried to hide how uncomfortable he was as he walked down the aisle with Myrcella on his arm. He really didn’t want to do this, he should have taken her and absconded from Dorne. He should have done something while he still could have- she might have been upset about leaving behind her paramour but she would have gotten over him eventually- probably. The important thing was she would be safe, and free from harm. Jamie wouldn’t be betraying his house and spitting on his father’s grave that he had dug for him.

Myrcella stepped on his foot and the jolt of pain from her heel crushing his toe caused him to stop walking. When he turned to her, he saw they were a few paces in front of the groom, he had walked too far, lost in his thoughts. He tried to pretend like that was normal but knew he was unsuccessful as his face took on a pinkish hue. He was Lannister everyone else made a mistake, not him.

Myrcella turned her head and whispered in his ear. “You’re more nervous than me, father.” There was that word again, the word that was why he was following through on Arianne Martell’s crazy plan. The reason he was willing to betray everything else. The word that brought him to his knees and had him willing to do anything.

He unlinked his arm from hers and took a step backward to give Trystane free access to her. He watched from a somewhat odd position behind the couple, and a few steps from the Septon by the statue of the Mother.

“You may now cloak the bride and bring her under your protection.” The Septon declared.

It was a bittersweet feeling as he watched Trystane remove the cloak on Myrcella’s back with the split crest of House Lannister and House Baratheon, the stag and the lion with their backs to each other. His nimble fingers quickly unworked the clasps around her neck and pulled the cloak away from her. He then handed the cloak to Jamie who took it with a surprisingly genuine smile, Myrcella's happiness was contagious.

He watched somewhat saudadely as Trystane removed his own cloak from his back, the red sun of House Martell splayed proudly on it in red silk, over a black backdrop. The sun lit up the night sky, as the shadows closed in on it. The cloak was beautiful and when he draped it around Myrcella’s shoulders, Jamie was forced to admit that it was a good look on her. She was glowing as she stared at her very soon to be husband with wide eyes, everything else forgotten.

The Septon then proclaimed, "My lords, my ladies, we stand here in the sight of gods and men to witness the union of man and wife. One flesh, one heart, one soul, now and forever."

Trystane grabbed Myrcella’s hand in his own and interlocked their fingers. The Septon tied a ribbon in a knot around their conjoined hands. “Let it be known that the Princess Myrcella of Houses Baratheon and Lannister and Prince Trystane of House Martell are one heart, one flesh, one soul.” He declared to the congregation that had gathered there for the wedding. “Cursed be he who would seek to tear them asunder.”

The Septon pulled on the ribbon and the know unraveled. “Look upon each other and say the
words.” He commanded of them.

In unison, Trystane and Myrcella spoke the words that would bind them together for all eternity. “Father, Smith, Warrior, Mother, Maiden, Crone, Stranger.” They recited the names of the seven from memory as was the tradition.

“I am his and he is mine. From this day, until the end of my days” Myrcella spoke loud and clear, her voice drowning out the much softer one of her lover who simultaneously said, “I am hers and she is mine. From this day, until the end of my days.”

With the vows exchanged Trystane turned his head slightly to look at the crowd for a moment. “With this kiss, I declare my love.” He declared. Trystane let go of Myrcella’s hands and cupped her face in his palms. He gently brought his face to hers and kissed her to the roaring applause. The kiss was longer than was strictly necessary and when they finally parted both their faces were flush and Myrcella’s eyes were sparkling.

Jamie found himself applauding with the rest of the crowd despite what it obviously meant for his house, and for his legacy; Jamie couldn’t help but feel some joy at his daughter’s obvious exuberance.

The feast was in full swing, Jamie sat there nursing a glass of arbor gold watching as Trystane and Myrcella fed each other pigeon pie like toddlers, putting each other’s forks in their mouths and occasionally sharing bites with a kiss. The whole thing was so disgustingly sweet and Jamie was beginning to wonder if Trystane was actually not a part of his sister’s plot, very few people are as good of actors as Trystane would have to be in order to pull this off.

Jamie had fielded at least a dozen questions about his appearance here and why he wasn’t wearing the white cloak that he had always worn. All of them had been met with the same lie that Arianne had crafted. He was here to see his niece marry on his way home from a confidential sensitive diplomatic mission. He had hung up the white cloak to live out the dying wish of his father and be Lord of Casterly Rock.

Princess Arianne Martell stood to her feet, and banged her spoon on her glass. “I’d like to call a toast,” She announced. “A toast to their love, their happiness, and the alliance of our great houses. Let us all put our bad history behind us. To the future! To the alliance of Houses Baratheon, Lannister, and Martell! May this alliance last for generations to come!” She cheered and everyone lifted their own goblets to take a long sip with many applauding after they had drunk their fill.

Arianne remained standing as the servants went around and refilled the recently emptied glasses of wine. “Perhaps Lord Jamie Lannister would like to make a toast as well.” She made it sound like a request but Jamie knew it was anything but that, it was time for him to betray his house.

Jamie stood and Arianne took her seat with a triumphant smirk on her face. “I would like to call a toast…” He licked his lips, his mouth suddenly extremely dry. “To the union of Prince Trystane Martell and my da-niece and heir Myrcella Baratheon! May they live long and happy lives!”

He had done it- there was no going back now, not with all the nobles that had heard him declaring her as his heir. Until he had a valid excuse- a child of his own. No matter how little regard he had for Myrcella’s happiness, he couldn’t back out of their deal now. Myrcella would live and in a few decades, it would be a Martell or perhaps a Baratheon, not a Lannister who lorded over Casterly Rock.
Jamie sighed and retook his seat. Once he was seated, frantic whispering broke out. He watched as many of the lords and ladies gathered for the wedding turned to each other and spoke about his declaration like a common girl who had just heard the latest gossip. Within a moon, all of the realms would know that Myrcella was the heir to Casterly Rock, a woman who is not a Lannister would inherit the wealthiest land in all of the seven kingdoms for the first time. He would be scorned both publically and privately for his decision, he would be chided by everyone who bore the name Lannister. Lannisters’ would be cursing his name for generations to come. His name would be remembered in history as the man who gave away an entire kingdom.

Yet as he looked over at a beaming Myrcella chatting quietly with her husband, Jamie knew he would do it all over again if his daughter was safe and happy.

Chapter End Notes

What do they do with the cloak when the groom removes their old one? I rewatched every wedding from the TV Show and reread the scenes in the books and they always cut away after they remove the cloak and cut back when they put on the new one, the old simply vanishing into thin air. I assumed they gave it to the father/person who walks the bride down the aisle but I actually have no clue.

Next chapter we go back to the wall and the Night's Watch for the choosing with Ser Davos. That should be posted on Tuesday.

Read, Kudos, and Review.
Davos II

Chapter Summary

Davos's reaction to Jon's resurrection and the first night of the Choosing for the next Lord Commander of the Night's Watch.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Davos really should be getting some sleep, he hadn’t slept at all last night either but he couldn’t sleep after the events of the previous day. His entire world had been completely uprooted. Jon Snow had come back from the dead, sure he had suggested that Melisandre try to bring him back but he hadn’t really expected anything to happen. He certainly hadn’t expected something to happen four days after the failed ritual.

He had given Jon Snow’s eulogy and lit the pyre and Lord Snow had come back to life within the flames. He had crawled out of the flames, alive and unburnt. Ser Davos knew the legends of Old Valyria and of the unburnt Targaryen Kings that had come before, not every Targaryen was immune to the flames but some of them were. Never before had there been a non-Targaryen unburnt so it stood to reason that Jon Snow was also a Targaryen. Jon Snow had a claim to the Iron Throne and Davos would make sure he took it, the realm needed a man of his character to take it. Jon Snow might be a bastard but so was the boy currently sitting on the throne.

Davos had already pledged his life and allegiance to a King and that King had failed him. Stannis had earned Davos’s respect and admiration, he had been loyal to the rightful heir of King Robert Baratheon. Stannis had spat on his loyalty. Stannis had thrown his entire kingdom away when he put all his faith in the Red Witch. Stannis had been a fool blinded by his lust for his birthright and his faith in the red god.

Stannis had burnt his only daughter, his only child, his heir, the Princess Shireen Baratheon. Davos had loved Shireen like she was his own daughter, she had been his lifeline after the death of his sons in the battle of the blackwater. She had taught Davos how to read. She was an innocent child, the sweetest girl Davos had ever known. King- no Lord Stannis had burnt her alive. He had never earned his title as King and when he had murdered his own daughter he had lost any claim he might have had.

Jon Snow was different from Stannis, he was good. Jon Snow had come out of the fire and upon hearing the Red Witch had been the one to bring him back had been wroth. Jon Snow had somehow ferreted out the information that she had sacrificed Shireen with Stannis’s consent, to bring Azor Ahai victory. Yet Jon Snow despite his life being saved by Shireen’s death had burnt
Ser Davos had wanted to join the Night’s Watch and serve with Jon Snow before his death but after his resurrection, Ser Davos wanted to serve Jon Snow. By giving Davos Shireen’s killer and condemning the woman who saved his life because she murdered an innocent child, he had gained the undying loyalty of Ser Davos. When Jon left The Wall to take back the North like Davis and most everyone expected, Davos would go with him as long as the king would have him. Jon Snow was a good man and burning an evil person alive did nothing to color his opinion of his goodness. If anything it only improved his opinion of him, he had sought justice even when it hurt his own cause. He had prioritized what was right over his own self-interests, even his own life. Davos was confident he would make a great king and Davos would make sure that he became king whether he wanted to be king or not.

All of that had lead to Davos standing outside in the middle of the night, well past nightfall, begging entrance to the Kings Tower to speak with the King. He didn’t know if Jon Snow would be awake, but after seven days of being dead, Davos presumed he might be. Davos needed to speak to the king, to convince him to take the throne and to swear his allegiance to him.

He rapped lightly on the door with his knuckles, if the King was sleeping he likely wouldn’t be disturbed but if he was awake he should hear him. Davos was pleased when the King opened the door himself only a few moments later.

“Ser Davos.” He greeted warmly. “Do come in.” He pulled the door open and stepped aside bidding Davos entrance to the somewhat luxurious chambers of the Kings Tower.

The last time Davos had been in here he had been begging Stannis to leave Shireen and Selyse behind when he marched on Winterfell and Stannis had insisted on his wife and daughter going with him. Davos couldn’t help but wonder if Stannis had already decided to sacrifice Shireen when they had that conversation. If he had just insisted a bit more could he have saved Shireen? Davos shook his head, it wouldn’t do to go down that rabbit hole of what if’s, and maybes.

“Who do you think should be the next Lord Commander?” King Jon asked of him.

Davos frowned. “I’m not sure you should be asking me that, I’m no man of the Night’s Watch.”

“Which is exactly why I’m asking you, you’ve observed us for a year and are an unbiased observer.” King Jon explained calmly. “You’re also a great judge of character.”
Davos’s frown deepened. “I’m not so sure about that.” He had thought Stannis was a good man, a great one even, and then Stannis had burnt his only daughter alive.

Jon put a hand on his shoulder. “You weren’t wrong about Stannis, he was always obstinate and just. You just didn’t realize how far Stannis would go in his stubbornness or how deep his religious fanaticism went.”

Davos still blamed himself and doubted how good he really was at judging a man’s character but it didn’t matter. It was not the duty of the king to reassure Davos and comfort him. Davos was the one who was supposed to advise and comfort the King not the other way around.

“I can’t speak of the men garrisoned at the other castles, I don’t know them. From Castle Black, it seems to me that Ser Denner Frostfinger would be the best choice. He went with you to Hardhome, to save the wildlings and seems like he would be willing to work with them. Denner commands respect from all who work with him and he is an approachable kind person with charisma.” Davos told the King honestly. “He’s more than a bit self-centered and is a bit amoral at times but he’s a good leader. I don’t think he’s a great choice but he’s the best of what appears to be a rotten bunch.”

Jon nodded. “I was afraid you would say that.” He sighed audibly. “Ser Denner was one of the men in the crowd that watched me be murdered. He may not have knifed me himself but he stood by and watched as I was murdered. He knew about the plot that resulted in my death and chose to stand by and let it happen.”

“He’s the best choice for Lord Commander I have little doubt about that but I can’t reward a man who watched me be murdered by supporting his campaign for my former title,” Jon explained, his voice rising in volume as he went on.

Davos nodded, that seemed more than reasonable. Just another instance of when Davos had been wrong about someone. “So who will you support then?” Davos asked with a raised eyebrow.

“No one yet, I’ll wait, see who is running for Lord Commander, and probably eventually reluctantly back Ser Denner Frostfinger. Winter is coming and there are things more important than a personal vendetta” King Jon explained, clearly bitter with his choice.

That was why Davos knew Jon Snow needed to be king. He was willing to not let his own personal biases affect his decisions and he would put the good of his kingdom first over what he wanted for himself.
“I didn’t come here to discuss the next Lord Commander, Your Grace,” Davos spoke up trying to drift the topic back to what he had wanted to speak about, why he had come at this hour to speak with the King.

King Jon cut him off. “I’m not a King, I don’t want to be King. I never even wanted to be Lord Commander.”

“It’s not about what you want, it’s your duty to take the throne. You have the best claim, you are the best candidate available. Under Tommen the realm has gone to hell, The Sparr-.” Jon raised a hand and the rest of Davos’s speech died on his tongue as he obediently fell silent.

“I’ve heard Stannis’s spiel before. Let me finish.” Jon reprimanded him. “I didn’t want to become Lord Commander but I accepted the role to keep the Watch out of Slynt’s grubby hands. I knew Slynt wouldn’t be prepared for the Others when winter came and did what I had to in order to ensure the survival of all of mankind.”

“Despite what my former brothers may believe, I did not let the wildlings through our gates because I wanted to befriend them or because I was one of them. I did it because we needed more fighting men to defeat the Great Other and his army. I did not support Stannis because he was the rightful heir to the Iron Throne or even because I hated the Boltons and Lannisters. I did it because he was the only king who understood the threat that we were facing and we need the aid of all of Westeros to defeat the Others when Winter comes.”

Jon sighed audibly. “If I have to become King of all the Seven Kingdoms for mankind to survive the Long Night then I will don the crown. If I have to abdicate my claim to get the aid of my Aunt Daenerys and her Dragons then I will gladly do so. Whatever it takes of me I will do it, because if I don’t then we won’t survive the Long Night and all of life will die.”

Davos knelt down before his king. “I swear my undying loyalty to you. I will shield your back and keep your counsel and give my life for yours if need be. Anything you ask of me I will do it. I swear it by the old gods and the new.” He vowed.

King Jon actually chuckled at his declaration. “I don’t want your undying loyalty, I don’t need a yes-man, I expect I’ll have plenty of those soon.” Davos looked up at him. “If I ever lose my way, if I ever let the power get to my head or go the way of Stannis...” Jon grimaced. “I want you to call me out on decisions you don’t agree with. If you ever feel that I’m beyond any chance of redemption and that your advice is falling on death ears then, by all means, betray me.”
King Jon paused and took a deep breath to steady himself. “If I ever go the way of my grandfather and go completely mad… I want you to kill me.”

Davos smiled up at the King who only continued to impress him. “That is why you have my loyalty, Your Grace.” Davos rose to his feet before the King. “I will do as you asked and if it comes to it, which it won’t; but if it does then I will betray or even kill you.”

King Jon smiled for the first time during that conversation. “Thank you, Ser Davos. I’m not a King yet, I can’t be one until we win the loyalty of all the northern houses. If the Lannisters ally with the Boltons, which they will if I declare myself as a Targaryen King. Then we will lose, and when Winter comes, all life will be extinguished.” Jon explained. “One day, I will demand to be called Your Grace but for now I’m just Jon.”

Davos supposed he could live with that. King Jon wasn’t running from his calling and duty but just exercising caution. His reasoning was sound so Davos could live with him being just Jon for now. No, not just Jon.

“Can I see your sword for a moment?” Jon raised an eyebrow in askance as to why but consented and handed Longclaw over.

“In the name of the Warrior, I charge you to be brave.” Davos declared and Jon realizing what was going on, sunk to a knee. Davos tapped his left shoulder with the flat of the blade.

“In the name of the Father, I charge you to be just.” He tapped the right shoulder with the blade.

“In the name of the Mother, I charge you to defend the innocent.” He tapped the left shoulder again before lowering the sword and placing it by his side.

“Arise Ser Jon of Houses Stark and Targaryen, Knight of The Seven Kingdoms.” Davos declared and Jon rose to his feet with a grin that Davos knew was matched on his own face.

The title wasn’t for Jon’s sake, he doubted that Jon or him cared about being called a Ser at all but for the sake of the Lords he would have to enter negotiations with before he revealed his true heritage to all the world. Rather than being just Ned Stark’s bastard, now he was an honorable knight and it gave him some extra respect in forming alliances. Not a lot but every little bit counts.
The day had gone by far too quickly. Jon being called Ser had been met with very little fanfare. Jon and Davos had spent many hours deep into the night and through the morning discussing strategies for taking the north. One thing they had agreed on is that they needed the Wildlings in their army, they maybe could get the same amount of men from a different house or combination of houses who would refuse to fight with Wildlings but the Wildlings unique skills that they could not find anywhere else. In the afternoon, Jon had gone to meet with Tormund and asked him to gather all the wildlings so he could speak to them, he hadn’t said why but Davos knew he was trying to get them to help him take the north. Davos well Jon was busy with the had asked Ser Denner Frostfinger to teach him some of the basics of Swordplay, if he was going to be by Jon’s side in battle then he needed to learn some combat skills. Plus it gave him a chance to get a measure of the man who would likely be the next Lord Commander. Davos was worn thin after two nights where he did not sleep at all, and an afternoon of grueling physical activity. All he really wanted to do was sleep but still had a few more hours until he could.

The brothers of the Night’s Watch were gathering in the Great Hall now for the choosing. Jon, Davos, Sansa, Brienne, and her squire Podrick had been permitted to attend the choosing as long as they didn’t interfere, and obviously, they had no vote. Last time they had been offered to attend at first, an invitation Davos had graciously accepted but once Stannis had threatened to choose for them if they did not choose immediately they had found their admittance barred from the proceedings. This time, even if Jon decided to cast his own vote and speak for a candidate or even submit a name for the choosing, Davos doubted their admittance would be barred. Jon commanded too much respect and even more fear after the events of yesterday.

Ser Denys Mallister stood to his feet and he slammed his mug on the table causing the room to fall silent immediately. “This is certainly a bit irregular,” Mallister said in greeting. “We are gathered here to choose the 999th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch.” He paused for dramatic effect. “Yet, the 998th Lord Commander sits here among us, despite us all bearing witness to the fact that he was dead for a week.” There were a few light chuckles at that remark and some scoffs in disbelief but the somber mood quickly drowned them out and the room fell silent once again.

“The old Maester Aemon died and has yet to be replaced. The first ranger, the first steward, and the first builder are all being held for treason; somehow leaving I, Ser Denys Mallister as the Castellan with the most seniority as interim Lord Commander until the next one can be chosen.”

“Without a Maester here, the duty of counting falls to the first steward of Castle Black. Since Bowen Marsh is being held for treason, that duty falls to Brandon Perryn as the first steward with the most seniority, serving at Eastwatch by the Sea for fourteen years, assisting him in the counting will be Jadyn Quagg as the first steward of Shadow Tower and Tytus Kyndall as the first steward of the Night Fort.”
Ser Denys paused and took a deep breath before continuing the introduction. “There are 612 brothers gathered here today for the choosing. For a new Lord Commander to be elected, they will need to receive 409 votes to meet the minimum two-thirds election requirement. If no Lord Commander is chosen today then we will adjourn for the day and meet again tomorrow. If you submit your name to the choosing and fail to garner at least seven votes to meet the minimum one percent requirement then you will be barred from being nominated until we meet to decide the one-thousandth Lord Commander.

“We will now open up the floor for any names people would like to submit to the choosing.” Ser Denys Mallister finished and as soon as he had finished a number of people stood up to submit their own names. Davos sighed, this was going to be another long night.

Ser Denys Mallister pointed to Cotter Pyke with a slight frown and everyone else sat down so he could speak.

“Thank you, Mallister.” The intentional snub by dropping his title was noticed by almost everyone. “Most of you know who I am, I’ve captained Eastwatch for the last six years after being appointed by Lord Jeor Mormont. I led the defense of The Wall during the invasion of Skagos when they tried to move south from their island and settle in the gift. I repelled the savages and taught them not to leave their cursed island. I fought in the battle of Thenn and countless others. I’ve sailed through many storms and I’ve overseen the trade and distribution of all our resources in that time.”

“Overseen means letting the stewards handle everything,” someone Davos didn’t recognize stage whispered earning a handful of chuckles.

Cotter Pyke scowled. “I’m a man who will not bow down to any Lord who thinks he has a place to command the Night’s Watch when he’s not one of us.” Pyke looked at the guest table and glared at Davos and Jon. “I will bring the Night’s Watch back to the glory days when we defended the wall from the Wildlings, not let them through it.” He glared at Jon again.

Ser Denys Mallister hid a snicker with a cough. “Thank you, Cotter Pyke,” He said cutting off his tirade. “Anyone else?”

Once again people all around the room stood to submit their candidacy. He pointed to Ser Denner Frostfinger.

“Thank you, Ser Mallister. I’ve served in the Night’s Watch for four years, most of it was spent as a Ranger. When the Lord Commander Jon Snow appointed Ser Alliser Thorne as the First Ranger, I
shifted to the position as Master of Arms. I haven’t fought in as many battles as most of the brothers have. What I have done in my short time here was show two key abilities.”

“I’ve shown the ability to teach as the recent recruits can likely attest to and I’ve shown the ability to survive. The Night’s Watch often finds itself struggling when a new Lord Commander takes control. Jon Snow was the exception to the rule, often times the Lord Commander has a new vision that he can’t yet enact. Often times the new Lord Commander undoes much of the progress the last one made as they disagreed with most of their decisions.”

“My vision is largely similar to that of the previous Lord Commander. Before Lord Snow led an expedition beyond The Wall to bring the Wildlings south for the winter, I was among those who considered the Wildlings our greatest, even our only enemy. But I went to Hardhome with the Lord Commander to Hardhome and I saw The Others. I saw their army of the dead, they slaughtered a hundred thousand Wildlings with no mercy. We have to stand united now more than ever, we need the Wildlings, we need the Boltons, we need the Baratheon King, and the Targaryen King as well.” He glanced over at Jon as he said that. Davos was impressed Jon managed to not show any frustration at his flattery when he had allowed him to be murdered.

“We cannot afford to let any personal vendettas impact our decision making. We need a Lord Commander who has no feuds with any of the Southern or Northern Lords. We need allies from all directions. As a baseborn former Hedge Knight, I hold no grudges against any of the important houses. None of them know who I am and as such have no quarrel with me.” He looked back at the still calm Jon Snow. “I knew about the plot to kill the Lord Commander, but I stood by and let it happen.”

Frantic whispers broke out around the room as the shock set in. Even Jon Snow had been unable to hide his shock at him publically outing himself. “Traitor!” Numerous voices cried out, some demanding for his head.

“I won’t pretend Jon Snow was my friend, but he was my brother.” Ser Denner called out over the crowd. “I believed in what Jon Snow was trying to do. After Hardhome, I agreed with his mission and was proud to serve under him. I respected him. He never made a decision I did not agree with when he was Lord Commander. He was the greatest Lord Commander I’ve ever served under and maybe the greatest ever. Yet, I allowed him to be killed.”

“With Jon Snow at the helm, we would not have survived the winter. Through no fault of his own, the Lannisters, Boltons, and Baratheon’s would not send aid to the Night’s Watch with Jon Snow in charge. Ser Jon Snow was believed to be the son of Lord Eddard Stark, a man who committed treason. He was believed to be the brother to Robb Stark, The King in The North. He may have not had a choice, but he housed Lord Stannis for a year. House Tully or House Frey whichever one you claim holds the Riverlands has quarrels with Ser Jon Snow, whether for him being a bastard or for his cousin’s actions in shaming their house. The Vale is also held by a Tully. Dorne hates the
Starks for the actions of Lord Snow’s apparent mother, Lyanna Stark shaming Elia Martell. The Iron Islands hate the Starks for Lord Eddard Stark crushing their insurgence and keeping the last son of their king captive for ten years. The only place Ser Jon Snow would not find enemies is the Reach and they wouldn’t dare risk their alliance with the crown to send us aid.”

“Ask yourself this, if King Tommen had offered to send us a thousand men to man the wall if Ser Jon delivered the head of Sansa Stark to him as reparation for her part in the murder of King Joffrey, would Jon Snow have accepted her offer? Would any of you do the same if it was your loved ones? I have no one outside of the watch, no great family name, no connections in the capital, there is nothing that I would put above the watch. I will do anything for us to survive the winter.”

“I let my Lord Commander, Jon Snow die for the good of the watch. With Ser Jon Snow at the helm despite his brilliant leadership and excellent battle strategies, we would not survive the winter. The Others and the army of the dead outnumber us one hundred to one, even with the Wildlings. We need more allies and we couldn’t find them under Ser Jon Snow. So with a heavy heart, I allowed Ser Alliser to continue his plot and murder the Lord Commander.”

“I can’t promise that everyone will send us all of their armies, I can’t promise that any will heed the call if I’m Lord Commander, but I can promise that I’ll try to reach everyone and give up whatever we have to, in order to make sure that we all survive the upcoming Winter. Ser Jon was the first sacrifice I made to survive the Winter and he won’t be the last. I would allow women to take the Black, I would allow Wildlings to take the black, I would even accept the aid of wild animals- dogs and the like if that’s what it takes. These times are desperate and we will all do what we must to survive.”

As Ser Denner Frostfinger sat back down many around the room burst into applause at the speech. There were still a few demanding his head but the noises of agreement drowned them out. Davos looked over at Jon and noticed that even he looked reluctantly impressed. It took Ser Ser Denys Mallister a few minutes to regain some semblance of order and continue with the rest of the candidates that were submitting their own names to the choosing.

Almost a hundred names stepped forward offering themselves as a good choice for Lord Commander. Some of them cited their experience in battle, others cited their seniority. Some cited their connections outside of the wall and their family name. Some candidates offered bribes and others promised retribution. As many names were given in jest as there were serious candidates. It took almost six hours for the herd to thin down and Davos only remembered a handful of the submissions.

“Is there anyone else who would like to submit a name for the choosing?” Ser Denys called out and no one stood. “In that case, I-” He was cut off by Dolorous Edd standing.
“I would like to submit a name to the choosing.”

If Ser Denys Mallister was at all upset by the interruption he gave no sign of it. “Very well, Eddison Tollett the floor is yours.” Ser Denys declared sitting himself back down.

“Thank you, Ser Mallister. At the last choosing, I put my own name forth and claimed I would make a horrible Lord Commander but so would all of you.” Edd received a few chuckles at that declaration.

“I was wrong. Jon Snow was a great Lord Commander, the best even. His time with the watch has come to an end and we find ourselves forced to choose yet again. Despite me being wrong about Jon Snow, I still do believe that none of us would make a good Lord Commander. None of us could ever hope to surpass Jon Snow.” Ed proclaimed, his face long and solemn.

“Get to the point already!” Someone called out from the crowd. A few people jeered at his insulting them all. Even Davos had to wonder at what was the point in this, was he trying to convince Jon to be Lord Commander again? They needed him on the throne not here at the wall.

“I’ve thought long and hard about who could possibly succeed a King as Lord Commander, a King as good as Jon Snow is. We all agree that we need a Lord Commander with a sweet tongue, one who can convince the Lords in the south to send us their armies. Most of us agree that we need someone who can work with the Wildlings now settled in the gift. We need a man who is fearless and willing to bend the rules for the good of the watch.”

“When we were locked in that room with the Lord Commander’s corpse, I came to the realization that no one in the watch is at all like Jon Snow. I wanted to throw our lives away in a mad attempt to take out Ser Alliser Thorne. I don’t have the temperament to be Lord Commander. No one in the watch can replace Jon Snow.” He grinned widely and looked at the guest table where Jon, Lady Brienne, Podrick, Sansa, and Davos himself were seated. “Which is why I propose we look outside the watch and nominate Ser Davos Seaworth as the 999th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch.”

Davos had thought he had seen pandemonium before at the battle of the Black Water or even earlier today when Ser Denner had ousted himself for his part in Jon Snow’s murder. Those were certainly hectic situations but there was something different when they were all focused entirely on him. Nothing compared to five hundred men in his face screaming exclusively at him, calling him an outsider and Edd a traitor. Ser Denys Mallister was banging on the table to call a return to order but no one paid him any heed. They were too incensed.
Davos didn’t know how to feel about his nomination. He had never asked to be Lord Commander, he had never asked to even be a Lord of anything. His sons had all died in service to Stannis and he had nothing left outside of serving his King, Jon. He had wanted to join the Night’s Watch when Jon had been Lord Commander but that had been because of Jon. He now served his King outside of The Wall, he was going to thrust his King onto the throne.

But The Wall was important too. Davos had seen The Others, he knew that their army was marching on The Wall. Without the proper leadership on The Wall, it would fall. Davos didn’t know if he was the right man for the job but he knew that someone like Cotter Pyke would be a horrible choice. Ser Denner was maybe a solid option but while he talked a pretty talk, he had never shown the ability to live what he preached. Davos was skeptical that even if Jon hadn’t been the Lord Commander, even if Ser Alliser with all his southern connections had been Lord Commander, he doubted that they would have found any help.

You had to see the threat to believe it, their only hope of getting all the numbers they need to win the great war was to have Jon Targaryen sitting on the Iron Throne. If Ser Denner was in charge would he let the Lannister Army use the watches resources to defeat Jon when he made the move south? If he believed that the Lannisters would win would they possibly even fight against Jon? He said he would do whatever it takes to survive the winter, make whatever sacrifice they needed to make in order to survive. He had already let Jon die once, could he do it again? Davos wasn't sure he wanted the answer to that question.

How much help would Davos really be to Jon if he went with him? He had no knowledge of battle strategies or any skill in the field. His skills were sweet-talking people and smuggling. He was no Lord despite the title and lands Stannis had given him. He was no knight either. Jon would be at war and was charismatic and scary enough to get followers without him. Davos had been the perfect foil to Lord Stannis. Stannis was so intensely dislikable and un-charismatic that he needed a silver-tongued hand to serve him. Here Davos could do some good, here Davos could save lives. Jon did not need him, the watch did.

Ser Davos glanced over at Jon who locked eyes with him and gave an almost imperceptible nod of his head. Davos stood to his feet and most of the room fell silent wanting to hear what he had to say. “I planned on asking the Lord Commander, Ser Jon to let me join the Night’s Watch the night he died. I believed in the possibility of the Others being real even before we came here, and after so many here saw them at Hardhome, I know it to be true. I have nothing left for me in the outside world and I believe in the cause. I’ll join the Night’s Watch whether I’m Lord Commander or not, and if Ser Denys will allow it I would like to accept the unorthodox selection and add my name to the choosing.” Ser Davos sat down without another word and everyone turned their eyes to Ser Denys awaiting his verdict.

Ser Denys’s eyes appraised the room’s occupants. “This is unorthodox Ser Davos but not strictly prohibited. If you swear your vows once tonight’s choosing is done then you may put your name forth in this choosing. You will not hold a vote until you are sworn in tonight, however.”
Davos nodded his head in agreement with his terms. “Thank you, Ser Denys.” There was no reason he would not agree, he would likely only get a few votes and drop out. If he said no then men might not vote for Ser Denys purely out of spite or because it made Ser Denys look insecure.

“Is there anyone else who would like to submit a name for the choosing?” Ser Denys called out and no one stood. “In that case, I would like to nominate myself for the position of Lord Commander. I joined the Watch as a boy and have served loyally longer than any other ranger. Through 10 winters I’ve served. As commander of the Shadow Tower, I kept the Free Folk away at the attack on the wall led by Mance Rayder. I led the ranging to the Frostfangs to defeat the Free Folk clan that had taken to hunting our rangers for sport. I was the first man to successfully map the territory belonging to the Thenns.”

“None of that matters now. The Night’s Watch is no longer what it was when I was a boy. The wildlings I fought against all my life are now the Free Folk and our allies. The tales of the Others I was told as a horror story when I was a wee lad are actually true. Every battle I won is meaningless now that we have seen the true enemy, we were only squabbling amongst ourselves before. Now the real war begins.”

“For years, even before the days of Aegon the conqueror the Night’s Watch has stood strong with one goal. With one code. Times have changed. If I am inducted as the 999th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch we will attempt to adjust to the new world while also keeping the traditions that we’ve committed to for so long.”

“As Lord Commander, I will not allow women to serve in the watch as many of the men here have proposed we do in this time of crisis. I will work with the wildlings and give them some control of some of our abandoned castles along the wall if they take our vows. The vows each of our brothers swore when they joined the watch is what has let the watch stand for thousands of years. We will still hold no lands or titles. We will still father no children nor will we take a wife. We will continue to not take part in the wars of men. Even the most heinous crimes will be forgiven if one chooses to take the black. Our vows are the foundation of the Night’s Watch. For thousands of years the Night’s Watch had stood and if we are smart and stay true to ourselves then the Night’s Watch will stand for at least a thousand more. We will adapt but the foundation must remain the same especially in such a troubled time.”

With his campaign speech wrapped up, Ser Denys banged on the table once again to call everyone back to the main topic. “Is there anyone else who would like to submit a name to the choosing?” This time there were no responses. “We will-”

“Lord Commander Mallister,” Jon called out from his place beside Davos. “I know this is extremely unorthodox and I have no place to say anything as I’m no longer a brother of the Night’s
Watch but if it would be okay with the Lord Commander then I would like to speak for one of the men chosen.”

Ser Denys Mallister scowled before quickly hiding his feelings behind a mask. Davos grinned. Jon had backed Ser Denys into a corner, if he denied Jon the opportunity to speak then people would assume that Jon wasn’t supporting him and likely vote against him because of it. If he wasn’t allowed to speak here then Jon would just speak to everyone on the morrow since the Lord Commander would almost certainly not be chosen tonight and again Ser Denys would look bad for denying him the opportunity to speak and the men still revered Jon especially after his resurrection. This was a no win situation for Ser Denys, unless Jon would speak for him he lost here. His only hope was to latch onto the technically correct title that Jon had called him and hope that meant he was speaking for himself.

Ser Denys forced himself to smile. “I think everything surrounding this situation is unorthodox. I don’t think a man of the Night’s Watch has ever come back from the dead before. There is no protocol here so I see no reason not to allow it.”

“Thank you, Lord Denys,” Jon said with a small smile before addressing the rest of the men in the room. “Ser Davos may not have taken our oaths but he’s done more for the Night’s Watch then most men ever have- more than I ever did. Ser Davos was the one who convinced the late King Stannis Baratheon to heed our call for aid. Without Ser Davos, we would all be dead at the hand of Mance Rayder and his army.”

“King Stannis chose to make Ser Davos his hand despite his baseborn status and lack of political experience. When I served as Lord Commander Ser Davos was one of my most trusted advisors. We talk about how we need a sweet-talker who can convince the Lords and the Crown to send men to the wall to help us deal with the Others. All of you try to claim that you would be able to convince them. Ser Davos does not need to claim that as he already has. He convinced House Hornwood and House Tallhart to fight for Stannis. He is the one who convinced the late King Stannis that the grumkins and snarks were real. Stannis was arguably the most stubborn man in all of Westeros, and Ser Davos convinced him that a fairy tale was real and that he should stake his crown on helping the watch. He’s already convinced a King before to aid the watch once before, why couldn’t he do it again?”

“Ser Davos has never said our oaths, he’s never gone beyond The Wall and he’s only ever fought in one battle. Ser Davos doesn’t have the experience in battle that you all might have but does the Lord Commander need to be battle-tested? Ser Davos is a leader with tons of charisma and right now I’d argue that is more important, that his persuasion skills are the most important thing for the Watch. That is what the watch needs in a Lord Commander. A smart man who knows how to lead, who knows how to command and Ser Davos is the best one here in that regard.”

There was some applause at the end of Jon’s speech, not as many as there was for Ser Denner but
there was definitely some, and Davos couldn’t help but feel like he actually had a chance to win this.

Ser Denys banged on the table once again to silence the crowd. “Is there no one else who would like to submit a name to the choosing?” He asked for the fourth time. Again there were no responses. “In that case, we will now proceed to cast our tokens for the choosing. Please submit your token to the bowl of the candidate of your choosing and then return to your seat. If you are illiterate then you are welcome to ask Jadyn Quagg or Tytus Kyndall for directions of whose bowl is whose. Once everyone has cast their tokens Brandon Perryn will count the lots and announce the results of tonight’s choosing. If no candidate receives the mandatory 409 votes needed to be elected as Lord Commander then we will adjourn for the day and meet again tomorrow night to cast our tokens again. If you submitted your name to the choosing and fail to garner at least seven votes to meet the minimum one percent requirement then you will be barred from being nominated again until we meet to decide the one-thousandth Lord Commander of The Night’s Watch.”

Davos watched as the brothers all stood from their seats to submit their tokens for the first night of the choosing. Davos found himself instinctively reaching for his pouch of finger bones only to remember he didn’t have that anymore, he had lost it at the Battle of the Blackwater. Sleep would probably not come easy again tonight regardless of what happened. He would be a brother of the Night’s Watch by the morrow and possibly even Lord Commander.

Chapter End Notes

Originally I had no plan to go this direction with the Night’s Watch and the choosing but after reading the bio of literally every member of the Night’s Watch there were none that sounded like a decent choice for the position so my options were an OC which I hate using as major role characters or someone from outside the watch. I thought about Ser Jorah and well it would be poetic, it obviously wasn't something I could make happen in a reasonable timeframe. Enter Ser Davos.

I love Ser Davos as Jon’s hand and think he might be the best choice to serve as his hand but it's too valuable of a position politically to give it away to a complete non-factor who brings no armies with him. If Jon was just vying for the North then Davos is a great hand but if he's jockeying to be King of all the Seven Kingdoms, then he needs someone with more political ramifications. Positions on the grand council are offered as incentives to prospective allies and Jon can't afford to freely give away the most powerful bargaining chip he has unless he plans on selling his hand in marriage which he obviously doesn't.

Jon getting knighted is small and not a big deal but it gives him some political power while he's just pretending to just be a bastard, not a lot but a bastard knight at least gives him some status for now.

Jon essentially giving Davos permission to betray and even kill him is largely to reassure Davos that he’s not Stannis just because he is a King now. It's also partly who Jon is to always put the greater good over his own self-interests. If he went mad then
he probably would want to be killed to save the world and the people he cares about from suffering under him. Regardless, he has no plans to go that way so these contingencies are just that, contingencies and not something he plans on ever having matter beyond reassuring Davos that he is not Stannis.

In the show, we very clearly see Stannis at the choosing of the next Lord Commander so it seems like guests are allowed to observe? I'm going with that for mostly plot convenience but since it happens in the show I'll allow it. Maybe they only let Stannis do it because he saved all of them and was King or whatever but the same logic could apply to Jon who just defeated death so people find it very hard to tell him no.

Ser Denner admitted to his knowledge of the plot in killing Jon so it can't be used against him. If Jon's chosen candidate was losing and Ser Denner was winning all Jon would have to do is reveal that Ser Denner watched him die and did nothing and his support would evaporate. By being the one who shares the information he can spin it in a light that makes him look like the good guy and make Jon lose his leverage. 

What is the proper chain of command in the Night's Watch? I made something up since the only thing we actually see is Maester Aemon is in charge of the choosing but Castle Black has no Maester at this time. So who is in charge?

How anyone could ever think Cotter Pyke would make a fine Lord Commander or even castellan I will never know. The dude like every person from the Iron Islands is described as a complete idiot every time he is mentioned and I realize biased narration is a factor but wow he's dumb and reckless. I read an interesting theory that talks about how the Iron islands practice of drowning people has left all of them brain dead/severely mentally damaged since partial drowning often causes brain issues, oftentimes for life afterward. It would certainly explain the behavior of every single person from the Iron Islands with the possible exception of Yara/Asha.

Next chapter we go back to Jon with the start of his plans for the Northern conquest. It should be the longest chapter yet at over eight-thousand words. Should be out this Friday.

Read, Kudos and Review.
“Rhaegal!” His Daenerys called softly, her voice waking him from his nap.

His head shot up and he nuzzled his snout into his mother's chest. She was visiting him during the day, he could hardly believe it. He had thought that she would spend her whole day ruling. Jon had listened in for a while from the roof but most of what was happening had been in some foreign language. He believed it to be High Valyrian but he couldn’t say for sure- all he knew was that he did not speak it so he had decided to get a much-needed nap.

But she was here now and Jon could not be any happier. She stroked his head and Jon leaned it to it. Actually that was a lie- she had brought others with her. He would be happier if she did not bring other people with her. There was a woman and a small boy with her, they were not the friends of a dragon.

Jon growled lowly at them and puffed some black smoke out of his nostrils.

“This is Lord Tyto and Lady Mara.” His Daenerys explained to him, never ceasing her stroking. “They came to thank you for saving them last night.”

The woman bowed before him and Jon was glad she knew her place was beneath him. He would never like her but she was acceptable as subservient to himself. She spoke in the same foreign dialect as he heard when he had listened in on his Daenerys’s ruling of her people.

He quickly lost interest in her, he was never going to be entertained by a sheep when there was a dragon present. He turned his head back to his Daenerys and pressed it into her chest, nuzzling into her as she stroked him.

His Daenerys stepped away from him and picked up the small boy she had named Tyto. He turned his head and glared at the offending child for stealing his Daenerys’s affection. She was his, not this child’s.

She stepped back towards him and Jon greedily rubbed his head on the shoulder not holding the
child. She was supposed to pay attention to him, not this Tyto person.

The boy reached out and gingerly touched the top of his head. Jon growled with protest. Who did that insect think it was to touch a dragon?

The boy mumbled something in a foreign tongue and pulled his hand away. *Good,* Jon harumphed to himself. The boy was not worthy of touching him.

His Daenerys said something in that same foreign language, the only words he recognized were *zaldrīzes* and *perzys* which Rhaegal knew meant dragon and fire. The boy then touched his head again.

Jon snapped. He would show this worm why one does not touch the dragon. He snapped his head up and bit into the hand that had dared to defile him.

The boy screamed in pain as Jon tasted his flesh and reveled in it. His Daenerys screamed at him and put him in chains. He was back in that cave, this time unable to move his neck at all and free himself.

Jon woke up with his head pounding and his heart racing. That had only been a dream. He hadn’t really bitten off Tyto’s hand as the dragon had craved. The Dragon had wanted oh so badly- he had wanted to show that foolish child why one does not poke the sleeping dragon. The dragon had demanded that he teach that commoner to show him some respect. He had held the dragon back from his desires, not because he cared at all about the boy but because he had feared his Daenerys’s reaction if he had. He had feared that she would turn on him, lock him up again. That he would hurt her again. That was the only reason he had stayed his hand and remained calm.

His Daenerys had been a fool for bringing that boy to him, if he had just been Rhaegal he would have given in to the Dragons urge for blood when he was touched. The dragon did not like a child without the blood of old Valyria touching him. The dragon had demanded his head and Jon had barely been able to contain himself. The dragon had been insulted by his Daenerys treating him like a dog. Thankfully, his Daenerys had realized how upset he was before he had snapped and sent the child and his mother away.

Jon looked out the window of the room he had been given by Ser Denys Mallister. The night was still black with only the moon and the stars casting a pale light on the world below. There would likely be a few more hours until sunrise.
Last night had been the first night of the choosing for the next Lord Commander of The Night’s Watch and it had been much different than Jon had expected. Ser Denner Frostfinger had confessed to being a witness to Jon’s death and to knowing the plot that Thorne had hatched before it had happened. He had spoken against himself and by doing so had made his crimes seem like a positive and destroyed the leverage Jon had over him. He had made a bold gambit that had paid off immensely as he had tallied 109 votes, the second most of any candidate.

The most had gone to the surprise candidate, Ser Davos Seaworth who collected 114 of the 409 votes required to be inducted. Jon hadn’t planned on Ed nominating Ser Davos but it was a very welcome surprise. Davos was everything they needed in a Lord Commander and was loyal to Jon. Jon would miss Davos’s council but the wall needed him more than he did.

Davos could have frankly been a shit Lord Commander and Jon might have still supported him. The nomination of Ser Davos as a candidate for Lord Commander had introduced uncertainty and that was what needed. Davos would draw enough votes to stop another candidate from getting the position for the time being. He would not win yet, he was too new to the Night’s Watch to get all the more senior or traditionalist voters to choose him even with Jon’s support.

That was what Jon needed, he needed the choosing to be a long one that took many moons to end. While the choosing for the Lord Commander was ongoing, the Night’s Watch was on lockdown. The ravenry was shut down and no ravens could be sent from the wall until a new Lord Commander is chosen since they all technically needed the approval of the Lord Commander to be sent out. That meant that as long as the choosing took, no one would know about his death, resurrection, and more importantly his Targaryen heritage outside of the Free Folk and who would believe them. Time was the most precious resource for right now and he needed to control the distribution of that information.

He hated giving up Davos solely for the sake of keeping his identity secret from the Lannisters but they would not be able to defeat them and the Boltons combined forces with only a few thousand Free Folk. The numbers were against them with just the Boltons opposing them, both and they would surely be crushed.

The downside was with Castle Black on lockdown, Jon couldn’t even send ravens to the other northern houses asking for their help in the war against the Bolton’s. However, he doubted any would flock to fight for the man who had betrayed the north by allowing the Free Folk to settle their lands. They would not risk their own necks to save him or stop the Bolton’s, if they were willing to do so then they already would have. They were too afraid of what would happen if they lost. He would gain their allegiance when the Bolton’s were at the disadvantage.

Jon looked out the window again, there was still at least another hour until sunrise. He could work on his plans for the Northern Conquest and he probably should but the temptation to visit his Daenerys, even if just for a few minutes when she woke up was too strong to resist. She might still
be sleeping as she had been when he warged into Rhaegal earlier in his dreams or she might have already left to go rule but he had to check. It had only been a day since he had last seen his Daenerys and he already was missing her.

He closed his eyes and focused on the connection he could feel to Rhaegal. When he reopened his eyes he knew he was in the dragon’s body.

He was flying and Jon had to admit he had missed the feeling even if it was only a single day he had gone without. There was nothing like it, the feeling of the warm morning breeze on his face, the clouds he could see below him. The people milling down below, small and insignificant to the mighty dragon that he was.

As enjoyable as flying was he hadn’t come here to fly, he was here to see his Daenerys. Jon was outside of the city, over open water in what he assumed was the summer sea. From his aerial view, he was able to see he was likely in the peninsula of what his Daenerys had renamed Dragon’s Bay.

He descended quickly retracing the path that Rhaegal had traversed from Meereen to be over the sea, he could see the sun rising in the east as he re-emerged over the city. The morning was almost here and he knew his Daenerys woke early and started taking petitioners not far after sunrise so if he wanted to visit with her then he needed to be there very soon.

He landed on top of the pyramid that his Daenerys lived in over her balcony and poked his head into her room. She was still sleeping but Jon knew she would wake soon and he had plenty of time with morning still being a few hours out at Castle Black with it being over two thousand miles west of Meereen.

He stared at her sleeping form. She was alone in her lavish bed, a light blanket draped over her shoulders was the only covering she had on her entire body. The rest of her beautiful form was completely bare and unveiled to his prying eyes.

He wasn’t sure how long he had been watching her but it couldn’t have been too long before her back arched slightly and she let out a soft yawn. Jon unable to contain himself let out a happy chirp that she was finally awake.

She shot up to a sitting position and rubbed the sleep out of her tired eyes. When her eyes fell upon Rhaegal she smiled and practically jumped out of her bed.

“Rhaegal!” She exclaimed as he rubbed his head into her bare chest. “You’re back!” She stroked his snout and Rhaegal purred content with her affections. “Where were you yesterday?”
Jon might have answered if he could but he didn’t know how to convey as a dragon that his human body had come back from the dead and he had spent the whole of yesterday plotting to take over their Kingdom so he settled for nuzzling her chest with his head some more.

Jon was disappointed when she pushed his head away but it was only for a short moment to pull on a loose robe before sitting on the balcony and placing his head once again in her lap.

“I should thank you Rhaegal, after your impressive hunt two nights ago, there were no Harpy attacks yesterday.” She rubbed small circles on the top of his scales. “In one night you managed to do more than my entire council had done in many moons.” She looked away from him but did not cease her petting. “Maybe one does need fear to rule successfully, maybe I can’t just be diplomatic.”

His Daenerys sighed audibly. “I’ve spent so long worrying about being as mad as my father- about becoming him. I spent so long trying to be diplomatic just to prove I was more than the Mad King’s daughter.”

Daenerys stopped her petting and looked out into the distance. “Maybe I should have listened to the advice of Daario and just been a conquerer. Embraced the dragon and taken back my throne with fire and blood. Sacked Meereen and moved on to Westeros.”

Jon was appalled, and pulled his head off of her lap. His Daenerys was a good ruler and a great Queen. Had he caused her to think that she needed to be a dictator to protect her people? Jon had never been a King but he knew from his time as Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch before his death that one needed both diplomacy and fear to rule. He had been forced to make awful decisions for the good of the watch. He had swapped Gilly’s child with Mance’s to protect the boy from being burnt because of his king’s blood. He had to behead a man for insubordination to quell any rebellion but then he had feared what he had become and made Ser Alliser First Ranger completely erasing any of the good his decision to behead Slynt had caused. Diplomacy was not Jon’s strong suit but it is what had saved the Free Folk from extinction and possibly had even saved the Watch even if it had led to his death.

Jon shook his head side to side to try to compel her to stick to the path of diplomacy.

His Daenerys stood up from her chair so she was eye level with him and placed one hand on her hip, the other one reaching out to gingerly touch his nose. “You disagree?”

Jon bobbed his head up and down. She was always so good at understanding his gestures.
“I never expected a dragon to advise me to go the peaceful route.” She snorted and then smiled at him and lightly caressed his snout. “You were always about fire and blood, the words of House Targaryen are said to be the hearts of every dragon but you want peace.” She paused for a moment and pressed her lips to the top of his head. “Then again I suppose you haven’t behaved much like a dragon is supposed to recently.

She stepped away from him and looked down at the city below where her people were only just starting to wake up. “I’m terrified that if I go the peaceful route my people will suffer. If I don’t scare the Harpies into inaction that they will hurt my people.” His Daenerys sighed. “I’ve tried going the path of diplomacy before and all it did was make everyone hate me- the masters and the freemen. I tried to marry one of the masters for an alliance and that failed. I tried to be just and my people rebelled against me for killing one of their own for murder.”

“I’ve tried to be a good diplomatic queen but despite whatever I do someone is always taking advantage of my weakness and causing chaos. The only way to keep them calm is with fear, you gave me that even if for only a short time... I don’t know how to proceed Rhaegal.”

Jon hadn’t understood the full situation when he had tried to urge her towards diplomacy. She needed fear to get them to accept her decisions not that she was having trouble making them. She needed the perfect balance of both to rule successfully. Jon had no clue how to express that need without words but he tried anyway making a series of gestures and bobbed his head to convey it anyways. He also really didn't want her to marry some Meereneese noble.

Somehow she had miraculously understood what he was saying or figured it out for herself. “Perhaps you’re right, maybe I need to use some of both. I have to try diplomacy and when that fails I’ll turn to fire and blood.” She sighed. “I’ll meet with the Masters and the leaders of the Sons of The Harpy and when they refuse my terms they will die.”

She kissed him once more on his crown before heading back inside her room to get prepared to see her subjects petitions. Jon stared after her as she got prepared and once she was truly gone he opened his eyes and was back in his own body.

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Jon walked through the gates of Castle Black that barred them from the outside world alone and tossed aside the black cloak if the Night’s Watch he had worn over his other cloak. He was met by Tormund outside the gates. “You look different,” Tormund said in greeting.

Jon supposed he did look quite different. He was no longer dressed in all black as he had worn
every day for the last three years. His ensemble now had some of the signature crimson red of House Targaryen. His cousin Sansa had apparently spent all of yesterday making this cloak for him and Jon had to admit she had outdone herself. The red dragon of House Targaryen stood proud on the black background of his cloak in contrast to the all black wool that he had worn as a brother of the Night’s Watch.

He also had a silver brooch of a three-headed dragon pinned to his chest. Ser Denys Mallister had gifted it to him, in what was likely another attempt to curry his favor and get him to support him in the choosing. Apparently, the brooch had belonged to the late Maester Aemon. Jon didn’t care about the motives for gifting him the brooch- it was nice to have something that belonged to his true family.

Jon had initially planned on going to the meeting in the furs he had worn when he was with the Free Folk but when Sansa gifted him the cloak he had realized he needed to appear to them as their king, they needed to follow him, not be friends with him. He wouldn’t appear like this to the Night’s Watch yet but he needed to show himself as a King and not a crow to the Free Folk. They needed to follow him into battle as their leader and not equal or else he would never command them effectively.

Sansa had tried to make him wear a copper crown doused with oil and on fire but Jon had refused. If the Night’s Watch saw him with flames on his crown then all the old Targaryen loyalists would vote for Ser Davos at tonight's Choosing again since he had endorsed him. If he was seen as unburnt by all the brother’s own eyes and not just the word of mouth then they would bend the knee and elect Ser Davos immediately as Lord Commander. And within a fortnight the Lannisters would know and their entire army would be backing the Boltons. Jon would lose if things were forced too quickly. Time was the key. He needed Davos to slowly lose his support and leave the choosing open as who Jon was faded from their mind. As they started to think of him as just Jon Snow once again.

“I’ve done as you asked and gathered all the Free Folk who were willing to speak with you, King Crow.” Tormund continued undeterred by the lack of response.

Jon nodded. “Thank you. What are our numbers looking like?”

Tormund scratched his beard. “That can march and fight?” He asked and Jon gave a slight nod. “Two-thousand, the rest are children or the elderly.”

Jon supposed that’s what should have been expected since he had told them to take the weak first since if they left them behind they would have died, in hindsight that had been stupid but he could not change the past. If I look back I am gone. He had made his plans expecting about twice that since all the women of the Free Folk also fought.
“How many of them do you think will be willing to fight for me?” Jon asked Tormund as they entered the camp.

Tormund laughed. “With a few words of encouragement just about all of them will- maybe not the Thenn’s but everyone else. They think you’re some kind of god. The man who returned from the dead and survived a great fire.” He stopped walking and leaned in to whisper in Jon’s ear. “Of course, I know better. I saw your pecker. What kind of God would have a pecker that small?”

Jon laughed before quickly turning solemn again. He had to focus on more important matters. “All of the Free Folk are here, right? Not just the leaders?” Jon asked. He knew the Free Folk well enough by now to know that their leaders bending the knee would not convince everyone else too. He needed to earn all his men’s allegiance to him and have them all choose to bend the knee.

“All of the fighting men, and a little under half of the children and elderly.”

Jon nodded again, he would have preferred everyone but as long as the fighting men were there he could persuade them to fight for him. He wanted to be able to count on the well-respected elders to advise to fight for him and the children to pressure their parents into doing so but this could still work as long as the elders who weren’t present didn’t outright tell the men to not fight for him.

Jon and Tormund walked in silence to the small platform that had been built last night for this very occasion. Tormund took his place on the side and Jon stepped up to the center stage to try to rally the Free Folk.

“I’m sure you all know why you’re here,” Jon shouted out to the crowd that had gathered for his call to arms. “I’ve come here to ask you to take arms alongside me and help we reclaim my kingdom.”

Outraged cries rose up at his declaration and one of the Free Folk stepped up to the stage and spat at his feet. “We said we’d fight with you, King Crow, when the time comes, and we meant it, but this wasn’t what we agreed to. We agreed to fight the Great Other. We agreed to fight the army of the dead. We did not agree to fight the southerners so you can be a King. This is not our fight.” Dim Dalba declared with venom.

Jon’s reply was drowned out by the boisterous crowd who clearly agreed with Dalba’s sentiments. Tormund blew hard on the horn that he always carried with him and the crowd went silent to hear what he had to say. As much as the Free Folk had respected him, he would never be one of them like Tormund was. That was just fine with Jon he did not need to be one of them, he just needed
their men.

“If it weren’t for Jon Snow, none of us would be here. All of you would be meat in the Great Other’s army. And I’d be a pile of charred bones just like Mance.” He took a step forward to stand at Jon’s side. “The crows killed Jon Snow because he spoke for the free folk when no other southerners would. He died for us. If we are not willing to do the same for him, we’re cowards. And if that’s what we are, we deserve to be the last of the Free Folk.” Tormund proclaimed with a fiery passion. Jon appreciated the assist but he had to be the one to gain their support- not Tormund.

Jon stepped up to fill the void as soon as Tormund was done. “I know what you’re thinking.” Jon declared. “This wasn’t the deal that we made. This isn’t your fight. I shouldn’t be asking you for this.”

“You’re wrong.” He said as his voice lowered an octave. “We all saw The Great Other and his army at Hardhome. There were at least 100,000 wights with him that day and he doubled his army that day when the rest of the Free Folk were exterminated.”

“We have what- two-thousand of the Free Folk and 613 men of the Night’s Watch? Even if all of us fight with the strength of a hundred men; we will lose. The Night’s Watch and the Free Folk are not enough to defeat the Great Other and his army. We need more allies. We need the south. We need all of the south.” And dragons he silently added.

“I’m not asking you to put me on the throne because my grandfather was a King or because my father was a Prince. I’m not asking because I want you all to bow down before me and call me your grace. I’m asking because we have no other choice. This isn’t about me- this isn’t about any of us. This is about survival. This is about the end of life itself.”

“King Joffrey did not send any aid to the Night’s Watch, King Tommen will not either. Roose Bolton has not helped us either as is his duty as Warden of The North. King Stannis offered us his aid but he is dead and his men are gone now. We need more men- a lot more men and if the only way to get it is by placing me on the Iron Throne then I will sit on the Iron Throne and play King.”

Jon looked at the crowd below hoping the reaction to his passionate speech would be entirely positive. He desperately needed the wildlings on his side to have a chance at defeating the Bolton’s and reclaiming the throne for his Daenerys and him.

Tormund stepped in front of Jon and looked him directly in his eyes. “I will fight for you, Jon
Snow. I will declare you my king.” Then astonishingly he bent to a knee and bowed his head.

Dim Dalba stepped out from the crowd again. “I don’t like you, Crow,” He sneered. “I won’t fight for you… but I will fight for my people and for my survival. If that means I have to kneel before you and declare you as my King then so be it.” Then to Jon’s astonishment, Dalba too took a knee before him.

“Snow.” The giant Wun Wun said loudly. He was at the back of the crowd of thousands gathered here today to hear him speak but the Giant’s voice was still heard by all who were present.

“King Snow.” He repeated and then he dropped to his own knee as the ground shook with the sudden movement by the thirty-foot tall giant.

Once Wun Wun took a knee it was a trigger for everyone else there as they all could see and hear Wun Wun whereas those at the back likely hadn’t seen Dim Dalba or Tormund kneel. Soon all of the Free Folk was on their knees before Jon, even Sigorn, the Magnar of Thenn who Jon had thought would never kneel. The Dragon roared with pleasure at the sight of the men knelt before him in their proper place and Jon couldn’t help but smile. *I have my army Bolton and I’m coming for you.*

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Jon sighed as he looked at Dim Dalba, Tormund, and Sigorn the Magnar of Thenn. The only leaders of the wildling clans who had survived Hardhome and made it south of the wall. He was meeting with them to tell them to do the one thing he had told them not to do for the sake of gaining his crown and saving the world from the Others.

“I need you to conduct raids on the North.” Jon didn’t bother with the pleasantries he knew these people would not care, they weren’t the southern lords but the Free Folk.

All of them stared at Jon in disbelief. “You told us we weren’t allowed to raid the North when you brought us through The Wall. That was your first condition, before even asking us to fight for you against the Others when the time came.” Dim Dalba said with a slight frown.

“I did.” Jon acknowledged with a slight nod. “Times have changed, I’m no longer trying to gain allies with pretty words as Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. Now, I’m a king and I have to win battles to get us the allies we need.”

Jon frowned. “I don’t want to hurt the North but I have to. We need to conduct raids on Last Hearth, the Karkhold, and the Dreadfort along with the other castles on the way but primarily those three. We need to weaken their army in order to have the advantage. Steal or burn their food storages, destroy their weapons, damage the walls if you must. Do not fly any banners when you conduct these raids, they must think that the wildlings are acting alone.” Jon ordered. His targets
had been strategically chosen. Last Hearth was mandatory due to the proximity- not attacking it would arouse suspicion, and they were disloyal anyways. Jon had no doubt the Karkholds would side against him because Robb had executed their former Lord so weakening them was crucial. The Boltons needed no explanation but he had to settle for the Dreadfort since Winterfell was so far away. All three had sided against Stannis anyways.

“Why?” The Magnar of Thenn asked gruffly.

Jon allowed himself to smile slightly. “Lord Bolton will easily be able to rally all the Northern houses to come with him here with a large army to crush the wildling scum and drive them back over the wall.” They all looked at him like he was insane and stupid. Perhaps he was. “We’ll ride out hoisting Stark banners when we go to meet them. Most of the Northern houses will turn on the Bolton’s for their part in the massacre of the man they chose as their King and their fathers. They’ll turn on them and the Bolton’s will be surrounded by their enemies and outnumbered with us holding the home-field advantage.”

Jon’s declaration was met with smiles, albeit hesitant ones. He knew the plan was risky but they needed the Bolton’s to attack them. A siege on Winterfell was an unwinnable task. An open field charge would be even more stupid with the difference in their numbers and lack of supplies, the Bolton’s could just wait them out as they starved in the snow. He didn’t trust the Northen Lords but he trusted that they would protect their own best interests and that they hated the Bolton’s. The Bolton’s weren’t even well-liked before the Red Wedding. After all of that death, they would be seeking to remove them with or without Jon’s influence. He didn’t have a better option than to trust the North to remember like they claimed they did.

“This one has balls” The Magnar of Thenn laughed to Jon’s astonishment. “Certainly, more than Mance ever did. I like him.”

Jon smiled again as the other two leaders gave the same compliment or variations of it and set to doing what Jon had ordered. Things were starting to come together now, soon the North would be his.

Jon had asked Tormund to discretely gather all the wargs among the Free Folk for a special task and it had taken him a few days to find them but Jon was more than pleased with the results. There were just shy of a hundred of them, including the children and elderly. They likely didn’t all have the same mastery of the ability but they had it in some form and they could use that.
“Thank you all for coming to meet with me. I have need of your talents to whatever extent that you have them.” Jon looked at the men and women and a lot of children gathered there before him as he spoke most of their faces cold despite publically kneeling to him they didn’t like or trust him. Most of them fear him, however. “Everyone in the seven kingdoms believes that wargs are a myth, even the brothers of the Night’s Watch believe they are one,” Jon explain

“No one not in this camp will ever find out you have your talents. You will tell no one that wargs exist in any of the seven kingdoms or the Night’s Watch. Not even my sister nor if you choose to take a southern bride. You’re the biggest asset we have against our enemies-”

“Our enemies.” A man cut him off from the front of the crowd. He was older and greying with an old man’s pinched face and lack of hair but he still very much had the physique of a man twenty years his junior. Jon knew he had seen him somewhere once before but he couldn’t place it.

Jon looked at him with steel in his gaze. “Our enemies,” Jon repeated. “Anyone who will not stand with us against the Others and the army of the dead is our enemy. The enemy of life itself.”

The man nodded but the fight did not leave his eyes. Jon forced himself to accept the slight submission, he could earn his respect later- in battle. “As I was saying everyone south of here does not believe in wargs. They have no problem discussing important plans when the birds are listening in or the rats are underneath their feet.”

“We do not have the numbers that the Boltons do. We would lose in open combat if we storm them blindly. Information will be our key to success, knowing their moves before they make them, where their people will be and how many of them. Secrets that we can use to blackmail them into compliance, knowledge is power.”

Jon took a deep breath and remembered the pain of losing Ghost, the pain of his death as Ghost. “I know I’m asking a lot of you, we all know how painful it is to die as a warg and I’m asking you to warg into animals next to some of the most dangerous men in the realm- to be their shadow even.”

“How do you know? Don’t pretend you understand us, King Crow.” A woman from the back jeered and some of the others gave shouts in agreement.

Jon was surprised when he was saved from having to answer by the man who had interrupted him before. “He is a warg, Grisella you fool. An extremely powerful one considering how he tamed his direwolf.” The man spat.

Jon looked at him in surprise “What is your name?”
“Varamyr Sixskins, My King.” There was some disrespect in the address but Jon squashed down any anger it invoked.

“You were with Mance when I met him with the leaders of the clans, weren’t you?” Jon asked the realization dawning on him as to who he was.

“I was, I bent the knee to him to save our lives and it got us all killed.” The as will you, he clearly meant to say went unsaid but was heard all the same.

“You rode the polar bear and shadowcat into battle?” Jon asked. “When your eagle was burnt by the Red Witch they rampaged? Or was that someone else?” He had been in Mance’s camp at the time, to kill him under the white flag of parlay. That was before he knew about the real threat.

“I was.” He acknowledged his chin held up in defiance.

“Do you speak for your people?” He asked Varamyr but also the rest of the room. “Will they listen to you?”

A few people nod from around the room and Varamyr gives another curt response. “They will.”

He looked away from Varamyr for a moment. “Until the Long Night comes there will be no more riding of bears or wolfs in battle. We can not afford to tip-off anyone to the existence of wargs. We need the intel more than we need the extra firepower in battle.”

He looked back at Varamyr. “Can you organize a schedule for shifts for every warg we have to spy on Roose, and Ramsay Bolton, at all hours of the day as well as Lord Umber and Lord Karstak, Lord Hornwood, Lord Cewlyn, and Lord Glover, Lord Manderly and Lord Ryswell as well as a lower priority mission.” He had chosen his targets easily. They were the largest Northern Houses that had fought with the Boltons against Stannis and Last Hearth was the closest castle to the wall. Every warg will have at least one day off a week and not be assigned to watch them for more than 8 hours in a single day. I have no desire to separate you from your friends and family.”

Varamyr chuckled. “Not all wargs are as powerful as you, King Crow. Most of us can only control animals we have a bond with or at least have met, it’s not as simple as just picking an animal at some location and appearing in their skin. Stretching our minds into so many animals at once could break them.”
Jon frowned. He probably should have known that but he hadn’t. If there was less of an audience he might have asked Varamyr what he should do instead or how to work around that but there was too much of a crowd that despite their public fealty would not respect him if he asked Varamyr for advice. “How many of you could do that?”

“How many of you could do that?” Varamyr said smugly.

“Anyone else?” Jon asked slightly desperate.

“No.” No one disagreed with his statement which meant he was likely honest. Great.

“How many people can at least warg into a discrete animal, a bird or rabbit or something of the ilk?”

“Most of us have rather tame familiars,” Varamyr said after a moment of pause. “Most of us would rather not be separated from them, however, King Crow. Might I propose a different solution?”

Jon closed his eyes. “You may.” He hadn’t wanted to be put in this situation but he couldn’t refuse his council not when he needed a solution so badly, and refusing would only make him look insecure and weak and that was worse than publically accepting counsel.

“We all share a single bird, the stronger willed of us go first in controlling it until it’s broken completely under the strain of a hundred voices and anyone with even a smidgen of warging ability could slip into its skin with ease,” Varamyr suggested and the crowd murmured their consent with his idea but still looked to Jon for a verdict.

Jon nodded, he had to remember the Free Folk weren’t like the people of Westeros, they would not take issue with someone challenging his authority in the same way the Westerosi Lords will. A part of him felt slightly guilty for breaking the mind of a bird but ultimately it was just a bird and thousands of lives were at stake, there was no doubt that it had to be done. “See that it is done.” He ordered Varamyr.

“I’m afraid we don’t know what those men look like or where they are. You would need to slip into the bird’s skin first and lead it there.” Varamyr challenged him with a smug grin.
Jon sighed internally even as he voiced his consent and ordered them to bring him a four birds and four rats. He would have to prioritize intel from the more dangerous locations. He would send two of each to Last Hearth and another two of them to Winterfell. The Boltons would hear anything the other minor Lords heard as their liege Lord and again Last Hearth for proximity. He stepped outside the tent for a moment and asked someone to bring him Tormund who had arrived with haste. He would be defenseless while he warged, he needed someone he kind of trusted to be there and stop any foul play. He couldn’t back down from this challenge but Jon had no clue if he could even slip into a creature that he wasn’t bonded with’s skin. He had tamed a dragon, surely he could control the urges of the bird.

Jon put his hand on the head of one of the crows that they had brought him on probably thinking it was funny to make King Crow warg into a crow. Still, Jon was glad it was a crow. A crow might be terrible in battle but it was much more common and thus also unnoticeable then the flashy hawk or eagle he had expected.

Jon closed his eyes, he just had to focus on the bird, like he did when he warged into Rhaegal every morning. He could do this, a crow was no dragon. When he reopened his eyes he was in Rhaegal’s body. Oops, wrong animal. He mentally apologized to Rhaegal and could feel his mirth before he tore himself out of Rhaegal.

The bird he told himself when he was back in his own skin. He closed his eyes once again. He had to focus on the bird. Focus on its unsettling black eyes. The soft black feathers. The pointy beak that could peck a man’s eye out.

Jon did not need to open his eyes to realize he was inside the bird. Everything, in the bird, felt wrong and foreign to him. With Ghost and especially Rhaegal, he felt like he was them, wearing their skin had come as naturally as breathing. Now everything was pained and unnatural. The crow was cruel and twisted. He felt like an unwanted tyrant forcing the crow to bend to his will. He wanted out of it but he was here for a purpose. He shuddered to himself as he forced the uncleanness down and the disgust away.

He had a job to do so he picked up one of the rats in his talons that a warg had already taken and prepared to fly off to the Last Hearth, the ancestral home of Lord Umber the traitor who had sided with the Bolton against Stannis. The bird wanted to eat the rat he was holding and it took a significant amount of willpower to tame its desires and refuse its demands.

“Wait.” He heard Varamyr call out clearly amused. “We all need to get a feel for the bird first.”

Jon withdrew from the bird and watched as every other warg took their turns in an arduous process of possessing the bird and withdrawing, different wargs took different lengths of time to get a feel of the bird and rat respectively. The later they got in the process, the quicker the time to inhabit the
bird became. Finally, after over an hour of watching people warg into various animals, their work was done and Jon could finally reinhabit the bird and take it to Last Hearth with another rat to spy on them.

Jon slipped back into the crows body after giving Varamyr orders to follow him as the other bird, a much easier endeavor now than it was the first time as the bird seemingly had no more desires of its own or any will left to fight his commands. This time there was no struggle to refrain from eating the rat he clutched between his talons. The fact that it was snowing meant that flight was even slower and it was almost three hours before they had reached the Last Hearth. To think it was the closest of the castles. He had settled into a tree dropping the rat who immediately scurried down through an open door of the holdings to get inside and away from him.

Satisfied with his work Jon opened his eyes and was a human once more. The rest of the birds wouldn’t be able to be sent out yet if he needed to escort them personally. He didn’t have enough time in the day to escort all the birds right now. Jon looked at the men and woman in the room and saw respect for his passing of Varamyr’s test. Even Varamyr seemed to reluctantly respect him now. Varamyr had clearly expected him to fail at breaking the bird’s will to his own.

It wasn’t what Jon had hoped for when asking for the wargs but it was something and for the first time since his death Jon allowed himself to hope that things would go smoothly. He would take the north and later the Iron Throne for his Daenerys and him.

Jon smiled as Sansa entered his room just before the ninth night of the choosing. Since Jon’s resurrection, the two had been meeting and exchanged stories of what had happened in their time apart- which by exchanging Jon had really meant he would talk and Sansa would listen occasionally adding a comment or telling him something small. Still, he would wait for her to open up to him or for there to be some urgency

“So where did we leave off last time?” Jon said as she took her seat. “I believe I had just told you about the wight and how I received Longclaw?”

Sansa nodded. “Brother, may I go first tonight?”

Jon narrowed his eyes slightly before visibly relaxing and nodding his consent. She was obviously scheming something if she was not only willing to talk for the first time but offering to go first. Hopefully what she shared would give some indication as to what she was planning.
“Like you, I’ll start with the beginning.” She hummed as she folded her hands over her lap. “When we left Winterfell with the King, we stopped at the Ruby Ford. I was a foolish girl back then, I believed Joffrey was some gallant prince, not the cruel little shit he was.”

“Joffrey and I went riding together and stumbled upon Arya fighting the butcher’s boy with wooden sticks, playing at being knights. The butcher’s boy hit her hand and she dropped her stick. Joffrey laughed at her and I made the mistake of calling out Arya’s name.”

She paused in her story for a moment and when she resumed her voice was distant and low. “Joffrey taunted the boy for wanting to be a knight and demanded he pick up his sword and fight him with it while Joffrey used a real sword. He refused and Joffrey rested the point of the sword on the poor boy’s cheek.”

Sansa let out a dry laugh. “Arya snapped and hit Joffrey in the back of his head with her stick to get him to leave the butcher’s boy alone.” Jon couldn’t help but chuckle, that did sound exactly like Arya.

Sansa took an audible breath before continuing her tale. “Joffrey whirled on her with his sword drawn and snapped her stick. He had her pinned with her back to a tree and was hacking wildly, he would have taken her head if he could in his anger.”

Even knowing that Arya was still alive Jon couldn’t help but worry about what would happen to her here. She had attacked the crown prince, even if he didn’t hurt her- the King certainly would punish her. “Nymeria saved her,” Sansa whispered. “She came out of the woods to save Arya and bit down on Joffrey’s sword arm. He dropped the sword and Arya threw it in the river.”

“My dear sweet precious Prince Joffrey told the King that Arya and the butcher’s boy had assaulted him and beat him with clubs while she set her wolf on him.” She choked back a sob. “Arya told the truth and they asked me to verify who was telling the truth.

She looked away from him and at the floor. “I was a naive stupid fool who believed my prince to be a gallant knight and Arya to be the one who always ruined everything for me.” She spat with surprising venom over who she used to be. “I-I said I couldn’t remember that it had happened too fast- that I hadn’t seen. I lied to the King about his son being a vindictive shit and betrayed my family for that brat…”

Jon rose up and crouched beside Sansa’s chair clutching her hands tightly as she sobbed, once she had gathered some of herself she continued her account. “I paid the price for my foolishness. I paid for my decision to betray my family. The Queen demanded Nymeria’s pelt but Arya had made her
flee knowing what was likely coming.”

She stopped again to sob and her voice was shaky when she continued. “The Queen took my Lady instead. Father demanded that he be the one to take the head at the very least and I had to watch as my own father killed my wolf.” She moaned. “I was such a naive fool that even after that I still loved my gallant precious prince and blamed Arya for the whole thing. I still believed that Cersei was kind and admired her.”

Jon didn’t know what to say so he just stayed crouched next to her as she cried. He couldn’t tell her she wasn’t a naive fool or excuse her actions in defense of the prince. She had been a naive fool, there was no way he could deny that without it just being a lie in order to comfort her. He held onto her just reveling in the fact that his cousin was safe with him.

He wasn’t sure how long he had stayed there just silently holding her before she spoke again her voice barely a snivel. “I just want to go home, Jon… when can we go home?”

Jon pulled out of her grip as red hot anger seized him. She was still trying to play her games, of course, she wouldn’t have told him with any other intent. She still was trying to manipulate him into doing something he had already promised her.

He shoved away from her and stood up his face hardened. “Do not play your games with me, cousin.” He spat.

Sansa flinched back at his tone and Jon felt the tiniest bit guilty before he squashed that down with a roar. “I-I’m sorry brother.. I just wanted to know when we’ll leave the wall- when you’ll start making preparations to reclaim Winterfell.

If Jon had trusted her then he might have told her that he had already secured the loyalty of the Free Folk, that he had already positioned spies in Winterfell. That he had already started sending supposedly independent Wildling raids to Last Hearth, Karkhold, and the Dreadfoot to weaken their holdings and steal supplies while keeping them unprepared for him being the actual threat. But he didn’t trust her and he was angry so instead, he simply said: “When the choosing is done we will leave.”

Sansa reached for his hand but Jon pushed it away. “Please Jon, the choosing could take years. We have to reclaim the North, we have to destroy the Boltons.”

“The Night’s Watch is too important to leave until I know it’s in good hands.” Jon spat at her. “I
will retake the North when the time is right- not until then.”

Sansa just nodded and silently left his quarters.

Jon needed to get away after Sansa had tried to manipulate him into being rash and getting killed. So rather than attending the night’s choosing as he had every other night, after their conversation he chose to go to the one place he knew would calm him, to visit his Daenerys. Any plans he came up with now would likely fail since his anger was clouding his judgment he told himself to justify his desires.

He was in a farm just outside the city stuffing his face with a crispy sheep when Jon opened his eyes again. The farmer was staring at him terrified as he ate his livestock but Jon ignored him enjoying his meal.

As soon as he finished Jon took off for the palace hoping that his Daenerys would still be awake and able to speak with him. He needed to see her, to hear her calming voice. He needed to know he still had someone he could trust- who cared for him. Even if she didn’t know who he really was.

As he descended to the pyramid he was glad to see his Daenerys standing on the balcony holding a pitcher of wine. She was clearly upset by something so his happiness at seeing her quickly bled away.

He landed on the roof as he always had and she immediately reached out to pet him. “I’m so glad you came tonight Rhaegal.” She spoke softly as she stroked the scales on his neck.

She took a long swig from the pitcher. “I’m not the last Targaryen,” she spoke softly her voice heavy and somewhat slurred from the wine. “For so long I believed that I was the only Targaryen, that I would be the last one.”

Jon’s heart was racing surely she meant Maester Aemon? She must not be aware he passed. Or maybe she was pregnant after thinking she was cursed. She couldn’t have found out about him, it had only been ten days since his resurrection for a Raven to get here that fast it would have to have been released immediately after his return and been trained to fly to Meereen. There was no way she knew about him yet. She couldn’t- it was practically impossible.

“Lord Varys’s little birds claim that there is another. The Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch; Jon Stark, they claim that he died in a mutiny and seven days later walked out of the funeral pyre, alive and unburnt. Varys reasons that he is the son of Rhaegar and his Lady Lyanna. I have a nephew.”
AN: The author's note is going in the chapter because I exceeded the character limit with all my explanations of the events of the chapter. Oops.

Just because Daenerys did not notice Jon struggling to not attack someone without Valyrian blood, doesn't mean that he didn't struggle to do so. Perspective is important. Everyone without Valyrian blood, dragons will always be somewhat hostile and distrusting of.

The decision to put the Night's Watch on lockdown and give the Lord Commander control of all mail going in and out is largely for plot convenience but it does make some sense. The Night's Watch is in a lot of ways a military base and no military base is ever going to let anyone and everyone send and receive mail without monitoring it. When there is no Lord Commander, there is no one to monitor the mail so it makes sense that it wouldn't be allowed. Additionally, there's the factor of how being able to send mail can influence the results of the choosing. Let's say Ramsay Bolton was sent to join the Night's Watch by Robb after what he did to the Lady Hornwood. If Ramsay was to run for Lord Commander and send a Raven to his father asking for him to send prisoners to the wall rather than killing them, then he could influence the vote by adding an extra, however, many votes to his corner. Alternatively, someone could offer the territories in the gift in exchange for men to secure them the position of Lord Commander. The Night's Watch is a seat of power and well it's not the most powerful one- with the right Lord Commander it can be weaponized extremely effectively. in the books, Jon tries to rally the Night's Watch to his cause to retake Winterfell from the Boltons after getting the pink letter- admittedly mostly the wildlings but he still tried to do so. He failed because he didn't neutralize those actually loyal to the watch (Or the Boltons) but there is potential for such a scenario to work. What if during Robb's time as King in the North, there had been a different Lord Commander- and they had made a deal with Tywin to mobilize the watch against Robb, striking at him from behind- a completely unseen enemy that could have crippled him. If Tywin had offered them all the opportunity to return to their old lives and be absolved of their crimes that had gotten them sent there, how many of them would stay loyal to the watch? Maybe a dozen? If you control the watch you have power and letting Lords outside the Wall have a say in the Lord Commander is an incredibly stupid concept. Hence the Lockdown during the choosing (The gift is still open because it's considered the territory of the Night's Watch). Hence the plan to keep the watch without a Lord Commander.

Jons decision to have Sam go the citadel to save Mance's babe is like the crux of his tenure as Lord Commander and his decision to send Sam at his behest in the show looks like just plain favoritism. I'm definitely keeping that part of the book as having happened in this universe. It's too important to his character development to exclude it like the show did.

Tormunds speech was awesome in the show so I left it in but Jon really should have been the one to convince the Free Folk to fight for him- not Tormund. The Free Folk kneel in canon and they kneel here, again they are free to choose if they kneel not because they won't ever kneel.
So let's talk Jon's plan for the Northern Conquest. The North is not going to involve themselves in a power struggle for the position of Warden, they don't love the Bolton's and after Robbs marrying Talisa, they aren't entirely loyal to the Starks either. Even if they were, they won't risk losing power in order to support Jon- a bastard and Sansa who is now Lady Bolton- and a girl, in what looks like a failing bid, they didn't in the show and they probably won't if this occurs in the books. Jon unlike how he is portrayed in season seven and eight, is not an idiot. He knows that they will all choose to stay neutral in his war so he's forcing them to make a choice. They don't see the Wildlings winning as a viable option for their future. They think the Wildlings are undisciplined savages who would take their power and rape their wives and daughters. When the wall has no outgoing post beside the announcement that Jon had died that went out immediately after his death, they will assume the Wildlings seized control of the wall and all rise up to go crush them before they invade the rest of their lands. They know that the wildlings are south of the wall because the idea that they wouldn't is completely absurd (News travels people), even Kings Landing and Daenerys in Essos as well. News travels, especially big news that is impossible to deny. Jon plans on riding out alongside Sansa while hoisting Direwolf banners and force the Northern Lords to choose if their hatred for the Boltons or the Starks is stronger. He rightfully presumes most will side with the Starks as the Boltons have no desire for Northern independence and are content on allying with the crown. They are also all greedy and want more power. From there once the Boltons are handily defeated- Jon would reveal the truth of his resurrection and Targaryen heritage and again the Northern Lords, greedy for power would want to put him on the Iron Throne, no longer content with just independence.

The warg spy network is hardly an original concept but hopefully, this is a more realistic interpretation. Wargs do not just warg into an animal and then know everything that animal had seen or heard instantly. They warg into an animal they usually have to have a bond with, not whoever they want. 100 wargs is about 1% of the Free Folk population with the gift and that seems like a reasonable ratio considering all the Stark children (Except maybe Sansa) are wargs. Eight hours a day of warg shifts might sound like a lot but you have to remember that wargs are essentially sleeping while they wary. They do it in their sleep all the time so all Jon is really asking them to do is adjust their sleep schedules.

We know from Bran's own experiences with Hodor that things whose minds are broken are easier to warg into. We know that Bran who admittedly is a much more powerful warg when he does his time travel warning thing, by controlling him so forcefully, he completely breaks Hodor's mind and will. It stands to reason that a hundred voices in your head could break anyone's mind- especially that of a bird into the point where their skin is effortless to slip into. Varamyr was testing Jon's warning capabilities by having him warg into the bird he had no bond with first. We know in the books that Jon is a powerful warg according to Varamyr but he thinks he could steal Ghost from him in spite of that.

I included Varamyr in the story because there are no other surviving wargs from the Free Folk with names and we technically never seen Varamyr die, the prologue ends right before. Also because the Dance with Dragons prologue is possibly my favorite chapter in the entire series and is what inspired this entire novel. Varamyr will serve as the warg expert/mentor for Jon and kind of his spymaster. I didn't want to use an OC for such a big role so rather than bringing back some boring warg for that role I let the most interesting one survive.
He chose the locations he did to send his wargs because the Last Hearth is closest and liable to get any news that leaks from the wall first, informing Jon if they needed to shift their plans. Winterfell needs no explanation for his choice of placing his spies there since both Roose, the Warden of the North, and his sister's rapist, Ramsay is there.

I'll probably have to say this a dozen times but Sansa does care about Jon and the rest of her family; she just has tunnel vision right now as she's fueled primarily for her desire for vengeance against the Boltons. Her anger is both causing her to be sloppy in her manipulation attempts and literally the first thing established about Jon's character in the books is how perceptive he is, so seeing through obvious manipulation is to be expected. (Cough Cough.) Jon does not trust Sansa or anyone really except Daenerys after being murdered by men he trusted.

There is a specific reason for why Varys already knows of Jon's resurrection despite the lockdown that will be revealed in a long time (He's a merman obviously). Daenerys's reaction to the information will be in next Friday’s chapter. I don't believe in secrets in case you can’t tell by now. People outside of the wall will be relatively aware of the important happenings of the Night's Watch and just about everywhere else. There is no chance the Lannister army could move in secret to Highgarden without anyone knowing. Large armies that take months to move do not travel in secret. News travels in my version of the world of Ice in Fire. Things in Westeros will be known pretty quickly in Essos and vice versa. Varys didn't lose all of his contacts by going to Meereen.

Chapter End Notes

This Tuesday we have the next Jamie chapter as he and Myrcella along with her new husband return to King’s Landing briefly and are reunited with Tommen.

Thanks for reading. Don't forget to leave Kudos and review.
Jamie stood on the deck of the ship as they pulled into the port of King’s Landing. He was unsurprised to see that there was a party of Gold Cloaks waiting for them to escort them to the Red Keep. What did surprise him was the quantity of them, there were at least 30 men waiting for them. Jamie thought it was a bit extravagant but he supposed that with the Queen and Queen-Mother imprisoned by the faith militant, they didn’t want to take any chances with the Princess’s safety.

Jamie could see the commoners whispering to each other as they docked. No doubt, they were gossiping about his lack of white cloak and armor as again he was wearing an outfit that looked much more like something his father would wear than something he would have ever pictured himself in. The Kings Guard was supposed to be for life but here he was as Lord Lannister after shedding the white cloak.

Jamie walked down the stairs to the lower level where he knew Myrcella and her new husband were staying in. He had not seen too much of them while on the boat back to Kings Landing, they had spent most of their time alone in their cabin doing things Jamie did want to think about his daughter doing.

Jamie turned down the hall to where Myrcella’s room was but found his path blocked.

“They’re still fucking like rabbits right now.” Nymeria Sand told him. That had not been a pleasant surprise when he found out she was coming back with them as Myrcella’s handmaiden. His daughter would still be at risk even if her husband was not in on the plot with one of the treacherous Sand Snakes by her side at all times.

Jamie ignored her and lightly rapped on the door with his knuckles. “We’ve docked in King’s Landing, we’ll disembark shortly. Be ready to go.” Jamie said to the closed door.
“We’ll be there…” Myrcella panted through the door. “In a minute, Father.” She moaned for reasons Jamie would not think about.

Myrcella had taken to calling Jamie her father every time that they spoke in anything close to a private situation. Trystane and Nymeria both knew he was her father and Jamie wasn’t sure if they knew because of Arianne or Myrcella telling them. Myrcella seemed to trust both of them despite one or both of them plotting her possible murder. He still didn’t know how to tell her that or if he was even allowed to do so.

A part of Jamie was selfishly glad that Cersei was imprisoned at this current time. She had reacted rather poorly to him calling Myrcella and Tommen his children before he had left to rescue Myrcella and he did not want to imagine how much worse she would react to Myrcella calling him father. Not to mention how angry Jamie was at her cheating on him while he was a prisoner and fucking Lancel and Kettleblack and Moon boy according to Tyrion. Yes, it was better that he just gives Tommen his resignation and not see Cersei at all for now. It’s not like she would die, Ser Gregor would defeat whatever faith militant decided to fight for them in the trial by combat. Maybe Jamie would get really lucky and Lancel would be the faith’s champion, wouldn't that be a fitting end for Cersei's boy toy.

“The Queen has asked us to escort you to the keep. Your wheelhouse is just this way, Princess.” Ser Humfrey Waters, the Commander of the City Watch told them once that had deboarded.

Jamie blinked owlishly. “The Queen? I was under the impression that the faith militant was holding her for trial on charges of infidelity.”

“The Queen-Mother.” Ser Humfrey corrected himself. That did nothing to clear up his confusion.

At his look of confusion, Ser Humfrey elaborated. “She was allowed to return to the keep until her trial after her walk of shame.”

“Walk of shame?” Jamie asked still completely lost.

Ser Humfrey sighed and pinched his brow, he was saved the trouble of answering when a different gold cloak butted in. “They shaved the bitch and made the whore walk to the keep naked with her saggy tits hanging out.”

Jamie resisted the urge to punch the guard. “What is your name Ser?”
“Aurane Flowers, Ser Goldenhand—” He slurred and gave a mock bow.

Humfrey turned around to look at Aurane Waters. “She is still the Queen-Mother, you’ll treat her with respect or you will find yourself on the executioner’s block.” He snapped at Flowers.

He then turned back to Jamie and the rest of their party. “I apologize for his behavior. He is clearly drunk. If it would like to Princess, please feel free to punish him.”

Myrcella turned her nose up as if she smelled something foul. “I’ll let him off just this once. I’m sure he meant no harm by his crass description. A simple apology will do in this case.”

Jamie wondered where Myrcella got her kindness and mercy from. There was no way it came from Cersei and while Jamie was better than Cersei at being decent, Myrcella and Tommen too he supposed were in a league of their own. Perhaps it was from seeing how cruel Joffrey had been and simply doing the opposite.

Aurane Flowers fell to his knees in front of them and clutched his hand together. “Thank you, Princess!” He blubbered. “I recant! I wasn’t thinking, I did not mean to insult your mother!”

Myrcella sniffed and lifted the hem of her dress as she stepped past him to the earlier indicated wheelhouse. Jamie sighed and saddled his horse alongside Prince Trystane and Nymeria as they prepared to ride back to the keep.

Jamie had planned on avoiding Cersei, he would catch up with Tommen briefly, and then he and Myrcella would depart to Casterly Rock, avoiding Cersei entirely. Now he had to prepare to see the woman he both hated and loved more than anyone else in the entire world. He had to tell her to her face that he was leaving the Kings Guard and her behind to return to Casterly Rock and take her daughter away with him. Jamie was confident that it was sure to go over well. He snorted at the thought, it was bound to go horribly.

The ride to the keep was all too short and now he was standing across the street from Cersei with four of the Kings Guard flanking her including one monster of a man that could only be Ser Gregor Clegagne. Jamie could only imagine how Ser Barristan would have reacted to having to serve with someone that had as little honor as the mountain. Once upon a time, the Kings Guard was a place for the most honorable of knights but these days it was full of sellswords, rapists, and child murderers. At least there would no longer be a Kingslayer in their numbers but Jamie was sure he’d be replaced by someone even worse, probably a kinslayer. Jamie was glad to be leaving the Kings
Guard if that was what it looked like now.

Jamie watched mutely as Ser Osmund Kettleblack held out a hand to help Myrcella out of the wheelhouse that she took a with a polite smile. He had already stolen Cersei from him and that thing dared to touch his daughter? His left hand balled into a fist as it hung uselessly at his side.

“Mother!” Myrcella exclaimed with a wide grin. She lifted her dress and quickly walked to where Cersei was standing still flanked by three of the Kings Guard, completely unmoving from her spot.

Cersei looked awful and that was probably being generous to her current state. Her head was completely bald except for a few wisps of golden hair on her scalp. She was thinner then she used to be as well, significantly so. She was bony and pale. Her face was gaunt as the skin was stretched tight over her skeleton. They’re where dark bags under her eyes as if she had gone weeks without sleeping. Even as she hugged Myrcella to her, her eyes were frantic, darting back and forth about, scanning the people around her as if she was afraid at any moment that they would be attacked.

Jamie was angry at Cersei but that doesn’t mean that it didn’t hurt him to see the usually so proud and strong Queen completely broken and so weak. She was still his sister despite everything. She was still the mother of his children and if only for their sake he wanted her to be alive and happy.

Myrcella stepped away from her mother and beckoned her new husband over. “I want you to meet my husband Trystane Martell.”

Trystane took Cersei’s hand in his and kissed her knuckles. “Charmed,” Cersei replied with a smile that didn’t reach her eyes. Her eyes glanced over his shoulder to where Jamie was standing and her eyes bored into his own eyes. She obviously wasn’t happy with the fruits of his “diplomatic mission.”

Jamie knocked on the door what he knew to be Tommen’s room. He wanted to catch him alone when he turned in his resignation and this was the easiest way to guarantee that he would be alone.

“Go away!” Tommen shouted before changing his mind. “Who is it?”

“Ser Jamie Lannister.”
“You may enter,” Tommen said and Jamie opened the door.

Tommen was lounging on his bed, wearing a loose purple robe. His robes had stains of chocolate on the sleeves and his crown was noticeably absent from his head. He was pudgier then Jamie remembered and Jamie couldn’t help but worry about his youngest son’s health.

“Uncle Jamie.” Tommen greeted him with no real enthusiasm.

“Are you alright?” Jamie asked as he took in his state. He had come here with a different purpose but his reason seemed unimportant now and his son’s well being came first.

Tommen scowled. “What do you think?” His voice rose to a shout. “My wife is being imprisoned for some bullshit charges that my mother made up, and every one of my subjects hates me. I never should have been king, that was always Joffrey’s role. I’ve been a horrible king.”

Jamie sat on the edge of the bed next to Tommen’s feet. How do you comfort him about that without outright lying? “I’ll admit your tenure as King has been rough but that is mostly due to circumstances out of your control. You don’t control the actions of others, you didn’t choose to have the new High Septon go completely crazy and arrest the Queen and your mother.” He put his left hand on Tommen’s leg. You are not responsible for the decisions of others nor should you be concerned by their opinions. Do what you feel is best, you’re the King, not anyone else. Their opinions can influence you but in the end, yours is the only one that matters.”

“But I don’t want to be King.” Tommen’s voice was so faint that Jamie almost missed it.

Jamie frowned. “Unfortunately you don’t have much of a choice there.” He patted his leg. “On the bright side, you only got to marry your beautiful wife because you are King.”

Tommen smiled briefly but it quickly turned into a frown. “Margaery would be better off without me. It’s only because she is Queen that mother drummed up these charges and got her arrested.”

Jamie sighed. “Perhaps.” He conceded. “In a little bit, your wife will be free after she is found innocent and you’ll be reunited once again. Years later, you’ll look back on this incident and laugh about the silliness of all this.”
“I miss her,” Tommen said sadly and Jamie could offer no assurances there. Still, he tried anyway.

“While I’ll admit she’s not your wife, your sister is back from Dorne with her new husband for the next few days,” Jamie told Tommen.


Jamie grimaced. “That’s actually why I wanted to see you.” Tommen looked into his eyes but did not stop smiling. “I wish to leave the King’s Guard.”

Tommens frowned again and Jamie couldn’t help but feel guilty for taking his joy away. “Why?”

Jamie instinctively tried to run his right hand through his hair forgetting it was a golden prosthetic now and instead bonked his forehead with it. “This, Your Grace.” He held up the hand and let out a light laugh. “I can’t even beat most squires with my left hand, I lost to a woman even while in Dorne.” He grimaced. “I failed to protect your father and I failed to protect Joffrey, both died on my watch.” He sighed. “I’m not able to protect you and I’m only a liability.”

Tommens frowned but consented. “Very well, I will miss you Uncle Jamie but I release you from your oath. You are free to leave.”

Jamie knelt as was the procedure for something like this. “Thank you, Your Grace.”

“What will you do now, Uncle Jamie?” Tommen asked once Jamie was back on his feet.

Jamie sighed yet again. “I’ll finally do what father wanted and take up my rightful position as Lord of Casterly Rock.”

“When will you leave?” He asked morosely.

Jamie truthfully didn’t know. He presumed that he had to go to Casterly Rock immediately to officially name Myrcella as his heir but he could hardly say for certain. “Me and Myrcella, unfortunately, can not stay here any longer than a week.”
Tommen frowned. “You are dismissed, Uncle Jamie.” He said making a shooing motion with his hand.

“Tommen..” Jamie tried to apologize but Tommen wouldn’t hear it.

“I said you are dismissed.” Tommen repeated with some force and this time Jamie did as he bid. So with a bow and a faint whispered, “Your Grace,” he left Tommen’s room and his son to his misery as much as it pained him to do so.

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Jamie shoved the mutton chop off of his plate as he again tried to cut it with only one hand while holding the fork loosely in his golden hand.

Myrcella giggled. “Just call for a steward Father,” She told him as her eyes twinkled full of mirth. “You don’t have to cut it yourself.” She beckoned a steward over to do just that for him and Jamie reluctantly allowed the steward to cut his mutton into little bite-sized chunks as if he were a toddler.

She seemed to be the only one finding any enjoyment in this family dinner they had all gathered for while Jamie and Myrcella were still here. She had charred amiably with anyone who would entertain her. She was the only one doing much of anything but silently glaring.

Cersei said nothing to Jamie the entire dinner and would glare at Jamie anytime Myrcella called him father. Once, Jamie might have been intimidated into submission by her glares but now he was uncowed. He would instead glare right back at her.

Tommen was somehow even more unruly than his mother was. He had made sure to ignore everything both Jamie or Cersei said to him and outside of a cordial greeting to Prince Trystane he had ignored him as well. At least he was conversing with Myrcella who he was very clearly happy to see again. He was completely indifferent to Jamie being called his father and no one saying anything to prove the opposite. He didn’t acknowledge Jamie as his father or say the opposite. He didn’t even acknowledge him at all and Jamie almost wished he would yell at him and deny that he was his father. He knew how to handle rage but the cold indifference hurt more than anything he might have said aloud.
Jamie sighed and ate one of the bite-sized portions that had been cut up for him as yet another awkward silence descended on them. Jamie tried desperately to break it up.

“So what do you think of the food here Prince Trystane?” Jamie asked searching for a safe topic of conversation. “How does it compare to the cuisine of Dorne?”

Trystane swallowed what he had been eating and wiped his mouth with his handkerchief before speaking. “It’s very good, Lord Jamie.” He cleared his throat. “Less spicy then I am used to but good.”

Myrcella swatted Trystane’s arm hard enough that he hissed through clenched teeth. “My husband is to polite to say this but we find it a bit bland. The foods in Dorne are much more flavorful.” She turned to Jamie with big doe eyes. “You will find us a Dornish chef, won’t you Father? We definitely prefer the cuisine from Dorne over the western dishes.”

Jamie forced himself to smile. “I’m sure we can find some sort of arrangement that will allow you to eat the food that you enjoy best.” Of course, the flavorful dishes of Dorne with their rich tastes and spicy bite made it all the easier to hide poison within them.

Myrcella beamed. “Thank you, father.”

Jamie smiled, a genuine one this time.

“I’ve never had food from Dorne, we must try some before you leave for Casterly Rock,” Tommen interjected with a happy smile as he conversed with his sister.

“Oh yes,” Myrcella gushed. “You’ll love it, it’s simply divine.”

“Leave?” Cersei hissed as she glared at Jamie. “Why on earth would she leave for Casterly Rock?” She took a long drink from her chalice filled with rich red wine. “She will stay here with her mother and brother.”

Tommen was surprisingly the one who spoke next. “Surely, you’ve heard mother? Uncle Jamie has left the King’s Guard and will be taking up his rightful place as Lord of Casterly Rock like grandfather had always wanted. He’s named Myrcella as his heir.” He explained, Jamie knew it wasn’t for his sake but for Myrcella’s and maybe himself as well. He probably did not want to see Cersei and him fight over this when it was likely already hard enough for Myrcella as is.
Cersei sniffed. “I did hear that particularly fictitious rumor.” She took another perfectly graceful sip from her chalice. “But it is just that, a rumor, and a false one at that.” She glared at Jamie to try to cow him into submission like she always had.

Today Jamie would not bend however, there was too much at stake. “It’s not a rumor I’m afraid. I’ve taken up my Lordship as our father always wanted and I named my daughter as my heir.”

“She’s not your daughter,” Cersei shrieked shrilly. “You did not raise her! I did! You can not take her away from me again!”

Jamie forced himself to quell his rage. She had been the one who demanded that he not be present in his children’s life for fear of Robert finding out and now she was mad at him for listening to her? He turned to Tommen and inclined his head. “I beg your pardon, Your Grace but could you give me and your mother the room? We clearly need to have a conversation.”

Tommen did not address Jamie again, he simply turned to Myrcella. “Sister, would you and your husband like to visit the kitchens with me? We can try to hunt down some of those Dornish confectionaries you rave so much about.”

Myrcella glanced at Jamie, obviously worried about him and he gave a slight nod telling her to go. “I would love to Tommen.”

Jamie and Cersei watched in silence as they left the room with Kettleblack, Blount, and Swann trailing behind them leaving Jamie and Cersei alone with only the silent Ser Gregor guarding them.

Jamie clenched his jaw. “You seem displeased with me, sister. You sent me to Dorne to bring back our daughter and I did.” He snarled. “Alive and unharmed.” Just with a noose around her neck.

“I wanted MY daughter back here with me! I wanted her free from those venomous snakes, not married to one! I want MY daughter back and you are taking her away from me again!” Cersei snarled her voice ringing with vitriol. “You failed me, Jaime, you failed.”

Jamie in the sanctity of his own mind agreed with her venomous barbs but he would never admit that out loud and certainly not to her. “She is in love with her Prince as much as you might wish
otherwise, she is happy. Myrcella is my daughter and my heir as well. She and her husband will return to Casterly Rock with me and live there with her father.

“You are not her father!” She spat, spittle flying everywhere as she raged at him.

“I’m not?” He feigned confusion and looked around the room. “Then who is? We all know it’s not Robert.” He took a step towards her. “Is it perhaps Lancel? Oh I know, it must be Moon Boy. He tapped his chin pretending to be thinking. “No that’s wrong it must be Kettleblack, but which one? Perhaps both?”

Fear flashed through Cersei’s eyes so briefly that in a better frame of mind he might have thought it to only be his imagination. “I should have known you would be stupid enough to believe the baseless accusations against me. Those are naught but lies made up by our enemies.” She said in a haughty lilt.

Jamie took another step towards her and was now close enough to smell her perfume. She smelled of lavender and it was all too tempting to fall back into her arms and forget that she was a lying whore. “You really think I’d be stupid enough to believe for that bullshit?” Again he thought to himself privately. “I know you’ve been fucking Lancel behind my back and I know the charges against you are legitimate.”

Cersei blinked, seemingly stunned that he had not fallen for her lies again. That he had finally grown a backbone and defied her. She quickly recovered and fell back on her previous argument. “You.” She took another step towards him. “Are.” Another step and he could see the sweat on her forehead. “Not.” Jamie took a step backward as she advanced again. “Her.” Jamie took another step backward as she advanced on him like a vulture eyeing a tasty morsel. “Father.” She once again closed the distance between them and Jamie backpedaled. “You did not raise her.” She took another step to bridge the gap between them and when Jamie tried to retreat he crashed into the wall. “I did.” Cersei snarled as she hit his chest.

Up this close to her was a hazard, he wanted her bad. He could feel her hot breath on his neck as his hairs stood up, waiting. He wanted to turn his anger on her as the lying whore mewed under him with pain and pleasure. He wanted to take her soft, sweet, sinful lips with brute force and force his way down her throat. He wanted to treat her like the lying whore that she was and have his way with her.

But he could not do that, he knew that if he fell back into bed with her he would cave to her demands and bend to her will. He had to protect his daughter and he couldn’t do that if he let his sister control him any longer. So with thoughts of his daughter in mind, he took a step forward and shoved Cersei away from him with his one good hand and put her on the backfoot. Ser Gregor put a hand on the pommel of his greatsword but did not move otherwise.
“Raise her?” He questioned aloud. “I didn’t raise her because you wouldn’t let me!” He was surprised by the vitriol in his own voice. He did not realize he had harbored that much resentment about this before now. “You were too worried about your dear husband finding out just how much of a whore you were. You told me not to interact with my own kids and I the fool that I was I listened.” He vented. “Well no more,” Jamie swore vehemently. “I will not bow to your selfishness again. I will be a father to my children and not just a sperm donor anymore.”

She flinched back as if he had physically struck her before sobbing. “I’m sorry Jamie,” she moaned. “I haven’t let you be there for your children... I was just so scared of people finding out and trying to take them away from me.” She stepped forward and gripped his left hand in both of hers. “Let us do this right, we’ll raise our children together, here in Kings Landing as a family.”

Jamie wished he could accept her desperate plea but he could not. He had to leave and take Myrcella with him to keep her safe, giving Cersei what she wanted would result in the death of their daughter. So Jamie forced himself to remember what Tyrion had told him; Cersei is a lying whore, she’s been fucking Lancel and Osmund Kettleblack and probably Moon Boy for all I know. He chose to instead focus on his anger.

“No.” He snarled with a venom he no longer felt. “My daughter and I will return to Casterly Rock where we belong. If you would like to come with us then I will not stop you.” He, of course, knew she would decline his offer, which would require her to leave Tommen alone with the “evil” Queen Margaery. She would not be able to control the kingdom anymore and he knew she would always put power over him.

Cersei changed tactics. “Please,” Cersei begged him. “If you go through with this then everyone will know that the accusations are true. I-I’ll be killed for being unfaithful and sleeping with you.”

Janie snorted. “We both know you are guilty and so does everyone else. The trial will be by combat and Ser Gregor will kill whatever combatant that the faith finds. The trial is a farce and my actions will have no impact on the outcome.”

Cersei quit her broken facade once it was clear she couldn’t appeal to him anyway. She stepped back in his face, all tears gone and snarled. “I won’t let you take my daughter away from me.”

Jamie laughed at that. “You don’t have a say in the matter. She is returning with me to Casterly Rock when the week is done. The only way you could change that is by killing me.”
He took some perverse pleasure in watching her squirm as she realized just how little she could do about it. He was protecting Myrcella for his daughter’s sake but he couldn’t deny that it felt good to hurt Cersei half as much as she had hurt him. Cersei is a lying whore, she’s been fucking Lancel and Osmund Kettleblack and probably Moon Boy for all I know.

Cersei looked back at Ser Gregor who had half of his sword unsheathed. For a moment Jamie thought she would give him the order to cut him down but that moment passed and she simply lifted her head and strode away from him, her dress billowing behind her as her heels clicked against the stone floor as she receded from him with Ser Gregor trailing her like a loyal puppy.

Jamie scoffed and watched as she walked away. Once she was out of sight he too exited the dining hall, leaving his dinner unfinished. She was all bark and no bite.

- “You asked to see me, Your Grace?” Jamie asked as he entered the solar of King Tommen. He had been told by Ser Balon Swamm that the king had requested his presence at his earliest possible convenience. Tommen was the king so Jamie had, of course, come immediately.

“You asked to see me, Your Grace?” Jamie asked as he entered the solar of King Tommen. He had been told by Ser Balon Swamm that the king had requested his presence at his earliest possible convenience. Tommen was the king so Jamie had, of course, come immediately.

“Sit, Lord Jamie.” He greeted him with a smile and gestured to the open chair across from him.

Jamie frowned at the formal address but did as bidded. He had selfishly hoped that Tommen summoned him because he wanted to see his father and finally was willing to acknowledge that was Jamie, not Robert. Unfortunately judging by the use of his official title it was business that his son wanted from him.

“I would like you to lead the Lannister armies up north to Riverrun.” Tommen began to explain but Jamie cut him off.

“This is Cersei’s idea, isn’t it?” Jamie snarled leaping to his feet. “She’s trying to keep me away from my daughter.”

Tommen did not flinch at Jamie’s raised voice. “I give you a lot of leeway because of your relation to my mother but I am still the King and I will be treated with the proper respect.” He commanded in his most authoritarian voice but it came across poorly as his voice cracked showing his true age.

“Apologies, Your Grace,” Jamie said with his head bowed. “I forgot my place, I assure you it will not happen again.”
Tommen puffed up his chest, no doubt trying to intimidate him but it was more amusing than anything. “See that it doesn’t.”

Once Jamie had retaken his seat, Tommen spoke again. “When the Frey’s agreed to break guest right and murder the Stark’s at the red wedding, your father Lord Tywin Lannister promised the Frey’s Riverrun. The Frey’s have not yet received the lands promised to them by House Lannister. You are now Lord Lannister and a Lannister always pays their debts so it is your duty to help them claim their Lands.”

“Is that an order from the King?” Jamie asked through gritted teeth.

Tommen nodded. “That is an order.” He looked into Jamie’s eyes. “You will leave at once to break their siege and take the castle. Take as many of your men as you need with you. Myrcella will stay here in King’s Landing until your return and when you return you will both be permitted to return to Casterly Rock until your services are once again required.”

Jamie stood and gave a stiff bow. “If that is all, Your Grace.” His voice was dripping with polite sarcasm but Tommen didn’t notice or just didn’t care.

He gave a firm nod. “It is.”

Jamie hurried through the door and was almost free when Tommen called out again. “Uncle Jamie.” Jamie turned in his direction. “I’m sorry but I need my sister here right now, just until I get my Margaery back.” Jamie forced himself to smile and then spun back around and closed the door behind him.

This was very clearly Cersei’s work.

Chapter End Notes

Trial by combat is not being outlawed here, like in the books. Outlawing the trial by
combat just led to the moronic decision to blow up the sept and have everyone still love Cersei more than Dany in spite of it? In this, like in the books, there is a trial by combat it just must be fought by a member of the Kingsguard. It's out of character for the faith to choose to end the trial by combat and for their to be no pushback to them doing so.

Tommen's characterization might be worse than season 8 Jon in the show. Despite his mother imprisoning his wife who he clearly loves dearly, he still clings to her guidance and lets her rule the kingdom in his name, driving it into ruin. In this, he will be gullible but not stupid. In this, during Cersei's imprisonment, Olenna spoke to him and placed the blame for Margaery's predicament on Cersei's shoulders. As such Tommen is rightfully furious with Cersei for her actions and his anger has driven a rift between him and his mother.

You can decide for yourself if it's Tommen or Cersei's decision to send Jamie away, both make some sense as both would want to keep Myrcella close for similar reasons. Jamie obviously believes it's the latter.

This Friday we get Daenerys hearing of Jon's parentage and her reaction to the news.

Thanks for reading. Make sure to leave Kudos and review the story, also subscribe so you don't miss any future chapters.
Daenerys III

Chapter Summary

Daenerys learns of Jon's existence.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

It was truly incredible the power that fear held. One savage attack by Rhaegal on the Harpies one night and the Harpies actions almost completely ceased. The fear for their lives had caused a temporary ceasefire between the Masters and the Free Men. She knew it would not last, fear alone was not how she wanted to rule but the peace that he had wrought in the short term was much appreciated.

Rhaegal had stopped visiting her at night, instead, he now would visit in the mornings and Daenerys had begun waking up earlier in order to still see him. She wasn’t sure why he flipped the times but it didn’t matter. He was still there with her at some point during the day. He was still the only one of her dragons who behaved at all that way, so human like.

“Your Grace,” Missandei said as she stood in the doorway to Daenerys’s private chambers. “Ser Jorah Mormont and Daario Naharis have returned and are waiting for your judgment in the throne room.”

Daenerys smiled. They were finally back from their expedition to find her, her brave old bear, and her lover. She rose from her chair and immediately rushed down to the throne room. She knew it was improper but she had missed them terribly.

“You did not find her?” She heard Tyrion ask. “So we are to presume the Queen is dead?”

“I’m afraid so,” Jorah whispered somberly. “I failed her.”

“How do we proceed from here?” Tyrion mused aloud as he drummed his fingers on a goblet that was no doubt filled with wine. “Do we hold Meereen in her name or do we go to Westeros and take the throne from my vile sister and “break the wheel” as she would say.”

Daenerys decided that Tyrion had enough fun and cleared her throat from where she stood in the doorway. All of their heads shot towards her.

“Khaleesi,” Jorah murmured and dropped to a knee before her. At the same time, Daario shouted, “My Queen!” And rushed towards her.

Daenerys took a step back away from him as much as she had missed his company in her bed, he needed to remember his place. He did just so and took a knee before her as well.

She looked towards Tyrion who had a wide grin on his face. “That was cruel, Lord Tyrion.” She chastised him but her eyes were filled with mirth. She had found it slightly amusing as well and she knew Tyrion had not meant any real harm by it.

“Apologies, Your Grace.” He said with a sweeping bow but the grin did not leave his face for even
She looked back at the still kneeling Daario and Ser Jorah. “You may rise.”

They rose to her feet and Daenerys ignored Daario in favor of addressing Ser Jorah. “I banished you, why have you returned to Meereen again?’

Ser Jorah did not flinch or show any signs of fear at what might happen to him for refusing to listen to what she had commanded. “I swore I would be by your side until the day I die, I promised to shield you always and give you my best council if you have need of it. Anything you want of me, I will give you. If that is my head than I will gladly offer it to you.”

Daenerys sighed. “I banished you twice. You came back twice disobeying my commands. And you saved my life. So I can’t forget that you betrayed me and failed to follow through on my orders but I can’t send you away and punish your loyalty to me nor can I forget that you saved my life.” She looked over at Tyrion. “Lord Tyrion, what would you advise me to do in this situation.”

Tyrion took a long drink from his chalice. “It’s a difficult situation, Your Grace. You can not reward disobedience and you can not punish for loyalty. So you do neither.” He paused and took another drink from his chalice. “Forgive me for this example but Lord Stannis Baratheon when a smuggler smuggled in food for them during the siege on Storms End, he took the smugglers fingers for his crimes and knighted him for his actions. Perhaps you should do something similar to Ser Jorah for both his services and his betrayal.”

Daenerys thought about what Tyrion had advised it was sensible but how to do so. She could not butcher him and take a hand, she needed him able to fight when they went to war, taking a hand would likely lead to his death in combat. He had no value to her as an adviser anymore, she couldn’t trust him again but she knew that he would insist on fighting so taking a hand would be the equivalence of taking his life. She sighed and stepped down towards Jorah. She didn’t want to do this but she had no choice.

“Ser Jorah Mormont, I strip you of all ranks and titles. Any claims you have to lands and your family name. From now on you will be known as just Jorah.” Daenerys declared and her heart burned when she saw the tears in Jorah’s eyes but even still he bowed his head in acceptance. “However, as a reward for your services and for saving my life, you are no longer banished. You will be permitted to stay in Meereen and stand by my side. You will not have a place in my council but you will be allowed to serve as a soldier and a guard in my army. In time you may be able to regain your place.”

Ser Jorah dropped to his knees and beyond a quiet, “Thank you Khaleesi,” said nothing. Daenerys watched him with sad eyes but she knew she had no choice in the matter. She had to punish him somehow but she had also given him what he wanted and she would not have to part from him again.

She turned towards Daario. “Your loyalty has exceeded that of what would have been expected of any sellsword. Even without promises of gold, you rode off into the Dothraki sea and even into the heart of Vaes Dothrak searching for me. For your loyalty, I’ll reward you with a title, from this day forth you shall be known as Ser Daario, Knight of Meereen and the Seven Kingdoms.”

Daenerys doubted that Daario would care about the title she had given him. He did not care about the code of a knight nor did he care about how he was addressed. The move was both selfish and political. A knight would be a much more fit consort for a Queen than a sellsword although she knew people would still grumble about his position as her bedwarmer. The title being given to a lowly sellsword also showed that she would reward loyalty with honor. She hoped that by Daario
receiving such a title it would encourage other sellswords to be loyal to more than just the gold
they received for their services.

She stepped towards Daario who was kneeling before her after receiving the title. She crouched
down so her lips were level with his ear. “I expect you in my bed chambers tonight, Ser Daario.”
She whispered to him, her voice thick with desire.

She rose and turned her back to the still kneeling men, heading to her own chambers to prepare for
Daario’s visit. She made sure to take extra care and swing her hips as she receded from them and
she was sure that she could feel Daario’s eyes glued to her backside. Okay, maybe that title she had
given him had been almost entirely selfish.

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Daenerys was sad to see when she woke up that her bed was empty, Daario had apparently already
left her. That was unfortunate she had wanted him to pleasure her in the morning but the few
rounds they did last night would have to be enough for now. Then she heard the growling. Fearing
the worst Daenerys shot out of bed all drowsiness gone and was met with the most amusing sight.

Daario was pinned in the corner as he desperately tried to pull his pants up so he could leave her
chambers. Looming in front of him was Rhaegal’s large head that had crept through her balcony to
bully her lover. He was obviously jealous that she had dared to spend the morning in bed with
Daario instead of speaking with him. Rhaegal had been very possessive of her lately and always
tried to find time by her side.

Daenerys laughed and Daario shot her a betrayed look. She ignored him and called out to Rhaegal.
“Rhaegal!”

His head snapped up and turned to her. At her glare, his head slunk back from a fleeing Daario and
nuzzled into her hand. She gently stroked Rhaegal’s face and watched as he left without putting on
his shirt and didn’t even bother to close the door behind him. Daenerys made sure to do that herself
and lock it as well, it was bad enough that she was going to have this conversation with Rhaegal,
she would not let anyone else witness it as well.

She sat down on a plush armchair over by the window and Rhaegal’s head quickly found her lap
and she stroked his green scales with a small smile. Eventually, she spoke to him, “Play nice with
Daario.” She chastised him. He growled quietly in reply but lacked any heat in the action. “I need
him.” She whispered quietly.

Rhaegal lifted his head off of her lap and shook it as if to say she didn’t. “I do,” Daenerys
protested. “Not like I need you but I do need him.” She blushed in spite of herself this was a very
odd conversation to have with a dragon. “I have needs,” she tried to explain. “Sometimes I need a
man to uh mate with me?” She blushed again and glanced down, she wasn’t sure if Rhaegal could
even understand this at all. “It doesn’t have to be Daario but I do need someone to warm my bed
and it can’t be you, you’re not a human. Sometimes I have to make time for others as well- you
can’t have me all to yourself.”

She looked back at Rhaegal and noted that he almost looked jealous? Was he upset that she had
only hatched male dragons and he wanted a mate of his own? Or was he upset that she was with
Daario instead of the mornings that had been their time? She couldn’t say which but it almost
looked like he was jealous of it being Daario who was in her bed? She must be mad to think such a
thing.

“I’m sorry I did not birth you any female dragons,” She apologized to Rhaegal who immediately
looked away as if he was embarrassed. “I wish I could give you someone to mate with for yourself but I can’t.”

Rhaegal shook his head, was she wrong or was he in denial? Or maybe she was completely mad and his head movement meant nothing at all. “I’m sorry you can’t mate Rhaegal but I will not deny myself my own pleasure to feel your misery.” She told him firmly.

Rhaegal shook his head as if it’s that not what he had wanted and Daenerys was extremely confused. Was he just jealous that Daario had stolen his time with her? “Come, let me tell you about yesterday.” She patted her lap and his head immediately rested on her legs. Yes, it was definitely just Daario stealing their time together.

"Send in the next petitioner.” Daenerys declared with a slight wave of her hand and watched as Ser Jorah stepped back outside to escort the next petitioner in to see her.

It was definitely an adjustment having Ser Jorah with her again but not actually with her. Just Jorah not Ser anymore. She corrected herself, she took that title from him. She had sent him to Greyworm to be used like the Unsullied in guarding her city and protecting her. She could not trust him with sensitive information ever again but she did trust him to protect her and her city.

The next man practically sprinted in to see her with Jorah trailing behind him. A former slave she could tell by his dress and the scars he bore on his face and arms. He had a light skin than most of the men in Essos, something more akin to the colder climates of Westeros. He did not bother to bow when he entered or even let Missandei list her titles, instead immediately jumping right into his request with no decorum.

“Your Grace, I ask your permission to take a man’s head.” He spat clearly angered by something or another.

Daenerys raised an eyebrow, amused by his demands and ignored his lack of formalities. Surely he knew the answer would be no. Like it was for all the freed slaves who wanted all the masters dead, and when she had first taken the throne petitioned her for just that. “Which man is that?”

“The man,” he spat with venom. “Tore me away from my wife and newborn daughter. He stole me away from my home. That man sold me to fight in the pits of Meereen for my own life. He sold me so he could live a little bit better and condemned me to hell. It’s only fair that he goes to hell himself.”

Daenerys paused and for once had no answer for the man. She knew that Jorah had sold slaves and been banished from Westeros for his crimes but she had never actually reconciled that fact with herself. She had kept the Jorah before they had met separate from her brave old bear, the one who was by her side and loyal beyond any rational concepts.
But now she was forced to accept that they were the same person. His past might not matter to her because she knew who he was now but it did matter to other people. To her people. She couldn’t give the man Jorah’s head as he wanted but he couldn’t stand by her side either.

She had assigned him to guard her streets and protect her and her city but she hadn’t considered how that assignment would affect her people. This man might be the only one bold enough to confront her about his past but he was almost certainly not the only person in Meereen that Jorah had sold.

He might be protecting her people and her people might be safer because of it but they would not feel safe. They would be scared and distrusting because of his presence. She could not have him patrolling her streets and protecting her city as she had wanted.

Yet at the same time, he was a symbol, a symbol that the Masters could change. He was a man who sold men into slavery and now he helped her break off chains. He could represent hope to the Masters that they could have a place in her new world, that she could forgive their past transgressions if they worked to move past them. That they could change.

But a traitorous part of her mind whispered to herself. Had he really changed? She knew Jorah went to insane lengths for the woman he had loved. He hadn’t sold men and women into slavery or condemned children into damnation because he was a mean or cruel man. He had done it because he was in love with a woman with expensive tastes that he would do anything to quench.

Was his regret for his actions in selling people a facade to earn her love? Or did he only regret what he had done because he lost his wife anyway. Did he regret the actions or the consequences of them? If Daenerys asked him to kidnap men from their families and put them in shackles would he obey?

He didn’t help her end slavery in Astapor, Yunkai, and Meereen because he wanted slavery to end and thought it an abomination that had to be abolished. He had done it because he was in love with her and would do anything for her. He had not returned to her side and saved her life because it was right, he had done it because he was in love with her. His motivation had never changed, just the object of his desires. She knew that if he had to make a decision between her life and all of the lives in Meereen he would choose her and that scared her. He was a lovesick fool who would go to any lengths to serve the woman he loved. He was not a good man or a horrible one just a fool.

She looked back at the free man who Jorah had once sold and then back at Jorah. “Are his accusations true Jorah?”

“I can not say if I sold him particularly but I did sell many men into slavery Khaleesi,” Jorah admitted quietly. Was he ashamed of his past actions or was he acting this way because he knew she didn’t approve?

“What was the price you sold him for?” Daenerys asked Jorah in a more assured tone than she truly felt.

Jorah looked down and refused to meet her eyes. “Most able-bodied men with no experience in combat or skilled at a particular trade sold for somewhere in the range of 500 silver pieces.”

Five hundred pieces of silver? That was it? He had valued human life so little that he had sold men into slavery for what was essentially two gold dragons? A human sold for only slightly more than a horse? Expensive wines sold for more than that by the barrel.

“453!” The man called out. “That’s how much you sold me for.”
It was even worse than she had thought. Slavery was a terrible thing and anyone who partook in selling people for so little coin had to be evil to even consider doing such a thing. Yet she knew Jorah wasn’t evil. No, just selfish, she corrected herself. Anyone who partook in slavery was incredibly selfish but Lord Tyrion was right, they weren’t evil. Jorah was not evil just selfish and a lovestruck fool. Just like he was now.

She turned back to the free man. “I can not give you what you ask for,” She apologized, sincerely. She didn’t want to kill Jorah but she almost wished she did- it would be easier to give him justice. If Jorah hadn’t saved her life, she might have done just that. She had promised him she would if he returned to Meereen after all. But he had returned and saved her life. She did not want him dead. “Jorah saved my life and I would not be just if I took his for his faithful and loyal service.”

Loyal Daenerys laughed internally. This was the man who had spied on her for the Usurper for a year. He had betrayed her. He had been loyal recently but could she truly call him loyal? What if he ever fell in love with another woman?

The man stepped up towards her and the Unsullied that flanked her stepped in his way. “What about the rest of us? All those lives that he stole? The men sold by him who died in the pits or the women who were raped for the Masters’s amusement? Where is our justice?” He roared at her clearly upset by her decision.

Daenerys couldn’t give him what he wanted even if she wanted to and a part of her did. Like she had told every other petitioner asking for a Master’s head she would not punish for what they had done before slavery had been outlawed. She could not take all their heads, she needed to end the cycle of prejudice and violence. She needed to break the wheel. “I will not punish men for what they did before slavery was outlawed. It would not be fair or just. I’m sorry that you were wronged but I can not offer you your vengeance.”

“I understand that but correct me if I’m wrong, Your Grace but...,” he sneered her title. “... was slavery not already outlawed in Westeros where I was abducted from? His actions were punishable in both mine, and his lands when he committed them- the very lands you yourself hail from. So should he not be punished?”

Daenerys didn’t know how to answer his plea. He was not wrong Jorah probably should be punished for his crimes. Before the Usurper pardoned him he had the choice of death or The Wall. He instead chose to flee to Essos and continue his vile ways. She didn’t want to send him away again, selfishly. She knew that she should at least banish him if not sentence him to the wall or mark him for death. She wouldn’t do that, she cared too much for him even if it wasn’t the best decision.

“I can not give you his life but I have punished him for his crimes.” Just not the crimes of selling people but of betraying me and refusing to stay away. “Jorah No Name has been stripped of all lands, titles, and claims to his own name as reparation for his past sins. It is not his life but that is not something I can take from him and call myself just.” She declared in a firm voice but she felt none of that confidence she exuded. “Jorah will personally repay you for the price he sold you for, seven times over. I offer to take you with me when I return to Westeros, I will return you to your family and restore any lands you once had.”

“No amount of gold can repay ten years of servitude.” He spoke quietly but to Daenerys, he could not have been any louder. “No gold can make up for missing my daughter’s first steps.” Daenerys’s heart burned and she forced away her tears. She had cost that man the chance to be a father, she had deprived a girl of her parents and forced her into a horrible position- possibly being alone in the world- like she had been this man’s child was now parentless. The worst part was Daenerys agreed
with him, there was no repayment for that but she had sworn herself to a path of peace and diplomacy not just fear and vengeance- repentance and redemption so even if it was not Jorah who he wanted she had to deny him his desire. So she hid all of that doubt behind her Queenly facade and stared at him emotionlessly.

He backed down. “Thank you for your wisdom and justice, Your Grace.” He sneered and spat at her feet before leaving the keep without a backward glance or even the slightest sign of respect for her. Her guards made to apprehend him but she waved them off. He was right to be angry with her, she was angry with her own decision.

Daenerys stroked Rhaegal’s head on her lap after she had awoken and told him about the events of the previous day as she always did every morning since their return from the Dothraki sea.

Well with the exception of the first night after Daario had returned when he stayed in her bed. Since then Daario had made sure to leave after they finished their passionate activities every night. He would leave her to sleep alone, too scared of Rhaegal to risk spending the night again.

She had awoken earlier than usual today, plagued by the thoughts of her decision the previous day. Nightmares of the man’s wife and daughter being dead because of Jorah’s actions and her just staring blankly and offering nothing in return for their lives that her man had taken had awoken her in a cold sweat. Thankfully, Rhaegal was there for her when she awoke.

She had told him of the man who had been sold by Ser Jorah Mormont and of her inability to reconcile who Jorah was and has become. She told him of her own nightmare- only to him could she show weakness. She had told him of her desire to give the people their vengeance and repay the masters for their cruelty but her inability to do so to stop the cycle of violence. She had to break the wheel not grease it or change the wheel but break it.

Their time this morning was interrupted by Ser Jorah and Missandei. “Your Grace, Varys is calling an early emergency council meeting. He says he has news that can not wait.” Missandei told her in high valyrian as she burst into the room.

Daenerys frowned. Varys technically did not have the power to call an emergency council meeting. Especially not one this early in the morning even if Daenerys herself had been awake for hours, what did he have that could not wait until a later hour to share? Still, it was a one-time thing and if his information proved to be that much of a concern then she would allow it. If not then she would make it very clear to him that he did not have that power, actually she would probably do that either way. He should take the information to her or Ser Barristan and they would decide if it warrants calling an emergency council.

She kissed Rhaegal gently on the head and promised to speak to him once again tomorrow morning before following Missandei out of her chambers and to the solar they always held the council meetings in.

“Stay here and guard my chambers.” She ordered Jorah knowing that he would follow them if she didn’t directly tell him otherwise. She had Jorah pulled from the rotation of guarding the city knowing it made her people uncomfortable and had assigned him strictly to guarding the pyramid. Not her person though even if she knew that he would do that zealously but her possessions. She could not trust him to be by her side where he would hear secrets that he could then give to her enemies to betray her once again. She believed he was loyal but she couldn’t chance it.
As they walked the halls with only moderate urgency, Daenerys turned to Missandei; “Do you have any idea why Varys is calling a council meeting so early?”

Missandei shook her head. “None, Your Grace.” She stopped for a moment. “Perhaps he heard back from the Masters of Yunkai and Astapor. Perhaps he called a meeting to inform us all that they rejected your more than generous offer of mercy.”

Daenerys thought that had to be the case but it still didn’t seem a good enough reason to call a council meeting this early when they had one scheduled already for tomorrow. Surely their response wasn’t that urgent unless it was a declaration of war. She feared the worst, knowing that no good news would ever be considered so urgent.

She and Missandei were the last to arrive in the solar, the rest of her council looked as confused as Daenerys was. They all were in various states of drowsiness with Daario even dozing on the table and Daenerys was probably the most alert of them all having got up this early for the last week to see Rhaegal. Except for Varys who had an unsettling grin on his face. She took her seat at the head of the table and Missandei as her translator since they did not all speak the same language at least fluently sat beside her.

“It is not your place to call council meetings, Lord Varys.” She reprimanded him. “Next time you have urgent news, bring it to me or Ser Barristan first and let us decide if it warrants a full council meeting.”

He bowed his head. “Apologies, Your Grace, but I think you’ll agree that this could not wait for even a second longer.”

“Yet you make us wait even now with your inane babble.” She heard Lord Tyrion mutter quietly before taking a drink from his chalice.

“Share what news you have to say,” Daenerys ordered.

“I have news from The Wall,” Varys said and everyone turned to him in complete dismay. Daenerys herself was incredulous, this was urgent news? She had asked for news of all the happenings in Westeros and the wall was included in that. She had heard of the Lord Commander Jon Stark’s foolish decision to let the wildlings south of the wall because he had taken to believing in fairy tales. Surely he did not think the unsurprising event of the wildlings rebelling was really worth an emergency council meeting? She was sure that they were fine people like the Dothraki, not just savages but you don’t just erase centuries of bad blood in an instant.

“The Wall?” You woke us up this early for the fucking Wall?” Ser Daario cried out. He was not a morning person as Daenerys very well knew by now with how often he had awoken in her bed hours after her. The only way he was happy to be woken up early was with a woman waking him up by pleasuring him.

Lord Tyrion was even more snarky. “Did they find a Grumkin? Or was it a Snark this time?”

“Lord Snow claims so but that’s not what the meeting is about,” Varys explained with a smile clearly unaffected by all the open hostility towards him.

“Lord Stark,” Daenerys absentmindedly corrected him. She refused to acknowledge the concept of bastardy and treat them any differently. He was the son of Eddard Stark so he was Lord Stark, not Snow.

“I’m afraid not, Your Grace.” Varys apologized looking only nervous for once. “I don’t know how
to say this..” He trailed off for a moment. “The Lord Commander was killed in a mutiny at Castle Black, by his own men, not the wildlings.”

Ser Barristan spoke next and well he was not angry he was clearly perplexed. “That is tragic and noteworthy news for sure but surely that does not warrant an emergency council meeting?”

Varys nodded in agreement. “Normally that would not, I thought little of it when I received the news a few days ago.” He took a deep breath seemingly to prepare himself to deliver more news. “But the Lord Commander did not stay dead.”

Tyrion outright guffawed at that. “You called us here because of a fairy tale? Surely you did not believe your source’s silly rumor of dead men walking.” The looks on everyone else’s faces echoed his sentiments.

“I didn’t,” Varys admitted. “When the first raven arrived carrying this silly rumor in its talons I tossed it aside. I did the same with the second source and the third as well. But when seventeen different ravens arrive from both men of the Night’s Watch and wildlings claiming that thousands witnessed his resurrection, you’re forced to realize that the rumors of dead men walking are true.”

Varys sighed. “Jon Stark was dead for seven days but when his funeral pyre was lit Jon Snow came back to life and walked out of the flames, Unburnt.”

Daenerys froze. She was the unburnt, the only Targaryen. The one immune to fire when no Targaryen had been for generations before her since the days of dragons, before the dance. That was her title, not this usurpers’. He could not steal everything she had worked so hard for in her life. This had to be a lie, she needed it to be one. Yet, a part of her rejoiced that she was not the last Targaryen. Her house would no longer die with her.

Varys continued to speak as if there was nothing wrong with what he just said. “When Jon Snow rose out of his funeral pyre it was a roaring flame but he was unburnt. He burnt the red priestess of the Lord of Light, Melisandre of Asshai who resurrected him alive claiming she sacrificed Shireen Baratheon to do so with the consent of her father, Stannis Baratheon. One of my sources claims the woman confessed to having done so.”

Daenerys closed her eyes remembering the words that would always haunt her, the price she had paid for her dragons. Only death can pay for life. She had sacrificed her own son and another man had sacrificed his daughter to bring back Jon Stark.

“Surely this is a one-off event?” Tyrion protested. “A side effect of the resurrection ritual, you can’t actually believe Jon Sno-Stark is a Targaryen.” He proclaimed, completely incredulous.

Varys shook his head. “I’m afraid that is the case. One of my little birds claims he stuck his hand in the flames before he burnt the red priestess and it still came away unburnt.” He sighed once more and looked towards Daenerys. “I believe he is the child of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark.”

Daenerys knew that was a possibility, Lyanna had been pregnant when Rhaegar had left her. Could her child have really been raised as the bastard of Eddard Stark?

Tyrion did not think so. “Why would Lord Stark ever claim a Targaryen as his own bastard? Why would he protect the byproduct of his sister’s rape? He was the staunchest supporter of the Baratheon reign, he was the King’s best friend. He practically put King Robert on the throne himself. Why on earth would he risk everything to save a Targaryen born of rape? Lord Stark hated the Targaryens, why on earth would he protect one.” He ranted.
“My brother did not rape Lyanna.” The words were out of her mouth before she could stop them and all eyes turned to her. “They were in love and ran away together.” She closed her eyes and admitted the terrifying and yet wonderful truth. “She was pregnant with his child when Rhaegar left to go fight the war, it’s not impossible that Jon Stark is that child.” But it’s not likely either.

Tyrion was persistent. “I still see no reason for Eddard Stark to claim the child as his own.” Or maybe he was just too stubborn to admit that he too had been fooled and believed him to be Lord Eddard’s son and nothing more. “He hated the Targaryen’s as much as anyone. He wanted them all dead.”

Ser Barristan spoke up. “You’re wrong Lord Tyrion. I can’t claim to know if Jon Stark is really a Targaryen but Lord Eddard Stark does not want all the Targaryens dead. When he was Hand of The King, King Robert wanted to send assassins after the Queen Daenerys when he heard she was pregnant. Lord Stark refused to accept his decision and even attempted to resign as hand when he sent them. When King Robert was laying dying, Eddard came out from seeing him and immediately claimed that His Grace had a change of heart and no longer wanted Her Grace dead. At the time I thought it was just him not wanting to murder an innocent child for the sake of his honor but perhaps there was more to it than that, perhaps he was truly trying to protect his kin.” Ser Barristan sighed. “Lord Stark was not the kind of man to sire a bastard- he was too honorable for that. If Jon Stark is truly unburnt then I believe he is a Targaryen and the son of Rhaegar and Lyanna. Even if he is not unburnt, it’s still a serious possibility.”

Daenerys had never known that about Lord Eddard Stark. Her whole life she had been told he was the Usurper’s dog. She had hated him more than anyone except for Robert Baratheon. Even over the Kingslayer and Tywin Lannister, she had hated him. He and the rest of his family had betrayed his sister and gone to war against her love. He had betrayed his sister for his best friend, chose to let his sister die so his friend could sit the throne. Yet, he had apparently spent his life protecting her and her supposed nephew even at great cost to himself. With that knowledge along with the knowledge of Lyanna’s pregnancy, Daenerys knew that Jon Stark was a Targaryen. She was not the last Targaryen.

A horrifying revelation struck her and Daenerys couldn’t help but laugh. She was so obstinate about breaking the wheel, about treating both bastards and trueborn sons equally and it would stop her from claiming the throne. If Jon Targaryen was truly the bastard of Rhaegar and Lyanna then by her own rules for the new world he had the best claim to the throne as Rhaegar’s son. She could not break the wheel and end the stains of bastardry and inequality without she too conforming to the rules and giving Jon Targaryen the Iron Throne.

They all looked to her with questioning glances wanting to know what she found so humorous but she refused to divulge any of her thoughts. How many of them would betray her for Jon Targaryen, would Ser Barristan leave her for the son of his good friend Rhaegar instead of serving the Mad King’s daughter? Surely at least Tyrion would abandon her and instead support his old traveling companion who he spoke so highly of and his claim. Would Varys leave her as well like he had so many kings before her? She knew Greyworm and Daario were loyal to her as were all the people she had freed but could she afford to trust her Westerosi advisors? Was that Varys’s intention by revealing the information to her entire council first? Did she want them to abandon her for her bastard nephew?

Even if she gave up her goal of treating bastards equally and selfishly chose to ignore that rule she had wanted to enforce when she was Queen, they would still abandon her. He had a cock, there had never been a Queen ruling Westeros before. The Lords would all flock to follow the male- even the illegitimate one who didn’t want to destroy their way of life. Everyone would choose him and she would be left with nothing, the wheel would keep on spinning and nothing would change. The
same people would be oppressed by the powerful and she would be unable to help them.

No, the only way she could keep her throne was to deny he had any claim to it, to claim that he was not her kin. To shun her only family left, to remain as the last Targaryen. She wanted more than just about anything to have a family, to not let the Targaryen’s die with her. But she had to put her dream of the perfect world first, she had to focus on the good of all people. A world free of inequality, where bastard and trueborn were treated equally. Where no man had ownership over another. A world where every woman had a choice in who they married. To do that she had to be Queen and she could not be that if another man had a better claim then her. She had to break the wheel and nothing would stand in her way. She had the dragons and the armies, not him, if it was required then she would destroy her only kin for the greater good of her kingdom.

“What we do with Jon Stark?” Grey worm asked somewhat lost in the conversation. “If she is our Queen’s kin than is he our ally?”

“We do nothing,” Tyrion spoke next before Daenerys could say anything denying that he was her kin. “He is a man of the Night’s Watch, he has no claims to lands or titles. He can not serve the Queen or take the throne because he is bound by his oath to defend the wall from Grumkins.”

Hope sprung in Daenerys’s chest. Could she really have kin and not have them be a threat to her new world? Could she have both family and her throne and the new world? Dare she hope it?

Naturally, Varys had to crush her hopes. “The Night’s Watch is an oath until death and Jon Stark died. He is no longer bound by that oath.” Varys tutted. “Even if he was still bound by that oath, Targaryen’s have superseded oaths to the Night’s Watch before, Aemon Targaryen served as Maester at Castle Black but when his brother died he was still offered the throne.”

Once again Daenerys’s own words haunted her. Targaryen’s are not subject to the rules of Gods or Men. They were better than that and now it might cost her everything she had strived so hard to achieve all because of a man with her blood and by her own rules a better claim to the throne and more importantly a cock. Was all of her suffering for naught? No, he had to be lying to try to steal her birthright. He was not a Targaryen, just another usurper seeking power for themselves. He could not be. But why would he have such an easily disputable story? All someone had to do was burn him for his lie to be exposed, a traitorous part of her mind told her. He must be telling the truth. She shut that part of her mind out, he had to be a usurper grasping for power. The throne belonged to her. She was the one with the Dragons, not this pretender.

Ser Barristan spoke next and voiced what all of them were thinking. “If Jon Stark is able to come back from the dead then maybe his tales of the Others and the army of the dead aren’t so fanciful. Maybe he’s telling the truth.”

That was a truly horrifying thought and no one had anything to say after that point. Stark had to be lying for all of their sakes, not just her throne. If there really was an army of the dead, as numerous as Lord Stark proclaimed than they were likely all doomed. He had to by lying. He was lying. He was just a usurper, trying to steal her power. Not her kin but a lying usurper.

Daenerys stood up abruptly. “These claims about Jon Stark are false.” She declared her will firm and resolute. She could not afford to doubt it. “He is not a Targaryen, Lyanna and Rhaegar’s daughter died with her. He is no kin of mine, just another usurper trying to steal my birthright. Everything he has claimed is a lie with no grain of truth to it.”

She did not wait for a reaction or any protest. She did not look back to see if they were surprised by her sudden change of heart. She did not want to see them questioning her mental stability, to worry about their inevitable betrayal. She had petitioners to see and she had to forget about Jon Stark. He
was nothing to her but the son of the Usurpers dog, regardless of what Varys or Ser Barristan claimed.

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It had been a mistake to go on with her day as she had planned. She had spent the entire day letting her anger and paranoia fester. Every petitioner she saw had reminded her that soon they would not be petitioning her but her nephew when he stole everything from her. She had been crueler then usual and she knew that some of the decisions she had made were the wrong ones, due solely to her anger and resentment she harbored towards her nephew.

Daenerys had never been a heavy drinker, but tonight she was one. She was already on her third bottle of wine and she would likely consume even more. She wanted to forget her doubts and worries, forget that her nephew even existed. Forget that she knew he was a Targaryen and not a pretender.

Daario had come calling to take her to bed tonight but Daenerys had sent him away, she needed some time to process all of this on her own. She wished Lord Varys had told her this news privately. She could have not allowed it to be shared, to let it stay a secret as long as her nephew did not press the issue. Varys was crafty though and had made sure she could not have stopped the spread of the lies of Jon Stark, of her nephew. She knew Varys wanted to have a backup plan in case he decided he did not like the world she was building, he would help her nephew usurp her.

She sighed and stood up and looked out at the sunset there was a speck in the distance that she knew was Rhaegal. Rhaegal always knew when she needed him. He would always be there for her even when everyone else abandoned her for her nephew. He and his siblings would give her the seven kingdoms and crush her nephew if he tried to usurp her.

When he landed, Daenerys immediately reached our and rubbed the smooth scales on his neck. “I’m not the last Targaryen,” she spoke softly her voice heavy and somewhat slurred from the wine. “For so long I believed that I was the only Targaryen, that I would be the last one.”

Rhaegal’s head twiched in her grip. “Lord Varys’s little birds claim that there is another. The Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch; Jon Stark, they claim that he died in a mutiny and seven days later walked out of the funeral pyre, alive and unburnt. Varys reasons that he is the son of Rhaegar and his Lady Lyanna. I have a nephew.”

Rhaegal violently jerked away from her, tearing the skin of her hand with his sharp scales due to how quickly he turned away. She hissed in pain but reached out her bleeding hand towards him once again and stroked under his chin. “It’s a lie of course. A ploy by Jon Stark to steal my birthright, he is not really my nephew. He can not be.” She took another sip of her wine. “Visenya died with Lyanna, the usurper is not her daughter, just a mummers dragon.”

Rhaegal shook his head. “You disagree? You think Jon Stark is truly a Targaryen?”

He nodded and she sighed. “I suppose you might be right, if I’m honest with myself I believe it too. It makes sense, I know Lady Lyanna was pregnant when Rhaegar left her and I want to have a family. I don’t want House Targaryen to die with me. In the House of the Undying I saw a blue rose growing on the wall where he was at the time. He has a connection to me through our shared blood.” She sighed once again and took another long drink of her wine. “I can not believe him to be a Targaryen, no matter how much I want too. If I acknowledge him as my kin then he can usurp me. It has to be a lie or else I’ll lose everything I’ve worked so hard to build.”

She grabbed Rhaegal’s head in her hands. “I need to break the wheel, I need to be Queen to do that.
I aspire for a world where all men are equal, where bastards are treated equally to trueborn sons. In order to make that world a reality I would have to give my throne to Jon Targaryen or else I am nothing but a hypocrite. They would still choose him over me because he is a man. I can not make that world a reality by giving him the throne so I must deny that he is my kin. It is the only choice.”

Rhaegal pulled his head out of her hands, gently this time and shook his head once again. “You really think I should accept him as my kin and risk my throne? Risk everything I’ve worked so hard for?”

Rhaegal nodded and Daenerys couldn’t contain her anger at him. Was he too betraying her for this usurper? “Why?” She raged. “Why should he get what is mine by right? Is all my suffering for naught? What has he suffered for the throne that gives him right to it?”

Rhaegal looked at her and cocked his head as if he was asking if she was stupid. “I suppose he has suffered, he died after all if Varys is telling the truth. Perhaps he does deserve it but what about me, what about my suffering? I’ve strived so hard for so long to build the perfect world and he can take it all away from me.”

Rhaegal shook his head once more. “You don’t think he’ll take it from me?” He nodded. “They judge me for being the Mad King’s daughter but he’s the one who inherited the madness. He believes in fairy tales and an army of dead men. Yet, they would all flock to him as a Stark and be proud to call him their King.” Rhaegal looked almost gleeful at the thought of it even as she and once again Daenerys felt a pang of betrayal that she forced herself to shut out.

She scoffed and stood there silent for a while, absentmindedly stroking Rhaegal’s scales until the sky was black. “I’m scared Rhaegal,” She confessed in a faint whisper. “What if he is not mad? What if there really is an army of the dead? Dragons were a myth and yet now you exist. Death was permanent but then my nephew proved that false as well. Do you think it’s possible that the army of the dead and the Others are truly as real as he claims?”

Rhaegal rapidly nodded his head. “You always seem to know things you should not be able to know and you have yet to lead me wrong so I’m inclined to believe you. What do I do about Jon Targaryen now that I know that? I won’t give him my throne.”

Rhaegal nuzzled his head into her chest. “You think I should offer him a place by my side?” He nodded. “You think he will bend the knee to me? Not try to steal my throne?”

Rhaegal hesitated for a moment but then nodded once more. “I don’t know Jon Targaryen or trust him but I do trust your judgment Rhaegal, and if you vouch for him then I will trust you and welcome him by my side. If he bends the knee. I thought you would be the only family I ever had, my only children. House Targaryen was going to die with me and now it will live on, I’m no longer alone.”

Rhaegal turned away seemingly embarrassed by her praise. She pulled him back to look at her kissed Rhaegal gently on the snout. “I’m so glad to have you as my confidant, you’re the only one I can trust to stay with me no matter what and not betray me for anyone else- not my nephew if he tries to usurp me.” She sighed. “I have to go now, I have to call a council meeting now before I lose my nerve, before I allow myself to doubt or get insecure again.

She pulled away from him and walked back inside feeling his heavy gaze on her as she left him there. She stepped out of her room and was immediately greeted by Jorah who had been guarding her room as he had been assigned to do.

He saw the tear stains on her cheeks and was immediately by her, alert, and clearly concerned.
“Are you all right, Khaleesi?” He asked and grabbed at her hand that still had blood stains on it from when she cut it on Rhaegal’s scales.

She forced down all her emotional indecision towards Jorah, there was a time to doubt him, to worry about letting him too close to her. She had to do this. She pulled away from him and closed off all of her emotions. “I’m fine. Send word that I am calling an emergency council meeting right now, I want them all in the solar within an hour.”

Jorah looked reluctant but he bowed low. “As you wish Khaleesi.” He then turned and strode down the hall to talk to other guards and order them to do as she bidded and fetch her council members.

She settled herself in the solar and waited for the rest of them to arrive. She was really doing this, there would be no going back after she claimed her nephew as hers. She might lose everything but he was family and she had to stand with him. If the threat was as real as he claimed then she must be prepared for it. They had to be ready to wage war with the Others and the army of the dead.

They gathered much quicker than she had expected when she called the council, this morning it had been a slow slog for Varys to gather them but when she called the council they had all rushed to attend it. Good that they knew not to make their queen wait. Once the last person, Ser Barristan had limped in and settled in their seat Daenerys stood up and addressed them all.

“Jon Stark is a Targaryen, there is no denying that he is the natural son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Lyanna Stark. Prince Jon likely did indeed come back from the dead.” Daenerys closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “It is likely that the Prince’s tales of the Others and the army of the dead that we previously thought to just be his excuse to bring the wildlings south of the wall is in fact the truth.”

She opened her eyes again and was surprised by the lack of protest from her council, she supposed that all of them except her had already accepted this as truth. The evidence was stacked in favor of Jon being a Targaryen she supposed. It was only her fear that kept her from accepting it herself.

“Lord Tyrion, you brought a Red Priestess to Meereen, bring her to me. I need to speak with her and find out if resurrection from the dead is truly one of their capabilities or if this is just a lie spun by someone who wants my throne.” Tyrion nodded in agreement and gave his consent to his task.

“I need you all to spend significant time researching the Others and ways of defeating them. Find out how they can be killed and what their weaknesses are. Find out how they were defeated eons ago. If there is any chance that they are real then we must be prepared for the worst.”

“Lord Varys, I want to be updated on everything you hear about Prince Jon Targaryen, no matter how small or how many sources or how credible they are, report it.”

“Your Grace, I have more news on him now,” Varys interrupted her.

Already? In one day what had he learned? “Enlighten us.” She commanded.

“Jon Stark,” He began.

“Prince Jon Targaryen,” Daenerys corrected him with a scowl. “To call him a Stark would suggest that House Targaryen is beneath the Starks, I hope that was not your intent.”

“Apologies, Your Grace, I meant no disrespect.” Daenerys waved her hand accepting his apology and telling him to get on with it. “Prince Jon Targaryen has rallied the wildlings or as they call themselves, The Free Folk to his cause. They have crowned Jon Targaryen as their King and will war with him to claim the Iron Throne. Prince Jon claimed that they needed to unite the realm in
order to defeat the Others and the army of the dead and they all swore to put him on the throne to do that.”

“Yes very Free,” Tyrion muttered. “They bow down and call a man their king. Forever free folk.” Tyrion muttered lifting his glass in a mock toast. Daenerys wanted to chastise him, it was the same way the former slaves called themselves the free men when they called her a Queen. They had the freedom to choose their own leader not to lead themselves.

Daenerys closed her eyes and forced herself to take deep breaths. Rhaegal had said he would not usurp her, that he would bend the knee to her. He was gathering an army to defeat the Others not to steal her throne, or maybe to claim the North back for the Starks, she would name him her warden. She could not doubt herself, she had made her decision and she would stand by it. She would not look back. If I look back I am gone.

“How many men does he have?” Ser Barristan asked.

“Most of the wildlings he brought past the wall are children or crippled. The woman fight in the wildlings army and even then among the 10,000 he saved, maybe 3,000 are capable of fighting in his army. The wildlings are undisciplined and will struggle to match in a formation so it is likely that their might will be closer to that of a force of 2,000 men if that. They will pose little threat to most disciplined knights. Although he does have a giant according to my little birds.”

“Surely he can not expect to take the seven kingdoms with so little men?” Tyrion pondered between drinks. “Jon Sno-Targaryen is no fool, or at least he wasn’t one.”

Varys nodded. “He faced worst odds when he was Lord Commander. Regardless, I suspect that he will reach out to all the Northern Lords and ask for their aid, if he hasn’t already. I can only speculate on how well received he would be.”

Ser Barristan turned to her. “Your Grace, what do we do with Prince Jon Targaryen? Is he our ally or an enemy? Should we send him men to aid him or…” He trailed off not wanting to contemplate aiding their enemies or killing Rhaegar’s son.

“He is not our enemy and I hope he is an ally. He is kin and I will not fight him unless we have too. I plan on sending an envoy to him, to bring him to Meereen and offer him a place on my council and by my side. If he will bend the knee.” Daenerys swore knowing there was no going back on this now. “If he is telling the truth about the Others then he is an extremely valuable ally and his Free Folk are more valuable than most men due to their experience with the enemy.”

“What changed your mind, Your Grace?” Tyrion asked the question that Daenerys was sure all of them wanted to but only he, as drunk as he was, had the courage to. “You were so dead set on him being an imposter this morning, and a liar trying to steal your birthright. What changed?”

Daenerys saw no harm in answering honestly and knew she had to give a real reason to avoid them thinking she was bipolar and going mad. “Rhaegal persuaded me otherwise. He believes that Prince Jon is truly a Targaryen and that his tales of the Others are indeed true.”

It was a testament to how oddly Rhaegal had been behaving lately, how intelligent he had acted that no one had anything to say about her explanation although Varys tutted as if he had known it all along. Everyone knew Rhaegal was different by now, nothing would surprise any of them about his actions at this point. They all knew that Rhaegal behaved more like a human than a dragon lately.

“Who do you plan on sending as an envoy?” Ser Barristan asked in the lull of the conversation.
Daenerys smirked. She knew just the man, the one person who would stay loyal to her and not turn to her nephew no matter what. A man from the North who knew it’s lands and customs. A man who had no purpose in Meereen and she could afford to lose and even benefit from his leaving for a time. Yes, he would be the perfect choice.

“You asked to see me, Your Grace?” Jorah asked as he entered her chambers. She had chosen to meet him here instead of her throne room, wanting to ask this of him as Daenerys, the Khaleesi not the distant Queen who had banished him and stripped him of his name. He needed to remember why he was loyal to her and not turn aside when she sent him home.

It was for that reason that she had chosen such a scandalous dress that teased so much skin. She was not a whore who sold her body for a crown but she was not afraid of using her beauty to get what she wants. It wasn’t her preferred method of assuring loyalty but she knew Jorah was only with her because he loved her and she needed him to remember why when she sent him away. She needed to be assured he wouldn’t be swayed from her side because Prince Jon was from the North.

“The usurper pardoned you for spying on me, gave you leave to return to Westeros whenever you choose to do so. Am I wrong?” She asked behind a blank mask betraying no emotions.

“He did Khaleesi,” Jorah admitted seemingly defeated.

“You will return to Westeros-” She began to declare but was cut off by Jorah’s begging.

“Please Khaleesi,” He pleaded, falling to his knees before her. “Do not send me away again, I am loyal to you. Only to you.”

Daenerys took a step back and knelt down by his side. “I am not banishing you again,” She spoke softly in an attempt to comfort him, to remind him of the good and kind Queen she was once again since he had not seen it lately from her. “I am sending you to Westeros as my envoy.”

She rose to her feet and after a moment Ser Jorah did as well. She turned away from him and gazed out the balcony. “I have a nephew in Westeros.”

“Khaleesi?” Jorah asked in confusion.

“There is another Targaryen, the son of my brother Rhaegar and Lyanna Stark. He went by another name until recently, Jon Snow. He was the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. He was believed to be the bastard of Eddard Stark who hid his sister’s child to save their life. He too is unburnt, he walked out of his own funeral pyre alive and unburnt after he was killed in a mutiny at Castle Black.”

Jorah looked at her in complete shock and disbelief. “That’s impossible.” He muttered.

Daenerys smiled. “He is a Targaryen, nothing is impossible for us.”

Jorah nodded mutely knowing her well enough not to argue with her about this by now.

“I am sending you to Castle Black to treat with my nephew. Bring the Prince back to Meereen with you, offer him a place on my council, and by my side if he bends the knee. Find out if there is any
truth to his claims of the Others and The Army of The Dead. Find out all he knows and what he wants and then bring him to me.”

“I will Khaleesi,” Jorah promised.

“Good.” She turned away from him. “You leave tonight.”

Jorah looked somewhat upset but nodded anyway. “As you wish, Khaleesi.”

He bowed low and then walked out of her chambers to prepare for his journey across the Narrow Sea and home to Westeros.

Daenerys watched him go sadly. She had missed her brave old bear and despite her conflicting feelings about him, she would miss him once again. But she could not have him by her side in Meereen with his past, he made the people of Meereen distrustful towards her and that was not something she could have with the city in such a fragile state. He had to leave and this was a golden opportunity to send someone loyal to bring her nephew to her side. He would bend the knee and she would rule with him by her side. Her family and house would live on beyond her, maybe he would even ride one of her dragons, perhaps Viserion.

Chapter End Notes

Jorah had to be punished in some way for his refusal to stay away, as she says herself before revealing he has Greyscale. I'm not doing the meaningless Greyscale Jorah plot that only served as a plot device to make Daenerys feel somewhat guilty for burning the Tarlys. Stripping him of all his lands and titles lets him stay with her as he wants and serve her but is still a punishment that will dissuade those who would refuse to listen to her commands.

Daario being knighted was to show how she rewards those who are loyal to her beyond what is expected of them. Daario might not care about the title but many others will and making that reward attainable inspires loyalty.

The scene with a former slave sold by Ser Jorah confronting him and Daenerys about that was something I always thought would happen in the show but the Greyscale plot robbed us of that. We know Jorah sold slaves, and the most likely destination for slaves he sold would likely be Slavers Bay. The odds that no one he sold was there and remembered him is infinitesimally small.

Jorah's character never really develops in the show or the books. I like him just fine but him being fiercely loyal to Daenerys and breaking the chains off of slaves because of his love for her is not character development. He sold them in the first place because of love. Until he finds a motivation other than love of a woman that inspires his actions, and actively works against the desires of his love how much can he really develop? The object of his fixation changed not him. Daenerys needed to realize that and reconcile that he was also the man who had sold people into slavery, not just her loyal protector.

We never get an exact currency system for Essos but we know a seasoned slave sailor (A valuable commodity) sells for 500-900 pieces of silver. If we use the more expensive of the Westerosi silver coins that is 30 Moons to one Gold Dragon. That's
essentially the price of five horses based on the conversion rates we see in the books and chump change to the rich. That's a seasoned slave with a valuable trade, not an untrained nobody.

Daenerys is entirely about social injustice. Her entire break the wheel spiel is about making sure that the weak have power and are treated right. It's very likely her agenda would include counting bastards fairly. She doesn't want anyone to be oppressed and she doesn't blame people for who their parents are and likely if they were married or not.

Part of Daenerys wants a family and part of her wants the throne. She's going to be torn between the two sides initially when she hears of Jon's existence. She's going to be paranoid that he'll steal her power but she'll also desperately want a family of her own and for her house to outlast her. She's going to be insecure and paranoid at first and likely would have remained that way for awhile still without her conversing with Rhaegal who she trusts entirely after he had saved her and hunted the Harpies, etc. Even when hearing that Jon now has an army, she's going to trust Rhaegal's judgment because he's shown that he knows things he shouldn't before and he has yet to steer her wrong. Once she's convinced that Jon will not usurp her she's obviously going to be ecstatic to have a family again.

People are going to connect the dots and realize if Jon can not stay dead then the Others could also theoretically bring back the dead. Jon is living proof that the army of the dead could exist and he won't be afraid to flaunt his resurrection to convince people of that fact.

I'm curious as to who you guys think will be the first person to discover (Not be told) that Jon is a warg of Rhaegal.

Thanks for reading, make sure to review and leave kudos if you enjoyed this chapter and subscribe so you don't miss any future updates. On Tuesday we have a really short chapter told from Sansa's perspective.
This is going to be a bit long and I'll probably ramble a lot but there are apparently some issues I need to address since everyone took offense at Daario and Daenerys fucking in one scene. There might wind up being minor spoilers in here so if you want to skip feel free just don't comment another angry comment about why isn't Jon fucking Val thing without reading this.

This is a real comment I got from a guest reviewer on AO3 "I was slowly catching up this story and start liking it quite a bit. Then you suddenly drop your pants and take a shit on my face. Was this whole story just an elaborate hoax to shove your Daario shit on Jonerys people's faces? Scummy troll."

Daario and Daenerys are fucking in cannon and that's not something that I can change instantly. I was completely unaware that putting something other than Jon/Dany in a Jonerys story for even one fucking scene was a criminal offense. For christ's sake, she doesn't even know that Jon exists at this point in the story. Daenerys doesn't have real feelings for him as a person, she could leave and feel nothing as she does in canon. She is with him because he represents her having a choice after being sold into two marriages. He is someone she can be with entirely because she wants to and not because she has to.

I find tagging the story as Daenerys/Daario as disingenuous towards the few people who might actually be looking for that pairing. I didn't tag it Daenerys/Daario or give people warning because it's literally only one scene in total in the entirety of this story where they actually are together. There is no love triangle here or serious feelings filled relationship, it's just a hookup for sex that is only even kind of shown in one chapter. I'm not going to tag every one night stand or temporary fling in the story or else I'd have over one hundred relationship tags solely based on all the whores Tyrion beds. Only relationships actually significant to the plot of the story are tagged. Rhaegar/Lyanna is relevant to the entire concept of the story and will constantly be referenced so they are tagged. Daario is not a major player. I won't apologize for not warning people beforehand that Daario and Daenerys are fucking, that should be implied based on the starting point of the story and in chapter six I did reference that she missed having Daario warming her bed.

Jon is not the type to fuck around in cannon. The only person he hooks up with in the books cannon is Ygritte, who he is with for the sake of his cover and he falls in love with her along the way. (Love is a question there or if it's just a variant of Stockholm syndrome. She literally said fuck me or you're still a crow and you'll die) He does not go around fucking all the Free Folk while he is with them. He is solely a one women person, that's not a bad thing nor does it make him a simp. In the show, you have Ygritte and Daenerys as the only people he fucks. Both of whom he doesn't fuck at first meeting or screw around before he gets together with them. Jon even in Winterfell refused to go to a brothel and screw some whore. He might get together with Val in the books but he's not gonna be doing it for a quick fuck on the side (Or his death will completely warp him like it did Catelyn). There is no evidence in the cannon
material that he is at all like that. He is not the type of person for a friends with benefits relationship, Daenerys is in canon absolutely that person considering she literally has one. I'm not justifying her relationship with Daario or condemning it simply pointing out that it exists and just because Jonerys is the endgame, does not mean that they have to have the same exact prior relationship experiences.

Also need I remind you that Jon's parents are the most lovesick fools in the entire series. (Robb is arguably up there as well but his was equally duty and love). It's entirely reasonable for him to have his eyes set on one person and not go fucking around with others because he only has eyes for the one that he loves. He won't ever be as bad as Rhaegar or Lyanna in that he'll let thousands die because he loves Daenerys but his love for her keeping him from seeking another is logical.

Even if he wasn't like he is in cannon, or like his parents, he still wouldn't be fucking around for a multitude of reasons. First and foremost sleeping with someone requires that you trust them at least a little. Jon was just murdered by the Night's Watch, men that he trusted, why would he climb in bed with anyone right now? He has serious trust issues and that's kind of a mandatory part of any relationship. Even a purely physical one he's still vulnerable in during the act. The only people Jon kind of trusts right now are Daenerys (Mostly due to the fact that he's Rhaegal), Tormund, and maybe Davos or Arya if he knew where she was. He's very cautious after his resurrection and hesitant to trust anyone because he was just murdered. Maybe if you died you'd say fuck it I want to get laid as much as I can before I die again but I personally think it's more logical to try to do everything to avoid being betrayed again and that includes sex where he is vulnerable.

Additionally, Jon being a playboy with a harem or even one side-fuck is completely moronic from a political standpoint. The North is extremely fickle in cannon, and they distrust Targaryens. He needs them to see him as Ned Stark's son, not Rhaegar's. They will support Jon not because he's a Targaryen but a Stark. To do that he has to act like the honorable Ned Stark in ways that don't hurt his campaign. Being celibate until marriage is one way of doing that. He'll refer to Ned as his father when speaking to people whether he believes it or not, he'll declare himself as of houses Stark and Targaryen, keep the non-Targaryen name of Jon because the small things let them believe that he is still a Northern Stark and not a southern Targaryen or his real fathers son but instead the son of the man they all followed.

Rob Stark lost the North because he couldn't keep it in his pants and knocked up a girl breaking his betrothal. If Jon was to go around fucking whoever he pleased then the Lords would fear that he is like Robb and accuse him of thinking with his cock. If he were to knock someone up with a bastard (Which is a fear of Jon's as we all know) then he would either have to marry them (Like Robb), deny any responsibility and shame the woman (Not like his honorable father but how the North thinks of Rhaegar), or force the woman to drink moon tea, killing the babe and possibly destroying the mother's ability to have children. Or even worse he lets the child be born and based on the rules he and Daenerys want to establish where bastards are treated equally to trueborns, they would be the rightful heir to the throne and cripples his options in a marriage alliance. Jon is not that selfish and desperate for a fuck to risk everything on it.

Daenerys does not consider the bastard thing because she both thinks she's barren and also
as a woman she is the one who has a choice on if the bastard is born or not. Jon would not be the one who gets to make that choice on if the child dies. If Daenerys thought she was actually able to have children then she wouldn't be sleeping around so much either. She is not pregnant with Daario's child and Jon won't be raising that child as his heir.

If he really needed to get laid, he would not be doing it with Val as that's even more politically suicidal than just a random whore would be. To the Northerners the wildlings are the enemy, they have been for years. Even when they realize why Jon let them beyond the wall they won't exactly like each other. Him fucking a wildling is the quickest was possible to lose the support of the northern lords, and become just a wildling lover. It's possible he loses them even faster than he would by bending the knee to Daenerys for her aid against the Others. Jon is not stupid and led around by his cock like everyone here seems to want him to be. That is not a bad thing.

Jon has tunnel vision on defeating the others, that's his end goal and he's not going to make decisions that work against that endgame. He knows that he needs Daenerys and her dragons, yet, he also needs the North to fight for him and he can't have that if he bends the knee. So marriage is the only logical solution that lets him retain power to keep the North in line and gets him Daenerys's aid. He has feelings for her, yes, but he's not motivated solely by those feelings. He won't jeopardize the possibility of that for a quick fuck, and if he does go around fucking whoever then why wouldn't Daenerys continue to do the same? He knows that right now she is under no obligation to not fuck who she wants as much as he might wish she'd stop. If she persisted in sleeping with Daario after they were betrothed then would he maybe fuck around? Perhaps but Jon is rational and knows he has no say in who she sleeps with right now and doesn't take it personally because again at this point she does not know that Jon even exists. He wants a real relationship with her and not just a political marriage.

Jon is not weak and submissive to Dany by not fucking around, she won't trample over him and be the one in control in their eventual relationship. Him being in love with her, and loyal to her does not make him a simp nor is that typically a bad thing. They will be equals in their relationship. He won't be like his father and let his love for her distract him from his responsibilities. Him not being a complete playboy does not make him a simp, please wait until he's actually in a relationship to judge their dynamic.

Also, kind of a spoiler but we see in cannon with wargs that the more time you spend as an animal the more you become like them as well as other things that cause the same effect that are too spoilery to mention here.. Most animals don't have harems but one mate, wolves who Jon was a warg of for a long time being the most prominent example. Dragons fall under the same umbrella in this. Just saying, it's totally reasonable for Jon to not go fucking around with every attractive woman he meets,

As for why she sent Ser Jorah to treat with Jon since apparently I didn't express that clearly; she's paranoid of her losing the allegiance of whoever she sends to him. She needs him to bend the knee to her, not for them to decide he's a better ruler. Jorah is also someone she can't have in Meereen with his history. He was pardoned in Westeros by the Baratheon King so legally they can't do anything to him if she sends him there and if Jon executes her messenger then he's obviously not an ally. It's not like she could send Tyrion or Ser Barristan even if she trusted them to do so as they are considered outlaws by the Baratheon King. Who
else could she send but Jorah? Missandei? Daario? There is no good option here. Jorah is the
most expendable and unconditionally loyal, so to her, he makes the most sense as an envoy to
represent her interests. His interactions with people in the North will be far from good but he
is the ideal choice to use as an ambassador who will represent her interests alone.

Knighting Daario was meant to be a bad decision to show that Daenerys doesn't understand
how Westerosi customs work. She sees a knight as an empty title that is given as a reward to
men when she hears of the knights of Westeros doing horrible things. She wasn’t raised to see
a knight as anything special and the context is limited for her. Some are good like Ser
Barristan but most the ones she knows by name are the ones who have done awful things
since bad deeds are more commonly shared than good ones (Especially with Viserys as he
main source). She knows of the Kingslayer being labeled a knight, Ser Gregor who raped her
good-sister and killed her niece and nephew. She doesn't have many tales of yore about good
knights, only evil ones. She looks at the title of knight as something she can give out to gain
men's loyalty without actually losing anything. Ser Barristan was absolutely upset with her
decision even if the scene wasn't shown in this chapter.

A few people pointed out that giving bastards a place in the line of succession is nearly
impossible logistically and yes, it nearly is but so is ending slavery in a single day yet
Daenerys does that either way. She is an idealist who wants to remake the world and is often
times ignorant of who gets trampled along the way. Realistically, what this will only serve to
do is make people more hesitant to claim their bastards as their own since otherwise they
have no claim to the lands but she still wants to make a better world for the bastards as
impractical as it might be. Most of her goals are impractical at best and more realistically
impossible but she doesn't believe in the word impossible and thinks she can make anything
happen.

If you don't like it, then you don't have to fucking read it. It's not that hard of a concept to
understand. If you want to write a story based on this concept where Jon fucks around with
everyone he sees then knock yourself out but don't bash senselessly because the story doesn’t
move exactly as you want it too.

I hope that cleared everything up, now onto the chapter that might be shorter than the
author's notes. Oh and also for the record I'm a male. I'm flattered that you think so highly
of my ability to understand the female mind though.

Sansa Stark was plotting to light Jon Snow on fire. Okay, that sounded bad but she had no choice in
the matter. Her brother or well cousin she supposed was refusing to take action until the choosing
was done and she knew that would be for a while still. The Boltons could not be allowed to hold
Winterfell any longer. She would not allow it. Winter would come for them. Ramsay Snow would
get all that he deserved.

Sansa had tried playing nice with Jon before and it hadn't worked so now she had to take drastic
measures now. She had asked him multiple times and he had refused to take action. She had tried to
guilt trip into acting and he had shut her down, time and time again.

When Sansa had first spoken to him about her life and tried to play the scared weak girl that she
had been to manipulate him into doing something. He had screamed at her and raged about her
manipulating him but Sansa had thought she had gotten through to him. Sansa had skipped the
choosing that night not wanting to see Jon again in his current state of ire.

Jon had as well, going to the Wildling camp south of the wall with more urgency than he ever had before. He practically sprinted through the snow and out the gate to go visit with the Wildlings. Sansa had hoped that he was going to recruit the Wildlings to their side, that something she had said had ignited a spark in him. A spark to fight.

She had been wrong. Jon had still done nothing to prepare to march south on the Boltons. He still refused to act. He refused to wear the Targaryen cloak she had made him, apparently ashamed of his heritage, and refused to use the power being a Targaryen- even a bastard one gave him.

If Jon would not act then Sansa would force him to do so. He wanted to stay at the wall until the next Lord Commander was chosen and Sansa would speed the process up. If Jon had just listened to her and worn the Targaryen cloak and a crown of fire like she had wanted then Davos would have already been chosen and they could have left this horrible place already.

Ser Davos was doing an incredible job rallying supporters on his own. After he had been sworn into the Night's Watch, his own speeches when he was nominated had persuaded a good portion of the men to vote for him. Jon could have spoken on his behalf again or reminded the Targaryen loyalists or at the very least Baratheon haters that made up over half of the watch, who he was and Davos might already be Lord Commander and they would be on the march to Winterfell.

If Jon wasn't going to remind people that he was the King and a Targaryen then Sansa would do it for him. All she had to do was light him on fire, preferably during the choosing so it would be the first thing on their mind when they voted.

So Sansa had doused the black cloak and vest of the Night's Watch that Jon always wore to the choosing in oil when he went to the wildlings camp today. All it would take is for his cloak to brush against a candle or torch and the whole thing would be set ablaze. His clothes would burn away but he would still stand there unburnt and unharmed. Everyone who doubted the tales of his resurrection and Targaryen heritage would be forced to confront the truth.

Jon would likely figure out what she had done, and he might hate her but he would be forced into moving against the Boltons immediately. She would have her revenge and if Jon hated her, well then she could live with that as long as she got her revenge.

It was the eighteenth night of the Choosing now, and Sansa would be enacting her scheme tonight. Jon took his usual seat by her side without saying a word. Brienne sat to her left and Podrick to her left. They had their table entirely to themselves as they were guests and separate from the proceedings so they were left on their own. That made it easier for Sansa to burn Jon without risking anyone getting hurt as collateral damage besides herself.

Ser Denys rose to his feet to start the proceedings and the room fell silent, all eyes fixed on him. "We are gathered here today for the eighteenth night of the Choosing for the 999th Lord Commander of the Night's Watch. There are 612 brothers gathered here today for the choosing. For a new Lord Commander to be elected, they will need to receive 409 votes to meet the minimum two-thirds election requirement. If no Lord Commander is chosen today then we will adjourn for the day and meet again tomorrow. If you submit your name to the choosing and fail to garner at least seven votes to meet the minimum one percent requirement then you will be barred from being nominated until we meet to decide the one-thousandth Lord Commander. We will now open the floor to any candidates who would like to add a name to the choosing or say anything in a candidate's favor." Ser Denys glared at Jon at the end of that statement as he had every other night of the Choosing since that first night, to make sure that he knew he meant only sworn brothers this time.
While Jon was distracted and no eyes were looking in her direction, Sansa quietly and discreetly inched the candle in the center of the table closer to the edge so it would be quenched to fall onto Jon's vest when it was time.

Ser Wynton Stout stood to his feet first. "I would like to remove my name from the choosing in deference to Ser Davos Seaworth." He wasn't a major candidate but any extra support for Ser Davos got him closer to induction. "Ser Davos has recent experience playing politics that give him an edge in gaining us allies. I do not have that, it's been sixty years since I joined the Night's Watch. Ser Davos was hand to a king only a few moons ago. We need allies and he is our best chance for that. I'm putting my support behind Ser Davos and I encourage you all do the same."

Next to speak was Jarmen Buckwell. "I am removing my name from the choosing in favor of supporting Ser Denner Frostfinger. He is the only man willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure our survival."

A few other men spoke reaffirming their own desire to campaign and once the room was silent and Ser Denys Mallister had stood up to proceed onto the voting. This was Sansa's time to enact her plan. She pulled hard on the tablecloth and the candle fell onto Jon's vest.

As Sansa had planned, the oil quickly caught flame and his clothes were alight. Jon immediately flung himself out of the chair and away from everyone as she had expected he would. He knew he was unburnt and Jon was too selfless to risk anyone other then himself catching fire or getting burnt.

He stood there motionless with a grimace as his clothes were rendered into naught but ashes as the flames tickled at his skin. Every eye in the hall was fixed on Jon as they gazed at the proof of his kingship, the proof of his Targaryen heritage on display for all to see.

Ser Davos was the first person to drop to his knee before the King and Sansa smiled. Him going first would remind people who they should support, who their King wanted as Lord Commander of The Night's Watch.

Then another person, if Sansa was correct, Ser Lyman Blackbar whose house had fought on the Targaryen's side in Robert's Rebellion and was sent to the wall as atonement for his crimes. He bent the knee to Jon with a whispered "My King."

Then Ser Jarmen Buckwell who had only just thrown his support behind Ser Denner Frostfinger also bent the knee to Jon. Another Targaryen loyalist who had fought alongside Jon's father. She doubted he would be pushing his support onto a man who stood by as his King was murdered anymore.

He was not the only one but he was first, Jon did not have everyone bowing before him in the end but he had at least half the room and dare Sansa say it but two-thirds of the men clearly were choosing to support Jon as King and hopefully his opinion of Lord Commander. At the very least Sansa knew that Frostfinger had no chance at Lord Commander after that showing by Jon, since no one would risk the Dragon's wrath by voting for a bystander in his murder anymore.

Jon turned to Sansa with a fire in his eyes. He was clearly upset about what she had done- and Sansa had no delusions that he didn't figure out her involvement. "A word, dear cousin."

He spat at her with more venom then she had ever heard from Jon but he did not raise his voice at all.

Good. Sansa thought to herself silently even as she meekly followed Jon out of the room with her head bowed, and Brienne trudging along beside her. Let them all fear the Dragon's wrath. Let them fear displeasing their King.
As Sansa was leaving she heard Jarmen Buckwell speak. "I misspoke earlier, I would like to support the nomination of Ser Davos Seaworth as the next Lord Commander."

Another voice Sansa did not recognize stood next. "I am withdrawing my name from the choosing in favor of supporting the candidacy of Ser Davos."

Sansa grinned. Her plan had worked perfectly to her plan. Ser Davos would be elected tonight and Jon would finally be able to turn his focus to taking the North back from the Boltons.

"Stay here," Sansa told Brienne as Jon stomped through the door to his chambers. "Jon won't hurt me." Sansa admitted wasn't sure that was the truth right now but she knew if Brienne was there then he might blame her for this and it was Sansa's crime alone.

"Are you sure, my lady?" Brienne asked concerned with a hand on her sword.

Sansa just nodded and closed the door behind her as she entered Jon's room behind him. As soon as the latch clicked Jon was in her face.

"What the fuck were you thinking?" He roared at her. "Were you trying to kill me?"

Sansa sniffed and held her head up. "Of course not, we both know that fire can not kill you. I was helping you."

"How does lighting me on fire help me?" He demanded as he took a step towards her.

For a moment in his anger, Sansa thought Jon would strike her as Ramsay would. That cold rage in his eyes looked so familiar. Sansa shivered but pushed those thoughts aside to answer Jon, now was not the time for this. She would have her revenge soon. "You saw everyone bowing down to you at the choosing. They will now support your candidate, Ser Davos for Lord Commander and not the one who watched you die. They fear you now and will obey because of it."

Rather than calm Jon with her reasoning it only made him more upset. "Did it ever occur to you to talk to me? To ask me about your plan?" He demanded. Sansa had considered it but knew he would refuse her offer like he had refused to wear the crown of fire and the Targaryen cloak she had made him. So she took the decision out of his hands.

Jon was not finished. "Did it ever occur to you that I didn't want Ser Davos as Lord Commander? That I did not want the choosing to end now?"

Sansa froze. That had not occurred to her, was he scared of the Boltons? Was he pushing off reclaiming their home because he was scared of dying again? Or was there something else. She voiced her thoughts aloud. "Why? Are you afraid to move against the Boltons? Of death?" Again.

Jon scowled. "I needed my heritage to stay secret. Until the choosing ends Castle Black is on lockdown. No ravens are allowed to leave. I did not want to fight the Lannisters as well and now when we try to reclaim the North we'll also have to face the combined might of the Lannister and Bolton armies trying to crush the Targaryen usurper."

Sansa was confused. His logic made some sense but it was inevitable either way. Waiting until the choosing ended just pushed it back not away. Did he want people to forget he was a Targaryen? Surely he wasn't that naive to think they would forget that. "That is inevitable, people aren't going to just forget you walking out of the funeral pyre."

Jon nodded and his face softened slightly. "I didn't want them to forget. I wanted to stall. I had been sending the Free Folk to raid the keeps of the nearest northern houses. They think I am dead, they
would assume the Free Folk were acting independent of my influence and gather all the Northern Houses to come and exterminate their common enemy. We would come out to greet them with the Direwolf banners of House Stark and have the Boltons surrounded by men who hate them on all sides. They would be forced to make a choice instead of being neutral in the conflict. Your foolishness ruined that plan and now we will likely all die against the Lannister and Bolton combined forces."

Sansa paused. It was actually quite a good plan, one that she had ruined with her own impatience. She had been too focused on revenge and it might have cost them everything. No, he had ruined it by not sharing it with her. She would have listened if he had told her, she wouldn't have been so stupid if she had known. "My foolishness?" Sansa questioned, defensive. "If you had thought to trust me then I would not have acted. This one is just as much on you, dear brother."

Jon evidently did not like her response. "How could I ever trust you when you don't trust me? I was murdered by men I trusted, cousin. My brothers." He roared. "The only time you tell me anything about your life is when you are trying to manipulate me. You've always treated me like shit and now I'm just someone for you to use in order to gain power. I don't know why or if you killed Joffrey, how you escaped so easily or why you married a fucking Bolton. Why on earth would I ever trust you?"

Sansa was enraged, how dare he suggest that she had chosen to be married to Ramsay. "What would you like to hear Jon!" She spat. "How Littlefinger kidnapped me, how I was almost murdered by my aunt, and then he murdered my aunt and sold me to Ramsay?" She shouted back. "How Ramsay beat me and raped me while making Theon watch helplessly? How he branded his name on my skin? How I..." No, she couldn't tell him that part. That was her secret that she would never share with anyone, ever.

Jon's expression softened. "Yes, sister. I want to be there for you, but I can't if you don't trust me. I can't trust someone I don't know." He rubbed the crescent scar over his heart. "Not again."

Sansa frowned and felt somewhat guilty. She would let him in and let him know part of her life. He was the only family she had left now. "At Joffrey's wedding."

"I want you to share stuff with me but now is not the time." He scowled again. "Your scheme worked, Ser Davos will be elected as Lord Commander tonight. We have to move now before the news of my resurrection spreads." He looked over at the fire roaring in the hearth. "Start drafting letters to all the Lords of the Northern Houses requesting aid. I'll sign off on them as Jon Targaryen, the son of Lyanna Stark before you send them. I doubt many will choose to aid us but we need all the help we can get."

"How volatile are the Boltons tempers?" Jon asked seemingly out of the blue.

"Ramsay has anger issues. If he's upset then he's quite insane and sadistic. He has self-control issues as well." Sansa stopped and pondered over what she knew about Roose. "Roose is not at all like Ramsay. He is cold and calculating. He is the one who orchestrated the Red Wedding."

Jon nodded and moved back to the previous conversation as he finally dressed himself in the Targaryen cloak she had made for him. "While you're writing the letters, I'll be meeting with the Free Folk and informing them of the change in plans. We'll ride for the Dreadfort with our army at sunrise and be there within a moon's turn. We'll take the undermanned castle and make them come for us."

Sansa nodded mutely and took a seat at Jon's desk and set to writing out the letters he had requested. She did not look up as the door opened and closed again with a thud as Jon left. Sansa
did not think that holding the Dreadfort was a wise place to defend from but at the very least if they did die she would have taken something from the Boltons first. Maybe, they would all die but at least she might have some measure of revenge first. It would never be enough revenge if they lost there but Sansa had learned her lesson and would not try to interfere. She would not be the one to screw up Jon's plan again.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is very poorly written, I won't pretend otherwise. I tried to rewrite it three times and it just wound up worse so it's whatever. There is only one scene here and it's poorly executed but this was one of the first things I knew I wanted to do with the story.

Sansa tries to force things and Jon learns that not trusting anyone can be just as dangerous as trusting them. He was betrayed because he didn't share his plans not because he did. Sansa had to learn that she needs to ask and try to work with someone rather than manipulating them. So Sansa lights Jon on fire and like with the Dothraki when Daenerys burnt the Khals they bend the knee and follow his command, or in this case recommendation of Davos as Lord Commander. Considering that a good portion of the watch is likely people who fought on behalf of the Targaryens in Robert's rebellion, it's totally logical that when they see the proof that Jon is a Targaryen for their own eyes rather than hear of it that they follow his commands. Sansa understood this and used it to manipulate circumstances to what she thought was their benefit.

Next chapter, on Friday, we have the first chapter told from Myrcella's point of view since we have no POV characters in Kings Landing anymore and we get to deal with the fallout of Jon's heritage being revealed to all of the world, as well as both Margaery and Cersei's trials in what is probably the best chapter so far.

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Myrcella I

Chapter Summary

News of Jon's heritage reaches the Capital. Margaery and Cersei's trials

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This is delicious Myrcella.” Tommen moaned as he bit into one of the stuffed green peppers that Nymeria had prepared for them. “I can understand why you love this so much. We must get ourselves a Dornish chef here full-time.”

Myrcella nodded her agreement. “I definitely miss the Dornish delights. Nymeria isn’t the best cook in the world but she does well enough for until we get a proper Dornish cook.”

“This isn’t the best?” Tommen exclaimed in delight. “I can hardly imagine any better!”

Nymeria curtsied. “You flatter me, Your Grace.”

“Your Grace,” Ser Loras Tyrell stood in the doorway waiting for the King to bid him admittance to join them. “The Queen-Mother Cersei has called for an emergency council meeting.”

Ser Loras was the newest member of the Kings Guard having joined with her father’s resignation. Good-Grandmum Olenna had suggested that he take a place on the guard to help Queen Margaery feel safe with someone she could trust protecting her. Just in case a trial of combat was needed. Tommen had jumped at her suggestion and ordered the new Lord Commander Ser Balon Swann to put him on the Kings guard.

Tommen stood up and offered his hand to Myrcella. “Come sister, shall we go see what mother wants?”

Myrcella took his hand and rose to her feet but shook her head. “I’m not a part of the council, Tommen.”
Tommen frowned slightly. “Neither is mother but she will still be there. I insist that you join us.”

Myrcella smiled. “In that case, I would be honored to attend a council meeting with you.” She bent down and kissed her husband on the cheek before linking her arm with Tommen’s and they followed Ser Loras out of the kitchen and to the council room.

She wondered what it would be about. Would Tommen direct it? Would mother? Would Uncle Kevan? Was she allowed to say anything during the meeting? This would be an enlightening experience and a useful one if she was to be the lady of Casterly Rock one day.

When they entered the room it was clear that they had already started without her or Tommen. Mother was sitting at the head of the table when they entered the room with Ser Loras guarding the door behind them.

“We should be sending all of our forces north.” Their mother demanded. She froze when she saw Tommen and Myrcella enter the room. “You don’t need to be here Tommen, Myrcella. We can handle this for you.”

Tommen scowled. “I am the King, this is my council. I very much have to be here, it’s you who does not need to be here. Now I believe you are in my chair.”

Cersei reluctantly got up and moved down the table. “Myrcella should not be here, she has no place on this council.” She insisted.

Tommen took his seat at the head of the table and gestured to a serving girl to get a chair for Myrcella which she placed on the end of the table next to Tommen. “Neither do you mother, I insist that Myrcella stay with me. If anyone is not welcome here it is you.”

Her mother frowned and her nostrils flared but she did not comment again even as Myrcella took her seat by Tommen’s side.

Tommen folded his hands over his lap and sat straight-backed in his chair. “Now, what news was so urgent to call an emergency council meeting?”

“We have news from the wall, Your Grace.” An older man with warm blue eyes that Myrcella did not recognize answered. “Apparently the Lord Commander Jon Snow did not stay dead when he
was killed in service. He rose out of his funeral pyre seven days later, alive and unburnt. Apparently, during the choosing for the next Lord Commander, he got lit on fire again and was still unharmed. They believe that he is a Targaryen, the son of Lyanna Stark’s rape.”

“It’s all lies of course,” Cersei interjected. “Just a power-hungry bastard trying to steal the throne from my son.”

“Lord Qyburn,” Uncle Kevan addressed the old man who had given the report previously, so that was his name. “How reliable are your sources? Is this just a silly rumor spread by some peasant desperate for some coin?”

“I can’t vouch for my sources, they aren’t ones I’ve relied on too heavily before. A dozen ravens came today from Castle Black all sharing the same tale of Jon Snow being a Targaryen and unburnt.” Lord Qyburn shared.

“The whole thing is preposterous, I tell you.” An older man rasped who Myrcella vaguely recognized as Grand Maester Pycelle. “Fire always burns, there is no such thing as magic. This is obviously nothing but a lie.” Pycelle echoed Cersei’s previous statements.

“It is a lie by a bastard desperate for power. We should send all of our armies south in order to crush this fool like we did his brother.” Her mother snarled.

“Your Grace,” Uncle Kevan Lannister, Hand of The King asked. “The new Lord Commander of The Night’s Watch is Ser Davos Seaworth, hand to Stannis Baratheon. Did we consider the possibility that they want us to send all of our armies North?”

“The Bolton’s reported Shireen Baratheon as missing after Stannis’s defeat. They claimed that some soldiers said that Stannis had sacrificed her to the Lord of Light but what if that was a lie? What if Ser Davos is claiming that the late Jon Snow is a Targaryen so we would send our armies north and leave the capital undefended when Shireen comes to take the crown.”

Mace Tyrell nodded eagerly. “I was just going to say that. It’s an obvious ploy by the mockery of a knight, Davos Seaworth. We must keep our armies here and be prepared for war here in Kings Landing. Let the Boltons deal with Jon Snow.”

“Why not send the Lannister forces already marching to Riverrun to reinforce the Boltons. The capital would not be any more vulnerable if we did and the chances of Jon Snow winning if this is
not a ploy would be significantly lower.” Uncle Kevan suggested.

Tommen nodded. “See that it is done then, Lord Kevan.”

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“Lady Olenna,” Myrcella curtsied as she took her seat at the table. Olenna Tyrell had invited her to join her for tea today. She had wanted to get to know her good-granddaughter, she claimed. Myrcella was all too eager to accept, the capital had quickly lost its luster with everyone at each other’s throats. Mother wanted her husband dead, Jamie was gone and Tommen had refused to leave her side at all when he could prevent it. He had been very clingy without his wife and Myrcella was all too grateful to accept the offer to have some time away from him. She loved her brother dearly but she needed some space on occasion.

“Princess Myrcella, please you can call me Grandmum if you like, King Tommen does so and you are his sister after all,” Olenna replied with a smile.

Myrcella giggled. “I’ve never had a Grandmum before, I would be honored to call you that.”

“Tell me, Princess, how are you enjoying being back in King’s Landing after a year away?” Olenna asked.

“You can just call me Myrcella, Grandmum. I’ve never been one for all the formalities.” Myrcella said and then took a sip of her tea.

“Me neither.” Olenna smiled and placed one of her wrinkled hands over Myrcella’s smoother hand.

“It has been nice. I love Dorne but I didn’t realize how much I missed the people here until I saw them again, F-Uncle Jamie, Allya, Catelyn, Maria, Uncle Kevan, Mother…” Myrcella hid her grimace at the mention of her mother behind a sip of tea. “I’ve really enjoyed seeing everyone again. I missed them.”

Olenna smiled knowingly. “But not King Tommen.”
Myrcella shook her head. “No, I did miss my brother-”

“He’s just a bit clingy,” Olenna interjected.

Myrcella glanced down at her teacup and gave the barest of nods.

Olenna sighed. “Tommen didn’t use to be like this. When I first met the King he was a happy child. He was a bit naive but he was sweet and kind yet strong at the same time. Alas, I fear that Margaery’s imprisonment has taken a toll on him.”

Myrcella forced a small smile. “I’m sure that once Queen Margaery is freed in three days, Tommen will go back to his usual self,” Myrcella said with a hope she did not really feel.

Lady Olenna looked forlorn and dabbed at the corner of her eyes with her handkerchief. “I’m afraid that Margaery will not be freed,” Olenna confessed. “Your mother has done a good job procuring witnesses willing to lie about Margaery. There is too much-fabricated evidence against my grand-daughter for her to be deemed innocent.”

“Surely the Gods will smile down on her and she’ll win the trial? Even if it has to be by combat.” Myrcella argued half-heartedly.

Olenna shook her head. “Perhaps but I’m worried that my grandson, Ser Loras will lose. He injured his knee only a few short weeks ago and who knows who the faith might choose as their champion. It could be anyone, they would have the advantage of knowing who Margaery’s champion is and how they fight while Ser Loras would know nothing, not exactly favorable odds.”

Myrcella frowned.

“As much as I’m worried about my grand-daughter, I worry just as much about Tommen,” Olenna admitted. “Before you returned from Dorne, he was inconsolable. He would hide in his room and spend the whole day moping about and lamenting over his wife’s suffering. I worry what would happen to him if Margaery is executed when your uncle returns to take you to Casterly Rock with him.”

Myrcella frowned again. She knew that his wife’s imprisonment had hit Tommen hard but she hadn’t allowed herself to think of what he would be like if his wife was actually executed for these
false charges. She had been looking forward to meeting Margaery and having some personal space again that she did not think about the alternative option if she was found guilty.

“Is there anything I can do to help Mar- The Queen?” Myrcella asked and chided herself quietly for using an informal address for a woman she had never met.

Olenna shook her head and dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief once more. “I’m afraid not my dear, it’s all in the hands of the gods now.”

Myrcella’s face fell even further. “I’ll be praying for her at least.”

The two of them sat there in a somber silence or a few minutes before Olenna spoke up again. “Actually, I hate to ask this of you but there is one thing you can do to help.”

“I’ll do it.” Myrcella agreed before flushing when she realized she didn’t know what that thing was.

“Thank you, my dear.” Olenna smiled and once again wiped away her tears. “Your mother, as I’m sure you are aware of, is the one prosecuting Margaery. One of her witnesses is a sweet bard that Margaery was ever so fond of named Wat.” Olenna then frowned and her voice hardened. “Your mother’s man, Qyburn had the poor bard tortured until he spewed the lies they wanted him to tell about Margaery.”

Myrcella frowned. She knew her mother was capable of cruelty for her children but surely trying to get her good-daughter who Tommen loved killed by torturing another for them to lie had to be too far. “Mother wouldn’t do that.” She argued half-heartedly.

Olenna grimaced but hid it behind another soft smile. “Of course not. Qyburn was acting without your mother’s knowledge in an attempt to please her. He’s the one responsible for this tragedy, your mother hates Margaery and wants her gone but she wouldn’t ever go this far. Qyburn acted in order to give your mother the evidence she wants with methods that she would not condone.”

Myrcella was pretty sure that was a lie but the lie was sweeter than the truth so she ate it anyway. “So what can I do to stop him?” Myrcella asked.

“I know this isn’t honorable or but I fear for my grand-daughter and grand-son,” Olenna confessed
with obvious shame. “With your uncle gone, as Heir to Casterly Rock you command the Lannister forces in King’s Landing, your word is the law to them. Can you-” Olenna cut herself off as she sobbed.

Myrcella laced her hand with Olenna’s in what she hoped was a comforting gesture. “Tell me what I can do to help.” She demanded quietly.

Olenna wiped away her tears. “Your mother has men from Casterly Rock guarding the Black Cells, can you ask one of them to confess that Qyburn had Wat tortured until he agreed to lie? That the charges are all fabricated?” She asked before looking away from Myrcella embarrassed at her request.

Myrcella smiled softly. “Of course.”

Olenna squeezed her hand tightly. “Thank you, my dear.”

“We are gathered here today for the trial of the Queen, Margaery Tyrell on accounts of infidelity to His Grace, King Tommen, lewdness, adultery, fornication, adultery, lying before the Gods and high treason. May the Father grant us judgment and the Crone grant us the wisdom to discern the truth.” The High Sparrow intoned. “Presiding over this trial is Roslin, Robert, Rhaena, James, Thomas, Lady Alys Bulwer, and myself the High Septon. Acting as the defendant for the accused is her brother Lord Willas Tyrell.”

Myrcella had only ever been to one trial before, back when she thought King Robert Baratheon was still her father but this was certainly the oddest one she’d ever seen. The High Septon had chosen five commoners to sit as the jury over the trial. People who would be easily bribed or decide that their anger over their station or lack thereof would influence their decision making. That seemed like a foolish decision but from what Myrcella had heard of the High Sparrow he was a man of the people who considered the commoners equal to even the King in the eyes of the gods so it made sense for him to choose nobodies to preside over the Queen’s trial.

Tommen was a bundle of nerves as his wife was brought out to the stand. She looked terrible, although less so than her mother did. She was pale and gaunt wearing a simple sackcloth as her only clothing, very unbecoming for a Queen. Despite her current state she stood tall and looked completely unfazed by her ordeal.
Despite his wife’s appearance at the current time, Tommen was absolutely besotted with her. He looked at her with a clear desire in his eyes and his concern was palatable. He looked at her the same way Trystane looked at her and father did to her mother.

Her mother was glaring at the Queen and seemed joyful at her current state. Tommen blamed their mother for his wife’s imprisonment as did Grandmum Olenna and while she wasn’t so certain before, it seemed that it might be the case with the pure hatred their mother was openly displaying towards Queen Margaery. Myrcella couldn’t understand why their mother couldn’t just be happy that both her and Tommen were in love with their spouse like father was.

“Queen Margaery Tyrell, you have been accused of being unfaithful to your husband the King Tommen which is an act of treason and as such punishable by death. How do you plead?” The High Sparrow asked.

“Not guilty.” Margaery declared her voice full of confidence but somewhat raspy due to her lack of speaking while imprisoned for the last few moons.

“There are witnesses against you, Queen Margaery.” The High Sparrow said. “We shall hear their honest testimony first and then you will be allowed to call forth your own witnesses. You will not be permitted to speak until it is your turn and any infractions will be made a note.”

“We understand, High Holiness.” Lord Willas Tyrell spoke on his sister’s behalf.

“The prosecution calls forth it’s first witness, Septa Moelle.” The High Sparrow called out and in walked a rather large Septa with a mean face. “Septa Moelle do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?”

“I do.” Moelle confirmed.

“Septa Moelle please share what you have to say then.”

“When Queen Margaery was taken into the custody of the faith, I inspected the Queen’s maidenhead to see if there was any validity to the charges leveled against her. Her maidenhead was already broken.”

“Thank you, Septa Moelle.” The High Sparrow declared with a slight inclination of his head. “The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Grand Maester Pycelle.”
In walked an old friendly man that Myrcella knew well from how often he had treated her when they were children. He was, however, missing his long beard that when she had last seen him went past his waist but now he only had a chin full of peach fuzz. “Grand Maester Pycelle do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?”

“I do,” Pycelle agreed as he bobbed his head sagely.

“Please give us your honest testimony then, Maester.”

Pycelle pulled a scroll out of his robe and began to read off of it. “On the eighth day of the sixth month in the year three-hundred AC, Queen Margaery came to me asking for the herbal brew of tansy, a contraceptive more commonly referred to as Moon Tea. I granted her request and gave her a batch as was my duty as Grand Maester.”

“You did not think it was odd that the Queen was asking for Moon Tea?” The plump man sitting on the jury that Myrcella thought might have been Robert accused.

Grand Maester Pycelle shook his head. “I presumed that His Grace, King Tommen simply did not want an heir yet. I never imagined a scandal of this magnitude or that the Queen had taken another lover nor was it my place to, I serve the King and Queen not judge their choices..”

Margaery looked like she wanted to say something and she was visibly angry but her brother Willas whispered something in her ear and had a hand on her knee which seemed to be enough to contain her obvious anger.

“Thank you, Grand Maester Pycelle.” The High Sparrow declared with a slight inclination of his head. “The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Wat the Bard.”

Out walked a rather frail and sickly looking man in all blue who might have been called handsome once but no longer looked the part. His one remaining blue eye was beady and frantic and he was shaking as he walked to the stand. His hair was a blondish color that looked like he hadn’t received a hair cut in a long while or even brushed it. His fingers were swollen and purple, unable to play an instrument ever again. His teeth were oddly pristine compared to the rest of his body, unnaturally white even. Judging by her mother’s glowering look of accomplishment, it was obvious who was responsible for the bard’s current state. Evidently her mother was trying to fabricate evidence against Margaery. If she did that to get rid of Tommen’s wife, would she do the same for her?
Myrcella hoped not, she loved her husband.

“Wat the Bard, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?”

“I-I-I d-do.” The Bard stuttered as he looked directly at the floor in front of him.

“Please share your honest testimony then, Wat.”

“S-sometimes L-lady Margaery would f-fondle herself while h-her c-cousins p-pleased m-me w-with their m-mouths,” Wat confessed, a stuttering wreck. If she had doubted Olenna was telling the truth about Wat being tortured into lying those doubts were gone now. “O-other t-times I-I-I w-would sing for h-her w-while she s-sated h-her l-l-lusts with other m-men.”

“Who were those other men?” The High Sparrow prompted gently.

“S-Ser Tallad, L-lambert T-turnberry, J-Jalabhar Xho, Hugh Cl-clifton, and Os-osney Ket-kettleblack.” Wat replied quietly as if he was afraid of being overheard.

“Thank you, for your testimony, Wat. The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Lady Alla Tyrell.”

Out to the stand walked a rather beautiful maiden that she had seen around the red keep before but never met. The girl was maybe ten and four, she avoided making eye contact with anyone and instead stood with her head down as if she was the one on trial.

“Lady Alla Tyrell, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked once more.

Alla Tyrell glanced at him before averting her eyes in favor of the sight of her own feet. “I do.”

“Please share your testimony then, Lady Alla.”
“My cousins Margaery, Elinor, and Megga along with myself would sometimes call for men to give us improper attention and pleasure.” Alla never looked up as she spoke in a quiet voice. “I never partook, of course, only watched as my cousins pleasured themselves with men who were not their husband like some kind of whore.” Her face was an unnatural red by the end as if this was the most scandalous thing she had ever seen.

Myrcella chances a look over at Grandmum Olenna who had an ugly sneer on her face as her own kin lied about Queen Margaery and did not even implicate herself. Myrcella couldn’t help but share her sentiment. Margaery was very clearly hurt by the baseless accusations her cousin had no doubt been bribed into making by Myrcella’s mother.

“Who were those men?” The High Sparrow prompted her.

“Ser Tallad the Tall, Hugh Clifton, Osney Kettleblack, Jalabar Xho, and... Wat the Bard,” Alla replied with only the slightest hesitation. She finally lifted her eyes and looked at the High Sparrow at the end there.

Grandmum Olenna for some reason looked ecstatic at her response. It only took a minute for Myrcella to figure out why that was. Alla had left out Lambert Turnberry from her confession throwing Wat’s recount into question.

“Thank you, Lady Alla.” The High Sparrow dipped his head to her and she practically ran out of the room at her dismissal. “The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Hugh Clifton.”

Out walked another man who well he didn’t look nearly as bad as Wat had, he had obviously been tortured into selling Cersei’s lie. He had fresh scars on his cheeks and his arms were wrapped in bandages.

“Hugh Clifton, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow parroted the customary question he had asked so many times today.

“I do.” Clifton confirmed with a slight nod.

“Please share your testimony now.”
“I was assigned to guard the Queen when shortly after she was wed to Renly Baratheon. When she
was married she rarely slept with her husband. Her husband usually found his way into a man’s bed
and she often would invite men who were not her husband into her bed with Lord Renly not only
aware of those dalliances but encouraging them. I’ll admit I myself was lured to their bed on more
than one occasion.”

She heard a shifting of armor behind her and looked back to see Ser Loras’s face red with rage and
it looked like it took all of his discipline to not leap down there and skewer Clifton for his likely
lies. Everyone knew that Renly preferred men and everyone believed Ser Loras was one of Renly’s
more frequent lovers. This had to be hard for Ser Loras to listen to a man he once trusted to protect
his sister slander both his sister and dead lover.

“I thought these dalliances would end once she was betrothed to Joffrey and later married to
Tommen but to my horror they did not. To my unending shame, I continued to fall into her bed and
had sexual relations with her even while she was married to His Grace, King Tommen. I can only
beg the gods for forgiveness for my weakness.”

“Thank you, Hugh Clifton. The gods forgive and by choosing to confess and repent you will find
mercy.” The High Sparrow spoke softly. “The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Ser Tallad.”

Myrcella could see why he was called Ser Tallad the Tall when he entered the room and walked to
the stand. He was as tall as anyone Myrcella had ever seen and was skinny as a rail. His face was
soft and he did not carry himself like other large men such as Ser Robert Strong did but as someone
much more demure.”

“Ser Tallad, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give
honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow parroted the customary
question he had asked so many times today.

“I do.” Ser Tallad confirmed with a slight nod. His voice was low and gravelly while his face
showed no sign of his true emotions. “

“We ask that you share your testimony then.”

“I was a lover to Queen Margaery since her days as a husband to Renly Baratheon. Renly had
certain proclivities for men that left him unable to sate his wife’s desires so she would call on me to
warm her bed. After Renly’s death, she still often called me to bed with her, even during her
betrothal to King Joffrey and after she married King Tommen. I foolishly believed my lust to be
love and I can only ask the father to show me mercy for my sins.”
Ser Tallad was a good actor, if this was a lie of course. Evidently her mother had offered him some substantial reward for his mummery as he betrayed his liege lord. He genuinely looked remorseful for his crimes and like he wanted to change. He looked ashamed as he confessed his treason and adultery to all the realm.

“Thank you, Ser Tallad. The gods forgive and by choosing to confess and repent you will find mercy.” The High Sparrow spoke softly. “The prosecution calls forth its next witness, Jalabhar Xho.”

A summer islander with the native dark skin in a bright yellow vest with a feathered green cape practically floated out to the stand to share his testimony. He was dressed as a prince and not a man on trial with all his various jewels he wore one his person. Myrcella vaguely recognized him from his time in King Robert’s court as an exiled prince begging for aid to reclaim his home.

“Jalabhar Xho, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked once more.

Jalabhar grinned up at the box that the royal family was sitting in. “I do.” His accent was thick and even if Myrcella did not know who he was she would immediately recognize he was from the Summer Isles based solely on his accent. No doubt he was trying to bedazzle her mother with his lies with that cocky and proud grin he sported on his face.

With how jubilant her mother was it seemed to be working, the trial was playing out exactly as her mother had wanted. Everyone was testifying the lies she had spoon-fed them and Lord Willas Tyrell was going to have a hard time digging Margaery out of the hole the prosecution had put her in.

“Please share your honest testimony when ready then.”

“I served as a tutor to Queen Margaery, and her maidens, Alla, Megga, and Elinor.” His voice was seemingly softer at the mention of the last name he gave but that might have just been Myrcella’s imagination. “I would teach them the summer tongue and tell them stories of the beauty of the summer isles. Margaery would promise to bring my case before the King in exchange for the lessons.”

Jalabhar sighed and flexed his hands. “I fell in love with the lady Elinor during those lessons despite her hand already being promised to Lord Alyn Ambrose. I will admit that I took her
maidenhead but I will deny that I had any sexual relations with the Queen or the other ladies being accused and anyone whose claimed to have seen otherwise is nothing but a liar.”

Jalabhar turned to glare at the box they were seated in. “Shortly after the Queen, Elinor, and the others were taken into custody on the senseless ramblings of a bard, the Queen-Mother Cersei had me taken into custody and thrown in a cell for cucking the King. She offered me the wall, in exchange for me confessing to having sexual relations with the Queen. She never tried to figure out if it was the truth just demanded a confession. Fearing that I might be tortured until I broke like that poor bard that my Lady Elinor was so fond of, I agreed to confess if I got the wall.”

“I confess the truth as the gods have demanded.” He declared. “I confess that I love my Lady Elinor.” His gaze once again drifted to the royal box and he found her mother’s furious eyes. “I confess that this trial is nothing but a farce organized by the Queen-Mother Cersei, in an attempt to take the crown from the rightful Queen’s head.”

If the High Sparrow was at all unnerved by the man’s loud declarations then he gave no sign of it. “Thank you for your testimony, Jalabhar Xho.” Jalabhar bowed and left the room to complete silence. “The prosecution had no more witnesses. We will adjourn briefly and then the defendant will be allowed to present witnesses to share their testimony when we reconvene.”

Myrcella chanced a glance at mother during the break and was pleased to see that she looked furious at Jalabhar’s actually honest testimony. She was muttering under her breath and her hands were balled into fists at her side. Her face was red and she was trembling with pure rage. Myrcella couldn’t help but wonder just why her mother hated Margaery so much, she knew she was protective of her and Tommen but this seemed to be too far. She didn’t even hate Trystane half as much. She glanced over at her husband sitting by her side and he squeezed her hand in an attempt to comfort her. A vain one, sure but the sentiment was nice.

After what was probably only an hour, the High Sparrow banged his gavel and called for order. “We will now reconvene the trial of Margaery Tyrell with the defendant presenting their own witnesses before we reach a final verdict of guilt. Lord Willas, do you have any witnesses you would like to call forth?”

Lord Willas did not stand, seeing as how he was as cripple and just spoke from his wheelchair. “The defendant calls forth Maester Lomys to bear witness.”

An elderly maester with a hooked nose stepped up to the stand. “Maester Lomys, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked the maester.
“I do.” The maester agreed without any hesitation.

“Maester Lomys, you have served as maester at Highgarden for eight and thirty years now, is that correct?” Lord Willas asked the maester.

“That is correct, my lord.” The maester replied with a slight nod of his head.

“Can you share with the court when you first discovered Margaery’s maidenhead had broken?” Willas prodded.

“I first discovered Queen Margaery’s maidenhead had been broken on her routine checkup after her ninth nameday, before she had flowered. Queen Margaery had likely snapped hers during horseback riding as when she was younger she was quite the frequent rider. It is a common occurrence for a young girl to lose her maidenhead through non-sexual acts.”

“Thank you, Maester Lomys. No more questions for you.”

The old maester nodded and bowed towards Margaery and then he left the room.

“The defendant calls forth their next witness, Lady Elinor Tyrell.” Willas declared and in waltzed the beautiful maiden that had stolen the heart of the exiled prince, Jalabhar Xho. It was not hard to see why her prince was so besotted with her, she was not at all lacking in beauty. Her auburn hair shone and her face was beautiful. She had a curvy figure and Myrcella noted one of the judges that she couldn’t remember the name of was staring at her with visibly present lust in his gaze.

“Lady Elinor Tyrell, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked once again.

The girl nodded and looked to where Jhalabar Xho was now seated after giving his own testimony. “I do.”

“It has been alleged that you carried on an affair with Jhalabar Xho, are those accusations true?” Willas questioned calmly.
“They are.” She confirmed. “We’ve been together since I first arrived in Kings Landing with Margaery, almost two years ago despite my hand being promised to Lord Ambrose.”

“Was Queen Margaery aware of this affair?” Willas prodded.

“She was,” Elinor confirmed.

“Did she help you hide your affair?” Willas asked immediately after her last answer.

“She did.” Elinor agreed. “She would even ask for moon tea as she believed that her marriage to the King would stop people from investigating why it was needed. She knew it would be suspicious if I was the one to ask for it since I was not married and wanted my happiness. I’m ashamed that my own selfishness led to the false accusations about Margaery and caused her and Megga to suffer.”

“No more questions. Thank you, Lady Elinor, for your testimony.”

Elinor exchanged a sad smile with Jhalabar Xho before she left the stand joined her cousins in the audience.

“The defendant calls forth their next witness, Ser Loreon Lannister.” Willas Tyrell called out and instantly people started muttering, shocked that the Tyrells would have a Lannister testify for Margaery and by extent against Cersei.

Myrcella had done as Grandmum Olenna had begged her to and told the guard of the Black Cells to confess of what Qyburn had done to Wat and the other prisoners. A part of Myrcella pitied the scorn Loreon would receive for stepping out against his family even if it was on her orders and a part of Myrcella wanted to tell mother he was doing it on her orders. But she refrained because she was afraid of losing her mother despite her recent cruelty so she said nothing letting Loreon take the scorn here for her.

“Loreon Lannister, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked once the room had quieted down.

Loren looked towards the box Myrcella was seated in and a part of her wanted to hide away. She
was afraid of her mother finding out but she needed her brother to have his love back. If she backed out Margaery could die and her death would be on Myrcella’s hands so she met Loreon’s gaze and nodded slightly, hopefully, an imperceptible gesture to her mother.

“I do,” Loreon confirmed loudly.

“Lorean Lannister, you serve as a guard to the Black Cells in the Red Keep?” Willas asked already knowing the answer.

“I do.” He confirmed his eyes once again finding Myrcella’s and again she wanted to flinch away.

“When was Wat first imprisoned in the black cells, was it before or after the arrest warrant went out and Margaery was arrested?

“A week before, the arrest of Margaery and a day more before the warrant was issued as far as I’m aware.”

“Can you describe what you noticed of Wat’s imprisonment in the Black Cells?” Willas prodded gently.

“Wat was taken into captivity as a healthy lad full of vigor and youthful energy even when thrown in chains. The day after he was put in captivity, Lord Qynburnt and later Cersei visited him. I was not permitted to join them in the cell during their interrogation but when I saw him again the next day all his enthusiasm was gone. One of his eyes had been removed and his teeth were riddled with holes, his finger and toenails had all been removed in an effort to make him talk. He was broken.” Loreon admitted frequently glancing towards Myrcella in order to make sure that these confessions against her mother were okay.

In unison horrified gasps sounded all around the court as he described the brutal torture of Wat in the Black Cells. She couldn’t help but be skeptical that they are all genuine and not just hiding their casual acceptance of it like her mother often did.

“No more questions. Thank you for your honest testimony, Loreon Lannister.” Willas said sincerely. Loreon nodded once more in Myrcella’s direction before leaving the stage without another word.
“The defendant calls forth their next witness, Archmaester Ebrose.” Willas declared.

Out to the stand walked a silver man. Like all Archmaesters, Ebrose wore a half mask on his face, a ring, and a rod which for this particular Archmaester was silver in color. His robe was also an extravagant silver. His hair was even silver although that was likely due to his advanced age. Still, he looked much more impressive than the Grandmaester Pycelle ever had.

“Archmaester Ebrose, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked once more.

The elderly maester did not hesitate. “I do.”

“If I am not mistaken, Lord Qyburn served under you as an acolyte at the citadel before he was expelled.”

“That is correct.” The Archmaester confirmed.

“Can you detail for us why he was expelled from the citadel?”

“I personally expelled Qyburn. He was practicing forbidden necromantic arts and had taken to experimenting on still-living humans, even dissecting them before trying to put them back together. He was immediately stripped of his status and banished from the citadel, he was forbidden from ever serving as a Maester.” Ebrose shared without hesitation.

“So would you consider torture a form of his expertise?” Willas asked quietly.

The Maester seemed to ponder it for a moment and then nodded. “I wouldn’t use such crude terms but that does appear to be a field that his unique proclivities would be best suited for.”

“Your High Holiness, I would like to petition that we have the testimony of Wat dismissed as the evidence provided by Archmaester Ebrose and Loreon Lannister that it came after extreme torture and illegal partitioning of human dissection by an ex-acolyte who was forbidden from ever practicing his craft when he was banished. He did this before an official arrest warrant was issued by the King. I would also suggest Lord Qyburn’s immediate imprisonment for his crimes and violations of his oath.” Willas pleaded.
The High Sparrow stood up once more and banged his gavel. “All in favor of having the testimony of Wat dismissed?” All of the members of the jury except one raised their hand to signify that Wat’s testimony was meaningless. “The testimony of Wat will be stricken from the record.”

“Sons of the Warrior, I ask that you take Lord Qyburn and hold him custody until his own trial.” The High Sparrow ordered and Myrcella watched as Lord Qyburn was peacefully stood from his place beside her mother, patting Ser Robert on the shoulder and exited with the faith militant to occupy a cell of his own. Cersei tried to hide it behind a passive face but Myrcella knew how furious her mother was that her loyal dog was now a prisoner, that the man who could doom her with his testimony was now in the custody of the man she would be tried by later this week. He could expose all her secret plots- but mother would get off free of any consequences because of the ever so just, trial by combat.

After things had settled back down, the High Sparrow resumed the trial of Margaery Tyrell. “Does the defendant have any more witnesses that they would like to call forth and share their testimony.” He asked of Lord Willas.

“Just one more. The defendant calls forth Ser Osney Kettleblack to bear testimony.” Willas declared with a slight smirk.

“Ser Osney, do you swear in the sight of all of the Gods that you will speak only the truth and give honest testimony to the best of your knowledge?” The High Sparrow asked for what should be the final time today and since Cersei’s trial would be by combat, hopefully, the last time Myrcella ever heard him say that.

Ser Osney turned his face up to the top box and glared at Myrcella’s mother. “I do.

“Ser Osney, can you detail for us the circumstances that led to your imprisonment by the faith?” Willas asked with a small smile.

“I can.” Ser Osney agreed firmly before resuming his glare at Myrcella’s mother. “Queen Cersei approached me and asked me to try to seduce Margaery Tyrell so she could imprison her for infidelity and have her executed. She wanted me to then confess my crime to the High Septon and I would be granted the mercy of taking the black where I was to kill the Lord Commander, Jon Snow. I would then be granted a pardon for my crimes and be given a Lordship and a highborn wife.”
Shocked gasps rang around the room despite everyone having already assumed similar. It was only proper after all for one to be affronted and outraged by behavior like this. Myrcella simply scoffed.

“As an incentive to perform the task she fucked me, repeatedly.” Ser Osney added with a slight chuckle.

This time it was Myrcella who was outraged. Mother loved father, she would never. He had to be lying. She believed that her mother was behind Margaery’s current situation but she would never choose to sleep with someone else other than father.

“I failed in my task, Margaery was kind to me and would tease a little but I could never seduce her into breaking her vows to her husband. So instead the Queen asked me to lie to the gods and claim that I had fucked her. As an incentive for telling that lie, she fucked me again so I could tell it true when I said I fucked a Queen. I did as she bid but the Crone gave his High Holiness the wisdom to see the lie for what it was and now I stand here today telling the truth in the sight of the gods.”

“Queen Margaery Tyrell is innocent of the charges leveled against her, they are nothing but fabrications by the Dowager Queen Cersei to the best of my knowledge. Cersei Lannister has at least attempted to coerce myself and other key witnesses, including Wat the Bard through either torture or reward. The only Queen guilty of any crime here is Cersei Lannister.” Ser Osney roared his eyes never leaving the top box and Cersei.

Lord Willas Tyrell stood with a smug smile. “Thank you for your honest testimony, Ser Osney.” He turned towards the High Sparrow once more. “The defendant does not feel the need to present any more witnesses, your High Holiness.”

The High Sparrow stood once more. “I think we can all agree we are ready to reach a verdict on the guilt of Queen Margaery Tyrell. All those in favor of a guilty verdict?” He asked of the jury and only one person, the same one who wanted to count Wat’s false testimony in the proceedings raised his hand. Likely a man loyal to her mother or whatever incentive she had bribed him with.

“All those opposed?” The High sparrow asked and the other six hands rose in the air.

The High Sparrow smiled and banged his gavel for the final time. “The Gods have spoken here today and delivered their justice. In the name of the seven, I hereby declare that Margaery Tyrell is not guilty of all charges.”
Tommen turned to her with the biggest smile she had ever seen from him and pulled Myrcella into a crushing hug. “She’s free!” He cheered.

Margaery was finally free. Myrcella was going to get to meet her good-sister. She smiled brightly as well as she hugged Tommen back. Cersei, on the other hand, had an ugly scowl on her face that she made no effort to hide from anyone. Why couldn’t their mother just be happy both her and Tommen were happy and in love like their father was.

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Their mother did not look nearly so jubilant as they went to her own trial today. She was escorted down onto the stage by the faith militant where she would be held for the duration of the trial to prevent her from attempting to flee.

Ser Robert Strong had been conspicuously absent this morning as mother’s shadow at breakfast and as they rode to her trial but Myrcella supposed he was just preparing for the trial by combat elsewhere since he would undoubtedly be named as her champion.

Myrcella took her seat in between Tommen and her husband and took both of their hands, intertwining fingers needing some comfort as she watched her mother’s life be put on the line in a trial by combat. She was sure Ser Robert would defeat whoever he had to face but it was still nerve-wracking to know that one misstep by him would cost her mother her life. She was mad at her mother and maybe even hated her a little bit but she did not want her mother to die.

The trial for her mother was surprisingly lacking in attendees, at least in comparison to that of Queen Margaery. The section reserved for the members of the faith militant was particularly lacking with maybe half as many people there today as there was the previous day. She supposed most of them must just be squeamish and did not want to watch Ser Robert rip someone in half. Myrcella could understand that herself, she didn’t particularly want to watch such carnage either.

The High Sparrow stood to his feet and the hushed murmurs silenced. “We are gathered here today for the trial of the Queen-Mother, Cersei Lannister on accounts of infidelity to the late King Robert of House Baratheon, the first of his name, lewdness, adultery, fornication, lying before the Gods and conspiring against the Queen Margaery Tyrell, which is an act of high treason. May the Father grant us judgment and the Crone grant us the wisdom to discern the truth.” The High Sparrow intoned. “Presiding over this trial is Rose, Joana, Tytus, Lord Janos Wendwater, Miriam, Thomas Waters, and myself the High Septon. Acting as the defendant for the accused will be herself, the Queen-Mother Cersei Lannister.”
“Queen-Mother Cersei Lannister, you have been accused of being unfaithful to your late-husband, King Robert of House Baratheon, the first of his name, lewdness, adultery, fornication, lying before the Gods and conspiring against the Queen Margaery Tyrell, which is an act of high treason and as such punishable by death. How do you plead?” The High Sparrow asked.

Cersei naturally did not respond to the accusations. “The gods know that I am innocent but I can not trust foolish men to find the truth so I leave it in the hands of the gods. I demand a trial by combat.” She sniffed and held her head up high.

“A trial by combat you will have then. In accordance with the precedent set by King Aegon, the champion for any member of the royal family must be one of the king’s sworn seven.”

Her mother smiled gracefully. “Of course, I name Ser Robert Strong as my champion.”

The High Sparrow frowned. “I’m afraid that is not possible, Your Grace.”

Cersei scowled at him in confusion. “What do you mean that’s not possible? Ser Robert was sworn in as a member of the Kingsguard. He is the champion of my innocence.”

The High Sparrow actually scowled back at her although his tone was nothing if not polite. “Ser Robert Strong attacked the Great Sept of Baelor last night and absconded with Lord Qyburn after slaughtering all of the sons of the warrior present at the Sept last night in the escape.”

Oh gods. Myrcella did this, sure she didn’t kill them all herself but she was the reason Qyburn was arrested. She told Loreon to testify against him at Margaery’s trial and as a result, Ser Robert had slaughtered men to rescue him from his imprisonment and likely death. All because of her actions at the behest of Grandmum Olenna. Olenna looked just as horrified as Myrcella felt she had a hand over her mouth and her eyes were wide as she stared at the High Septon in complete disbelief. This was an unexpected consequence for them all of Qyburn’s arrest and imprisonment.

Her mother, Cersei looked scared for the first time Myrcella could remember seeing. She had been sad and shaken before but never truly terrified like she was right now. She was visibly trembling as she tried to regain control of the situation. “I name Ser Osmund Kettleblack as my champion.” She declared in a shaky voice.

Ser Osmund limped forward. “I’m afraid I must decline, Your Grace. I injured myself in a spar yesterday and would not be able to aptly defend your honor.” He said politely but it was obvious
that he was upset with her for what had happened to his brother at Cersei’s behest.

“Ser Loras Tyrell!” Cersei cried out desperately and Queen Margaery chuckled.

The High Sparrow shook his head. “I’m afraid not, Your Grace. Ser Loras was already chosen as the faith’s champion by the Warrior for your trial if you chose one to have it be by combat before he was sworn in the Kingsguard.”

Oh gods, Grandmum Olenna had planned for this to happen, Myrcella by telling Loreon to testify had doomed her own mother to death. She had been stupid and fell for the lie about them wanting to only punish Qyburn for torturing Wat and imprisoning Queen Margaery. She had thought they were doing it for Tommen’s sake, to get Margaery back but this was always about punishing her mother’s foolishness.

She curled into her husband’s side and cried into his shoulder. “It’s my fault.” She sobbed. Trystane did his best to comfort her by rubbing circles on her back but it was largely ineffectual.

“Ser Jamie Lannister!” Her mother shrieked. “I choose Jamie as my champion.”

Most of the room laughed at that response. Whether it was because he was a cripple or not a member of the Kingsguard she could not say why they did but they laughed all the same at her desperateness to have someone capable fight for her.

Myrcella was incredibly glad that Jamie had hung up his white cloak. She knew father would lose to Ser Loras and mother was going to die in this trial regardless she could not lose father as well.

“Your Grace,” Queen Margaery called out two seats over from Myrcella. “Ser Jamie is no longer a knight of the Kingsguard. He resigned a moon ago. I understand how you could forget, however, with all that has been going on in the last few days. I’m sure it has been a very upsetting week for you.” She taunted.

Trystane’s chest heaved and it only took a moment for Myrcella to realize that this time her husband was one of the people who laughed at her mother. She angrily tore herself from his grip and turned to Tommen only to find him smiling as well. She scowled and pulled her hands away from both of them instead just crossing her arms over her chest, making no efforts to hide her tears.

She understood why her husband hated Cersei, and he was justified in doing so but he could at least pretended to care about her for Myrcella’s sake, She might have gotten his favorite uncle killed and
the Lannister’s did murder his cousins as children. Myrcella just wanted an understanding shoulder to cry on.

Tommens was even easier to understand because Myrcella felt mostly the same. She too hated mother right now for her actions and interference in her love life. She still loved her, however, and certainly did not want her dead. Tommen, on the other hand, seemed to not care if their mother died, perhaps it was simply because he was a child who did not understand that she would really be gone forever. Or perhaps Myrcella would feel the same if it was Trystane that their mother had conspired to kill.

Her mother sighed and hung her head, resigned to her fate. “I name Ser Balon Swann as my champion.”

Surely, he couldn't be that terrible of a fighter right? He was who her father had chosen as his successor as Lord Commander of the King’s Guard. He could beat the tourney champion knight Ser Loras in single combat, right?

Ser Balon stepped forward and bowed. “I would be honored to fight as your champion, Your Grace.”

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“In the sight of gods and men, we gather to ascertain the guilt or innocence of this...woman Cersei of House Lannister. The champion for Cersei of House Lannister, Queen-Mother of, His Grace, King Tommen is Ser Balon Swann. The champion of the Gods choosing to represent the faith is Ser Loras Tyrell. May the Mother grant them mercy. May the Father give them such justice as they deserve. And may the Warrior guide the hand of our champion to determine the truth.” The High Sparrow declared, and with that, the trial by combat began.

Ser Balon Swann was in the traditional garb he wore as a member of the Kingsguard. He wore the same silver armor he always did with a white cloak clasped to his shoulders by an ivory stag for the King’s House and an onyx swan for his own. He wore a full helmet with swan wings at the edges of his eyes with a narrow slit at his eye level so he could see his opponent and his chain mail left him protected at his neck from any glancing blows. He carried a morningstar with a six-foot reach in his right hand and a small plain round shield on his left arm.

Ser Loras Tyrell was much more flashy. He wore his usual fanciful silver armor with twining black vines embroidered on it and the plate was adjourned with sparkling sapphires that shined beneath the bright sun. His helmet with a caged guard that protected his face from any broader strikes but a
small blade could pass through the slits. His helmet was equally as lavish with roses of solid gold embroidered on it. He carried a more traditional bastard sword with a larger rectangular shield on his other arm bearing the seven-pointed star of the faith he was championing for.

Her husband tutted at Ser Loras’s taste in weapon for the fight in what she assumed was an attempt to comfort her. “Choosing a sword against an armored opponent was unwise,” he explained to her. “He’ll do very little when he lands a blow against the heavy plate of Ser Balon.”

When he noted Ser Balon’s weapons of choice he nodded in approval. “The morning star is a much better weapon for this fight. Ser Balon is strong and one solid hit to the chest or head and he could kill Ser Loras instantly. He had more reach than Ser Loras as well with his weapon. Ser Loras will have to be quick and dance around him to win this fight.”

There was a chance that her mother actually won this then, a chance that she would survive this trial. All it took was for the warrior to smile down on Ser Balon and let him get a single lucky hit in and he would win. Ser Loras was obviously the better and more capable of the combatants but all it took was one mistake and he could be dead and mother would live.

As soon as the trumpets sounded to declare the trial had begun, Ser Loras lunged towards Ser Balon with a swift strike at his flank. Ser Balon easily deflected it with his shield and tried to club Ser Loras’s side with his mace but Ser Loras easily spun out of the way.

Ser Loras jabbed once more and again Ser Balon easily blocked it before attempting to club Ser Loras’s skull but he spun away once more and lunged forward, this time he was too quick for Ser Balon to block and he took a glancing blow to his shoulder that seemed to not faze him at all as he scratched at his armor.

Ser Balon lunged forward this time with an overhead strike with the mace that Ser Loras narrowly managed to get his shield up in time to deflect the blow. He shoved off with his shield and glided backward, once again putting some distance between them.

Ser Balon immediately lunged forwards once more with a side strike that was deflected this time by Ser Loras’s sword and well the weapon was blocked by the sword, he stepped forward and shoved Ser Balon’s chest with his shield, causing the larger knight to stumble backward.

That was an opportunity that Ser Loras did not fail to take advantage of as he forced Ser Balon on the backfoot with a flurry of rapid strikes that Ser Balon only just managed to block before the next blow would come raining down on him. A hit got through and nicked his chest, another one scratched the side of his head. A third against his knee. Ser Balon was clearly losing this fight.
Luckily, the gods were on her mother’s side and Ser Loras randomly stumbled while advancing, allowing Ser Balon to put some distance between them again and go back on the offensive with a swift strike towards Ser Loras’s middle.

He of course parried that and took a step back before lunging forward once more. With a blow that was easily deflected by Ser Balon’s Mace. They danced that way for a good few minutes with each person parrying the others blow with the greatest of ease as neither managed to land a single hit.

Myrcella felt hope with every blow that Ser Balon parried and every step that Ser Loras took back. Soon his back would be against the wall and he would have no chance to dance out of the way of Ser Balon’s blows. “She might win,” Myrcella muttered quietly.

“I doubt it.” Trystane scoffed. “Every second this fight foes one for, Ser Loras’s victory becomes much more likely.” He explained to her. “Ser Balon has thicker and heavier armor with a weapon that requires more brute force than finesse. He tires as the fight drags on and soon Ser Loras will be able to defeat him with little difficulty.”

Her husband really sucked at reassuring her and giving her false hope. At least he didn’t sound so giddy about her mother dying anymore. He was at least trying to pretend he wanted Ser Balon to win and mother to live.

Ser Balon made a broad overhanded stroke with his morning star and Ser Loras lifted his sword to block the strike. Steel rang across steel as the blades clashed with Ser Balon putting all his force into the blow. Then Ser Loras actually dropped his sword.

Ser Balon could actually win this fight. Mother would live.

Ser Balon immediately pressed his newfound advantage and took quick strides forward with Ser Loras blocking each blow with his shield as Ser Balon made sure to back Ser Loras away from the sword so he could not recover the blade. Ser Loras blocked the next blow with his shield and unsheathed a smaller two-foot-long short-sword from his belt. With such little range it would no doubt be extremely difficult for Ser Loras to do anything more than block and hope Ser Balon made a mistake.

Ser Loras was almost up against the wall and soon he would have no room left to dance away from the mace, instead being forced to block every strike until eventually one landed and he died so that her mother could live.
That time had come as when Ser Loras spun out of the way of the next swing from the mace that was aimed at his rib cage. He danced away from the blow but his back was up against the wall and he was unable to survive with fancy footwork any more.

Myrcella looked away from the combat at the Queen sitting a few seats over, looking very much terrified that her brother would soon be dead. Tommen’s face was impassive as if he couldn’t care less if their mother lived or if his good-brother did. Mother looked ecstactic as she watched Ser Balon frantically hack at a very defensive Ser Loras and soon she would be free from the truthful accusations of treason.

Ser Balon took another broad swing with his mace that Ser Loras barely managed to block in time with his heavily dented shield and the force behind the blow was finally enough to put a hole in the shield. All Ser Loras had now was half of a shield and a short-sword. Surely, this was the end of this wretched trial.

Ser Balon took a wide swing, intent on caging in Ser Loras’s skull with the morning star and ending this fight in an instant. Rather than try to dodge the life-ending blow or block it with the short-sword, Ser Loras stepped forward into it and thrust forward with his blade at Ser Balon’s eyes.

The metal shaft of the morning star banged against the helm of Ser Loras but Ser Loras struck true and his blade found the spot between Ser Balon’s eyes, the blade inserted narrowly through his visor.

Myrcella’s joy turned into ashes in her mouth as Ser Balon fell to the ground with a sword jabbed in his visor. Myrcella was no warrior but even she knew that a strike between the eyes would kill him. Ser Loras also fell to the ground and Myrcella could only pray that he too was dead and the High Sparrow would declare that he had died first so mother won and would continue to live. She buried her head into her husband’s shoulder to scared to look and see the truth.

Her hopes were crushed when the crowd roared and the trumpets sounded. She knew Ser Loras had survived and mother would die. This was all her fault. She had caused this by telling Loreon to rat out Qyburn and caused Ser Robert to flee leaving her mother with that man protecting her. This was all her fault.

“The gods have made their will known. Cersei Lannister, in the name of King Tommen of the House Baratheon, First of His Name, you are hereby sentenced to death.” The High Sparrow declared pompously. “She will be beheaded tomorrow morning.”
Her mother did not cry, instead, she cackled as she heard she was going to die. “Jamie was the valonqar.” She screeched. “Why didn’t I see it? Jamie was the valonqar.”

I always planned on killing off Cersei here. Cersei is quite frankly a terrible main antagonist as if she was Queen, every single person in the seven-kingdoms would flock to Daenerys to see her on the throne since you really can’t do worse than Cersei. It's much more interesting to have a more morally gray antagonist and not a Mad Queen. In case, you haven't realized it by now, this is not just a rehashing of cannon but a new story. If you want to see Cersei as a villain just watch season 7 and 8. In this, Tommen will remain King for the time being and the Tyrells will remain on his side, not Dany's. There are no Mad Queens or Kings, for that matter, in this story.

I find it utterly ridiculous that while Cersei was imprisoned, the idea that Olenna would not use the time alone with him, to manipulate Tommen against Cersei. When Tommen is alone without his wife and mother, he's going to latch onto any contact and it's very plausible that she would poison him against Cersei for taking Margaery away from him. She also uses the familial connection and Mackage's care towards Tommen to manipulate her as well into dooming her mother. As Myrcella is heir to House Lannister and the Westerlands, it makes sense that her authority regarding Lannister soldiers would trump Cersei's. Cersei is obviously never going to use the Gold Cloaks that are not loyal to her for something so important.

Tyrion's trial is one of the most memorable scenes in both the books and the show but they show surprisingly little detail in both of the oaths they say or how the proceedings actually go, it's primarily just summaries of the happenings. Also, a trial by the High Sparrow is bound to be different than when by Tywin Lannister. Do they have defendants for the accused in ASOIAF? I’m saying yes and no one was willing to serve as one for Tyrion or maybe it's a case by case thing. Regardless, Margaery has one because, after months of solitary confinement, it's hard to believe that Margaery would aptly be able to defend herself.

I realize in the books that the High Sparrow has septons and silent sisters presiding over the trials but in the show, he yammers on and on about how the lowest of the common folk are equal to a King and even him so from my perspective, it seems more logical for him to use those common folk as the jury for his trials.

I tried to follow Cersei’s plan for the trial from the books but quite frankly her plan is moronic. She wants to offer an exiled prince the wall because she thinks he's a beggar? There are men who would rather die instead of go to the wall. Even if the wall was fine, why would he not try for a better deal from the Tyrells? Why would any of them for that matter? Even if he is guilty, he still has no reason to take her proposed deal. She succeeds in getting some of them to confess but not all. With the "deal" the Tyrells gave him, he gets to retain his freedom and marry "his love" a beautiful maiden who now has no value to anyone else in marriage proposals due to him supposedly sullying her honor.

I know modern literature likes to make it out like a hymen is some virginity detector but they commonly break before one has sexual relations. Horseback riding is one of the most
common ways, in fact, and in medieval times it's absurd to believe that most highborn ladies don't have their hymens broken before marriage. As a rich and powerful family with their own Maester, they had to have already known her hymen was broken if it was. The Maester giving a timestamp on when it happens, as the Maesters are sworn to hold no loyalty to who they serve, should essentially be the final word on that evidence being used against her.

Torture is common place in medieval times and isn't really used to dismiss an accusation. Why it's dismissed here is because it's Qyburn, an ex-acolyte forbidden from practicing his forbidden craft who does such things to Watt. The fact that he dissected and experimented on Wat without a license basically that is so unforgivable. Also, there is common folk on the jury who are less predisposed towards torture so they'll be more likely to forgive it. I originally had Sandor killing Gregor as the faith's champion in the trial of combat but that seemed way too cliche and I still want Ser Gregor around for later. Qyburn being imprisoned for continuing to practice his craft and ordering Ser Gregor who is essentially a mindless zombie to rescue him lets me keep both of them in the story while having Cersei lose her trial by combat as I planned.

I intentionally left Margaery's trial extremely open-ended on if she's actually guilty or not in spite of the verdict. Is Jalabhar just taking the deal that does not get him the wall or death? Is Elinor trying to save Margaery's life or being honest? One of their key sources was the Maester of High Garden, did they win his loyalty? Did he lie about how and when Margaery's hymen broke? Does it even matter?

Cersei was never going to risk her trial not being one by combat. She does love her children and doesn't want any ugly truths to come out that could threaten them or make them doubt her children's legitimacy. She can be executed for fucking Lancel, Kettleblack, and even Jamie but none of those mean Robert isn't their father. She wasn't on trial for claiming Tommen is legitimate but for cheating on Robert. Jamie wouldn't ever face any punishment for fucking Cersei because in a medieval society, no one cares if the men sleep around, only if the females do.

Although does it matter if Tommen/Myrcella are legitimate? In the show, Cersei becomes Queen after the death of Tommen despite having no Baratheon blood. This means that the succession line of Westeros is next of kin not next of kin within the same house since that's the only reason Cersei could become Queen since as his mother she is his closest living kin. So does it matter if they're Robert's children as long as Joffrey is? I guess the bastard status stops them from having a claim so Tommen has to be legitimate. Myrcella does not, if Tommen were to hypothetically legitimate Myrcella as a Lannister and Jamie's son with Cersei, she would still be next in line for the throne as Tommen's closest kin until he has a child of his own.

We know that Ser Loras is extremely hot-headed. He recklessly attacks Dragonstone and nearly dies in the process in the books. He executes the King's Guard on duty when Renly dies without thinking twice about it. He has horrible anger management. When Cersei is imprisoned alongside Margaery, it's very possible he goes to the Sparrow and demands to be the champion against Cersei, wanting her to pay for her actions. He admits his decision to Olenna who would rather her grandson not die so she manipulates it so he won't face a champion he can not defeat. Kettleblack is a sellsword and can obviously be bought out of
being her champion, Jamie was never a threat and once he resigns, Ser Loras fills the gap so she has only five choices. When they get rid of Ser Gregor, everyone is very defeatable by him.

GOT has an obsession with everyone using swords against armored opponents for some reason which is stupid since they're not very effective against them. Using a heavier mace that can actually dent armor as Ser Balon was in this is much more logical. Hopefully, the combat scene was decent, it was my first time ever writing one.

What about the Valonqar prophecy? You could argue it's fulfilled by Myrcella ordering Loreon to testify against her (Or Jamie in Cersei's mind) or you could argue it's fulfilled by Ser Loras (A younger brother) being the one to kill her champion. In truth, it doesn't matter at all since the Valonqar prophecy is outright false in the show as in episode two, Cersei reveals her and Robert had a trueborn child with dark hair that died as a babe which since the prophecy says she had three children and none of them are Robert's the prophecy is entirely invalidated by that decision by the showrunners.

There won't be an execution scene because her insane cackle at the trial result shows enough and Myrcella's emotional state at seeing her mother executed is much the same to her losing the trial. Also, executions are really boring to write and feel anti-climactic. This seems like a better place to end the chapter. Cersei is actually dead, she was just beheaded off-screen.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading, make sure to review and leave kudos if you enjoyed this chapter and subscribe so you don't miss any future updates. On Tuesday we go back to Ser Davos who is now Lord Commander of the Night's Watch and get to see his vision for the Watch.
Davos III

Chapter Notes

I don't feel as if it was properly explained last chapter and since there were so many questions about it I'm going to elaborate on why Cersei being guilty of incest does not cost Tommen his throne. Essentially, everyone with power in the capital wants Tommen to remain on the throne for their own benefit. Tommen (Through his mother's manipulations) was the one who gave the faith militant the power to act and a new King would certainly try to revoke that so the High Sparrow wants him on the throne. The Tyrells want him on the throne for the obvious reason of Margaery being his Queen and him being easily manipulated. The Martells might try to dispose of him and crown Myrcella if that was possible but framing only Tommen as illegitimate would be difficult and for the time being, Myrcella is his heir since he has no children of his own. The Stormlanders know that they will never have a Baratheon by blood on the throne if they dispose of Tommen so they accept that having someone whose name is Baratheon is better than a Targaryen or whatever. The Riverlands are ruled by Walder Frey (Or Baelish in the books) and they need the Lannisters supporting them to maintain their power. The Boltons hold the North for now and a new king would likely be less friendly towards them so they stay beholden to Tommen. Tommen has made no effort to stop the raids by the Iron Islands or stop them from crowning their own Kings so why would they try to remove him without the support base to crown one of their own in his place. Lord Baelish might try something but he would be alone with only one Kingdom so he could do very little to force him out on his own. Removing Tommen has become easier for the later but right now, the time is not right for him to be disposed of so everyone important wants to let him keep his crown for the time being.

I hope that clears a few things up, now on to the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ser Davos Seaworth was now Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch, never in a million years would he have imagined this turn of events. When he had decided to join the Night’s Watch after being nominated on the first night of the choosing, he had no expectation that he would be chosen. He had just wanted to help Jon and knew this was where he could do the most.

Then Jon had spoken out on his behalf that first night and he had been the leading vote-getter for most the time since. Jon hadn’t spoken for him after that night and he had slowly lost the support of a good portion of the Targaryen loyalists as doubt set in about who he now claimed to be. He had gathered men of his own to vote for him with his own opinions and charisma so he hadn’t really lost much ground but Jon had decided that it had been long enough and he was ready to progress his plans so he ended the choosing prematurely.

His decision or well maybe Sansa’s decision to light him on fire had a vast majority of the Night’s
Watch bowing down to Jon and declaring him their King. That had led to Davos regaining all the Targaryen loyalists’ allegiance in the choosing as he was their King’s chosen candidate. More importantly, that had led to Ser Denner Frostfinger losing his entire support base as even those who hadn’t bowed had still been cowed enough to not risk the Dragon’s wrath by supporting a man who confessed to being a bystander to regicide. It was a dishonorable way to become Lord Commander but honor never won wars so Davos could really not care less.

Ser Davos was even less certain now than ever before that he was the right man for the role of Lord Commander. He could hardly even read and write even less and now he was Lord Commander at a castle without a Maester. He needed to find a well-educated steward immediately or else his term as Lord Commander would be a very ineffectual one. He wondered what Jon was thinking when he decided to send Sam to study at the Citadel instead of just request a new Maester, that was something that Davos would rectify immediately.

There was a knock on the door to his new office and Davos rose himself to go and let whoever was outside in, the small things he would have to do until he had his own steward were certainly an oddity.

The rightful king, Jon Targaryen as he assumed he now finally wanted to be called stood outside his door. “Lord Commander,” Jon greeted him with a small smile and a slight dip of his head.

“Your Grace,” Davos returned with a much deeper bow as he stepped aside to give his king entrance.

Jon grimaced. “I suppose I have to get used to that now.” He said with a slight laugh.

“I’m sure it is an adjustment, Your Grace.” Davos chuckled back.

Jon entered and walked towards the desk that had once been his own. Ser Davos closed the door and turned to face his king. “I need the permission of the Lord Commander to send out ravens.” He said bluntly.

“Of course, you have no need to ask, Your Grace.” Davos agreed immediately. “May I ask what for though?” Davos asked hesitantly, his curiosity getting the best of him.

Jon frowned but answered anyway. “The Lord Commander is theoretically in charge of all outgoing messages from Castle Black, it’s not a rule actually practiced but it is still common
courtesy to ask.” He ran a hand through his hair and hesitantly answered the question part of Davos’s statement. “I’m sending letters to all the Lords of the Northern Houses asking for their allegiance in my quest to take back the north and reclaim the Iron Throne for my House.”

Davos nodded in understanding. “It’s finally time then, Your Grace?”

Jon sighed. “Unfortunately, it has to be after my sister’s rash actions. I’m making my move now whether we are ready to or not since the news of my heritage being leaked means enemies will soon be at our door.”

Davos nodded and fell silent. “Any advice for the new Lord Commander from the previous one?”

Jon laughed. “That’s not something I ever expected you to say. Assume that if you do something your brothers don’t like that they will kill you for it.” Jon joked. “Keep your distance from your enemies.”

Davos frowned at the poor advice, it must be hard for Jon to think back on his time as Lord Commander after being betrayed and murdered. “When do you leave?” He asked changing the subject in an attempt to salvage the conversation.

Jon sighed. “We leave at first light tomorrow. We’ll march south with the wildlings to retake the North. Unfortunately, I can’t afford to stay any longer we have to strike quickly before the Boltons and Lannisters realize what I’m planning. I wish I could be here for Thorne’s execution but I have no say in the matter.”

Davos fell silent for a moment. “I hate to ask this but is there any chance you could leave some wildlings here to man the wall? We’re seriously undermanned and we need to have men stationed at all of the castles if we’re to aptly defend it from the Others when they march on the wall.” That was the intention when Jon had let the wildlings settle the gift, their warriors were supposed to help defend the wall.

Jon shook his head. “No. I need all the men we can get right now, even with all of the wildlings our fighting force is less than half of that which we expect the Boltons to have.” Davos was not surprised by the refusal but he had hoped that Jon could spare at least one-hundred men for him. “I will, however, promise that when we defeat the Boltons army I’ll send all prisoners that have no value as hostages up to help defend the wall. So expect a massive influx of men in the coming months.”
Davos nodded his agreement with Jon’s offer that he really had no choice but to accept. “I wish you good fortune in the wars to come, Your Grace.”

They fell silent once more before Davos spoke once again. “Do you happen to know of any stewards who are literate? I’m afraid my reading and writing skills are rather subpar for a Lord Commander.”

Jon laughed aloud. “Bowen Marsh would be the obvious choice but for obvious reasons, he’s not a plausible choice. Sam is at the Citadel so he’s not really an option either. Satin is somewhat literate but I’m afraid there is not much else currently available at Castle Black.”

Davos nodded and decided to send for Satin as soon as Jon left. “Why did you send Sam to the Citadel instead of just requesting a new Maester?” He didn’t speak it aloud but he wondered if it was just Jon showing favoritism to his close friend.

“I needed someone who believed in the Others existence to research how we can defeat them.” Jon hesitated and seemed to war with himself about if he should expand on his answer but eventually sighed and expanded on his answer. “I sent Sam and Gilly with Mance’s babe to the citadel to protect the child from the red witch in case she decided that she needed to sacrifice him for his King’s Blood. Perhaps, if I hadn’t done so, Shireen wouldn’t have been sacrificed and I would still be dead.”

Davos pushed away the conflicting emotions on how he wished that the baby had died instead of Shireen, the child was innocent, they didn’t deserve to die and without Shireen’s sacrifice Jon would be dead and they would all die when the Others came and the seven kingdoms were unprepared. Perhaps, Shireen would have been taken captive by the Boltons and they would be torturing her right now. Davos shook his head. He couldn’t dwell on what if’s. He definitely did need a new Maester, however, and he resolved to request one immediately.

Jon turned and headed back for the door then paused. “In a few weeks, Ser Jorah Mormont will arrive at Castle Black on behalf of my aunt, Queen Daenerys Targaryen in order to treat with me. Inform him and him only that I am at the Dreadfort and to head there in order to negotiate with me. Provide him a fresh mount and food for his journey if needed.”

Davos wanted to ask how Jon knew that Queen Daenerys was sending someone to treat with him and how he knew who specifically that was but Davos had served under Stannis long enough to know it was not his place to question the King. “I will do so, Your Grace.” Davos agreed

Jon smiled. “Thank you, Lord Commander. I will leave you to your business, I’m sure you have
lots to do now that you’re Lord Commander and I have letters to send.” Davos bowed and Jon left without another word.

Davos sighed and sat at his desk. He too had letters to send informing all of the Lord Paramounts of the Kingdoms that he was now the 999th Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch, he was sure that Stannis’s hand being Lord Commander was sure to go over swimmingly in the capital.

Ser Davos looked down at all the builders in the watch with some disgust. The builders were a miniscule portion of the Night’s Watch with only eight and thirty members. Davos understood why there were so few when they previously only needed to maintain three castles until Jon made it four but now with Davos wanting to restore all of the castles along the wall to defend it when the time came, he needed probably ten times as many builders. Hopefully, Jon would win his war quickly so he could send more people to defend the wall.

“Thank you, all for coming,” Davos said in greeting as he stood up and addressed all of the builders he had called together. “The builders are maybe the most essential part of the watch and in recent years they’ve been largely neglected and fallen to the wayside. I mean to change that.”

“Undoubtedly this order is understaffed and with the previous first builder being on death’s row for his treason, we are without any chain of command in this order. I’m afraid that I do not know enough to fairly appoint a new first builder in Yarwyck’s place. Which is why I propose that amongst the other members of your order, you choose his successor yourself.”

The room did not reply for a long while so Davos encouraged them. “Any volunteers?”

An older and stout man stood up. “I would like to be the first builder.” He declared pompously.

A man with a wooden leg laughed. “Can it, Kegs. You can barely even follow instructions. Yet alone give them.”

Kegs rounded on him. “And who is Boot? You?” He sneered. “You can’t even work properly. You’re just a glorified steward.”

The man Davos supposed must be named Boot smiled. “No, not me. The only choice for first
builder is Othell Yarwyck. Despite his treason we need him. He is literate and has experience commanding us, the rest of us would be ineffectual leaders of the order. He knows more of the state of the wall than any of us. We just do what we are told, he figures out what needs to be done.”

Davos frowned surely they couldn’t really want to follow the man who had killed their previous Lord Commander, someone who they had just bowed down to only yesterday. Apparently Davos wasn’t the only one with that train of thought. “He killed our Lord Commander, he killed our King.” Halder protested vehemently.

“He is no king of mine.” Someone spat and there were a few cheers in agreement at that statement. Evidently, their decision to kneel had been one borne out of fear but now that Jon was gone, they were no longer afraid of speaking against him. The worst part was as the Night’s Watch swore no part in the wars of man, Davos could not chastise them for their disrespect.

“It’s still treason,” Another man argued back. “He was our Lord Commander.”

“It is.” Boot acknowledged with a slight dip of his head. “Regardless, of what he did in the past, we have to put the watch first and we need Yarwyck.”

They were getting nowhere in choosing a first builder, perhaps he would talk to some of them in private and choose the first builder himself if this persists. Davos cleared his throat loudly and redirected their attention back towards him. “It appears we will not yet choose the first builder today, regardless we still have things we need to discuss.”

“The Night’s Watch only has men posted at four garrisons currently, with the Others fast approaching we need to have the entire wall defended. To do that, we need builders to repair the damages done to them and make them inhabitable. We also need builders to work on siege weapons to place along the wall in case of an attack from the North or South.”

A burly man that Davos did not recognize laughed at that. “Even if it only took one man to do each task, we still would not have enough builders to restore all of the castles. This is why an outsider should have never been made Lord Commander.”

Davos frowned slightly. “I’m aware of that Ser. I do not mean to restore all of the castles at once, we do not have the men to do so. I need to know which ones are the closest to inhabitable so we can prioritize those spots. We do need more builders which is why in the coming days, I plan to transfer stewards into the order of builders for the time being.” Davos knew that was likely a controversial opinion, once your order was chosen it was supposed to be for life but Davos had to
bend and even break the rules in order to survive the winter.

“Who here is familiar with the status of the other castles and which ones are the closest to functional?” Davos asked once more.

The builders were silent for a moment before once again Boot spoke for them. “Othell Yarwyck might know.”

Davos resisted the urge to groan at Boot’s stubborn loyalty to a traitor. “Anyone else?”

Halder shuffled his feet and his boots scraped the floor making a horrible screech. “Yarwyck is a traitor and deserves to die but he is the only one aware of the conditions of all the castles. That was his job as first builder not ours.”

Davos sighed. “Satin!” He addressed his new steward. “Go the Ice cells and request for Othell Yarwyck to be brought here.” He would not forgive Yarwyck’s transgressions but he would use his knowledge to do his duty.”

It was only a few minutes later that Yarwyck was escorted in to see them. His arms were bound in fetters and it was clear that he was still a prisoner despite them needing his expertise.

“Othell Yarwyck.” Davos greeted him coldly as Yarwyck took a seat at the table closest to Davos.

“Ser Davos,” Yarwyck said plainly. “I never imagined you would be the next Lord Commander.”

Davos chuckled slightly in spite of himself. “Neither did I.” He regained his bearings and immediately got to business. “I hear you’re the only one who knows the conditions of the other castles and what it would take to repair them.”

“I am.” Yarwyck conceded.

“Which castles would take the least effort to restore?”
Yarwyck hesitated, debating on if he should try to leverage the knowledge to save his life before shaking his head and responding. “Greyguard is not far from being inhabitable. Queens Gate is also not far from being usable. On the eastern side of the wall, I would say that Long Barrow is closest to being functional although it would still take considerably more work than Queens Gate and Greyguard.”

Davos nodded. Queensgate was not at all a priority as it was the closest castle west from Castle Black but Greyguard and Long Barrow were a good distance from the other manned castles and would make it much easier to defend the wall when the time came. With the Nightfort already playing a similar role on the western side of the wall, Long Barrow had to be the priority. “How many men would it take to restore Long Barrow within a moon?” He asked aloud.

Yarwyck froze and wiggled his fingers as he thought about it. “Probably all of us and even then I’m not sure it’s all that feasible.” He answered honestly. “We don’t have enough builders in order to restore the castle at an accelerated pace and it is a few day ride from here and we’ll need to move supplies back and forth. I’m also the only one who knows the extent of the damage there and even then it’s been a year since I last assessed it and the wildlings have raided the wall since so I couldn’t say if it’s still in the same condition.”

Davos sighed internally. It appeared that they might really need Othell Yarwyck after all. Could he really forgive him for killing his Lord Commander and King? Would he ever feel safe if he let someone who already killed his Lord Commander off the hook? Would it encourage more people to undermine him? The answer to all of those questions was unfortunately yes. He needed the experience Yarwyck had as first builder more than he needed to avenge the Lord Commander. He was positive that Edd would hate him for this and regret nominating him but Davos had to do what was best for the watch not himself or anyone else, not even his King. Still, he could punish Yarwyck. He needed him alive, but that didn’t stop him from punishing him at all.

“Tell me, Yarwyck, what hand do you hold a sword with?” Davos asked quietly.

Othell Yarwyck blinked owlishly not understand why he was asking such a question but still answered it. “My right m’ lord.”

Davos stood, unsheathed his new sword, and brought it down on Yarwyck’s right wrist that was resting on the table.

Yarwyck screamed in pain and cursed Davos’s name. Davos ignored him and spoke softly but menacingly to him. “It appears the Night’s Watch still has need of your services so I can not take your head for your treason. This time, you only lose your hand for your treason but do anything to betray the watch ever again and it will be your head that winds up on a spike.”
Yarwyck glared at him but dipped his head. “Thank you, for your mercy, m’ lord.” He hissed through gritted teeth as he tried to refrain from screaming out in pain.

Davos turned back towards his steward, Satin. “Take him to get medical assistance, it wouldn’t do for him to die now. We need him.”

Satin nodded and hauled Yarwyck up by his non-injured arm as he dragged him out of the room.

Ser Davos turned back towards the other builders who were looking at him differently. Some were angered but whether that was over his maiming of Yarwyck or him sparing Yarwyck’s life, it was hard for Davos to say. Others looked impressed by how he handled it and a few more looked sick when they took in the sight of the severed hand lying on the table Yarwyck had been at.

“Othell Yarwyck will remain first builder for the time being. All of you, are to prepare to head to Long Barrow to restore the castle so we can restock it with men once it is complete. You are not to leave yet as once I meet with the Stewards you will have new recruits to transfer into your order. If anyone overhears Yarwyck or anyone else planning to betray the Night’s Watch you are to send word to me immediately.

“Yarwyck will remain first builder due to his understanding of the endeavor but Boot is in charge of any disciplinary issues while you are away from an occupied castle.

“Thank you, Lord Commander.” Boot replied with a slight nod to show he accepted the responsibility.

“You are dismissed,” Davos declared, and immediately the men all stood up. “Go and carry out your assignments with haste.”

Davos watched them leave until he was alone in the room. Davos sighed in relief, that one was finally over now all that was left was to meet with the other two orders. Surely, they couldn’t go much worse, right?
The meeting with the Stewards was surprisingly pleasant. A number of them had been eager to be reassigned to the builders and he ended up having too many volunteers. He had re-assigned almost one-hundred men from the largest order and had ended up sending a smaller contingent of men to Greyguard to repair that castle along with the much larger group that would head down to Long Barrow led by Othell Yarwyck.

Illiteracy was a serious issue among the members of the Night’s Watch at the present time. The complete lack of literate members almost made Ser Davos pardon Bowen Marsh as well but he didn’t need him like he did Yarwyck, Marsh just made life easier for him. Literacy was not a requirement they needed all of their men to meet it just made things simpler and quicker, as long as every castle had at least one literate steward they could theoretically function, and while they were lacking they weren’t in that dire of straits yet.

The stewards had always been the largest order in the Night’s Watch and that had not changed even after Davos’s aggressive re-assignments. They just now had 200 members compared to 150 builders and rangers, rather than the 300+ they had previously.

The meeting with the Rangers had gone smoothly enough as he gave them their new assignments. The frequency and locations the Rangers went to had dropped drastically as right now defending the wall was more important than exploring an abandoned wasteland, bereft of all human life with the Free Folk now being south of the wall. Without Dragon Glass or Valyrian Steel, it was foolhardy to engage the wights or the Others so they mostly had to leave them alone, just spying on their actions from a somewhat safe distance.

Davos had re-assigned many of the literate rangers to the stewards and builders, something that none of them were very happy about but it needed to be done. He had also taken a significant portion of the rangers and given them the job of training all the members in combat as everyone needed to be proficient when the Others marched on the wall. He also set a portion of them to training with aiming and reloading ballistas as he assumed they would play a crucial part in their defense of the wall.

Suffice to say not very many people were happy with him. Oddly enough, Ser Denner had supported his decisions and because of that they were accepted fairly easily. Hence why he had asked Ser Denner to stay behind, he had thought Ser Denner would be difficult to work with and he would need to reassign him to another castle to keep him from plotting his demise or at least not stopping a mutiny as he had with Jon.

“Ser Denner,” Davos said in greeting once they were alone and gestured for him to take the seat across from him.

“You wanted to speak to me, Lord Commander?” Ser Denner said as he did as Davos had bidded.
Davos nodded. “I did. I was surprised to see you supporting the reshuffling of the watch and the lack of…” Davos trailed off not wanting to seem rude.

“You expected me to oppose and undermine you because I let King Jon die.” Ser Denner concluded.

“I did,” Davos admitted.

Ser Denner sighed audibly. “I didn’t let the king die for personal reasons, I did it for the watch. I didn’t think you were what’s best for the watch for the same reason I didn’t think the King was the best choice. Through no fault of your own, you will find few allies outside of the wall. You were hand to Stannis that makes it hard for you to find allies in the capital and from the Crown. The King was believed to be the son of a traitor and the brother of a usurper.”

Davos nodded in understanding but raised an eyebrow. “So what changed?”

“King Jon decided not to stay dead and proclaimed himself as a Targaryen in such a public manner.” Ser Denner chuckled. “After that display, King Tommen is extremely unlikely to send us any aid since we harbored King Jon for so long unless we delivered his head on a spike and even then he might just grow a new one.”

“Aid from King Tommen is impossible now so we might as well hedge our bets on King Jon and pray he wins the throne so we can survive the winter. I’ve always been willing to do what it takes in order for the world to survive the coming winter, just what it takes has now shifted with Jon Waters proclaiming himself as the Targaryen heir.”

“I like what you plan on doing and it’s not too dissimilar from what I would have done as Lord Commander, the defense of the wall should be our first priority above all else right now. My methods would have been a bit different but it is a smart decision to re-assign members to areas of higher priority especially the rangers having a much lesser role without the wildlings.

Davos nodded in acceptance with the logical reasoning and came to a decision. “You’re a good commander, Ser Denner. I plan to name you castellan of Long Barrow once it is inhabitable.”

“I’m honored Lord Commander Davos.” Ser Denner said gratefully before chuckling again. “I’m surprised I’m not being put in a noose for my part in King Jon’s demise.”
Davos frowned slightly. “While you and all the other men who participated in the mutiny do probably deserve death for your treason we, unfortunately, cannot afford to execute a dozen men for it. The watch has to come first before avenging the King.”

Ser Denner nodded in agreement. “I’m presuming that only Yarwyck, Marsh and Thorne are being executed for the crime then?”

Davos shook his head in regret. “Unfortunately we need Yarwyck too much to execute him. He lost a hand for his crime but will keep his life. Ser Alliser Thorne and Bowen Marsh will be hung tonight.”

Ser Denner was taken aback. “I’m impressed, Ser Davos. I thought your loyalty to the King would win out over the good of the watch. It’s the right decision to spare him, the same one I would have made. You have my support, Lord Commander.”

Davos did not trust Ser Denner and probably never would but he appreciated the support all the same. He let the unspoken he would also spare Thorne and Marsh bit stay unsaid. He needed allies within the watch, garrisoning the other castles and if Ser Denner was willing to respect and encourage others to accept his decisions then he would gladly take the help. Despite the disastrous showing on the final night of the choosing, Ser Denner was well respected and oft-listened to amongst the watch, and with King Jon gone he would gain a following again as fear of him no longer acted as a deterrent. If Ser Denner was truly an ally then he would be a massive boon and help to quell an uprising against him like there was against Jon.

“I’d argue that loyalty to King Jon is what is best for the watch and the realm.” Davos countered calmly. “He knows the threat we are dealing with and has already sworn to send all prisoners he captures to the Wall. With him on the throne we can actually survive the winter.”

Ser Denner nodded. “True. We better pray that he wins then.”

“Aye.” Davos agreed easily. They certainly had better pray for that or else it wouldn’t just be the end of the Night’s Watch but life itself.
The time had finally arrived and Davos would admit he wished it hadn’t. He was about to execute Ser Alliser Thorne and Bowen Marsh for their treason. Davos understood that they both deserved death for killing his King and was glad that they would die but he would admit that he wasn’t entirely comfortable executing them himself. He had never enjoyed watching executions when he served with Stannis and he had never served as an executioner before. Still, he had to be the one to do it or else he would never gain the respect of the men who he now called his brothers. As unpleasant as it might feel, it was necessary.

“Brothers!” He called out to the crowd of all the men who served in the Night’s Watch that had flocked in the courtyard to witness the executions. “We stand here today because five of our own brothers have committed treason! We are here because they chose to murder their Lord Commander that they were sworn to serve. We all stand here as witnesses for the execution of our brothers Bowen Marsh and Ser Alliser Thorne.”

Ser Davos walked towards the platform that held Bowen Marsh who was visibly trembling at the thought of his pending execution. “Bowen Marsh,” He addressed the sniveling coward. “Have you any last words, now is the time.”

Bowen Marsh whimpered pathetically. “Please Lord Command, have mercy. I made a mistake. I can still serve you- I can still serve the watch. Please don’t kill me,” He begged. “You spared Yarwyck, surely you can spare me as well. I can still be useful. I wasn’t even the one-”

Davos snarled and kicked the box out from underneath him, tired of hearing him winge. The noose tightened around his neck and the traitor hung suspended over the ground, flopping weakly as he tried to prevent the end. His face was purple by the time his body finally gave out.

He then turned to Ser Alliser Thorne and stood in front of the box that he stood on, which prevented him from death for a short time. “Ser Alliser Thorne,” He greeted with some anger in his voice. “Have you any last words, this is the time.”

Ser Alliser had not taken his imprisonment after Jon’s resurrection well. He was gaunt and forlorn. His face looked like it had aged a hundred years in the last month. Davos felt no pity for the man, he deserved to suffer after killing his Lord Commander and King.

Ser Alliser swallowed audibly, a sound he was sure that everyone heard in the courtyard. “I conspired against and killed my Lord Commander.” He spoke loud enough that everyone else could hear him speak. “I committed treason of the highest order. I not only killed my commanding officer but my King.”
“Long live King Jon of House Targaryen. I killed him but the dragon rose up from the ashes. I killed my King and for that I choose death.” Ser Alliser said resolutely

Then, to everyone’s surprise, Ser Alliser jumped backward off of the crate holding him, choosing to hang himself now rather than wait for Davos to do it. Davos watched dispassionately as he hung there suspended in the air, twitching, and flailing before finally the lack of air got to him and his movements ceased.

Davos turned away from them and looked over to Satin. “Take them down and burn their bodies,” He said quietly before stepping back inside, and away from the silent crowd staring at him.

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“Lord Commander,” Satin said as he entered the office that Ser Davos now called his own after being elected as Lord Commander almost three weeks ago. “There is a man here searching for King Jon. He claims he was sent as an envoy by Daenerys Targaryen.”

Davos blinked. He had forgotten about the envoy that Jon had claimed his aunt would be sending three weeks ago. A Ser Jorah Mormont, he had thought the envoy had been closer to the Castle if Jon knew who exactly it was already. Somehow Jon had sources in Meereen where Queen Daenerys was rumored to be with her dragons in order to know so far in advance who she was sending or perhaps he had just guessed who it would be but he had sounded so certain that Davos doubted it was the latter.

“Is it Ser Jorah Mormont?” Davos asked curiously. He would see the man either way but he would only inform him of Jon’s plans if he was who Jon claimed he would be.

“He only introduced himself as Jorah.” Satin replied with a quirked eyebrow in askance that Davos ignored.

“Send him in to see me,” Davos ordered and Satin left the room without another word uttered back to him.

Satin soon re-emerged with an older gentleman with a burly build and a thick black beard with very little hair on the top of his head. He carried a longsword on his hip with a pair of daggers laced on the other one. A former slaver Davos knew, he had been banished from the North but Daenerys Targaryen had apparently pardoned him and Jon planned on honoring her pardon for
“You are Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch?” The man that Davos assumed was Ser Jorah Mormont asked as his eyes appraised his form.

“I am, Lord Davos Seaworth.” Davos confirmed and gestured for the man to take his seat across from him.

“I am here on behalf of Her Grace, Queen Daenerys Targaryen to meet with her nephew, Prince Jon Targaryen.” The man told him as he ignored the seat that Ser Davos had offered him.

Davos did not reply to his request. “You are Ser Jorah Mormont?” Davos asked the man.

He blinked in surprise and lightly shook his head. “I was.”

Davos frowned slightly at the past tense address but figured that his Queen had just given him a new name or something. “King Jon told me to expect your arrival before he left three weeks ago.” He made sure to put extra emphasis on the word King. Even if Jon was a bastard he was still the only Targaryen male with a claim to the throne and well it was unfair, a female had never inherited the throne and that would work in Jon’s favor in his campaign.

Jorah’s jaw dropped. “Prince Jon knew I was coming?” He asked in disbelief.

Davos nodded. “He did. The King told me to tell you and you alone that he was marching on the Dreadfort and that you could rendezvous with him there to discuss terms. He too is interested in an alliance with his aunt.”

Ser Jorah nodded and stuck out his hand “It appears that I must leave then, I have a mission to carry out. It was a pleasure to meet you, Lord Commander.”

Davos stuck out his own hand and took Ser Jorah’s meaty palm in his grip. “Nightfall is almost here, you’re welcome to stay for the night and set out in the morning.” That was what his King had ordered after all. Davos didn't like the man but he would not forget his necessities.
Ser Jorah smiled. “Are you sure? I wouldn’t want to infringe on your hospitality.”

“I’m sure, the King insisted that I provide you with a fresh mount and food for your journey if you need any of it, this should fall under that umbrella and even if it didn’t, I would still insist. We have more than enough room for you to stay.” Davos smiled, completely unsincere, and let go of Ser Jorah’s sweaty palm.

Ser Jorah finally took the seat that was offered to him. “How did Prince Jon know that I was coming? Why would he vouch for a former slaver?” He asked in clear confusion.

Davos wondered the same himself. “I couldn’t say. You’ll have to ask him yourself when you see him, I only do as he had commanded of me.”

Ser Jorah fell silent for a moment. “My father was Lord Commander when I was last in Westeros. Did you serve under him? Do you know how he died?”

Ser Davos chuckled. “I’m afraid not, I’ve only been in the watch for a month myself.”

Ser Jorah stared at him. “Surely, you jape. How were you ever chosen as Lord Commander?”

Ser Davos chuckled once more. “King Jon was lit on fire at the choosing so everyone threw their support behind his candidate.”

Ser Jorah leaned forward. “The rumors are true? He really is unburnt? He really died and came back?”

Davos smiled softly. “Aye. He did. I could hardly believe it when I first saw it myself. We thought he had woken up as a wight when he woke up in his funeral pyre but he was still himself somehow alive and unburnt after being dead for seven days.”

“How did that happen?” Ser Jorah pressed.

Davos sighed and glanced out the window. “Lord Stannis Baratheon had a red priestess that helped him in his quest to claim the throne. When he marched south of her to take Winterfell from the
Bolton’s, his priestess convinced him that a great sacrifice would be needed to win the battle.” Davos clenched his jaw and balled his one good hand into a fist. “He sacrificed his own daughter, the Princess Shireen.” Davos tried to keep calm but he couldn’t stop his anger from coming across in his words.

“Stannis lost that battle and the red witch fled back here to Castle Black. When King Jon was murdered in a mutiny she attempted to bring him back using some of her blood magic. We had thought she failed but when he was bound to his funeral pyre, he rose up out of it alive even after seven days spent dead. He burnt the bitch alive for her murder of the Princess Shireen.”

Jorah nodded breathlessly. “Only death can pay for life.” He whispered to himself.

Davos nodded in agreement. “That is what Jon said the moment he found out who brought him back.”

Ser Jorah nodded before changing the subject once more. “So, tell me about Prince Jon? I’ve been sent to get a measure of who he is.”

Davos smiled and began to tell Ser Jorah about the best man he knew.

Chapter End Notes

There are a total of nine builders listed on the ASOIAF wiki, two of whom are dead. None of those members come from a noble house and as such are likely illiterate considering the time period. There are thirty-five stewards and sixty-four rangers. The builders are clearly undermanned and with the complete lack of wildlings beyond the wall they are probably the most important order. In the past maybe the priority was venturing beyond the wall was a priority but the only thing that is out there still are the Others and their army. Seeing as how they can't kill the Others, sending anything more than the occasional scout to track their movements is a suicide mission. The watch has to focus on holding the wall when the Others march on them with their army. Hence the priority on rebuilding the wall from Davos.

The Stewards are largely a luxury for the ones ill-suited for combat and the Rangers don't have to be half that size when they only serve as scouts and hunters now. Davos re-assigns a number of men to bolster the weakest and most important unit since he understands that if even one spot in the wall is unmanned they could easily fall.

Davos leaving Yarwyck alive is a terrible choice he's forced to make but he has to prioritize the watch over his loyalty to Jon. As the First Builder he's going to have
knowledge of techniques and have experience teaching his craft. When there are over a hundred transfers that has to be prioritized. They need maximum competency above all else as not just their lives are at stake but every life in all of Westeros.

Writing executions sucks but this one needed to happen. Ser Alliser was a staunch Targaryen loyalist and finding out he murdered the last male Targaryen was always going to have a huge effect on him. He already felt slightly guilty for betraying his Lord Commander since he holds the Night's Watch in such esteem and treats his vows seriously. Finding out that the same Lord Commander he killed was also his King is probably enough for him to become suicidal.

Next update will be on Friday and it'll be Jon's POV as he marches south to take the Dreadfort.
Jon VI

Chapter Summary

Jon marches south to take a castle.

Chapter Notes

To the people who continuously ask when Davos will remember that he has a wife and children, I feel the need to remind you that this is based off of the show primarily. In the show, he only has one son, who died in the battle of the Blackwater. His wife might be alive or she might not, I couldn't say considering he never mentions her and continues to linger by Stannis and then Jon's side and later joins Bran's council rather than return to his family. If Davos does still have a living wife, then it is clearly a loveless marriage or else she would have been mentioned at some point.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jon smiled as Sansa entered his tent to share her life with him for the first time since that disastrous last encounter where she had tried to manipulate him, Jon had snapped at her then went to see Daenerys and sulk only to find out that she somehow knew about his resurrection and who his parents were. That had been an unexpected development, to say the least.

At first, once he was done conversing with his Daenerys he had panicked and sprinted towards the ravenry where he was assured that they were still on lock-down. He had then headed to the Free Folk camps and checked in with his wargs to see if the Boltons or anyone else knew of his heritage but they still did not know- if they had he would have moved immediately, but even now he had heard nothing. Somehow, Varys had found out but no one else knew yet which made little sense given how Meereen was much further from the wall than Winterfell or even King’s Landing yet that was somehow the case. Varys had to have sources amongst the Free Folk which was a terrifying thought as it made it all the harder to trust them or anyone really if even they would sell his secrets to the spider. The spider was an impossibility, everyone knew that. He had always had a way of finding out the most secure of secrets and apparently Jon’s resurrection was no exception to that. Perhaps it was magic of some sort.

Jon was exceedingly grateful that Lord Varys now served his Daenerys in Meereen and not King Tommen anymore as if the Lannisters were to have found out that early in the game, they would be doomed. Even now they might be doomed after Sansa’s impatience had cost them the element of surprise and thrown his previous plan to the wayside. Now they were stuck with a more conventional war strategy and they would probably lose even if they only were fighting the Boltons’ northern forces. Or Jon would reveal his trump card if the need arose.
They had sent out letters to all the Lords of the Northern Houses requesting aid but he doubted anyone would show up for him, it was too risky to side with a usurper in a failed rebellion. Most the Houses would refuse to participate and Jon wouldn’t bother trying to change their mind, he knew it would be a fruitless endeavor. Even if they did offer to come Jon would have been hesitant to accept their aid and let them into his camps. They were likely all spies and traitors who would only get him killed. He would earn their loyalty when he defeated the Boltons.

Sansa smiled and curtsied. “Your Grace.” She chimed sweetly in greeting and then took a seat on the floor beside him.

“You can still call me Jon, you know.” Jon replied with a slight smile of his own. In spite of her foolishness, they were still the last of the Starks and Jon didn't want them to be at each other's throats.

Sansa frowned slightly. “I owe you an apology, Jon. I let my desire for revenge get the best of me and screwed up all of your plans.”

Jon nodded in agreement. “You did.” He then sighed audibly. “That’s all in the past now, it does us no good to look back and get lost. Let’s just endeavor to do better in the future. We need to be able to trust each other.”

“I do want to trust you, Jon, it's just hard after everything.”

Jon smiled and placed a hand on her knee. “I completely understand. It’s certainly hard to trust anyone after all that’s happened since we left Winterfell.”

“You said you wanted to hear about what happened at Joffrey’s wedding? How I escaped?” Sansa asked after a moment of awkward silence.

Jon nodded. “I did.” After a moment he added some false platitudes at the end. “Of course, if you aren’t ready to share it then I won’t force you.”

Sansa shook her head. “I do. It’s just hard.”

Jon nodded and took her hand in what he hoped was a comforting gesture.
“I was unknowingly involved in a plot to murder Joffrey orchestrated by Lord Baelish and Lady Olenna Tyrell.” Sansa began to explain.

Jon blinked in surprise. Lady Tyrell had not been who he would have suspected of murdering Joffrey, not at his wedding to her granddaughter. That was valuable information they could use to hopefully drive a wedge between the Tyrells and the crown.

“Ser Dontos Hollard showed up drunk to a tourney and was unable to ride as a result. Joffrey wanted him to be drowned in wine for his folly.” Sansa said with some disgust. “I plead for his life and instead he was made a fool in the King’s Court.”

Sansa shook her head and Jon squeezed her hand gently to reassure her. “In my foolishness, I thought that he actually cared for me and wanted to repay me for sparing his life but he was just using me. He gave me a beautiful amethyst necklace that he claimed was a family heirloom and I wore it to Joffrey’s wedding.”

“One of the Amethysts was a fake, filled with poison. During the wedding, someone removed it from my neck and dropped it in Joffrey’s chalice. He died and Lord Tyrion was framed as Ser Dontos ferreted me away in the confusion. The Tyrells wanted Tyrion framed so I could marry Willas and give them control of the north but Littlefinger wanted me to himself.”

Sansa heaved a deep shuddering breath and Jon squeezed her hand again. There were tears in the corner of her eyes and she looked to be on the verge of breaking down. A part of Jon wanted to stop her and protect her from all of this but he needed to know so he did nothing. “Littlefinger was in love with my mother,” Sansa explained. “After her death, he desired me in her place. He was sweet and kind and did everything to protect me. I looked up to him and trusted him.” Sansa laughed bitterly. “I was a fool. Littlefinger just lusted after me, he kissed me and Aunt Lysa saw.”

She smiled sadly. “At first I had thought he truly cared about me because of my mother. He was sweet and kind and did everything to protect me. I looked up to him and trusted him.” Sansa laughed bitterly. “I was a fool. Littlefinger just lusted after me, he kissed me and Aunt Lysa saw.”

Sansa sniffled. “Aunt Lysa confronted me and raged at me for stealing her dear sweet Petyr from her just like my mother had. She called me and mother whores and threatened to have me thrown through the moon door for trying to steal Petyr.” Jon stiffened at the thought of Sansa falling to her death. “Littlefinger came in and comforted my aunt assuring her that he only ever loved one person and then pushed her through the moon door claiming he only loved my mother. We lied and claimed she committed suicide but I killed her. I killed my aunt.” Sansa sobbed.
“It wasn’t your fault,” Jon protested. “Lord Baelish killed your aunt, not you. He kissed you and he pushed her to her death, not you.”

Sansa nodded but Jon knew she did not agree with him and blamed herself. Jon hugged her gently and for a moment he held her in silence before she pulled away and resumed her tale. “I was so stupid, I thought that his decision to murder my aunt proved that he loved me and was a hero. I trusted him, looked up to him, and enjoyed being around him.” She clenched her hands into fists at her side. “He betrayed me and sold me to the Boltons.” She spat venomously.

Jon blinked owlishly in surprise. “Why?” Sansa gave him a puzzling look so he elaborated. “What did he gain by doing that? What was his end goal?”

Sansa laughed. “He wants the same thing that all men do. Power and to sit on the Iron Throne with me as his Queen.”

Jon laughed. “I can assure you that all men do not want that.”

Sansa hit his shoulder playfully. “Every man but you.” She amended.

Jon was sure that Baelish did want that but how did selling Sansa accomplish that? He voiced that idea aloud. “How does selling you to the Boltons give him power?

Sansa looked at him as if he was stupid. “Chaos is a ladder, he would always say. By giving me to the Boltons he destroyed their alliance with the crown. He would sow discord in the capital which is an opportunity for him to move up in station. He likely expected me and Ramsay to have a child who no one could contest their claim to the North. When my husband was to mysteriously die, I would rule the north in my sons name. He already basically controls the Vale through young Robyn and ideally, I would have had the North. With two of the largest kingdoms in his grasp and possibly the Riverlands as well through the Tully side of the family, and him being Lord of Harrenhal he would be in a very powerful position. He underestimated Ramsay’s cruelty or simply just didn’t care about how he would treat me.”

Jon’s jaw clenched. “What did that bastard do to you?” He growled. He quickly remembered it was a sensitive topic and calmed down. “You don’t have to answer if you aren’t ready.” He reassured her.

Sansa gave him a sad smile. “I know. I want to.”
Jon gripped her hand and squeezed it tightly.

“Ramsay was awful from the beginning, the moment I met him I should have known that this was a mistake. He had The-”

She was cut off by Varamyr Sixskins entering the tent. “Crow!” He huffed. “There is urgent news that you need to hear immediately.”

Jon frowned. Sansa was finally opening up to him so of course, something would come up now. He was torn between doing his duty as King and dealing with the urgent news or being the brother that his sister needed and that he wanted to be.

Sansa took the decision out of his hands as she squeezed his hand once more and then let go and left the tent, the moment completely gone. Jon knew it would likely be some time before she opened up like that again.

“What is it?” Jon snapped somewhat harsher than he had intended.

“At Last Hearth,” Varamyr explains. “They apparently found Rickon Stark.”

Jon was on his feet in a moment. “Who heard this?”

“Sulfur. She is the rat right now.” Varamyr replied plainly.

Jon did not hesitate to force himself into the rat they had positioned at Last Hearth. There was some struggle to seize control from Sulfur but Jon’s will was stronger than hers, she was no dragon.

Jon dashed across the floor to follow the receding footsteps of Lord Smalljon Umber who was walking down the long hallway while conversing with the maester of their house and another man Jon could not easily recognize. With the rat’s super-sensitive ears he was able to clearly hear their conversation.
“We should bring the boy with us to Winterfell! Lord Bolton will want to use him as a hostage.”
The man Jon did not recognize spat.

“But what if this so called Jon Targaryen wins?” The Smalljon argued. “He would never forgive us for turning over his brother to the Boltons. If we do that and he wins it would be the end of our house. He would burn us all.”

“What if Roose wins?” The man countered. “If they find out that we have Rickon Stark and do not turn him over to them then we’ll be flayed for our treachery. I don’t fear Jon Snow-Waters-Targaryen, whatever the fuck the oathbreaking wildling-loving bastard is calling him now. I do fear Ramsay Bolton, if Lord Snow is anything like his uncle then he’ll only punish us and not the entire house for our treachery.”

“His grandfather is the Mad King and his father is Rhaegar fucking Targaryen. I doubt he is anything like the honorable Ned Stark or even the lovestruck foolish King Robb. He’s likely as mad as the rest of the dragons and will burn us alive.” The Smalljon argued once more. “If Jon Targaryen wins and we aid him then we could have a chance to rise high in the world, if he claims the throne then we could be offered him a place on his council and a very beneficial marriage for little Ned. This is our chance to move up in the world. So yes I fear his retaliation more than the Boltons, Roose’s hold on the North is too fragile to end our house. Jon Targaryen’s will not be so loose. If we betray the Starks and give the Boltons his brother he would not hesitate to eliminate us all, both us and our sons. We have more to gain and less to lose by siding with him in this conflict.”

The other man in favor of siding with the Boltons just growled lowly in reply.

Jon’s heart rate sped up as he struggled to keep pace with the men as they walked through the long hallways. They really had Rickon or at least thought they did, his brother was only a few weeks away from them. They had to strike at Last Hearth and get him back.

There was a blinding pain Jon’s head for a moment, not the rat’s but his. He missed most of the ensuing conversation that had taken place in the last minute. Before it had soon passed and Jon was still in the rat, free of whatever weird pain that was. He quickly resumed his pursuit of the Umbers and tried to listen in on their conversation.

The Smalljon turned to the Maester. “What would you advise us to do with Rickon Stark? Do you have any wisdom you would like to impart to us?”

The Maester smiled his thin lips curling upwards. “Wait, give him to whoever wins, and don’t let
anyone find out that you have him until then. If Lord Snow chooses to attack Last Hearth turn him over and then betray them to the Bolton’s. If he avoids us then keep him hidden until there is a victor. Gain favor with the winner.”

“What if the betrayal fails? What if Lord Snow wises up to your plot, then we’re in a worse spot then if we just gave Rickon Stark to the Boltons.” The Smalljon snarled.

“So don’t betray him then, take all your men with you to Winterfell in order to assist the Bolton’s. Leave Last Hearth undefended so it falls easily and Lord Snow gets his brother back. He would be forced to forgive you for siding with the Boltons if he wins because you kept his brother safe. If he loses then you can say that the castellan acted independently and Rickon wasn’t found until after you left for Winterfell. If the battle looks to be going in his favor then stab the Boltons in the back. Play both sides”

“It’s still too risky.” The man Jon did not recognize argued.

“There will always be risk, you just don’t want to help the Starks, Mors. This is bigger than just paying back King Robb’s stupidity or the Lord Commander’s decision to let wildlings settle in the gift and raid our lands. We have to do what is best for our House, not follow stupid revenge schemes to our grave.” Lord Smalljon Umber explained. “We will follow the Maesters proposed plan and pray that things work out in our favor.”

“If I may Lord Umber, I would like to visit with the boy now and see how he’s settling in, he can’t think that he is a prisoner here if we are to fool Lord Snow.” The Maester asked kindly.

The Smalljon nodded his consent and the Maester split from the other two to turn down a hall. Jon warred with himself for a minute before deciding to follow the Maester instead of the other two. He probably should follow Lord Umber and hear what they were planning but he wanted to see his brother again after so long, he wanted to know if it was truly him before he adjusted his plans.

The moment the Maester opened the door to the room they had Rickon situated in, Jon scampered in behind him. There was no doubt in Jon’s mind that the boy they had was indeed Rickon. Like the rest of the Stark children he took after his mother in looks with long shaggy auburn hair and bright blue eyes. His face was rounded but gaunt due to his life on the run without getting proper food most likely. All thanks to Theon chasing him out of Winterfell. He had aged considerably since Jon last saw him three years ago and was now a boy of six name days.

While his looks might have left some doubt as to who he was, the large black direwolf resting at the foot of the bed did not. That was the direwolf that Rickon had named Shaggydog a lifetime
ago. His green eyes were open and staring at the corner that Jon was cowering in as he observed the Maester. Jon didn’t know how but he knew that the wolf recognized that he was in the rat.

“Am I a prisoner?” He heard Rickon ask calmly.

The Maester shook his head and smiled. “No. You are here to keep you safe from the Boltons until your brother defeats them.” The maester lied kindly to Rickon.

“Robb?” Rickon asked excitedly with a bit of boyish hope.

The Maester shook his head once more, likely trying to appear sympathetic. “Robb died, I’m afraid. No, your half-brother Jon or well cousin maybe.”

Rickon’s brow furrowed in confusion. “The bastard?”

Jon flinched. He knew Rickon was just repeating what his mother had always called Jon but that didn’t mean it didn’t hurt to hear him say that. He knew Rickon wasn’t trying to hurt him or mean anything by it, he likely didn’t even know what it meant and he certainly didn’t know Jon was listening in. Still, it hurt all the same.

The Maester nodded. “Yes. Your father claimed him as his bastard but apparently he is actually the son of your aunt Lyanna Stark and Rhaegar Targaryen.”

Rickon smiled. “It will be nice to see him again after he abandoned me with the rest of them. When will he be here?” Rickon asked eagerly.

The Maester sighed. “I don’t know but we’ll keep you safe until then.”

“Osha too?” Rickon tried to demand but it sounded more like a question.


Rickon stared at him in confusion so he elaborated. “The woman we found with you?”
Rickon nodded. “She is safe as well, I’m afraid you can’t see her, however, no one can know you’re here yet.”

Rickon frowned but didn’t protest too much.

“Would you like for someone to bring you food from dinner?” Rickon nodded in reply.

Jon decided that he had seen enough and pulled himself out of the rat and reopened his human eyes. Looming over him was Varamyr who handed him a glass of water the moment he was back in his own body. “Thanks.” Jon exhaled as he downed the glass to help his suddenly very dry throat.

“You committed an abominable act,” Varamyr said blankly in reply.

Jon blinked owlishly. “A what?” He asked eloquently.

Varamyr laughed. “You don’t know?” He scoffed and shook his head. “Of course, you don’t know you are a southerner.”

Jon frowned at the derogatory tone but wanted to know what he was talking about so he ignored his resentment. “Care to explain it to me?” He asked politely but both of them knew it was a command. They also both knew that Varamyr like most the free folk might choose to ignore his demand, they would fight for him, call him king and even kneel but they would never serve him or listen to everything he told them to do if they didn’t want to. He didn’t yet have the authority despite his title to force them to do so, even if they didn’t want to.

Thankfully Varamyr chose to answer his question. “There are three things that are forbidden for any warg to do as they allow the beast to influence the human’s mind but they also vastly enhance a wargs power, some say it strips away their human morals,” Varamyr explained calmly. “The first is mating as an animal, the second is consuming human flesh and the third…”

Jon at first wanted to scoff at the notion that his decision to eat the Dothraki scout and the Harpies as Rhaegal had influenced his mind but he thought better of it. He had enjoyed watching people burn a little much since returning to his human body and well he put it off as a part of his whole dying thing, he had been very solitary since returning to his body much like dragons were. He had also enjoyed seeing men grovel before him and felt like it was his right to rule he had pinned it on
the Targaryen blood thing but maybe it was Rhaegal influencing his mind. He had been quicker to anger now and his feelings for Daenerys were certainly more possessive then he had ever felt towards anyone ever before.

But did Jon care if it was? He was Rhaegal, there was nothing wrong with being a dragon, with being Targaryen. He was the blood of the dragon, it was only right that he be the dragon he was born to be. The wolf part of him had led to his death, he had to be a dragon now. The world needed a fearsome dragon to defeat the long night not an honorable wolf. He would avoid breaking the rest of these rules just in case but breaking the first one had not been a bad thing and had only benefitted him.

“And the third?” Jon questioned as Varamyr trailed off unwilling to name the third.

“The third is to warg into a human.” Varamyr shuddered.

“That’s possible?” Jon asked in complete disbelief. Did he have to worry about someone taking over his body? That would be terrifying if it could truly happen.

Varamyr frowned. “In theory yes, as far as I know, it’s never been done.”

Jon let it drop and moved on to the previous topic. “What makes you think I broke one of these rules?

Varamyr sat down on the floor and after a moment of hesitation, Jon followed him to the ground. “When you first were in Mance’s camp, when you wanted to turn cloak and pretend to join us on our expedition over the wall, I stole your wolf,” Varamyr explained calmly. “You had a strong bond with him but I was stronger and forced you out of him to take him for my own. Unfortunately, Mance made me return him to you.”

Jon growled lowly at the idea of Ghost being stolen from him and then turned bitter when he realized that if Ghost had been stolen he would still be alive. Varamyr should have kept him. He was glad to know he was more powerful than even Varamyr who was the most powerful warg amongst the Free Folk so he had no worry that Rhaegal could be stolen from him. That would be absolutely catastrophic and could lead Westeros a ruin, ravaged by flames in a dance of dragons.

“I could overpower the bond between you and your direwolf with pure force but I couldn’t force you out of that rat that you had no connection to.” Was that what his headache had been? Varamyr trying to force him out? “Your power has increased drastically as a warg since then and the only
way it could increase so much in such a short time is by committing an abominable act.” Varamyr explained undeniably smug that he had figured it out.

Jon tried to deflect the idea that he had broken one of those rules, that information could be used against him he was sure, it was better that Varamyr thought he was mistaken. “I died.” Jon replied bluntly. “Maybe that is why my power increased.”

Varamyr smiled far too smug for Jon’s liking. “But you didn’t really die, did you, your body died but you’re a warg. You went to your wolf but then he died and you went to something else until your body came back.”

Try as he might Jon couldn’t conceal his shock that Varamyr had puzzled it out so easily. “So what if I did?” He snarled in reply, angered at Varamyr’s casualness towards the truth.

Varamyr held his hands up defensively. “Calm down, King Crow. I won’t tell anyone I just want to know what you went into after you died and which abominable act you committed.”

“Then why do you want to know?” Jon snapped suspiciously.

Varamyr smiled. “Because you’re the first person I know besides myself to do such a thing and I want to know how the effects manifest in different cases with different animals. I know it can’t be your wolf blending over because that was the first one I broke the rules with and you aren’t behaving like a wolf.”

Jon frowned. He should probably want to know how his breaking of the rules would change him. He didn’t trust Varamyr but he was the closest thing to an expert on wargs that there was and Jon needed to know so he would be forced to trust Varamyr for now.

“A lizard,” Jon replied quietly with a half-truth. He wouldn’t tell anyone besides his Daenerys about him being Rhaegal and he was sure Varamyr wouldn’t believe him if he claimed to be a dragon. It was likely that he would figure it out when he called Rhaegal to him but for now, there was no way he would risk that secret getting out yet.

Varamyr nodded. “Interesting. Which act was it?”

Jon frowned knowing how unbelievable his answer would sound but he didn’t know if the acts had
different repercussions so he had to answer honestly. “The first one.”

Varamyr blinked in surprise. “Eating human flesh?” Jon nodded and Varamyr whistled. “Must have been some lizard.”

Jon knew Varamyr was expecting him to elaborate on what kind of lizard it was but he said nothing and after a moment Varamyr dropped it.

“As I’m sure you’ve noticed it is much easier to warg into something now even when already inhabited, your connection to this lizard you frequently warg into is stronger as well I’d presume. You can feel their desires and they can feel yours, you can almost communicate with them even while you two are in the animal’s body.”

Jon nodded that sounded similar to how he would describe his connection to Rhaegal. He was Rhaegal not just a passenger though, he and Rhaegal for the most part shared desires and the others wants became their own. They were two parts of the same being who happened to inhabit two bodies.

“You should notice some of the animal’s personality bleeding into yours with each abominable act you commit and even just as you strengthen your bond. I couldn’t tell you exactly what to expect without you elaborating on what kind of lizard it is and even then I’d only be guessing.”

Jon nodded. That hadn’t really told him anything new but he would go to Varamyr if he had any more questions about warging or these acts which well Jon didn’t necessarily consider them a terrible thing, he still was glad to know about them and their consequences before he unknowingly committed another one.

“Thank you for informing me Varamyr. Please inform Sulfur that the rat is once again available and pass on my apologies for forcing her out of it.” Jon said respectfully dismissing Varamyr who dipped his head and did as Jon had requested. He could worry about wargs and laws that he had broken later, right now he had to inform everyone of the change in plans to go for the Last Hearth instead of the Dreadfort, without informing them that it was because of Rickon and that he was letting sentiment affect his decisions. The Free Folk wouldn’t understand the political value that holding Rickon would provide for them in their campaign for him to take the Iron Throne seeing as they didn’t really have any politics North of the Wall nor did they put any stock in family names.

Jon strode out of the tent to go inform everyone of the change in strategy and the new target. The first person he encountered who needed to know was Tormund.
“King Crow.” Tormund greeted warmly and made to embrace him but Jon stepped back, this was business right now. “We are no longer marching for the Dreadfort, instead we attack the Last Hearth.

Tormund frowned. “Why?”

The lie came all too easily to Jon. “There were undoubtedly spies at Castle Black that would have told the Boltons of our plans. Now that we’re free of any eavesdroppers I can reveal the true plan. Last Hearth is closer so we can get there before any encroaching army. This gives them less time to prepare for combat and us the advantage.”

Tormund nodded. “You southerners and your convoluted plans. We Free Folk when we see an enemy simply attack them, nothing too complicated about that.”

Jon smiled. “If we had the numbers I would too,” Jon lied. “Unfortunately we are outnumbered so we have to be crafty.

“I’ll spread the word, King Crow,” Tormund swore and parted from Jon.

Jon was accosted by Sansa as he searched for the Magnar of Then. “What’s happening Jon? What news was so urgent?” She demanded.

“The Boltons received news that we were heading for the Dreadfort from someone in the Night’s Watch. They are sending men to reinforce them there so we’ll instead hit Last Hearth while most the Umber men are with the Boltons.” Jon lied easily.

Sansa frowned. “Why? We could still beat them there and take the castle, we’ll have to face them in the field at some point why put it off. We can take the Dreadfort and hit them where it hurts, they won’t care about Last Hearth.”

Jon frowned as well. He had forgotten that this was Sansa, he had to divulge the true reason or else she might get it in her head that she would be helping him by sending a letter to the Bolton’s informing them they were attacking Last Hearth so he would be forced to turn his gaze back to the Dreadfort. He grabbed her arm and dragged her back inside his tent for some measure of privacy.

“Sorry.” He apologized. “Trusting is still hard for me. The Umbers found Rickon.” Jon whispered.
“They have him at Last Hearth right now.”

Sansa stepped back in shock. “You’re sure?” She asked in astonishment.

Jon only nodded. “It might be a trap,” She protested. “They might be claiming some other boy as Rickon.”

Jon shook his head. “He has a direwolf with him.”

“Young source might be lying,” Sansa argued trying not to become too hopeful.

Jon shook his head once more and grabbed one of Sansa’s hands in his own. “I won’t divulge my source but I trust them as much as I would if I had seen him myself.” He would not risk the secrets of wargs existing getting out as they were too valuable of an asset and he still wasn’t confident he could fully trust Sansa, he just knew not trusting her had proven to be more of a liability so far, so he would give her this little bit.

“What about Bran?” Sansa asked after a moment. “Do they have him too? They were supposed to be together according to Theon.”

Jon felt slightly guilty for forgetting about Bran in his jubilance at finding Rickon, if the Umbers had found only Rickon and this Osha woman then that likely meant Bran was dead. Hopefully, he just escaped from the Umbers but Jon doubted it, or Rickon likely would have mentioned him.

“They don’t have him, I have no clue where he could be,” Jon said remorsefully.

Sansa frowned but then smiled. “At least we’ll have Rickon back.”

Jon nodded in agreement. “Keep the news that the Umbers have Rickon secret, we don’t want people thinking that I’m letting my heart ruin our strategies.”

Sansa nodded then frowned. “Aren’t you?”
Jon shook his head. “My plan will work regardless of what castle we reside in.”

Sansa raised an eyebrow but Jon refused to elaborate. Secrecy was key if they were to win this war, and well Jon wanted to trust Sansa he would never tell anyone his plan as if word of it leaked out then it could possibly fail and cause catastrophic damage to his efforts and the chances of the living winning the great war.

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Jon was almost disappointed by how easy it had been to take Last Hearth from the Umbers. He knew they were only putting up a token defense to make it look like they were loyal to the Boltons but Jon had still expected more. They had closed the gates and had archers on the wall but that was it. There were not even a hundred men guarding the castle.

Wun Wun had knocked down the gates and they had stormed in within minutes taking the castle without any major casualties. Jon had almost wanted the fight and the fact that he hadn’t even needed to unsheathe his sword bothered him. The dragon demanded blood and he knew that the Umbers were only doing this for their own benefit not any loyalty to the Starks. A part of him wanted to take all of the Umber’s heads instead of playing this mummery but he couldn’t let rumors spread that he was like his grandfather. He hated politics but he had to play the game so his kingdom could be united when the Long Night came.

They had burst through the gates with Jon at the front of the charge and immediately the old Hother Umber dropped to his knee, prostrating himself before Jon, pretending that he was loyal to him and House Stark.

“Your Grace,” Hother proclaimed. “Last Hearth is yours. We have long awaited the day that the Starks came to reclaim the North from the Bolton bastards. House Umber knows no King except the King whose name is Stark.”

Jon forced himself to take a deep breath and not take the coward’s head for his lies. “Surely, you’ve heard the rumors of my parentage. I am no Stark.” He said coolly. He didn’t know why they even bothered pretending that he wasn’t a Targaryen or that they didn’t know. Maybe they thought he would deny the accusations and didn’t want to risk false accusations. He really should take Sansa’s suggestion and wear a crown of pure fire. His coloring was all Stark and it would quiet any arguments that he wasn’t who he claimed.

Hother’s lip curled with thinly veiled disgust. “We have heard the rumors, Your Grace. It doesn’t matter if your father happened to be a dragon, you still have the blood of a Stark. If that bastard
being your father allows a Stark to finally sit the Iron Throne then so be it.”

Jon nodded half-heartedly. “Indeed.” He wanted to correct Hother’s opinion on his father but it’s not like he had any proof of his Daenerys’s claims that Rhaegar and Lyanna had loved each other. He had to pick his battles and for now not defending his father was what he needed to do. His father didn’t deserve to be defended anyways, nor did his mother. Their selfishness had let thousands die and ended the Targaryen dynasty. He would never repeat their mistakes.

He turned away from the castellan he would, unfortunately, have to work with until he defeated the Boltons and towards Tormund who was standing only a few paces behind him trying not to laugh at Hother’s behavior. “Go into the crypts and bring all of the bodies to be burnt.” He ordered and Tormund and a group of wildlings cheered as they went to do so.

He knew this might sour the Umbers and the rest of the Northern Houses against him but he had to prioritize stopping the Long Night. The Great Other could not be allowed to add more men into his armies especially if they were to be residing here for the near future. He would not sleep until he was sure there were no dead men waiting to kill him when he closed his eyes.

Hother finally grew some backbone at that command. “Your Grace,” he flustered. “I know the Targaryens have always burnt their dead but the North does things differently. We bury and respect our dead here. You can not just enforce your foreign policies on the North!” He snapped at him as he rose to his feet.

Jon quelled him with a harsh glare as he dismounted from his horse. “You will burn your dead from now on,” Jon replied sharply. “That is an order from your King.”

Hother, unfortunately, did not rebuke his claim to being his king so Jon could not take the conniving snakes head but he did argue back all the same. “Why?” He demanded with a roar that defied his advanced age. “They are dead, why defile their graves? The North will not support someone who shows such blatant disrespect towards their fallen.”

Jon sighed and glared at Hother once more. “The Long Night is coming, the Others are real and are marching on the Wall with their army of the dead. The Great Other can bring back the dead to fight by his side. All the dead must burn and we will all perish.” He said bluntly. There was no avoiding telling the Lords why he did this and he had to do this for the wildlings to fight for him, he couldn’t put this off until after he had the throne. He couldn’t risk the Others coming before he had the throne either, this had to be done now.

Unsurprisingly Lord Hother Umber laughed at his claims. “The Others?” He scoffed. “An army of
the dead? They are nothing but a children's tale. I thought the Stark blood would out but it appears you have inherited the Targaryen madness from your father.”

Jon again wanted to take his head but he couldn’t let them think he was as mad as his grandfather, this would be the popular reaction to that particular claim. The dead were dead, there was no changing that, everyone believed that. Luckily, he was walking proof that that was not true. “If I offer you proof that the dead can live again will you permit your dead to be burned?” Jon asked with a fake smile.

Hother likely knew it was a trap because Jon wouldn’t have offered if he didn’t have proof but Hother acquiesced all the same, likely due to his curiosity about how he would prove it. He might have heard the claims of Jon’s resurrection but he doubted that very many people actually believed that part of the story, he might not even believe that Jon was a Targaryen but the Umbers were just using his claim to move up in the world and seat a northerner on the throne. That was fine with Jon, they could believe what they did as long as they supported him and his Daenerys believed him which he knew that she did. “I will if you can prove such a thing,” Hother grumbled reluctantly.

Jon sighed once more. “Dryn!” Jon called out. “Help me out of my armor.” Dryn was not Jon’s official squire and he would no doubt soon be replaced when Jon offered that position to secure the loyalty of some Lord and their armies. It was a small concession but not one that he could just give out freely. Tormunds youngest son was eager enough and served fine in the role until he needed to give it away and unlike any of the northerners would not be offended if he gave the role to someone else.

It only took a moment for him to get out of his breastplate and soon after he was clad in just his gambeson for protection. He knew that any of the men still stationed on the walls could easily take him out with one well placed shot and he knew that the Lannisters and Boltons would both heap riches on them if they survived afterward. Jon’s eyes scanned the walls frantically looking for anyone who might attack him and saw no one foolish enough to be caught doing so yet.

His fingers hesitated as he gripped the top button of his gambeson. He had to trust that the fear of the two-thousand Free Folk that Jon had with him would keep anyone from being bold and trying to kill him, this was an unavoidable need to expose himself and a risk that he would have to take multiple times. He really should start wearing that crown to intimidate others in situations like this. It was likely only a small deterrent but anything that discouraged making attempts on his life would be welcome and it would be good to remind them that he was a dragon and not a wolf who would just roll over and die.

Jon sighed once more and shrugged off his gambeson leaving his naked chest open to Lord Hother’s gaze. He knew it was unsightly, the deep red gashes that marred his usually pale skin. Five deep gashes in his body that had never healed over from when his brothers’ had killed him. The hole over his heart deep enough you could even see bone. There would be no denying that he
had died when one looked at his heavily wounded chest.

Hother was gaping at him like a fish as were the other Umber men here when they stared at his chest. “The rumors are true…” He muttered quietly to himself.

“Is that sufficient proof, My Lord?” Jon said politely.

Hother dropped back to his old and feeble knees. “I-It will suffice, Your Grace.” Jon knew that Lord Hother most likely still doubted his tales of the Others but the fact that Jon had clearly beaten death had scared him into submission at the very least. He doubted he would face many assassination attempts when they believed him to be immortal. The lack of fight had certainly made it easy to hide that he could still be hurt like any man. He needed them to believe that was the case as long as possible.

Jon nodded and smiled. “Good. See to it that all of the dead are burned from now on, Lord Hother. Anyone who buries their dead will be punished as if they were the wight that rose up themselves.” He nodded towards the wildlings behind him and some of them wordlessly went to follow Tormund into the crypts. He pulled his gambeson back on and re-buttoned it although he decided not to bother with the armor, for now, the leather would be apt enough protection for the time being.

Jon looked away from Hother and at the rest of the occupants of the keep. “You all have to make a choice. Bend the knee and re-affirm your pledges of fealty to Houses Stark and Targaryen or journey to the wall and take the black.” Jon didn’t bother giving a flowery speech to the small folk on what he planned to do as king or why they should re-pledge fealty. He doubted that most of them really cared and were just carrying out their liege lords orders. He wanted to hear the small folk but flowery words wouldn’t win them over, they had had too much of those. They needed decisive actions. He had to prove he was different than their previous rulers, he couldn’t just claim he was. They would give their loyalty out of fear and habit to submit to their overlords.

As Jon had expected all of them dropped to a knee. He turned back towards Hother after giving them leave to rise again. “You’ll have chambers prepared for me and my sister as well as food and board for all of my army.”

Hother seemed to relax after moving away from the uncomfortable subject of Jon’s death and the Others. “Your Grace, we found your brother err-cousin. We have been keeping him safe here at Last Hearth until the Starks could reclaim the North.”

Jon did his best to fake his surprise at them having Rickon, even if he had already known they had
him. “Bran?” He asked excitedly. “You found Bran?” He internally winced as he lied there, he knew Bran was still missing and likely dead but he had to pretend he didn’t know they had Rickon and it was easier to sell that lie with the wrong brother.

Hother ate it up like it was the sweetest honey. “I’m afraid not, Your Grace.” He apologized. “We found the youngest boy, Rickon.”

Jon forced himself to frown. “How do I know this boy you have is Rickon?” He asked with false skepticism. “How do I know you haven’t trussed up some imposter to curry favor with your King?”

Hother shook his head quickly. “No, Your Grace, the Umbers would never do such a thing. We are loyal to the Starks.” Jon only stared at him resisting the urge to roll his eyes at his insistence of the Umbers honor binding them. “He has a direwolf, Your Grace. He calls it Shaggydog I believe.”

Jon faked shock. “You will take me and my sister to him to suss out the truth for ourselves.”

Hother nodded eagerly. “Of course, Your Grace, if you would follow me?”

Jon nodded and followed him down the halls, his sword hand never leaving the wolf head pommel on Longclaw. He heard Sansa’s quiet footsteps padding behind him and knew she was also following without bothering to look back to see.

Rickon was still in the same room that he had spied him in as a rat. The Maester was reading a book to him as he sat on his bed petting Shaggydog who appeared to be napping. On the foot of the bed. Jon eagerly overtook Hother and rushed past him slamming the door open.

Shaggydog’s head shot up as the door crashed into the wall and jolted him awake. The Maester fell silent at the sudden intrusion as both him and Rickon turned to look at Jon standing in the doorway.

“Rickon.” Jon exhaled in relief at seeing his brother safe and unharmed.

Shaddydog leaped up and bounded for Jon with unbridled enthusiasm, Rickon was only a step behind him as he stumbled on his way out of bed but also ran towards him.
Jon crouched down and rubbed behind the black direwolf’s ears. “Thank you for keeping Rickon safe.” He muttered quietly as the wolf purred in contentment.

He was soon knocked away from the last direwolf as Rickon barreled into his chest knocking him backward and onto his back. “Jon!” He squealed excitedly as he clung to his neck.

Sansa chose that moment to step into the room as well. “Rickon,” she said softly her voice thick with emotion.

Rickon looked to her and after only a moment of hesitation crawled off of Jon’s chest and leapt into her arms. “Mother!” He cried happily. “You finally came back!”

Jon and Sansa both flinched at that form of address. Rickon had been so little when he last saw them and Sansa did look remarkably similar to the late Lady Stark. He likely only recognized Jon because he knew that Jon was coming and the Umbers wanted Rickon to be excited to see him so their mummery would be as effective as possible. Still, it no doubt stung Sansa to hear that Rickon did not recognize her.

“That’s not your mother Rickon,” Jon said gently as he rose to his feet and put a hand on Rickons shoulder. “That is your sister, Sansa.”

Rickon blushed. “Sorry Sansa, I thought you were mother.” He smiled up at her. “I’m glad to see you again sister.”

Sansa smiled through her tears. “Me too, Rickon. Me too.”

“Why are you crying? Are you sad?” Rickon asked with an innocence that only a child could.

Sansa laughed. “I’m crying because I’m happy Rickon. I really missed you.” She clutched him tighter to her chest.

After a moment Rickon sprung away from Sansa and to the Maester. “Now that Jon is here, can I see Osha?” He begged tugging on the Maesters arm.
The maester chuckled. “You stay here with the King and your sister, Lord Hother will go get her.”

Rickon cheered. “Stay here with Sansa,” Jon told Rickon after only a moment of hesitation. “I’ll go with Lord Hother to find her.”

Sansa gave him a look in askance to what he was doing but Jon ignored her. He wanted to see the likely deplorable conditions they likely had the member of the Free Folk in for himself. He wanted to see how they were treating the woman his brother clearly cared about so much before they spiffed her up and pretended like she was living in luxury the whole time. He also wanted to speak to her about where Bran was and didn’t want to bring up what was likely a sensitive subject in front of Rickon.

“Your Grace, that’s hardly necessary.” Lord Hother protested feebly.

Jon forced himself to smile. “I insist. I should be the first one to thank the woman who kept my brother safe for so long.”

Lord Hother sighed wearily. “If you would follow me, Your Grace.” He said resigned to the fact that Jon would see how she was likely imprisoned.

Jon was unsurprised when the maester took him into the dungeons where Osha was no doubt being held. He doubted that they would treat a member of the Free Folk with any regard with all the hostilities between them over the years. They would have to set their grievances aside and work together to stop the Long Night.

Jon followed in silence until they were at a cell holding who Jon could only assume was Osha. She was tall and lean with a hard face that was crisscrossed with a number of scars. She had long shaggy brown hair that was unevenly cut all around. She was dressed in the home-made furs that all of the Free Folk typically dressed themselves in.

Lord Hother fumbled with the keys to the cell. “Y-Your Grace, you have to understand we had to keep her here so people would not suspect that we had Rickon.”

Jon gave Lord Hother another false smile. “Of course, all is forgiven now that Rickon is safe.”

The cell swept open and Jon stepped inside. “I’ve been told you’ve been with Rickon for the last two years and kept him safe.”
She looked at him with obvious suspicion. “So what if I did?” She asked defensively.

Jon gave an actually genuine smile. “I’m sorry I should have introduced myself. “I’m King Jon Targaryen, Rickon’s brother.” He held out his hand to her in a peace offering.

She eyed his hand but did not take it. “Rickon is a Stark. How can you be his brother if you’re a Targeeyin or whatever?” She asked in suspicion.

Jon sighed and pulled back his hand. “That was poorly phrased. Rickon is my cousin, I grew up believing I was his half brother.” She did not relax her posture at all at Jon’s clarification still worried that this was some trap to hurt Rickon.

Jon pretended he did not notice her tense state. “I owe you a debt for keeping Rickon safe while no one else could, if there is anything I can do for you in return don’t hesitate to ask.”

She very clearly did not trust him still but she responded all the same. “You said you were some sort of King?”

Jon nodded. “I am, King of the Seven Kingdoms” he confirmed.

“I plead of you then, save my people. Allow us to settle south of the wall before winter comes and we all die.” Osha pleaded her desperation coming through strong at the end.

Jon couldn’t help himself, he laughed. He knew it was the wrong way to react but she wanted something he had already done before he was even the King. Judging by her glare she was clearly affronted at his reaction.

“When I was Lord Commander of The Night’s Watch, I allowed the Free Folk south of the wall and to settle in the gift.” Jon flinched at the reminder of what came of that decision. “I personally went to Hardhome to lead all of the people there.” Jon sighed. “The Great Other attacked while we were boarding the ships to travel south of the wall. I’m sorry to say that only 10,000 of the Free Folk survived.”

Osha looked heartbroken and understandably so. “I heard that rumor but I thought it was false, the
crows would never make peace with us.” She swallowed nervously. “My sister, Nara. Did she make it?”

Jon ran a hand through his hair. “I’m afraid I can’t answer that question. I don’t know her personally if she did. You would have to ask Tormund or someone else who might know. He’s just outside, I can take you to him if you would like.”

Osha furiously wiped away her tears and shook her head. “Can I see the Little Lord first?”

“Rickon?” Jon asked already sure of the answer. Sure enough, she nodded in confirmation.

“Lord Hother,” Jon addressed the cowardly castellan who had given him the castle on the orders of his Liege Lord. “Would you lead us back to the room where Rickon is staying in?”

Hother bowed once more. “Of course, Your Grace.”

As they followed Hother, Jon turned back to Osha. “I hate to ask this but I need to know, what happened to Bran?” He hesitated and then voiced his fear. “Is he dead?”

Osha frowned but shook her head. “He went with Hodor and the Reed children North of The Wall. They said he needed to become the Three-Eyed Raven.”

Jon pinched his brow and marveled at his crippled brother’s stupidity. Rangers often died going beyond the wall and he went there with a lackwit, and two children? There was almost no chance that Bran hadn’t already died and joined the Great Other’s army. What ever possessed Bran to make him think that going North of The Wall was a good idea? And what was a Three-Eyed Raven?

He could ask Davos to have the Night’s Watch keep an eye out for Bran on theirrangings but it wasn’t something that either he or the Night’s Watch could afford to commit too many resources to when he was likely just a wight.

Jon said nothing more to Osha as they walked back to Rickon’s room in a companionable silence. They arrived back at his room to see Sansa and him curled up together on his bed while Shaggydog lied across their laps. They were talking quietly to each other as they snuggled.
The moment Rickon saw Jon and Osha standing in the doorway, he sprung up with an equally, excitable Shaggydog sprinting behind him. “Osha!” He squealed excitedly as he forgot about his siblings in favor of his protector. “I missed you so so so much.” He cried as they embraced.

“I missed you too, Little Lord,” Osha whispered tenderly to him.

A part of Jon was jealous that his littlest brother preferred Osha to him or his sister but Jon was just more happy that Rickon was alive and safe now. It was only understandable that he grew to care for the one human companion he had for the last two years even more than he loved his family. All that mattered is that they were together again and they would not be torn apart ever again. Not by the Boltons, Lannisters, or even the Others. He would not lose them all again.

Chapter End Notes

Jon and Sansa are finally connecting, sort of, at least. The uphill climb to a somewhat functioning normalish relationship will be a gradual one. She's finally opening up and learning that she needs to trust Jon now- at least kind of. Jon is likewise learning that he has to trust her and not trusting her is more dangerous than doing so.

I assume by selling Sansa to Ramsay, he was attempting to gain control of the North. You can debate if that was actually needed but her child would have the indisputable claim and she would be their regent. It's the only way that the decision makes any sense from Baelish who claims to care about Sansa. Chaos is a ladder is one of my favorite quotes from the show, in spite of the awful context it was used in. That logic makes his decision to just give Sansa away make more sense, if he wants the Kingdoms divided and chaos to reign then breaking the alliance between the North and the Crown is a logical step. He needs the realm divided if he's to be King like he wants with no noble blood.

I actually really wanted the Boltons to capture Rickon but it being the Umbers who turned him over to them and the fact that Jon would have to be an idiot to not spy on the Last Hearth; made this outcome inevitable.

Why did the Umber side with the Boltons? I'd presume that they either thought Jon couldn't win even with them which seems like a stretch or they were still angry about Robb renegading on his vows and causing the Red Wedding that killed the Greatjon? I went with the latter option. Of course, like all men in the world, the Umbers are going to primarily care about their own interests and they'd be a fool to not use Rickon to try to get an in with a claimant to the Iron Throne.

The Dance with Dragons Prologue is so good. There are three events that we learn are considered abominations by wargs there. To eat human flesh, to mate with wolf as wolf, and to warg a human. We know Varamyr thinks those limitations made him
weaker and implies that you become stronger by breaking the rules. We know that Bran becomes stronger as a warg after warning Hodor for the first time, and after eating the Jojen paste, among other things that are less clear cut.

So what are those negatives that made them be considered abominations? If they had no negatives to them then everyone would do them and they wouldn't be forbidden. The likely answer is they cause you to lose your morals, as we see very clearly with Bran in the books and even more so in the show where he's left an emotionless shell. That being said I'm not writing Jon as a complete psychopath who doesn't feel emotions so I'm saying they take on more and more of the animal's personalities with each act they commit. For Ravens that might be distant, closed off, and emotionless but for Dragons that is more angry, possessive, prideful and solitary. There is still fewer morals due to the acts but more of a shift than a lack of morals.

Poor Jon accidentally broke the first rule in the second chapter, completely unknowing of the consequences. He is forced to turn to Varamyr for answers about the consequences of that act, in spite of not trusting him due to how little knowledge he has on the subject and the lack of other avenues to find that knowledge. He needs to know so he confides in Varamyr.

Jon is mostly just being paranoid at the Free Folk deciding to not follow him because he changed targets to Last Hearth at the news of Rickon being there. He was just murdered by people he trusted for doing what was right in his heart rather than the popular choice that was considered tactically wise.

Jon is quickly learning how terribly slimy politics are and that sometimes he has to play nice with people who want him dead or dance to the tune of their manipulations in order, to keep his crown.

Shockingly, Jon remembers that the ultimate enemy is the dead and that they need to be burned to stop them from coming back. Crazy concept I know.

Unfortunately, I'm going back to weekly updates. With the quickly increasing chapter lengths and the return to the real world as the quarantine comes to an end, I can no longer commit to writing two chapters a week. Next Friday, will be the next chapter and it'll be the first one told from Tyrion's POV.

Thanks for reading, make sure to leave Kudos if you enjoyed and subscribe so you don't miss the next chapter.

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