A Little Rose with Steel Thorns

by daydreamsinthesun

Summary

an AU where Robb breaks his word to the Freys' to marry- not Lady Jeyne Westerling but the widowed Margaery Tyrell instead at his lady mother's suggestion.
Robb looked away with guilt from Jeyne Westerling's confused and tearful face. He may be a King now, but he had no idea how to handle situations with the fairer sex. He was aflame with shame. Robb should not have used Jeyne so terribly that night. He did not mean to accidentally give Jeyne a hopeful notion that he would intend to marry her instead of the Frey girl. Jeyne Westerling was very pretty. She had been astonishingly very kind to him despite being the invader of her home. In another time or place, perhaps he would have asked for her hand. He fought against his strong feelings to do the right thing. His honour demanded that he marry Jeyne to protect her honour. But he had obligations to his army to make a different choice. As a king, particularly a king at war, Robb needed to choose wisely as he had been reminded, almost chastised by his loyal men. A letter from his lady mother had jolted him to reality with a marriage to Lord Renly's widow. So the North would have the might of the Reach on their side and not that of their enemies, the Lannisters.

"Take the tea, my lady," repeated Robb gently standing there awkwardly. "I- I bid you farewell, my lady. I thank you for all that you have done for me." Robb made a step backwards. His eyes misted with unwavering guilt at Jeyne's sobs.

"I thought you did not want to marry a Frey," sobbed Jeyne. He didn't and he wasn't going to marry a Frey.

"I am marrying someone else." Jeyne had brushed a ringlet behind her ear and stared at him questioningly.

"If not a Frey, then who?"

"Margaery Tyrell," answered Robb testing out the name of his future bride and queen. Robb did not remember Jeyne's reaction as he had been interrupted by the low growls by Grey Wind. Robb found himself missing Jeyne Westerling's gentle smiles and comforting manner. Jeyne had not made Robb feel like a boy playing at lord and king like his new intended did. When Robb could tear his all-too often distracted gaze from the immodest neckline of Margaery Tyrell's blue southron gowns. He found her terribly infuriating with her southron ploys and opinions.

The gems of golden roses that entwined the bronze diadem glittered in the pale morning sun. The Queen was a dainty young woman of six and ten in a warm gray dress unlike her usual choice of colourful southron styled gowns. Margaery's pretty face was etched with grief and anger yet composed. Her usual courtier smile was replaced with an uncharacteristic scowl as she gazed upon her two prisoners who had caused her grief, anger, and worry. A tall blonde woman in blue armor bowed to the little Queen and handed her a sword. The uninjured Northern bannermen of her husband King Robb, the bannermen of Lord Tully, and the men of the Reach that had been sent following her marriage to Robb Stark stood watching and waiting for the justice to be served. I cannot do this. I'm not a northerner I cannot wield a sword. I'm not Brienne or Dacey Mormont whose sword and axe where like extensions of their arms. Yet I had insisted on doing so. She had practiced diligently in wielding a sword to perform an execution with Brienne of Tarth yet the fear of failure and doubt crept into her weary mind. What would Mother say if she were here? Had any lady wife of a Stark before her done what she was about to do?

The beady-eyed weasel of an old man and the pale colourless eyes of the other stared at her mockingly and unrepentantly. Her practiced restraint of keeping her anger in check was weakening. This was atypical for her. Loras had been the hot tempered one and Margaery had been better at keeping control of her emotions. She thought of her good-mother Lady Catelyn Stark murdered
before her eldest child's eyes, Margaery's husband. Margaery was haunted by Catelyn's desperate pleas for her son's life. Margaery thought of Robb's blue eyes filled with fear as he pushed her to Loras' protective arms. "Margaery, run!" he had urged. Margaery pondered morbidly if those would be the last words he would ever say to her. She hoped not for she had just begun to get to know Robb. He was warm and loyal, unlike the cold and barbaric young man she had expected. Now Robb was lying wounded inside the walls of Riverrun and Margaery may yet be widow twice.

Most of Margaery's thoughts were of Loras. Her darling Loras all bandaged and bloody was quickly languishing with his many stab wounds.

'I'm afraid Sir Loras will most likely die, Your Grace,' the maester had told her during her bedside vigil last night.

Loras, my beautiful brave brother. She choked back a sob and stifled the tears from pouring down her cheeks. I am a Tyrell too and the Queen in the North I can be brave as well. The blind rage and grief that spurred the impulsive demand of dispensing justice to the Lord Walder Frey and Lord Roose Bolton in the northern manner had raised some eyebrows and grumblings of the men who wanted the traitors' heads themselves. Loras had cut down every man to protect his only sister from harm and Margaery had avenge his sacrifice somehow. I do not care I want to hear of old lion's face when he finds out that Robb and I lived through his Rains of Castamere. She smiled at that bittersweet thought.

If Robb survives his wounds, a thought nagged her.

"I, Margaery of Houses Stark and Tyrell, Queen in the North and the Trident in the name of my husband Robb of House Stark, King in the North and the Trident sentence Lord Walder Frey of the Twins and Lord Roose Bolton of the Dreadfort to death as traitors against their King Robb Stark of Winterfell." Her sweet soprano voice rang loudly and with the queenly authority that she had practiced as a little girl under her grandmother's tutelage. Old Walder Frey was first on the executioner's block. She asked for any last words as per the custom. He cackled and spat in the direction of her silk slippers.

"If the Young Wolf had not broken his word to marry one of mine his Tully bitch of a mother would alive." She swung the heavy sword and ended the lecherous old man's japes and treachery. Margaery did not make the cleanest of executions and gasped at the spurt of fresh blood. Margaery heard Lady Brienne's tread from behind and she flushed that she had failed to do it properly.

"Grey Wind," Margaery whispered softly. Margaery tried to look away but could help but to stare at the sight of Walder Frey's bulging eyes. She ignored the sound of his moans from the botched execution. Instead she thought of the imprisoned Frey women bunched up like rabbits including the pale tearful Roslin Frey married to Lord Edmure Tully. No, you should have been happy you achieved your ambition of being the grandfather of the future Tully heirs. Did you have to break the guest right?

The men cheered as Grey Wind ripped Lord Walder Frey apart. She looked away but fixed a composed face as blood marred the hem of her skirts. Lady Brienne kindly wiped the blade quickly for Margaery, before the body was removed for the next traitorous lord. Margaery flinched at the sight of the blood and felt ill as the strong smell filled her nose. Margaery turned around with a hand against her small nose and her other hand on her stomach. Shouts and growls of 'traitor' and other apt names were hurled with venom as Lord Roose Bolton was dragged in iron chains to meet his end.

Roose Bolton's betrayal at the wedding at the Twins in attempting to kill Robb, Robb's loyal noblemen of the North and Riverlands, Margaery's Tyrell retinue. Bolton had sought to make himself the new Warden of the North with the backing of the Lannisters. Margaery hated this man for what
he almost did to her and her innocent unborn child. The knife he almost plunged into my baby. Oh sweet Loras. It was Roose's fault for Loras' fading life. The horrific memories replayed in her mind. She had watched her brother defend her and her unborn baby, every wound he received, every Frey and Bolton's men he killed. How his once beautiful and flawless face was now horrifically scarred and bloodied. He had been the most beautiful of the four Tyrell children. *What is a Rose Queen without her Knight of Flowers? What is a sister without her closest brother?* Her small hands clenched into fists at her side as she glared at Roose Bolton. *Loras.*

Roose Bolton was forced to his knees before Margaery. She asked the Lord of the Dreadfort for his last words. He looked up at her with his pale colourless eyes but remained silent. Margaery felt a shiver go down her spine she almost wished for an insult or curse yet she remained calm even as Grey Wind attacked his neck and blood spurted. *His final “leeching”. The Queen watched the Leech Lord's death for a few moments longer just long enough to see Bolton's spotted pink cape flecked with his own blood. She turned to Brienne who gave her a smile as she began her walk inside the castle. The cries of "The Young Wolf" "The Queen in the North!" “The North Remembers” broke out. Robb would have shouted "The North Remembers!" back if he had been there but she opted to smile and wave at the men before instructing a servant to collect whatever remained of the heads of Frey and Bolton.

Brienne followed her as Margaery summoned a messenger to her solar after the executions. Days ago, she and the high ranking lords had come to an agreement to have all the elder Frey men be killed and the younger Frey boys the choice to take the black or die. The northern noblemen had swiftly killed the remainder of Bolton's men. Any sons would be sent to the Wall. She thought of Robb's half brother Jon Snow who was at the Wall. As she walked up the stairs to her solar, she wondered, *would they try to kill Jon Snow in revenge for me killing their father or grandfather?* Her husband had now lost his father and mother. He would not like his wife sending young assassins to kill yet another family member, bastard or not. Robb might wake displeased that his meddlesome southron wife, and his lords had made decisions without his approval. Margaery had done what she believed to be right and even tried to do it the northern way to hopefully placate her husband's men. How she wished her grandmother or Willas was here to guide her or alleviate her doubts!

Margaery felt the weight of her sleep depravity over the past week. She had stayed up late at night keeping vigils over Robb and Loras with Grey Wind at her feet. When she did sleep she was plagued with nightmares of Robb struck to the ground by an arrow falling to his knees. The sound of the musicians playing the Rains of Castamere mixed with the clash of swords, and shouting. The snarls of Grey Wind as he protected Robb, while she held Loras' bloody body. Margaery would wake up screaming alone in bed. Sometimes her nightmares included a scrawny dark haired boy with a long skinny face staring at her in the shadows, but that part was only a dream.

The young queen was still ill in the early mornings and some food made her violently ill. Her experience thus far of being with child for the first time was not how she ever imagined based upon the teachings of her lady mother and septa. The aversion to certain smells, particularly the smell of blood could not have come to her more ill timed. The Queen nevertheless walked daily through the tents of the wounded men giving her thanks for their bravery and loyalty to their king and her and made prayers for their recovery. She spent hours with her husband's great uncle, Ser Brynden Tully the Blackfish and the other noblemen to discuss what needed to be done while the King was still wounded. Not that they valued her opinion but none dared to make a complaint when she did offer her counsel.

The solar allowed for Margaery’s use did not have a large war council table with maps and strategy plans littered about. It had a desk with papers and letters and a sitting area where she and Lady Catelyn spent a lot of time waiting for Robb to return from battle. What she would give to have Lady Catelyn’s motherly companionship. Margaery yearned for her own lady mother's comforting
embraces.

The serving maids had left a tray of food and drink for her sip and nibble on while she conducted her duties. Margaery had just sat down in her chair, when the messenger with the Tyrell emblem arrived bowing.

"Your Grace, I offer my prayers to New Gods for the loss of Lady Stark and pray for your brother Ser Loras's good health," spoke the young man no older than she.

"Thank you," she said smiling. "Has there been any news from King's Landing?"

"King Joffrey and the court believe King Robb is dead. I am told that he believes he has won the war."

She laughed lightly. "Well I suppose I shall send you to tell them otherwise. I have a message for you bring to King's Landing." Margaery held out the short letter, she had penned in the early hour before the executions were carried out. "I want to you deliver this during court or at a feast when Joffrey Waters, the Queen, the Hand, all of the members of the Small Council, the lords and ladies are all present. I want you to say what really happened at the Twins and to present Lord Tywin with the heads of Walder Frey and Roose Bolton. I have instructed a lovely singer to sing 'The Wolf in the North'. Tell Lord Tywin, the King and I demand Princess Sansa and Arya to be returned back to us. We will free Jaime Lannister in their safe return." Margaery pursed her lips at the lie. Robb would not free Jaime for the girls before the Twins. Margaery had no idea if he would change his mind now, after Lady Catelyn-

I might not have lied if my raven has reached Highgarden. Grandmother will have something planned or Father and his army will have begun its march on King's Landing. Maybe Robb's sisters will come home sooner perhaps. Robb won't be angry for long.

"Is that all my queen?"

"No, Martin, one last thing. It is in the letter, I bid you to declare that Winter is Coming and it is Growing Strong." She placed her hand on the swell of her stomach. Martin nodded and tucked the letter inside his traveling cloak.

"Yes, Your Grace." He bowed as he left the solar. Margaery leaned back into her chair.

"Eat, my queen," Brienne urged kindly as she placed the wooden platter of crumbling cheese and bread in front of Margaery. Margaery smiled at the unhandsome lady dressed in armour. Lady Brienne had not been a companion of Margaery's even during Margaery's brief marriage to Lord Renly. Lady Brienne did not like Margaery. But Lady Brienne had been a sworn shield to Lady Catelyn and Lady Brienne grieved Lady Catelyn's murder and blamed herself for it. Out of sorrow for their loss for the auburn haired matriarch who they both admired, Margaery and Brienne had become unlikely companions.

"I failed Renly and I have failed Lady Stark too," wept Lady Brienne as she stared at her large feet. Margaery would have reached over to comfort the lady but Lady Brienne was not used to female companionship.

"She would not blame you. Lady Stark- Catelyn would rather you find her daughters and protect them," murmured Margaery as she recalled Lady Stark berating Robb for not trading the Kingslayer for his sisters. Robb had not slept that nightLady Brienne did not respond and Margaery was too worn out to offer any more words of comfort.
It was hours later and Margaery still sat nibbling on the last of the bread. Brienne stood up as a guard entered and bowed to Margaery.

"Your Grace, there is a man at the gate claiming to be Sandor Clegane. He says he has Arya Stark."

A look of surprise and confusion appeared on both women. The Hound? Arya? Was she not in King's Landing? Was he not Joffrey's dog?

"Arya?" gasped Margaery.

"She is held captive with her elder sister in King's Landing," spluttered Brienne with disbelief.

"The Hound swears its Ned Stark's youngest girl."

"Brienne, have Theon Greyjoy and any of the northern lords who knows Arya Stark well be brought to the Great Hall to verify if this girl is who the Hound claims she is."

"Ser, have the Hound disarmed and have them escorted to the Great Hall," ordered the Blackfish gruffly as he entered the room.

The Blackfish and the guard headed one way and Brienne went in search of Theon Greyjoy. Margaery headed to Robb's and her chamber that had become heavily guarded since Twins. He appeared to be sleeping when she walked in. Grey Wind lay curled at the foot of the bed staring up at her with his yellow eyes. She kissed Robb's forehead and ran her fingers through his auburn hair. She held his large calloused hand and squeezed it gently. He was a handsome man with his Tully looks. Not the most handsome man but neither was she the greatest beauty of all of Westeros. Margaery in all honesty, was not sure whether she loved him or if he loved her. But she was thankful he was no Robert or Joffery and that he wanted to bed her unlike her first husband. Robb was good at war but he sorely lacked any political acumen. He had not heeded her misgivings of going to the Twins but he had at least relented in her demands of the men remaining armed and Grey Wind being at his side at all times. Even Margaery had not seen the treachery of Roose Bolton coming, which made her both wary and frightened. What if the child is not who they say she is? She kissed him on the corner of his mouth and whispered,

"Wake up soon, husband." She turned to the giant direwolf who warmed to her faster than it's master. Margaery stroked his fur and beckoned him to follow, "Come Grey Wind, someone says Arya is here." Margaery was not sure if Grey Wind would leave Robb’s side for he rarely did so. But to her surprise, Grey Wind followed her out of their quarters and down to the Great Hall.
When Robb's little wife Margaery entered the Great Hall with Grey Wind by her side only Brienne of Tarth, the ever-smiling Theon Greyjoy and the Blackfish stood standing by the makeshift throne. Bowing when they heard her presence. She certainly does not look flustered after executing Frey and Bolton like a proper little lady should. *Shame she is Robb's wife, she could do well on Pyke. If I ever went back home, I am a lord without a castle or land now*, he thought darkly. His lord father would rather rebel and have Theon killed then agree. He has Asha. *Father told Mallister, I am no son of his, a Greenlander now.* It stung to hear but when Robb had not sentenced him to die as a hostage and embraced him like a brother. The insecure feelings of a boy who did not feel like he belonged to a family had somewhat died. Robb's new wife seemed instantly perceptive to his desire of approval from the Starks. The little Queen had offered him a marriage to one of her pretty younger cousins and hinted possibly of marriage with Sansa Stark once she was returned.

"*You will be officially family then,*" she had said as she sipped her chalice of Arbor Gold. Robb and some of the other northerners had been wary of the granddaughter of the Queen of Thorns and her flashy arrogant knight-brother when they arrived. Theon and Margeary both were flirtatious beings but not with each other. Robb had made it very clear despite his coolness to his own wife. Theon was also well aware of her political shrewdness but somehow Theon felt that Margaery was genuine in her concern for him and was not just using him to her advantage. Margaery is cleverer than most girls. *Came with a lot of Arbor Gold and soldiers too.* Lady Stark was smart in brokering a marriage for Robb with the Tyrell rose once Renly died, even if she did get killed for it.

Margaery looked to him with her large brown doe eyes.

"*You grew up with Robb and his brothers and sisters. I trust you can tell if the girl the Hound has brought is indeed Arya Stark,*" greeted the little Queen as she made her way to sit upon the wooden throne.

Theon smiled and nodded. Grey Wind sat by her feet, shifting in an impatient manner. He thought back to the night at the Twins. The sound of Grey Wind ripping out throats, the shouts, the sound of steel hitting steel. It was chaos, Theon had tried to find his way to Robb's side he remembered hearing Dacey shouting and her axe hacking, and the booming roars of Wendel Manderly. *Tully has won for the worst wedding in Westeros.* Theon had almost got himself killed trying to kill off the archers above raining arrows on them. Theon's wounds were no longer leaking, but were still healing and a tad sore but the prospect of the return of a Stark was far more interesting than lying about listening to the moaning and groaning of wounded men. *There weren't any women around anyway to occupy my time with either.*

"*Yes, Your Grace.*"
The heavy doors swung open and the guards with the red Tully emblem came in escorting a tall unkempt man and a small scrawny looking boy. Margaery frowned at the shorn dark brown looks on the boy and frayed clothes of a peasant boy. *Truly, was the Hound mad if he was going to try to pass off a boy for a Stark girl?* The child had a long skinny face with a peevish look. Margaery tried to recall if either Lady Catelyn and Robb had described Arya. The girl was said to look like her father Lord Eddard Stark and in comparison to her other siblings who took mostly after their lady mother's looks. Margaery glanced quickly at Theon for any sudden recognition. He was still smiling as he scrutinized the boy.

The guards bowed before her. "Your Grace, I present the Hound, Sandor Clegane."

She nodded and motioned the duo to kneel. The tall man bowed stiffly and gave the younger one who staring at Grey Wind a nudge to follow his suit. *Surely, Arya knew her courtesies? Oh, I see the Hound's scar!* Her brother Garlan had told Margaery and her little cousins about Clegane and other members of the court from his travels to King's Landing. It was unpleasant to look at indeed. She smiled and gestured for them to stand again.

"I am surprised to see you so far from King's Landing, I thought you were Joffery's dog and loyal to the Lannisters. The guards tell me that you claim to have brought the Princess Arya back to her brother, my husband, King Robb." She had almost said Lady Stark as well but caught herself in time. Real Arya or not, the girl would have come for looking for her mother. The Starks' mother was dead, body lost. No child should have the pain of being so close to being reunited with their mother but instead have to deal with their brother's wife, a stranger.

"Joffrey is a piece of shit." *Where's Sansa then?* The Blackfish still looked skeptical, perhaps he thought the same.

"Aye, it's Arya Stark. Do you really think I would have wasted my time and gone through all the trouble if it weren't?" replied Clegane bluntly. Brienne and the Blackfish looked ready to reprimand the Hound for his rudeness. Theon smirked. Margaery stared at the child's grey eyes and badly shorn brown hair. She felt she had seen the child before. *At the Twins, the child in the shadows as some of her father's men carried Loras and I away from the Twins. It was dark and my vision was blurry from sobbing for Loras who had fallen, not knowing what had become of Robb,* she thought. *Stop, you are only seeing what you want to see.*

Margaery remained silent and stroked the wolf's fur to stop its fidgeting. He is not growling like he was around the Freys. The child had an impatient look on her face as Theon eyed her.

"I am Arya Stark of Winterfell. I am Eddard Stark's daughter and Lady Catelyn's. That's Grey Wind, my brother's direwolf. You are Theon Greyjoy, my father's ward." The voice was that of a girl's. She pointed at a dirty finger at Theon. "You liked to go visit the brothels in the village." Margaery almost chuckled at the last bit.

"Arya Underfoot?" queried the Kraken heir with a growing smile on his handsome face as he took steps closer to the child. Grey Wind bounded from his place by Margaery towards the girl like he had found an old long lost family member. *She is a long lost family member.* The child petted the wolf and let him lick her grubby face.

By the obvious look of recognition on Greyjoy's face, Margaery decided get up and walked slowly towards the girl as if Stark girl would be easily spooked and flee.

"Well I take it, you did not go through the trouble of bringing my niece's daughter back to her family
for a mere thanks," said Ser Brynden sagely. The Hound grunted. Margaery gently placed her hand on Arya's shoulder and turned to the Hound.

"You have mine and King Robb's gratitude, Sandor Clegane. Ser Brynden could you see that he is paid? Thank you, Lord Theon. Tell the men and Lord Edmure that Princess Arya has returned safely. Lady Brienne, I trust you can see that Sandor is given some provisions and is escorted out of the castle if he does not mean to stay. I think Princess Arya would like to see her brother, bathe and have a proper meal." Margaery held out her hand to the smaller girl and smiled kindly. "I'll take you to your brother."

Arya looked back at Clegane and said good-bye and something about his spot on her list before placing her small calloused hand in Margaery's. Margaery, and Arya with Grey Wind leading the way made their way through the castle to Robb.

"Robb might be still asleep. The maester has been giving him some milk of the poppy for his pain," she warned. When they entered the chamber, Robb was propped up a bit and looked curiously disoriented like he had woken from a strange dream. Perhaps he needs dreamwine as well. Robb noticed Margaery. He smiled at her genuinely in a rare moment of honest tenderness in their short marriage. He is most handsome when he smiles.

"Robb, I have someone for you. Its Arya." Robb didn't look as surprised as she imagined he would be. He craned his head to stare at both Grey Wind and Arya.

"You really are here," croaked Robb as his throat was dry. The look on his face made Robb look much like the boy he still was but could no longer be as Arya rushed over from the door to hug him. Both brother and sister were crying and hugging for the mother and father they had lost, the girl and boy they once were before the war tore apart their family. Catelyn should have been a part of that embrace. She should have been there to welcome her youngest daughter into her late father's castle. Margaery felt a bit awkward just standing there and slipped out to give orders to the maids to arrange for a chamber for Arya and to find some clean clothes around Arya's size to wear after her bath. She visited an unchanged Loras. An hour later or so, small voice called to her from behind as Margaery contemplated going to the sept to pray,

"Robb has ordered me to take a bath. He says he will join us for supper along with Theon."

Her grey eyes were puffy from crying. The child still was still looking at her one part peevishly and the other Margaery could not tell.

"That would be lovely," replied her brother's wife sweetly. The maids helped undress Arya and into the tub of hot water infused with sweet smelling floral and spice oils. Arya wrinkled her nose the smell was sickly and strong. She felt awkward and self-conscious with her flat chest and skinny body as the bath water turned dark and murky quickly. Arya stared at the pretty woman who was adjusting her diadem in her long curly brown hair as the maids scrubbed the how many months worth of dirt and grime off her body and hair. Her hair was short and uneven. It appeared Robb had married an even more-daintier girl than Sansa. How is she going to last through winter at Winterfell? It was bizarre to think of Robb as a husband and father more so than he being crowned a king.

"I didn't know Robb had gotten married even as I was making my way here. It's strange. Him being king, married, and soon a father," blurted Arya who was staring at Margaery's stomach. Margaery gave a small shrug and smiled broadly. Does her cheeks ever hurt from smiling too much?
"Mother met Margaery when she was married to Renly Baratheon. She said marrying her would be worth breaking my vow to marry one of Frey's daughters." Robb had told her after the woman had left them. Robb did not seem to hate his wife but there was no evident love in his voice as he spoke about her. Arya had missed his conflicted face as he glanced at the door Margaery had exited.

Arya finally looked at the Tyrell now Stark girl and she didn't see whatever there was that her lady mother saw. Mother is dead. How was she worth breaking a vow to the Freys and getting our Mother murdered? Arya wanted her mother. She had spent her time on the road worrying about how her mother would react seeing Arya with dressed like a boy with a sword. How changed she was since they had departed from Winterfell.

"We are sisters now. I have never had a sister, being the youngest and only daughter. I have little cousins I am very fond of though," said the Tyrell excitedly. One sister is enough for me. Arya despite how silly and stupid she thought her elder sister was. She still loved Sansa. Not that she would start admitting it anytime. She glowered at her brother's queen as she was put into a slightly too big blue dress with silver fish embroidered on. Queen Margaery's smile faltered ever so slightly.

I bet your Septa praised everything you did.

"I hate dresses. You would like Sansa better. She sings prettily, and has perfect stiches. I want to be a water dancer. I've killed people you know." She thought of her Needle, stupid Genry and Hot Pie as she tugged on the sleeve of her dress. Nymeria. It made her sad that she may never see them again. Arya looked back at the Queen who for once was not smiling. Frowning sadly at her hands. One of Margaery's pale hands rested on her growing stomach. She had an exasperated look in her large brown eyes as she looked up at Arya.

"You Starks are hard to gain favour with. You had to do what was needed to stay alive like I am sure your sister has been doing in King's Landing. I executed Walder Frey and Roose Bolton early this morning for killing your lady mother and trying to kill Robb, Loras and my baby. For trying to destroy everything my family and I worked for. You want to wield a sword, well I want to be Queen. You are familiar with your father's way of serving justice," snapped Margaery standing up. "I am going see if your brother needs anything. Sarya, brush the Princess' hair. Oh you won't have to marry Elmar Frey."

Arya stared questioningly at her good-sister's retreating form. The maid, guided Arya to sit on the now vacated chair, while she brushed and combed out the numerous knots and tangles.
Margaery lay awake curled on her side and her head resting on Robb's bare chest like a pillow. Dark wings, dark words, they said. The raven had come from Winterfell. Bran Stark, his direwolf, and the two children of Lord Howland Reed along with a member of Winterfell's household named Hodor had disappeared in the night according to the maester of Winterfell. Food and supplies had also had been reported missing. It's unlikely three children and a giant of a man have been kidnapped by the Ironborn or by the remaining men at the Dreadfort. Both of which still needed to be dealt with before they reached Winterfell. There were reports of the Ironborn raiding along the coast. There was no news yet if Ser Rodrik Cassel had killed Lord Bolton's bastard or not for the terrible hunting and raping of women. There had been no word from Margaery's grandmother or Willas from Highgarden. Or the messenger I had sent almost two weeks ago to King's Landing. Robb had said nothing about her decision to send the heads of Bolton and Frey or the deal to trade the Kingslayer for Sansa to King's Landing. Probably in shock still, that I personally served the sentence.

Little progress had been made. Robb was beginning to talk freely with her, where once had been a wall. Robb had paced around their chamber hours earlier grumbling about why his crippled brother, a simpleton and the two Reeds would leave and where would they go? In the letter, the maester said the Reed boy had spoke in riddles and talked about a three-eyed crow and the Children of the Forest.

Margaery had heard and read a little about the Children as a child but she never heard of a crow with three eyes. Late in the evening, Margaery had asked about the things in North and beyond the Wall. Robb had recounted some of the stories he and siblings were told by an old woman called Old Nan about the creatures that lived beyond the Wall. Mammoths, giants, skinchangers, and worst the Others. Margaery had shuddered despite being under furs and without thinking edged closer to Robb. Direwolves were not normally seen south of the Wall, according to Robb. She tried so hard to not believe there was any grain of truth in the stories for they frightened her and added a whole unfamiliar set of threats to Robb and her. If direwolves were real and six had made it south of the Wall then how could those other creatures not be real and possibly coming south? Margaery was used to the grey direwolf and always felt safer when Grey Wind was around. But Grey Wind is nothing close to as terrifying as a Mammoth or a Giant or the Others. Being clever won't be enough keep my family and I alive.

"They are just stories, they have been dead for hundreds of years, don't worry. It's the wildings that give the men of the Night's Watch grief." Nevertheless, Margaery had lain awake unconvinced as Robb slept. His arm lay resting protectively over her middle. "But you said Bran was crippled. Why would your brother risk his life and three others to go North or wherever if he did not believe the Reed boy?" she had asked. Robb had considered what she had said, staring at Grey Wind.

"I don't know what to believe, Margaery. Bran should have left a letter behind though; he should have known that with our lord father and lady mother killed. We just got Arya back. I have a sister that's held hostage south and now a brother who has disappeared north. I don't know which way to head to north or south." He had raked a hand through his auburn hair frustrated.

Mace Tyrell had urged his daughter in his recent brief letter to have Robb ride south to join his forces take King’s Landing to avenge his lord father and lady mother who had been betrayed the Lannisters and their ilk. Plying to her feminine heart and familial loyalty, he urged her to do so to avenge her brother Loras' sacrifice. Margaery had cried and prayed in the sept for her brother, but his condition was unchanged and still worsening. I should send Loras back to Highgarden, so Mother might have a chance to say good-bye. She never once imagined going to her future home without her Loras. He was Highgarden, and everyone she had left behind. He was her protector.
Loras was supposed to be there for her, as he had listened to her complaints over Robb's coolness. She was left alone in her confusion over his random acts of tenderness and her early frustration with Arya's stubbornness. Neither were something she felt comfortable yet talking about with Robb. Dealing with Arya felt like Margaery's first trial in practicing her mothering skills before her own child came into the world. Margaery had conciliated with Arya. She offered Brienne to continue to teach Arya how to use a sword and fight as long Arya wore dresses befitting her status as Princess of Winterfell when it was not lesson time with Brienne. Margaery wanted Arya to participate in some of more practical ladylike activities like sewing stitches, and visiting the smallfolk. The high harp and singing were out of the question with this one.

"If someone or yourself has a wound in need of stitching wouldn't you want to know how to do it properly if there was no maester nearby?" Margaery had tried to be encouraging and patient but Arya was resistant and only made less than half-hearted attempts in her stitches. How I want to curse the child to the seven hells. The couple of trips to visit the villages with Arya were more successful despite how crude Arya became around the smallfolk. You would not think she was highborn at all if it were not for the dress. Hopefully, Robb's baby brother is more pliable than Arya.

Robb had been debating on splitting his army, half to go South to join her lord father's army in attacking the King's Landing and the other half to go North to deal with the Ironborn raiding of the Northern coasts and the Dreadfort. She would be left behind at Riverrun or go north to Winterfell along with Arya before Margaery was too far along to travel. Margaery herself did not want Robb himself to go South for various reasons. Her father's ambition of placing a Tyrell on the Iron throne had unlikely gone away, the day she had wed the King of the North. If anything it had only increased when he received her raven that his favourite son was mortally wounded.

Robb did not desire the Iron Throne. He wore his bronze crown out of duty. Three Starks had died in King's Landing and only Arya had it out alive so far. I'd rather not have Robb take the risks with those odds. I don't wish to be widow again even to be the Queen. Robb just needs his sister Sansa Stark and his father's sword back at the very least. Father just needs to kill or defeat Tywin and Joffery and the Lannisters headed by the Queen Regnant will destroy themselves. Let Stannis or someone else take the throne from the Lannisters.

There had not been any word about King Stannis Baratheon's next move or the strange Red Priestess from Asshai since his defeat in the Battle of the Blackwater Bay. It seemed a Stark-Baratheon alliance against the Iron Throne was not going to be repeated. Stannis had not allied with Robb before or after he made his claim to the Iron Throne and even when Renly had been mysteriously killed. Brienne and Lady Catelyn had claimed that Stannis had a part in it. "It was a shadow in the shape of Stannis that killed your late husband. I swear by the Gods what I saw was true, Your Grace." Was it because Lady Stark was sent to treat with Renly? The northern lords' desire of splitting from the Seven Kingdoms and be independent from the Iron Throne. Or perhaps Stannis still remembered her father's siege of Storm's End long ago and Robb married me Lord Mace Tyrell's daughter? Stannis is outnumbered and has no gold. But he has a priestess with a strange god. Renly is dead. What if one of those shadows come for Robb?

Robb watched his wife tearfully kiss her brother, the Knight of Flowers, good-bye as a small part of his army set out to journey south. Robb could not say he and his good-brother truly got along but he had respect and gratitude towards the knight who defended and protected his wife and unborn heir. He felt a rush of guilt come over him. He had not protected his sisters. His sisters did not have their direwolves unlike he had. Robb had cringed at things Arya had told him she had done and witnessed as made her way back to their family. She was ten. Robb felt like calling for Grey Wind
and setting off as well to save Sansa himself. Who was protecting his little sister who believed in
knights like Loras Tyrell? Certainly not her own brother, a king. Forgive me, for not coming myself
and for not saving our Mother. My lady mother would have wanted me to go South with the
Kingslayer to trade for Sansa. Instead, he was marching north.

At this moment the decision of going north felt like he was giving up and abandoning Sansa like
Arya had told him angrily days ago. When the carriage carrying Loras was no longer in view, Robb
had approached Margaery from behind and placed a hand stiffly on her back. She turned her head
and peered up at him with a tears in her eyes. She was radiant despite the melancholic mood. He felt
like he should embrace her or kiss to comfort her like a husband should but Robb was awkward
about overly open displays of affection in the viewing of his men and Arya. Robb may have bedded
his wife and got her with child but Robb was also well aware how formal he was with her, which
made broaching public intimacy all the more awkward.

"Be kind to her, Robb. She is your wife and Queen. If this continues for years, you may push her too
far and gods knows what shall happen. She carries your child. Think about that."

"We've done our duty. I don't see the sense in going through some great pretense."

"Oh, Robb. Is that what you want? I fear you sometimes forget that I am from the South and was
unaccustomed to northern ways once." Robb looked at his lady mother's tired eyes and decided he
would try to fall in love with his wife and befriend her. In fact, he could not remember the original
reason why he had been so cold to Margaery Tyrell.

Margaery had known how to kiss and was a bit more experienced for a virgin. She had said she had
practiced kissing with the stableboys at Highgarden and had heard things about what a man and
woman did in the bedchamber from her mother's ladies in waiting. His southron wife was surprising
in other ways, particularly her executions of the traitorous Frey and Bolton. When he was told by the
Blackfish and Umber, he had thought he had heard wrong. His wife was a dainty thing and as far he
had knew, enjoyed the traditional ladylike pursuits. She knew how to play the game of thrones far
better than he did and drew some kind of euphoria from her political plotting. Robb now respected
her for it, rather than seeing it as equal to the frequent treachery at King's Landing.

Robb had seen how fierce Margaery was in her dislike of Lady Roslin, his Uncle Edmure's Frey
wife. "How could a brother defend a girl whose father and brothers had murdered his own sister?
Had plotted with the Lannisters to take his castle and kill him and his men? She might be pretty for a
Frey but she is simple-minded ninny. Men only think with their cocks. Family, Honour, Duty, my
arse," she had raged to Robb, Theon and Arya hacking at her dinner. Theon had almost choked
from laughter, which had only increased when he saw Robb's mouth hanging open in shock. Arya
had looked at his wife with an inkling of newfound respect and even allowed her to comb her short
hair whilst chirping questions.

Her dislike for the Freys had two exceptions. Roslin's brothers, Olyvar and Perwyn Frey had been
pardoned by Robb since they had remained loyal and had no part in the wedding at Twins. Perwyn
and Olyvar had been tactful not mention their sister, the new Lady Tully, around the Queen unlike
Lord Edmure who had been angry that Margaery refused to receive Lady Roslin or even
acknowledge her existence if they happened to be in the same room. It's for the best, Margaery is
heading to Winterfell, her and Uncle Edmure would row constantly without me there. The Blackfish
had jokingly warned Edmure at last night's supper that if he brought up his wife in front of Margaery
once more she might personally execute him before the apple-cakes were served. Theon, the
Umbers, and Dacey Mormont had laughed while Uncle Edmure glowered at his uncle.

Margaery allowed him to hold her hand as they went to say their goodbyes to Lord Edmure and his
bannermen who were remaining to defend the Riverlands. After their goodbyes and wishes for a safe journey were made, Robb helped his Queen into a carriage due to her condition. He made sure she was comfortable before heading to the front passing by his sister and Brienne of Tarth who were already mounted on their pony and horse by the carriage. He mounted his horse with Grey Wind and Theon on either side of him. He looked back at his men and Dacey.

"Winter is coming and we going home," he called out loudly. Cheers erupted from behind him as he spurred his horse north.
They had stopped for the night somewhere along the Kingsroad past Moat Cailin. Robb and the men had rode ahead to join Dacey's mother Lady Maege, Lord Howland Reed and his crannogmen in the attack of Ironborn occupied Moat Cailin, With Balon Greyjoy's sudden death, Asha had claimed herself Balon’s heir of the Iron Isles. There were grumblings heard of Balon's brothers also vying for the seat that rightfully belonged to Theon.

Robb and Lord Howland Reed had led an attack through the swamps using passageways by boat. They had gave the Ironborn occupiers hell before the few remaining Ironborn men had surrendered Moat Cailin after their new Lord of the Iron Isles had offered the men safe passage back to the Iron Isles if they surrendered and acknowledged the alliance between Theon and the Starks. Like most Westerosi men with the exception of Dome, the Ironborn were prejudiced against the idea of a woman ruling over them and had accepted Theon as Balon's true heir readily. A few of the Ironborn asked to remain and fight for Lord Theon, which he accepted happily at their acceptance of him.

Robb's lord father's closest friend, Lord Howland Reed was a small man with light coloured hair that was going grey. He had green eyes matching his green clothing. Margaery had wondered how this small man had helped Lord Eddard Stark kill Ser Arthur Dayne. Margaery had dared to ask the lord about that day but all she got was a sad smile and a quiet whisper she probably was not meant to hear. "I am the last one who knows, the only one left to tell the truth." He instead turned the conversation to his sorrow for Eddard Stark and Catelyn Stark's murders. Margaery had forgotten his queer statement until after the lord had already gone back to Greywater Watch.

Lord Howland had seemed more resigned and a tad mournful than surprised or concerned when Robb had mentioned his children's and Bran's disappearance. Like he had an inkling it was going to happened. She had wanted to press him for answers of where they were going and why but Margeary had not had the opportunity. She felt the crannogman had been avoiding her and her questions.

Lord Howland Reed and his crannogmen had gone back to defend their lands and ensure the Ironborn did not cause any trouble on their way back to the Iron Islands. Robb and his northern host were leaving immediately to defeat the invading Ironborn led by Theon's elder sister Asha Greyjoy who had taken Deepwood Motte. Before the Ironborn could make it to Winterfell. Lady Maege and her other daughters along with Brienne of Tarth were tasked with accompanying their pregnant Queen and Princess Arya safely to Winterfell.

Parting had been more difficult than Margaery had expected. She felt a pang in her heart that she had never experienced before. Robb had gone away to battle before and she had been worried yet not so distressed. Perhaps it's the baby. Robb himself had been unable to leave Margeary or his little sister.

In the journey, the couple had spent more time together than they had previously. They were far more comfortable around each other and less like the strangers they had been at their wedding. For the first time, Robb and Margaery had not slept much that night preferring to enjoy each other's company fully before their long absence away from each other. Robb had murmured between searing kisses how he had grown to enjoy some southron things like Arbour Gold, and Margaery dressed in her impractical sheer Myrish lace nightgowns. Margaery was thankful it had been dark in the carriage, so he could not see her blushing.
He had spent the early morning before departing hugging Arya and telling her to be good and to tell Rickon he loved him. Robb had bent down on his knee around Arya's height and whispered in her ear before giving a kiss on her forehead. He reassured them that he would be back at Winterfell before the baby was born.

Margaery's eyes had watered when he bent down to kiss her good bye and looked at her with his lovely Tully blue eyes, "I love you. Both of you." Placing a large hand on their unborn baby. "Be safe and dress warm, sweetheart." The declaration and the endearment shocked her. Margaery was for once at a loss for words, she only was able to nod and hugged him tightly as her growing bump would allow. He smelt so nice. Margaery had let a sob when Robb had looked back at her and Arya as he rode away with Grey Wind leading. She wanted to run and yell that she believed loved him too but she did not move and could not find her voice at that moment. But did she really love him?

At the beginning of their journey to Winterfell, Margeary had spent it crying and sleeping from the emotional exhaustion in her carriage. Margaery had thought the Riverlands and the Neck were cold, the air was colder and flecks of white stuff fell from the sky that she had never seen before in her life. Snow. She had asked for them to stop briefly so she could walk about with the snow falling on her hair and diadem. Brienne had tutted that she should go back inside her carriage before she got ill. Lady Maege said she looked like a proper Queen of Winter with the snow in her hair, rosy cheeks from the wind, and wrapped in her Stark grey wedding cloak and furs.

Margaery had beamed at the high compliment from the she-bear and a conversation about this and that had started. After a bit, Margaery asked about Lady Maege's exiled nephew Jorah Mormont. Her mother Alerie's youngest sister the pampered pretty Lynesse had married the banished bear lord for love after he named her Queen of Love and Beauty in a tourney. However that love had cost him his title, his home and his sword because her inadaptability and extravagance. A perfect example of how the austere North and the wealthy South could not mix. Before her wedding to Robb, Margaery had worried that her marriage to Robb would prove to be as successful as her Aunt Lynesse's marriage to Ser Jorah Mormont.

Lady Maege and Alysane Mormont had made it clear of their love for Jorah despite the shame and poverty he had put their house under and thought little of Lynesse Hightower. Margaery had not heard of what had become of her aunt in Essos but there had been reports of Jorah Mormont that he was a knight serving the Targaryen girl. There have been rumours of dragons also from sailors. This girl would have no love for the great houses of Westeros that fought against her father Mad King Aerys if she ever made over here. Margeary's family had fought on the Targaryen side during Robert's Rebellion but that would count for little now since Margeary had married Lord Eddard Stark's eldest son named for Robert Baratheon.

Fire and blood. Would Daenerys kill Robb like her father had killed Rickard and Brandon Stark? How many times had she heard the words "the North Remembers" since Robb had placed his cloak on her shoulders. Would Jorah Mormont allow this Targaryen to bring fire and blood upon his family and Bear Hall? Would he fight against the she-bears himself on the battlefield if it came to it? Margeary was not naïve to believe an alliance between Robb and herself and Daenerys would be easily brokered. Nor did she strongly believe he would helpful to her and Robb. Ser Jorah had fled to Essos in exile to avoid execution by his liege lord Eddard Stark for being involved in the slave trade. He likely has little love for Starks and little love for Lynesse anymore. Worth a try at least.

"They say Jorah serves Daenerys Targaryen. They say she has dragons and is building an army to take across the Narrow Sea to retake the Iron Throne."

Would it hurt to write to Jorah Mormont as a niece who happened to be the Queen in the North offering a pardon allowing him to come home in exchange by pledging allegiance to Robb?
Perhaps, he had enough influence to steer Daenerys in an alliance with the Starks? Daenerys would have to be daft to not consider an alliance with the North and the Trident and the Reach if she was serious about reclaiming her father's throne.

"I can't speak for my cousin Jorah, my Queen. But we Mormont women bow to no king or queen unless it's a Stark of Winterfell. We are of the North we don't give a damn of who sits on the Iron Throne. I reckon the smallfolk in the south don't care either as long they have enough food to eat," answered Alysane. Margaery had smiled and remarked how she had never seen such fierce loyalty from the bannermen/women outside of the North. Barring the exception of Lord Rickard Karstark and Lord Roose Bolton.

"I have heard stories about his military success and how he was knighted by King Robert. Your nephew is still my uncle by marriage as far as I know. I shall write to him offering a pardon if it pleases you." Alysane looked to her mother and Lady Maege inclined her head. She grunted good-humoredly,

"Aye, it does your Grace. He'll come home if he has not fallen for yet another fair maiden." Alysane and Jorelle rolled their eyes and chuckled.

"I thought there weren't any more dragons," said Arya between bites of bread. A debate over the existence of the rumored dragons ensued as Margaery went back to her carriage.

The journey to Winterfell seemed to take forever mostly due to the slowness of the carriage and the wagons. Arya had taken to occasionally bunking with Margaery and telling her stories about playing in the godsdwood with her siblings and Theon. Then she would rattle off her list of people she wanted to kill before falling asleep. A wolf howled in the night and Arya had been having dreams of being a wolf more frequently. Must be because I am almost home. Robb had started to tell her how he had dreamed that he saw Arya the day she had come to Riverrun with the Hound, but changed his mind and said no more about it.

Margaery was not all that horribly ladylike as she originally thought. Margaery swore occasionally and knew some bawdy songs. She did not force Arya to wear dresses for most of the journey and complimented Arya's riding from her carriage promising Arya one of her father's best horses for her next nameday gift. She is not all that bad. It had been strange to Arya being surrounded by mostly women. She had spent so much time in company of men and boys since she had fled King's Landing.

Arya had stated how she did not want to marry a lord or a prince and have children remembering saying the same to her lord father in what felt like ages ago. Brienne had told her how she had avoided marriage and how her father taught her how to fight. Lady Maege had no husband and had five daughters that all bore the Mormont name. The Mormont women all fought in battle and were accepted. Alysane Mormont had two children out of wedlock. She had expected Margaery to tell her she needed to marry as a part of her duty to her family. But the little rose merely said that Robb and her would not force Arya to marry anyone she did not want to. Margaery was a perfect little Queen and far more feminine in stark contrast to the rest. But Arya had to admit that she admired Margaery's use of her intelligence and cunning to garner her influence beyond being just a wife and a broodmare.

Arya's experiences in the South had soured her opinion and trust of southron people. However Arya had listened to Margaery's stories of life in the Reach with curiosity. The gardens and the horses her lord father bred. The pleasure boats she had went on down the Mander with her little cousins. The
brunette spoke of her parents Lord Mace and Lady Alerie Tyrell and her eldest brother Willas who was crippled like Bran. She spoke of her other older brother Ser Garlan the Gallant and his wife Lady Leonette who was very gifted at the high harp. Arya had noted her good sister avoided speaking of the Knight of Flowers. It had been easy to blame Margaery for Mother's death but she too had lost her brother.

Arya had reluctantly allowed Margaery's well-intended "mothering". It felt wrong to do so soon after Mother's murder. It also felt nice yet strange that someone was looking out for Arya. She is a part of the pack now. Hot Pie and Gendry had been her pack before they had left her or refused to come with her. She had told Margaery about Hot Pie and his baking when Margaery had lamented on cravings for flaky and buttery pasties one day.

"Do you like this Gendry?" whispered Margaery in an all knowing tone. Arya had wrinkled her nose and said that he was stupid.

Arya knew they were close long before the grey castle of Winterfell loomed at a distance, Arya had shouted happily.

"I'm home. I'm home. I'm home! Look Margaery, it's Winterfell!" The Queen craned her head out of the window of the carriage to get a look of her new home. Margaery's face did not reveal her reaction. Robb had asked Arya to be helpful to Margaery in her transition to life in the North before he had rode away. Arya had pointed out all the distinguishable features of Winterfell a little too fast in her excitement and longing to be inside those walls again. Margaery had laughed,

"You and Brienne ride ahead! You can give me a proper tour when we are there. I need to shut this I am getting quite cold." Arya had been too distracted to even notice the cold despite the dress and fur lined cloak she wore. Had it been this cold when she had left for King's Landing? She wondered as she galloped ahead with Brienne following.

Margaery had been travel weary and anxious, when she finally made to Winterfell. The castle was larger than she had imagined. It was not beautiful like Highgarden or even Riverrun. As she got out of her carriage, Arya was greeting the people who were lined up in the courtyard to welcome home their Queen and Princess. A small man with gray eyes and hair approached her and bowed. Is everything here gray?

"Your Grace, I am Maester Luwin and I welcome you to Winterfell." The rest of the people followed suit in dropping down on their knees to bow before Margaery. She waved a small hand gesturing for them to rise.

"Thank you, Maester Luwin." The maester proceeded to introduce the household to Margaery by name and position. Margaery smiled but only a few names stuck particularly a serving woman named Osha that looked too hard to be a woman and Mikken the blacksmith. Margaery was most surprised by the small boy that she recognized to be Robb and Arya's youngest brother Rickon. His auburn hair was so long that it appeared to have not been shorn in a long time. His face was longer than Robb's, similar to Arya's in a way but shared the same Tully blue eyes with Robb. His direwolf was all black with green eyes.

"Prince Rickon, this is your brother King Robb's wife Queen Margaery." The young boy looked warily at Margaery and did a little bow that he had probably had been instructed and reminded to do. Margaery bent down to the youngest Stark's eye level.
"Hello Rickon, what's your wolf's name?"


"Robb is gone to fight the Ironborn invaders. He will come back. Your mother is –." Margaery made a move to comfort the boy. Shaggydog snapped at her and bared his teeth. Frightened, she stood up and backed away. Grey Wind had taken to me quickly. Lady Catelyn had said he probably liked the smell of me.

"Gone," finished Arya. "She died protecting Robb, fighting to get Sansa and I back, so all five of us would be safe. I came back Rickon. Robb will too. Rickon, tell Shaggydog to be nice to our good-sister." Tears came down the little boy's face. Margaery would have scooped the boy up and held him if she weren't so afraid of Shaggydog. His sister instead led him inside somewhere Margaery did not know with Shaggydog following.

"My Queen, my apologies, Rickon has not been able to cope well with all the changes in his family. Especially since Lady Stark left. His direwolf reflects that. I gently told him about Lady Stark's death when your raven arrived then Bran's –". The maester was fiddling with his chain. Poor boy.

"It is understandable, Maester Luwin. You did your best I am sure. If someone could show me my chamber I would like to bathe and change out my traveling clothes before the feast." And get out of the cold. The chamber prepared for the Queen was Lady Catelyn Stark's chamber since it was the warmest. Another Southron wife.

The chamber was warm. The room could use some decorating in Margaery's opinion but it sufficed. She bathed and donned a silver gray silk gown with gray roses and thorns. It was not the warmest or the least revealing gown Margaery had but it was the last one she had that fit and was clean. I need new gowns.

The maids did not know how to style hair in the popular styles of the South. Lady Stark had preferred keep her up in a bun or down. Nothing fancy or intricate like the styles Margaery liked and was used to. Margaery was in no mood to do her own hair that evening, so she left her soft brown hair down in the Northern fashion with just her diadem as adornment. Shame not one of my little cousins had came with me to serve as a lady in waiting when I married Robb like they had when I married Renly. With one last look in the looking glass, Margaery left her chamber to be led to the Great Hall.

Chapter End Notes

What do you guys think about my ideas about Jorah? I am unsettled in my want to rewrite my previous ideas concerning the Starks and Jorah and Dany.
It had been a moon and a half since Margaery had arrived at Winterfell. It had only taken a couple of days for Margaery to memorize the layout of Winterfell. Learning how Winterfell ran and the duties overseeing the household took much of her time. In Robb's absence, Margaery had taken to sitting on his throne listening to the supplicants and disputes. It was tiresome and her cheeks hurt at the end of the day from politely smiling for hours. She had written her letter to Ser Jorah Mormont carefully and threw out the several drafts that did not suit her. Margaery did not have "little birds" like Varys did, so she had the letter sent to White Harbour to go on a ship across the Narrow Sea. Everyday without fail, she asked Maester Luwin more than once for any news or if any ravens had come, she was waiting for news from Willas or of the reaction at the court to her message.

Margaery did not understand why she felt so lonely even during the day, when she constantly surrounded by people. She figured she was simply homesick and that it had nothing to do with her Stark husband. Her favourite place in the castle was the glass houses. She felt homesick thinking of the flowers she tended to in the opulent gardens of Highgarden. Margeary felt silly feeling so since every highborn maiden left her home to marry. *I am the Queen in North. I cannot cry for my mother, for home. I cannot behave like a child, when I am going to be a mother myself.*

Ser Rodrik Cassel, the master at arms of Winterfell had returned from the Dreadfort with a prisoner named Reek. Ser Rodrick had claimed he had killed Ramsay Snow for his crimes. Reek had been Ramsay's servant kept alive to tell all the crimes Ramsay Snow had committed. Like his name, he reeked a foul odour and was filthy from head to toe. Margeary had been ready to dismiss the prisoner to the dungeons until she took note of Reek's eyes. They were the same creepy colourless eyes as Lord Roose Bolton's eyes.

"You forgot another thing Ramsay Snow has done, Reek," she had called out. "Pretending to be someone else. You have your father's eyes, Ramsay Snow. I remember them when I executed your lord father for treason." Ramsay Snow had a cruel sadistic smile on his ugly face. This time however Margaery had not personally performed the execution. Ser Rodrik Cassel had asked courteously yet insistently to do it himself as a way of avenging Lady Stark in ending Roose Bolton's line and fulfilling the duty he had been sent to the Dreadfort to do. *No more Bolton rebellions will plague my children and their children.*

Arya had taken Margaery to the godswood to show her the pools. Margaery kept a respectful distance from Shaggydog. She often came here to dip her swollen feet in the warm water of the hot springs as Arya and Rickon played. Rickon still refused to cut his hair and fought loudly when Maester Luwin tried to get him to do his lessons. She thought of light brown haired and red haired children of her own playing in the godswood someday. *If we survive this war and this winter that is coming.* The godswood at Riverrun had made the widowed Tyrell uneasy when she had wed Robb before the unfamiliar Old Gods. This weirwood heart tree however, was the biggest she had ever seen. *Not that I have seen many weirwood trees.* For someone who did not worship the Old Gods, Margaery thought this godsdow was pretty in its own eerie way.

Today, Arya and Rickon were playing with Shaggydog, while Margaery had sat before the old weirwood tree half watching the children and observing her surroundings. The face carved on the tree was grotesque with the red blood like sap dripping from the eyes. *It's not truly blood.* Margaery stared at its eyes.
"Can you see me? If I prayed here for Robb, my baby, my good sisters, and good brothers, would you listen to me?" she had asked in a quiet voice. The tree obviously did not answer. The red leaves blew in a light breeze. The wilding woman Osha claimed that rustling weirwood leaves meant that the Old Gods were listening.

Maester Luwin had told Margaery not to place much stock in Old Nan's stories, which, were more frightening to hear from the old woman herself. Robb had not joked when he told her she was probably the oldest person in the Seven Kingdoms. Shriveled Old Nan and her filmy white eyes made her grandmother seem youthful. Her stories made the North and the land beyond the Wall seem far more terrifying than what little Margaery had seen in her very short time in the North. The other day, Osha had been brazen to tell Margaery that her husband should be going north. When Margeary had responded that King Robb was in the north and was riding to Deepwood Motte, the wilding woman said,

"No the real north, little Queen."

If the "real" north was truly like what Old Nan's stories and Osha said about the blue-eyed White Walkers, why did Bran Stark head in their direction? Margaery had sent a raven to Robb's half brother Jon Snow and Lady Maege's brother who was the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch that morning wanting confirmation of the things she had feared to be true. Margaery heard footsteps and turned around there stood the curly haired Beth Cassel.

"Your Grace, Maester Luwin and my father say there's word from King's Landing," said Beth dipping to a curtsey slightly out of breath. Finally.

It had been easy to use the mockingbird. The mockingbird thought himself to be so clever and sly. Poisoning the half stag half lion or twice over lion, whatever the monster was had been orchestrated to perfection in her opinion and had required minimal outside help. Getting the red she-wolf and its family sword out of the lion claws had been most tricky. That's where the mockingbird came into use. Of course, the mockingbird had its own agenda for the red she-wolf. With the pretty red trout killed, what a better replacement to lust and love over than the red trout's own pup. The mockingbird was no different than other men like the dead fat drunk stag. Wasting their lives obsessing over women who did not want them. The mockingbird's hatred of the headless wolf was ill concealed to the trained eye. Double-crossing the mockingbird had amused her as she watched the ship carrying the red she-wolf and the sword amongst the supplies and bounty from the Reach disembark to not the falcon's nest as the mockingbird wanted but back north to her little rose and red she-wolf's littermates. The mockingbird's drunk Red was dead somewhere in King's Landing.

Of course, the red she-wolf and the huge sword were not her main objective, the retrieval had been an indirect request made by her little rose. Hearing the bells ringing for the dead monster's funeral at a distance made her grin. A grandson for a grandson. Her Left poured some more wine into her cup. She raised the cup as a toast to the ringing bells then drank deeply. How delicious and satisfying it tasted! She thought of the lioness that grew more instable since the monster had been killed.

A son for a son.

Seventeen and already a legend.

Seventeen and already dead.

How the Queen of Thorns wanted to prick the old lion to death herself. Oh well, she had to give her
fat rose of a son something to do, she supposed. The fat rose bellowed that the Young Wolf was a fool to not come and challenge the lions himself. *Now why would he do that when he had married a southron rose to gain her thorny army to help fight in the south for him?*

The Mother had cursed her with three fat half-witted roses for children. Bless the four little roses that had been sired by fat rose. *His only achievements, she thought dismissively. They had all learned to use their thorns against friend and foe. She only had a wise scholarly crippled rose heir, her gallant and the last able-bodied rose gone to fight off the frost in the north left. The most beautiful and impetuous rose had likely died in his mother's arms by now. His death won't have been in vain. They would have been out of the game if they had lost their little rose and her budding pup. *Hopefully, the first half-wolf and half rose would be born a son.*

Under disguise, the spider had recounted watching and listening to the little rose's messenger present the rotting heads of the weasel and leech lords on platters to the monster and the lions whilst "The Wolf in the North" played loudly. *"These are lies! The Young Wolf is dead! Tell them!" screamed the monster.* How the lioness had seethed and the old lion had roared furiously afterwards. The dwarfed lion had been darkly amused and smug,

*"Excellent job Father. The Young Wolf has won every battle and has now survived your second Rains of Castamere. I wonder who will come first to kill us the Young Wolf with his impending winter or Lord Mace Tyrell's army of steel thorns to avenge his boy the Knight of Flowers. I wonder how Jaime is fairing. I might have become your only son."* Word that the dwarfed lion had been immediately arrested unjustly for the monster's murder by the lioness had spread like the wildfire of the Battle of Blackwater Bay.

Oh well.

The ship was now out of sight, she ordered Left and Right to have the carriage head back her awaiting boat on the Mander to take her back to Highgarden.

It had looked like it was going to be a bloody battle to get the Ironborn out of the north and free Robett Glover's wife and their children held captive. When Asha refused to hail arrows on her baby brother at the damn last minute, Robb had itched to ride back home once Asha and Theon had come to an agreement on ruling the Iron Isles. Theon had the strongest claim to the Iron Islands, Asha and Theon were planning how to defeat their uncles who sought the lordship over their birthright. Robb had avoided promising Sansa as a wife for Theon making it clear it was not because he did not think Theon was not worthy of marrying one of his sisters. *"You have my blessing, Theon. If she will have you."*

Thinking of his wife back at Winterfell. His parting with Margaery had been slightly disappointing when he told her he loved her and she had only stared at him stunned and slightly confused. He understood her confusion, he had not made things easy for them. *She must feel something for me, she was crying when I had looked back. How soon would that go away if Margaery ever found out about the things he had done inside Grey Wind’s mind. How frightened she looked when he had told her the stories Old Nan had told them as children. He remembered how Margaery had asked to be held afterwards as he kissed her comfortingly. Margaery will be running from him not to him for comfort. She will never let me near her again. Robb could not bear to see his wife's big brown eyes go wide in fear because him. Perhaps, it was for the best that her opinion of me was never high.*

He had dreams of being a wolf in his sleep but he never before killed a man who had been spying on them in broad daylight as Grey Wind. Robb had perversely enjoyed ripping out the man’s throat. *I'm
He remembered in one of his wolf dreams following Margaery around Riverrun and wanting to bite Ser Patrek Mallister for staring at Margaery's breasts a little too obviously. *I'm a warg.* Rickon was too young to ask about his connection with his wolf. Bran and Summer had disappeared. Arya's Nymeria was missing. Lady had been killed and buried at Winterfell. Robb thought of Jon at the Wall and his white wolf. *Had he slipped into Ghost before like I did with Grey Wind?*

Joffery was dead. Killed by a womanly manner of death – poison. The damn prick that had ordered his lord Father to be killed whilst Sansa and Arya watched. Maester Luwin had sent brief message to Robb at Deepwood Motte. His men were drinking boisterously. But Robb's mood had sobered when he remembered they still had Sansa held hostage. There had been a cryptic message more like order from his wife. *Ride north to the Wall, trust me* scrawled below a message from the Night's Watch. Why did he have to go to the Wall? Robb wanted to go home to Winterfell to rest for a moment. A wildling attack. Disturbing his thoughts, Theon sat next to him with a cup of ale. They sat quietly for a while,

"You going north?" asked Theon. Robb looked at his friend.

"Yes. I know you have to deal with your uncles. But Margaery has written that I am needed up there. Uncle Ben always said the Wall was poorly manned unlike how it was in the past. If it's a wildling attack, as King in the North and as a Stark of Winterfell, I have to go. I won't let my land be overrun with wildlings. Father said I had a duty to aid the Night's Watch, when needed." *Goodbye brother.* Theon nodded staring at his empty cup.

"Who knows, maybe the family reunion with my uncles will go as well as it did with Asha. I'll be at Castle Black before you have killed all the wildlings," joked Theon. Robb laughed sadly and clapped his hand on Theon's shoulder.

"I'll save a couple of wildlings for you."

A tall young girl with a hood covering her hair stood at the bow of the ship sailing north clutching her doll. For the first time in a long time there was happy tears in her clear blue eyes. *I'm going home.* She had been so afraid the Lannisters had caught her escaping with *Ice* when Ser Dontos was killed on their way to the docks of King's Landing. Two tall red haired twins had taken her to the Queen of Thorns who had arranged for a ship to take her to White Harbour. The girl had asked about the master of coin. Olenna had fixed her long red hair and replied,

"Don't worry about him. A word of advice dear child, never trust him ever again."

She could hear the bells as she boarded the ship reminding her Joffery was dead and he could no longer torment her. He had been horrible than his usual when he had found out her brother was still alive. *He is dead and I am going home with Father's sword, she thought as she stared at the open blue waters.*

Chapter End Notes

leave a review or comment. xo.
Question: How acceptable is it to be open about being a warg? Or is it something to be hidden/not talked about?
let's crow for the king!

Crossing the courtyard past Arya practicing with a wooden sword with Brienne. Margaery huffed her way up the stone steps of the Library Tower. She seemed to have gotten more fatter and ungainly overnight. The babe had taken to nudging her recently. But today she was having annoying back pain that would not go away no matter if she sat or tried to walk it off. Margaery had an insatiable appetite. She never ate so much meat in her life. Margaery liked and ate meat but always preferred vegetables and fruits. She was insatiable in other ways too. Margaery had tried to satisfy herself remembering Lady Taena Merryweather's instructive talk of self-gratification. There was no one at Winterfell eye catching enough to harmlessly flirt with and frustratingly the sole person who could help satisfy her appetite was at the Wall by now. Probably a good thing, I look and feel like a puff fish.

She wondered how Lady Stark had carried and birthed five children and had remained a handsome woman. Perhaps that wretched Westerling girl will come and "nurse" Robb, when Margaery became fat and ugly. She scanned the shelves of books for a book on the topic that she looking for. Stupid men wanted and needed heirs but they only had to do the simple task out of the whole production.

Her fussing over Rickon was getting nowhere close to getting the boy to warm up her. In addition to sewing dresses for Arya, she sewed little tunics and trousers with black direwolves embroidered on for the boy. She praised his successes in play fighting his sister and in his lessons with Maester Luwin. Margaery was encouraging, whenever he got frustrated. Which was often. Sure, he behaved politely as a small child could to Margaery when his sister, Maester Luwin, or Osha were around. Margeary had thought she had finally made at least a stride with the youngest Stark. But Rickon had come into her chamber one evening and shouted that it was his mother's and she had to get out. It was neither her fault nor Rickon's that she appeared to "usurping" the late Lady Stark's place at Winterfell. Still, Margeary had felt horrible and cried.

If she had not come to Winterfell carrying their King's unborn heir, would the people here not have welcomed her as warmly as they had? Would they have just seen a bride who represented the deaths of their lord and lady?

The books were not very helpful. They had no answer as to how one could kill a White Walker. Perhaps someone at the Wall already knows a way to kill them. Margaery tossed the last dusty book on the table in frustration. So much for distracting myself. Heading back to her chamber to rest and hopefully dull the pain, her mind wandered back to the events at the Wall and King's Landing. The wildling attack on the Wall seemed serious. She had prayed in the small Sept and before the heart tree that Robb and his army had made there in time. There had been no mention of Sansa Stark, when the news of Joffery's death had come to Winterfell, which made her concerned if the Lannisters had imprisoned or killed the eldest Stark girl.

Margaery took off her diadem and lay down on the furs. Margaery drifted off into a deep sleep despite the discomfort she felt. She dreamt of a small girl with auburn hair dressed in periwinkle and furs sitting alone in the godswood.

As Margeary got closer, the little girl cried,

"Don't let them take him away too! She burnt them! She'll kill him too! Why couldn't she leave us be? She promised to be benevolent!"

A crow cawed loudly, "Brother, Brother, King, King, Brother!"
The face on the great weirwood was weeping too as the girl continued her desperate pleas. The feeling of a fiery stabbing sensation hit her. It felt so real she cried out but the girl was still crying unaware of Margaery. Who died? Why couldn't the girl turn around and hear me?

She turned around looking for someone to help the girl, a sad maid dressed in a blood stained white gown with blue roses a top her head looked at her mournfully. Two men appeared, the elder was cold and stern looking, the younger, was tall and handsome. A dark haired man in his mid thirties sat next to the sobbing auburn haired girl cleaning his sword.

"I don't want to be the last one left! Please, I don't want to be alone in the world!"

The stabbing pain persisted. Margaery looked down and saw a pool of blood around her feet. A rose bush with three beautiful golden yellow roses was covered in frost and blood. It needs to go to the glass house or it will die! A small pretty wolf howled. Everything blurred yet the crying and cawing continued louder and louder.

The serving maids who gone to ask the queen if she would like to have the cook make her anything had heard Margaery's cries of pain. The Queen was curled in the fetal position clutching her middle. Her pale blue dress was drenched in parts. Blood also dotted the dress.

"Your Grace! The baby! Send for Maester Luwin!" It's too soon. Nine moons they said. It's only been eight or seven?

This baby had insisted it would be born in the manner its parents had, whilst their fathers were away fighting. Traditions had to be upheld no matter how big or small. The babe had given its inexperienced mother warnings of their desire to join the world.

Margaery was still disoriented from her dream and the real life situation of birthing her first child early than she had expected left her panicky. Margeary hopelessly screamed for her lady Mother to tell her that the baby and her would be alright. A scream for Robb died in her mouth, for she wanted him with her but at the same time she did not want to admit it. She could hear Maester Luwin's voice and the sounds of frenzied movement in and out of the chamber. Everyone knew that a woman's battles were faced in the birthing bed. Please, don't let my baby and I die, she prayed.

A king in black armour and grey furs stood in the muddy and blood stained courtyard of Castle Black staring up at the Wall. The Wall was nothing Robb had ever seen in his life. It was massive and foreboding. It glittered even in the dark. Robb and his army had rode into Castle Black in the midst of the battle. His best archers were sent up the winch to assault the wildlings with fire arrows. Robb had searched for Jon as he cut down the wildling invaders. He stabbed a red haired wildling woman who pointed her bow and arrow at an unsuspecting Lord Umber who was fighting a long gray haired wildling with gold bands.

Robby had found his brother after the raiders had been defeated. Jon was taller, and his hair was longer since he had left Winterfell for the Wall long ago. I must look different to him as well. Ghost even looked different. He had been the runt of the six pups found and was now bigger than Grey Wind. Robb saw Jon carrying a Valyrian sword.

"Old Bear Mormont's sword," Jon explained. A group of black brothers in a mutiny had killed Lord Mormont. Robb thought of Ice bitterly in the hands of the Lannisters along with Sansa. Jon never looked more like their Father as he took charge of the men of the Night's Watch. His face was grim when he told Robb that Mance Rayder had thousands of wildlings.
It was morning again and Robb was still over exhausted and sore from being knocked off his horse by a wildling. Grey Wind had attacked his attacker, ripping out his throat. His face was still caked with the wildling's blood. When he had asked where Jon was, everyone looked at him uncomfortably. *Had Ser Alliser Thorne and Janos Slynt killed or imprisoned Jon?* Robb had wanted to kill both men for their comments about their lord Father and how Thorne called Jon "Lord Snow" in a jeering tone. Jon was just following orders when he was with the wildlings. He ignored the comments about his brother breaking his vows by lying with a wildling. He had been cold and mulish towards them. Reminding them if it weren't for Jon's leadership after Noyce had died Castle Black would have fallen. They did not like that one bit, but said nothing back. *To my face at least.*

A fat boy around his age stuttered that he was a friend of Jon's.

"What is your name? Where is Jon then?"

"S-Samwell T-Tarly, Your Grace. Jon, he—he has gone beyond the Wall to parlay with Mance."

Tarly. He did not remember all of his Margaery's lord father's bannermen's names except for Lord Randyll Tarly.

"Show my men and I how to get beyond the Wall. We'll help in negotiating with this King Beyond the Wall." Samwell had led them through the tunnel past a dead giant. The black brothers who had defended the gate had died as well. The men muttered words of astonishment and solemn prayers to the Gods and to the slain black brothers. As Samwell Tarly had the gate lifted, Robb raised his sword, roaring, as he led the charge towards Mance's army.

His army had attacked the wildlings and Mance had surrendered dropping his weapons down. The other wildling men followed or were killed if they continued to attack. Robb was underwhelmed by the appearance of this "king" and overwhelmed with the prospect of letting thousands of wildlings through the Wall. Winter was coming and there was not enough food to feed them all.

"As my brother, what would you do with this man?" asked Robb looking to Jon.

"I'd take him as your prisoner." Robb nodded in agreement. Robb had the sense that this man would never kneel to him. The Glover brothers escorted Mance. As Robb was about to turn back to remount his horse, Jon's voice stopped him.

"As your brother, I would burn the bodies of the dead. If you had seen what I have seen, you would too," said Jon seriously. Robb gave a questioning glance but nodded.

Following the ceremony of burning the men of the Night's Watch and some of Robb's archers who had died. Robb had chosen to sit with his brother and his friends instead of eating with Thorne and Slynt. Jon had introduced him to his friends Pyp, Grenn, and Dolorous Edd. Samwell Tarly was also there with a girl named Gilly and her baby. I thought women were not allowed at the Wall. Robb made no comment and thought of the talk of Jon having a wildling lover. Robb told Jon about his marriage to Margaery, the treachery at the Twins, and his lady mother's death.

"Arya was brought by the Hound to Riverrun for a ransom. She and Rickon are at Winterfell. Bran's disappeared though. I would look for him if I knew where to look. He has Summer though which is good. Sansa—" Jon had smiled at mention of Arya then frowned at the mention of their crippled little brother.

"I h-have seen a boy with a direwolf like yours and Jon's beyond the Wall. He couldn't walk and was carried by a tall man. His friends made me promise not to t-tell," interrupted Samwell biting his lip. Robb set down his fork and knife. It had been suspected they gone north but Robb had hoped they not made it past the Wall. "I-I helped them get through one of the tunnels that goes underneath
the Wall. I'm sorry, Your Grace." Tarly gulped fearfully. Robb looked at Jon who did not look annoyed or angry as Robb felt. Jon had always been better at hiding his emotions.

"Robb, you haven't been on top of the Wall yet," said Jon pushing away his empty plate. Robb sighed and followed out of the dining hall. They took the winch up. Robb had been amazed looking up at the Wall, but the view of the top was spectacular. It was also unbelievably colder up on top and the wind made Robb uneasy of falling off.

"I'm sorry about the girl you loved," asked Robb as they walked along the Wall. "What was she like?" Jon stopped and looked out to the land beyond the Wall.

"Her name was Ygritte. She had crooked teeth but I thought she was beautiful. She had red hair. They considered it to be lucky. Kissed by fire. She put three arrows in me." A rush of guilt and realization hit Robb. Red hair and arrows. I stabbed her. Of all the wildlings.

"I saw her. I killed her. She was about to kill Umber. I'm sorry, Jon." Jon looked at him sadly and hugged him.

"It was a battle and you didn't know. I had chosen my vows over her." Robb couldn't tell if Jon was just this to make Robb less contrite. They spoke no more for a long time. When they did talk it was about their concern for Sansa. Robb's guilt for his mother's death and for not marching on King's Landing to save Sansa himself. He poured out every doubt he had since the news of their father's execution had come and he had been made the Lord of Winterfell whilst Jon listened silently. Now I am king. Jon had growled when Robb spoke of what he knew of their sister's treatment in the capital. Jon told him about the wight that had tried to attack Lord Commander Jeor Mormont. Sam killing at an Other with a dagger made of Valyrian steel. They awkwardly spoke of their fledgling warging powers with Grey Wind and Ghost. Robb's fear of telling Margaery or her ever finding out went unsaid.

As they were going down in the winch, Jon said,

"I wanted to go south with you to avenge Father and get our sisters back. I left and got as far as Mole's Town before Sam and the others came stopped me." I wanted you there too, brother.

That was the last time the two brothers had a moment to talk freely and openly together in private. Robb went back to his role of King in the North and Jon went back to his role as steward. Robb grew impatient with the situation at the Wall. Some men were upset about the decision not killing the wildling captives. Some saw the sense in holding them captive. Robb was not leaving until a definite decision was made in placing the thousands of wildling refugees and the Night's Watch had elected a new Lord Commander. Robb had remained outwardly neutral in the latter subject, to quell any discontentment of Robb favouring Jon too much. Not that Jon had seemed keen to take the position or was aware of Sam's nomination and campaign for him.

On the other hand staying at Castle Black a moment longer was a terrible idea. Mance Rayder's late wife had a sister named Val. Robb did not think a wildling could be considered beautiful. Val was older than Robb but she was a beauty. Val was striking with long blonde hair, grey eyes and high cheekbones. Val had full breasts yet was still slender. One of brothers of the Night's Watch had said she could make a man forget his vows. Even a marriage vow. Val was haughty towards the men, whenever she left her tower where she cared for her sister's baby. Robb thought of his pregnant wife guiltily. It is just thoughts, nothing more. He thought of his lady mother's face when she had asked him if he had laid with Jeyne Westerling after she informed him of his betrothal to Renly's widow. I am not Robert Baratheon. I told Margaery that I love her.

A few of Robb's men were vehemently against everything southron, had indiscreetly bemoaned that
A marriage between the wilding "princess" and their Young Wolf would aligned the North and the wildlings together. Robb had been furious and snarled at them for disrespecting his Queen and the mother of his heir. He reminded them, his late lady mother had been southron. A loyal northern lord or heir would suffice to marry Val. Smalljon Umber could steal her or maybe Norrey. If Robb was scared of his Margaery's reaction to his warging powers, he would have to be as stupid as Hodor to provoke her Tyrell pride by mentioning Val.

Irritatingly, Val had seemed to seek him out when he was alone or with Grey Wind who was indifferent to the woman. Robb remembered how Grey Wind had only sniffed Margaery once then rolled on his back like a giant puppy asking for a belly rub.

"So I hear you are planning on marrying me to one of your kneelers. I am no kneeler lady. I am a woman of the free folk if you want me to marry one of them they'll have to come and steal me. After I geld them, you can have them join your crow brother."

Ignoring her lack of courtesies, he responded coolly, "I have been made aware of your people's marriage customs. Once one of my men steal you, you will have to bend the knee to me as King in the North."

"The north is that way and there's no kings or kneeling there," Val gestured to the Wall. "You men here think I am some kind of princess. The free folk only see me as Dalla's sister. You will be wasting your men on me." Robb replied with a mulish grunt and begun to turned away.

"Why don't you steal me yourself?"

Robb blinked at her blunt and forward question. She had to have known he was married. Robb couldn't help but compare Val's haughty bluntness to Margaery's saucy yet sweet manipulations at seducing him. Robb had at first found the latter overwhelming as he had expected a blushing meek bride in Margaery. Ignoring the temptation and Val's seductive hips, Robb looked at Val straight in the eye.

"I am married and a King, and as you said you aren't a wilding princess. Kings don't need to steal their brides." He walked away to the tower he was quartered in with Grey Wind following. It was definitely time to ride back to Winterfell, to his wife's warm bed.

How long can the choosing of a new Lord Commander take?

A tall balding man's blue eyes flashed and angrily gritted his teeth.

"I said three names into that fire. Balon Greyjoy, Joffery Waters, and Robb Stark. Why is it that I am hearing that the traitor Stark is still alive?"

"One must not question the Lord of the Light, Your Grace," answered the red woman. He slammed his fist on the table.

"Your Grace, I have mentioned before to ally with Robb Stark. His father Lord Eddard Stark died believing in your rightful claim over Cersei's bastards and your brother Renly. He has no love for the Lannisters," offered his Hand.

"I should allow Robb Stark to take half the kingdom with him? He'll demand independence for the North and the Trident. Do you not think I know that Mace Tyrell and the Reach will be more loyal to his only daughter's husband over me? Mace has no love for me and nor I any for him. I am the
rightful King of the Seven Kingdoms. Seven not five. I had no love for Ned Stark but I respected him. His boy on the other hand..."
Sansa could make out the port of White Harbor at a distance. She had been relieved the ship had been able to make it. There had been a storm that almost prevented them from making port at Old Castle or White Harbour. The captain had half a mind to turn the ship around and go back. Sansa's blood went cold at the thought of going back there. She pleaded if they could go around the storm and sail to Eastwatch-by-the-Sea as a second option. She would go to Castle Black to find Jon Snow. Her disguise as the red haired captain’s bastard daughter had made her think of her bastard half brother Jon. Cat Waters was made to protect her from the less than gentlemanlike crew and any spies working for the Lannisters. A small part of the girl was disappointed she would not be going to see Jon. Unless Jon visited Winterfell like Uncle Ben had at times, Sansa would never have an opportunity to see him. *I'm sorry I was so horrible to you.*

Her hood was down, her hair flying in the breeze as she carried her lord father's heavy sword up the white stone Castle Steps to New Castle. The captain had offered to carry it himself but Sansa had politely declined. Sansa Stark should return carrying Ice. The city within its walls was comprised of white buildings. New Castle was at the top of the hill. The captain had asked for a private audience with Lord Wyman Manderly. As they were led into the Merman's Court, Sansa was in awe. *It's beautiful.* Sansa looked around at the depictions of sea creatures before her eyes landed on Lord Manderly. He was fatter than she remembered from the last harvest feast he had attended when she was child.

"I am Captain Matthias of Oldtown. I serve the Tyrells and have brought a shipment of goods for Queen Margaery from her grandmother the Lady Olenna Tyrell. I have also brought Princess Sansa Stark and Lord Eddard Stark's sword back to the north. I have a letter from Lady Olenna herself.” Lord Wyman leaned forward to get a good look at Sansa who had been trying to not drop Ice. *If he leans any more he will fall over and squish the poor captain.*

"Princess Sansa? How?” He handed the letter over to the page boy who gave it to his lord. The Lord of New Castle read the letter quickly. Lord Wyman beckoned her to come closer. She stepped forward. The old man's face crinkled with shock and delight. "You look like just your lady mother."

Sansa learned later that evening at the feast that her brother Robb was still at Castle Black. She was deep down a bit disappointed Robb had not saved her himself and brought back home. *But I am back in the North so I cannot complain.*

"Why is my brother at Castle Black?” Sansa asked Lord Manderly over her trencher of fish, clams, and buttered bread.

"Wildling attack on Castle Black, I am told. Your Grace, don't fret his Grace the King and his host along with the men of the Night's Watch defeat the wildlings,” answered Lord Wyman. Sansa hoped that Lord Wyman's optimism would prove to be true. She left the feast early to get a good night's rest before her journey to Winterfell. Sansa lay awake though worried that this was only a dream and she would wake up still trapped in King's Landing.

Birthing the baby had not been as long as Margaery had felt it had been. In the first two days of motherhood, Margaery's voice had been hoarse from screaming (and cursing) during the birth. She was sore in places she felt uncomfortable thinking about. Her breasts leaked, which had grossed her out. She was disappointed that her body had not magically gone back to how it had been before she
became with child. Maester Luwin had expressed his concern over her health. *I gave birth, am I not allowed to be looking a little wan? I'm alive and my baby is alive.*

She never felt more triumphant in her sixteen years, when Maester Luwin had announced that her baby was a healthy prince. *I did my duty.* She had suppressed the fear of having a daughter as her first born and gravely disappointing her lord father who wanted a grandson as the next King in the North. Since she was a small girl and in every letter he wrote to Margaery after her marriage to Robb Stark there had been the expectation of her to have a son. He always mentioned the expected grandson and the desire to name a newborn colt sired by his best stallion in honor of her son. Robb had not vocally placed such a pressure for a son as her lord father had. It was known all Kings wanted a son over a daughter as the firstborn.

Her baby boy was small but not the frail kind of small. *Thank the gods.* The baby prince had remained unnamed so far. That was Robb's task as the babe was his heir. If she had the choice she would have named her son after Loras. Which was unlikely to happen since Lady Catelyn had not named any of her five children southron names. Lord Eddard Stark had named his six children for his dead brother and father, old friends and northern girl names. As she held her sleeping baby, she silently cried for the brother who died for her and her son. *I would have never held or saw my baby if weren't you sweet brother.* Her boy had soft coppery hair like his father. His eyes were blue as some newborn babes were so Margaery did not know whether her son would take after her or Robb or the Stark gray eyes like Arya. She enjoyed his cooing and gurgling. *How soft babies were!*

Arya and Rickon had come to see their first nephew. Rickon had poked the little prince because he did not believe that the baby was real. The little prince made a little squawk and squirmed in his mother's arms.

"He is boring. He can't play with me or anything," complained Rickon loudly. Margaery smiled at the young boy. Arya rolled her eyes.

"He is going to grow, stupid. You were just as boring when you were born," snapped Arya playfully. Rickon had argued that he had been born fun and could play. After few more minutes, Rickon had lost interest in the infant and had left to go find Shaggydog.

"He is less ugly than Rickon had been. Less annoying too. Rickon had cried at night all the time and kept us all up," said Arya as she peered at the infant prince. Margaery handed her son to his aunt's arms. Arya held her nephew gingerly and had a look of contemplation as she stared down at the bundle.

"He looks like Robb." The baby made fussing noises of hunger and began to cry. The wet nurse took the baby from a relieved Arya to feed the hungry prince.

"I definitely don't ever want to have a baby. Ever." Margaery laughed.

"You might change your mind one day, Arya." Arya scoffed in response.

As they broke their fast in Margaery's solar, they discussed Arya's lessons with Brienne and her lessons with Rickon under Maester Luwin. Arya chattered about the dream she had last night. Margaery had found it amusing that Arya had dreamed of being a wolf. I don't dream about being a rose. It would be a rather dull dream.

"I was running around and hunting with a pack of wolves. The last one I had before was when I saw Mother dead in the water." Margaery snapped her head up and almost spit out her drink before looking at her good sister curiously. *What?*
"What do you mean you saw your lady mother?" asked Margaery in disbelief. Arya bit her lip and toyed with her food looking unsure how to respond.

"I don't know. I smelt her first then I found her in the water." Margaery remembered Robb had said something odd when Arya had come to Riverrun. The rumours that Robb turned into a wolf during the battle did not seem as silly when she first heard them. "I think it was Nymeria." Unsure how to go from there, Margeary smiled and nodded feeling very overwhelmed.

The more she thought about it, Margaery was almost positive that Robb had dreams like his sister. He was far more aware of his wolf dreams. He knew about things that only Grey Wind had witnessed, she was certain. His random biting remarks about Patrek Mallister and the necklines of her gowns no longer confused her. Or the time she had harmlessly flattered Theon's skill with the bow shortly after their marriage. Grey Wind had growled and snapped his teeth at Theon and Margaery. Robb had been cold as ice to her that evening and had told stories about faithless wives. She was not self-deluded to believe that his behaviour came from jealousy. He simply believed the worst of her.

*It was not fair though. What about that stupid Westerling girl who wrote to Robb?*

Robb had never received the letter nor had she read it herself. Lady Stark had read it and burned it angrily. Now Margaery was curious as to its contents. Did Robb have a bastard child? *How dare he spy on me through Grey Wind! How long had he been doing this? Why the secrecy?* Margaery had not realized her angry thoughts had reached her countenance until Arya spoke,

"Robb never told me either. He tried, I think. He probably thinks we are too delicate to hear such things." *Delicate, indeed, she thought sourly.*

---

Jon had been voted as the next Lord Commander of the Night's Watch by a landslide. Publicly, Robb had appeared neutral and indifferent to the results as Jon was about the war in the Seven Kingdoms. He grinned broadly at Samwell's persuasiveness as he congratulated Jon in private. Jon had given him his thanks but appeared to be shocked and unenthusiastic about it. Some of the older Frey boys, Margaery had sent to the Wall had been annoyed that Janos Slynt had not won. He ignored the direct and indirect insults they threw at him. The insults towards Margaery and his late lady mother were not easy to ignore. They were punished for being disrespectful to their royal guest before Robb's fist could come into contact with their weasel like faces. *Your fathers and grandfather have been executed for their treachery. You are lucky to be alive.*

Samwell Tarly had left Castle Black to go the Citadel at Oldtown to become the maester for Castle Black. Robb had promised Samwell Tarly a place for Gilly and her baby at Winterfell. After that Janos Slynt had been executed for his insubordinations in refusing to follow Jon's orders to go to Greyguard. Robb had watched his brother execute Slynt with approval. When Jon had looked up at Robb, both locked eyes and nodded. They achieved some justice for their lord father by ending the life of the man who helped slay their father and the Stark household in King's Landing.

Leaving Castle Black had been bittersweet. Robb had been relieved that he would finally be going back to Winterfell to meet his newborn son and see Margaery, Rickon and Arya again. He was also sad about parting from Jon again. *This time it is me riding away.* Robb looked up at the seven hundred feet high Wall and thought of Bran, Summer, Hodor and the Reed children beyond it. Uncle Benjen had likely died out there as he was still missing. *Jon and I will find you Bran and bring you home.* When he did not know. Jon had made Robb promise him to tell him if anything should happen to Sansa or their other siblings.
"When we get Sansa back, I'll send a raven. You better be coming to Winterfell for a visit, Lord Commander." The auburn King and the dark haired Lord Commander embraced one last time before the King departed with his direwolf and his host.

A letter had arrived for him from Westeros. It was not from King's Landing thankfully or detailing any of his deeds that he had come to regret. It was from a girl he had never met before addressing him as uncle. One of Lynesse's nieces. The thought of his second wife made him feel bitter. This Margaery Tyrell girl was the wife of Ned Stark's eldest trueborn son. Queen Margaery offered him, her "dear uncle", a royal pardon to return back to the North.

She spoke of his Aunt Maege and his cousins who fought fiercely for her Stark husband and the North. Margaery mentioned Dacey was a part of the personal guard of King Robb. He felt a tug in his chest for his ancestral home at Bear Island that he had not felt since he decided that Dany would bring him home. That I loved her as well. But Dany did not seem to be in any rush to sail to Westeros. His "niece" hinted at a threat bigger than Tywin Lannister was looming beyond the Wall. Bear Hall is not too far from the Wall. His lord father was the Lord Commander of Night's Watch and this Queen in the North did not mention him. Was he dead?

What's the catch to this pardon? He was about to crumple the letter if it mentioned harming Dany. I only have to bend the knee to King Robb Stark. That meant breaking his allegiance with Dany. Reading between the lines, Jorah realized Margaery also hoped he would broker an alliance between Dany and Robb Stark.

"The continuation of bad blood between the Starks and Targaryens will affect everyone, especially those most loyal." Meaning my kinswomen. And myself.

Jorah had not said anything when Dany had called Ned Stark "the usurper's dog", when the news of his former liege lord's execution came. He had been too wrapped up in his bitter satisfaction. Understandably, Daenerys' beliefs about her father Mad King Aerys and Robert's Rebellion were based on Visery's skewed version. It's going to be a complicated task of unraveling some of her grudges. Since, Dany did not want to set sail for Westeros anytime soon, remaining here in Meereen. Perhaps, this will get her to remain focused on retaking the Iron Throne.

"My bear, what did you want to talk about?" asked Dany. Jorah spoke of Queen Margaery's letter to him. Leaving out the part about his pardon for now.

"Queen in the North? I am the rightful Queen of the Seven Kingdoms. She and her husband are pretenders like the rest of them. She is the wife of the usurper's dog's pup," scoffed Daenerys dismissively. It was hard to speak highly of Ned Stark's son but he was doing it for his home, for his family, and for the realm. Dany needs allies in Westeros. People are not waiting for her to come home with bated breath.

"The Northern lords named Robb Stark as their King in the North. The Trident has named him their King as well. The Starks have an annoying way of aspiring loyalty in their men in both life and death. He has family ruling the Vale. Robb Stark hates the Lannisters for keeping his sisters hostage and executing his lord father. Robb Stark has married Lord Mace Tyrell's daughter. The Tyrells are the second most wealthiest and powerful family in the Seven Kingdoms. I think it would be prudent to consider allying with Robb Stark, Khaleesi."

"His father helped the Usurper kill my father, my noble brother Rhaegar, and stole my birthright."
"I am a northman and we remember a different version, Khaleesi. Ned Stark rebelled because your father King Aerys called for his head after he killed Lord Rickard and Brandon Stark. After Rhaegar stole Lyanna Stark, Brandon Stark rode to King's Landing to save Lyanna. Your father had Lord Rickard Stark burned alive, when he called for a trial by combat. Brandon choked himself to death trying to save his father from being roasted alive. The Lannisters killed your father, and murdered your brother's wife and children." Dany looked away irritated and disbelieving. She had cringed when he spoke of how her father had killed Rickard and Brandon Stark.

"I don't want to hear what my father did, Ser Jorah. It's lies, my brother loved Lady Lyanna," Dany said in a warning tone that meant the conversation was over. But Jorah was stubborn.

"Rhaegar may or may not have abducted Lyanna. But his love for her cost him everything. It cost Lyanna, her father's life, her eldest brother's life, and her own. His actions made you and Viserys penniless orphaned exiles. Look at what it had done to Viserys. Neither sides are guiltless in the rebellion." Tears shone in Dany's beautiful violet eyes. They remained silent as Dany fiddled with the sleeves of her tokar.

"You fear I will destroy your precious North. I thought you believed I had a gentle heart." I still do, but even the gentlest hearts are capable of harm.

"You may despise the Usurper's dog, but you love your home. I told you I would bring you home. Have you been informing on me to this niece of yours? How long have you been corresponding?" Her face contorted with anger.

Jorah growled frustratedly. "I received only one letter from Margaery Stark. She wrote to me on the behalf of my kinswomen. I have not written to her once or replied to her letter. I serve you and only you, Khaleesi." I never sold your secrets to Margaery. Dany's face softened. She stroked the side of his face gently.

"I shall consider an alliance with Robb Stark, for you. My loyal bear." Jorah was exalted by her touch and that he had so far succeeded his part. I won't be needing that pardon. Yet he kept the letter on his person at all times. Jorah had an inkling feeling that Arstan Whitebeard was not who he said he was and had overheard parts of his conversation with Dany.

It was days later since the letter from the Queen in the North had arrived. Dany had wanted to meet with him and have her little scribe Missandei compose a letter to Robb and Margaery Stark. Jorah was making his way to Dany's quarters when Whitebeard came by,

"You give wise counsel to Her Grace for an informant. I remember Ned Stark spoke against killing her during the Small Council meetings." Barristan Selmy. "He and King Robert argued." Ned Stark disapproved of me informing on Dany in other words.

"I am not an informant anymore. I have not given any information on Dany to King's Landing for a long time now. I only did so in the past because I wanted to go home and I did not know Her Grace. There was nothing here for me but the desire to go home. Your exile in Essos has not been as long as mine. You did not leave a home behind unless you consider the Kingsguard Tower home," barked Jorah impatiently. "Move Selmy, before I am late."

"Now you have another option of going back there, should Her Grace not forgive your past transgressions." Damn you, Selmy.

"Do you wish for Her Grace to move forward in retaking her father's throne or remain here in Meereen?" shot back Jorah as he strode away.
Robb's face crinkled with happiness as he rode through the north gate of Winterfell. He saw his Queen dressed in a gown of dark green and silver wrapped in the wedding cloak he had placed on her pale shoulders. Her curly soft brown hair was half up half down with her diadem as her sole adornment. Gods, she is a beauty. She carried their baby wrapped in blankets in her arms. Arya wore a dark grey dress with a small sword strapped at her waist. Her short hair had appeared to have grown out a bit. Rickon looked taller and had longer hair than he had when Robb had rode South. He isn't a baby anymore. Rickon had burst out of line and ran to his brother.

"Robb! Robb! You came back!" he shouted as Robb lifted his baby brother up into a big hug.

"You've been a good boy for Margaery, and Maester Luwin?" He bent down to hug Arya along with Rickon.

"Did you tell Jon that I'm sorry I lost Needle and that I miss him?" Arya asked. Robb nodded and kissed her. He was a little hurt at her stiff response to his kiss. Margaery appeared to be a bit wan, he noted with concern. Before he could make a proper first greeting to his son, Margeary cut him off,

"Husband, why don't we go inside? I don't want our son to catch a chill." He nodded, placing a hand on the small of her back as he walked with her to her solar. Margaery sank down into a chair slowly, Grey Wind bend his head to sniff the baby.

"Say hello to your father," cooed Margaery as she held out their son for him to hold. He was so light. Robb brushed a finger over his son's hair that mirrored his own in colour. A little hand grabbed hold of his finger.

"Hello my boy. You're a strong little one aren't you?" Robb placed a gentle kiss on his son's forehead. His son squirmed at his scratchy beard.

"What do you wish to name him?" Robb looked at his son. I knew his name before he was even conceived. He turned to his wife as she stood beside him with a soft smile. He snaked his free arm around her waist.

"Eddard. After my lord father." She sighed as she adjusted the blankets around their son.

"Eddard. After my lord father." She sighed as she adjusted the blankets around their son.

"I figured," she murmured quietly in a resigned tone. He looked at her perplexed. What's wrong with the name Eddard? Margaery all the sudden smiled brightly and stood on her tiptoes to kiss Robb passionately. If he had not been holding little Eddard, he would have wrapped Margaery in his arms and pushed her against the desk. He groaned. It's been too long. All too quickly, she broke away.
flushing so pretty. A flicker of an emotion crossed her face for a moment before a cheery courtier smile masked it.

"Prince Eddard needs to be fed and have his nap." So does his father. They took him to the nursery and after his feeding the new parents watched him fall asleep in his crib.

"He looks just like you." As she snuggled against his furs and black armour still watching Eddard sleep.

"We'll have a little boy or girl as beautiful and clever as you one day, sweetheart." Margaery only responded with a slight nod. Robb kissed the top of her floral scented hair, mesmerized by the little being they had made.

For one thing, Arya was not stupid. She could see and sense that Margaery was like a simmering pot about to boil over lately. Margaery was really good at hiding it. She slipped on the mask of perfect dutiful Queen and wife so well. It was Robb's bewildered, hurt looks and his peevish moods from the lack of attention from his wife that gave it away. Arya noticed they did not dutifully hold hands as much as they did at Riverrun nor did Margaery accompany them to the godswood when Robb came. *She always came to the godswood with us.* Rickon had now taken notice and complained that he missed Margaery cheering for him.

Margaery had taken to the wildling girl Gilly and spent her time outside of her duties with Gilly, Brienne, and sometimes Lady Maege or holed up in the nursery with little Eddard. Margaery was only genuinely warm with Robb when their son was around, Arya noted. Margearly always had a soft smile on her face when Robb was holding their son, unaware of his wife's stares. Arya was frustrated with how stupid her brother and her good sister were being. *If I have to see Robb cast sad concerned looks when she is not looking once more, I'll scream.* Robb was badly pretending not to sulk in the godswood today. He asked if Arya knew if Margaery had been this ill since Eddard's birth.

"She is not ill. She is wroth with you," replied Arya struggling not to roll her eyes. Robb looked at her confused.

"What have I done? Is she really that upset about naming our son after Father?" Arya gave a pointed look at Grey Wind running around. Robb paled in realization.

"Why don't you ask her yourself?" goaded Arya. Robb squared himself as if he were about to go into battle. She would have laughed if she had not been so annoyed with Robb's slowness. *Hopefully by time its supper they will have made up.*

Robb found Margaery looking out the window in her solar while Gilly was stoking the fire. She did not even turn around to look up at him.

"I am busy, Robb." *Ignoring me.* He did not leave though. Gilly with a wide eyes, tactfully left and shut the door behind her.

He reached for her. "Sweetheart-" Margaery whirled around and swatted his hand away. She had angry tears welling up in her brown eyes. His wife was a little more than a head shorter than him and dainty yet he felt she was towering over him.
"How dare you keep that from me? When were you planning on telling me? When we were old and grey? Or were you waiting for me to catch you slipping into Grey Wind? I may be a Tyrell but I have been completely honest with you since the beginning. I told you everything. You never once told me what happened between you and that Westerling slut. I found out only when that tart sent you a letter at Riverrun. Your lady mother burned it before I could read it. Why would she write to you, Robb?"

Robb had prepared himself for a fearful reaction to his warging powers and thought of ways he would try to soothe her fears. He recoiled from the mention of Jeyne. He wanted to curse Jeyne for writing to him at this moment. *What happened with Jeyne should not have happened. I chose to break my word to the Freys for you.* But the words did not come out the way he wanted.

"I was wounded and she was comforting. It was only once. It was a dishonorable thing to do and I felt bad. Margaery, I made sure she drank moon tea afterwards," he spluttered. She laughed coldly casting him a glare.

"I sure it must have been difficult for you. So difficult it was enough you would have married her. Don't lie. I know your sense of honour and your love and pity for Jon. How nice it is to hear my husband is willing to bed any wench who can't keep her smallclothes on for comfort? Your father was very apt when he named you after Robert Baratheon," seethed Margaery. He felt stricken as though she had slapped with her words. He was slightly angry at the mention of his lord father. "Did you bed any wildling women for comfort? Well how I will I find out they are likely illiterate."

Robb tried to explain, "I did contemplate marrying Jeyne to prevent her disgrace. But I didn't and nor I have I once did once I break my vows to you. I swear it by the Old Gods." He was growing defensive and he threw her first marriage to Renly at her. *Swords are my weapons as words are hers.* A mistake he realized as soon as he uttered the words for it made her only angrier. She snorted indelicately.

"I was Renly's wife in name only. I was not as pretty or had the necessary appendages as Loras did to entice him." Robb blushed and looked away at the insinuation.

"You know you took my maidenhead. You would have died at the Twins if you married that slut. I had to beg you to demand to keep yourself and your men armed during the wedding. You didn't listen to your lady mother when she wanted to trade the Kingslayer for the girls. You chose your damn pride over your sisters. Does Arya know about that? You wouldn't heed me when I begged you not go to the Twins and not to trust Walder Frey. You unnecessarily made yourself and your siblings orphans."

Robb gritted his teeth as Margaery rattled off truths that haunted him. He wanted to grab by the arm and shake her until she took back what she said. *That's not fair.* Both had avoided talking about the Red Wedding with each other, focusing on upcoming battles, their baby, and too preoccupied in their own grief.

"Loras is dead. Our son's life almost ended before it even truly began. You have a son and heir because he died protecting me. I watched Loras fight and fall helplessly, knowing it could have been avoided. I still have nightmares of that night. Maybe if I had died also, that seashell slut would have come to comfort you. But that does not matter to King Robb because he has his heir and the broodmare of a wife that he does not trust nor listen to when it matters," ranted Margaery exhausted in ragged breaths.

Angry defensive retorts he had ready throw at her and the desire to storm out of her solar died when he softened at how small and sad his wife looked. Margaery was wan from emotional trauma and physical exhaustion of the Red Wedding and giving birth for the first time. *She truly believes I still*
think so little of her. This time she let him hold her. He rubbed small soothing circles on her back, and murmured softly in her hair,

"I'm so sorry sweetheart. I'm sorry you had go through that whilst carrying our boy. I do trust you, Margaery. I didn't at first but I trust that if something should happen to me in battle that you would manage without me and protect our son and my siblings. My little rose Queen, you are too clever and lovely to be a broodmare. Don't ever think that ever again. We will name our next boy after Loras." Margeary nodded against his chest. The anger in her had gone and a teary smile appeared. She reached up to kiss his neck.

"I don't want you to die anytime soon or ever. I was so scared you were going to die as well at the Twins, Robb. I was thought I was going to be cursed to become a widow again," whispered Margaery softly. Who would have been her third husband? What would have become Eddard? Robb held onto her tightly. "But I am a Tyrell not a Martell. I won't stand quietly if you dare make a fool of me with some other woman."

Wolves don't stray from their mates. Robb did not remember who initiated the kissing or how long they did before Robb picked up Margaery and carried her to his chamber. He placed his little rose on her back on top of his fur-covered bed. Robb shrugged off his furs and boots. Margaery sat up and helped him take off his armour. Once it was off, he pulled off her dainty slippers and embroidered woolen stockings. Kissing her creamy legs as he went. She giggled as she wiggled off her smallclothes. Margaery tore his tunic off impatiently as he kneeled above her.

"I'll mend it tomorrow," she said breathlessly in between kisses. Robb was a lot gentler in removing her light blue gown with the plunging neckline and no sleeves. It was completely southron with cutouts and a low back. It was one of his favourite gowns of hers from the South. The dress she wore when we first met, when he disliked and distrusted her. Yet was attracted to her.

"I remember when I first wore it in front of you. It clearly left you a good impression of me. I thought your eyes were going to pop out their sockets. Your face was almost the colour of your hair, love." She grabbed his crotch cheekily then slipped her hand down his britches. He let out groan to which Margaery smiled wickedly. Little minx.

"It did. Theon and my lady mother teased me about it afterwards," Robb gasped huskily. Margaery had her own idea of teasing him, which was far more enjoyable. His britches were tossed at the other end of the room.

"Is it too soon since the birth?" asked Robb huskily cursing his lack of thought to ask Maester Luwin. Robb had not been privy to his parents' coital affairs following the births of his younger brothers and sisters. Not that I really wanted to know such things about my parents. He hesitated not wanting to harm Margaery or anything. Margaery shrugged underneath him and wrapped her skinny pale legs around his waist. Her breasts were fuller than he had remembered. Her large brown eyes darkened with desire and her long hair fanned out on the pillow. She quirked an eyebrow archly,

"It's cold in here, wolf. Warm me up." And so he did more than once until both were satisfied.

Robb always dozed off cuddling Margaery. It was only a little after mid-day, Margaery was blissfully wide awake naked entangled in her husband's arms with her head rested in its usual spot on his chest.

"Does it hurt to go inside Grey Wind?" she asked rubbing the side of his torso. He opened his eyes
and pulled the fur blanket over her shoulder.

"No, I haven't slipped inside Grey Wind for more than a few moments outside of the wolf dreams," answered Robb honestly. He asked her if she was frightened of him. Margaery shook her head no. I find it more strange than frightening. She felt him let out a breath of relief. After asking questions about what he did and saw through Grey Wind, she mentioned her recent observations to his past odd jealous behaviour. Robb cringed and held on to her waist possessively as if she would run off to someone else at any moment.

"I had Grey Wind follow you to protect you whilst I was not there or was unable to. I was not spying on you on purpose, sweetheart. I thought I did not care for you. But I found myself disliking men who were less awkward and more experienced than I am, flirting with you." She felt a sense of relief that things between her and Robb had improved; that she wasn't going to be trapped in a loveless marriage.

"You trust I am never going to be a faithless wife? Because I love you, Robb Stark," she asserted softly. She looked at his blue eyes shyly. It was the first time she said those words to him. To anyone besides her brothers and parents. The words felt strange yet right coming from her lips. She felt giddy like she had too much sweet wine. Her family was too pragmatic to put silly songs of love in their children's heads. Robb never looked so happy as he flipped them over on her back and nuzzled her hair and neck.

"I love and trust you, Margaery. But I am not going to promise I won't get jealous or angry if some man flirts with you or takes too much out of your compliments." She smirked happily.

"I did kind of enjoy your attentions when you get all jealous. Well when you weren't being mean. I liked that you didn't ignore me or saw me as some troublesome wife. Don't worry, I prefer red haired Stark men with blue eyes and are good with a sword." Robb roared with laughter, his eyes filled with mirth. When he did not stop laughing and Margaery looked at him confused, he supplied, "So my little brother is my competition."

The lioness paced restlessly. She refilled her wine goblet and drank deeply. How many goblets of wine had she had she did not know or care. She was furious. More furious than she had been when the little Tyrell whore's messenger revealed that Robb Stark and her had survived the Red Wedding. Even Catelyn Stark and the Knight of Flowers' deaths had not pleased her for too long. Her first-born had been killed by the valonqar. Her only daughter had been sold by the same little man to the Dornish. Had the snakes killed her Myrcella? Her lord father was trying to force her to marry Oberyn Martell or whoever and steal her youngest cub from her.

Sweet Tommen, my last son. She thought of their real father, her twin and lover. Jaime was still held captive by Ned Stark's son.

He is supposed to be by my side. Protecting Tommen.

Cersei had raged when Ned Stark's stupid girl had somehow managed to escape King's Landing. Along with the Stark ancestral Valyrian steel sword. No one had been able to find her or the damn sword. Father had planned to melt it down to make a sword for Joffery and Jaime. The valonqar must have had a hand in that also, she thought. He had a soft spot for the child. Only Petyr Baelish believed otherwise and claimed the Tyrells had helped her escape before he set sail for the Eyrie. She didn't trust that sly man either. Tyrion would die and justice for her Joffery would be served. She
waited the little imp's whole life to see him die. He killed Mother, he killed Joffery. The Mountain will kill Oberyn Martell in the trial by combat. Cersei was certain of this.

Father will never try to marry me off ever again.

They are coming to kill Tommen and I.

Who specifically she could no longer answer. The dim candlelight seemed too bright and obnoxious as she poured more wine. She saw enemies everywhere from roses, wolves, stags, snakes, and the whispers of a dragon queen far away. Lions don't bow before lesser beings. Tywin had offered Joffery to Mace Tyrell's daughter but his conniving mother the Queen of Thorns had thought against it and married the girl to the Young Wolf. Leaving the Lannisters with only the Martells. The Roseroad had remained blocked by Mace Tyrell's army in response to the attacks on his children. The Martells and Tyrells feuded, but Oberyn Martell seemed unmoved by her suggestions to have Dorne attack the Reach whilst Mace Tyrell was focused on revenge for his son. He must have been plotting with Tyrion also. Dorne was known for its poisons.

Why was everyone so utterly disappointing?

Jaime let himself be captured. If she were a man she would have fought to get back to King's Landing to be with the one she loved. The flagon of wine was empty and she slammed her glass goblet down hard enough it almost broke. Once Tyrion was dead, she would focus her energies on destroying the rest of them particularly Queen Margaery before that witch's prophecy came true.

Chapter End Notes

-Robb thought he only slipped into Grey Wind for a few moments, when in reality it was a lot longer.

What do y'all think of the Dany & Jorah (potential alliance with the North) part? I feel like its the worst part because I don't identify/like Dany as much as I like Margaery, Sansa, Arya... etc. I'm sure if the direction I have written so far is good.

Leave a review! :)

Sansa Stark was happy to be free from the Lannisters and King's Landing. However, the sense of foreboding had not left Sansa Stark as she left White Harbour. Sansa and her guards had gone ahead of the barges carrying the produce and wares from the Reach but they weren't moving fast enough for Sansa. She felt like she was being followed by something other than the barges. They were going up the White Knife and had just passed the fork, going left. She eyed the rocky hills warily on either side. Sansa thought about what Lady Olenna's words about never trusting Littlefinger. She shivered at the thought of where she would be now if Ser Dontos had taken her to wherever Littlefinger wanted to bring her. His off comments comparing her to her lady mother did not seem so complimentary as did from other people who knew Lady Catelyn Stark.

Lord Wyman Manderly had sent a raven to Winterfell to inform her family of Sansa's return to the North. She wondered about her good sister, the Queen in the North and if they would become friends. *I haven't had a true friend for so long.* Sansa remembered her friend Jeyne Poole. *What has become of her?* Her thoughts turned dark, thinking of Septa Mordane, Jory Cassel and all the slain Stark Household. Sansa tried in vain to steel herself from allowing the guilt and grief for her part in her lord father's downfall. But landscape around reminded her of him. Dark and grey. She had been such a stupid little girl.

*I wanted to marry Joffery and be his queen. Look what it got me, she thought bitterly. A dead wolf, a murdered father, scars and bruises marring my skin.*

*Why didn't she see Lady's death as an omen or a sign? Why did I tell the Queen about Father's plans? If I had only been more dutiful and boarded that ship home like Father had planned without complaint.*

She thought of the Tully words, Family, Honour, Duty. She was the most Tully of her siblings and her Southron aspirations and beliefs. She still wanted to believe in the hope that a hero would kill Ilyn Payne and Janos Slynt for what they did to her father Lord Eddard Stark. There are no such men, they exist only in songs. Being back in the North, she still did not feel strong feelings of being a wolf, the blood of Winterfell instead she felt numb and empty. *How can I, without Lady?* Father and mother are gone. Had her time trapped in King's Landing tarnished her? Did Robb, Arya, and Bran blame her for what happened?

Sansa looked down at her doll trying to force the negative train of thoughts to go away. *I'm Sansa Stark, daughter of Lord Eddard Stark and Lady Catelyn.* Sansa had survived and she was going home to be reunited with Robb, Arya, Bran and Rickon. No one would hurt her once she was safe inside the grey granite walls of Winterfell. I'm returning to the pack, my home. Days later, she asked if they were close enough to the Kingsroad and Winterfell to go on land.

"Aye, milady," replied one of her guards after he asked the captain of the boat. They had made it on land safely and unloaded the carts, wagons, and garrons when the other barges finally caught up. As Sansa and her Manderly escorts were stopped by the sound of approaching horses down the road towards them. Sansa's stomach clenched nervously but she let out a sigh of relief when the grey Stark banners came into clearer view. Front and center behind his large grey direwolf was Robb in his furs, leather, armour and a bronze crown on his Tully haired head. He carries himself like Father did. Sansa was too mesmerized and emotional by the sight of her elder brother riding towards her like she had dreamed he would at King's Landing. He was only a few feet away as he dismounted his horse and Sansa also dismounted her pony so quickly she almost fell. Grey Wind beat Robb and licked Sansa on the cheek and nuzzled wet black nose on her side.
"Robb!" sobbed Sansa as he ran and hugged her tightly. She was so relieved and overwhelmed with various emotions because the moment felt too surreal. Robb did not smell like the over perfumed men of the South, he smelt like leather, trees, metal, and horses. Comforting smells. Robb looked so much older despite being only three years older than her. He had a full beard and there were some faint lines on his face.

"I am so happy you are safe now. I was too impatient to wait for you to arrive at Winterfell once I got Lord Wyman's raven. I have been riding up and down the Kingsroad everyday waiting," explained Robb as he helped her remount her pony. He thanked Manderly's men and asked them to impart his gratitude to Lord Manderly as well. He offered them to stay at Winterfell until they were ready to take a boat down the White Knife. As Robb was about to go remount his horse, Sansa stopped him.

"Wait, I have Father's sword with me as well. You should ride back home carrying Ice." She pointed at the large leather scabbard containing Ice strapped on the side of the poor beast. Robb's face turned solemn, which she guessed he was thinking about their lord father. He took it and unsheathed it half way to look at the grey steel.

"Thank you, Sansa," said Robb still solemnly as they rode side by side. The two eldest auburn haired Starks did not talk much for a little bit.

"I heard about the wildling attack on the Wall. I trust that everything went well. How is – Jon?"

"Everything seemed fine before we left. Jon is Lord Commander of the Night's Watch now. He was concerned about you alone in King's Landing. I made a promise that I would write to him once you came home safely. But he might be a bit busy with the trying to habitat the Gift with the wildlings and commanding his brothers." She felt proud of her half-brother in becoming Lord Commander. Bastards did not have such opportunities to reach high positions. "He promised to keep a look out for Bran for me. Before I received Manderly's letter, I was planning on riding back to the Wall."

"Oh that's great. Father would have been so proud of Jon." She turned to look at Robb in surprise. "What? What do you mean? Why does Jon have to keep a look out for Bran?" Robb looked away with a frown on his face.

"Bran disappeared along with Summer, Hodor and Lord Howland Reed's children in the night whilst I was still in the Riverlands. Jon's friend Samwell Tarly told me he saw Bran and begged him to come to Castle Black with him. But Bran refused and so now he is somewhere beyond the Wall." Worry etched Robb's handsome face. Mother had always been fiercely protective of Bran even more so after his fall. Robb must have inherited the same feeling after Mother had been killed. He almost had all of us safe in the North. They rode in silence, listening to the banter of Robb's guard. Mother and Father's death hung around them heavily. Sansa broke their silence,

"I want to ride with you to the Wall," declared Sansa firmly.

"Sansa, the Wall is no place for women," said Robb looking at her incredulously.

"I want to see Jon. You said that it might be sometime before he can make a visit to Winterfell. I don't want to wait to apologize or write a letter. I remember Jon and you aren't very good at correspondence." *Something might happen and it will be too late.* Robb's face softened slightly.

"I'll think about it. Arya will demand to come along though so don't say anything until I have made my decision," answered Robb slowly. Sansa nodded. She asked about Theon Greyjoy, noting the dark haired young man was not present. *Is he dead also?*
"Theon is back in the Iron Islands with his sister Asha fighting his uncles who are contending for the lordship. I was going to mention this later or even have Margaery tell you but since you brought Theon up, I might as well do it now." Sansa looked at him confused. Robb flushed then realization dawned on Sansa making her blush uncomfortably.

I haven't made it to Winterfell yet and I am to married off.

"Theon asked for your hand. I told him I would give my blessing only if you wished it. I would not send you away right away until you were ready. If you don't want to marry him, I suppose Margaery could arrange a marriage with one of her cousins to Theon." But you want to make him family.

"I'll think about it," replied Sansa neutrally mirroring Robb's earlier response. Theon was not the worst prospect she could hope to have following Joffery. I've already had the worst. She knew Theon her whole life unlike any other suitors. Theon was handsome and had a reputation to be experienced. Imagining her life as Lady of Pyke was not ideal but far better than being Joffery's wife or an unknown lord. To be honest, Sansa was neither excited nor filled by dread by prospect of becoming Lady Sansa Greyjoy. Only indifference. Marrying Theon would cement an alliance with the Starks and the Greyjoys. Family, Honour, Duty. Sansa wanted a husband who was like her lord father. I'm still a stupid girl with stupid dreams who never learns.

Sansa learnt that Robb was a father. He had named his son after their lord father. She felt a small stab of jealousy she had wanted to name a son of hers after Father. But that feeling ebbed away as she watched, Robb's face lit up when he spoke about his boy and his wife Margaery. According to Robb, Prince Eddard had his Tully looks but Robb was adamant he had Margaery's nose. Sansa was curious about her brother's wife, the woman who executed Lord Walder Frey and Lord Roose Bolton. Word of what the Young Wolf's Rose Queen had done in vengeance had spread throughout King's Landing. From the rich to the poor of Flea Bottom, everyone talked about it in fear and wonder. She remembered the looks on Joffery, Cersei and Tywin's faces; it had been hard to not smile and laugh. Robb told her how the Hound had brought Arya back to him for ransom. I might have made it home earlier if I had gone with him. Thoughts of the Hound disappeared when she saw Winterfell as they made it over the hill.

She reached to touch the cold granite stone with her fingertips as they went through the gate. Robb dismounted and helped her down. Sansa turned at her siblings and the familiar faces of Winterfell. Maester Luwin had teary eyes. Arya's hair was so short it could not be put into the simple plaits she often had them in. In contrast, Rickon's hair was so long and unruly. She greeted everyone individually, saving her family for last. Rickon had cried remembering their mother when he saw Sansa. Sansa burst into tears and reached for her baby brother. Sansa looked up at a petite young woman being greeted with a kiss by Robb as she bent down to hug Rickon to comfort him.

Margaery is so beautiful. The couple exchanged concerned glances as Margaery handed the baby to Robb, and then bent down to Rickon's height.

"Rickon, please don't cry. Aren't you happy to see your sister Sansa? Let's show her all the lemon cakes Cook has made! Maybe Cook has a bone to give Shaggydog." Margaery's voice was so soft and melodic. She must be good at singing, she thought in awe. Margaery held out a delicate hand to Arya and Sansa to hold. Rickon sniffled and grabbed Sansa's other hand. The four walked to the kitchens with Shaggydog and Grey Wind following. Margaery had allowed them to have a lemon cake each before the feast. Sansa noticed with a sad twinge at how close Arya and Margaery appeared to be, as they laughed about something. Rickon tugged on her dress with sticky fingers,

"Sansa, can Shaggydog and I sleep in your bedchamber with you tonight?" asked Rickon looking up at her with his big blue eyes. Sansa scooped him up and kissed him on his nose. He no longer had that lovely baby scent she remembered him having. My baby brother has gotten heavier.
The dragon seethed with rage when the bear came before her. Her fierce bear was proud and stubborn in his refusal to beg for forgiveness like the other had. The bear loved her yet he sold her secrets to the Usurper. She thought of her dead son and her horse lord husband. The bear claimed he had done what he did so he could go home. I don't have a home or a family to return to, she thought bitterly. How convenient was it that her bear had only recently been written to by his "niece", the wife of the usurper's dogs' pup? Ask for my forgiveness, and I will grant it, you silly proud bear. She fought to keep the tears from spilling.

Threatening exile to her bear felt like chopping off a limb and handing it back to her enemies. The devastated look in his eyes made her want to recant those words but she remained firm. The bear believed in her ability to rule despite being the only daughter of a mad king and gave her wise counsel. Am I to be as mad as my father?

"Ally with the Young Wolf" he had told her. When writing out her terms for an alliance, he had advised her to give the North independence for the northerners were proud and disliked the southron politics. "They will demand independence from whoever gains the Iron Throne, Stannis Baratheon or yourself. Save yourself the trouble and focus on the rest of the kingdoms." She did not like all of the customs of the slave cities that she had liberated. Will Westerosi customs be as foreign as I will be to the people of Westeros?

He was too familiar; it hurt her and angered her. How could he love her like a woman and still respect her as his queen? I can never be your maiden fair. He was a mere knight and she a queen there were boundaries to be maintained. You both are exiles, her mind said. When she asked him about his motives in advocating for the alliance with the wolves. He had answered that his only motives was to protect her and his home. The two things he loved. Betrayal for love. The words of the prophecy ran through her mind. Her bear rattled off the things he did for her as her unfailing right arm. His tone was as if she owed him forgiveness and gratitude, not him. She sat straighter and looked at her bear straight in the eye before she vocalized a verdict on his punishment.

Little Eddard was a chubby baby. Margaery giggled at his little rolls as he was put into a new little dark green garment Margaery had sewn for him. Robb was out in the stables or in the wolfswood. Margaery wrapped her son in a blanket and carried him to look out the window.

"Look, it's Aunt Arya having her lesson with Lady Brienne," cooed Margaery in a higher pitched voice. Eddard gurgled and smiled up at her. "Now you are all handsome, let's go see your other aunt." Margaery wore a pale pink gown with two cream panels decorated Tyrell golden roses. Margaery and Eddard went to her solar. Gilly had brought a cradle for Eddard into her solar when he grew to heavy to hold. Gilly was a bit awkward at times but overall a sweet and hard working girl. Margaery's eyes had gone as big as saucers when Gilly told her that her father had fathered her son who was a few moons older than Eddard. Margaery had listened to Gilly riveted and horrified as the wildling girl described how her father Craster offered every male child to the Gods. Except Gilly's son. Margaery hoped once Gilly was properly trained and fully transitioned to life at Winterfell that she would become her handmaiden. The poor girl was not well liked by many of the female servants barring Osha because she's a wildling with a wildling bastard. Margaery had sharp words as a warning with one maid who loudly made deriding comments about Gilly as Margeary passed by Rickon's chamber.
Sansa entered her solar a few moments later. Sansa had a new gown of blue and grey, which complemented her eyes. Sansa was fourteen and she was taller than Lady Catelyn Stark had been. Lady Stark had believed that Sansa would grow up to be more beautiful than her. Sansa was the easiest Stark to befriend thus far since Margeary had not met Bran Stark. They had bonded over their similar interests of ladylike pursuits and doting over little Eddard. Margaery had tactfully did not show a higher preference over one Stark sister over the other to hopefully prevent any sisterly rivalry. Sansa dipped into an effortless curtsy before Margaery.

"Your Grace."

"It is Margaery. I have said before we are good sisters there is no need for such formalities in private," corrected Margaery. Sansa nodded and sat down in a chaise facing opposite Margaery's. Margaery adjusted Eddard in her arms and smoothed his soft curls. "You asked to talk to me in private?"

Sansa made no move to elaborate on her purpose so they talked about trivial things like new gowns and the weather. Sansa offered her condolences and gushed of how she met Loras at the tourney in her father's honour at King's Landing. The victor of the tournament and the Hand are dead. Margaery smiled at her good sister's little crush. Sansa noted how Margaery and Loras looked so much alike that they could have been twins. Sansa then turned the direct of their conversation to Robb and how Eddard looked like him. Margaery seized this moment to mention Lord Theon Greyjoy.

"Your brother told me he has mentioned Lord Theon Greyjoy's interest in a betrothal with you." Margaery observed the younger girl for any emotion. Sansa's face was inscrutable like it was carved of stone or ice. She learned well in King's Landing.


"I know my lord father had hinted in his hopes for a bride for my eldest brother Willas but I think House Stark needs alliances with more than just my family. I probably don't know Theon as well you or Robb or any of your siblings. But marrying him might be easier than marrying a complete stranger. However, whatever I or Robb or even Theon want or wish for, the decision remains yours. Robb and I refuse to force you to marry against your wishes after everything you have been through. I could arrange a marriage to one of my cousins or perhaps Alys Karstark with Theon instead. She's now the heiress to Karhold. You have a choice."

"Unlike your lady mother or I. Thankfully, it turned out pleasantly.

"I thank you and Robb for such consideration. I told Robb that I would think about it. I have prayed about it and made a decision. I have decided to accept a betrothal with Lord Theon if he will have me," decided Sansa resolved with a small smile that did not meet her eyes. Margaery nodded slowly with pity for her good sister. He will be better than Joffery or Robb will come to kill him. There had been whispers of the fading bruises and scars that marred Sansa's back by her maids. Margaery had mentally thanked her grandmother for getting the poor girl out of King's Landing before she too was wrongly implicated in Joffery's death like Tyrion Lannister had. Robb had punched the wall in anger and had broken a sword as he hacked at trees, rocks, and the ground. Cursing Joffery, the Kingsguard, all of the Lannisters, and even himself. Margaery placed her son in the cradle then knelt down at Sansa's feet clasping her hands over Sansa's reassuringly.

"We are not forcing you out of Winterfell. You will remain here until you are fifteen or sixteen then you shall marry Theon if you wish." Sansa nodded, a small little tear went down her face.

"I know. I'm lucky to not be complete strangers with my future husband. I am grateful at your suggestion but I don't think waiting so long is necessary. Theon needs an heir to follow him and his
"sister." Sansa paused then continued,

"Margaery, may I make a request?"

Margaery nodded, it was the least she could do. "Convince Robb to let me go the Wall with him. He does not want me to come to along but I want to see Jon before I am to married and go to Pyke." Margaery nodded a little perplexed by the random request. As far she knew from Robb and Arya, Sansa and Jon Snow were not the closest.

"Of course, Sansa. I'll speak to Robb tonight about it." *I wonder how much convincing it will take for him to allow Sansa to go.*

After her almost daily ritual of going to the godswood with one of the younger Starks, Margaery wrote a letter to Theon of Sansa's assent to marry him then gave it to Gilly to have Maester Luwin send with one of the ravens in the Rookery. Margaery mused on the news from King's Landing. Tyrion Lannister had demanded a trial by combat and Prince Oberyn Martell had named himself his champion against the Mountain. *That would have been interesting to watch.* Margaery would be dishonest if she was not a bit nervous that she had not heard any news of Stannis Baratheon or any reply from Ser Jorah Mormont. Stannis may have lost the battle of Blackwater Bay but Margaery trusted no one to be harmless until they were dead and remained dead. The dull-witted Frey girl was going to have a baby in the next moon. Hopefully none of my children or grandchildren will ever marry any of hers. Margeary wanted the Kingslayer to be brought to Winterfell to be held prisoner here. *The ninny or that soft headed fool might let him go free.*

Robb had not explicitly said so, but Margaery felt like he was hoping to get her with child again before he left for the Wall. She sometimes like yesterday limped like a newly deflowered maiden. He was inexhaustible lately. He even woke up early still taking little Eddard from the nursery to lie on his bare chest while Margaery slept in much later than she usually did. Robb was mulling over the idea of joining up with the other half of his army in attacking Casterly Rock now that he had her father's men at his disposal after his visit to the Wall. *As long as you don't make any stops at the Crag.*

Margaery poured a glass of chilled sweet wine and ate an apple tart as she waited for Robb. Robb was eating amongst his men tonight. She thought to herself how she would fulfill Sansa's request. Manipulation? Seduction? *My gown does not show much skin.* Not that stopped her husband lately. Margaery dabbed on some floral water in her hair and on her pulse points. A few moments later, Robb came into her solar his cheeks were flushed from drinking. His leather shirt was unbuttoned a bit revealing some chest hair. Gods.

"Marg, Margar, Margaery! My sweet rose!" exclaimed Robb boisterously, kissing her hard. *My lips are going to be swollen.* "You smell so nice. You always do. I love the way you smell." He began kissing her neck with his hands in her hair. Smalljon or Wendel must have gotten him to drink more than he normally would.

"You smell like ale, dear husband. Robb, I need to talk to you about something important." Robb huffed good-humoredly and sat down at the table. She sat on his lap. "Sansa came to me early today. She has agreed to marry Theon." Margaery spoke slowly to gauge whether he was too drunk to process what she had said. Robb nodded relieved.

"That's good to hear. I am relieved. Theon would accept a rejection I think but his people might take it as a serious slight from us – what's the word? Greenlanders."

"Sansa also mentioned how important it was for her to go to the Wall with you."
"Margaery, no it's too dangerous at the Wall for women. The men of the Night's Watch rarely see or lay with a woman since taking their vows. I can't keep my hands off you everyday, imagine what they would try to do to my sister. Sansa survived King's Landing yes but I am not going to willfully risk her safety even for Jon." Robb's face was hard and his tone was firm and unyielding. He rubbed her thigh and kissed her temple when she made a small noise of disappointment.

"But Robb, she may never see get the chance to see Jon ever. Jon might not have time to leave the Wall to attend her wedding even if it's here. Sansa will be moving to Pyke afterwards and I'm sure visits here will be seldom. She will be safe with you and Jon and both of your wolves there, I'm sure. You don't want her leave Winterfell with any regrets or even ill feelings towards you." Robb grumbled.

"Arya will get jealous and upset about it if I allow Sansa to come and not her. I want both to stay here safe. So the answer remains no, Margaery. She can write a letter to Jon and I'll give it to him but neither of my sisters is going to the Wall. Please leave it, Margaery." Whatever amorous mood Robb had been in earlier had died, he was still a bit flushed but he was in an exasperated mood. Margaery flounced off him with a huff and walked away to pour another glass of wine.

"Have your uncle send the Kingslayer here. Send a messenger to Theon if he can join up with you to assault Casterly Rock by sea," suggested Margaery. Robb nodded staring at the fire. "Yes, I imagine Tywin is preoccupied with trying to kill off his other son. There's been no news of Stannis Baratheon. I haven't heard from Willas or my father lately. Its too soon to expect any reply from Ser Jorah Mormont." Bran is still missing to top it all off.

"This war is not over. Not until the Kingslayer and Queen Cersei pay for their sins with the end of the House Lannister," growled Robb. Margaery set down her cup and stroked the sides of his bearded face. His blue eyes softened at her touch.

"I don't know how I feel about you going south again, Robb," said Margaery softly. "Can't you send Robett Glover as your commander to fight in the Westerlands?" You need to stay here to hold the North. She thought of Osha's words and the Others beyond the Wall.

"My lady mother made the same suggestion once," he replied muffled as he pressed his curly head on her breasts then her stomach. "Hopefully, we have made another baby."

Her cousins were enjoying their kill, a buck. She sat staring with her dark golden eyes at the giant grey rock where her little two legged pup lived. The giant grey rock where she and her sister and brothers had lived until she and her smaller sister had left. She whined then howled in frustration and longing. She had followed her dead sister's red pup as she was swimming in the water. She smelt only two of her four brothers. She hoped the two legged pup would see she was nearby when she "hunted" with her.
They stabbed Old Mormont now they have mutinied against my brother. Robb cursed himself for bringing Sansa along. She had screamed in shock and fear at the sight of Jon. No, no, he can't be dead. Robb had stood in shock until Sansa's sobs had brought him back to reality. She had been sitting by Jon's side ever since and was helping the blind Maester Aemon heal Jon. Jon had been stabbed a couple of times, thankfully Ghost defended Jon from his attackers and Robb's host's arrival had surprised some of the men. Fat Bowen Marsh had tears streaming down his face muttering, "For the Watch, for the Watch…"

Robb looked at them with disgust and fury. Some of the men of the Night's Watch had mutinied because Jon had allowed some of wildlings to join the Night's Watch and appointed a lowborn bastard named Satin the stewardship. Robb was unsurprised that the Freys were amongst the mutineers. Margaery should have killed them all. He itched to take Ice and finish the job his wife had started.

"Jon will live. He has to," cried Sansa holding Jon's scarred hand. She did not look away from Jon as she addressed Robb. "I don't regret coming here so you shouldn't regret allowing me to come." Robb remained unconvincing. Her stricken face as she exclaimed how much Jon resembled Father and the queer look on her face when Satin the steward had mentioned Jon's execution of Janos Slynt. She must be remembering Father's execution and being at King's Landing, he thought.

Robb was just as mulish and internally worried for Jon as he had when Bran had his accident. He was King in the North yet there had been no precedent for the situation. His predecessors as lords of Winterfell and Warden of the North had executed deserters. Lord Commander Jeor Mormont had been slain beyond the Wall. But this was personal. Maester Aemon had told him in the dim candlelit room that the men of the Night's Watch must remove all ties to their family through it can test them to break their vows.

"No one ever thinks about the family of those men being tested just the same."

Two days later, Robb became worried enough to insist on going to the godswood beyond the Wall to pray. Sansa had come with him for once leaving Jon's side. He knelt in the snow before the heart tree and prayed to the Old Gods to allow Jon to live.

"Father and Mother were taken from us. Don't let Sansa watch Jon die like she watched Father die. Please. Jon may be a Snow but he is the most Stark out of all of us. He is my brother. Let him live. Please watch over my missing brother Bran and the Reeds."

That was the only comprehensible thing he said before he started to silently cry. Thankfully, Grenn and Smalljon Umber had kept a respectful distance as he and Sansa prayed. He prayed for his Margaery and Eddard's health and safety. If he left his wife with child again Robb prayed both Margeary and the baby would live through the birth. Robb prayed for both Arya and Rickon's health and wellbeing.

He turned his head and saw Sansa was crying as well. He reached his arm around her shoulders and hugged her.

"I must be cursed. I wanted to be Joffery's Queen so badly and Father died because of it. Now I have killed Jon because I insisted in seeing him and to apologize for being so cold to him when we were children." Robb murmured refuting and reassuring remarks watching the snowflakes land in Sansa's
"None of that is your fault, Sansa. The Lannisters killed Father. Jon was assassinated. You hear me, it was not your fault."

*Unbeknownst to the two Stark siblings, the face of the heart tree was crying as they prayed. Far away, a broken boy cried with grief and longing for his family.*

"The Drowned God must look upon you favourably despite the many years you have been away on land. Well according to Dampair. First you win the Kingsmoot, with my help obviously. Now it looks like you got yourself a greenlander wife, baby brother, one of them high and mighty Starks you lived with. She is a bit young to have been one of your previous conquests." Asha threw the letter at him. Theon picked it up and read it quickly. Queen Margaery had written of Sansa's assent to marry him.

"Ned Stark would have killed me if I went near any of his daughters like that. Plus she was a child last time I saw her." He was friendly to the other Stark children but Theon was only really close to Robb. Bran and Rickon were too young for him to be really close. Sansa Stark was too prim and proper as a child and Arya was downright annoying at times particularly around the sullen Snow. *Theon smirked, Snow will be pissed I'm marrying his half-sister.*

Theon was in a good mood that evening. In the first time in a decade, Theon Greyjoy finally had a fairly secure place in the world. He was no longer a hostage/ward of Lord Eddard Stark. He had returned to a mismatched family. His mother was not all that well in the mind but it was nice to hear one of his parents had missed him. Asha was infuriatingly smug all the time but she was family. *I'm Lord of Iron Isles and I am marrying Ned Stark's daughter. If Balon had been buried in the ground like they do on land, he'd be rolling in his grave. Victorion had accepted him as Balon's rightful heir and Lord of the Iron Isles. Theon's grin faltered slightly thinking of his Uncle Euron. He won't give up. Euron wants my throne. He's mad and likes to play games. Theon thought of his Uncle Victorion's third wife and how Euron had impregnated her. How Victorion had killed his wife. Theon stopped smiling.*

*Sansa will have to stay back at Winterfell for a while until Euron is killed. *I'll marry her at Winterfell and hopefully I get her with child as quickly as Robb got his wife with child. I won't let Euron humiliate me like he did his own brother.*

Asha was too sure of herself when it came to the threat of Euron while Theon felt wary and uneasy under his mask of cockiness. As he went to bed for the night the sounds of the waves crashing into the rocks did not sooth or fill him with happiness tonight. For once he missed the quiet of his old room at Winterfell and riding out to battle alongside Robb. His men were only his because Asha had relinquished her claim as sole heir of Lord Balon Greyjoy. *If Asha had been Rodrik or Marron she would have killed me by now or banished me like Father banished Euron.* Sure Asha loved him and was protective of her last and little brother but they were familiar strangers. And ambition is a wicked little beast capable of turning the closest of friends or family into enemies.

*Arya was still fuming that her sister had gone to the Wall with Robb. *I'm Jon's "little sister", not Sansa. Sansa even tried to get Robb to allow Arya to come along as well, which made her only angrier. Arya had felt pity for her elder sister having to marry Theon. She had bluntly asked as she*
watched Sansa stitch a new gown for her wedding,

"Must you really have to marry Theon?" Sansa had stopped her needlework and stared at her lap.

"Yes, I must do my duty as a Stark. Marrying Theon and giving him heirs will prevent any Ironborn raiding of the North. Every son I bear, won't attack their cousin Prince Eddard or any other children our brother and Margaery have. I'll make it sure of it. Theon will have a legitimate reason to join up with Robb in defeating the Lannisters in the Westerlands. I want to ensure our family's survival. I want everyone who has harmed our family to pay for what they have done."

*The North Remembers.*

Arya had thought about her own desire of never wanting to marry a prince or a lord or anyone. It had felt a bit selfish that her sister was sacrificing her happiness to protect their family. But that feeling went away as soon as Robb announced that he would be leaving for Castle Black and Sansa was coming.

"Why does she get to see Jon and I don't? It's not fair. She huffed and stomped angrily through the Wolfswood to avoid everyone. She wanted to go an adventure to see Jon. Arya wanted to show Jon how well she could fight and her water dancing.

Margaery had tried to make Arya feel better by mentioning Jon would come visit Winterfell like Arya's Uncle Benjen had. Brienne had followed Arya around everywhere to make sure she did not follow them. Except for today. *What happened to Uncle Ben anyway?* She was annoyed with Robb. She was annoyed with Sansa. She was annoyed with how much she missed Jon. *Worst of all I lost Needle.* Robb was a good brother but when he was at Winterfell he was busy with his kingly duties or being all lovey with Margaery most of the time. He watched her spar with Brienne and played with her and Rickon here in the Wolfswood. The sound of a twig or a branch snapping or being crunched by someone or something's foot, startled Arya. She unsheathed her small ugly sword, looking around her.

"Brienne?" called out Arya scanning for the tall blonde in blue. She was too far from Winterfell for anyone to hear if she shouted for help. *Remember Syrio Florel's lessons. Do what Brienne has taught me.* The bush rustled vigorously to her left and Arya whipped around so fast she tripped over a tree root, dropping the sword.

*Ow.*

Arya lifted her sore head and reached for the sword and looked at the bush. Two large golden eyes stared at her. At that instant Arya forgot about being angry with Robb and Sansa or missing Jon.

"Nymeria!" Nymeria had gotten bigger not as big as Grey Wind, slightly smaller than Shaggydog. Arya scrambled up and wrapped her arms around Nymeria's neck and stroked her grey fur. *We are both home now.*

Sansa rode alongside Robb as Grenn and Smalljon Umber led them back to the Wall through the Haunted woods. In a matter of minutes, Grey Wind had been growling and whining. Circling them and keeping close to Robb's side. Sansa swore it was getting colder and darker and the horses were getting skittish. *Is this place actually haunted?* Grenn stopped in front of Sansa. His eyes flickered around their surroundings in recognition and fear. Grenn cursed and uttered,

"White Walkers." Sansa paled thinking of Old Nan's stories. *I can be brave.* Robb must have heard also as he unsheathed Ice immediately. "Valyrian steel?" Robb nodded.
"Grenn, get Sansa to back to the Wall. Now!" commanded Robb in his king voice. "You as well Umber. Go Smalljon!"

"No, Your Grace I swore to protect you," argued Smalljon firmly. Grenn had quickly tied his horse to hers and got on her horse behind her taking the reins with one hand. His other hand carrying a torch, the proximity to the fire did not make it any less cold.

"Use your torch. Your sword is useless against them. They don't like fire," yelled Grenn to Smalljon. Sansa turned her head to look back at Robb but Grenn's shoulder blocked her view. She saw shadows but whatever it was and her horse was moving so fast, it could have been a trick of the light or her mind. Grey Wind's snarls and a harsh ringing noise reverberated in her ears. How Grenn knew the way back to the Wall in this mist, Sansa was not sure. The sound of a frightened horse was coming from her left. Sansa squinted with the torch's flames so close; Robb's rider-less horse was galloping at its full speed disappearing in the trees. _No, not Robb. He can't be dead._

"We have to turn around. You have to save him," cried Sansa with tears streaming down her face.

"No, King Robb gave me an order to get you back to Castle Black, milady," shouted Grenn. "Hold on to my arm or the horse, before you fall off. Them damn dead things are still following us." Sansa clutched his right black leather covered arm. "His Grace'll be fine with that blade of his. Jon said once that you Starks are hard to kill." _Thank the Gods, Margaery had pressed her grandmother to not only get me out of King's Landing but also Ice_. They made it out of the wooded forest to the treeless stretch of land before the Wall, riding straight to the Gate. The Gate opened with a loud moaning of the metal as they approached.

"Urgh, my arm is about to fall off holding this," groaned Grenn putting out the torch after he dismounted as the Gate lowered. All four were breathing heavily. Sansa got off the poor beast and led the horses down the long zigzagging tunnel behind Grenn stopping only to open the three iron gates. Sansa kept looking back hoping the Gate would open and Robb would be coming through.

"Sorry about your hair, Your Grace. A bit of it blew into the flames by the wind. I'm told ladies like their hair," Grenn said awkwardly.

"What's a bit of singed hair compared to dying. I'm grateful you saved my life."

Margaery was tending her plants in the Glass Garden. Eddard and his wet nurse were there also. Tending to the plants relaxed Margaery from the stresses of the game of thrones. Her duties of listening to suppliants, managing the running of Winterfell, giving alms to the smallfolk, overseeing the welfare of her husband's siblings and their son was easy. The daily routine of awaiting news and planning their next move was getting to her especially when no news came from her own family. Prince Oberyn Martell had been slain in the trial by combat against the Mountain. He was a friend of Willas' despite the accident. Ser Gregor Clegane was also dead as well. Tyrion Lannister had avoided execution by escaping. The pudding of the whole drama was he not only escaped but also had murdered his father Lord Tywin Lannister and a whore. Margaery chuckled thinking of the chaos and stupidity that would follow with Cersei Lannister in control.

Margaery was no fool to know that Cersei would want to get her twin back. Ser Brynden Tully was bringing Jaime Lannister to Winterfell in chains in secret under the pretense of greeting his great-great nephew Prince Eddard. Word came that Stannis had finally left Dragonstone heading to Storm's End. Nothing unpredictable about that. More interestingly, Lord Baelish had married Lysa Arryn. He controls the Vale through Lysa and the sickly little Lord Arryn. Sansa had told her about
how she got out of King's Landing and her grandmother's interference of Baelish's plans. "Your lady grandmother told me to never trust him." Sansa had made an off comment about Baelish's comparisons of Lady Catelyn and her. Why were some men so vile? Baelish was a more dangerous player than Cersei Lannister. How far would he go to get Lady Catelyn's lookalike daughter? Well I certainly won't let him succeed.

She watered the little seedlings with a clay jug. Margaery glanced at the blue winter roses that were across from her. They were pretty but they made her think of the dream she had the day she gave birth to Prince Eddard. Margaery shivered despite the warmth of the Glass Garden. I can't dwell on silly things like dreams. She turned her thoughts to her family. Willas, Grandmother, and Father had not written to her in awhile or had she heard any news of them. What are they doing or plotting? Is Father going to lay siege on King's Landing? The conditions of the poor people of King's Landing must be dire with Father's blockade of the Roseroad. Margaery felt a stab of pity for the Kingslanders. Father is likely not starving the Lannisters like he had Stannis Baratheon. Well not as rapidly. She took off her gloves and went over to her little boy. The wet nurse handed Eddard to her.

"You are getting so big." Eddard grabbed one of Margaery's curls and tugged it. She winced as she pried his little hand out of her hair. "You like Mama's hair like your Father does." Her face dimpled at the small rose bushes from Highgarden she had transplanted a fortnight ago remembering of her wedding night as she exited the Glass Garden. Robb had accidentally yanked her hair as he tried to help her remove all the petals from her hair the morning after.

The wedding had not been as splendid as she had expected. Her new husband had been cool and courteous throughout the ceremony and the feast. Margaery had suffered through the bedding ceremony with grace and whatever dignity one could muster whilst men stripped her naked. She certainly fared better than Robb who looked so awkward and uncomfortable. They stood in the bedchamber both naked as their nemeday silently. Robb was obviously failing in trying not to stare at her naked body. Margaery blatantly stared at her husband's brawny body. Especially his cock and she did so long enough that Robb took notice blushing. She made a little noise of appreciation. He turned even redder but she could tell he was enjoying it against his wishes.

"Husband, would you like a cup of wine?" He nodded distracted. She walked to the table and poured the decanter of wine. She handed him a goblet, which he finished quickly in one or two gulps. 'You are bedding me not going to your death.' Nevertheless, she had smiled sweetly up at him. Margaery took his empty goblet and threw it behind her ignoring the loud clank it made. She guided Robb to sit on the end of the bed that had petals strewn all over it. Margaery made the first move kissed him long and hard. He kissed her back and his hands went to the small of her waist. Both were breathless when they broke the kiss.

Robb's face went red when his hand brushed her left breast in its journey to touch the side of her face. 'It will be morning by time he beds me.' She took his hand.

"Do that again, Robb," she said archly. Robb gulped and complied giving her breast a gentle fondle. His lovely blue eyes darken she made a pretty moan. He kissed her and squeezed her bottom a little roughly. Without breaking their kissing, Robb pulled her on his lap. As soon as she straddled him and Robb pulled them further onto the bed flipping them over with him on top. She touched his chest and muscled stomach. The wine must have emboldened him or he is not a green boy as everyone says he is. 'She broke the kiss in a gasp of surprise and pleasure as she felt his cock harden against her thigh and his hands travel down her body.

Maybe he is not so frigid after all?

"Make me your wife." Stroking his hardened appendage. He moaned a name; his voice was deeper.
The Others came at them with such speed with their ice swords. They were tall, gaunt, and pale as the white snow. Their eyes were inhuman, Robb had never seen such deep blue eyes, and not even Brienne Tarth's eyes resembled them. There were three of them. His oak shield broke in half as he instinctively tried to block a blow to his chest. His horse had fled the moment he got off it. These Others sure know how to fight. Robb thought of an army of these Others invading the seven realms; killing his people and his family. *They are the real enemy, the only danger that matters.* Robb stabbed one of them with Ice in the stomach. Its flesh and bone shriveled into a massive ice puddle.

One down.

Robb attacked the second one glancing once to see Umber parrying the third's attacks using the torch like a sword. The second one was seemed faster and better or maybe Robb was getting tired faster as they went around in circles. *I need to kill this one fast and help Smalljon.* Sharp screeching noises came from the third's sword as it brushed the flames. Grey Wind had been helping Smalljon by distracting the Other knowing Umber was less equipped than Robb. A flash of grey knocked the Other down from behind. Robb hacked it and it too became of ice in the snow.

"Grey Wind to Umber!" Robb ordered as he ran over to finish off the last remaining Other. Grey Wind snapped and snarled at the Other trying to get to the space between Umber and the pale blue eyed demon.

"We've got 'em, Your Grace!" boomed Smalljon with bravado. Robb had got within range seconds too slow. The Other impaled Smalljon in the gut. Umber's smile had faded slightly as he slumped forward.

"NOOOOO!"

*He is not dead. Umber is just wounded, not dead. I'll carry or drag you back to the Wall if I have to.* The Other turned around quickly but Robb wielded Ice and jabbed in the same spot where Umber had been impaled. Robb dropped Ice on the ground and was about to push Umber on his back to assess the wound. Grey Wind snarled at Umber. The hope that Smalljon had only fallen due to a wound was futile; Umber's eyes were no longer brown. Deep blue like the Others.

"As your brother, I would burn the bodies of the dead. If you had seen what I have seen, you would too." Jon's words echoed in Robb's mind. He picked up the still burning torch as undead Umber began to rise and set Umber on fire. Tears streamed down Robb's face as he watched Umber's body burn.

"I'm so sorry." He unclipped Smalljon's swordbelt to give Lord Greatjon Umber as he would have no body to bury and sheathed Ice.
Time always went by so slowly whenever Sansa waited. Sansa had paced by Jon's bed when the horn went off signaling the return of the search party for Robb and Smalljon. She wrapped herself in Jon's black cape that was much too long and wide on her and ran out with Ghost at her heels. When Sansa made it to the courtyard, she looked for her brother's face amongst the men gathered. Grey Wind came up to her and licked her face in greeting. *He'd be howling if Robb were dead.* Lord Greatjon Umber had watery eyes and mournful face. Sansa looked at what Lord Umber was holding in his large strong hands, one of which was missing two digits. Smalljon's swordbelt. How strange it was to see such a towering strong man with a less than boisterous or fierce countenance. "He was brave, Lord Umber. I am grateful for his insistence to remain by my side despite my order for him to escape. The Others moved and fought so quickly, I would have been overwhelmed if Smalljon had not kept one of them distracted. He would have lived if I had killed that last one in time. For that I am sorry." Sansa spun to the sound of her brother's voice. Robb's bronze and iron crown was slightly askew on his head. His face shone with sweat and ashy grime. Everyone was so grim that Sansa had to fight to keep the smile of relief that Robb had not died from showing. "Will more of those creatures come to Castle Black?" "Don't be sorry, Your Grace. Smalljon took his duty to protect you seriously. We Umbers proudly serve the Starks. You honour me by bringing my boy's swordbelt. I'm not Karstark, no need to look so nervous. It was an honorable death, for which I can harbor no ill will to you, sire," assured Greatjon in his deep voice. "How do we kill these Others besides fire and Valyrian steel? Our iron steel is useless against according to the crow," asked Dacey Mormont looking at Grenn. The problematic rarity of Valyrian swords in Westeros troubled them. Sansa thought of how Lord Tywin had planned to melt Ice into two swords. Sansa shook her head. *Robb won't do it. Ice is Father and cannot be melted down.* "Lord Commander Snow was having Sam look through some of the old scrolls and books for anything that could help before Sam left for Oldtown," supplied Grenn. "He also questioned some of the wildlings on knowledge of the Others," said the steward named Satin as he joined the throng. "I can look through the books and scrolls while I sit with Jon," offered Sansa. She could read better than most of the men of the Night's Watch. None of her brother's men were the reading type and Maester Aemon was blind. Sansa wanted to be useful as Jon still had yet to awaken. Robb gave her an encouraging smile and squeezed her hand. She turned to Lord Umber and in her most genuine courteous voice. Not her little bird voice. "I'm sorry for your loss Lord Umber. I did not know Smalljon that well, but he was brave and kind to me." Lord Umber looked touched by her words and said thanks. Robb asked her if she was well and Sansa told him she was better now knowing he was alive and well. Robb looked grimly at the Wall as he spoke, "I'll come by the Maester Aemon's tower to have supper with you later, Sansa. Satin, would you take
Princess Sansa back to the Maester's Tower? Tell Maester Aemon we will be having a council meeting in half an hour.” Satin nodded and took her back to the Maester's Tower despite having Ghost with her.

Satin and Maester Luwin had gone to the meeting. Ghost was curled at the end of Jon's bed watching her with his red eyes. The books and scrolls were so old and fragile that Sansa had to be very careful. She noted that Sam had a small pile of books that spoke of dragonglass against a cold enemy. Another stack of books seemed to be a reject pile so Sansa gently put them into a spot where she would not mix them up with the rest.

After a few minutes, she started her own stack of unhelpful books and scrolls. Sansa picked a book with a leather cover that was falling off a bit and began skimming it. It was just another account of the Long Night about the last hero of the First Men. She had read Sam's loopy scrawled annotation about the dragonsteel in another book. Valyria was the place where the dragons came from. Her eyes widened as she stared at the Mormont ancestral sword Jon was given by Jeor Mormont. Dragonsteel is Valyrian steel. Her excitement dimmed when she remembered that they already knew this since Robb had slain some Others using Ice. Disappointed, Sansa was about to put it with the bookkeeping ledger from 200 years ago.

"Have you heard of the prophecy, my child?" came Maester Aemon's soft voice. Sansa had not heard him return from the council meeting. Sansa shook her head but the Maester could not see her.

"No, I have not. What is this prophecy about?"

"Who you mean. It is about the prince that was promised. The prince is the song of ice and fire. Long ago a prophecy was made that a savior will be born and he will save the world from darkness. I thought it was Prince Rhaegar and so did he for a time. But he died and so did his son." Sansa was about to ask what was the darkness that the world needed saving from. Winter is coming. She looked at the wolf on Longclaw.

"Rhaegar could not have been a savior. He stole my aunt and doing so tore the kingdoms apart," blurted Sansa. He was not self-less he had been utterly selfish and that's the exact opposite of being a savior.

"Yes, I suppose not. The Starks and the Targaryens both had their share of tragedy," replied Maester Aemon gently saying less than he wanted to. "The word of Rhaegar's sister birthing dragons across the Narrow Sea. Born in salt and born in smoke. It must be her. Daenerys must defeat the Others."

Why must it be a Targaryen?

"But you said a prince not a princess," corrected Sansa. Aemon gave a sad smile.

"Dragons are not sex specific. The Valyrian word for prince is neither male nor female. But I am too old and feeble to go to her. To help her with her dragons and give her counsel, my fourth test. A dragon has three heads and alas I cannot be one of them." He trailed off looking absolutely gutted. Sansa put the book down and straightened the blankets around Jon that did not need to be straightened. Her mind was no longer on the Others and finding more of their weaknesses. Sansa was curious about her Aunt Lyanna, not knowing much about her. Father only ever spoke of Lyanna in comparing her to Arya and avoided speaking of her abduction. Why though? Sansa only knew of Mother's long-standing dislike of Jon living at Winterfell when Father returned to Winterfell with an infant Jon and Lyanna's body. What happened you?

"Maester Aemon, why do you think Prince Rhaegar took Lyanna? He was married and a father and she was betrothed to Robert Baratheon." Maester Luwin broke out of his sad reverie and considered
her question. Sansa felt like the answer lay before her but she just couldn't put it together. Just a wounded and sleeping Jon is there.

"I only corresponded with Rhaegar by raven discussing the prophecy. That was before it all happened and he had never mentioned Lady Lyanna. We can only wonder at his reasoning." His answer dissatisfied Sansa.

**Why would a prophecy obsessed married prince want to abduct Lady Lyanna Stark? Was it love? Was Rhaegar horrible like Joffery?**

"I suppose you are right. It's just I have heard my whole life that Lyanna Stark had been kidnapped by Prince Rhaegar but never why. Father always said my sister is a lot like her and I can't imagine Arya not killing her abductor royal or not. Father never spoke of how he found her or what happened." They spoke no more on the subject. Aemon put on fresh bandages on Jon's wounds. They spoke about Jon and the likelihood of him awakening soon as she held Jon's burned hand with Ghost's head on her lap. **Wake up Jon.** Sansa poured herself a cup of something stronger than she was used to. Two cups later, Robb found her flushed from drink surrounded by cluttered stacks of papers and books and behind him Satin set down trays of supper for her and Robb.

"Our survival depends a promised prince. He or she is going to save us all from winter and the Others. A song of ice and fur—no. Fire!" Robb sighed and took her cup from her.

Her husband had been overall happy or at least appeared to be happy with their first born despite it being a daughter not a son. Her softhearted husband was quite taken with their new little girl, sitting next to her with the infant in his arms. Her two living brothers Olyvar and Perwyn offered their congratulations on the new healthy Tully child. Originally, her lord husband Edmure had wanted to their baby after his eldest sister Catelyn. Roslin agreed as a proper wife and lady should defer to her husband's wishes but all she could see was the image of Queen Margaery's beautiful face glaring at her with accusing eyes. She could imagine Margaery's soprano voice flinging cutting words of the irony in Edmure naming the baby after the sister who was murdered at his wedding by orders of the baby's maternal grandfather. Even with the Queen no longer at Riverrun, Roslin still felt like an unwanted outsider at times. The servants and the smallfolk all still preferred Margaery despite Roslin's efforts to win their respect and love.

**I'll always be Roslin Frey, daughter of the treacherous Lord Walder Frey who murdered his guests at my wedding.**

Roslin was always in awe of and was easily intimidated by Queen Margaery. The Queen in the North was the same age as her and was so fashionable. Roslin had never seen such pretty gowns or jewels.

Following Roslin's horrific wedding, Queen Margaery had kept all of Roslin's half-sisters and other female relations locked up including Roslin for a short time until Edmure convinced Her Grace to allow her to remain with him. Her half sisters were frightened and bitter. They feared Margaery Stark after their lord father and their brothers were executed or sent to the Wall. Not that any of Lord Walder Frey's daughters and granddaughters mourned for him; they feared they too would die alongside him. They vehemently believed Margaery was a witch who used glamour potions to seduce Robb Stark to become queen and thus breaking his vow to marry one of them. "She is a wanton witch. The plants she grows are used for potions of seduction and guile." They were upset that they were not getting the Lannister husbands they were promised.
Roslin observed that the Queen was just a vivacious and attractive girl who was free in her courtly manners, which at first shocked Roslin who had only seen her lord father's lewd groping and comments to his wives or female servants. Margaery Stark was a peculiar woman; she attended the war councils and voiced her opinions on war and politics. Women are supposed to be demure and kind. Roslin noticed that even Edmure once or twice stared too long at his nephew's wife's shapely figure.

Robb Stark and his giant wolf made Roslin uneasy. *I am glad I did not marry the King.* Lord Edmure was warm and did not have any unnatural pets. Roslin had grown rather fond of her husband. The King was around her age and handsome but despite his Tully looks he appeared dour and cold to everyone that was not in his army. *Even his own wife.* Roslin was frightened by the King's wolf and if she was a braver person she would have asked for the horrid beast to be chained in the kennels not prowling around Riverrun.

Her husband had taken more offense to the Queen's blatant snubbing of Roslin than she did. Edmure was hot headed and still grumbled about the Queen occasionally. He had softened a little when everyone watched as the Queen said her final goodbye to her brother Ser Loras Tyrell. *I don't blame her really. All she sees is her murdered brother and good mother and I am also reminder of the blade that was meant for her son and her.* Lady Roslin Tully would endure every slight and the perpetual hatred Queen Margaery harbored with gratitude and grace. The Queen's personal execution of her lord father had freed her from his control. She was free from the horrible life at the Twins. Her brothers Olyvar and Perwyn were thankfully in the King and Queen's favour. Roslin had cried herself to sleep dreading an annulment of her marriage made by the Queen on the grounds that the marriage was a ploy to murder King Robb, and his army. No annulment or charge against her came and Roslin remained alive as the Lady of Riverrun. *Edmure must've put his foot down or had the Blackfish sway the Queen on my behalf.* She had kept the youngest and sweetest of the Frey girls as handmaidens and did not fight for the other Frey women when Queen Margaery sent them to the Silent Sisters.

In the end, Roslin had been relieved that Edmure had changed his mind and decided to name the baby after his mother that died when he was a little boy. Margaery's harsh words and his own grief for Lady Catelyn still bothered him, which Roslin believed to have led in the name change to Minisa. Baby Minisa had inherited Roslin's brown hair and Edmure's blue eyes. She snuggled against Edmure and looked at their tiny daughter.

*I don't think I would have been this happy if I had been Robb Stark's queen.*

Margaery was not sure whether she felt over the moon with happiness or slightly inconvenienced when her moonsblood did not come. Her wolf had succeeded in his enthusiastic pursuit of getting her with child again. Not that she had not enjoyed herself or not want more children. In fact she wanted to give Robb a litter of Stark children. Margaery had not expected to fall with child only a few moons after birthing Eddard. *At least I know what to expect this time around.* Margaery decided to keep it to herself for a little while longer incase her moonsblood came late due to some irregularity and also Maester Luwin's fussing was at times overbearing.

She was sitting at her desk in her solar rereading letters. Robb had written a brief message that some of the men of the Night's Watch had stabbed Jon. Margaery instantly thought of Sansa and felt a twinge of guilt for pushing Robb in allowing Sansa to come and her seeing another horrible thing done to a member of her family. Margaery was upset her worry of inadvertently sending assassins to Jon at the Wall had come true. *I should have had those Freys killed.* She bit her lip thinking of the
worry and stress Robb was likely feeling, which made her feel worried and stress as well. She disinterestedly read Lord Edmure's announcement of the birth of his daughter Minisa Tully. She wrote the customary congratulations to the Lord Edmure and his wife. Margaery had Maester Luwin chose a fitting gift for the child to go with the red and blue blanket with white pearlescent trout she had some handmaidens sew moons ago.

Margaery reread Willas' letter over and over. Their lady mother grieved deeply for Loras still and had recently returned to higher spirits when they had received the news of the birth of Margaery's son. Everyone congratulated the birth of the heir to the North. Willas wrote of the rumours of Cersei's attempts to get Dorne to attack the Reach. 'Father's army is in the wrong direction.' Willas hinted at a plan to incite the Faith Militant to "purge" the court at King's Landing of sin. Meaning Cersei Lannister and all of our enemies. His piety comes in use at last. Father was growing fatter in his blockade and restless for Lannister blood according to Garlan's reports. Willas did not mention their grandmother, which meant to Margaery that she was plotting something. Olenna Tyrell would never write of her plans to Margaery or allow Willas to mention them in fear of the letter being intercepted. Margaery understood this but nevertheless disliked being left in the dark.

Margaery wrote a letter to Robb requesting he have Sansa escorted back to Winterfell for her wedding, which would take place in a moon. Theon had written a brief letter stating the wedding would take place at Winterfell and that he would not being bringing Sansa to Pyke right away leaving no reason as to why. The wedding would have to be a small affair due its fast approaching date. That meant fewer guests to feed at the wedding feast. Margaery was not at all stingy but she was growing conscientious of the level of food in the warehouses and probability of the war preventing any shipments from the Reach one day. The Glass Gardens would not be able to sustain all of the people of the North. Margaery splurged on Sansa's wedding clothes to compensate. Margaery was having four seamstresses work on a wedding gown and a trousseau for Sansa to bring with her whenever she went to Pyke.

She went to the window looking out watching the snowflakes fall. It is getting colder so quickly. Margaery could appreciate the beauty in the snow but after awhile the queen in her thought of the people that depended on her to aid them through winter to stave off starvation. I am a daughter of the warm fertile Reach. This cold never seemed to bother Rickon or Arya. Margaery thought of the Stark words.

Winter is coming. How pompous and arrogant all of the other House words are.

"Am I ready for this?" she said aloud. She could see Arya and Rickon playing in the falling snow with their direwolves trying to get Lady Brienne to join in their fun. Winter had come and it was not going away anytime soon. Margaery wanted Robb's arms around her but she had to be brave for him, for their son, and their people. For the child growing inside me. She was not going to let them think Margaery Stark, the Queen in the North was a weak highborn southron lady.

"You must go to the Wall with your army, Your Grace," suggested the red priestess. "The Lord of the Light sees an enemy that only you can destroy." Her annoyance at the King's Hand's meddling with her plan for Edric Storm had diminished slightly. There are others with king's blood. Lord Davos Seaworth held a message from the men of Night's Watch asking for aid against a wildling army. With the recently procured loan from the Iron Bank, they could sail to the Wall. The Lord of the Light was directing Melisandre to go there. The flames were unclear at the moment of what her purpose was. In order for to figure this out King Stannis needed to go there. But of course, Azor Azhai was stubborn.
"No, Robb Stark and his army are there already by now and if a wildling kills Stark the better. Lord Tywin is dead, and the Imp has likely fled Westeros; now is the time to take King’s Landing. I have waited long enough to claim my right as the one true King of the Seven Kingdoms." Melisandre studied Lord Davos Seaworth’s impassive bearded face and King Stannis's unyielding stare.

"Yes, but Your Grace, as king you have a duty to the Night's Watch," said Davos. "You should at least inquire about the events at Castle Black." Melisandre was disappointed she expected more coaxing from Lord Davos. But then again she supported the idea; Lord Davos was a disbeliever of the Lord of the Light and mistrusted Melisandre, trying to remove her power over King Stannis like Maester Cressen had tried yet failed. She would have to convince him in other ways.

She walked angrily around her bedchamber in the Tower of Joy with tears in her eyes. 'How ironic?'. She felt like a caged animal seething at its captor. 'I am so stupid. A stupid little girl swept away by the dream of a prince and freedom from an unwanted marriage.' The glamour and beauty of her decision was gone leaving her seething at him and full of self-loathing. The disillusioned dark haired girl turned to face him.

"How dare you not tell me?!" screamed Lyanna glaring at the silvery prince who dared to look apologetic. "Look at me in the eye and tell me how my lord father and Brandon were killed." Her voice cracked as she said Brandon's name. Brandon was so full of life the idea of him no longer a part of the living world broke her heart.

"You are in a delicate condition." He said not looking at her. 'What an excuse.' He cared more for this baby than he ever did her.

Stupid, stupid girl.

"Delicate? I am a wolf not an inbred dragon like you. Tell me! Tell me how your mad father murdered my father and brother!" She flung a pillow at his head wishing it were something harder so he could feel a sliver of the pain she felt. The entire room had been torn apart in her rage and there was not much left to smash or throw. How could he keep her in the dark about this? How dare he not have the courage to face her?

The image of her father Lord Rickon Stark roasting alive in his armour when he expected to fight a fair trial by combat and her handsome wild brother Brandon Stark choking himself to death trying to save their father hurt so much.

'They were not supposed to die that's not what she wanted.

'Forgive me Father. Forgive me Brandon. I'd be the good girl you always wanted me to be and do my duty if I could take back what I did.' Lyanna thought of Ned and of her baby brother Benjen. 'I'm so sorry.' When she found out from overhearing Ser Arthur Dayne, she had spent days in bed sobbing and howling in anguish. How disappointed would Lady Lyarra Stark be in her only daughter had she lived long enough to see her now?

Lyanna had gone with Prince Rhaegar to escape the cage of expectations she was forced to live up to and marrying the philandering Lord Robert Baratheon. She had wanted to have adventures and have a life worthy of a song. But she wound up trapped in another cage that cost Father and Brandon's lives. 'I don't feel liberated or like I'm in song.'

"What did I get out of this?" she said aloud seeing Winterfell in her mind with such longing. Rhaegar
moved towards her softly.

"Our love. Our little Visenya." He placed a hand on her stomach. She recoiled from him. Listening to him talk about his prophesized promised son and the need for another third child, another daughter had once been exciting, but it sickened her now. He was married to another yet it never fully bothered her until now. Being in the Dornish princess's homeland made it all a thousand times worse. She felt like one of Robert's whores.

"No. You took advantage of my unhappiness and used me for some stupid prophecy. You are no different from Robert. You see me no better than Robert ever did."

"I love you my fierce beautiful Lady Lyanna." She would have said the words back to him but it all felt wrong.

"It's not enough for me anymore," she murmured sadly. Thinking of her Father and Brandon murdered by the father of the man she believed herself to be in love with and also the danger Ned and Benjen would be in now. They had died trying to save her, thinking she needed to be saved. 'Do I even know what love is?' All she felt was numbness and guilt. She looked away from his purple eyes and looked out the window at the red mountains of Dorne. Her grey eyes narrowed.

"My baby will be a boy." She turned her head to see Rhaegar shake his head.

"Lyanna, our baby is a girl, a Visenya to my son and daughter Aegon and Rhaenys. A dragon must have three heads." His voice was soft and melodic but the tone sounded all too much like Robert's undoubting infatuated talk of the many sons she would bear him or Father's stern and unyielding edicts that she would not wield a sword or break off her betrothal. 'They did not see me for what I am.' Lyanna's blood boiled, a dragon murdered two wolves she was not going to let another dictate her and her pup's fate. 'He is mine not yours.'

"No, I will have a son. A son who is a wolf and he will look like my brothers and I. Like all the Starks before him. He will be of the North, the blood of Winterfell not the blood of the dragon. He won't resemble you at all. The North remembers, Rhaegar. Your family won't be anything to him," roared Lyanna icily. "Where is your precious Prince Aegon? What of your wife and daughter? Shouldn't you have gotten them out of King's Landing?" You left them all alone. Lyanna wished at that very moment every silvery haired Targaryen dead and if any dared to survive and challenged the Starks she hoped her boy would destroy them. She stormed away to lie on the bed and did not speak to Rhaegar until the morn.

Rhaegar was leaving to fight against Robert. He was donning his black armour with the red three-headed dragon emblazoned on the breastplate.

"Let me go to Ned. He is my brother he won't hurt me." Ned was levelheaded and he would know what to do. He would understand and protect her baby from Robert even though the two were close friends. "Please Rhaegar." His face softened and he kissed her full on the lips. She had thought she had swayed him finally until he made the order to Dayne and the other Kingsguard to keep her in the tower and to kill anyone who tried to take his Lyanna or Visenya. She hurt her hand in a futile blow to his armored chest.

"I hope he kills you! I hope you both die!" Lyanna cried petulantly. His face was so sad and handsome like he had been the day he played his harp and sang so mournfully and beautifully. The day she had been first attracted to the crown prince. It felt like ages ago.

"You shall have your wish, milady," and with that he left the tower and rode away. Lyanna cried half regretting her choice of words and half in anger at being left alone in a sweltering tower with no
maester or anyone to talk to besides the members of the Kingsguard.

"I want to go home."

Moons later, Lyanna Stark went into labor howling in pain and crying for her dead mother, father and dead or living brothers. She screamed for Rhaegar once or twice before the fever took over. She moaned and groaned, hallucinating the presence of Old Nan. She was a northern girl who did not fare well in the dry sweltering heat in Dorne. 'I'm going to die. My son and I won't make it.' The pale blue winter roses she loved so much were a small sweet smelling comfort to her while she writhed in pain and bled. At last her child was born. Her precious son who had been born with a full head of dark hair and Stark grey eyes like her, like Ned, Brandon and Benjen. She lay there weakly bloodied murmuring every northern lullaby and ditty to her baby.

In the end the only males who never disappointed Lyanna came. She could hear her brother's voice and Lord Howland Reed's from below. Fear of Robert's wrath for her baby filled her with anxiety. Her voice was hoarse from screaming Ned's name by time he made it to her side. Her strength was fading and she did not have much longer.

"Forgive me, Ned."

Forgive me, my son.

Robb could not bear to look at Sansa who stood silently crying beside him knowing he would cry himself. Sansa had been certain Jon had squeezed her hand back but a day later she and Maester Aemon had found Jon had stopped breathing with no heart beat. He forced himself not to look away as Grenn, Pyp and Dolorous Edd set his brother's lifeless body on the pyre of wood. Jon and him were suppose to find Bran and bring him home. Jon and Robb were suppose to fight together against the Others. Jon was suppose to be like Uncle Benjen to his children when the war was over. Jon should be alive taking them up the winch to show Sansa the top of the Wall.

"And now his watch has ended," intoned the men of the Night's Watch. The trio lit Jon's pyre on fire. I can't watch my brother's body burn away. Ghost and Grey Wind howled eerily. Sansa slipped a gloved hand in Robb's larger hand. Robb heard her whisper,

"Jon was the hero I prayed for. The hero who would kill Slynt for what he did to Father." The smoke of burning wood stung his eyes and Ghost was barking at the burning pyre.

Chapter End Notes

nghh just watched the trailer for the Cinderella movie. Totally watching it for Richard Madden <3, Cate Blanchett, and Helena Bonham Carter.

I'll update tomorrow or the day after. :)

I hope you liked it!
It was dark out and Ghost still had not left his spot by the pyre or stopped howling mournfully. Sansa spent the rest of the day curled in Jon's black cape crying until her eyes were puffy. She slipped out of the Maester's Tower easily when Robb and Grey Wind had gone. She saw the burning pyre was going dying out in the darkness.

"Ghost come here boy. To me Ghost," hissed Sansa in a low voice trying to coax the large white direwolf to follow her like he had since she came to Castle Black. Ghost looked at her and whined inching closer to the smoking wood. Sansa avoided looking at what she imagined would be the burnt remains of Jon. Ghost came to her finally and tugged at her sleeve insistently pulling her closer to Jon's funeral pyre. Sansa had a horrible flashback of when Joffery had forced to stare at her lord father's rotting head.

I can't look.

"No Ghost, we have go inside before someone notices," said Sansa as she tugged back. Crunch, crunch. Sansa looked up and froze in shock. I must be delirious or have gone mad in grief. Jon had sat up and looked around frowning in confusion. At Ghost's bark, Jon spotted them and stood up coming towards them. He was all sooty and his clothing had burned away leaving him completely naked. Sansa was too preoccupied in her shock to notice right away. His frown deepened when he took notice of Sansa fully.

"Sansa?" Sansa had not heard Jon's voice in so long. It was deeper and throatier than she remembered.

Jon was all disoriented. The things he saw in his dreams had uprooted his entire sense of being. He had tried to wake up and sooth the blurred yet beautiful girl with hair that kissed by fire whose salty tears fell upon his face. Ygritte? His ears were still ringing with the dark haired wolf girl's angry snarls at the silvery man clad in red and black. Seeing his young father come to the dying wolf girl promising to protect her baby.

Uncle, not father.

The man he strived to emulate turned out to not be his real father. His real father was Prince Rhaegar Targaryen. No, I look like Ned Stark not at all like a Targaryen. He could still feel the wolf girl's anger at the Targaryens and herself and the intense grief over her beloved brother and father. Jon was overwhelmed, Lyanna Stark was the mother he always wanted to know about. She had been there the whole time buried in the crypts at Winterfell.

Father died before telling me who my mother was and that I was only his nephew.

Jon walked off the burning wood and straw towards his tall lithe red haired half-sister. Cousin. Her large blue Tully eyes looked upon him in shock and disbelief. Is this a dream too? Jon crushed her into a hug. It felt real so real something cold brushed against his nether region causing it to stiffen in response. Jon's eyes widen when he realized he was naked and briefly enjoyed having his cousin who still believed to be his sister pressed against him. I thought she was Ygritte that's all. They
awkwardly separated. Both blushed and stood staring at the ground.

"Um here," offered Sansa his black fur cape flushing with a small smile. He could tell Sansa was burning with questions. Jon donned the cape quickly keeping everything out of sight. He then followed her up to Maester Aemon's Tower with Ghost. When she shut the door behind them she asked,

"How are you alive? I felt no pulse or heartbeat. Neither did Maester Aemon. How do you not have any burns on your body from lying on that burning pyre all day?" Sansa looked like she was on the verge of crying from shock. Jon frowned not knowing how to explain. He was not the best with words. I'm going to have to explain more than once when everyone sees me walking about. It was all so convoluted and mind boggling to him how could he convey a more sane answer to Sansa, to Robb, to everyone? When he did not fully accept that he was not truly Eddard Stark's son.

"I am not your bastard brother. I'm your bastard cousin," answered Jon slowly unsure how to explain the part of being unburnt. Sansa visibly flinched at the word bastard and frowned confused. "My mother is Lyanna Stark. She made Father promise to keep me safe from Robert before she died." Sansa nodded with sad understanding eyes. Prince Rhaegar being his real father went unsaid.

"Father is still your father, no matter what. You look like him and you even sound like him." She gave him a fresh tunic and trousers and turned away to give him privacy. They sat down the bed side by side when he was done dressing.

"What was your mother like? What happened to her well besides having you and dying?" Jon thought about his dark haired grey-eyed mother who was not much older than he was now when she died.

"She was fierce and willful like Arya. She had the Stark look like Father. You are a lot like my mother as well. She believed in songs and believed in princes. She thought Prince Rhaegar loved her." He wanted a Visenya not another son.

"That blind foolish love cost her father and brother. Like it cost me Father," finished Sansa matter of factly. It killed her in the end. It being I. Sansa seemed to sense his train of thought. "She loved you, Jon. I'm sure she never regretted having you. She died thinking of you. I'm sorry I was so horrible to you when we were children." Jon gave her a one armed hug.

"What happened to Father is not your fault. You were a child, I never was angry with you." They sat in silence. Jon thought of Father. He thought of burden that he had to fulfill to keep his pack alive. To keep the whole of Westeros from being overrun by the Others and never ending winter. He thought of some burning sword he saw in one of his dreams.

"It's not Daenerys Targaryen. It is you Jon. You are the prince who was promised. You are ice and fire. I should've known since you were my hero who killed Slynt." Jon looked at Sansa questioninglly. How did she know? "Maester Aemon told me about it. He thinks it's your aunt in Essos. Oh, that means he is your great-great uncle." Jon merely nodded feeling strange to have kin other than the Starks. He thought of his mother's angry refusal.

"No, I will have a son. A son who is a wolf and he will look like my brothers and I. Like all the Starks before him. He will be of the North, the blood of Winterfell not the blood of the dragon. He won't resemble you at all. The North remembers, Rhaegar. Your family won't be anything to him." Lyanna had been right for Jon had the Stark look and personality. Jon spoke gruffly.

"I'm no dragon. I am of the North. The only family I have is anyone with the name Stark." Maester Aemon too, he amended in afterthought. He bore no ill will to the maester. Sansa smiled sleepily at
him. Jon lay next to Sansa as she slept, unable to sleep. He realized he had not asked her how she got out of King's Landing or why she was at the Castle Black.

Harwin rode alongside the being that once was the lady he had served. When they had found by the river, Harwin had begged Beric Dondarrion to save her. She had risen in a form that so unlike what she had been like alive. Her long dark red hair and white porcelain skin was no more. It was now white and brittle and in places half gone. Her skin was like curdled milk. The gruesome scratches on her face and slash on her throat were still there leaving her unable to speak. Lady Stoneheart's appearance was not the most drastic change Harwin noted.

Lady Catelyn Stark had been more forgiving and less bloodthirsty. Lady Stark would have gone to Robb when she learned he had survived the Red Wedding. Lady Catelyn Stark would have rode to Winterfell at once when Harwin told her the news of her daughters' return to the North. But Lady Stoneheart led the Brothers Without Banners west to the Westerlands instead. Not even the announcement of the birth of her first grandchild who was named for her deceased husband diminished her zeal for the blood of anyone with connections to the Lannisters, Freys, or Boltons. Queen Margaery had killed most of the Freys. They were just outside Lannisport when they were stopped by red and gold cloaked men. Lannisters.

"We will not have ruffians or scoundrels on our lands," said the short one pompously. "Ser Kevan Lannister will have your heads if you refuse to leave." Lady Stoneheart covered her throat and in a gargled voice Harwin had grown use to understanding.

"Hang them."

Margaery sat on the throne in the Great Hall scrutinizing the new prisoner of Winterfell. Ser Jaime Lannister did not look at all the handsome knight brother of the Queen. He was mangy and filthy yet the Kingslayer still managed to have an arrogant tongue. Margaery turned her gaze to the Blackfish.

"Was the prisoner in any trouble?" The Blackfish rolled his eyes at the Kingslayer.

"No, Your Grace." Margaery nodded and turned back to the Kingslayer.

"We have not met yet we lived in the same castle for awhile. Different parts of the castle but nevertheless accept my apology I could not attend your wedding. I was a bit chained up. You look so much like your brother. You could be twins like my twin and I. Where is that flowery brother of yours? I don't see him." Margaery's brown eyes flashed in annoyance at his gloating. You have absolutely no reason to gloat.

"Wipe that smirk off your face, Kingslayer. Your son is dead. Your daughter is in Dorne, remember what the Mountain did to Elia Martell and her children. I'm sure they haven't forgotten. Lord Tywin is dead. They say your brother killed him whilst he was on the privy. Poison wine, an arrow to the bowels, how would you like to die to upkeep the Lannister legacy?" Margaery smiled broadly at Jaime's angry glower.

"Your father gambled your life and freedom away with that wedding. You can gloat about my brother's death all you want. But you are the one in chains and I his sister hold you prisoner. You know your sister far better than my brothers ever knew me. Do you think your sister will free you
when your lord father and your brother failed to do so? Sansa and Arya Stark have returned home. The value of your life as gravely diminished, Kingslayer." Margaery noted how angry his infamous moniker made him.

"Then kill me already," hissed the Kingslayer challengingly. "I almost killed that boy when I pushed him out of the tower. Come on." Margeary raised an eyebrow at this slip of information. Lady Stark had not mentioned this to her.

"In due time," answered Margaery evasively. She flicked her hand to dismiss the guards to bathe him and lock him up in his cell. As the last guard left the Great Hall, Lady Brienne spoke,

"Your Grace, the Kingslayer just admitted to attempted murder of Bran Stark." I'm not deaf. Margaery smiled at the towering lady of Tarth.

"Yes, indeed he did. Alas we cannot have a trial since Bran is not here to verify this or is there any other known witnesses. I won't give him the pleasure of killing him just yet. However he won't be needing the hand he used that led to my good brother's crippled state. What do you think Ser Brynden does that serve well as punishment for the time being?" The Blackfish nodded in agreement. Brienne's large blue eyes widened and gaped as she touched her sword hand but nodded also.

Margaery had not made through the door of her solar when Arya and Rickon assaulted her with questions.

"Is the Kingslayer really here? I want him dead. I hate the Lannisters."

"Are you going to stick him with a sword? Let Shaggydog have bite of him too."

"Margaery, what you planning? Why was he moved from Riverrun to here?"

"He came here to be Shaggydog's supper!" Margaery laughed at Rickon and ruffled his hair.

"No he isn't! Rickon shut up I am asking serious questions!" shouted Arya annoyed. The two squabbled for a few minutes before she ended it.

"No Rickon, he isn't here to be Shaggydog's supper but I'll keep that lovely suggestion in mind. Arya make sure Rickon goes to bed at a proper time then we will talk. I haven't seen Eddard all day." Arya sighed impatiently and nodded. She tugged her resistant little brother to his lessons with Maester Luwin. Gilly came with Eddard in her arms. Margaery took him from Gilly's arms. Margaery kissed Eddard's chubby cheeks.

"How is your boy?" asked Margeary interestingly. Gilly smiled showing her teeth gap.

"He is good, Your Grace. Growing and sitting up I think he is missing Sam though," replied Gilly biting her lip. You mean you miss him. Margaery smiled understandingly.

"I think Eddard misses his father too."

Heartbroken Jorah had arrived in Lys yesterday. He had taken pleasure in a brothel with a silvery haired whore that night. The morning sun was too bright for the recovering twice-exiled knight as he
made his way to the docks. *I shouldn't have drank so much.* He asked around for a captain who traded in Westeros. There was one from Myr who was leaving in an hour. Jorah scoured the port for the dark skinned captain.

"I need a passage to Westeros. White Harbour. I have the coin for it," said Jorah in the Lyseni he knew.

"You are in luck. I go to White Harbour. I bring Myrish lace and gowns to sell to the Rose Queen. I always get good price from the Westerosi roses. I am bit late though I got distracted by the beautiful women." *No kidding, Myr is nowhere near Lys. It is not exactly a stop along the way.* The captain looked a bit concerned and looked at the Mormont sigil on Jorah's belt. "You important? I will give you best cabin and second best whore if you smooth things over for me. Queen needs Myrish lace for wedding of the Princess." He had a heavily accented but otherwise decent knowledge of the Common Tongue thankfully. The letter tucked in Jorah's pocket was suddenly the most priceless thing he had in awhile.

"I have a letter from the Queen herself. I am Ser Jorah Mormont, the Queen Margaery's uncle by marriage. She requested that I return to the North to counsel her. Poor girl must be out of her element in the North. I am sure Her Grace will continue to do business with you." The letter was a pardon and a request for an alliance between Dany and the Starks. As Jorah suspected the captain could read little in the Common Tongue when he showed him the letter. The portly captain bowed.

"Oh welcome abroad my ship, Ser Uncle. Come." Jorah was given the captain's quarters. Jorah looked east and thought of Dany and how much further away he was getting from her with each knot the ship was gaining. He wanted to go back and find another ship headed to Slaver's Bay. *It's too late.* He had with him amongst his belongings the draft he and Dany agreed upon for the terms of alliance.

*If I establish this alliance for Dany if I make her conquest of the Iron Throne easier. She will forgive me.*

Jorah worried for Dany. The people in the slave cities were stuck in their ways and Dany had provided no work or incentive for the slaves to remain free. Barristan Selmy was no longer bold it appeared. She needs to be guided to focus on the Iron Throne.

"Have you heard any news from Westeros? My letter from the Queen is a bit dated," enquired Jorah when the captain offered him sweet wine and other exotic offerings.

"The king died from poison that comes from Lys I hear. Poisoned by the dwarf lion. The Lannister lord is also dead. Killed by his dwarf son while he was taking a shit!" laughed the captain. Jorah gruffly laughed along. Jorah's mind raced at the implications of Lord Tywin Lannister's death.

"Your niece the Queen had a son recently. Sold most of my best wine to at the ports of in the reach in their festivities. Made good profit." Jorah thought of Dany and her dead son and of his own babes that never lived.

Robb was still shock that his brother was alive and breathing. He had found Jon and Sansa lying next to each other on the small bed that Jon had lay unconscious in. Robb had staggered at the sight. Sansa had clutched Jon's clothed body in her sleep in rather un-brotherly manner. Thankfully Jon had been lying down ramrod straight not touching Sansa. Unbeknownst to Robb, Jon's return from the dead was the least shocking thing about it all. Recalling his initial purpose of seeking Sansa that morning. He had cleared his throat loudly in an exaggerated manner,
"Sansa you need to get ready to leave soon for Winterfell. Your wedding is in less than a moon."
Sansa stirred and got up. Jon sat up and rounded on him and Sansa. Sansa looked away and slipped
to her chamber to pack.


"Never mind that. I watched your men light you on fire and you didn't have a pulse! How are you? I
don't understand." Jon told him of how he remembered bits of how he was stabbed and the dreams
he had about a burning sword. Jon appeared to choosing his words carefully. Robb frowned in
disbelief. There has to be more to this.

"Now will you tell me who Sansa is marrying?"

"She's marrying Theon," answered Robb having a hard time looking at Jon in the eye. Robb knew
Jon would be displeased. Theon and Jon had never got along. Jon looked at Robb murderously.

"Theon fucking Greyjoy! You sold Sansa to him! She just returned from King's Landing and now
you shipping her off like that! Was this your idea or your wife's? Jon looked like just Father had
when he was displeased. A bit wilder too. Robb glared at Jon at the mention of Margaery and the
accusations.

"Leave Margaery out of this Jon, I'm warning you. Sansa could have refused. I gave her the option
to wait until she was sixteen when she accepted the marriage betrothal. Do you think I am that
callous? Jon, trust me Theon is not all that bad. Theon isn't a shit like Joffery." Jon made of grunt of
disbelief. Jon was about to say something back when Sansa came back with her things.

"Stop it you two. I made a promise and I can't go back on it. Jon, don't look at me like that. I
appreciate your concern but I have to do my duty just like Robb has to do his. You have to do your
duty, remember?" Sansa looked older than her fourteen years with her hands on her hips glaring at
them. Jon sighed and nodded slowly. Jon and Sansa exchanged a look that Robb did not understand.
What are they not telling me? What is the big secret? Sansa glanced at his confused face.

"Tell him, Jon. You have to listen to Jon without interrupting," ordered Sansa. Her face softened and
looked at them sadly. "Will you come for my wedding? I need someone to walk me and hand me
over before the heart tree." Father was supposed to.

"We will be there," answered Jon. Robb nodded and hugged Sansa. Sansa left with Ghost trotting
behind her. Robb turned around.

"What you are going to do? Are you still Lord Commander of the Night's Watch? You did die so
that means your watch has ended technically." Jon shrugged unconcerned.

"I'll remain Lord Commander of the Night's Watch. I won't leave my post. Sansa is wrong though
she could still break the marriage contract if she wished." Maester Aemon had woken up hearing
their voices and his entrance had interrupted them.

"Jon? Why is it that I am hearing your voice?" The blind man approached Jon and felt Jon's face.
Robb was almost out of earshot as he went to follow Sansa when Jon's voice stopped him.

"Yes, Maester Aemon, I awoken on the pyre in the night. It- it appears I may be your great-great
nephew." Jon said as if he still struggled to believe the words he said. Robb's eyes widened and he
thought must have misheard. Maester Aemon gasped in shock.

"Rhaegar's last living child." Maester Aemon's eyes shone with tears. "Reborn from smoke. You
must tell me everything my boy."
Robb felt like he needed a barrel of ale at the moment or his head would implode so he and Grey Wind left the tower to check on Sansa's escort party instead of confronting Jon. After hours of overseeing and updating his men on Jon, which led to many questions some he did not have an answer to. He heard the soft crunch of footsteps coming from behind him.

"Sansa, everything is ready. We still have time to go up to the top of the Wall if you like." But it wasn't his sister who stood behind him it was Val. Her long blonde hair was plaited to the side.

"Sorry. I came to offer my condolences on your crow brother. I was—"

"Thank you. Your words are not necessary. Jon is alive," cut in Sansa sharply coming from nowhere with Ghost. Sansa was stiff and cold as ice in her pale blue-grey dress and grey cloak. Val looked startled and bemused at the younger girl's glare. "I would like that tour of the Wall now. I want to give a detailed description to my good-sister the Queen." Robb did not mention that he had already told Margeary all about it the last time he was here. "You may leave now, my brothers have no need for you, Lady Val."

Sansa hooked her arm in his and led him to the direction she came from. Jon appeared in the shadows with a throaty chuckle but said nothing. Robb stared at Jon strangely.

"Explain what I overheard you say to Maester Aemon." Jon frowned and stiffened looking at the ground.

"It's nothing."

"When we get up to the top. No one will over hear us up there," urged Sansa looking around.

When they made it to the top, Jon showed Sansa points of interest and such. Jon slowly recounted a dream about a dark haired girl heavy with child in a tower shouting at a man with silver hair.

"She looked like an older Arya. She was screaming Father's name. The baby-" Robb shook his head fiercely.

"No, you are my brother. You can't be half-Targaryen. Look at you. You are Father's son. You look just like him."

"Then why did he not burned in that pyre?" chimed Sansa. Robb glared at her. How could you be so accepting of this madness? She shot him a look back.

"Margaery, would think you gone daft if she were." Robb turned away.

Robb had been taking in the view whilst trying to wrap his mind on Jon's revelation, when he heard Sansa laughing at something Jon had said. Which in itself surprised him since Jon was not the Wittiest man by far. Ever since Sansa had returned she had laughed but never so freely and genuinely as she did now. Sansa noticed Robb was left out and had Jon repeat what he said. Robb laughed not really listening as he was observing Sansa gaze at Jon in rapture when Jon was not looking. It was subtle and only lasted a few seconds. Oh gods, no. Robb had to remind himself that they were not really siblings with Jon so it was not at all like the Lannister twins or the Targaryens. Jon is apparently half Targaryen though. Robb put a hand through his hair as he always did in awkward situations. Margaery would know what to do.

"Jon tell him now." Jon uncomfortably told him about the prophecy Rhaegar Targaryen had obsessed about and had discussed with Maester Aemon who had mentioned it to Sansa who helped Jon explain. Robb remembered Sansa's tipsy rambling. The Seven Kingdoms were ripped apart by bloodshed and war so Jon could be conceived and borne.
Why Rhaegar? If not Father, then why couldn't have been Stannis or someone else?

"So you are not just our cousin but you are also a prophesied prince who will save us all like the last hero did in the Long Night. Arya won't take this well at all." Robb attempted to joke but no one laughed as they all stared grimly at the great white expanse of the land beyond the Wall. How will you defeat the Others? The wind was so cold like the breath of the ice dragons from Old Nan's tales. Robb froze. What if ice dragons aren't just tales? Robb remembered Margaery's attempt to have an alliance brokered between them and the Targaryen girl. She has three fire dragons. After hearing Jon's story, Robb's opinion of the Targaryens was almost on par with the Lannisters.

Jon's voice broke his train of thought. "We should head back down." The snow was falling hard and it almost hard to see. When they made it back down to the courtyard, there was a hush of whispers from the men of the Night's Watch and Robb's men. Grenn and Pyp wooped in delight and shock, when they saw Jon. As Jon helped Sansa on her horse and he wished her a happy wedding and marriage.

"You aren't coming? You said earlier you would. Don't you want to see Arya and Rickon?" cried Sansa her voice was growing higher pitched and desperate. Jon looked up at them sorrowfully.

"I have to do my duty, Sansa. Remember? The faster I figure out the particulars of I am meant to do —" Robb did not want Jon's absence to mar Sansa's wedding.

"Stop faffing and get on a horse, Jon. You aren't doing anything alone. Remember what Father said a lone wolf dies but the pack survives. You have a duty to our family as well. As soon as the wedding is over, we will ride back here and do what needs to be done. I'm surprised you aren't going to take this opportunity to threaten Theon." Jon looked conflicted.

"You stupid slut! You are a disappointment to your father and I! Your precious king does not care for you! Has he written back to you? It's been months since you sent that pathetic letter. He likely does not remember you. Did you really think he would marry you after he took your maidenhead? Your father is the bannerman of the Lannisters. Starks may have honour but not sheer stupidity. King Robb occupied our home it was no courtly visit let me remind you," screamed the Spicer's daughter. Jeyne sobbed in shame and grief.

"You can't go to him now to become his mistress or whatever you aspired to be. His Tyrell wife has bore him a son. If he had married a Frey you might have been able to supplant her. It's a shame your bastard is a sickly girl not a healthy son to contend his trueborn son. You are still ruined beyond repair. Your father or I cannot even arrange a proper marriage for you to a lord or an heir. We'll have to settle for a lowly knight or someone to who will take your shame. It infuriates me that you had to have a change of heart in taking the tansy he supplied you." Jeyne ignored that last part. His awful men put him up to it. He looked so upset, he truly didn't want to kill our baby. Mother had been most disappointed when her child turned out to be a girl. Jeyne was reminded of this everyday.

"You can't go to him now to become his mistress or whatever you aspired to be. His Tyrell wife has bore him a son. If he had married a Frey you might have been able to supplant her. It's a shame your bastard is a sickly girl not a healthy son to contend his trueborn son. You are still ruined beyond repair. Your father or I cannot even arrange a proper marriage for you to a lord or an heir. We'll have to settle for a lowly knight or someone to who will take your shame. It infuriates me that you had to have a change of heart in taking the tansy he supplied you." Jeyne ignored that last part. His awful men put him up to it. He looked so upset, he truly didn't want to kill our baby. Mother had been most disappointed when her child turned out to be a girl. Jeyne was reminded of this everyday.

"Robb said he did not want to marry a Frey girl. He married Margaery Tyrell out of duty not love." Her mother laughed mockingly and in disbelief. He loves me. He is waiting for me, miserable with his wife like I am miserable here. But if Jeyne had not been so deluded in her love and fantasies for the handsome Stark king she would have remembered how awkward he treated her, not able to look at her in the eye the morning after.

"Duty got him a wealthy beautiful wife and a heir to his throne. What do you have to offer your Young Wolf?" My love and little Gwyn. Jeyne refused to take her mother's baiting. "You should
have killed the Young Wolf rather than nurse and fuck him.” Jeyne flinched.

"You are going to have to face the truth and get your silly head out of the clouds. Queen Margaery will tear you apart. She executed two lords and destroyed their Houses before her son was born. Don't be daft to think he will intervene for you. She is Olenna Redwyne's granddaughter she will outplay any seduction made by you to her husband. Jeyne, you are my eldest daughter. You were meant to be more than a tarnished girl with a royal bastard. You are above becoming a royal mistress.” Jeyne wiped her tears.

"I want to see him, Mother. It kills me that he does not know about our daughter. He will—"

"Set aside his Queen and disinherit his heir for your love and sickly daughter. Stop this foolish talk Jeyne I have had enough of it. You won't go to Winterfell and humiliate yourself further. I have tried to hide this shame and give the child away before anyone noticed. I will tell everyone your bastard is a stable boy's if you won't give up your 'love' for the Young Wolf."

"Gwyn has the Tully eyes just like my King Robb," shrilled Jeyne stubbornly.

"Your King Robb? There is only one woman in world that can legitimately say that by the Gods and she is not you. Go to your chamber, you weary me child." Jeyne stormed out of her mother's solar tearfully. Eleyna was in the room they shared. Jeyne got a mad idea and began to pack her clothing and other items.

"Are Mother and Father sending you away?" asked Eleyna curiously.

"No, I am going to prove Mother wrong. I am going to my love, the King in the North. I am not to sit here and wait for them to make some match for me. I am going to prove that love prevails, Eleyna." Her younger sister looked at her unconvinced.

"It's not safe the Brotherhood Without Banners are in the Westerlands, Father says. What are you going to do if King Robb turns you and your baby away?" He won't.

"Curse his wife and their children." Jeyne had stole a box from her mother that belonged to Maggy the Frog. *There had been rumours that their great-grandmother had cursed a lady and her children long ago. I can do the same.*

Chapter End Notes

Seriously debated on not having Robb find out for awhile. I think Jon would have tried to keep to himself for a little while.

Oh Jeyne.
Chapter Summary

It's Family, Duty, Honour not Family, Desire, Honour.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Winterfell was undergoing a flurry of activity in preparation for Sansa's wedding to Lord Theon Greyjoy. The castle was being prepared to house their guests. Ser Brynden Tully had remained at Winterfell for his great niece's wedding. Margaery was growing anxious that the Myrish trader that her Grandmother and Mother had recommended would never come. Sansa still had no wedding gown or any exquisite gowns. The seamstresses had finished all of the woolen dresses and stockings for Sansa and waiting for the Myrish and lace and silk to arrive. I was counting on having her wear the most beautiful gown to make up for the simplicity of her wedding.

Margaery was used to attending the ginormous feasts and weddings with seven courses that Lady Alerie planned back at Highgarden. Being austere in the menu or in general wedding planning was easier said than done. Margaery wanted the perfect wedding for Sansa so badly. Her being hormonal was not making things easier. She would cry then snap at the servants then cry again for being unreasonable. On the brighter side, Margaery finally accomplished the impossible – Rickon had finally had his hair shorn.

"Weddings are too much of a bother," complained Arya as she stood before Margaery trying on her new dress for the wedding. Margaery nodded her approval of the dark blue dress with intricate silver beaded embroidery. Arya's hair had grown out and was long enough to put in a small braid or hang loosely in the northern manner. Arya was slowly growing out of her awkward looks and was becoming a beauty. Not that many noticed since she spent most of her time sparring with Brienne in boy clothes.

"They are a tradition and traditions are often traditionally are bothersome. You are a beauty, Arya dear. Gilly don't you think Princess Arya would look exquisite with a crown of roses or something." Arya smiled awkwardly at the compliment.

"Yes, Your Grace a crown o' roses would lovely on Her Grace. Maybe some o' the blue ones," offered Gilly enthusiastically. The custom of weddings was foreign to Gilly and she enthusiastically immersed herself in the preparation of it. After Arya had redressed in her plain woolen clothes and scampered off somewhere with Nymeria, Margaery went to Maester Luwin. Margaery finally decided to allow the inevitable fussing of the maester before Robb and Sansa arrived to Winterfell. It would look odd if the Maester did not know that the Queen was with child.

"I am with child," stated Margaery bluntly to the maester who looked up in surprise.

"Oh a blessing from the Gods, how long have you suspected?" Maester Luwin examined her stomach. Margaery noticed her bump showed faster than it had with Eddard so she could not hide it for very long anyway.

"Almost three moons," replied Margaery. Maester Luwin asked about her appetite and if she was or
still having sickness from being with child. He gently chided her to dress warmly with the cold and snowfall seeming to increase each day.

"Eat green vegetables, my Queen. I know you have numerous duties as queen but I suggest you try to rest a little every so often. The stress you endured in your last pregnancy caused Eddard's early arrival I believe. Thankfully it was not too far off from when he was expected," advised Maester Luwin. Margaery thanked Maester Luwin and said she would try to rest more often and follow his advice.

She told Arya and Rickon that evening during supper in her solar both congratulating her and expressing their preference in the sex of the next Stark. Arya was often her bedfellow when Robb was away with Rickon sometimes sneaking in the covers between them in the night. That night they discussed the Kingslayer again and when Margaery would hack off his sword hand.

"Brienne fancies the Kingslayer. I don't think she agrees with cutting his hand off anymore," whispered Arya harshly with disgust. Margaery looked at Arya in surprise, Arya respected and admired Brienne. How Brienne visited the Kingslayer without her notice surprised her as well. "I think you should not allow her to visit him in the dungeons anymore. He almost killed Bran and he killed Jory Cassel. He killed my father's men. He wounded Father. I want a new instructor, I think."

"I'll speak to her. I won't turn her away from Winterfell without hearing what she has to say," spoke Margaery diplomatically. Arya stared at the ceiling.

"If you won't cut his hand off yourself, may I do it? I promise I will do a clean job of it," asked Arya. "I wouldn't have any other person do it in my stead." They lay in silence listening to Nymeria shift on the floor in her sleep. "How do you like the new septa?" Arya had not been fond of the Stark girls' previous septa who was killed at King's Landing. Margaery had a new septa come to teach the girls and later any daughters Margaery would have. Septa Nary was a short plump woman who was fond of the colour blue. Margaery was unsure Septa Nary was an appropriate choice because of the septa's feistiness and cynicism yet she seemed more receptive to Arya's rebellious attitude.

"Septa Nary is different than Septa Mordane," offered Arya non-chalantly. Margaery left it at that. As Margaery was drifting off into deep slumber she heard Arya's soft whisper her prayer list, "the Kingslayer, Raff the Sweetling, the Red Woman, Ser Meryn, Ser Amory, Ser Ilyn, Queen Cersei."

Margaery finally decided to use her the fabric of her two golden yellow Myrish lace dresses that she brought with her from Highgarden. Margaery could not stall making a wedding gown made and Sansa was too tall for to borrow Margaery's silver grey wedding gown. The yellow gowns were unsentimental and impractical for daily use in the North. The golden yellow Myrish lace would pair with the rich velvet in black for the Greyjoy colours of black and gold. Margaery hoped the gown would turn out beautiful and cursed the tardy Myrish trader for not turning up at White Harbor. The rest of Sansa's trousseau would have to be made after the wedding.

It was a long day Margaery sat by the window looking at the setting sun in the nursery with Eddard sitting on her lap gnawing on a string of teething beads and folds of her gown. He had cried disliking the taste of wool. Margaery soothed Eddard by making silly faces.

Today was a sad day for Margaery today would have been Loras' eighteenth nameday. She had tried to keep herself busy from thinking about her loss but being queen meant she outsourced most of the more time consuming jobs. There had been only a couple of supplicants arguing over which tree stump marked the end of the other's land early that morning. Margaery could not even cry a single tear though she wanted to cry a thousand. It had been awhile since she thought of Loras, which made her feel guilty. How long would it take for her memories of Loras to fade? How his eyelashes were
annoyingly longer than hers, and the sound of his voice telling her bawdy jokes? How they hid in the
gardens giggling from Mother and Septa Flora when they were five and six? How he walked and
handed her over in her wedding to Robb? She wondered how her mother and father feeling today.
Margaery wanted Robb here so she could snuggle with him under the bedcovers. She wondered
how far he was from Winterfell in this awful snowfall.

She even momentarily forgot that she had cut off Jaime Lannister's sword hand only several hours
ago. Margaery had felt a small twinge of regret after the sword dismembered the hand from arm. As
to her word she had listened to Brienne. Brienne had told her how he confided in her of what
Mad King Aerys had asked him to do and his plans for the population of King's Landing to burn.
Margaery thought of the poor people of King's Landing. They were spared that only to endure a
famine brought on by my own father. However, saving the thousands of people of King's Landing
did not excuse his crimes against House Stark.

Margaery had donned on her most Northern gown of wool trimmed with fur with her diadem on top
of her soft brown curls. I must look like a queen. Her northern subjects had not seen her perform the
custom of personal justice. She wore a necklace of emerald and yellow diamond flowers linked
together by dark silver vines and thorns to remind the Kingslayer she was the daughter of Lord Mace
Tyrell.

He thinks me a child playing at being a queen in a castle.

Margaery had every person highborn or lowborn at Winterfell who wished to be present in the Great
Hall. "Do you deny you and your men's attack and slaughter of Lord Eddard Stark's retinue?" Ser
Jaime Lannister looked at her defiantly yet remained silent. Shouts of outrage and catcalls for the
Kingslayer's death ensued.

"Do you deny you fornicated with your sister Queen Cersei in the tower which Brandon Stark fell
from?" There were murmurs and hisses among the crowd. His green eyes shone with intense dislike
at her.

"Do you deny your own admission of pushing Brandon Stark from said tower to kill him so he
would not speak of what he saw?"

"No," growled the Kingslayer. Ser Bryndon Tully looked at him with burning hatred that reminded
Margaery of her late good mother's fierceness. The Great Hall burst in a clamor of shouts. Margaery
waved them to quiet down, remembering Lady Catelyn Stark's scarred hands.

"Do you deny sending an assassin to kill Brandon Stark as he lay unconscious who attacked the late
Lady Stark?" Jaime Lannister looked like he did whenever the name Kingslayer was thrown at him.

"I did not send an assassin. I killed a king in his own throne room why would I risk the messiness of
hiring an assassin."

"Then who else would want Brandon Stark dead? Queen Cersei?" questioned Margaery watching
him looking for the answer in his countenance. Jaime Lannister was not good at hiding his emotions.
He balked at answering; looking frustrated like he did not know the answer.

"Does it matter really if I name someone or not? I am going to lose my hand either way," retorted
Jaime. "Who has that honor?"

"I do," sneered Margaery rising from the throne. Jaime smirked.
"The Knight of Flowers taught you how to decapitate heads and limbs. What a well rounded education young ladies of the Reach get." Margaery smiled broadly.

"No, I'm afraid he didn't. Lady Brienne did." Jaime looked at Brienne half amused half annoyed. Jaime was taken outside to the Great Hall and his sword arm was tied down to a block of wood. His other arm was tied to his back and was held down by two men. Brienne handed her the sword like she did before with the snow falling in their hair. *It's like a pregnancy ritual.*

"I, Margaery Stark of Houses Stark and Tyrell, Queen in the North and the Trident charge you and convict you Ser Jaime Lannister of Casterly Rock in attempted murder of Prince Brandon Stark of Winterfell." Margaery swung the sword and Jaime cried out in pain. His hand fell to the snow covered ground with a light thump.

"Maester Luwin see that it does not get infected then have him sent back to his cell," ordered Margaery as she handed the sword back to Lady Brienne who looked a little green. She walked back inside with Arya and Nymeria both who weren't supposed to be there watching but were anyway.

"I wish Bran was here to see that. I still don't understand why he left." *Neither do I.*

They had taken longer to get to Winterfell in the deep snows. Jon had smiled when they rode through the North Gate of Winterfell. The castle looked like it did when he had left only it was now covered in snow. He nodded his head at Gilly who stood amongst the servants as he went to help Sansa off her horse. His hands tingled as he held her waist. Sansa smiled in thanks as he set her on the ground. Robb had rushed off his horse to greet a petite woman covered in furs who was none other than his queen. Jon saw her whisper something to Robb, which made him whoop and kissed her. Arya had happy tears welling in her eyes as she ran to Jon. Arya was taller and her face was losing its childlike look.

"I have missed you little sister," cried Jon as he hugged her tightly. His heart sunk a little when he remembered they were not truly half siblings. *She is still my little sister no matter what.*

"I missed you more," declared Arya's voice muffled by his black furs. Jon hugged and kissed Rickon on the forehead whilst he was still in Sansa's arms. Robb's wife greeted Sansa with a sisterly kiss on the cheek. Her large brown eyes appraised him and he could swore they flickered to Sansa curiously.

"Forgive my manners, Lord Commander Snow I was not expecting you," apologized Queen Margaery. She was a pretty petite young woman with long curling light brown hair almost as long as Sansa's. Her tiara matched Robb's bronze and iron crown. He bowed and kissed her hand that smelled of rosewater.

"It was a last minute decision, Your Grace." She smiled merrily.

"Oh do call me Margaery, you are my husband's brother." Jon nodded stiffly. He followed Robb and Arya to Father's old solar, which was now Robb's. Robb appeared to not have made much use of it. A fire had been lit for them and a flagon of ale was set beside a platter of cheeses and bread to tide them over until supper. Ghost, Grey Wind and Nymeria lay on the stone floor watching them.

"Where's Sansa and your wife?" asked Jon looking behind them at the door.

"Margaery probably whisked Sansa away to try on her wedding gown," answered Arya. Jon frowned thinking of where the bridegroom was. Arya looked at him knowingly. "Theon hasn't arrived yet."
"What has happened while I was away at the Wall other than wedding preparations?" inquired Robb as he poured three cups of ale. Arya sat down and nibbled on a piece of hard cheese and looked at Robb.

"The Blackfish brought the Kingslayer here. The Kingslayer admitted to pushing Bran from the Tower. Margaery cut off his sword hand a fortnight ago. She already told you she is with child again." Jon almost spit out his ale.

"I'll kill that Lannister scum!" growled Robb darkly. Arya nodded in agreement. Jon frowned thinking of Bran out in the land beyond the Wall where an army of Others were. Jon was also surprised Robb's southron wife actually chopped off the Kingslayer's hand off.

"So what happened at the Wall?" Robb and Jon looked at each other uncomfortably. Robb cleared his throat and stared at his drink.

"Rather serious. The threat of the Others is increasing. Smalljon Umber was killed by one when they attacked Robb and him." Arya gasped and turned to Robb who shot a questioningly glare before he told their little sister of the attack. Jon added little comments throughout making it sound like he was been there but had taken Sansa back to the along with-

"It was Grenn, Jon. Not Pyp. Remember?" Robb giving him a pointed look, Jon reddened at the slip hoping Arya had not caught on.

"Right, I forgot. I get them mixed up all the time," lied Jon. Robb gave him a 'oh really' stare. Arya looked from Robb to Jon with a raised eyebrow.

"What are you not telling me?" huffed Arya. Jon shifted in his chair and was about to say something when Margaery and Sansa who came in giggling. Sansa was carrying a baby with dark red hair.

"Eddard meet your Uncle Jon," cooed Margaery. Jon noted Margaery's small rounded stomach that had been hidden under furs earlier. Sansa offered Jon to hold the baby, which Jon awkwardly held. Jon did not get to hold any of the younger Starks when they were babies because Lady Stark had not allowed it. Sansa adjusted his hands to properly support Eddard's body.

"It's a bit difficult when they are all squirming but you'll get the hang of it," assured Sansa as she stared at Jon with kind eyes. Jon noted Margaery's small rounded stomach that had been hidden under furs earlier. Sansa offered Jon to hold the baby, which Jon awkwardly held. Jon did not get to hold any of the younger Starks when they were babies because Lady Stark had not allowed it. Sansa adjusted his hands to properly support Eddard's body.

"It's a bit difficult when they are all squirming but you'll get the hang of it," assured Sansa as she stared at Jon with kind eyes. I won't father any children, he thought bitterly. Eddard grabbed a handful of Jon's hair and shrieked with delight.

"He looks like you," chuckled Jon to Robb. Eddard had realized his father was in the room and reached for him. Robb tickled Eddard with his beard causing the baby prince to have fits of laughter. Margaery sat on the armrest of Robb's chair smiling fondly at her husband and child. Jon's stomach twisted with envy. All Jon ever dreamed of was having a wife and children of his own. But that would remain a dream, as he was Lord Commander of the Night's Watch. Something cold touched his hand. Sansa's pale delicate hand held onto his larger scarred one giving a gentle squeeze. Jon looked up, Sansa was smiling at him so he smiled back, which probably looked more like a grimace and squeezed her hand back.

"Since when do you two hold hands?" blurted Arya baldly at them. Her grey eyes were narrowing with suspicion. They dropped hands immediately. Robb spared them a glance before looking at his wife who was staring at both Sansa and Jon with intense inquisitiveness and obvious disappointment that she had missed some thrilling act.
"Arya, may you go make sure Rickon isn't terrorizing Cook or something?" requested Margaery still staring at Jon.

"I have to take Ghost out hunting he hasn't ate anything." *Lie, I 'hunted' with Ghost last night.*

"I need to rest for a bit before supper," excused Sansa. They said this all at the same time.

"Ghost to me," commanded Jon as he left the solar with Ghost at his heels. He did not turn around when he heard soft footsteps behind him headed in a different direction. Jon had almost made it to the Wolfswood when he heard a shout from behind.

"Jon! What are you, Robb and Sansa not telling me? You are an awful liar, Jon." Arya and Nymeria were following them. She didn't go find Rickon. Jon stopped and waited for Arya to catch up.

"I can't tell you, Arya. Cos' you are my little sister," said Jon with a pained face.

"Margaery is going to know everything you are not telling me from Robb by time we get back inside the castle. So tell me," argued Arya stubbornly.

"You are not going to like what I have to say," stalled Jon.

"At least I'll know." *You will be wishing you didn't know.* Jon looked at Arya's grey eyes that were like his. It had been easy to tell Sansa. Sansa had forced him to tell Robb. But saying the words to Robb would never come close to being as painful to saying them to Arya.

Would you be more angry about keeping you in the dark or telling you now?

"I am not your half brother. I am your cousin-" Arya threw a snowball at his chest.

"That's a lie. Tell me the truth. This isn't funny." He had expected this.

"I am, Arya. I am Lyanna's son. I am still family. Arya, you will always be my little sister," reassured Jon to Arya and himself. "Father kept it a secret from us to protect me from Rober-" Arya rolled her eyes in annoyance.

"That's the stupidest thing I have ever heard. Why does Sansa get to know and I don't?" stormed Arya as she stomped away in the snow.

"Arya wait." Jon went after her but Nymeria growled and snapped her teeth at him.

Jon went back to his old room with Ghost. He dressed only in a black tunic and trousers and kicked off his boots lying on the bed. He was upset that Arya was upset and partly wished he had stayed at the Wall. *I am here for Sansa. I really wanted to see Arya and Rickon again.* A little later Robb knocked on his door informing of supper being ready but Jon said he would be eating his in his room. Another knock came and the door opened and Sansa appeared with two trays of supper and two flagons of wine.

"What are you doing here?" asked Jon surprised as she set down the trays and wine on the table.

"Robb said you didn't want to sup with us, so Margaery suggested I keep you company so here I am. Arya as well but she declined." Jon half wanted to go find Arya but he got up and sat down with Sansa at the table.

"Are you here out of your pity of who my real parents are?" questioned Jon a bit too harshly from his sour mood. Sansa's eyes grew wide and looked hurt. "Sansa, I am sorry," he added hastily.
"I am not here out of pity or guilt. I am here because I want to be, Jon. But if you wish me gone I'll go." Jon felt like a prick and grabbed her hand as she went to stand and leave.

"Stay, eat with me," ordered Jon softly this time. He did not want both Arya and Sansa cross with him. They ate in mostly silence as Jon was not much of a conversationalist. So he listened to Sansa discuss her wedding gown and how resourceful Margaery was with limited time and materials. Jon had not noticed Sansa had been drinking most of the wine until he went to drink from his flagon that it was near empty and he had barely drank from it. Sansa's cheeks were rosy from the wine.

"Sansa, slow down on the wine you'll make yourself sick," chided Jon as he took the flagons out of her reach.

"Oh Jon you should smile more and worry less. Oh look apple cakes! I like lemon cakes but the cooks are saving the lemons for my wedding." But she did not take a bite of her apple cake. Her pretty face grew serious and sad. In a flash, she was unexpectedly perched on his lap hugging him. Jon was caught off guard and flushed.

"Oh Jon, I am scared. I wish he were like you. I wish you would steal me like the wildlings do and take me back to the Wall or anywhere. And I wish I was as brave as you."

Jon held onto her tighter. Jon felt some self-disgust that the idea of stealing Sansa did not repulse him and that a part of him wanted to do so on his bed right now. We were raised as brother and sister. It's wrong. He remembered how he and Ygritte laid together once in a cave and how she died. He thought of how his mother had been whisked away from an unwanted marriage and how she also died before her time.

I won't let the same happen to you.

"You are brave, Sansa. You are the bravest woman I know. Your hair is lucky, kissed by fire." Sansa moved her head back to look at him in eye. She had a watery smile on her face. She kissed him gently on the cheek. "I can't steal you even if I wanted to. The world knows us as half-siblings. We have a duty."

I have to defeat the Others somehow and you have to...He didn't want to think about it.

Sansa let go of Jon and stood up with an air of disappointment and resignation. "Duty, yes. You are Lord Commander Snow and I'll be Lady Sansa Greyjoy." Her voice was hollow and slightly bitter. She walked out of his chamber without looking back at him.

A day and half after their own arrival, Theon, his sister Asha, and selected Ironborn nobles and guard arrived at Winterfell. After Theon bowed to Robb, Robb hugged his friend and soon to-be good brother warmly. Theon kissed Margaery's hand in greeting. Robb watched as Sansa greet Theon and Asha Greyjoy. She offered a chaste kiss on the lips to Theon who readily accepted.

"I hope your travel here was safe, my lord."

"It was despite the snow," answered Theon confidently. "I would like to sit by a fire and having hot to eat though." When the Ironborn had settled in, Robb learned of Theon's intention to marry Sansa the next day.

"I can't waste a moment, Robb. My damn nuncle Euron is trying to usurp my right as Lord of the Iron Isles. I have only less than a fortnight I can spare." Theon had a cocky grin on his face as he
"Hopefully, I get Sansa with child." There was a loud crash of metal hitting the floor. Jon looked a bit sheepish though Robb noted Jon's hands were clenched and his eyes were dark with anger.

"Sorry accidentally dropped my goblet." There was an awkward tension in the solar. Robb sat there stupidly not knowing how to diffuse the tension. Theon and Asha laughed to which made Jon's frown deepened.

"Oh don't just sit there all dour, give me the big brother speech, Snow," goaded Theon. "Or are you going to skip that and take a swing at me?" Let's not. Robb coughed loudly getting their attention.

"You must be weary from travel and the hearty food. Let me show you to your chambers," jumped in Robb. Asha Greyjoy had been unusually quiet during most of the exchange watching Jon with a mischievous gleam in her eye.

"Aye, my brother needs his beauty rest for his big day," teased Asha giving a small punch to Theon's chest. "I wouldn't hold a goblet or anything during the bedding ceremony if I were you, Lord Commander. Wouldn't want to break or dent none of the fine goblets." Robb shot a concerned glance at Jon as he followed the Greyjoy siblings out.

"Robb, I have to get up and make sure everything is running smoothly. I need to check on our son and I have to help Sansa. You have to go be a good host to our guests and get ready yourself to walk Sansa," moaned Margaery half irritated and half amused underneath his arms. He nipped her ear and neck playfully placing a hand on their unborn child.

"Ten more minutes please," whined Robb. Margaery gave in to five more minutes of cuddling and kissing then left him to dress. Robb and Grey Wind found Theon breaking his fast with his men in the Great Hall.

"Where is Bran and the giant oaf who carried him around? I haven't seen him or his wolf. Hasn't he come back yet?" asked Theon between a bite of oatcake and egg. Robb broke a piece of oatcake before answering.

"They haven't returned. A friend of Jon's saw them heading for somewhere beyond the Wall." Theon had paled slightly since Robb had informed him of the threat of the Others. Neither Robb or Jon or Arya had seen anything in their wolf dreams of Summer. Little Rickon had said he had stopped having dreams of Summer a long time ago. Surely, we would know if he had died or something bad happened to him.

"He'll be fine, Robb. He survived that fall and the assassination attempt," said Theon with an encouraging smile. Robb smiled back. Robb missed Theon's reckless optimism and bawdy humour.

Robb had left Theon and Jon alone, as they were getting ready to check on Margeary and his sisters for only a few minutes. Arya had peeked her head out of the door to tell them they just about done with Sansa's hair and they would be ready at any minute in a bored tone. As he made his way back he could hear shouts.

Now is not the time to kill Theon.

"Don't talk about her like that ever again, Greyjoy." Jon's voice was low and dangerous and he had his hands around Theon's neck.
"Oh shut up Snow. You may look like Lord Stark but you aren't at all threatening!" shouted Theon as he went on resuming adjusting his wedding clothes and black hair.

"Don't talk about Sansa like she's another one of your whores! You treat her right," growled Jon.

"I wasn't. Has life on the Wall made you go deaf? All I meant was that I am relieved that Sansa looks a lot more mature than she did the last time I saw her. Gods, if anyone needs a whore it is you. I can give you some recommendations of the lovely ladies of Wintertown, maybe you'll be less of a grump."

"Theon, the ceremony is about to start. You should head to the heart tree now," interrupted Robb giving a pat on Theon's shoulder as the groom left. Robb turned to Jon.

"I understand I am protective of our sisters too. But for Sansa's sake and for my piece of mind, Jon, don't start a fight with Theon or the Ironborn during the wedding feast. I have been to a wedding that ended in bloodshed. I'd like this one to be as boring as possible."

Jon nodded and he too left to join the other guests. Robb sighed as he went to collect Sansa. I hope I don't have too many daughters and have to constantly keep Eddard from killing all of their suitors.

It had been days after wedding that Robb awkwardly realize that Jon's behaviour might not been at all brotherly intentions.

Sansa looked at her reflection in the looking glass smilingly. She looked and felt beautiful. Her hair was a braided crown with the rest of her hair hanging loosely down her back. She had worried the wedding gown would not be to her liking. What a silly thing to worry about. It was not the elaborate southron gown she imagined she'd wear when she once dreamed of wedding Joffery. It was not her ideal choice but it was beautiful nevertheless. It was made of black velvet and pale golden yellow Myrish lace. On the black velvet there was small grey beaded snarling direwolves, with a larger one in a gentler pose on her bodice to represent Lady. Margaery had offered Sansa her gold baubles to wear for the wedding but Sansa politely declined preferring to keep it simple. Arya looked very pretty in her dress and her crown of winter roses. Sansa hugged her sister telling her how pretty she was. She turned to her good sister who was dressed in a dark green lambswool gown with her long tresses looking as glossy as the gems of her diadem.

"Thank you so much, Margaery," gushed Sansa.

"Oh you are welcome, Sansa. Don't cry, you don't want puffy eyes and a red face." There was a knock on the door. It was Robb looking handsome as his wife in a Stark grey velvet doublet and his usual furs.

"Is she ready? Oh Sansa you look so beautiful." Sansa beamed.

Robb helped her put on her maiden cloak in the Stark colours. She smiled and took his arm they made their way out of the castle. Everyone was dressed in their best clothes and finery called her name. Sansa had avoided Jon as much as possible since they supped alone. But her traitorous eyes sought him in the crowd as Robb and her made their way pass the courtyard to the godwood. Jon stood next to Lady Asha Greyjoy, looking striking in his all black ensemble. His beard was trimmed. The way Jon smiled at her when they made eye contact left her stomach all aflutter. She forced herself to look away. I can't look back. Sansa thought of her parents' marriage and how they had been strangers at first but they eventually fell in love.
I hope it's the same for Theon and I. I don't want a marriage like Queen Cersei's only loving my children and despising my husband.

Robb squeezed her arm and whispered words of encouragement. They came close enough to the heart tree of Winterfell, she saw Theon dressed in all black velvet and leather with the golden kraken sigil sewed on his chest. Theon had always been handsome. Sansa remembered Jeyne Poole had a crush on him when they were little girls. She wondered for a moment how Jeyne would have felt if she knew Sansa was marrying Theon. He smiled at their approach.

"Who comes before the gods?" His voice was serious as what was expected but there was an undertone of happiness, which made Sansa feel more at ease. Robb answered in his kingly voice,

"Sansa of House Stark, daughter of Winterfell. A trueborn and royal maiden grown and flowered comes here to be wed and asks the blessing of the gods. Who comes to claim her?"


"Robb Stark, King in the North and Lord of Winterfell, her trueborn brother." Robb turned to Sansa. "Sansa, will you have this man?" Sansa shoved aside her fears and her silly thoughts of escaping with Jon.

"I am a Stark of Winterfell, I'll be as brave as Father and Mother. As brave as Jon says I am."

"I will have this man," rang Sansa as loud and confident as their voices. Saying the words was not as terrifying or as filled with regret as she had feared. Theon had taken her pale hand in his calloused one as Robb stepped back. They knelt before the heart tree to pray. The red leaves blew in a breeze in a graceful manner. Sansa prayed for her parents' blessings, she prayed for the health of her family. She prayed for the health of her new husband and the fruitfulness of their union. She prayed for her lost brother Bran. Sansa stopped in mid prayer wondering what Theon was praying for, if he was praying. Theon took her staring at him as a signal that she was done praying. They rose hand in hand and faced one another. Theon took her maiden cloak and replaced it with a black one with the golden Greyjoy kraken on it. He clasped her hands in his again and kissed on her forehead before raising their arms up proclaiming their marriage was sealed before the gods.

Music played and was sung though Sansa paid no attention to it as Theon and her made their way to the Great Hall as man and wife. Their wedding feast was not the most luxurious as the feasts of King's Landing nor was it the most lively of feasts held at Winterfell. There were seven courses to honour the seven gods of the South and to honour Sansa's dual faith in both the new and old gods. Sansa and Theon chatted amiably as they would have in any circumstance as they ate and drank. Theon laughed and joked with Margaery, Rickon, and Uncle Brynden who sat on the other side of the high table. Sansa talked to Robb, Asha, and Arya who sat on her end of the table. Asha was a lot like her younger brother- bold and attractive. Jon had declined a seat on the high table but Robb had given him a withering look and insisted he sit with them. Jon sat eating his roast of venison and drinking his ale in an unsociable silence. Robb's men and the Mormont women came up one by one to offer their congratulations to Sansa and Theon. The Ironborn men were loud and crude, which many of the northern lords looked on with disdain. Sansa felt nauseous thinking of them stripping her naked during the bedding ceremony. Margaery gave her a pitying look as one of the Ironborn made lewd comment to Theon about the bedding ceremony. Theon laughed lightly. Asha leaned over the table to Sansa,

"Oh don't worry about him. He is all talk, he blushes like a beet at the sight of a woman's ankle." Sansa smiled at her new good sister in thanks. There was a little dancing before the puddings and lemon cakes were served. Rickon was feeding the four direwolves food from his trencher and the
surrounding platters. Dacey Mormont was dancing with Ser Patrek Mallister. Margaery was trying to coax Robb into dancing one reel with her after she danced with Uncle Brynden and Arya. Asha danced with a couple of the Ironborn and northern men. Brienne and Wendel Manderly were awkwardly dancing and bumping into others. Theon barked in laughter at their lack of gracefulness before he held out his hand to Sansa.

"Would you like to dance, wife? I promise I won't step on your toes." Sansa smiled and said she would be delighted to. As promised her lean dark haired husband did not step on her toes as they danced the northern reel. Sansa glanced at the high table. Robb appeared to have won his argument that the reel was too lively for Margaery in her condition. Margaery sat at his side with a pretty pout watching everyone dance. Without looking, she could feel Jon's gaze on her.

"We have a duty." Yes, she did didn't she? So she dutifully kissed Theon, which everyone watching loudly cheered. She glanced at Jon and met his unreadable gray eyes.

"You are quite the beauty," complimented Theon holding her waist firmly. She glanced away from Jon. Her gown was quite low cut in style that Margaery enjoyed and he eyed her chest appreciatively. She blushed shyly at his undressing gaze. She bit her lip and decided to try her hand at being flirtatious. Margaery told her that Sansa could use Theon's vanity and wantonness to her advantage.

"Thank you, my lord. Hmm, I think Flint or Manderly are quite handsome. Don't you agree?" teased Sansa. Theon chuckled.

"Flint is missing some teeth. Manderly is bald with more chins than I have fingers." Sansa smiled in what she thought was coy manner internally wondering how she would get him to agree to not have the bedding ceremony.

"Maybe I like the toothless bald look. Why don't we go someplace quieter." They slipped out of the Great Hall into a dark alcove and immediately started kissing. Sansa was so inexperienced she yelped when she felt his tongue and she bashed her nose against his. Theon groaned in pain pinching his nose.

"I'm sorry I haven't done this before," apologized Sansa cringing. This is not going as planned.

"It's alright, we should take things a bit slower I guess." Theon began kissing her neck. Sansa was about to give up and go along with the bedding ceremony when she made one last attempt. She remembered all the things Jeyne Poole had admired Theon for and pretended she shared the same crush on him as a girl. He looked down at her thoughtfully after she gushed about her 'supposed' fancy on him and his prowess at archery.

"I always hoped your father would like me and trust me enough to betroth me to you." Sansa blinked at him in surprise. He wasn't smiling and actually looked believe it or not serious. I never thought he wanted Father's approval so much. She touched the side of his face gently. Maybe he is not that bad under that cocky attitude.

"Now I am your lady wife and you my lord husband. When I was younger I fantasied you would be the first man to undress me when I was older. Too bad that the bedding ceremony takes that away from us, can't we go to our bedchamber now? I don't want to wait." She feared her voice had cracked in parts but Theon probably thought it maidenly nervousness.

"Who knew a Stark as prim and proper as you had such impure thoughts?" He bought it. "I don't know if we can weasel out of it half my men I am almost positive came here just for the bedding ceremony." She internally shuddered. Sansa mimicked Margaery's pretty pout of disappointment.
Theon deliberated for a few seconds before scooping her up and carrying her bridal style to his bedchamber that was prepared for their wedding night. Sansa was about to smile with relief that she had succeeded in getting her way as Theon locked the door behind him when she remembered what bedding involved.

She felt a rush of self-consciousness and nervousness as she watched her husband remove his layers of clothing. *It will be okay. We will fall in love like my parents eventually and have handsome children with red and black hair who love the sea and the woods.* He was wirier and a bit taller than Robb who was stocky in build. *Jon is...* Sansa reddened at the memory of Jon naked and covered in soot.

"Like what you see?" smirked Theon with a cocky grin noticing her flushed face.

Chapter End Notes

Septa Nary is based off Merryweather from the Sleeping Beauty cause everyone has burning questions about that. (not)
He had felt thrice his age when he learnt of Ned's death moons ago. He sat drinking moonshine staring at the moonlight reflecting off the water of the marshes in deep thought. He remembered his meeting of the four Starks at Harrenhal for the tournament that changed all of their lives. He remembered the war that ensued and the journey to Dorne; the battle that only he and Ned had survived against all odds.

*Seven against three.*

*Petals falling down upon them as they fought.*

*He had blacked out for a short while mentally and physically drained. He awoke slightly disorientated before making his way up the spiral stone steps of the tower. It was sweltering in the tower. The heat made the stench of blood and sweet smell of winter roses all that more pungent. He came into the room and there she lay motionless and bloody. Ned's tears of grief and the cries of an infant were the only sounds. He stepped on strewn wilting blue winter rose petals as he took Ned's hand from his dead sister's. If only I had been the Knight of the Laughing Tree, maybe it would have made a difference and the wolves would all be alive and free.*

He knew this from his time spent at the Isle of Faces before the tournament at Harrenhal. *It has a price.* He told his children of those events over and over in order to preserve his memories of his friends. *Incase Ned or I died and the boy needed to learn of the truth. When is the right moment? The memory of their parting resurfaced as he downed the rest of the clear liquid.*

*Both the quiet wolf and the crannogman were weary from grief over the deaths of the wild wolf and the wolf maid.*

*I can hide him and protect him for you. My people are loyal they have kept secrets as old as the coming of the First Men. You need not strain your marriage. You made a promise to keep him safe from Robert there was nothing specific that meant you had to name as your bastard."* Ned had shaken his head sadly at him.

*"He is my blood and I won't give him up. Tis' nothing against you or your people, but I can't, he is only good thing that came out of their deaths and this damn war. You are right I made a promise to Lya therefore I must be the one to protect him." He nodded understandingly before they embraced for the last time.*

*"Goodbye, Ned."

*"Farewell, Howland." As Ned on his horse and the wagon carrying the wolf maid's bones and her pup and his wet nurse Wylla headed north to Winterfell. Howland headed west to the bogs and marshes of his home but he stopped and looked back at the creaking wagon disappearing from sight.*

*Farewell Jon.*

It was his last adventure outside of the Neck. *'I am done with adventures.' A soft hand touched his shoulder. He-*
The floor creaked with soft footsteps and shook Howland out of his reverie. One of the main reasons he had stayed in the Neck for eighteen years entered the bedchamber. The room was dark with only two tapers burning. He did not turn around to look at the other occupant even as he heard the sound of the feather bed sagging under the weight of one sitting down on it.

"Our children aren't coming home are they?" came a bitter yet soft voice. Howland slowly turned his head to his wife. They have had this conversation many times before since he returned from the battle at Moat Cailin. She had her back turned to him facing the wall. Her long dark hair hung down to the middle of her back. Meera had dark hair like her mother though she kept it at shoulder length. At least she did before they left for Winterfell. "Are all my children meant to die before their time?"

Howland winced at her harsh tone.

"Meera will keep Jojen safe. She was taught how to fight. I taught her how to fish and hunt to survive." He did not speak of their children's part in Ned Stark's son's purpose in the war and the long winter that was coming. He had once which led to an angry outburst from his wife. She was still slightly alarmed by the greensight he and their son had.

"But who will keep her safe? What is there to fish or hunt where they have gone? My children are not a pair of sacrificial animals for the gods to use at their whim." His wife was protective of their children especially Jojen and had not taken their departure from their home and her care well at all.

"Howland, why wouldn't you fight to keep them from harm? Why didn't you fight to change their fate?" He could hear Meera's stubborn words to him about Jojen in his mind that mirrored her mother's. Because Jojen had to help Bran Stark develop his powers, He and I couldn't have changed the outcome if we tried.

"What will become of your House if you die without a living heir? What will happen to me?" Meera will come home to you. She will rule the Neck and be Lady of Greywater Watch. But he remained silent refusing to promise something that could change as easily as the direction of the wind. He stood up and walked over to sit next his wife on the bed taking her hand in his.

"I sometimes wish I had died and remained dead but I am too selfish to really mean it. I could never resent you for what you did for me. For them. But I think of my babies in danger, I feel trapped and helpless because I cannot go where they can. In turn, I am harsh and ungrateful to you because of it, I'm sorry." She stroked his beard mournfully. "You and the children are paying the price for my selfishness." Howland looked at her about to voice his repeated points of disagreement to her claim but she looked so haunted and beautiful. Instead he murmured as he pulled her closer words of regret that he had not been able to free her from her cage of regret and remorse.

"Don't be contrite, Howland. I don't think I was ever meant to be happy." Her eyes shone with unshed tears as she kissed him deeply. Jojen had inherited the same eye color before he got the green sickness. But you were happy once long ago before this all happened. We laughed and I watched you danced with my wolf friends.

Lord Theon Greyjoy, his sister and his retinue had left a fortnight from the wedding. Margaery had sighed of relief. Theon was the only Ironborn that did not irk his wife and to be honest himself as well. Sansa had been unreadable as she said her farewell to her new husband. Jon had also left Winterfell to go back to the Wall not long after. Again, Sansa had been quiet about Jon's departure. I am not sure what to think now.

Margaery looked at Robb in surprise when he and his army had not joined Jon on his trip back to
the Wall. Robb sighed when she asked about it.

"You were so adamant that you would go back to the Wall once the Ironborn left with Jon. Why the change, my love?" He rubbed her thigh as he slowly answered,

"I missed being here with you, our son, my sisters, and Rickon. These battles that are coming are not like the ones I have fought before. I fought men not these unnatural beings." She kissed him.

"I miss you too when you are away. You killed three Others. Robb, does that not count as experience?"

"Yes I killed three Others but it cost Smalljon's life." His face was pained at memory. "You don't understand Margaery. He died before my eyes and I had to burn him as he rose as a wight. I don't want to march my men to their death and see them become undead."

"You marched south and fought and won battles, did you not? We survived the Red Wedding. What are your house words, Robb? Your parents died, my brother died, and more will die. You can't save everyone, you know that and you aren't afraid of going to battle. The Wall may not keep them out for long and what will become them and their families? Of our family?"

He knew this but it did not shake the pessimism he felt. *I want to rest for once. I want to sleep through the night not plagued with nightmares.* The separation from Margaery was hard on Robb. The demanding pressure of not dying and ensuring no harm would come to his family, his bannermen, their families, and his people was exhausting enough. His parents had been lucky to raise a family during a relatively peaceful time period.

"You are right. I am afraid that I might not come back that it will be me that will be burnt. I'm afraid of not seeing this little one and Eddard grow up. I want as many children as you are willing to bear me. I want to give our daughters away at their weddings. I don't want to make you a widow again."

But Margaery had fallen asleep due to the late hour so Robb heard his wife's soft snores and felt slow even breaths against his chest.

Harwin looked at the hanging dead body of the member of the Brotherhood with Banners who let the young lady and the baby go unharmed. Some of the men had balked at Lady Stoneheart's orders to kill them. For the lady was pretty and appeared sweet yet desperate. Harwin had known the lady was no common lass passing through. Her speech and manner were more refined. *Her inconsistent tale as well.* Perhaps Lady Stoneheart might have not taken note of her had the baby not opened its eyes.

*Tully blue.* Everyone who knew Lady Stark disliked Jon Snow. But Lady Stark never went as far as to kill the boy.

Lady Stoneheart had twice the hatred for bastards, even it was of her own flesh and blood. The young lady had not known who Lady Stoneheart had once been.

"Who is she?" cried the pretty lady.

"Lady Stoneheart," intoned the men.

"She once was the mother of the Young Wolf and the other Stark children," Harwin stated. The lady gaped with fear.
"That's not possible! She died. Everyone said so," spluttered the lady.

"I suggest you go back to your home, mi'lady," warned Harwin. Lady Stoneheart made a noise that should have been a snarl or a sound of disgust. Pointing a knarled and scarred finger she spoke one word,

"Bastard."

"Lady Stoneheart knows who the father of the child is," translated Harwin. The lady tried to bolt as she realized she would not receive aid or pity from Lady Stoneheart. There were shouts of men rummaging her things, which made the girl very distressed. They had found inside a chest filled with foreign vials of various substances, books, and strewn old pieces of parchment. There was mutterings of witchcraft to varying degrees of fear and curiousity.

"And just what is a 'simple lass' doing with such objects and traveling north? With the bastard child of the Young Wolf?" questioned Harwin.

"I love him. She made him leave me for that-

Some days later, Robb had returned from a ride through the Wolfswood and Winter Town. He had just left the stables with Grey Wind at his side, when the grey direwolf growled and ran off with such urgency. Robb ran after Grey Wind when a cold rush of dread hit him. 

Margaery. He followed Grey Wind's snarls and footprints in the snow to the Great Keep. Robb unsheathed Ice as he raced to Margaery's solar.

Brienne Tarth's loud voice rang through the corridor,

"This completely inappropriate, you cannot come in here disturbing the Queen. I have told you, you cannot see His Grace without an audience. Get out of Her Grace's private quarters." An intruder or an assassin. Robb rushed through the doorway. Brienne's body was blocking Robb's view of the intruder. Grey Wind had put himself in front of Margaery who was holding Eddard in his arms baring his teeth and growling as he did around untrustworthy people. Margaery was staring at the intruder with extreme annoyance and loathing.

They have come to kill my wife and my children.

"Get away from them or I will have you executed this instant," roared Robb. The music of the Rains of Castamere and Grey Wind's warning growls around the Freys rang through his head. I won't let anyone else harm my family. "Now!"

Robb strode to face the intruder at Grey Wind's side standing protectively in front of his pregnant wife and their young son. Robb's eyes widened in shock and surprise yet he did not lower Ice an inch. It was not a man as he had expected. It was a young disheveled woman with chestnut curls and a heart shaped face with a look of love and fear as her brown eyes took in the sight of him. Jeyne.

Robb was conscientious of his wife behind him and the thought of word spreading of Jeyne's unannounced arrival to Winterfell. The assumptions would be made and his shame of lying with another girl other than his wife though it had been before he was married made Robb greatly annoyed. Grey Wind circled Jeyne growling lowly.

"What are you going here, Jeyne?" questioned Robb but his eyes landed on blankets that Jeyne clutched to her. A small head of brown hair poked out of the blankets. It can't be. I made sure she
was given tansy and moon tea. But the blasted child turned its head and revealed Tully blue eyes.

Fuck.

"Oh Robb! I meant no harm. I was desperate to see you. I thought-

"You thought you would find Robb here so you can show him your bastard child and seek a place here," cut in Margaery in the harshest tone Robb had ever heard her speak in. Robb cringed at Jeyne's tone of familiarity. Margaery's tone was chillingly like his lady mother's voice had been when she spoke of the supposed woman Eddard Stark had lain with that resulted in Jon. Despite any pity Robb felt for Jeyne Westerling and his bastard child, it did not keep him from ensuring his wife and his heir's position was upheld.

"Lady Brienne, please have Lady Jeyne escorted to Winter Town and be given a room at the inn," ordered Robb dismissively not sparing a glance at Jeyne. Brienne nodded and forcefully tugged Jeyne along. Giving her a chamber invited an idea of permanency at Winterfell and he could not have word reach his wife's family of him allowing a noble girl and his bastard housed doors away from their Margaery and her son.

"Robb please! Don't turn me away! Please for Gwyn! Look she has your eyes. I love you! I know you love me too!" Ignoring her calls that echoed in through the corridor, Robb turned his back and faced his Margaery and their prince. Margaery handed their squirming son to Robb. Margaery glared at the door stroking her rounded stomach.

"I can tell that stupid cow wants to displace me. She wants you to set Eddard and I aside for her sickly child and her. Did you notice that brat did not make a sound at all? I thought she was a mad woman carrying a dead child until it moved," snapped Margaery. She mimicked Jeyne's high pitched shrilly voice,

"I'm Lady Jeyne Westerling! I need to see King Robb! Oh Robb, I love you!" Returning to her normal voice. "Who does she think she is blatently mooning after you in front of me?"

Robb bent down to kiss his angry queen to show that he wanted no other woman other than her. When they broke apart, Margaery stood up and picked up Ice and pointed it at his lower region.

"If that girl and her bastard ever comes back here and if you dare make a fool out of me. I swear Robb Stark I will make sure the both of you rue the day you were born." Robb nodded and kissed Eddard's forehead. Jeyne Westerling had a shy prettiness that he had once found sweet but she had nothing on the complexity of vanity, shrewdness, ambition, fierceness, and a kind heart that made up Margaery Tyrell. Robb was a tad biased but he firmly believed no woman looked more enticing with child or whilst jealously angry. He could feel verbal tirade coming from her at moment.

"Is it not time for Eddard's nap, sweetheart? I want a nap in a bed of roses right now." Margaery glowered at him as if now was not the time to have sex. Robb gave Eddard to the wet nurse whose name Robb could never remember. Robb debated whether to marry off Jeyne to some minor lord who had a keep far away from Winterfell or a lowly knight from the Riverlands who did not mind raising his bastard or just banishing her from the North and the Trident altogether. He felt pity for the injustice the poor child would face like Jon had. He was really irritated by Jeyne and her behaviour. No proper lady would behave in such a manner to a married man and in front of his pregnant wife and his child.

But Robb 'napped' in a bed of roses after Margaery simmered down. Well not entirely, her 'thorns' have scratched me. He had felt them when he rolled on his back after he had finished panting. Margaery curled up against him peppering him with kisses on his chest.
"My beautiful rose, my clever queen, my lovely wife, my sweetheart, my love," he murmured as he peered down at Margaery all rosy and radiant in his arms wrapped in their fur coverlets. Her large brown eyes looked up at him happily. He kissed her hair and her nose. *Such a possessive little rose you are.*

"I love you my wolf."

Jeyne had cried in her bed at the inn in Winter Town. *It all went wrong.* The tall unnatural woman had escorted her to the town and made sure she had a room for Jeyne and her daughter Gwyn. *The Queen keeps unnatural women around her. She must be unnatural herself.* But Robb had burst into her solar with a mad look of fear and love…No he is trapped it was out of duty. It had gone all wrong ever since she encountered the Brotherhood without Banners. She had niggling feeling she had been followed by the old white woman despite the man allowing her to flee. *They had destroyed almost of the contents in the chest. Thankfully I managed to flee with it before that awful Lady Stoneheart burned it.*

Margaery Tyrell was cold and regal in her airs and manners. *How could he be happy with someone so frigid?* Her large brown eyes flashed dangerously at Gwyn. She looked at Jeyne with a look of disdain and dark mirth. Jeyne felt dirty and plain in her dirty travelling clothes standing before Margaery's fine grey gown and furs. Jeyne imagined the diadem on Margaery's head had golden gems of seashells not roses and Robb protecting Jeyne. Jeyne had cringed that Margaery Tyrell's son looked just like Robb with red hair and blue eyes. The boy was moons younger than Gwyn yet he was robust, bigger and chatty. The way the child squealed at the sight of Robb… Jeyne imagined that he was her son but the boy clutched to his mother for comfort as Robb shouted at Jeyne. That awful wolf, it should not be allowed indoors.

Before frightening wolf and Robb had burst in, Margaery had made biting remarks about the bruises on Jeyne's neck that she tried to hide with her hair. Jeyne had forced herself not to cry in shame. Jeyne had quickly run out of coin in a matter of a week after leaving home. Jeyne refusing to go back to the Crag to her mother's smug gloating.

She had met a man named Rolfe who was decent and for some reason did not mind going along with pretending to be man and wife. He was a man of a northern noblewoman named Lady Barbery Dustin was travelling the Kingsroad. Lady Dustin had been greatly amused that Ned Stark's son had followed his example and fathered a bastard. Lady Dustin had sympathized with Jeyne though she laughed and warned her she would have to fight more than just Margaery Tyrell to become King Robb's wife.

"I am surprised to see you. I thought you and the king shared a great love," mocked the man stripping out of his cloak. Jeyne glared at him.

"He does love me! We do share a great love worthy of a thousand songs! It is his wife's fault!" retorted Jeyne hotly. She refused to blame Robb for her fall into disgrace.

"Milady, you have a pretty face but you are not worth the trouble losing a kingdom for. Come with me back to my keep its no castle but its warm enough. I'll make an honest woman outta you by getting married and all. I'll take your daughter as my own and we'll make our own. We likely we already have since you let me have you more than once every night and morning." Jeyne recalled her jealously of Margaery's rounded stomach and adoration from the smallfolk for the little Rose Queen she had heard from the Riverlands to Winter Town.
They are all blind.

"But I loved him first. Robb Stark was mine first." How could someone so handsome and brave take what she given him and leave her? Jeyne looked at the box she had stole from her lady mother as Rolfe began to removed his wet boots.

I want her and her children dead. Once she is dead, I'll nurse him from his grief and he will see that he was wrong to not come back for me.

"Aye, but people here say the Young Wolf loves his Rose Queen greatly. She doesn't sit around stitching all day either. She killed Lords Walder Frey and Roose Bolton. Chopped off the Kingslayer's sword hand herself. Imagine what she would do to you and your daughter if you try to take her crown? You are going to be up against not just the Queen but her family as well. They are the now the wealthiest of the great houses. Do you really think he is likely to forgive you or marry you should something happen to his wife and son. If you love him truly then let the young man go, he has lost his father and mother." Jeyne turned away from him.

"You are just saying this because you want me. I am not afraid of her. I have ways of destroying her that need no sword. I can be a better wife and a better queen than she is." Rolfe laughed.

"Does that direwolf of the King's like you as much as it likes the Queen?" No, it wanted to attack me and Gwyn. What does that matter?

A young woman in servant's drab and a small skinny boy with a long face stood outside the door of Lady Jeyne Westerling's room, listening to a man and woman speak about the King and the Queen in the North. The boy had a murderously face and wanted nothing more than to burst in there and stick the "lady" with the pointy end.

"She threatened Margaery and our nephew's lives." The taller one nodded and adjusted her hood to ensure her bright hair was out of sight.

"We can't stay long, Arya. Gilly can't cover for us all night." Arya nodded and motioned for them to sit and wait for the man and woman to finish and leave the room. They will want supper soon. Arya and Sansa had been curious about the strange woman and her baby insisting on seeing their brother. Sansa had heard the woman as she was dragged down the corridor by Brienne. Brienne had apologized for not practising with Arya citing she had to go to Winter Town's inn. So the Stark sisters and Nymeria snuck out of Winterfell with the help of the equally curious Gilly. Sansa touched Arya's wrist and gestured to the stairs. The man was dressed in all black around thirty five and had a hooked nose. He and Lady Jeyne came down the stairs asking for a hot meal. They waited until they were seated before slipping back upstairs to find Nymeria who was hidden in the shadows of the dimly lit corridor.

"What are we looking for?" asked Sansa as they broke into the room.

"A weapon that is not a sword," answered Arya carefully scanning the room and rummaging through the contents of the room. She had rummaged through the room finding nothing out of the ordinary.

"Look, Arya. She has a chest of vials and strange objects," whispered Sansa urgently from the other side of the room. Arya leapt over the bed and peered at the contents of the chest. The scripture on the old parchment were not in the Common Tongue. Arya could tell it was not High Valyrian either.
"She is a witch." Sansa gasped at her sister's words.

"How are we going to get this out of here and destroy it? I can't hide this under my dress." Arya racked her head for a plan but Nymeria's warning growl made the girls whip around. Lady Jeyne Westerling stood alone in the doorway with a look of outrage and fear.

"Who are you and what are you doing in my room? Put down my things. I am a lady and will have your hands for thievery." Sansa smiled a harsh yet pretty smile and pulled her hood down revealing her Tully red hair.

"We are Starks of Winterfell and the sisters to the King in the North. I am the Lord Theon Greyjoy's wife. My sister and I will taking this chest and showing it to our brother King Robb." Arya laughed as Lady Jeyne's eyes widened in shock and increasing fear.

"We heard everything you said. You threatened our sister and our nephew. I'd run back to where ever you came from or take that man's offer. You are the stupidest person I have ever seen. Robb does not care for you or love you." Nymeria growled at Jeyne who backed up against the wall crying.

"You are lying! She sent you here didn't she? I love him! He loves me. He won't believe a word you tell him." Arya rolled her eyes and closed the chest and was about to leave the room. "You aren't leaving with that! Put it down!" Nymeria blocked Jeyne from Arya and Sansa as they hastily exited. "Rolfe! Stop them they are stealing from me!" Sansa took the chest from Arya as the man rose from his seat in the dining hall. The dining hall quieted.

"Give back the lady's things and no harm will come to you."

"No but I can promise harm shall befall you for threatening Starks of Winterfell." Arya brandished her sword. It wasn't Needle but it would suffice. "She threatened the lives of our good sister, your good Queen Margaery and Prince Eddard with sorcery. Who will you help us bring her to justice?"

There was loud grumblings amongst the patrons.

"I will," called a deep voice and a bull of a man stood up from his seat in the corner. Arya never wanted to punch or hug someone so badly.

Chapter End Notes

I apologize if the last section is a bit too soap opera like and makes you cringe. Cause believe me I have cringed whilst writing and rereading it.

Oh also I apologize to Sansa/Jon shippers (I ship them too as well) and hope they have some patience with how things are going to go. There are some variables preventing them from being together... yet
Margaery paced around the old wooden chest Sansa and Arya had brought to her and Robb in the middle of the night. Men from Winter Town had brought Lady Jeyne Westerling and a man who was said to be her lover/accomplice according to the girls. Arya and Sansa said they overheard her announce her plans to kill Margaery and little Eddard with a weapon that was not conventional in hope she would become Robb's wife and queen. Robb had gone white with anger as the undone white tunic he had donned. They both had haphazardly dressed in the dark when Arya and Sansa woke them. He stormed out of the Great Hall after ordering that Lady Jeyne Westerling be put in the worst of the dungeon cells. Jeyne had cried her innocence. She pleaded for him to think of their daughter. But Robb was unmoved by it all.

As Jeyne was taken out of the Great Hall to the dungeons, "I want three tasters for the Queen's, and my son's wet nurse's meals," ordered Robb before he stormed off. "I want more guards outside the nursery. Grey Wind to Margaery."

Margaery, Sansa, and the Blackfish who had woken from the entire ruckus peered down at the contents of the chest. Grey Wind growled at the box. It had appeared the contents had been rummaged through or were missing. There was vials of strange liquids, one of which Margaery was certain was congealing blood. The papers and the books were all in one of the dialects of the Free Cities but some of them had drawings of what the writing meant. Sketches depicted various ways of attaining beauty, falling with child, gaining riches, and power. Other pages were of awful things that the Blackfish skimmed over to the next pages until they came across the page with graphic illustrations of a woman gruesomely dying and her babes withering into dark little monsters whilst the man was preoccupied with another woman. There were several versions of this but all the drawings showed the same end, the wife and the children died and the husband ended up the other woman. Margaery's hands went instinctively to her pregnant stomach to shield her unborn babe. She felt sick and clammy. The opposite page showed the other woman marrying the man and- Margaery ripped the book from the Blackfish's hands and slammed it to the ground seething.

I won't die and my children won't die either.

"I want every lord and lady in this castle to see this then I want it all burned," shouted Margaery trying to remain calm and collected.

"Yes, Your Grace."

Margaery nodded absently her mind still panicking for her children's lives. What if she has already cursed them and I? This is just a horrible dream and I'll wake and feel silly about it all. It certainly felt dreamy everything was blurry and distorted. She felt warm and tingly. Just move my head and I'll wake up. That's how I wake from all my dreams. Get a grip Margaery. Be practical this is just a terrible dream.

"Sister, you are pale you should sit down and drink something." Sansa's voice sounded like an echo. The doors opened and Margaery turned her head sharply. Wake up you fool. Three figures emerged and that's when Margaery felt vertigo in her legs. She was seeing the dead. She meant to lean on the large grey direwolf but she missed and faltered. Her head felt heavy. I'm dead she killed me. She won. That Westerling girl won. Renly came running towards her blocking her fall as another pair of hands propped her up.
"Renly! Oh Renly, where's Loras?! How awful is this place that they wouldn't let you wear your finest silks and satins?" She wrinkled her nose. "Or have a bath? Gods, you reek. Is Loras with my son? Is my son dead? I want my boy and my brother now Renly. Stop looking at me so stupidly." She struggled in his arms.

Renly's blue eyes looked down at her with deep confusion. Grey Wind nuzzled her like Robb liked to do. She started to sob hysterically at the thought of never seeing Robb again. Grey Wind’s warm wet tongue licked her face and whined frantically in concern as she was lifted into the air. *His fur feels real,* she thought as she lightly grazed her fingertips on the grey fur.

Robb had stormed away wanting to hold Eddard and make sure he was still breathing after hearing Jeyne had threatened him and Margaery. Eddard was safe and fast asleep, yet Robb's heart was still racing with worry. Eddard's nurse had woken startled by Robb asking him if something was the matter. Robb scowled at her until she quieted. Robb pulled a chair over to the wooden cradle and sat down checking his son's pulse and watched his breathing.

After making sure the wet nurse could not see him, Robb slipped into Grey Wind. When he slipped into Grey Wind, he felt horrible as he watched his wife collapse into his great uncle's arms in distress. Brushing his son's curls before he gently scooped up the sleeping boy and quietly left the nursery to meet Uncle Brynden and a tall black haired man carrying Margaery inside the Great Keep. Sansa and Arya carried the wooden chest and behind them Grey Wind and Nymeria followed.

"What happened?" asked Robb urgently as he led them to Margaery's bedchamber.

"Her Grace became very distressed by the contents of the chest, I believe," answered the Blackfish as he eased Margaery gently onto her bed. Robb glared at the chest in his sisters' hands.

"Wake Maester Luwin and tell him the queen has fainted and wake every lord and member of my guard, Uncle Brynden. Tell them to meet me in the war council room. Arya, show me what you all saw that made Margaery distressed," instructed Robb as he grasped his wife's soft hands.

"I'll kill her. Of all the maidens in the Westerlands, I had to-"

"Margaery wanted all of your men to see this and then have it burned," stated Sansa. Robb nodded then someone by the door caught his eye.

"Who are you?" barked Robb at the black haired stranger who lingered in Margaery's room. The blue eyes were familiar yet Robb knew he had never laid eyes on this man in his life before.

"Gendry, your kingship- I mean Grace," replied the tall strong man. Robb noted his unfamiliarity with pleasantries and poor speech. "Gendry Waters. I'm just a blacksmith apprentice. I was knighted by Lord Beric Dondarrion the former leader of the Brothers Without Banners when I was with them." A bastard knight from King's Landing.

"You are far from the Riverlands or the Crownlands. What is your purpose here?" An assassin sent
by the Queen perhaps? His hand stroked the steel wolf on Ice.

"He came to bring me back my Needle, Robb. He is my friend from when I was trying to get home," cut in Arya standing in front of this Gendry Waters. "Gendry helped us bring Jeyne and that man here. He means no harm to us." Robb looked at his sister's fierce gray eyes and knew she spoke the truth. Robb shot a curious glance at Gendry. *He looks so familiar.* Sansa offered to watch after Margaery and take Eddard back to his nursery.

"Thank you for helping my sisters, ser," thanked Robb distractedly. Gendry nodded and awkwardly left. Arya went to follow with Nymeria but Robb grabbed her arm.

"You should go to bed, Arya." Arya nodded but Robb sighed knowing she would not go to her bed until much later. At least she has Nymeria with her. Robb placed the book back inside the chest and picked up the chest to bring it to the council room. He passed Maester Luwin who was tutting and took no notice of his king.

"I told Her Grace to rest and not allow any stress," muttered the maester.

Robb arrived to the council room almost all the seats were filled with bleary-eyed men and women arising at his entrance and bowing. He set down the chest and motioned for them to all sit around the round table. The Blackfish debriefed them on what happened and opened the chest to allow them to get a good look at the vile contents that lay inside.

"Send her to the Silent Sisters, Your Grace!" many shouted.

"Banish her," boomed a minority.

"Cut her head off and then burn her body and this box of sorcery!" shouted Wendel Manderly.

"Execute her before the heart tree let the Old Gods judge her," called out Dacey Mormont. Several of the Northern lords who kept to the Old Gods nodded and pounded their fist on the table in agreement.

"This may be tricky as she is a highborn lady. Eldest daughter of one of the vassals of the Lannisters," cautioned the Blackfish.

"What of the man who helped her get into the castle? His sigil was the same as Lord Harwood Stout of Yellowgrass. Yet this man is not missing an arm," pointed out Robett Glover.

"I'll have him interrogated and I'll see that Lady Dustin is informed of her vassal was an accomplice in this or that someone is posing as one of her vassals." Everyone nodded.

"The Lannisters might make use of Lady Jeyne Westerling's imprisonment here as an excuse to reinvigorate attacks on the Riverlands and try to make their way up to the North." Robb looked to the Blackfish for any feedback on this possibility.

"They may but they may not since we do not know the current situation at King's Landing for certain. I believe an plot on the Queen in the North and your heirs' lives should not go unanswered, Your Grace," answered the Blackfish carefully. Brienne agreed with the Blackfish and offered her apologies for not detaining Jeyne from Margaery's presence.

"There's nothing to apologize, my lady. It was premeditated. She brought that chest all the way from her home to here it looks like unless she found it on her journey here," soothed Lady Maege staring at Jeyne's chest with repulsion.
"Since we are all in agreement that Lady Jeyne Westerling must be punished for her plotting I think we shall end this council. Thank you all my lords and ladies." Robb stood up and instructed the Mormont women to burn the chest. He motioned for the Blackfish and Brienne of Tarth to follow him and Grey Wind. Robb was tired but he would not sleep until he interrogated Jeyne Westerling.

The dungeons were cold and damp. It was putrid inside her cell from the last occupant who had been moved into another cell for her arrival. She was frightened yet still hopefully she would get out there as a free woman. Robb won't kill me, I am a lady highborn. Jeyne felt anger at her beloved's meddlesome sisters and the skinny sister's wolf too. Rolfe had been imprisoned as well. I should have went to your keep and bided my time there as your wife. I would have an excuse to visit Winterfell then and see Robb. Robb would look at her with love and lust; not like he looked upon her with a wild murderous glare clutching that Tyrell girl protectively and tenderly. She hugged herself to keep warm and hummed a song she imagined Robb and her dancing to. Jeyne fell asleep quickly from the cold and tiredness.

A loud clang woke her up and she hit her head hard on the stonewall. The door swung open and the giant wretched wolf came in followed by Robb dressed in armour and furs holding a torch. Jeyne blinked several times adjusting to the increased light. She brushed her brown curls with her fingers self-consciously. Jeyne smiled at him though he was the one who put her in the dungeons.

"Tell me the truth have you cursed my wife and my son?" growled Robb. Of course all he wants to talk about is her and her son. Jeyne looked at the grimy floor and shook her head no.

I wish I had.

"Where's our daughter, Robb?" asked Jeyne remembering her daughter. Robb's face soften, Jeyne felt a glimmer of hope rise.

"I'll have someone bring her to you from the inn." Jeyne thanked him for his graciousness.

"She's a sweet child you will love her." And love me too.

"In time I may," said Robb shortly. "Jeyne, I am sorry that I misled you to think I held strong feelings for you after we- It was a mistake on my part for damaging your suitability for marriage. I held you in high regard for nursing me while I was wounded and despite I being an enemy. But I gave you moon tea to take in precaution to prevent further shame." Her heart felt like it was breaking into bits. She could hear her mother saying I told you so.

"No!" she wailed. "You are lying to protect her feelings. You love me." Robb stared down upon her with a mixture of pity and annoyance. He crouched down closer to her level.

"I am not, I don't love you Jeyne. I may not have loved or cared for my wife at first but she is now the only woman I love or ever will love. Cursing her and my children would not have changed that. Jeyne, why did you have to do this?" Jeyne cried harder and put her hands over her ears. This can't have been for nothing. Robb stood up and the giant wolf snarled at her.

"May you put that beast outside? It's making me uncomfortable," asked Jeyne. Robb laughed and shook his head.

"No, Grey Wind stays by my side. The last time people asked me to keep him locked up because he growled or made them uneasy, tried to kill my army and I. They murdered my lady mother and my good-brother. Wounded my men and myself. The Freys and the Boltons tried to kill them too." Them
meaning your wife and child. His eyes and voice were so full of hate that it made Jeyne whimper. 

Like Lady Stoneheart's.

"How did you get here from the Crag, Jeyne?" She remained silent and did not face Robb.

"Did you truly plan on cursing Margaery and my son?" Plead for mercy, her mind begged.

"I love you," she replied simply. "Please don't kill me."

"Lady Jeyne, you have committed an act of treason. You plotted to kill my wife, the Queen in the North, my heir and my unborn child."

I am going to die. It's not fair. Twice rejected, first a lion and now a wolf. Sixteen almost seventeen already treated like a scorned crone.

"Would you have chosen me over her if I had been born to family as wealthy as her family? If my lady mother was from a noble House as old as the Hightowers?" demanded Jeyne bitterly. Robb sighed with the same look he had given her before leaving the Crag, 

"I would have married whoever my lady mother would have counseled me to marry." And she picked Margaery Tyrell. Jeyne reached to grab Robb's hand but his wolf snapped his teeth at her outstretched hand. Please. After the King in the North and his wolf left her cell, Jeyne collapsed on the floor and sobbed.

Arya followed Gendry out of the Great Keep with Nymeria. His strides were twice as long as hers so she had to half run to keep up him in the snow.

"Where are you going?" she asked as she finally caught up to him.

"I'm leaving."

"You are going the wrong way, stupid." He scowled and turned in yet another wrong direction.

"Why are you leaving?"

"Your brother the King does not like me." Arya rolled her eyes.

"You caught him in a stressful situation. He is always a grump to everyone when he is worried or stressed. Would you stop walking to fast so I can thank you for helping my sister and I. For coming all the way here to give me back Needle." Gendry halted so abruptly Arya crashed into his back and fell in the snow. Gendry laughed deeply and offered a hand.

"Milady?" Call me that one more time. She scowled at him and got up without his aid.

"Ser Gendry, I am not going to let you come back here and leave without a reason like you did before." Gendry's blue eyes widened after a few moments of confusion but like a stubborn stupid bull he was, he charged away.

"Why bother coming here if you are just going to leave? What happened to the Brotherhood without Banners you were so impressed by? Are you mute as well as stupid?" snapped Arya as she stomped after him.

"I left the Brotherhood after Lord Beric died for the last time. Some madwoman has taken over half
of it. I was working as a smith when I found Needle. I thought- I thought you might like it back," he grumbled staring at the snow-covered ground.

"I do like having Needle back," thanked Arya. You as well when you aren't being aggravatingly stupid. They gave each other awkward smiles. He had grown a short beard. She wasn't sure if she liked it or not.

She grabbed his elbow and tugged at him.

"I want you to meet Mikken."

"Another wolf?" He asked eyeing Nymeria.

"No, stupid. He is the blacksmith here. He is the one who made Needle. You need a place to stay or would you prefer to offer your services as a knight."

"But it's almost early morn. " Arya shrugged and tugged on him harder in the direction of the smithy with the biggest smile on her face.

"Queen's Ser Uncle! We have sailed past the Pebble and are approaching the Three Sisters," announced the Myrish captain. Jorah nodded though he knew this by looking upon the distant sparse trees and rocky landscape of the Three Fingers they had sailed past two days ago. He yearned for the pine trees and his ancestral log hall. I haven't been this close to Bear Island in years. A small voice in his head reminded him also that he had never been so far from Daenerys since he had met her.

Will I ever see you again?

"We are sailing too close to lands ruled by vassals of the Vale for my liking. " I do not know who is friend or foe here. Days later they had made port at White Harbour, Jorah had been glad to be on sturdy land and no longer at sea. When he made it inside the white walls and was about to make the climb up to New Castle he bent down a picked up a handful of moist clay and pebbly dirt. He slowly rubbed the dirt between his rough hands in a rather reverent way. This is real. It is not sand. It's dirt. Dirt of the North. Letting the dirt fly from his hand, the proud unhandsome northman climbed the white steps with a renewed vigor.

Margaery woke the next morning still in the clothing she had quickly donned in the middle of last night. She was starving and thirsty. By the Gods, did she have to use the privy badly. She sat up and felt dizzy. Margaery tried to get up to go use the privy.

"Easy, sweetheart," came Robb's groggy voice. Two hands helped her up from behind. He led her to the privy and turn around to give her some privacy.

"I saw that chest, Margaery. I watched it burn after I went to her cell. She is guilty I am certain. I shall have a formal interrogation in front of the bannermen today. Uncle Brynden had to resort to methods of torture to get answers out of her lover or whoever he is. Would you like me to send for some food and drink?" Margaery's head pounded with all of this information. Where was I in all of this? Her stomach growled loudly.

"I'll take that as a yes," chuckled Robb. Robb looked so sleep deprived like he had only a few hours
of sleep. He led her back onto her bed, kissed her on the forehead and went off to find a servant or Gilly.

"You should rest, my love," chastised Margaery when he came back. He lay beside her and rubbed his hand on their unborn child.

"I wonder what he or she is going to be like," murmured Robb. Margaery smiled and placed her hand over his.

"The baby is a girl, I am carrying higher than I did with Eddard," whispered Margaery remembering her dream of Renly. "Elora Stark." A pretty name for a pretty girl named in honour of her brother the beautiful Knight of Flowers. Loras Stark never sounded right anyway.

"Princess Elora," tested Robb staring with heavy lids at her vast stomach.

"Sleep Robb," ordered Margaery kissing his eyes closed.

"Who are you?" questioned Ser Brynden Tully at the bloodied man. They had been at it for hours yet the man did not divulge anything.

"Rolfe Stout of Yellowgrass, cousin of Harwood Stout the Lord of Yellowgrass. Vassal to the House Dustin." Repeated like a well rehearsed answer.

"Then where is this Ser Osney Kettleblack who works for Queen Cersei? Sent to kill Robb Stark?" queried Tully holding up a letter found amongst the man's belongings. The man smiled in an ugly manner. "I can break that hooked nose of yours again if you'd like."

"No! No! He died. He is dead. It was a doomed mission. For what a chance to fuck the Queen again and whatever promises she made of wealth and ennoblement. He died when he met that girl and was offered to inherit that keep since old Stout has no heirs by Lady Dustin. Sure the girl isn't a beauty like that Queen Cersei but she is young and sweet despite her delusions. Highborn too. I tried to talk her out of it. I swear!"

Brynden gave a small smile pleased that he had finally gotten something worth reporting.

"Was this a joined plot between Lady Jeyne and yourself?"

"No, I came across Jeyne after I made an acquaintance with Lady Dustin who was travelling along the Kingsroad. Lady Dustin had stopped me asking me if I knew if the bones of Ned Stark had made it past the Neck," wheezed Rolfe or Osney. Interesting. "Jeyne needed coin for food and shelter, so we played as husband and wife. She wanted the Stark's wife dead and I was suppose to kill Stark himself." Then you fell in love with her.

"I am afraid your marital dreams with Lady Jeyne Westerling as Rolfe Stout or Osney Kettleblack are likely never going to happen." The tall man blanched.

"No, Jeyne is a silly and sheltered lady. Do you really believe she could curse Robb Stark's wife? She carries my child. I am certain, you can't kill a woman with child." But Jeyne plotted to kill a woman with child herself.

Chapter End Notes
bahaha I realized Jeyne sounds like the bad guys at the end of every Scooby Doo episodes when she thinks about Arya, Sansa, and Nymeria.
the music of a seashell

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Myrcella had woken up disoriented from a dream that Ser Arys Oakheart had been slain and a man with purple eyes named Gerold Dayne had attacked her but she had tried to roll over to her side and the pain had felt so real. She had touched the side of her face and it was all bandaged. It was real. It made her feel very ill to look upon the wounds and the gaping hole where her ear once was. Prince Doran's maester had saved her life. Princess Myrcella Baratheon sat on a stool before a looking glass covering her disfigurement. I am lonely. There was no one to play cyvasse with her. She had tried to play on her own but was quickly bored of it. She missed the companionship of her betrothed Prince Trystane Martell of Dorne and her cousin Rosamund Lannister. Being alone made her homesick.

She did not understand at first why she was supposed to lie to Ser Balon Swann of the Kingsguard and why her cousin Rosamund had curled her naturally straight blonde hair in the same manner that Myrcella's hair naturally curled. But the Sand Snakes had reassured her that it was only done to protect her incase the person who poisoned her eldest brother the late King Joffery came to kill her as well. However although she went along, Myrcella was not going to be stupid twice and completely trust the word of a Dornish woman or man again.

Princess Arianne promised to crown me Queen of the Seven Kingdoms citing the Dornish law of female right to lands and titles over younger brothers. Look at what it has done to my face and my sworn shield Ser Arys. The Gods have punished me for my sinful ambition. Why did the man attack me?

Myrcella looked at the corner of the reflection of the looking glass and spotted a golden crown atop a folded cape or gown of cloth of gold on her bedside table. It was not there when I woke this morning. Picking it up with curiosity, Myrcella donned the gold cape that was just her size. It was not the heavy cloth of gold that she was used to it was a more of a lightweight silk like material. For some reason wearing the cape made her giddy and she danced in the room to a song she loved in her head.

She picked up the crown and twirled back to the looking glass. Myrcella stilled when she saw the ugly scar on the side of her face and her lack of an ear. Seeing it brought back the feeling of pain and the memory of being sent away from her home and her family. I miss you sweet Tommen. She thought back to how things had changed so quickly after Father died. Father's closest and most trusted friend Lord Eddard Stark had been accused of stating vile things about her parentage amongst other crimes against her father King Robert. Her mother Queen Cersei told her and her brothers that those claims were lies. But Uncle Stannis believed them to.

Lord Stark's death sparked a war between her brother King Joffery and Lord Stark's son the handsome Robb Stark. She remembered the long journey from King's Landing to the grim and grey castle in the North. I can't remember what his face looked like but I remember the fluttery feelings of having a first fancy. I remember his hair was much like his kind sister Lady Sansa.

But now long after Father, Lord Stark and Joffery were dead, Myrcella began to feel some inkling of doubt in her beloved mother's words. All three of the royal children were golden haired and green eyed like their Lannister mother. They had nothing not even the slightest of resemblance to King Robert. Myrcella moved her ringlets to cover the ugly scars and the bandage where her ear once was.
She called us cubs barely called my brothers strong stags like Father had once been.

I wonder how Tommen is faring? Is he as lonely as I am?

Myrcella placed the crown on her head and cocked her head to one side that was unblemished and wasn't earless. I look like Mother. A beautiful, golden queen. A shadow moved in the looking glass. Myrcella turned her head there was no one there. She strained her ear for footsteps or any noise. She narrowed her green eyes and annoyed at how shadowy her chamber was.

"Maester Caleotte?" called Myrcella loudly with no fear in her voice. I am not afraid. There was no sign of the short, fat, and bald maester. She stood up and went to pick up a heavy metal candlestick holder to defend herself. Her maid should have been back by now and the guards posted outside her chambers were there to prevent intruders from entering her chambers. Unless they were killed or bribed. Myrcella had not heard any shouts or sounds of a struggle from outside.

"Be gone! Prince Doran will have your head!" I am Myrcella Baratheon, Princess of the Seven Kingdoms betrothed to Prince Doran’s son Prince Trystane.

Ours is our Fury.

Hear me Roar.

"No need to shout. Do you like your crown, Your Grace?" came a muffled voice in the shadows. "You would have made a fine queen if you truly were the daughter of Robert Baratheon. I never understood how no one took notice of the evident lack of Baratheon qualities in yourself and your brothers until recently. Lord Stark would have spared your lives, he disliked the murder of children. Pity for you, your brother the oh so wise King Joffery killed him." Myrcella took the stranger's hint and stalled for time. Surely someone will walk pass and notice something amiss.

"Lord Stark was a traitor and plotted the murder of my Father the King. Who are you and why have you come here? Did you help my uncle kill my brother King Joffery?"

"Lord Stark is only guilty of not heeding such wise advice and trusting the wrong people. Oh my dear child, you and I have met before." The stranger made a tutting noise, "Oh no I didn't kill him neither did your uncle; it was an old thorn and a mockingbird who slew Joffery Waters with poison. I'm afraid for the good of the realm I must remove all pretenders to the Iron Throne on the behalf of the one true King. Including you. Princess Arianne did you a great disservice with her foiled plot. I had almost forgot your uncle sent you here." Myrcella stood up straight and glared at the direction of the voice in a haughty manner.

"My mother the Queen Regent will make sure you-"

"Queen Cersei is imprisoned," giggled the voice. Lies. Mother is the Queen you can't imprison the Queen. Tommen would never throw our Mother in the dungeons. Myrcella shook her head furiously; her heart was beating so fast. Who is going to fight for me to return home if it is Mother is locked up? Uncle Tyrion is gone. Lord Grandfather is dead. Tommen is still a boy even though he is king. The realization hit harder and hurt more than the pain of her attack.

I am alone with no one to turn to.

"You are lying!" shouted Myrcella in a fit of rage and fear induced bravery she roared and brandished the metal candleholder hoping to knock them off their feet so she could run out for help.

The little lioness fought her attacker valiantly for she was braver and cleverer than the elder brother. It was a terrible shame she was not truly half stag half lion. For the late stag would have been proud
of the little lioness as she made swings at her attacker as if she were wielding a miniature warhammer. But the little lioness was too small over-take her attacker and she was stabbed in the heart. Her green eyes widened in surprise and recognition at her killer's face. She gasped as she fell to the ground crowned and wrapped in gold.

Robb stared at the small brown haired child that had his blue eyes. She was older than Eddard but was so small and pale. Will she resent me for killing her mother? Robb didn't even remember what the child's name was. Genni, or Galina.

"What shall you do with Gwyn Hill after Lady Jeyne's execution, Your Grace?" asked the Blackfish. I don't know. A part of him wanted to send the child back to Jeyne's family and remove all trace of Jeyne Westerling from their lives. Yet another part of him wanted the little child to stay and grow up here. Like Jon did. The decision however could wait; also he would have to ask Margaery's opinion about allowing the child to grow up amongst their children.

"I don't know yet. Has Lady Jeyne seen her?" For the last time.

"Yes, Lady Jeyne was allowed the morning with the child." The wet nurse and Gwyn Hill were sent away. Robb nodded then called Grey Wind to him to go to the godswood. "The guards asked if they are to bring out Lady Jeyne's lover Ser Osney Kettleblack to be executed as well?"

"If there isn't any more information that can be extracted from him then give him the choice to take the black or execution." Lady Barbery Dustin will be questioned why she was so far from her lands and why she provided a disguise for this man. The Blackfish nodded and Robb and Grey Wind strode away.

It wasn't snowing for once but it was windy, as Robb and Grey Wind stood by the heart tree before a small crowd of his northmen that slowly filed in. Robb still thinking about Gwyn and debated about offering Jeyne clemency. They could hear Jeyne's hysterical wails for her daughter before the guards had brought her into the godswood. Jeyne's chestnut curls had gone awry and frizzy despite it being put up in a bun. She had devastated look on her face and began to both cry and laugh when she saw Robb from a distance. Jeyne began to softly sing to Robb,

"You will rue this day
I will make you pay
Oh, what a mighty crown
Up shall you go, only to go down
Covered in blood you shall drown
In a land of snow with Ice
Only then will you have paid the price
In your pyre
Burning afire-

What the-? Robb stiffened and his eyes widened in shock. Her words are wind. That chest is burnt to nothing but ashes. Grey Wind stood up and growled at his Northerners burst into angry shouts and spat at her. Some followed Alysane Mormont's example and threw snow at her. Robb paled slightly
he expected insults to Margaery or pleas for mercy for the sake of her daughter Gwyn Hill. The guards dragged her by her hair to try to get her quiet but she kept on singing her song if you could call it a song. *Break her damn jaw.*

"The rose shall bloom thrice
The last will be a gamble of dice
Oh beware of a bear
It shall betray all that you hold dear
Don't bother shedding a tear
The Mother shall have no care
Her children shall burn such pretty hair."

Grey Wind attacked Jeyne but did not kill her leaving that to Robb and the dark smokey blade of Ice. Blood rapidly seeped out her wounds as she was dropped unceremoniously on her knees before the heart tree. Robb wanted nothing more than to skip the words and just run her through with Ice.

*It's just words to frighten me. Nothing more.*

"I, Robb of House Stark, King in the North and the Trident, Lord of Winterfell condemn Lady Jeyne Westerling on the charges of treason and witchcraft against the lives of my wife Margaery Stark of Houses Tyrell and Stark, Queen in the North and the Trident, Lady of Winterfell and my heir Prince Eddard Stark of Winterfell." Jeyne looked up at him and reached for him like she had in dungeons but he was out of her reach.

"You did this to me and broke my heart-" a raspy cough came from Jeyne staring at the ground. He swung the giant greatsword down on her neck. It wasn't the cleanest of executions but all that mattered was that Jeyne Westerling was dead. But Robb was shaking with anger and his stomach was in knots. The guards cleared away her body and head away to be burned. At the moment, he wasn't going to bother sending her bones back to her family. A letter of detailing her crimes and her execution should suffice.

When his bannermen had left the godswood Robb sat and cleaned the blade of Ice like his lord father always did. *The chest was burned. It was just to scare me or to make me spare her life that's all. There's nothing to worry Margaery and my sisters over.* The leaves of the heart tree rustled in a violent manner in the sharp wind as Robb knelt to pray before the heart tree. *I'm a king I should not be frightened by a random rhyme. I won't die and neither shall Margaery for a long time.* An urgent whisper, made Robb open his eyes and look around but no one was there besides Grey Wind. Grey Wind's yellow eyes stared at the face of the heart tree so Robb resumed his prayers and cleaning his greatsword. After his prayers he and Grey Wind left the godswood slowly to his wife's chambers.

Margaery looked at him curiously when he entered her chamber. She was sitting in a chair nibbling on some hard cheese. The room was too warm for his liking. So he unbuckled his armour and removed his thick furs and boots wordlessly until he was only in his tunic, leather jerkin, and trousers. He picked up a piece of hard cheese and ate it.

"She's dead," he announced bluntly. Margaery nodded still looking up at him curiously waiting for him to tell her more. Instead of mentioning what Jeyne's words before she died, he decided to broach the subject of Jeyne's daughter, his bastard. "I don't know what to do with my- Gwyn Hill." Saying my daughter in front of his wife that was not the mother of the child was too much.
"The child's fate is in your hands," said Margaery primly and neutrally. She stared at the candleholder with a heavy sigh. "I suppose you want to keep her here and make her a Jon Snow to our children." She paused. "Jon was unknowingly your cousin the whole time not the child of a hateful woman who plotted our children's death. But again it is up to you. You are the king and her father. Just don't expect me to nicer to her than your lady mother was to Jon." Robb bent down to kiss her knuckles and nodded. Margaery's face softened at his touch.

"Hello little Elora," whispered Robb feeling the child's movements as he pressed the side of his face on Margaery's belly. Once the movements slowed down, Robb looked up at Margeary's brown eyes.

"Could you send for Eddard, I would like to spend some time with him. He should be up from his nap." Robb quickly ran to get Eddard from his nursery himself. Eddard squirmed and shrieked at the sight of his mother as Robb made it through the doorway. Margeary stood up to kiss his chubby cheeks and his nose. Eddard grabbed at Robb's nose.

"Maybe, when Eddard is older he will get all hot and bothered by a nurse tending a soldier's wounds. I can see it now, someone exotic like from Volantis. He has to outdo you somehow." Her tone was light and mocking but her face was as sour as a lemon. Robb looked away in shame.

"Come out and say this whole mess was my fault. An innocent child was motherless. He closed his eyes and he saw his lady mother looking extremely disappointed and cross with him."

'Robb, you could have lost your wife, your child, your alliance.' All because I slept with a girl I barely knew. I know. Robb and Margaery did not look or speak to one another for long time. Until Margaery spoke,

"Do you think we will have more children than our parents had?" Robb looked up startled by her gentle tone.

"I was slightly younger than your lady mother and my lady mother when I had Eddard. My lady mother was the eldest daughter of twelve children," wondered Margaery as she smoothed their son's unruly dark auburn curls. Robb frowned hearing Jeyne's voice in his head but his memory was hazy even though it had only been just hours ago.

"Two or twelve children; don't matter to me. You need to survive each birth that is what matters to me. Margaery noticed his serious face and took it that he did not want so many children.

"Oh don't worry I don't want to have twelve. I'd be a fat puff fish though we would end up being grandparents to more than half of Westeros. Imagine that. Oh well, I think we should try for four at very least. Six would be nice," decided Margaery airily. She began to chatter away about possible future matches and possible names for their ideal four to six children. Robb was frustrated he could not remember all of words Jeyne sang. "If Stannis ever does have a son, maybe a betrothal might fix- Of course if none of your sisters wish to name a daughter of theirs after Lady Catelyn. Brenda is an awful name in my opinion. Lyarra is a pretty name. Or after one of Greenhand's children. Absolutely no son of mine shall be named Torrhen. It will give that dragon girl the wrong idea. A second son named for Artos the Implacable. Or William." She's been listening in on Rickon's lessons on the family tree.

Robb handed Eddard to Margaery and lay across the end of the bed in deep thought. My bannermen have likely heard snippets of what Jeyne said. Robb glanced at Margaery's pacing figure.

"Are you listening Robb?" snapped Margaery with good-humored annoyance. Robb sat up.

"Yes um I think it's all- lovely, but perhaps we should exercise some caution. Two children are good
enough for me-" Margaery's large brown eyes narrowed.

"Two? You couldn't keep your hands off me and got me with child so soon after Eddard's birth. I thought you wanted a large family." I do. Robb gazed at her growing middle. But I won't forgive myself if something were to happen to you.

"What's wrong? What happened? Why are you so distracted? You love talking about our babies as much as you like making them," questioned Margaery confused and was no longer smiling. "Oh wait you have will three children once this baby is born."

"Margaery, this has nothing to do with Gwyn. It's nothing just a long day that's all. Don't worry sweeth-" pled Robb raking a hand through his hair uneasily. Margaery huffed and rolled her eyes unconvinced.

"You were right lying doesn't suit a Stark." For once could she let things go?

Margaery patted Grey Wind who lay on the rug before the fireplace. "I'll be in my solar." With a swish of her skirts, Margaery stalked off with Eddard out of her chamber. Grey Wind cocked his head to one side. Robb stood up frustrated before strode out of the room after his wife.

Ghost had gone off hunting so Jon rode on in solitude. He was less than a day ride away from Castle Black. The snow fell down upon him harder as he made his way up back to the Wall. Jon was partially glad that he left Winterfell without Robb. The other half missed his brothers and his little sister. Cousins, his mind corrected. Jon was mostly glad to be away from Sansa. As children, Sansa and Jon never held long conversations but they never ran out of things (well Sansa talked mostly) to say to one another up until they reached Winterfell. After Sansa's wedding, their conversations were stilted and he always walked away with an excuse leaving a confused Sansa Greyjoy. He avoided Robb's wife Margaery and her all too knowing pitying glances and spent most of his time at Winterfell with Robb, Arya and Rickon. Jon cursed his own curiosity, which led to his decision to slip into Ghost one night. He had prowled along the corridors and heard sounds of lovemaking, which he wished could be unheard. How he wanted to burst through the door and bite Greyjoy. The stolen kiss in the stables of Winterfell as he was readying his garron for the journey back to Castle Black burned in his memory and plagued his thoughts. Jon had not heard her approach from behind and Ghost was silent.

"I came to say my farewells," she had said quietly, "You seemed to be always occupied that I figured this will be my last chance. I am going to miss you, Jon Snow." They stared at each other for a couple of minutes. "Do you hate me?"

"I could never hate you Sansa," answered Jon frowning at the suggestion. She smiled slowly though her eyes were sad and stepped closer to him.

"I know you can't promise to be safe. Promise me you will live." Jon nodded. Again, he was startled when Sansa stroked the sides of his face and kissed him. Despite Sansa's height, Jon still had to bend down a bit. She tasted like honey cake she probably had for breakfast. Unlike Margaery who smelled like a walking garden, Sansa was subtler with a light floral and lemon scent.

Jon groaned as they deepened the kiss. How he wanted to have her right there and perhaps they would have against the wall of the stall. The kiss made him want to forget who he was and steal her away like she had asked him to. But Jon remembered she was married to another and he was still a
bastard Lord Commander sworn to take no wife and father no children. 'Her vows to Theon and my vows to the Night's Watch.' Jon pulled away and backed away from Sansa. But she held on to him, both were breathing heavily.

"No. No, I won't let us make the same mistake Lyanna Stark and Rhaegar Targaryen made." I can't steal you like Rhaegar did. I shall father no bastard children.

"I'm sorry Jon. I know we were raised as brother and sister but I don't know why- I wanted yo- I am just so confused. Don't be upset," pleaded Sansa. Jon had to leave now without Robb. Any moment longer he was going ride out with Winterfell with her. Robb had almost convinced Jon to stay a little longer at Winterfell and that they ride back up to the Wall together.

"It's ok. Goodbye Sansa. Stay safe, sweet girl." He cupped her pretty face and stroked her soft red hair trying to memorize it all. He kissed her hard then led the garron out of the stable with Ghost who looked back at an upset Sansa.

Jon saw Ghost up ahead of him and shook thoughts of Sansa out of his head and focused on his journey. He racked his head with ideas to keep an army of Others from invading Westeros. I'll talk to Mance again. He claimed to have the Horn of Joramun. I talk to Maester Aemon. If only Sam was at Castle Black as well.

Melisandre smiled at the sight of the Eastwatch by the Sea on the shore of the windy icy Bay of Seals. The princess stood next to her in awe of the new surroundings and to have finally reach their destination.

"It looks awfully desolate to live here," remarked Stannis Baratheon's only child.

"The Lord of the Light has guided us here."

"And what is our purpose here exactly? Why does your god need my father here? If they require aid, wouldn't they go to King Robb? The Starks are friends of the Night's Watch everyone knows that." Disbelief in the one true R'holler runs deep in this one like Stannis' Hand. Yet the girl had a point, Melisandre could not see Stannis in the flames. All I see is Snow. But she smiled down at the young dark haired princess. Her greyscale concealed by her hair.

"You sound very much like your father, King Stannis. To answer your question, the Lord of the Light is not always clear, Your Grace. Only time will tell."

Margaery sat through Robb's explanation. Margaery almost burst into laughter at Robb's concern over by a threatening rhyme made by Jeyne Westerling. She is no composing minstrel. It was just to mess with your head. Robb's grim face and his concerned eyes flickering over Eddard and her stomach made her smile dissipate. He really believes I will die giving birth to a third child. Margaery shook her head. This is getting ridiculous.

"Robb, are we going to let some silly song rule our lives? She is dead, why can't we move on? We need to focus on the threat of the Others and this winter. How are we going to feed ourselves and our people?" It won't matter if I die in childbirth if everyone starves. Robb nodded slowly, stood up and paced around running his hand through his hair.
"I have to help Jon defeat them; to end this winter so you, our children, my siblings, and our people will survive." Margaery noted that he did not say 'we'. She set Eddard on the rug gently and hugged Robb. Their height difference and her stomach made it a bit awkward. She felt safe and reassured by his arms around her and the feel of his chest hair on the side of her cheek.

What about you? Who will make sure you survive?

Grey Wind made a funny noise as if to answer Margaery's thoughts.

"Don't you dare leave here believing you are going to your death just because Westerling said so. Promise me, Robb Stark, you will come back to me alive." He rubbed circles on her back.

"I promise, Margaery." The Freys and the Boltons took my Loras from me. The Gods can't take Robb from me too.

The next day, a raven from White Harbour arrived with news that Ser Jorah Mormont had made port a few days ago and would be escorted to Winterfell. Margaery smiled, excited to have someone who could tell her in detail about the Targaryen girl and the dragons she supposedly hatched. No more tales from sailors. She informed the Mormont women that their nephew/cousin had returned to the North and he was making his way to Winterfell. Lady Maege nodded with a small smile. Dacey and Jorelle were curious about the fighting style of the Essosi cultures that Jorah had encountered. Alysane merely shrugged disinterestedly and went back to her task as if Margaery had announced something utterly mundane and not the return of their only living male relative. Perhaps she is concerned about Dacey's current status as heiress to the Bear Hall?

Margaery had thought about offering him or some Northern lord to Alys Karstark. There was drama over who would inherit Karhold, which required Robb and Margaery's intervention.

Chapter End Notes

I feel like this chapter may be controversial. But I decided to leave it be.

-Myrcella's dancing was inspired by Kathryn Howard's dancing scene from the Tudors.

Polite constructive criticism/comments are appreciated.
Robb was busy for days overseeing the preparations for the journey to the Castle Black. Robb decided in the end that Gwyn Hill would not be sent back to the Crag unless Lord Westerling requested her return to her maternal family. He would not burden his northern bannermen's families with another mouth to feed even though they would claim it was an honour to raise his bastard daughter. His marriage would likely not survive being strained by having the girl live at Winterfell and nor did it look like the delicate child would survive the harsh cold of the North. In the end, without a formal farewell the child was sent south with a wet nurse and an escort bearing a bag of gold. Whilst he knew was being honourable to his wife and he had not forgotten Lady Jeyne's plots and words, Robb was nevertheless was slow to make a decision. So Ser Brynden had arranged for her to be taken in by Lord Clement Piper of Pinkmaiden instead of sending her to the Golvers.

Lady Jeyne's lover, Ser Osney Kettleblack had willingly taken the black. Margaery had not been too pleased about it since the man had been sent by Queen Cersei to kill Robb. The Blackfish was not too concerned about Kettleblack so Robb chose not worry about him. I have many other pressing worries.

Margaery and Lady Brienne were convinced that Gendry was a bastard son of King Robert's. Robb had met Lord Renly during the royal visit to Winterfell but only remembered how extravagantly dressed he was. Gendry was taller and bulkier than Robb who was stocky. His black hair, blue eyes, and strength met the description of Robert Baratheon's glory days. It was queer to Robb that King Robert's bastard son had struck up a friendship with Robb's youngest sister who Father claimed to be similar in spirit and looks as their aunt Lady Lyanna Stark.

"The she-wolf and the bull," teased Margaery when Robb told her of finding Arya yet again sitting in the smithy talking to Gendry as he worked. "Maybe she will want to marry after-all?" Robb snapped his head up. He had not considered his littlest sister might have an attraction to Gendry Waters.

"Arya is still too young." She was his baby sister and he is a bastard and a hairy blacksmith too. He has got to be eighteen or nineteen.

"Mmm, not for long. Oh try to be open-minded a bit. It might be a first fancy and nothing more. She wants to be a princess knight of sorts. At least she will be well equipped with a blacksmith for a husband," smiled Margaery, "He is a bit tanned and very well muscled too. It's been so long since I have seen someone with a tan around here. Your northern fair skin would burn under the sun in Highgarden. So I have to keep Arya and my wife from the new blacksmith.

"I thought you liked my northern complexion," smiled Robb as he took a gulp of his ale. Margaery looked him over with a smirk.

"You are too covered up for me to say, husband." Robb almost choked at her reply, he was thinking of something suggestive to say, when Rickon, Shaggy Dog and Sansa came in and sat down at the table. Robb blinked in surprise and irritation as he had thought Margaery and him would be supping alone.
"I'm starving," declared Rickon as he stabbed at a piece of roasted chicken.

"Eat some vegetables too," reminded Margaery who was smiling with laughter at Robb.

"Arya should be only a few minutes. I never laughed so hard. Gendry had us all in stitches when he fell in the snow more than twice and he got so mad he started to swear about how awful the snow is. I have never heard him speak more than three words that didn't include milady," laughed Sansa. It was true that Gendry got all flustered and self-conscious when Sansa politely talked to him or Margaery harmlessly flirted with him. *He is worse than Jon.* Sansa took several bites of her supper and exclaimed how lovely it was to have a hot meal.

"The cold doesn't bother me," chirped Rickon not understanding the fuss over Arya's friend. *Neither do I.* Robb did not dislike Gendry nor was he jealous of him. Margaery told him she sought Gendry out when she was homesick for the South and its culture. But talking to the blacksmith made her sad as well for he looked so much like Renly, which reminded her of Loras and his death.

"Your brother was just remarking how warm it was in here with all his layers," remarked Margaery, her brown eyes laughing. Robb hoped he had not gone red.

"Are you coming down with a fever?" asked Sansa concerned. Margaery looked about to burst into laughter.

"No I'm fine, thank you for your concern." He shot a warning glance at Margaery. *You are going to pay later for that.* Margaery smiled and opened her mouth but thankfully Arya came in saving him from whatever his wife was going to say. The conversation turned back to Gendry Waters much to the dismay of Robb and Rickon.

"Gross, you are in love with him," snickered Rickon after fifteen minutes. Arya scowled at him.

"Am not," refuted Arya. Robb took a bite of potato as he looked from his brother to his dark haired sister.

"Are too! You can't stop talking about how stupid he is," argued Rickon. "You can't do your lessons with Lady Brienne properly when you know he is watching you." Arya glared at him furiously and dumped her goblet over his head. Rickon howled and Shaggy Dog started barking. A maid came and led Rickon out to change out of his wet clothes.

"I'm still right though. Arya talks more about him than Sansa talks about Theon," grumbled Rickon adamantly causing Sansa to flush embarrassed and Arya to glower.

Changing the subject, Margaery asked,

"How are you feeling today?" Margaery glanced at Sansa with sisterly concern. Robb glanced at his sister and detected no illness as far he could tell. Maybe it's the monthly ailment for women. *Oh please spare me the details.* Robb wrinkled his nose and suddenly wished he had supped with his men in the Great Hall or took Rickon himself to change into dry clothes. Arya's grey eyes met his with the same look.

"A bit better than yesterday," answered Sansa. "I have written him a letter of the news but have yet to send it." Margaery squealed with excitement. Robb looked at both his sister and his wife in confusion."Do you think it is too early to announce it?" Margaery shrugged in response.

"I told Robb the moment I suspected I was with child the first time. I wrote my family of the news the moment the maester confirmed it." *Oh, a baby.*
“You are with child?” gaped Robb. *My sister is going to be a mother.* Sansa nodded with a smile. Robb congratulated her and kicked Arya's foot to keep her from making a potentially unkind comment about mothering little squids.

Everything had gone wrong, she thought bitterly as she watched her child scorch its food burnt before devouring it. She wandered along the banks of the river her feet bloody and callused from the rocks and hot sand. Her thoughts unwillingly went to her old bear. *You sold my secrets yet you time and time again advised me from this- sham of ruling the slave cities.*

*I sent my bear away.* She heard her bear's gruff voice, becoming more urgent as it faded. News had reached her before she and Drogon flew away, that her bear had made it to Lys and boarded a ship bound for Westeros. They did not say his given name or his title but the description of a balding gruff Westerosi man nicknamed Uncle Bear could only be Jorah Mormont.

*I was supposed to bring you home.*

She had not been pleased that she had banished Ser Jorah Mormont into the service of another queen that was said to be as beautiful and fertile of the land she was born in. Ser Barristan Selmy had said he had never laid eyes on Margaery Tyrell but he had met two of her brothers who Ser Barristan described as handsome in looks, shrewd and ambitious. The younger one was arrogant and hot tempered, whilst the elder was excellent at diplomacy.

Daenerys found herself not only curious but also honestly a bit envious of this Queen in the North. This woman had so much that Daenerys lost and wished she had: a family, children, and a home. The blood that trickled down her leg reminded her of her barrenness. *My lost son Rhaego.* The Queen in the North was rumored to be with child again after giving her husband the Young Wolf an heir. The same question of If I succeed in retaking my father's throne, my birthright, who will follow me when I am gone? ran through her head. She then thought of her second husband, Hizdahr zo Loraq. *Will every husband try to kill me for power?* She thought of Jorah who loved her more than he should.

*Will every man who loves me betray me in some way?*

She could hear her bear's voice reminding her of who she was. *Dragons plant no trees. I have to go home.* But only the image of the red door of the manse conjured in her mind.

Sansa’s life after her lord husband had gone back to the Iron Isles had continued on as normally despite the whole Westerling debacle. Sansa almost forgot she had been wedded and bedded to Lord Theon Greyjoy until her body began to show signs of change. It was like a surreal dream. She suddenly was sensitive to smells, and tastes. She woke up each morning feeling ill. *Hopefully it will pass.* Motherhood was something she had been excited for yet it was overwhelming to think about today. Sansa wasn’t naïve to believe that it was not possible to become pregnant so soon for Robb had been conceived before their lord father had gone to help Robert in the rebellion. Her sweet little nephew Eddard was born almost nine moons after her brother and Margaery had wed.

It had been nerve wracking to marry Theon and she had barely recovered the shock that she was no longer Sansa Stark. The confusing attraction to Jon Snow did not help. Despite his crude humour, Theon in their first two weeks of marriage was quite charming. His eyes roamed to other women but
he vowed there would be no bastard children to contend with their future trueborn sons and
daughters. He had said this while glancing at Jon who was looking in their direction. Jon had looked
away as if he heard Theon. Sansa knowing Jon's sensitivity to his bastardy, had to bite her tongue to
keep herself from berating her lord husband in public and defending Jon.

Kissing Jon in the stables spontaneously had been incredible and at the same time horrible. The way
he had kissed her back made her quite breathless and quite disappointed that he ended it. It had been
horrible because of the way he reacted comparing them to his real parents Lyanna Stark and Prince
Rhaegar. *Theon as Robert, Sansa added.* Sansa thought about it afterwards when Jon and Ghost had
gone that his reaction were not atypical of him. *Always trying to be as honorable as Father.* Of
course, Jon being Jon, he had said words of reassurance that he would miss her and he was not upset
with her for kissing him. But Sansa could not shake the feeling of rejection and self-consciousness.

*I am a married woman now I should not have kissed another man especially who I believed to be
my half-brother for so long.*

Sansa surmised the pained look on his long face was due to his grief and guilt for the dead red haired
wildling girl he loved. *She was probably everything I am not.* Perhaps if both she and Jon were free
to marry and the world did not believe them to be half-siblings; they would have been just as happy
as Cersei Lannister and Robert Baratheon had been with Jon's lost love looming over them. At least
Theon never loved any of the whores from Winter Town or compared her to another. But still her
dreams drifted from domestic life in what she imagined Pyke to look like to Jon standing by a snow
covered fir tree looking up at her with love.

Accompanying Arya to the smithy yet again that week, Sansa got bored by the conversation and her
thoughts drifted to her lord husband. *It's hard to try to fall in love with my lord husband with him so
far away.* For two weeks Theon had occupied pretty much all of her attention even when she
unsuccessfully sought Jon's company. Conversing with Theon always stalled with neither having
anything to say to one another. Common childhood memories were awkwardly broached since the
grief of Lord Eddard and Lady Catelyn Stark's deaths still stung Sansa. However, her growing
physical attraction to her lord husband made up for it. He was handsome and it was oddly reassuring
in a constrictive manner how his arms and legs wrapped/twined around her like tentacles
possessively coveting a chest of golden treasure as they slept.

She jealously watched her little sister chatter away the handsome blacksmith forge armor for Robb's
army. Sansa was curious if Robb and Margaery would truly accept and consider a lowly blacksmith
as a suitor for Arya. *Perhaps Margaery hopes he will one day be legitimized by Stannis and rule
Storm's End or Dragonstone.* The old Sansa would have seethed in petulant jealously that Arya
might make a potentially better match than her.

*But I just want to be happy. I can make a happy home on Pyke, I hope.*

The pious rose rustled with the stack of parchment and books with such frustration.

"We should have backed Lord Stannis during the battle of Blackwater Bay. I was certain he would
have been the victor and disposed the Lannisters. But Father's —" he made a frustrated sound, "and
Lord Stannis' hatred of our House because of Father's siege of Storm's End during Robert's
Rebellion botched things."

"He is a stubborn fool, Lord Stannis named your good brother a traitor and a false king. Thus
denouncing your sister's and her children's right to rule the North and the Trident. And the Reach as
well if neither you or Garlan provide an heir. I am sure Stannis knows this as all too well hence the displeasure towards King Robb Stark.” She tried to change subjects from the dour Storm lord,

*Just talking about him bores me.*

"I'm sure we will find a suitable wife for you. A Northern lass, or a Riverland lady? Since the suitable young highborn girls here in the Reach haven't caught your eye." She eyed her eldest grandchild; he was a handsome man in his mid twenties despite his leg. It had been clear as day that her youngest grandson preferred the company of men than that of the fawning girls and women.

*Perhaps-*

"I'm not at all like Loras, Grandmother. Stop staring at me like that. I don't have time to think of marriage as I am trying to keep us out of potential crossfires over the Iron Throne. Don't think because Stannis Baratheon has sailed from Storm's End that he has sailed away in defeat and is out of the game. If the reports are true that he has headed north it concerns us. What business does he have in the north if not to wage war with the Starks?" The Queen of Thorns peered into the bowl of yellow and purple plums unconcerned.

"Cersei Lannister is imprisoned by the Faith and due to be trialed by combat. The boy king is surrounded by imbeciles and corrupted opportunists from nowhere as per the Lannister genius. Your oaf of a father is itching to take control of King's Landing. I am surprised Stannis is giving up such a golden opportunity to seize his rightful throne. It may have been his last one. Don't fret, Willas it will give you wrinkles. Come now have a slice of pie." She flicked her hand and a serving girl cut a healthy sized slice of pie for the heir of Highgarden.

"But Lord Stannis and Tommen Waters are the last contenders for the Iron Throne. You told me Robb Stark does not desire to sit on the Iron Throne unless he has changed his mind since." She waved for the musician to pay louder.

"There are other contenders with stronger claims to the Iron Throne than Lord Stannis Baratheon, my boy. You haven't been thinking beyond Westeros and beyond the old Stark-Baratheon alliance. I have a preference of the two but I will wait and see who will benefit the Reach and your sweet sister in the North the most. Either way, my son gets to puff his fat chest and hand over the city to who ever successfully makes it to King's Landing under our terms. Loras did not die for Margeary to kneel in submission and be unmade a queen so therefore we must be prepared." She took a sip of her goblet of Arbor Gold listening to the rendition of the tasteless song "The Bear and the Maiden Fair". *Perhaps if the Targaryen girl wins the throne she will take Willas as her consort as a way of allying the crown with the Reach, the North and the Trident.*

Not that Olenna truly wished for a silvery haired bride for Willas anymore than she had wanted to marry a Targaryen.

_________________________________________________________________________

Brienne watched the heavily pregnant Queen in the North stoically bid the King in the North and his northern army farewell. Prince Rickon was red eyed from angry howls. The Lady Sansa Greyjoy bid her brother and great uncle a safe journey to the Wall. The Blackfish had decided to not to return to Riverrun feeling his place was fighting at the Wall alongside his great-nephew. Brienne twitched for some kind of battle to partake in but the Young Wolf wanted to keep some knights at Winterfell to protect his family and home. So she remained alongside Ser Rodrik Cassel and his young daughter Beth. The eldest Mormont daughters Dacey and Alysane were riding up to the Wall as well. Lady Maege remained behind with her newly pardoned nephew for the time being. Brienne glanced at
Jorah Mormont. *Beware of a bear, she sang.* She was almost certain Alysane and Maege had heard that particular line for she caught mother and daughter exchanging odd looks in the previous days. But the Mormonts were protective of their own and the kind Queen Margaery had taken to the estranged husband of one of her aunts. Jorah Mormont felt her stare and stared back. Brienne unwillingly broke it as the young Princess Arya approached her.

"He is being stupid. I don't understand why he needs to go with Robb. He complains about the cold and the snow," complained Arya, "I don't care if Gendry goes off to fight a war." *You care a lot.* But she kept that to herself knowing she herself lied often enough that she did not care for Jaime Lannister's wellbeing when in fact she did care. Brienne spotted a rider with a helmet shaped like a bull staring at Arya's back.

"You should say your goodbyes and wishes for his- their safe return. You will regret it if you don't." Arya shook her head stubbornly.

"Why should I? He promised me he would not leave again." The young Stark girl stormed away with Nymeria at her heels. Brienne was about to go after Arya, when she saw Jorah Mormont bow and stand next to the queen. For an utter stranger that he is, he rapidly gaining the trust and confidence of the Queen. She vowed that she would not fail the Queen in the North and the Stark children she had grown very fond of. *I failed Renly. I failed Lady Catelyn Stark. I won't fail another.*

Chapter End Notes

Gwyn is gone to the randomly selected Lord of Pinkmaiden. Literally looked a picture of all the sigils of the Tully Bannermen and picked one. Which I just realized it's close by Stoney Sept and the Westerland border... her fate shall be revealed much much later. Not anyone is going to be waiting with impatience...lol

Dany is so hard to write.

Jorah the Exiled Explorer is back is at Winterfell. :o
The night before the baby princess was born there was a terrible snowstorm. It had been moons since the King in the North and his host had rode to the Wall. Everyone believed that they would be snowed inside the great castle. The young Queen had slept dreamlessly for only a couple of hours covered in layers of furs and woolen blankets until her water broke. This time, Queen Margaery was aware that her baby was coming and called for Gilly to summon Maester Luwin. Sweaty and grimacing in pain, Margaery cried, labored, and pushed until at last after dawn the princess came out red-faced and squalling. Like her elder brother Prince Eddard, the infant princess was born with wisps of auburn hair and Tully blue eyes. Margaery could tell Elora had inherited Robb's chin as well although the shape of the eyes seemed like her own large eyes. She had cried and beamed with happiness as she held her first daughter in her arms. It was like falling in love all over again.

"You are going to be a great beauty, my little bud." Sansa and Arya sleepily came in to congratulate Margaery and see their new niece. Sansa's small bump that was hidden under the cloak she had thrown on over her nightgown.

"She is beautiful. What's her name?" asked Sansa holding the newborn gently. Robb had wanted to keep their daughter's name to themselves until she was born.

"Elora, Elora Stark."

"That's pretty. I thought Robb was going to name her after Mother," said Arya as she peered at the baby. Margaery felt a tug of sadness that Robb had yet again missed the tender moment of holding their child after they were born. Margeary sighed softly. One day my love, you will be here pacing the corridor or in your solar with Grey Wind waiting for our babe to be born.

"She's named for Loras," answered Margaery simply. Arya nodded and touched Elora's tiny hand. After a few moments, Sansa handed Elora back to her mother and the two sisters quietly left to go back to bed. Eddard was brought in excited to see his mother. He poked at his sister's side.

"Gentle, Eddard, that's your baby sister. You are an older brother now. What a big boy you are!"

"'ard! Ma-ma!" He smiled big all proud of himself. She kissed her baby boy and tickled his adorable chubby legs.

"You are such a sweet babe. Say hello to Elora." Eddard made a little wave before shoving his hand in his mouth. They cuddled until Eddard got too restless and wanted to play causing his sister to fuss so his nursemaid came to bring him back to the nursery. Not too long after the wet nurse came to feed the princess again, when she made hungry cries. So Margaery took the opportunity to have herself washed and dressed in a fresh nightgown with the help of Gilly whilst the other maids changed the soiled sheets.

"You birth such healthy pretty babes, Your Grace," congratulated Gilly as she plaited Margeary's freshly clean hair.

"I birthed them but they take after their father, the King," thanked Margeary modestly dabbing some floral water. "How is little Sam?" Gilly had finally named her boy.

"Aye her hair is red but I think the princess has a lighter hair than His Grace nor is it as bright as the
Lady Sansa's. "It could grow darker or brighter as she grows up. "He's quite a talker now, I 'ope he learns to read them big words. Sam sent him a book full of them for his nameday." They chattered about the new words little Sam had learned before Margaery settled back into bed exhausted.

Jorah woke up and dressed and went to the Great Hall to meet his Aunt Maege and cousin Jorelle to break their fast. Maege handed him a tankard of ale with a toothy smile. Jorah blinked in surprise.

"The Queen has birthed a healthy princess early this morning you just missed Maester Luwin making the announcement." Jorah noticed that everyone seemed to be drinking early in a celebratory manner. Jorah nodded then raised his tankard high and loudly cheered,

"To Princess Elora! And Queen Margaery!" Every hand was raised in toast and all repeated Jorah's sentiments. The sour manly Tarth woman made a toast while casting him a glare for the old and new gods to bless the new princess with good health. The Tarth woman certainly disliked him for whatever reason he did not know. But he did not find being held in her high regard or not a care of his. The northerners and Ned Stark's son had welcomed him the customary friendly yet frigid manner. My head is still attached to my neck. He smiled genuinely that morning for he had grown fond of his little niece the Queen in the North despite having known her for such a short time.

The King and Queen in the North were sitting on their weirwood thrones as they received Jorah in the Great Hall. He walked past his fellow northerners who had aged and sons who had grown since he had fled in exile. Some of the men he noted, wore sigils of the houses of the Riverlands. Jorah noticed his own kinswomen stood near the front by the Queen. His father's sister had aged from what he remembered. Dacey was nearly as tall as he. Alysane was a stout, strong young woman bearing all of the plain looks of the Mormonts. His second youngest cousin who was named after him Jorelle looked at him with childish curiousity. Jorah noted at Maege's youngest daughter Lyanna and her third daughter Lyra were not present. His eyes spotted an older man with a black trout emblazed on his chest. 'The Blackfish'.

Jorah stopped and knelt before the King and Queen in the North. The young bearded man that looked much like Lady Stark. His serious face staring down at him was reminiscent of Ned Stark but did not incite Jorah's enduring feelings of bitterness towards the King's late father. In the space between the King and Queen's thrones sat a large gray direwolf with golden eyes watching Jorah and sniffing the air. 'Lord Manderly did not exaggerate.' He inclined his head respectfully to the young pregnant Queen dressed in dark green velvet. Like the King, the Queen bore no immediate resemblance to a source of bitterness in this case his second wife Lynesse. Lynesse had been a golden beauty with creamy pale skin. Further inspection led Jorah to unnoticeably gasp. The Queen looked almost like the daughter he imagined having with Lynesse. The Queen had the same large doe like eyes though hers were brown and Lynesse's eyes were blue. Queen Margaery's curling brown hair hung loosely in the Northern manner, which Lynesse hated and made disparaging comments about. She had the same proud Hightower look that Lord Leyton Hightower and Lynesse had though it was softer and gentler than the latters. She had the same sweet goddess-like prettiness that he was certain could be only found in the Reach. Her skin looked as pale and creamy as her aunt's against the dark green of her dress that matched his surcoat.

"Your Grace." He then addressed his niece, "My queen." King Robb motioned for him to rise. Queen Margaery smiled at him. Jorah still after all these years did not believe he was at fault for his actions that got him exiled and stripped of his titles but he was thankful for the means to go home. "I am humbled by your pardon, Your Grace."
"We are aware that you were or still are an advisor to Daenerys Targaryen. I am surprised you have left her service or that she has let you go." Jorah clenched his jaw. 'Be upfront.'

"I have been banished by Queen Daenerys Targaryen, the Mother of Dragons." He was not going to list all of her titles like the little scribe did and neither was he going to go in the particulars of his second banishment in front of these people. King Robb nodded sensing Jorah was not going to divulge the full story publicly.

"So the dragons are truly real?" queried Queen Margaery. Jorah knew this question would come and the memory of seeing Dany emerge from the smoking pyre with three small dragons in her arms and on her shoulder.

"Yes, Your Grace there is three. Drogon, Viserion and Rhaegal." There were whispers from behind following his confirmation. The Queen's eyes burned with questions. But she leant over to whisper in her husband the King's ear.

"Do you remember the conditions of your pardon Ser Jorah? That you must relinquish all loyalty to Daenerys Targaryen and swear fealty and service to my husband Robb Stark the King in the North. Seeing as an alliance will be trickier to obtain with her with you no longer in her good favor. If the terms are disagreeable to you the Night's Watch could use a skilled knight like yourself." He glanced at his family who waited for his answer expectantly. 'I did not sail home to go join the Night's Watch. I can still try to broker an alliance for Dany with the North.' He bent down to one knee before Queen Margaery Stark.

"I pledge my unwavering service to my kin by marriage the Queen in the North. By the Old Gods, I swear fealty to the King in the North and House Stark." King Robb nodded once and gestured for him to rise. Queen Margaery smiled broadly.

"Your past crimes have been forgiven Jorah Mormont but do not forget any act of crime against our laws or against us will be punishable by death." Robb Stark gave him a hard look.

"I understand, Your Grace."

Jorah had never underestimated someone. He quickly learned that Margaery was an intelligent young woman. Other than the young Queen in the North's penchant for pretty things and delicacies only found in the warm climates of the South, there were few similarities in personality between Lynesse Hightower and Margaery Stark. Margaery Stark was adaptable to the North in every way her aunt was not. Where the aunt was haughty, the niece was kind hearted. Instead he found himself comparing her to Dany. Both were of similar age and had a gentle heart yet strong willed. Divulging information about Dany was hard and he was reticent on the subject for moons. But the doe-eyed Queen had slowly and patiently wore down his walls and he found himself telling her everything from his brief life in exile with Lynesse as a sellsword to his service to Viserys Targaryen up until his banishment at Meeren. Margaery had listened to it with rapture.

"Can she control her dragons? Setting three rogue dragons loose on the smallfolk and nobles of Westeros will not gain her any genuine support," asked Margaery after he had told her everything about the dragons. Jorah held the same concern and fear of Dany's children. Drogon was likely still flying around killing livestock and small children.

"She will learn," answered Jorah confident in Dany but there was a slight note of uncertainty in his voice that the petite brunette took note of. She pursed her lips and glanced in the direction of the window of the solar.

"If she doesn't, she might be responsible for more deaths than her father Mad Aerys before she has
even set eyes on the Iron Throne. You claim Daenerys is nothing like her unstable father and that she is the real deal. I hope you are right." Jorah opened his mouth to make more points that his Khaleesi shared the same love for the smallfolk as she did but Queen Margaery's face went dark.

"You were alive during the last winter. Everyone tells me this winter is different. Its colder and harsher like the story of the Long Night. Your lord father, the late Lord Commander Jeor Mormont died in a mutiny in an attempt to find the lost rangers led my husband's uncle Benjen Stark. I believe Lord Commander Snow has your family sword in his keeping." Margaery had alluded to it in her letter and Maege had grieved with him in the godswood though his belief in the Old Gods had come into question in trying times. Jorah shifted in his chair and stared at the flickering fire thinking if he had been there perhaps his lord father would be alive and their family sword would be still wielded by old gruff Jeor Mormont not Ned Stark's bastard. He clenched his fist.

"His last words were of you, my maid Gilly is a wildling—she is a friend of Samwell Tarly of the Night's Watch. He held him in his last moments. I don't know what your lord father said exactly, Lord Snow sent Sam to the Citadel in Oldtown." Jorah nodded numbly before he laughed harshly, "His forgiveness likely came with a plea to join the Night's Watch."

"You might find the demands of the Night's Watch more easier to bear than what I have demanded of you. The Night's Watch and all of the kingdoms need you. I need you. As you know, my husband is not riding up north to defend the Wall from wildlings. There are not enough Valyrian swords to arm every man." Jorah thought of Longclaw. "The only other defense we know for certain is fire. I can't sit around and wait and pray Jon—we need an alliance with Daenerys Targaryen. Her dragons are needed to destroy the Others. You must help or we will all die. This is direr than the game of thrones." He had a daft written but he had a niggling feeling that any effort may be futile in the end.

"I would not be here if I were not banished, Your Grace. I believe my counsel and word matters very little or nothing to Dany," responded Jorah honestly with a grimace.

"You can try what harm can befall us all by trying?" Margaery was clearly bluffing her belief that there was no risks. She paused to fiddle with her curls, "You love her. Not just in a reverent way one worships their king or queen or their lord or lady. Like you loved my Aunt Lynesse?" Jorah did not answer for he knew Margaery knew the answer already. She muttered something under her breath about Lyanna Stark.

"You should move on and marry. From what your kinswomen tell me my aunt was too spoiled and inadaptable to the harsh life at Bear Island. Alys Karstark is the heiress to Karhold and unmarried. You have five female cousins as the heirs to Bear Hall. Lord Commander Snow suggested marrying Alys to some wildling leader of the Thenns or something but I don't see the necessity with you here. There could be the Mormonts of Bear Island and another branch ruling Karhold." His initial liking of the Queen in the North was in jeopardy by her meddlesome proposition.

"I am too old," disagreed Jorah annoyed. I love another. Margaery smirked.

"But not too old to fall in love with Daenerys Targaryen." He made an effort not to growl in anger.

"So Your Grace, you want me to try to sway Dany to ally with you and King Robb and marry a girl I have never met."

"Yes and I never made an order for marriage, merely a suggestion. Anyway I have seen you with Rickon and I merely wondered if...well you were her closest advisor and friend. Even if she banished you, I doubt she will be thrilled to learn you are considering remarrying without her consent..."
"I was a lowly exiled knight, I doubt she held me in such regard." I was her trusted bear.

"Perhaps I am entirely wrong. I won't arrange a marriage between you and Alys or anyone if you are going to bring my aunt or the Targaryen girl's ghosts into the marriage bed," Margaery smiled at him sadly, "You are truly a stubborn yet romantic fool." Margaery spoke no more of marriage afterwards though the idea had festered in Jorah's mind. He still desired to be a father. His first wife had miscarried and died weak from the several failed pregnancies. He had turned a blind eye to his unproven but likely suspicion his second wife had taken moon tea to prevent any babies. Jorah had watched King Robb encourage his son to walk with envy.

Margaery had pestered the newly reinstated Lord Jorah Mormont with questions of descriptions of the Targaryen queen in her solar. She learnt Daenerys Targaryen was of shorter stature than her. Jorah was slow to answer the question of which queen was the most intelligent and finally chose a diplomatic answer of stating both queens had their strengths. Margaery had let that unsatisfactory answer slide and she dismissed Lord Mormont's refusal to answer her question of who was the more beautiful. It was vain and she knew she was asking a man who was enamored with Daenerys.

"Is my good sister, the Lady Greyjoy a greater beauty in comparison your beloved Khaleesi? Or does she also pale in comparison to the silvery blonde haired and purple eyed Targaryen queen?" Jorah bristled at the implication she made about his unsaid comparison of her to Daenerys.

"You are mistaken, my queen. I merely felt it was an unfair comparison. You and Queen Daenerys are night and day. You are more vivacious and more—confident…" Not listening, Margaery must have given a dirty look for Jorah quickly offered courtly compliments of her beauty. Margaery was irrationally and childishly jealous of Daenerys' having been more born a princess and having the birthright to the Iron Throne. Now she is a great beauty. She might have been Robb's wife if she had not been exiled and a plethora of other ifs. Jorah had let it slip that the Targaryen queen was barren, which made Margaery happy that she had something over the petite silver haired beauty. Her and Robb's line would continue with their son and daughter. And the other future babes we shall have. I have done my duty as a woman and a queen. I am a mother of children.

"That will be all Lord Mormont," dismissed Margaery in an uncharacteristically clipped tone. She had taken to calling him her Uncle Bear in private and publicly. Jorah quickly bent his balding head in a low bow and said a gruff yet sincere apology before exiting. He is a proud man who rarely apologizes.

Everything was smoothed over when Queen Margaery and her Uncle Bear went to Winter Town to oversee the implementation of her plan to ration the food stock so nothing was wasted or hoarded by the wealthier. The ships from the Reach were beginning to come infrequently. Far too soon than I had expected. Margaery bought goods and a warm meat pie from market vendors.

"I have bought nearly all of warm thick wool made in the North to be given to my people. What else can I do to prevent starvation and ensure they don't all freeze to death?" trembled Margaery clutching Lord Jorah's arm as they walked through the dense snow back to their tied horses. She had ordered all leftovers of every feast to be sent to Winter Town for the small folk's consumption. Should I not bother rationing and let them have a hearty meal for once if death is inevitable for them? The faces of the smallfolk who greeted her upon her arrival to Winterfell moons ago were now slowly growing gaunt. Her eyes began to water. I failed you, Robb.

"You have done all you can do, my queen. You cannot save them all from this winter." Margaery nodded as he helped on her horse.
"But I want most of them to survive." She shivered and tugged on her thick furs. Jorah nodded
understandingly. It was strange how in a short period of time, Margaery could not imagine not
having Lord Mormont as her protector and her advisor. She had intended to only keep him close so
she could keep an eye on him for practical political reasons of course. Margaery was not daft but
even she was not infallible to misjudge. They were aware their growing familiarity had a few
tongues wagging. She touched his bearded cheek.

"Will you promise to never leave my side, Uncle Bear?" A part of her feared he would go south the
moment Daenerys would hit shore. She would have to kill him or imprison him if he dared just to be
safe.

*I swear he sees me as his child as if I were his own cub.*

"Here I stand, my Queen." She smiled with joy and the worries of a few moments ago blew away.
The Queen had found a new knight and he a queen. He was not as beautiful as her beloved brother.
She was not the silver haired queen he was in love with. But that was ok.

Sansa had been stitching diligently little clothes for her baby, when she received a letter and gifts
from her lord husband. The gifts for their unborn child were two stuffed dolls in the shape of a grey
wolf and the other a black kraken with gold on the underside. The gifts for her were of less modest
materials, an exquisite necklace of gold and onyx, which made Sansa gasp at its costliness. The
second was even more startling. It was a small dagger with a jeweled hilt.

*When shall I have ever have to use that?*

She read his letter, which was not as long as she had hoped. Sansa had blushed and felt an
unexpected heat of desire as she read the line of his wish to see her clad in nothing but the necklace
he had selected. He expressed his joy of the news of her being with child and ended the letter with
hopes for her good health and that of their unborn son or daughter. Not a word of the war against his
uncle Euron, which kept them separated or any plans to come to her. Just a cursory sentence of his
good health though there was a brownish stain on the parchment that was a lot like a bloodstain. Fear
for Theon and possible widowhood led her to pray in the small sept and in the godswood as often as
the weather permitted. *Please do not make me lose another person I care about.* She may not have
been enthusiastic about wedding Theon, but that certainly did not mean she wished him an early
death. Sansa wore the necklace daily since receiving it and placed the straw stuffed animals for their
unborn child by the doll her lord father given her.

Robb had found the Red Woman irritating right off the bat. The arrival of Stannis Baratheon and his
men had angered Robb for he knew his and Jon's plans would have to be stalled. The audacity of his
fanatical wife and her men towards not only Robb but to the Night's Watch had grated on his nerves.
*This is no leisurely castle. Even the damn strange fool Patchface knows it.* Robb only found Stannis'
Hand Lord Davos Seaworth and his daughter Shireen likable. She was curious of Ghost and Grey
Wind though her lady mother forbade her to near the 'unnatural beasts'.

"What are you doing here, Stark?" questioned the tall balding Baratheon whose gauntness made him
appearing older in age. Robb had refused to bend the knee when his Hand announced Stannis as the
one true King of the Seven Kingdoms. In fact none of Robb's host had knelt for it was well known
that Stannis did not recognize their King.
"My duty, as King in North and the Trident and as a Stark to be of aid to the Night's Watch when needed," replied Robb evenly.

"I don't remember my husband Azor Azhai reborn, the true King of the Seven of Kingdoms allowing any of the kingdoms to secede," remarked Lady Selyse with her sycophant men nodding in agreement. The who asshii reborn? This was why he preferred the Old Gods, he mistrusted incense for it seemed to addle the mind.

"Nor do I remember him defeating the Lannisters in King's Landing. Though I must offer my thanks to him and the priestess for the death of Lord Renly, I would not have my wife Queen Margaery and our son." It was a low blow but he was in no mood for courtesy. They are wasting my time. He cast a glance at the stormy face of Stannis and the Red Woman's impassive heart shaped face. Seaworth looked frustrated as though it was not going all to plan. "I'd suggest you sail back south, if all you came here to do is gripe about my presence here."

They haven't even seen Gendry yet.

"We have come here for a purpose led by the Lord of the Light," rang the Red Woman staring not at Robb but at Jon. "To end the darkness."

Chapter End Notes

Margaery questioning Jorah: is inspired by Mary Queen of Scots' and Elizabeth I's "vanity" battle/curiousity of "whos prettier, whos taller, who has redder hair." I read about in a Tudor/Stuart Brit History class including a doc comparing Elizabeth's virgin status and Mary's mother/wife/fulfilled her duty as a woman. Mini history nerd blab over. I have read fics where both women either are BFFs or Dany has an intense mistrust or dislike of Margaery.

Whether Margaery is 100% Tyrell looking and has no Hightower looks or not doesn't matter. Jorah saw Lynesse in Dany so seeing something of her in her niece (willfully imagined or real) isn't too far out there.
Jon and Robb stood side by side silently deep in thought and half watching their direwolves prowl around the courtyard. It was Jon's deep somber voice that interrupted the silence.

"I've got to go, Robb."

"Aye, we are coming with you." Meaning Robb and Grey Wind. Jon scowled and shook his head. Melisandre spoke of a hero from her land that had similarities with the story of the Last Hero that Old Nan had told. Though he became disinterested in her word after she made it clear she wanted to burn a man of royal blood for her god. She wants the blood of Gendry Waters or Mance Rayder. Thank the Gods, she has little interest in Maester Aemon's king's blood. Another reason why Robb should stay back was that he was the only one who seemed to be immune to Lady Melisandre.

Who will be there to stop her from killing Mance or his son? Gendry?

"I have to do this alone." Robb frowned at him. Robb was living proof that her word should be taken with a grain of salt. But what choice do I have? Even Aemon talks as if I were to succeed I'd be alone. "If you won't stay behind here at the Wall then go back to Winterfell prepare for the worst; should I fail."

"How do I prepare myself to see everyone I love die or turn into wights before I die as well, Jon? Remember what Father said, the lone wolf dies but pack survives. Bran and Uncle Ben are out there as well, remember." He could see Father saying those words if he were there. He would not let me go alone. Jon frowned deeper at the thought of his little sister, Rickon, Maester Luwin, Gilly, Robb's wife and children dying. Sweet Sansa and her child. Jon looked at the Wall thinking of the impossibility that Uncle Benjen had survived. He was one of the best rangers. He would have made it back to Castle Black by now. Neither mentioned that they had not seen Summer in their wolf-dreams in awhile. Perhaps he had gone too far north of the Wall. Grey Wind and Ghost had not howled in mourning like they did before Lady's remains had made it to Winterfell. There's some hope.

I can't let you come with me, knowing that you might die. Lady Melisandre had warned Jon that Death loomed for his kingly brother beyond the Wall. It looms for us all. Jon shared some of Robb's mistrust of Melisandre and her red fiery god. They were their lord father's sons in their reverent faith in the Old Gods. The only thing we truly got right, mused Robb with exaggeration. For they had both broken Ned Stark's moral code when it came to women. Robb had begot a bastard daughter and Jon had broke his vows and lain with Ygritte. They walked to Jon's tower, which he shared with Robb since the unexpected arrival of Stannis. Jon was about to again firmly assert that Robb was not coming with him, when the Red Woman stood outside his door, her red choker flickering with each pulse.

"Come to try to convert me? Well Lady Baratheon and her men already tried early this morn," snapped Robb as Jon had inclined his head politely. She smiled bemused, sauntering behind them uninvited. She curtsied respectfully to them.

"No, I have not Your Grace. I know my efforts would be futile with yourself and your people." She had a troubled look on her face and did not call Robb deluded by the 'false' Old Gods for once. "I have come to tell you of what the Lord of Light has shown me in the flames." Both looked at her
with varying degrees of interest.

"I have seen a dying girl in grey on a horse riding and I have glimpsed two great sea-creatures battling for the rule of the sea but with death comes life." Her eyes flickered to Jon.

Jon automatically thought of Arya. Robb had mentioned she was fond of Gendry Waters and had not taken his departure well. His mind was spinning from the thought of Arya close to death trying to get here. *Little sister was stubborn but not crazy to brave such a journey alone.*

"Arya?"

"What?" croaked Robb at the same time. His bright blue eyes widened with surprise then narrowed with suspicion. "What sorcery have you done now?" His snarl cracked through the crisp cold air as Satin had let the fire go out. Grey Wind was at Robb's side, whilst Ghost lumbered to Jon sniffing.

"I am only sharing what I have seen," answered Melisandre mildly, "I am sorry it distresses you." Jon had warned Robb to be more tactful around Melisandre for she appeared to be Stannis Baratheon's true queen. Jon could not help but to also noticed that while Melisandre was beautiful, Stannis was very gaunt not at all like the strong man Father had described. Stannis had an air of grim finality and bitterness even as Jon urged him to sail back to south to King's Landing to take the Iron Throne. *To prepare the ill-prepared South for a winter that is coming if has not already.* There was moments where the Baratheon blue eyes flashed energetically but in a blink they dimmed and Jon's words fell on deaf ears. Only Seaworth seemed to have listened.

"Arya would not ride here. Brienne of Tarth would have followed her and brought her back to Winterfell," declared Robb confidently. Jon nodded and let out a breath of relief. "Please do not disturb us unless you have something of actual importance. Where is your steward? It's colder in here than it is outside." Melisandre's mouth twitched and Jon surmised she would have flushed with embarrassment. *Or anger.* Robb sat down brooding with Grey Wind curled at his feet.

"My apologies, Your Grace, and my lord." Jon went to get some firewood since Satin was nowhere to be found. Melisandre followed him out.

"Your brother may not believe me, my lord. Rightly so, King Stannis said three names into the flames. I was shocked to hear and see him alive. The Lord of the Light must have recognized his strength and his part in this war as vital. Forgive my part in that, Lord Snow. You love your family, I can see that."

He scoffed, "And why should I believe in your visions? Let me guess, more doom awaits my brother that was not concocted by yourself or King Stannis."

"Because I had a vision concerning you. The first one I had since arriving here. I felt you would not want your brother or anyone to hear it." Jon stopped taken aback and faced Melisandre.

"A bride of fire and a bride of ice shall desire you. Your choice will bring you your greatest sorrow and regret, Lord Snow. Everything you hold dear to you will be destroyed." Her face was melancholic, Jon almost felt the need to press for more details.

"I am the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch, there won't be choice. I cannot take a wife," he said this knowing the living woman he wished to take as his wife was married and with child. Jon resumed walking. *It's for the best.*

"I fear I may have been wrong about King Stannis. Let me show you Lightbringer. You are Azor Azhai reborn who will save the world from darkness." *That's why you have been urging me that this*
was my battle alone. She touched his arm. Melisandre was beautiful; he could see why Stannis broken his vows to his wife. Her hair was not a natural red. Not like Ygritte's had been or as Sansa's hair is...

Jon walked away back to his tower without any firewood. But luckily, Satin came up the steps carrying firewood a bit out of breath,

"My sorry, my lord. I will have a fire ready. That ugly Queen and her men and that Priestess have been using up all firewood with their fires." Jon nodded absently and looked at his arm that still felt warm from Melisandre's touch.

"Keep still, little brother," ordered Asha harshly, though she looked at him with concern. "The fucker, I'll kill him if he isn't dead already." *I'd rather die a cursed kinslayer then let Euron get away with killing my little brother*. But Theon was still alive and colour was coming back to his face, which was a good sign. Fever has gone away also.

"You think she liked my gifts? I was going to give the babe a sword. But I remembered Maron ripping apart my stuffed kraken our lady mother made for me. Lady Stark was a good mother to her children. Sansa will be a good mother as well." Theon had a far away look on his face that made Asha go cold. *Damn you. Fight.*

"Aye, but I think that dagger was wasted on her, your lady wife is a proper lady. You shouldn't have given in to his goading, Theon. You almost got yourself killed. She is safe in Winterfell, Euron is more interested in the Targaryen girl anyway. This is going to sting." Theon winced and cursed as she cleaned his wounds with salt water.

"I want her here, Asha. Our baby should be born at Pyke. I'll go to Winterfell myself and bring her home." *You can barely sit up without howling in pain.* But she nodded. Theon was fond of his pretty Stark wife. Asha was unimpressed with her good-sister's poorly concealed glances at the handsome Lord Commander. Theon had laughed off her drunken comment of Lord Snow being a more honorable Euron to his Victarion. But at the same time the Stark girl seemed quite taken with Theon as well.

"I'll bring your northern lady wife to you in Pyke. You promise me you will be alive and well by time we come back. Remember, that "tour" you boasted you would give Lady Sansa around Pyke, you can't do that if you are food for the crabs." Theon smiled weakly.

"That's worthy reason to live for."

The crocodile trudged through the snow alone. He had left his muddy swamp lands for the first time in more than seventeen years. He was journeying to the Wall to see the living remainders of the wolf maid and the quiet wolf. The young adventurous crannog he had once been had itched for moons to leave and tell the tale he had kept a secret for so long. *To follow my daughter and son.* The timing had to be right. He had kissed his star farewell and made sure every window was guarded in his absence. Incase the star decided to try to fall again.
Robb's face crinkled with happiness as he read the letter he received from Winterfell. Margaery had birthed a healthy daughter. *My little princess.* Under the formal announcement written by Maester Luwin, Margaery had written a little description of their Elora. He had imagined a little miniature of his wife in his head but Margaery had written that Elora had inherited his Tully blue eyes and wisps of what appeared to be auburn hair. There was an update on Eddard and Rickon's joy that his nephew has suddenly more "interesting to play with." Robb had blushed and was thankful that Maester Aemon was blind as he read,

... *I still have not forgotten the promise you made back in the Riverlands to have a swim with me in the hot springs. I love you and miss you, my wolf.*

His joy at the news of Elora's birth was dimmed by the grimness of the situation that prevented him from being away from his family. Robb sank back in his chair, leather clad and brooding.

"I hope it was not terrible news, Your Grace." Robb looked at the old man.

"My wife Queen Margaery has safely birthed a healthy daughter," announced Robb smiling though his blue eyes were mournful. *She might be walking by time I make it back to Winterfell.* Maester Aemon offered his congratulations.

"A ray of light in these dark times."

"What have you told Jon? Why is he determined to go alone? There is thousands of these Others."

"I have not urged my great-great-great nephew to send you away or keep in you in the dark, Your Grace. I believe Lord Snow is doing this out of love for you. You are familiar with the tale of the Last Hero. Jon believes he is saving you from death. Thus saving himself from the painful possibility of watching a brother fall at his side," answered Maester Aemon perceptively. *All of the Last Hero's companions died.* "I would have done the same for Egg."

"I do not fear death, Maester," argued Robb.

"Yes, you don't fear for yourself but you fear for everyone you love and everyone you are responsible for." Robb froze and his eyes stung as his sisters, brothers, Eddard's and Margaery's face flashed in his mind. *I may never see Elora's face or hold her. Or...* Maester Aemon reached out and felt Robb's face.

"So young. I told Jon this also; it is not shameful to cry, Robb Stark." Robb felt something wet hit his face and he looked up the elderly man to see he was crying as well. "The world is a cruel place for men of Stark blood. Four have died before their time in two generations. I pray you and Egg's great-great grandson do not join them so soon."

"Lady Brienne, what a surprise," greeted Queen Margaery with a smile. Brienne glanced around the queen's solar for him as she bowed low. "Please sit."

Brienne sat down with unease.

"I have come to voice some concerns about you, Your Grace."

"Oh?" The Queen raised an eyebrow. Brienne stared at her hands and chose her words carefully.

"There have been gross exaggerations and slander made about Your Grace and Lord Mormont. The
servants are gossiping at the lateness of the hour he is alone in your company. He is at your side all the time, which some believe he has become your lover." The Queen made an indelicate snort. Brienne's eyes widened in shock. *Accusations of queenly infidelity should not be taken lightly.*

"That is nonsense. There is a nothing to worry about Brienne. Lord Mormont and I have been working on a suitable alliance with Daenerys Targaryen. I hope she is amenable to my terms despite her banishment of Jorah. We are still waiting for a reply." Brienne gaped and her mouth was open in a small 'o'.

"Shouldn't you have inform the northern lords in a council or something?" blurted Brienne cringing that she spoken in a critical manner to the Queen.

"What lords are here to attend a council? They have all gone to Castle Black with the King. Only Lord Jorah, Lady Maege and yourself remain. I did not see the point in announcing anything incase nothing came out of it." Brienne nodded feeling silly.

"Is that all, Lady Brienne? I hope you don't trouble yourself over this frivolous gossip." Brienne nodded and rose and bowed before exiting the solar. In the corridor, she bumped into Lord Jorah Mormont carrying a stack of parchment and scrolls.

"My lord," said Brienne stiffly. The balding man dipped his head respectively.

"Lady Tarth," greeted Jorah neutrally as he slide past her and entered the Queen's solar. Brienne glared at his back. She could hear the deep and the soft feminine voices through the door. She quietly peeked through the door that had not been closed completely, and was certain she saw the Queen squeal with delight and wrap her arms around Lord Mormont's middle.

"Really. Let me read it again. Oh Jorah! What would I do without you?" declared the Queen in the North.

"You are quite capable on your own, Margaery." His resonant voice was dripping with fondness. Brienne's blue eyes almost bulged out their sockets. The familiar use of her name. Unable to comprehend what she just saw, she half ran to Jaime's guarded and locked chamber.

Sansa had been alarmed by Lady Asha's arrival to Winterfell to escort her to Pyke on behalf of Theon. She had paled, when she heard the news of his injuries. *And why he had got them.* Margaery had barred Sansa from leaving in her condition. Birthing on the road was one thing, birthing on the road in heavy snows was another.

"My lord brother wants his first child to be born at Pyke," argued Asha impatiently as if she had not planned for an extended trip.

"The second, third, fourth or whatever shall be born there. Can't you see she is too far along to for such a journey," snapped Margaery.

Maester Luwin had not vocally pressed her to stay until after the baby had been born as Margaery and even Lady Maege had. Sansa had been conflicted in making her decision to journey to Pyke now or wait until after the baby was born. Naturally, she wished to remain at Winterfell surrounded by familiar faces.

"Would you or Theon be angry if I refused to go to Pyke until after the baby was born?" Sansa had asked noting of Asha's anxiousness to return to the Iron Islands.
"I'll be angry if he dies without seeing his child or having any family with him. Because his greenlander wife is too soft to to brave a journey," Asha had spat. Sansa bristled.

"I am not weak, Lady Asha. I am thinking of his- our child. Tell me why did Theon want me to stay here and not journey to Pyke earlier?"

"Has my brother told you about why our lord father banished our Uncle Euron?" Sansa shook her head.

"Euron raped and got his brother Victarion's salt wife with child. He goaded Theon that he would do the same to you."

She had heard about how horrible Theon's older brothers had been to him but this was more extreme and terrifying. *My sons will love and respect each other.*

"Before or after Theon was wounded?" asked Sansa. The look on Asha's face told her all she needed to know. *That explains the dagger.*

---

Sansa in a flurry had her things packed and barely processed the upheaval of her life until she was far from the beloved grey walls of Winterfell and all of the equally beloved people inside it. She had birthed her babies and left her home forever in such a short time. She had cried in the privacy of the wheelhouse when the realization hit her that she had not given everyone a proper farewell. *I did not say farewell to Lady's gravestone or to Father in the crypts.* Rickon had cried at the news of her leaving Winterfell. Margery had tried again to persuade her to remain at Winterfell until the twins was three moons old. *A moon and almost a half should be ok.* Arya had said nothing but on Sansa's last night Arya had crept into her bed and slept next to her as they did as little girls. Lady Mormont had offered to accompany her to the Iron Islands but Sansa had gently declined her offer. *I don't fear Theon or his sister.*

Sansa, the wet nurses, and the babies were kept warm from the cold during their long journey. Though it was much warmer once they reached Cape Kraken. Sansa almost wished she had braved the journey whilst she was still pregnant for it had been gruelling to travel with two newborns. He had cried and howled for most of the journey leaving Sansa with little to no sleep. His sister wailed when her sleep was disturbed by him. Sansa feared he had caught an illness and was very distressed that he would die. So she spent many nights listening to their breathing when they fell asleep. Asha had cursed and grumbled amusedly that he was just as horrible as Theon had been as a baby. Sansa shifted the sleeping boy in her arms and stroked his fine black hair as they sailed to island of Pyke. One would think he was the most angelic of babies like his sister.

"I take that back, not even the rocking of sea could shut up Theon," said Asha before barking orders at the sailors. *The rocking of the carriage or rocking him in my arms made him only howl louder.* The cold winds coming from the sea blew Sansa's hair in her face as she looked upon her new home. The castle of Pyke was series of towers connected by bridges of grey-black stone or swaying rope bridges. It was alarming how the towers were merely standing on the eroded remains of the cliff it was built on and completely surrounded by the water. Once they made port at Lordsport, Lord Sawane Botley of Lordsport greeted her as well members of his family, and subjects curious by the arrival of their Lady Greyjoy and heir. Sansa had flushed that she had not asked Asha any questions about the people of the Iron Islands' faith in the Drowned God. She had known she and Theon would be wedded before the Drowned God. *Is there a ceremony for the birth of a child*
As she made her way through the gatehouse of Pyke, Asha and Dagmer Cleftjaw pointed out the lighter grey tower of the three.

"The old one was destroyed when King Robert and your lord father breached the walls." Sansa looked straight ahead unsure if that was a veiled warning of how she would be seen as, the reminder of the forces led by her lord father that crushed the late Lord Balon's rebellion.

"Now a Stark has bore the Greyjoy heir," remarked Sansa coolly. Asha laughed.

"Aye, mi'lady. Welcome to Pyke."

Sansa was led not to the Great Keep as she had expected to be welcomed by Theon sitting on the Seastone Chair. Instead Asha and Dagmer brought her to a tower called the Sea Tower. The rope bridges frightened her as they sway and she could not help but look down at the salty grey blue sea. Sansa stared at the wet nurses warily carrying her babies. *Don't you dare drop them.* Trying to be fearless in front of her good sister and her lord husband's old master at arms was impossible. Knowing her husband's lord father had died from falling from one of these bridges made her froze in fear and she had to be physically led along the bridge by Asha.

"You'll have to get use to be them eventually." *I don't think I will.* By time she crossed the third bridge and made it inside the tower, she exhaled in relief. Sansa entered Theon's solar. Theon rose from his seat and strode towards her before she could dip into a curtsey. *He's alive.* She blushed at the searing kiss he greeted her with.

"Hello."

"My lord," breathed Sansa. Theon smiled and then gaped in shock at the two babies held by the wet nurses.

"Twins?"

"Yes, a daughter and a son." The nurses presented them to their father. Sansa look up at him gauging his reaction. He seemed pleasantly shocked.

"Two. They are small. Blue eyes like you." He nervously held their daughter. "Don't want to drop her."

Without looking away, he addressed Asha and the old scarred Dagmer,

"Sister, Uncle, thank you for bringing them safely home." Sansa had thanked Asha, Dagmer, and the other men already.

"Yes, thank you for making the journey as comfortable and safe as possible for the babies and I." Asha smiled and clapped him on the shoulder.

"Good to see you walking about, little brother. I'm glad to know you hold up your side of a bargain." Dagmer grumbled something along a similar vein before both left leaving husband and wife with their infants. The wet nurses went out to wait outside until they were needed.

"Was the journey rough?"

"It wasn't too bad," downplayed Sansa. "He apparently is very much like you were as a baby." Theon smiled sheepishly.
"Do they have names?" Sansa shook her head no. Sansa could only think of Northern names. She liked the name Rodrik but she was not certain if Theon wanted to name his heir the same name as his hated elder brother.

"I was afraid of giving them names that are too 'greenlander'."

"No Florian or Jonquil Greyjoy?" teased Theon. Sansa laughed at horrible sounding the names were.

"Darn, my dreams are dashed."

"Thank you." Theon was still smiling yet she knew he meant he was thanking her for their children. Sansa smiled shyly back at him. All too soon, the babies needed to be fed again. The wet nurses left with the babies following a maid leading them to the nursery. Sansa wanted to follow as well as she had not been separated from either since they were born.

"Hungry or thirsty? I have warm mulled wine but if you are hungry I can send someone to the Kitchen Keep to get something," inquired Theon as Sansa stared at the door.

"Um, Mulled wine and some stew or fish and potatoes." Theon led her to the table and left the solar for a moment. A serving girl came and poured her a glass of mulled wine, then briskly ran out. Sansa noted as he walked and sat down next to her that Theon winced as he walked. He was handsome as ever but he looked exhausted.

"Are you well, my lord?" asked Sansa with concern. He had always been wiry and he was fully clothed so she could not tell if he had lost weight in his convalesce.

"It's Theon, we have known each other for many years now, Sansa. I am better, love." He poured himself a glass of wine.

"Theon, is he dead?" Theon frowned and shrugged.

"Asha is convinced he is and so is Dampair. Asha isn't convinced at all. He quickly changed the subject from his wounds and Euron to his queries about the happenings in the North as they waited for her meal. Sansa frowned yet she filled him in on the birth of Robb and Margaery's daughter Princess Elora. She recounted the execution of Jeyne Westerling and Arya's handsome friend Gendry Waters' arrival to Winterfell. Theon had shaken his head and muttered his incredulity that Robb had fathered a bastard. She glossed over Robb and his host joining Jon at Castle Black. Theon need not to feel compelled to join as well.

"More handsome than I?" teased Theon. Sansa shyly replied that Gendry was not in her opinion, which he smirked and asked her if she liked the necklace. Sansa touched the necklace and smiled. Her long hair was in a plait but she was certain it had come undone by the harsh winds from the sea making her look disheveled.

"It is beautiful. But Asha warned me some of your—our people would say it should have been paid for by the iron price. She said your lord father would have looked down upon it." Theon himself wore his chain with the golden kraken over his black surcoat and fine mail.

"He is dead. You are my lady wife, if I want to give you a gold necklace, I shall. Uncle Aeron can criticize my 'greenlander ways' but even he isn't the same man I knew before I was taken to Winterfell. How can he expect me to remain unchanged after so many years?" ranted Theon bitterly. Sansa put her hand over his and softly murmured,

"I love the necklace and the dolls for the babies."
"Two more shall have to be made. Can't have them fighting over which gets the wolf or kraken." The plump serving maid came in with a tray of hot fish stew and a small freshly baked loaf of bread. The smell of the food reminded Sansa of how hungry she was and she ate her meal wordlessly whilst her husband moved on to a tankard of ale.

"You shouldn't drink so much on an empty stomach," reprimanded Sansa. Theon glanced at her and smiled.

"It's fine, Sansa. I ate earlier. You look tired plus we have an early start tomorrow." Sansa yawned as she took his hand as they walked out of the solar.

"Why do we have an early start tomorrow?" asked Sansa leaning her tired head on Theon's shoulder.

"You weren't expected to arrive until tomorrow and I had arranged for a midday feast for my men to welcome you to Pyke and the Iron Islands." Theon guided her up the slightly uneven steps to their bedchamber. The second door they past, Theon pointed at it, "That was my chamber when I was small." The nursery was a couple of doors away from their chamber. Sansa kissed each babe goodnight, noting the squalling had not started with relief.

The first thing Sansa noted of her new chamber was that there was no fur covers on the bed. The room was decked in the Greyjoy colours, mostly in black. It was a sparse room yet no one could deny it was not a lord's chamber. It was clear no woman had shared these chambers in longtime for there was no looking glass like the one she had back at Winterfell. She had known that Theon and Asha's lady mother had not lived at Pyke for many years since Theon had been taken as hostage.

Sansa watched Theon removed his cloak, surcoat, and chainmail.

"The privy is through there. I'll leave the décor of this chamber to you. To be honest when I was wounded and brought back here it was the only time I slept in here. I preferred my old chamber out of habit." Sansa nodded as she undid her plait. Do they not have maids to help me dress and undress here in Pyke? She sat down the bed to remove her pale blue slippers and her wool stockings. Thankfully, a young blonde buxom maid came in carrying one of Sansa's nightgowns.

"I am sorry, my lady. I had trouble finding your nightgowns and robes. Yara and I have never seen such a grand lady's wardrobe. Well at least not on the Iron Islands." There was a bit of envy and disapproval at the ostentatiousness of Sansa's new gowns and fur lined cloaks in the maid's voice. Sansa merely nodded and allowed the maid to help her out of her gown and into her cream linen nightgown with Myrish lace of a similar shade.

After Sansa dismissed the maid, Theon's voice startled her as she had forgotten he was still in the chamber.

"You shouldn't let the servants speak to you so. The servants should not be dressed so wantonly either. Theon was lounging on the bed on the right side closest to the one window in the chamber. He still had his black britches and a black tunic on. He pulled the coverlet back as she lay down besides him. They peacefully stared at each other with only the sound of the waves and a lone gull squawking. Theon shimmied out of his britches and got under the blankets as well. Sansa reached to help him pull his tunic over his head.

"No, Sansa. I am keeping it on." His voice was sounded harsh. Sansa dropped her hands expecting him to roll over with his back facing her. Theon looked self-conscious and as if he wanted to bolt.

"Why? You are my husband. Scars don't frighten me." Well not anymore. I found the Hound's gruesome face and Tyrion's nose-less face horrible to look at. She had not minded Jon's numerous scars. Sansa boldly kissed him like she had done during their wedding feast. Theon kissed her back
and rubbed her breasts making her moan before placing a hand over her still slightly rounded stomach and whispering things about how happy she had made him. She tried to remove the garment again but he shook his head. He was unsmiling and his eyes looked away from her.

"It stays on, Sansa."

Unbeknownst to her, Theon had tried to make a move to prop himself over her but Sansa rolled over to her side with her back facing him. Exhausted, she did not turn around when she felt him shift around in bed or wrapped an arm around her. Sansa was lulled to sleep by the rhythmic waves crashing against the rocks and the journey, whilst Theon lay awake and grimaced in great pain when she leaned her back against his chest.

They were riding deep into the Haunted Forest. The men's hair and beards were snow covered. There was a layer of snow piling on Robb's bronze and iron crown. Everyone was on their guard since the recent wight attack that killed a wildling recruit.

"You sure you trust that sword to work like Old Mormont's sword against the Others and wights?" asked Robb worriedly as they approached two trees covered in crows. Grey Wind and Ghost ran ahead checking out what lied ahead. Against Jon's wishes, Pyp, Grenn and Dolorus Edd rode behind with Robb's guard. Jon had reluctantly returned the Mormont family sword as the sword had served him so well since it was given to his keeping. Lightbringer felt off to him ever since Maester Aemon mentioned that the sword was wrong and something about the wrong light will plunge everyone into further darkness. Jon touched the blade that did not hold anymore heat than any other sword.

"It will have to do," answered Jon who turned back and glanced at Dacey who ride alongside Gendry Waters with Lord Howland Reed in front of them. Howland had filled in the missing pieces of Lyanna and Rhaegar's story that Jon did not know. The Tournament at Harrenhal, the Knight of the Laughing Tree, and the battle at the Tower of Joy. Jon felt pain and sadness for the mother he never knew who bore similarities with Arya and Sansa. For the man who would always be his lord father. I would do the same for Arya and Sansa. He then looked up at crows perched above them. Suddenly, the murder of crows flew down at Jon and Robb cawing.

"What the-" cried Robb.

_Flee!_

_Fly! Fly! Brother!_

_Flyyyyy!_

Ghost, the quietest of the direwolves howled eerily, which made Jon's blood run cold. Robb and Jon locked eyes and nodded with wordless agreement. Robb drew Ice out and Jon slipped into Ghost.

Chapter End Notes

Edited. Yes. Random. Twins. I couldn't pick one or the other. So we got a girl and a boy.
Unnamed Greyjoy baby boy when he is grown up I imagined him to look like Killian Jones from OUAT. Girl -no idea since I have decided her hair is black as well.

They need names I know. Alayne is my unoriginal idea for the girl. lol

Thank you for the suggestions for my issue of "how Jon is going to defeat the Others without the help of Dany's dragons?" :)
Rickon did not like change. He hated that Jon and Robb had left to go up north. But Osha had reassured him it was for a noble reason: to fight and destroy the White Walkers and end winter. However, there was no reassurances or anything, when Sansa and her babies left to live with Theon. Why doesn't Theon live here like he used to? Jon returning to the Wall then Robb following him and now Sansa was gone. It was all too similar to Rickon. Father and Mother left and never came back. Robb, Arya, and Sansa took forever to come home that he had almost lost all hope. Even Bran left me behind. Bran had been the last Stark to leave and still had yet to return. Everyone stopped and stared out of a window at the land beyond the northern walls or in the courtyard gazed at the northern gate for a few seconds expecting (more like vainly hoping) to see Summer leading Bran carried by Hodor, and the Reeds.

He and Shaggydog followed Arya and Nymeria around everywhere to make sure they didn't leave also. He refused to do any of his lessons, since his hunger strike did not last. Roasted rabbit and potatoes were too good to pass on. Rickon was confident that Margaery would never leave the castle without her two babies nor could he think of a reason why she would have to leave anyway. Rickon did not know the world that lay beyond the walls of Winterfell but he had formed a bad opinion of King's Landing and the South that disrupted his world the day the King and the royal family came north to take Father and his sisters away. He could not remember his own father's face or voice though people remarked how Jon looked like a younger Ned Stark.

When Jon is older he will look like Father then maybe I will remember again.

"Why are you following me?" growled Arya with irritation one afternoon, when he found her cloistered in a corner by a window with Nymeria gnawing an old bone. She was trying to sew a large article of thick material. Not very well, he observed.

"Making sure you don't leave me behind again like they did," replied Rickon honestly with an edge of resentment. "You aren't allowed to leave too." Arya's gray eyes softened and she sighed. He looked away trying not to cry. I'm not a baby anymore.

"I am not going anywhere, Rickon. But I will leave Winterfell, one day when we are older. I want to go on adventures." He remembered Margaery crouching down and soothing him that Sansa had to go explore the Iron Islands for the shiniest pebble and the largest conch with Theon and their babies.

"I am leaving too," she'd said. "Like Sansa left to go on an adventure." Arya snorted but then knitted her dark brows in thought.

"I have a different idea of an adventure than that but yes. You will go on your own adventure one day too." To where? He thought of the places he had heard of with positivity. I'll go to Riverrun and visit Uncle Edmure then to the Vale where Father went to play with the fat king. Maybe Cousin Robin and I will be friends too.

"Do you miss them too?" He wasn't sure if he was referring to their deceased parents or their brothers and sister or both. She bit her lip and nodded. Her long dark brown hair covered her face as
she bent her head over her handiwork but Rickon noticed two tears drop on the cloth.

"Robb and Jon are of the north. But Gendry – and Uncle Brynden aren't. He didn't have much warm clothes when he came here. I thought if I could – since I am not allowed to fight too. I want to do something. He doesn't realize what he got himself into by going to the Wall. I tried to tell—stupid stubborn bull." Arya looked like she was about to rip the cloth into shreds. She kind of did. He rolled his eyes. *I wasn't talking about the stupid blacksmith.*

"Fur," said Rickon. "You can ask Osha to make a coat or a hooded cape. Its warmer than that." He didn't tease her this time or mention his name. Arya smiled weakly at him and hugged him. Rickon stood on the chair as he and Arya looked out the window. From inside, the snow had a wondrous and glittery beauty that could not be replicated in a tapestry or a painting but every northern child was raised to recognize the destructiveness of winter firstly. The north still remembered that winter of long, long ago.

"What are we going to do if Robb doesn't come home? Or Jon?" whispered Arya.

_Cry._

Little Eddard who could walk a short while before falling on his butt would be King in the North. Rickon recalled his last lesson with Maester Luwin before he refused to have anymore. How serious and faraway Maester Luwin had been during the random family tree lesson when he was suppose to learn sums. _With Bran not here, I'll be baby Eddard's heir. Or tiny Elora._

"He will though, he is lucky." Moons ago, Rickon had arrived to supper late and on his way to the Great Hall he had overheard Jon tell Sansa she was lucky because of her red hair. Robb, Bran, and I have red hair. "We should worry about Jon. He has hair like Father." Arya gave him a weird look as he walked away with Shaggydog to go visit Osha in the kitchens.

He smelt a faint scent of his brother, the lost one, amongst a pack of cousins. _Summer and Bran, shouted Jon._ He turned his head to look at his gray brother and whined urgently. The gray one raised his head and sniffed the air and ran in the direction of the scent. Jon followed but slowed down in his tracks to sniff at the largest crow in the tree. _Another warg._ He growled in warning and bounded after his brother. He found Grey Wind in a clearing by a cave covered and blocked by heavy snowdrifts. Grey Wind snarled and nipped him urgently. Yellow eyes locked on red. But the smell reached his snout before Grey Wind warned him.

_Cold dead things. Go back._

Ghost was in agreement and tried to force Jon out. _What about Summer and Bran?_ But Grey Wind had left the clearing and gone back to Robb. Jon stared back at the cave and looked up to see the largest weirwood tree he had ever seen atop the hill. _Is this where Bran was headed too? Summer was close enough to smell them, yet he did not appear. Jon ran and dug at the snow frantically. I'll find you Bran. We won't leave you trapped in there._ Jon felt the ice-cold wind that signaled the presence of wights and Others yet he still didn't heed Ghost's warning. _I'm almost there._ It was almost big enough for him to squeeze through.

_Fly! Fleeefeeef!_ The crow swooped down and pecked at him hard. Jon whipped his head to snap his teeth at the blasted bird. Hands were breaking through the ice and snow; wights were rising in the clearing. Lord Howland Reed ran across the clearing with such ease to him.
"Before they notice." He placed a hand on him and Jon lost connection with Ghost. He was back in his own body and watched Robb and Dacey riding for the clearing, shouting at Ghost to go back and orders to the men. Jon ordered Gendry to tie his horse to his before running back to clearing. He watched Robb and Dacey as they fought the rising wights. Grey Wind and Ghost snarled and attacked at the wights, removing limbs to slow them down. Jon noticed Lord Reed was still by the cave and ran to him.

"I smelt Bran's wolf. Bran, Hodor, and your children are somewhere here, my lord. We have to find them." But Lord Reed only stared up the giant weirwood with fascination.

"They made it here, yes," murmured Lord Reed. His face became tight with resignation. Lord Reed did not do anything but whisper under his breath whilst staring at the tree above. Jon looked behind him for any wights coming at them before crouching down to the hole he had dug. Grenn and Dolorus Edd had came hollering and waving torches.

"Bran! Hodor! Can you hear me? Its Jon!" bellowed Jon. No one called back and he could not see for it was too dark. He debated slipping back into Ghost whose sense of smell was better than his then he heard a small shout through the snow. A small brown haired head popped out of the hole.

"It's me, Meera!" called a young woman's voice. She was small enough to slip through the hole in the snow with ease. "Did Coldhands lead you here as well?" Jon helped her up and she burst into tears at the sight of Lord Howland. "He wouldn't fight even though he wanted to go home—I tried to get him to fight to change his fate but…" Jon frowned somberly at her anguished implication of Jojen Reed's death.

Where are Bran and Hodor though?

"Where's Bran?" asked Jon urgently. Meera bit her lip and looked at her lord father who looked impassively before answering him,

"He won't come. Bran is learning to be a greenseer. We have to go, we can't linger. There are more wights. We have to leave them behind." Her voice was stiff as though she were repeating an answer she did not fully agree with. No, he is my brother.

"I'll carry him back to Castle Black and make sure he goes home to Winterfell." A hand held him back. It was the little crannog woman and her large moss green eyes blinking with tears.

"Jojen said you would try deter Bran from his purpose out of love and protectiveness when you found him. His green dreams never lied. My brother and I fulfilled our purpose to help Bran to the cave of the Three Eyed Crow. Please, honor my brother's sacrifice."

"Bran is needed as you are needed, my lord," spoke Lord Reed ominously. Behind Lord Reed, Robb stood red-faced from exertion and looked at Jon and Meera Reed questioningly.

"Where's Bran, Hodor, and Jojen Reed?" called Robb. The snow around them was cracking and the ice-cold wind returned. More wights. Jon punched the snow and heavy snow fell down covering the hole to Bran and Hodor. And who and what lay down there. The boy had foreseen Jon finding the cave. Why is he is needed as I am? Why him? Tears stung his eyes at the decision he had made. He hoped he had made the right decision.

"They are dead," Jon lied, his voice cracking as he watched Robb's hopeful face crumble. "We have to go now." Grabbing Meera Reed's hand, they followed Lord Howland and the rest out of the clearing. Meera slowed down as they drew near the others mounted on their horses, waiting. Jon followed her gaze at the large black crow landing in the tree above them.

Her soft voice called out, "Farewell, Bran." Jon gaped in realization. Bran was the warg. Jon wanted
to beg Bran to come with him and Robb. *I don't want to say goodbye.* So he whispered,

"Fly to me, when you want to go home." *I'll come and find you.* The crow flew away, cawing. A distant mournful howling followed though it could have just been the wind.

"He will be fine. Bran has been looking out for you all," whispered Meera cheerfully before joining her father on his horse. "He always will." Jon nodded as he looked at Robb.

"Something doesn't add up, Jon," thought Robb. "The direwolves howled when Lady and Father died. Yet neither Grey Wind nor Ghost sensed Bran's death. Why didn't Summer come to us? What did Lady Meera say exactly happened to Bran?"

"Bran died alongside her brother Jojen of an illness and Hodor was killed by a wight attack. I wouldn't press her for information so soon; she is devastated she couldn't save them," Jon lied again. He was shocked at how easily the lies flowed from his lips. Lying to Robb hurt especially when the lies caused Robb pain. Robb looked back at Meera who was silently crying behind Lord Howland then looked at Jon stubbornly.

"But Summer—" Jon avoided Robb's eyes and looked ahead.

"I'm sorry about your brother, Jon," said Grenn sadly. "Your Grace." Voices offering condolences and words of praising Bran Stark, Jojen Reed and Hodor's bravery. Jon gritted his teeth at some of the men's unsaid surprise that a crippled, a simpleton, and a sickly crannog made it so far. *You could have told the truth, he reminded himself.* But Jon could not take back his words now. His only fear was that Robb would slip into Grey Wind and realize Bran was still alive back in that cave. It was days later and Robb was still mourning and placing Bran's 'death' on his shoulders.

"Bran would have wanted us to press on and destroy the Others. Think of Margaery and your children. Of Arya and Rickon. It is not your fault Robb," Robb looked away.

"He was my little brother, of course it is my fault. I should have looked for him and brought him back home. Father would have searched for Uncle Benjen." *Like he searched for Lyanna.* Jon bristled at the indirect and perhaps unintentional double slights. *After all I am only the bastard cousin and I even failed to find Uncle Benjen.* Robb's miserable mood was putting a damper on the men's morale. Not that it was particularly high to begin with. Jon was beginning to fear it had been the wrong idea to lie to Robb about Bran. Watching Robb's usual optimistic self be chipped away faster than their provisions, made Jon even regret allowing him beyond the Wall.

*I am the dour and grim one, not you.*

Despite her willingness to have an open mind, Sansa disliked Ironborn culture privately. Sansa was repulsed by the common game called the finger dance. *Dagon shall not play such an awful game.* The Ironborn bannermen welcomed her though she saw some of their disdain of her in their eyes. Sansa felt homesick for Winterfell, for someone to talk to whilst Theon and Asha were busy. She spent most of her time with the twins Dagon and Alayne but she craved the companionship of a friend. *I miss you Jeyne Poole.* She was desperate enough to call upon Damphair one day. But she was greatly annoyed to learn of the normalcy for Ironborn men to take "salt wives" from Theon's dour Uncle Aeron and his Drowned men. Asha and Theon had failed to tell her about the difference between a rock wife and a salt wife. She meant to bring it to Theon but she got distracted somehow and forgot all about it.
Little more than a moon had past since her arrival to Pyke, when she was allowed to see Theon's scars. They were jagged lines, one appeared to have been a miss attempt at slashing Theon's throat. The scars would not have looked so bad if whoever stitched it had not done such a bad job. She scowled at his stupid vanity and everyday she cleaned the area with salt water after she had redone the stitches.

Sansa was also busy planning Theon's name day feast, when she was stopped in Great Keep by a curvy red haired woman. The woman was clearly a whore of one of the men, as she wore paint.

"Lady Greyjoy, what a surprise. Tis' rare to see you here," exclaimed the woman dipping into a curtsey. "I'm Ros." Sansa smiled politely. Ros was around Theon's age, maybe slightly older.

"I remember the day you were born. Your lord father had every bell ring in your honor." Sansa blinked in surprise and shock. "What was a whore from North doing here? Please let it be one of men who escorted me here. But no woman besides her, Asha, and the wet nurses had travelled with them.

"You are from Winter town," guessed Sansa, which meant Theon had known this woman for a long time. How dare a whore of Theon's come up to me? How dare Theon openly house her in the same castle as me? Is this how Mother felt?

"Yes, I was. I had left though shortly after Lord Stark and you left for King's Landing for more opportunities..." Ros continued but Sansa did not care about what dubious opportunities she had stumbled upon. "...Your brother Jon paid me for my service once but—" Theon, now Jon. The thought of being in close proximity with the woman who had lain with both her husband and Jon made her want to scream and cry at the same time. Of course she had to have red hair as well.

"I am very busy. Get out of my sight, now." Her voice shook with anger and shock. Ros smiled sadly and curtsied as if Sansa had paid a compliment.

"He will protect you from him. Lord Theon loves you so," Ros trailed off and walked away. "I am glad you got away from him." Sansa glared at her retreating back yet failed to notice the pin in the shape of a mockingbird. Sansa stood there for a few moments reeling. Theon and Jon. Sansa was no longer in the mood to oversee the preparations and did not remember walking back to the Sea Tower but she 'woke up' from her thoughts as she entered her and Theon's bedchamber. Theon was yelling at her maid with a wild of fear and anger on his face.

"What do you mean you don't know where Lady Sansa is?" Her maid was shuddering with fear and shaking her head in protest that she had not seen Sansa for an hour.

"Stop terrorizing my maid, my lord. I am fine," snapped Sansa. The poor maid ducked out of the chamber crying. Theon let out a sigh of relief and embraced her. He kissed her neck, "Don't do that again, Sansa. I thought you might have fallen off a rope bridge and drowned or Euron might have—" She blinked away tears as he held her.

Theon was having a good time at the feast Sansa held in honour of his twenty second name day. He was the happiest he had ever been on his name day. His place and purpose in the world was clear. After a lifetime of the old gods and the Drowned God of the Islands not hearing his prayers. I'm no longer the boy without a family. Last son of Balon Greyjoy sitting in the chair every lord and the old kings of the Iron Islands had sat. At his side, his adoring Sansa, the daughter of the man who held
him hostage and denied him acceptance. *I won't reject my children like Balon did to me. They'll have the childhood that I never had.* He had laid awake after Sansa told him of the nightmares she had still from King's Landing. *No Joffery shits will be allowed to look my daughter.*

His face was flushed from drink and he leaned over to kiss Sansa's lips and neck many times. Sansa was eating some pudding as he whispered in her ear of how he would thank her later alone. Her cheeks went pink and she smiled shyly. Someone shouted a ribald comment to him but he couldn't hear over the din, so he laughed cause that how he responded to everything. His lovely wife stiffened and wrenched her hand from his. Theon turned his attention back to Sansa who had a clenched jaw.

"Is there something wrong?" Sansa shook her head no and stared stonily at the other end of the hall.  
"Are you ready to retire?" *She is in the mood for navigating.*

"Which bed shall you go to tonight, my lord?" asked Sansa frostily. Theon blinked in confusion at the trick question. *My old chamber or our chamber?*

"Whichever one you are in?" answered Theon as they slipped out of the hall. Theon brought his half full mug of ale.

"I sent your beloved salt wife away." Her voice was cold as ice. Theon almost choked on his ale, then the realization of who Sansa might confuse as his supposed salt wife dawned on him.

"Ros?" Sansa wrenched herself from his arms but he held her firmly.

"Yes, her. I am your second prize from the North? Your second salt wife," cried Sansa. "How the Ironborn lords would laugh at Ned Stark's daughter being their lord's lowly salt wife?" Theon would have burst into laughter if she had not appeared so serious about the ridiculousness. Tired Sansa was not to be jested at no matter how well meaning it was.

"Did you not pay attention to me announce you as my one and only rock wife? Our son and daughter are trueborn. Honestly, Lady Stark's hatred of Snow and Robb's bastard has made you paranoid," laughed Theon seriously.

*But you were always the one fooling around with women; it is expected. How was it that Theon had not fathered as many bastards as King Robert yet Robb who tried to be as honorable as Father had a bastard daughter?* She could imagine Sandor Clegane laughing at her for her naivety.

"Do you love Ros?" asked Sansa. Theon sighed.

"It was nothing. Sansa, don't be cross with me. I haven't lain with her for a long time. I have been too busy being ravished by you." Sansa went pink.

"What about when you left me at Winterfell after our wedding?" Theon grimaced.

"Once. I was drunk. I am sorry." His honesty hurt and she wanted to curse him out of the chamber, from her bed. *But you kissed Jon and think of him, her mind pointed out.* Asha had not made funny comments about Jon to her since she had arrived at Pyke. Yet Sansa was terrified that Theon would ever learn of it. *He would see me as the same as Queen Cersei. Maybe I would be if Jon had not stopped us from going further than a kiss.* No one could question the paternity of Dagon and Alayne. Her thoughts were on par with the one time Theon slept with Ros during their marriage. *They meant something.* She felt horrible for forgetting Theon was the best husband out of all the men she could have been wedded too.
"Take as many salt wives as you want," suggested Sansa casually, turning away. Theon blinked confused. "I'll have a guard find Ros and bring her back before she leaves the island. Damphair told me it is an important part of raiding. Next time, could you get me a ring or a necklace as well?" Her jest sounded false even to her.

"What? You were just angry with me about Ros. I know you don't really want me fucking anybody but you. I want you to be happy here. I lo– I missed Winterfell believe it or not when I first came here." That's why you brought Ros here when you found her. Sansa looked back at him. He looked at her expectantly.

"Now you have a Stark of Winterfell as your lady wife," finished Sansa understandingly. She smiled and craned her head for a kiss, which Theon obliged eagerly. "Don't let your Uncle Damphair hear you say you missed living in a greenlander castle." Theon smirked and put a lock of her hair behind her ear.

"Cross with me, my love?" Sansa sighed. She hated the fact that Ros had garnered enough affection that Theon had given her a place at Pyke. She was jealous that both Theon and Jon sought Ros' company.

"No, I am not." Theon looked slightly relieved as she leaned against him. She remembered Ros' parting words as she stared at the moon as he led her across the bridges. 'Lord Theon loves you so.'

"I love you, Theon Greyjoy. I hope I haven't ruined your name day." She glanced worriedly up at her husband. A smile broke out his face that was not mocking or merely content. She almost burst into tears, when she realized not many people ever said those words to him. He looked so handsome in the moonlight and with his new scruff.

"I knew I would win you over," laughed Theon in mock smugness. Sansa playfully hit him to which he added, "It was the best name day. You are going to have to get inventive to top it next year." Theon's depraved influence had encouraged her to talk in a raunchy manner, when they were alone. Theon delighted in it and was amused at her prim and proper 'please' in between. Sansa whispered in his ear an inventive idea she had in mind, which Theon groaned and lent down to whisper in her ear.

"I love you, Sansa Stark." Her eyes widened in surprise and gaped. He kissed her full on the mouth. When they broke apart, Sansa shook her head and corrected him,

"Greyjoy. I am a Greyjoy too now."

Everything was blurred and the ringing noise hurt his ears. Someone was shouting but he could not make the words. He was tired yet he swung his greatsword. Blood splattered the white snow. He almost tripped over someone's dead body. Who is it? They all wore dark clothes and armour. There's too many of them. They would all be dead within an hour. The more Others he killed the more came. His entire body ached but he did not dare slow down for they were inhumanly fast.

Think of Margaery, the babies. Home. Rickon. Arya. They are waiting for me. I have to come home.

He knew for sure Dacey Mormont and Dolorous Edd had been killed. Someone had picked up Longclaw and was fighting with it. We need to retreat or somehow kill them all. They had been vigilant but the amount of Others streaming in had caught them all off guard. Most of the garrons had fled carrying packs of their much needed supplies. It will be a long march back to Castle Black.
A hard blow hit Robb in the back knocking the wind out of him. He crumbled to the ground, the last thing he saw was blood dotting the snow before blacking out.

It is so bright out. He shielded his eyes from the sun's glare so he could focus on his surroundings. It was an unfamiliar castle. He scanned around for anybody who could tell him where he was. He saw a young woman at a distance and called out to her. She turned around. It was Margaery smiling at him. I am at Highgarden. I should have realized it smelt of flowers. She beckoned him to follow her, then ran down the steps to the gardens. Robb ran after her, but his heavy leather and furs were weighing him down in the scorching heat.

"Slow down, sweetheart." He could almost reach out and touch her. It's so long since he seen her and held her. She giggled and hitched up her gown to run faster. Why is she torturing me? Finally he had reached the fountain that was in the centre where Margaery stood staring down at the water.

"Where are the children?" Margaery simply stared at him then looked back at the water. He wanted to tell her he failed to bring Bran home. He wanted to mourn Bran with his siblings. He wanted to hold their children so badly. That they were no more closer to ending the war than the morning he had left Winterfell.

"Come home, Robb." He bent down to kiss her.

Margaery scowled at the letter she received from her grandmother reprimanding her like she was misbehaved child. She had always obeyed her grandmother. How was it her fault that her plans were not aligned with her family's motives? No one had written to her. Her lady grandmother disapproved of Margaery's alliance with the Mother of Dragons. Next time, keep me informed of your plans.

...Fire is unpredictable. I caution you to wait it out. If you get caught in the flames we all shall burn. Oh, congratulations on your princess...

My daughter is not an afterthought. Margaery folded the letter and tucked it away inside a book. She tapped her fingers on the desk restlessly. She had been growing restless even though her duties were not light. Margaery always required a flurry of activity, since she was young. There's no picnics to be had, no leisurely rides, or visits to the markets here. Winter Town was not a bustling centre at the moment so riding there was unnecessary unless there was a proper purpose. Her children were a joy to her, Eddard had grown more mobile was fascinating to watch and play with. It made her heart ache at how much he looked like Robb, when he smiled at her as he called her mama. Her little princess was growing too with the beginnings of teeth appearing.

Brienne of Tarth had become an absolute bore, spending all of her time with the imprisoned Jaime Lannister. Though their rapport had only begun since Lady Catelyn had been murdered at the Twins and before then Lady Brienne and Margaery had rarely spoke. The hypocrisy of Brienne's concern over Margaery's alleged infidelity with Lord Jorah Mormont annoyed her.

"What's it like being with a lion?" asked Margaery her thought out loud, when she spotted the lady knight on her way out of the sept.

"I beg your pardon, my queen," stumbled Brienne blushing and wide eyed. Whether or not, they were having relations with each other; it was clear as day Brienne did not simply harbour feelings of friendship for Jaime Lannister.

"I am surprised and shocked you would entertain the thought of spending time with him. He is the
prisoner of House Stark after all." *Oh don't be shy! The Kingslayer has broken his vow to celibacy already.* Brienne stiffened and looked away. *Perhaps the shackles excite her?*

"My queen, are you questioning my loyalty to House Stark and my honour as a maid?" *No, I am questioning the reality of the sky being blue.*

"No, not at all. However, I think it is deeply inappropriate for a maiden member of the household and instructor to Princess Arya to spend time with a prisoner unchaperoned. Think of the slander that would besmirch your honour and your lord father's. As your queen, I apologize for allowing the Kingslayer-

"Jaime," corrected Brienne.

"To seduce you. He must be missing his sister's company," finished Margaery unthinkingly. She realized she may have crossed the line, when Brienne's face crumbled at her words. She mumbled her gratitude for Margaery's concern for her, bowed, and walked briskly away with her head down. Margaery forgot about Brienne due to the unexpected arrival of Lady Alys Karstark.

_I hoped it was Robb alive and whole._

Lady Alys Karstark had ridden to Winterfell after she was informed of Margaery's proposal for a marriage between Lord Jorah and her by Robb. She had ridden to Winterfell to see her second suitor accompanied by a spear wife. Margaery had only met two wilding women who were ugly or plain yet pretty. The spear wife named Val was far more beautiful than she expected. Poor Alys who was pretty in her own right, looked painfully thin and angular next Val. Margaery watched Lord Jorah for any look of desire or interest in either woman. Disappointingly, his face betrayed nothing.

"How do you find Lord Mormont? Is he less pleasing than the wildling lord?" queried Margaery as they walked with linked arms.

"Lord Mormont is older then the Magnar. Neither could be called handsome, but Lord Jorah has more pleasing looks. However, I am not sure Lord Jorah is ready for another marriage or interested in me. My hair is not fair." *She knows about Daenerys.*

"I am sorry if I have made you waste a journey here, my lady." The taller woman shook her head.

"Tis' wasn't a wasted journey to meet to you, Your Grace. Perhaps, Lord Mormont will steal Val and make her his wife." Margaery blinked in surprise at the compliment and at the mention of Val. Val had gone back to the Wall stating her sister's son needed her.

"Val?" *How did I fail to notice this development?* She had been certain that Jorah took a liking to Lady Alys and that a wedding would take place in a fortnight.

"Aye," laughed Lady Alys unconcerned that her suitor might have jilted her for another woman. Alys frowned slightly, "But I am a bit disheartened that I may not be leaving for Karhold a married woman." Margaery felt pity for Alys and annoyance at Jorah.

"Are you sure? He told me you are quite lovely and that he was going to ask for your hand." That and reservations on his lack of men, wealth, and his unspoken internal battle to let go his love for Daenerys Targaryen. She assumed he was thinking of Daenerys.

"Really? Perhaps it was just nerves. I am glad a man is afraid of me." Her voice was hopeful as they stopped in front of heart tree to pray. Margaery finished her prayers first and looked over at Alys with admiration. Two of her brothers were killed in battle by Lannisters and Harrion had died at the Twins. Her own uncle tried force a marriage on her to make him Lord of Karhold, yet she escaped
She screamed bloody murder when she woke to see a tall handsome man with black hair and beard standing in her bedchamber. His pale blue lips smiled a sadistic smile at her. His eye patch and his blue eye were terrifying. Sansa's eyes widened in fear and glanced to the door, as she stood immobile. Her voice unaffected by fear and she screamed for Theon. The man looked both angry and amused.

"Now, now, trinket. You haven't given me the chance to introduce myself." His voice was velvety and full of dark amusement.

"I know who you are." Euron Greyjoy. She had heard all the awful things he have done from Theon. She walked slowly backwards by her little table by her side of the bed. He sauntered closer.

"Ah, I am sure my nephew hasn't told you many great things about me. I think we should get more acquainted. You are very beautiful, Sansa Stark." Sansa felt very exposed in only a thin nightgown.

"This is inappropriate. I am your nephew's lady wife. Leave my chamber, now," ordered Sansa frigidly. He got his brother's salt wife with child.

"Come now, luv," coaxed Euron. "I'll show you what is like to be with a true kraken. You look like you were born to be more than a lady. I would have made myself king and made you queen. Theon is a boy, a simpleton like Victarion. She wanted me, dear. Oh she did." I don't want you. I want Theon. Sansa backed into the little table. Sansa glanced down and saw the glittery hilt of the dagger Theon had given her in the candlelight as the drawer had opened slightly. She looked back at Euron quickly. *Stick him with the pointy end, Arya would say.* She picked up the dagger carefully and concealed it with her long sleeves.
Daenerys looked at the open water before her from where she stood on her ship. She wore a red gown in the Westerosi style. She had abandoned the awful tokar easily and reluctantly parted from the other fashions of Essos that she liked and was familiar with. *Perhaps I will bring those gowns into popularity with my people once I have conquered and dealt with the traitors who stole my father's throne.* On the day she disembarked from port with her army, she resisted the childish urge to look back. Not that she would miss Meeren or Slaver’s Bay. The finality of her life in Essos had hit her whilst every eye was on her waiting for a sign of weakness or something.

*I will never go back to the house with the red door.*

Large shadows flew overhead. *My children.* She could hear the uneven footsteps of Tyrion Lannister approaching. She looked down as he bowed.

“They are magnificent, Your Grace.”

She nodded in agreement. “Any word on this boy posing as my dead nephew?” *Aegon is as dead as Rhaego, Viserys and Drogo. As the rest of my family.* Yet Tyrion was convinced he was the real deal. Dany remained skeptical for two reasons: one was to guard herself from being prematurely hopeful of a long dead nephew actually being alive incase he was false; the second was the potential battle for the Iron Throne.

*If he is truly Rhaegar’s son, I may have to kill him or he will have to try to kill me. If he is false, he has become my greatest threat so long as people believe him to be the true heir.*

“Nothing concrete. There have been rumours of Aegon thinking of seeking the hand of King Robb Stark’s youngest sister, should you reject his offer of joining forces and sharing both the Iron Throne and a bed.” Daenerys frowned.

“The Starks are my allies,” growled Dany. She had reservations about agreeing to the alliance with the dogs, the King and Queen in the North. She still did not believe that they were honourable.

*Especially Margaery Stark. She was clever and sly enough to cause far more harm to me than any army.*

“I cannot say I was ever fond of the Starks. However, from first hand experience with Lady Stark, no mother is as fierce and brave as she was. If Robb Stark and his siblings are as fierce and cunning as their lady mother and are as loyal and unyielding as Ned Stark then you have either gained a great ally or a thrice damned enemy.” Tyrion had taken a long swig of wine and muttered about something about a sky cell and his thanks for a Bronn.

*Would they betray our alliance to put one of theirs as queen? Like Lord Tywin Lannister had done. If Father had only…* She had learned slowly and reluctantly that there was a lot of if Aerys had or
had not done this maybe the world would have not gone upside down before she born. *It still did not excuse the Usurper and Tyrion’s lord father’s hand in the murder of my brother’s family.* It had been hard to hear and believe the words of Tyrion. Why was it that every word that came out of Tyrion’s lips were things she did not want to hear? She much preferred Ser Barristan’s accounts of life at her father’s court.

“*Your gentle mother Queen Rhaella tried to shield Viserys from your father’s—troubles of ruling. They were very close...*”

She had not mourned for Viserys nor did she now because of the horrible person he had become. Dany cried for the boy he had once been and for their mother who died bringing her into the world. *I never asked about her especially after Viserys sold Mother’s crown.* Tears streamed down her face as she fell asleep remembering how the loss of Mother’s crown changed him and how cruel he was by blaming her for killing their mother. *If Mother had made it alive, we might not have left the house with the red door.*

*So many ifs.*

“I feel an old thorn must have prodded him into this,” smiled Tyrion. “Unfortunately for you, there is no male Starks of eligible age. Well unless you want to continue your “mother” role in all aspects. Your Grace, I would suggest that you be wary of any suitors, though there might not be many others besides your dear nephew Aegon daring enough to ask for your hand. With two husbands dead and Prince Quentyn Martell, a rejected suitor killed by your dragons.” Dany flinched and looked up at her dragons flying.

“Prince Quentyn was foolish. I did not order his death nor do I have any part in it.”

“Well, I am afraid Prince Doran will not care about the particulars other than that you rejected his son’s hand and said son is now a charred corpse by your dragons in his desperate last chance to woo you. It seems Targaryen-Martell alliances are doomed and quite tragic.” Dany scowled at Tyrion.

“Do you have any news that would please me?” *Surely, I have supporters in Westeros awaiting my return. Viserys had to be right about something. More deaths of Tyrion’s family or Stannis Baratheon would be good news. I saw a cloth dragon flying.*

“I do not tell lies nor will I sweeten my words to please you. King’s Landing is full of liars and sweet tongued connivers already,” answered Tyrion.

“Where is the Usurper’s brother? Isn’t he also in the Stormlands?”

“I doubt he was there when Aegon invaded. We would have heard of a battle by now. I do not know where Stannis is exactly, Your Grace.” Dany frowned. Tyrion turned his head north and frowned grimly.

“But you have an idea of where he and his army might be,” guessed Dany.

“Aye. Stannis is a unscrupulous man and not one to be easily distracted from his goals, which means something is more concerning to him than the game of thrones.”

Asha had roared with anger and fear when she saw the rope bridges to Sea Tower burning or cut off. Dagmer Cleftjaw and four men had made it across. The Drowned God had claimed two men. She saw Euron’s Silence at a distance. She had commanded her half of her crew to ready her ship to sail
close enough to Sea Tower. We’ll climb it if we must.

“Oh come on. Another round brother,” called Asha as Theon stood up stating he was going to retire for the night. Everyone shouted boisterously in agreement.

“I have had enough. But don’t stop on my account,” laughed Theon.

“Oh we weren’t going to.” That won’t be the last time I see you alive. I’ll see you one last time surrounded by grandchildren in your seventies or eighties. I’ll pretend to be Esgred just to annoy you. I die first.

She wanted to believe that Mad Euron would not dare to kill his own blood, that the taboo of kinslaying meant something to Euron. Spill not kill. Her little brother and the future of their House were trapped in that fucking tower. Victarion had sailed Iron Victory to attack Silence and to ensure Euron could not sail away if he had escaped.

“Faster, you fools!” shouted Asha angrily as she cross the plank to the first landing. Only so many could cross at a time. She and Eerl lifted the plank and lowered it where the second rope bridge once was. The third stretch was easy to jump. Eerl and Asha jumped with ease and barged into the Sea Tower as Qarl moved the plank to help the others get across.

The horrible squalling of Dagon could be heard as she and Eerl ran up the stone steps three at a time. Someone is alive at least. She heard Loren and Grimmtongue behind them. Eerl knocked the solar door only serving maids huddling in fear armed with a fire poker was in there.

“Where’s Lord Theon?” barked Asha though she knew he were he would be alive or not.

“I saw him run with his bow and arrow when Lady Greyjoy screamed for him,” answered one. Asha had already run out and up the stairs to the Lord and Lady’s chamber. One of Euron’s mutes was dead lying face down on the steps alongside a slain Ironborn who went with Dagmer. Dagmer was fighting Euron’s men. Asha bestowed two blows with her axe to one who turned to her.

“Make sure Dagon and Alayne are safe,” ordered Asha to Eerl Harlaw as she wrenched the door open. Grimmtongue and Loren finally made it to the landing. The chamber had been completely destroyed. Asha saw Sansa plunge the dagger in Euron’s back then pull it out. She made a little noise then drop the bloodied dagger with a loud clang on the bloodstained stone floor. Euron fell to his knees rasping with three arrows in him. Asha rushed to Theon who was holding himself up by the bedpost trying to move to Sansa. His bow discarded on the floor beside him. His leg was bleeding. She scanned for more injuries as she held him up. His neck is bleeding. Where the fuck is his sword?

“I— I almost kill her. The arrow just barely missed— you. Forgive me,” whispered Theon shakily. Sansa ripped a large chunk of one of the bed sheets and pressed it against his neck.

“I’m fine, I’m fine. He’s dead, we will be okay,” soothed Sansa as she touched her ear that had a cut from the arrow that narrowly missed her. “I was so scared he was going to kill you. I thought I was going to watch you die. I couldn’t just stand there.” Asha glanced at the discarded dagger. She’s become Ironborn after-all.

“Thank you,” Theon kissed Sansa’s brow. As Asha grabbed his arm to put over her shoulders she felt blood on her hand. Sansa gasped in horror as Theon hissed in pain.

“Theon, where else have you been stabbed?” asked Asha urgently as she led him out of the chamber. She wordlessly communicated to Dagmer to remain with her uncle’s dead body. To which he gave a good kick.
“Shoulder, leg, and neck. That’s all,” answered Theon weakly. *Salt water and fire.* His eyes were flickering with exhaustion, loss of blood, and hopefully not—

“Keep him talking,” said Asha harshly. Sansa babbled with tears streaming down her face. Her hands bloody from trying to staunch the blood.

“Tell me how you saved Bran from the wildlings. Tell me about the Grey king.” She and Loren carried Theon to his old chamber as he slowly recounted the history of the Grey king to Sansa. Asha removed her dagger from between her breasts and cut her brother’s shirt away. Asha was not a squeamish woman. She was slightly sickened by Theon’s shoulder wounds.

“Why is it going dark?” sobbed Sansa pointing to his leg wound. Poison. His shoulder could be healed. But that—

“My face is still handsome at least,” croaked Theon. Asha remembered him at nine years old crying as he was taken away from Pyke. Rodrik and Maron dead. *Outliving my brothers was not a goal of mine. Even when I wanted to rule the Iron Isles.* Sansa was clutching his hand, sobbing for salt water and supplies to clean his wounds.

“We need to amputate Lord Theon’s leg. We need to do something,” ordered Asha. Her eyes stung. This is no time to be weak. “Send for Damphair.” *Just in case.* She could hear the memory of the ugly cries of baby Theon made before he shut up and smiled at her. Or maybe that just Dagon crying again.

Of course, he had to smile at her.

“What is dead may never die, but rises again, harder and stronger.” She turned away not giving in to sentimentality and barked orders to her crew as if they were out at sea fighting a terrible storm.

---

Gendry Waters carried Little Cat’s eldest son swiftly in the snows. *It helps to be extremely tall.* Brynden himself carried the giant greatsword with less ease as they followed Grey Wind. Following the attack, the survivors had a disagreement on the direction they should take. Many like Brynden wished to get back to Castle Black. Lord Commander Snow insisted they press on and only a small group would go to bring the injured and unconscious king back to the Wall. *With little supplies? Fool.*

The only thing they had gotten out this mess was finding Lord Reed’s daughter and the confirmation of Bran Stark, Jojen Reed, and the servant’s demise. They had burned the wights of the fallen. *Too many died for nothing.* Brynden had believed Lord Commander Snow and King Robb had some sort of plan. *They had a duty to us.* He expected more pragmatism from Robb Stark.

“What was the plan, Lord Snow? Was there even a plan?” he questioned Lord Snow carrying the blade of the brave she-bear. He had noted Lord Commander Snow staring at Dacey Mormont and the sword after he had returned it to her. There was no outward remorse on the boy’s face. Lord Snow looked at him coldly.

“You could have remained at the Wall or gone back to Winterfell or Riverrun if you had any doubts.”

“Who would have stopped that bloody Other from finishing off King Robb then?” Lord Snow looked away in pain and guilt.
“I told him not to come. I begged him.” The look in his long face was the same Ned had when he wedded Catelyn, his dead brother’s betrothed.

“If—if he wakes, tell him that the summer never died. He flies and is in the trees,” Jon asked Gendry as they set on their march back to the Wall.

Meera gutted the last of the poor horses that had not run too far. Gendry had made a fire with the branches Grenn had chopped off. Brynden stood warily watching the trees around them.

“Do you think Lord Tully would give me a place as a knight. I’ll work as a blacksmith as well.” Brynden’s blue eyes turned to the black haired man as he lowered King Robb at a safe distance near the fire.

“Aye. I don’t see why he wouldn’t. I thought you had a place at Winterfell? The cold not to your liking?” Brynden looked back to the trees.

“I do, ser. But I don’t think I’ll be welcome if His Grace doesn’t come back alive and I do. I understand if—they couldn’t look at me the same. I am just a bastard. What’s a stupid bastard to a king and a brother?”

“Don’t think that way. You are very brave, Gendry,” chided Meera from behind.

“You got King Robb to safety after he fell. You could have gotten killed doing so,” added Brynden looking back at Gendry. “You knew how to relieve some of the pressure of His Grace’s head wound. That wasn’t stupid. His Grace isn’t dead so refrain from speaking as though he is.” The Gods might hear. Gendry reddened and looked down.

“Sorry, ser. I don’t deserve—It’s common knowledge. A lot of knights get knocked out cold. Not that I’ve ever been to a joust. You hear things from—where I lived.” Thank the Seven, for Gendry Waters.

Davos noted King Stannis appeared to have awoken from a dream, several nights following Queen Selyse’s sudden illness and death. He spoke and walked like the young man he had been during his brother’s rebellion. Davos wondered if this had to do with the Red Woman’s shift in interest on the young Lord Commander Snow. Either way I am glad to him out of her influence.

King Stannis stood beside him as they watched the men load up the ships at East by the Watch. He gritted his teeth as he learned that the not dead Jon Connington had invaded the Stormlands with a young man pretending to be Aegon Targaryen.

“Who else is going to come back from dead?” roared Stannis. Shireen and Davos remained silent.

“Are we sailing for Storm’s End or King’s Landing?” asked Shireen. But King Stannis had stormed away thunderous.

“We shall find out soon enough, Princess.”

“Hurry and send a raven. Tell them we have the Starks backing Father. That Father is legitimizing Gendry and has betrothed him to King Robb’s sister.” Davos gaped and shook his head.

“That’s a lie and more than one. You are his heir. I am already missing fingers. I’d rather not lose my tongue.” Shireen sighed desperately clutching her book.
Queen Margaery had been displeased with him since Lady Alys Karstark had gone back to Karhold unwedded to him. He had remained true to his feelings. The tension crackled in the Queen's solar.

"You lied, Lord Mormont. You never seriously considered marrying Lady Karstark did you? I am surprised you have not gone to her by now. Or is remaining here some ruse to lead me into false belief that you are neutral or on our side."

"There are no sides as Your Grace and Queen Daenerys are allies. I held my part of the bargain of getting an alliance brokered, remember?" growled Jorah angrily. "Have I not served you with loyalty since I came here?"

"I'll congratulate you, only if she keeps her word. In my experience, with Lord Frey and Lord Bolton neither did. You have Uncle Bear but I worry that I was foolish allowing you back here. You are loyal to her still. You would walk over your aunt and cousins' dead bodies and mine if she requested you to return to her side. Like a well trained dancing bear at a revelry."

"You want me caged either way, Your Grace," countered Jorah. She gave him a soft sad smile. *Caged in Karhold or here.*

"I have to because you were her bear longer than you have been mine. Being your niece isn’t reassuring when my aunt doesn’t hold any power over you anymore. I brought you home. I haven’t killed you or ordered you to take the black, Lord Jorah. You best remember that before she clouds your judgement."

"So this how it is to be?" whispered Jorah roughly. She made a little shrug.

"I don't see any other way. Your heart means nothing in comparison to the lives of the North, my family, and your family. Your love for Lynesse destroyed your reputation, bankrupted and shamed your House. I'd rather not wait and see what your love for Daenerys Targaryen shall bring."

"You can't," cried Sansa as they broke away from a kiss. Theon's hand was in her hand stroking it. "What will become of me?" Theon had insisted on talking about contingency plans incase he-

"Asha will protect you. If she goes away to war or to raid, go to my uncle Lord Harlaw."

"Our twins?" He traced her jaw line then stared at her hand in his other.

"Won't go with you if you decide to back to Winterfell. Asha needs to teach them the Old Way." *Why must you leave us?*

"You need to teach them. You are their father."

"I don't know, Alayne is already exhibiting sentry-like behaviour. She'll be manning the crow's nest
by age six," joked Theon smiling a smile that did not reach his dark eyes. Alayne's cries had woken Sansa as it was not normal for Alayne to cry at night. Then she had heard someone in her chamber. Sansa sobbed. *He jokes to mask his pain.*

*Dagon and Alayne need him. I love him.* She hoped the Drowned God would hear her since they had been married again by Damphair after the twins and her had been anointed with saltwater.

"No. You'll grow a beard. And we'll shall sail the seas."

"I'll be known as Theon the Blackbeard. Sounds better than peg legged Lord Theon."

"Father of seven sirens and Dagon." Theon quirked an eyebrow.

"Now that will be the death of me." Sansa had smile at that despite her tears.

Chapter End Notes

super short I know.

I'm not dragging out the 'is he dead?' for plot purposes. I'm honestly was not ready to do it/ don't want to. The struggles.
Sansa sat on the beach resting a hand on her huge stomach looking out to the grey green sea. Alayne and Dagon were swimming naked pretending to be great sea creatures in combat. A small red haired girl of three in a yellow shift dress was playing in the sand and pebbles babbling out loud. Sansa smiled contently and looked back at the twins. She no longer was on edge with worry when they swam out alone. Mother’s Greenlander worries, they rolled their blue eyes as they hugged her before racing into the water. It didn’t hurt to keep an eye. Her youngest looked up and made a high-pitched squeal of delight. There was only one person who elicited such a greeting.

“Plundering the beach, Aerine?” chuckled Theon as he walked to them. Sansa exhaled a breath of relief that he was home. He was shirtless with his usual black trousers. Aerine thrust her hand out to show off her biggest pebble from her pile of pebbles and shells. He sat down next to Sansa. “Oh my. What a treasure, may I have it?” He made a playful swipe at the pebble.

“No Fatha’, it is mine,” declared Aerine with indignation puckering her lips in a sassy frown. She clutched the pebble against her chest and ran away back to her pile of ‘treasure’. She ran back to Theon and Sansa. “Play sea monster with me. I missed you.” Sansa was about to object to Aerine going into the water, when Theon quickly scooped Aerine into his lap before she ran into the water.

“The sea monster’s got ya.” Aerine squirmed and giggled in his arms. He kissed her rosy cheeks and the crown of her red hair as he tickled her. Theon was Aerine’s favourite person in the whole world.

“You were gone a long time,” noted Sansa looking at him. “I missed you.” Pyke was a lot quieter, when he was away.

“Got caught in a storm. I had to sail to a port to repair the damages. Miss you too, love.” Sansa nodded and leaned herself on his right shoulder and arm. Theon was still wiry but his arms grown more muscled and toned over the years since the loss of half his left leg. His vanity had suffered for moons until he woke up determined to be able to walk and run with his peg leg. Theon kissed Sansa more passionately than they normally did in front of the children. Sansa smiled and flushed with desire. A lot of restraint is needed from now till the children are tucked in bed.

“Anyone went to the Drowned God?” Theon nodded.

“Aye, going to need a new cook and about four new sailors.” No mutinies, good to hear. Sansa made a mental note to recruit the replacements as soon as possible. She looked back at the sea to the twins shouting at Theon to judge their swimming race. Aerine grew bored and went to sit in the sand tracing shapes and the letters she learned.

“Tie! Come out of the water now.” The twins swam and scampered onto the beach to wrap themselves in the blankets to dry off before donning their clothes.
“How have you both been?” asked Theon glancing at Sansa wrapping an arm around her. He dipped his dark head to kiss her stomach. Soon the fourth Greyjoy child would be born.

“I’m well. Tiring more easily now as usual. I’m glad you are home.” Theon smiled and kissed her again. He was about to say something when Alayne crushed him into a hug. Theon kissed her wet dark hair.

“Father, where did you go? I missed you more than Dagon did. Where’s the plunder for us?” Dagon scowled and shoved his twin to get a hug from his father as well.

“You did not. Did I get a knife Father? I am too old for stuffed dolls and wooden swords. I am six and nine moons.” Sansa and Theon shared a glance. Sansa had been vehement in her disapproval on Dagon participating in the finger dance. She had grown to dislike daggers and knives in general since a poisoned dagger had left Theon’s life in danger.

“Knives? I thought you were going to be an archer like me.” Dagon pouted.

“Did you raid any libraries at least? I wish we had a library like Great Uncle Rodrik,” asked Dagon hopefully. Alayne wrinkled her nose she strictly only liked dolls, and swords. Getting her to sit and learn her lessons was a daily struggle.

“That’s why I took so long to sail back home.” Sansa rolled her eyes at the image of Theon and his crew surrounded by books. More like barrels of ale and whores.

“Aerine want a puppy and dolls.” Last moon she wanted something shiny like Mama’s necklace. The moon before that she wanted a direwolf after listening to Sansa talk about Lady and the direwolves her siblings had. He answered all their questions patiently as Sansa helped the twins dress and dried their hair. As they walked back to the castle, Theon carrying a sleeping Aerine stated,

“I pillaged five crates of lemons for you. Must say it's not very fearsome if word gets out I'm a raider of lemons.” Sansa beamed without the barest feeling of guilt about the ports’ disruption of business and destruction after Theon raided, and plundered them.

“That's all?” Sansa made a mock sound of disappointment.

“Haha. Just for that you’ll have to wait till your twentieth first name day to receive the other gifts,” teased Theon. Sansa smirked.

“No, I won’t. Last time you had me put all the jewels in less than five minutes after I removed my—“ Sansa stopped when she looked at her husband carrying the sleeping product of that night. Theon had insisted they christen one of his new ships Lady. Theon laughed silently. Thank the Gods, the twins were out of earshot.

Sansa sat on the same rock but she was not with child as far she knew. Theon was not away raiding. There was no red haired daughter who was Theon’s favourite. Their twins were too young to understand or know that their father had died. To know they had been deprived of their father. She felt so numb. None of the gods heard her cries and prayers to spare Theon’s life. Sansa was scared to hope that he left her a gift beyond the grave of another child.

Sansa’s eyes were red from crying. She never wore so much black in her life. Her good mother Lady Alannys had wore black since her two oldest sons had been killed and Theon had been taken from her. Theon had told her that his lady mother had barely recognized him at first. Sansa could see how
Alannys Harlaw sunk into despair. Pyke needed laughter to fill its grey halls. Sansa had surmised Margaery would write her condolences over Theon’s death and make a suggestion for Sansa and the twins to stay at Winterfell.

I can’t go to Winterfell either. He was a part of my Winterfell. Theon was now a part of the ghosts of Winterfell along with her lord father, lady mother, Lady, Septa Mordane, and Jory Cassel. She would remember the dark haired youth he had been. Theon and Robb playing and Jeyne Poole giggling at how handsome Theon was to a younger Sansa. Our wedding. The twins were born there.

Am I ever going to be allowed to be happy for more than five minutes?

Lady’s death.

Father’s execution.

News of Mother’s murder at the Twins.

Helplessly, watched Theon languish until he died.

Wolfless, orphaned widow. I haven’t reached my fifteenth name day yet. A mad part of her had wanted to jump into the sea whilst Damphair and his Drowned Men gave Theon’s body to the Drowned God. I am a mother. My babies need me. Sansa had gained Asha’s respect but that was overshadowed by their grief. Asha was strong and stoic during the ceremony yet Sansa swore she saw her hard jaw quiver slightly.

“Do you recognize the dagger?” Asha had asked pointing the poisoned dagger. Sansa shook her head no. “Theon did. Said it looked the same as the one that was meant for your brother. That your lady mother was convinced it was the Lannisters.”

“I never saw it. I was in King’s Landing when that happened and I never saw any of the Lannisters with one like that.” Asha nodded frowning at the dagger. “I thought it was one of Euron’s men’s.”

“That’s what I thought until Theon mentioned it. The man found with the dagger still had his tongue. He is dead so that helps little.” Euron’s ship was manned by mutes.

“Euron hadn’t expected Theon to be in the Sea Tower, when he came to—” remembered Sansa. They stood in silence for a long time. The sun had started to set.

“I was surprised you didn’t bolt out of marrying my little brother. I don’t blame you, as I wouldn’t have married anyone someone told me to. You liked him in the end?” Sansa stiffened at the reminder Asha was aware of Sansa’s feelings for Jon.

“Yes, I love Theon,” admitted Sansa softly looking at Asha’s dark eyes.

“You are free to go back to Winterfell or wherever Snow is—” How dare she assume I would pack and run off? As if my children meant little to me.

“I’m not abandoning my children,” cut in Sansa fiercely. Asha appraised her then nodded. “I don’t appreciate you insinuating that you have more rights to my children. They are Theon’s heirs not yours. I won’t let you take them from me.” Asha regarded Sansa impassively.

“You sound much like our mother did. She never forgave Father for allowing them to take him away. For not caring as much as she did. I could never fill that hole my brothers left.” She shook her head then looked back at Sansa. “Nice job, with the dagger and Euron.” Her voice was kind and full of respect. “Theon was proud of you.”
I know.

Margaery sat in her solar letting the news of Theon’s death sink in. Poor Sansa and those babies. Her mind flickered to the memory of Theon and Robb laughing on their way to the Twins. Robb will be devastated. Margaery looked up at the mournful face of Maester Luwin who had brought her the news.

“It’s tragic. He was like an older brother to Robb.”

“It is. They were close. Theon had much potential. Only twenty-two and two moons. I helped bring his and Sansa’s son and daughter into the world. The poor dears. I was glad they married for it ended any bad blood between the two houses. The boy wanted to be a part of the family. Theon did—”

Margaery stood up and gave the maester a comforting pat.

“If it’s too much for you, I can tell Arya and Rickon.”

“Thank you, Your Grace.”

Robb woke dry mouthed and utterly disoriented. He squinted trying to make sense where he was. He wasn’t sure if he was feeling ravenous himself or that was simply Grey Wind. Grey Wind is off hunting. Robb was moving. Or the sky was moving at fast jerky pace.

“We’ve got be less than a day or two away from the Wall by now,” a voice brusquely groaned. Another softer voice replied,

“I think the King is awake. His eyes moved.” Robb lifted his head stiffly. The sky stopped moving. It seemed as if he was being lowered.

“Slowly, sire.” A hand helped to support his head and neck. As Robb’s vision came clearer, he stared at the lined and bearded face of Uncle Brynden. Robb coughed and hoarsely whispered,

“Have we destroyed the Others?” Uncle Brynden’s smile turned into a grimace.

“No.” Brynden seemed to understand that Robb was confused as to what happened.

“You were knocked out from behind. A wight. Ser Gendry and I got you safely away before s—it finished you.”

“Where’s Jon?” Ghost wasn’t hunting with Grey Wind nor could he smell him nearby.

“Lord Commander Snow is alive with the Mormont sword.” His tone seemed off to Robb. Robb noted Ser Brynden was carrying Robb’s sword. Thank the Gods, it was not lost.

“He and Father have pressed on,” added the small dark haired Meera. “I’m afraid some of the remainder of your guard have gone with them as well. The rest have come with us. A few have left us on the way.” Meera gave a meaningful glance to someone. Robb’s head hurt trying to process this. He wanted to know who had lived and who had died. “Here drink this.” Robb slowly drank the liquid, spilling a little bit as he had not used his jaw for a while.

“Thank you, Lady Meera,” croaked Robb.

“Um Your Grace, Lord Commander Snow asked me to tell you this when you woke. I don’t
understand what it means but I’ll say it anyway.” Robb looked at Gendry Waters who standing at Robb’s feet. I am on some makeshift stretcher.

“Go on,” pressed Robb. Maybe it’s advice to protect the Others from making it over the Wall. Or something.

“Um, something about summer never died and that he flies and is in the trees. Lord Snow also said that he was sorry. Though if you ask me I don’t think it’s ever been summer or spring on this side of the Wall.” Robb blinked in confusion.

“He did it out of love for both of you, my king,” whispered Meera. “He asked me to stop you and Lord Snow from finding him.” Robb felt anger and betrayal when he realized Jon had lied to him and that Bran had not wanted to see him. That Jon had let him mourn Bran and allow him to feel guilty for Bran, Jojen and Hodor's deaths. Bran had not bothered to leave a note, now this.

‘Brother, Brother…’

He flies. Bran can warg into other creatures besides Summer. Why? How the- But Jon said-

“He died of the same illness your brother did,” hissed Robb. Meera shook her head.

“He was with you and Jon that day you found me. He watched you from the trees. It took him a lot of effort to keep—” She stopped herself as if to choose her wording carefully. “Your wolves from his.” She spoke even softer.

“He’ll come home though.”

“Your Grace, there is no certainty that anyone will come home anymore. Especially, when one has given up on the belief that they ever will.” Her voice was full of bitterness and sadness that did not suit her. “You really should eat something, Your Grace.” As she stood up, Robb grabbed her arm gently,

“Tell me everything from the moment you and your brother came to Winterfell to the day we found you. I won’t be kept in the dark anymore, Lady Reed. I don’t care what B—he made you promise to keep silent about.” She nodded. He let go of her arm and for some odd reason grabbing Lady Meera’s arm made him think of Margaery. As soon as I get to Castle Black, I'll write to her. He sat there trying to remember even after he had ate and was allowed to stand with Gendry’s aid.

Chapter End Notes

I posted this before I could change my mind again. I might though because I am fickle.

I figured if he didn't die now, I would keep him alive to the end. But at the same time, I feel like a kinda killed the Jon x Sansa pairing in my story accidentally as my story as deviated from my original ideas of how things would go. My idea for how they end up still works but it doesn't feel the same...

If anyone is interested I may write a story centring on Theon x Sansa cause I want to be in the holiday happy mood and writing the last chapter and this bit made me require a lot Kleenex when I want is some FLUFF.
Chapter Summary

Reposted!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“The Queen of the North and the Trident, Queen Margaery of Houses Stark and Tyrell,” presented Lord Umber loudly. Unexpected chants of The Queen in North, the Queen in the North followed. His great height and fierce looks seemed to intimidate their guests. Margaery smiled fondly at her loyal men and women. Tyrion Lannister, Ser Barristan Selmy, and two others bowed to Margaery. The girl was a scribe and the younger man was a eunuch soldier or commander of Daenerys Stormborn from what Jorah had told her. Daenerys herself regarded Margaery with coolly as if the titles were a joke.

“Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, Queen of the Andals and the Rhoynar and the First Men, Lord of the Five Kingdoms, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Breaker of Chains, and the Mother of Dragons,” spoke the little scribe with barest trace of an accent. Margaery looked at Daenerys for any reaction to the five not seven kingdoms. Her nostrils flared. Margaery did not curtsied before Daenerys as she was not bestowed the same courtesy. She could feel Umber’s discontent to the slight made to his Queen in the North on northern soil.

Her attire was a presentation of her status as Queen in the North and the Trident and as a Tyrell of the Reach. A daughter of the South and the mother and mistress of the North. She did not shiver or give any outwardly sign that the winter weather bothered her. The Targaryen queen shivered and frowned, as she was not dressed for the frigid weather and the harsh northern winds. She was as beautiful as they said she was, but she did not look as formidable as Margaery had expected. She had expected a scary yet beautiful dragon queen not a shivering petite young woman with hair made her look pallid next to the snow.

It is her impulsiveness that concerns me.

“Your Grace, I was not aware you would be visiting the North,” greeted Margaery. She had to rein in her annoyance.

“My men have fallen ill and we had not prepared for this long of a journey.” Or winter. Now you want to drain the precious resources that are meant for my people.

“King’s Landing is no longer short of food and supplies, you should have stopped there. Every morsel of food I allow you and your army to eat is taken from the smallfolk of the North. My people. Nevertheless, a letter informing of your plans would have made me more prepared to aid you.” Your soldiers will die of the sickness anyway. Daenerys bristled and glared at her haughtily.

“You said my dragons and I were needed in a fight against the Others.”

“Yes, I am aware of what I wrote. Unless your army is armed with Valyrian steel or can spout fire, they will be of no use to you north of the Wall.”
Robb’s army remained at the Wall awaiting his return. The rest have returned from the South now that Father has taken control of King’s Landing. Where she should be. Along with ships from Father’s navy docked at the ports of White Harbour. Daenerys looked thoughtful. Margaery glanced at Tyrion Lannister who had remained quiet surprisingly. *I am surprised he supported this ill planned journey.* He seemed to understand her gaze and made the slightest shrug.

*She didn’t heed him. So she is as uncontrollable as her dragons.*

“The food in the north is much different to the diet that they are used to. It would be wise to send them with your commander to take King’s Landing or to deal with this Aegon on your behalf. They won’t last if they remain here.” *I cannot take the risk of the sickness spreading from here to every town or village. Hopefully, they die at sea before they infect the people of Westeros.* Daenerys seemed receptive of the advice.

*Where is Ser Jorah?” asked Daenerys looking amongst Margaery’s retinue and army.*

*“Lord Jorah Mormont is weary from his travel from Bear Island. I did not wish to insult you with his presence. His aunt, Lady Maege is here to represent House Mormont.”* Margaery gestured to Lady Maege on her right. Daenerys smiled kindly with curiosity at Lady Mormont. “If you wish to see him and if he is feeling up for it, we can have supper together.” *I won’t allow Jorah and you a moment alone. I should have left him in Winterfell but that would have raised suspicion.*

*“I would like that.” Of course you do.* Margaery smiled and offered her arm to the silver haired woman.

Daenerys stared at the woman whom she had been curious about for so long. The Queen in the North had arrived on a white horse that reminded Daenerys of Silver. Margaery Stark was a beautiful woman dressed in a thick velvet green gown with golden roses. Over her chest was a breastplate of dark gray steel with the Stark sigil. The fur-lined cloak wrapped around her was also gray. Her diadem glittered in her waist length brown hair. Daenerys was confused as to whether she hated or admired Margaery Stark. Margaery appeared to be just as curious and wary of her as she was of Margaery. As Daenerys gingerly accepted the offered arm of the slightly taller woman, she inquired,

*“Is it normally this cold here?”* Margaery’s body heat and the stroll through the snow to the royal tents warmed Daenerys slightly. She glanced behind at Ser Barristan Selmy helping Missandai navigate through the awful cold and wet substance. Jorah’s kinswoman and the great bearded man stomped the snow behind their queen. Daenerys did not care for the harshness and barrenness of the North. *You can keep it.* She decided to sail for the Wall instead of King’s Landing last minute because she felt compelled to. Her mind and everyone insisted that she take her throne then go to the Wall.

Her dragons were needed to serve a purpose to save lives of the people of her homeland.

*“I am not sure I am the appropriate person to ask as I was not born and raised here in the North. But they tell me it has not snowed so deeply for years. I believe it is the rise of the Others that has intensified it. My lord father has written that it has snowed in King’s Landing.”* Daenerys frowned. *I was right to journey to the Wall.*

*“I shall go to the Wall with my dragons and meet with your husband King Robb and Lord Commander.”* *What did Tyrion say Ned Stark’s bastard’s name was?*
“Jon Snow, my husband’s cousin.” Daenerys looked at Margaery in confusion. Margaery smiled back.

“I’ll explain in the tent over some wine.”

As they sat down, Margaery poured two glasses of Arbor Gold. “Again, I am not the best person to tell you this, but I’d rather tell then let you believe I was keeping this a secret for malicious reasons or anything. It’s all mostly secondhand information. So any questions you may have you’ll have to save them for Jon.” Margaery had an excited and eager glow in her face. Why would I have questions for a bastard brother or cousin of your husband’s?

“Have you been told about your brother Prince Rhaegar and Lady Lyanna?”

“Yes, but what does that have to do with Lord Commander Snow?” Margaery sighed and took a dramatic gulp of wine. When she finished her glass, she continued,

“My good father came home with a baby from the Tower of Joy where he found his sister.”

“What are you trying to say?” growled Dany impatiently.

“That Jon is the son of Lady Lyanna and Prince Rhaegar.” Another nephew coming out of nowhere. Dany stood up angrily. Next the Dorne will claim to have my niece and the Vale my brothers.

“That’s not possible.” And they said Margaery Stark was a sensible woman.

“My husband and my good sister watched the men of the Night’s Watch light Jon’s funeral pyre. He was dead but instead he woke unburnt and with not a stitch on him.” Dany stopped in her tracks and looked back at Margaery. She was breathing heavily. I am the last dragon. “More wine, Your Grace?” Dany nodded and sat back down. Rhaegar had a second son.

“He doesn’t look like you, clearly. If you ever wanted to know what Lord Stark or any of the Starks looked like everyone says Jon has all the Stark looks.” Dany drank deeply.

“Did you know when you first wrote to Jorah?” Margaery shook her head no.

“Jon doesn’t desire the Iron Throne. He has more familial desires, I believe. He loves the Starks.” That was a relief to hear even if it may or may not be true. The two Queens sat opposite another, after a servant of Queen Margaery had announced supper was ready to serve if they wished. Daenerys was so preoccupied by what Margaery had shared that her anxiousness to see Jorah Mormont had been forgotten. But when her old bear walked in and bowed. Daenerys felt a hot rage come over her.

It’s a lie. He told her everything. About how I birthed my dragons. That’s how she knows how true dragons do not burn.

But what if Margaery is telling the truth?, reasoned her mind.

Sansa felt silly in the black trousers, Asha had given her to wear whilst learning to fight in. They fit awkwardly as Sansa and Asha were different builds. Sansa touched her bun to make sure it was in place. She had been worried that Asha would tell her she would need to shear her hair off as short as Asha kept her black hair. Brienne also kept her hair short like a man’s and Arya had her hair shorn when she pretended to be a boy. Sansa loved her hair. It was the only thing about her that had not
been scarred or broken. Her heart and trust had been broken when the Lannisters had killed her father. Her back was still marred with faint scars from her treatment from Joffery. The memory of her lady mother brushing her long red hair for her, Theon and Jon loved her hair. My babies love to tug at and play with my hair. Her long hair made her Sansa of Houses Greyjoy and Stark.

*Can I still be me, without my long hair?*

Her mind traveled north, to wondering about her younger siblings, Margaery, and her niece and nephew. Of where Bran was. She wondered if Robb had received the news of Theon's death and how he was taking it. To Jon and the great burden of everyone's fate resting on his shoulders. There was no sept or godswood to pray to. Just the Drowned God. Asha was becoming a dear friend of hers but Sansa felt isolated from the activity going on the mainland. Sansa desperately wanted to how things fared at the Wall. Her letter to Jon (and Robb) had been sent almost three weeks ago.

*In a sense widowhood on Pyke feels just as restrictive as the vows of the Night's Watch.*

“First thing, you need to know is…” Sansa exhaled nervously, clearing her head.

Jorah stared at Dany as she ate her supper. He could tell she was fighting not to devour everything in sight and maintain queenly manners in front of Margaery and the servants attending. She seemed leagues away whilst she conversed with Queen Margaery. Dany had barely noticed him throughout the meal though she had explicitly requested to see him. His expectations seeing her again had been slightly unsatisfied. He had noted by the rise and fall of her chest that she was either angry or distressed.

“I apologize if the meal is not to your liking. It must be drastically different to what you are use to eating,” said Margaery smiling.

“Oh no, it’s quite satisfying. This venison is delicious. Um what is this again?” She pointed with her fork to the bowl of crispy golden spuds with herbs.

“Potato, Khaleesi.”

“Potato, roasted potatoes.” Both Jorah and Margaery answered at the same time.

“I enjoyed the potatoes and also the pie.”

“Moose meat pie. Princess Arya’s friend Hot Pie made it.”

“Hot Pie? I would like to personally thank him for the pie.” The boy had made the crust in the shape of Dany’s sigil a three-headed dragon.

“Of course.” Jorah made a comment about the enthusiastic welcome led by the smallfolk upon Dany’s arrival. Dany glared at him coldly before looking away. Jorah frowned not understanding the reaction.

“Is it true that Ned Stark’s bastard son died and rose from his pyre unburnt?”

“I was not there, Khaleesi. A wildling woman named Val told me the tale as did my cousin Dacey and many of King Robb’s guard,” answered Jorah gruffly cutting his piece of venison. “Queen Margaery was told shortly before my arrival during Lord Commander Snow’s visit for Lord Greyjoy’s marriage to Lady Sansa.” He did not wish to see the importance of the boy. With a potential Aegon in the Stormlands and now the North claimed a secret Targaryen. He stared frowning deeply at the flaky three-headed dragon.
Aegon married his sisters. Does she plan on marrying her nephews?

“It is Queen Daenerys, ser,” corrected Dany in a similar tone she had spoke when she had banished him.

“Yes it is. My Lord Uncle Bear will be more conscientious from now on during your visit in the North.” Dany’s lilac eyes glowered at Margaery’s name for him. His desire and hope that Dany still wished him to be at her side had returned. She wanted to see me despite saying she never wanted to look at me again. She did not like the familiarity between Margaery and him. Jorah glanced at both queens on opposite ends of the table staring down at one another.

“Your Graces, the baker boy Hot Pie is here,” pointed Jorah as a plump boy with blonde hair like straw came in wearing a dusty apron and clothes.

“I know the smallfolk did not receive her with a warm welcome, Tyrion Lannister.” Tyrion gave a wry smile. “She spins a different story however. Did the Meereenese see her as the same?”

“Dragons do have that affect, Your Grace.” Large brown eyes flickered in the direction of where the three dragons were chained.

“Will you be accompanying her to the Wall?” He nodded.

“Her Grace is sending Selmy and her army of Unsullied south. I am to go with her and her dragons.” Margaery nodded in thought.

“Jaime wished he could see you but I kept him safely at Winterfell.” She looked again in the direction of the unnatural angry shrieks of the dragons. She continued, “He has his own room albeit guarded. He can walk around the courtyard as long as Lady Brienne or Shaggydog are watching.” Tyrion nodded and stared at his goblet.

“I wouldn’t have let her burn him. He is my brother.”

“I believe he knows that. He wants you to intervene for Tommen. To get him out of King’s Landing.”

“Not her?” Margaery smiled at him. Tyrion wouldn't have lifted a finger for Cersei anyway.

“He said Tommen should not be punished for his and Cersei’s actions. Or for your lord father’s.”

“Your lord father has taken control of King’s Landing. Surely, he could smuggle my nephew out of there with the same ease Lady Sansa was.”

“That was the work of my grandmother and help. My lord father would not risk being burned to death by dragon fire for Tommen.”

“I am to go to the Wall and introduce your husband and Jon Snow to Her Grace.” He wasn’t making an excuse just stating the difficult position he was in.

“You’ll think of something.” They were silent as Tyrion mulled over her words as he drank a glass or two standing in the snow of all places.

“Her Grace is curious about Lord Commander Snow. Lord Mormont does not seem pleased about this or at all convinced of Snow’s Targaryen parentage.”
"She is, isn't she? It is true, my good sister Lady Sansa is not liar."

"She lived and survived King's Landing." Margaery pursed her lips.

"I would not call Sansa a liar or anything less than courteous in front of Lord Commander Snow."
She added, "And my husband."

"My apologies, Your Grace, I meant no disrespect. I was quite fond of the child."

"She's a widow with two small babes now." Tyrion frowned sadly. Margaery turned to see Daenerys
trudging through the snows towards them wrapped in furs supplied by Lord Mormont.

"Marrying Snow to Her Grace would permanently end any bad blood between the North and the
Trident with the Iron Throne." Daenerys could remove Jon's vows to the Night's Watch, if she
wished.

"They are both so dutiful," murmured Margaery sadly. But she wasn't thinking about the Dragon
Queen who smiled at them in greeting.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry if this was still shitty. Random return of Hot Pie and his sigil pie crust skills.

But I am at last on holiday break which means more updates. :)


Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays to you all! I wanted to post an update before the 24th for y'all :) So enjoy (hopefully)!

Robb, Uncle Brynden, Meera, Grenn, Gendry made it safely to Castle Black though there were some who died of exhaustion and wounds. They had been burned on the spot. Satin and Maester Aemon were relieved that they were alive. Maester Aemon tended to everyone’s wounds as Satin brought him letters that awaited his return. Robb picked up the oldest of the bunch.

“Your queen and children are safe, Your Grace. I would have informed you immediately if it were the case,” said Satin in his soft voice noticing Robb’s apprehensiveness. Robb opened the letter and read it. It was not in Margaery’s hand, but in the old familiar scrawl of Maester Luwin. Robb had to read it twice. His eyes stung.

“We’re brothers now. Officially,” stated Theon grinning.

“I have always considered you my brother and friend.”

“I know. But this is different. Your children and my children will be cousins. Maybe a son of mine will marry a daughter of yours.”

“My poor daughter,” teased Robb as he hugged Theon. “When I see you again it’ll be spring.” But we’ll never have those hunts with our sons like we imagined when he and Sansa would come to visit.

How did I outlive my friend? My brother?

“What is it?” asked Brynden urgently from the other end of the room.

“Lord Theon Greyjoy has died,” answered Robb thickly. “My sister bore him twins, a son and a daughter.” He kept his eyes on the letter not trusting himself to keep his emotions under control.

“I’m sorry, Your Grace.” Satin stood awkwardly looking apologetically. “Lord Snow never mentioned he was family to you both.”

“How?” queried Brynden Tully. Robb handed the letter to Satin to pass to his great-uncle. Wounds left by a poisoned dagger. Robb did not just think of his own grief. He felt pangs of sadness for his sister and his nephew and niece. He wondered how Sansa fared and if the treatment of her by the Ironborn had changed since Theon was no longer alive. Luwin’s letter had been written with a shaky hand as the letters were not perfect and uniform as per usual. Robb heard a screech of a chair moved and footsteps. He felt a comforting pat on his back and he looked up to see Brynden looking at him sadly.

“Cat would have grieved as well for you and Sansa. Especially for her grandchildren.” Mother would have loved all four of her grandchildren. The grief and the unfairness of it overcame Robb’s ability to control his emotions. He hit the table and the unread letters fell to the floor. It was not until the candle was half way burned through and Robb could cry no more did he bend down to pick
them up.

Maester Luwin had written again informing him that his good father Lord Mace had ordered warships to White Harbor. The rest of his army had returned from the South.

...Her Grace and the army have ridden north of Widow’s Watch. Lady Lynessa Flint called for aid for the smallfolk sighted winged beasts, the dragons of Daenerys Targaryen caused a pandemonium of fear. The alliance between Your Graces and Daenerys Targaryen still stands unless she breaks it with an act of aggression. Queen Margaery believes she is sailing for the Wall....

Robb did not know how to feel about the news of Daenerys’ arrival to Westeros. He was relieved that the dragons’ aid in destroying the Others was coming at last. I might be coming home soon. He sifted for a letter from Margaery herself or any announcement of war.

My Robb,

She and her dragons may have reached Castle Black by time you receive this. I have used the swiftest raven but the weather may have delayed it. She has sent Ser Barristan Selmy and her army of Unsullied south to deal with a man posing as Aegon in the Stormlands. Tyrion Lannister is accompanying her. I have told her about Jon and she seems curious to meet him. Her army is plagued with a terrible illness. I have done my best to quarantine them from our people. Lady Flint is prepared to send word if any cases of the same or similar sickness arises. I pray for your safety and health. I love you and miss you terribly. I cannot wait until this all over and you can come home to the children and I.

Your loving wife,
Margaery, the Queen in the North

He let out a breath of relief that there was no outbreak of war. Robb was concerned about Margaery’s health if she had come into contact with the ill. I’d lose my mind if my Margaery fell ill and died. Robb shoved away his fear, thinking optimistic and positive thoughts. He reread it imagining her voice saying the words. He paused at the mention of Jon. Was it positive curiosity? Or not? Jon’s not here.

Jon, where are you?

Asha scowled at Damphair angrily. She let out several curses ignoring the reproachful looks he gave her.

“What do you mean the lords are calling for a kingsmoot? I thought the Drowned God could only do that?”

“Some of the lords are not pleased at the prospect of being ruled by two women for the next eighteen years.” Asha snorted,

“Tough titty.”

“They are vying for Theon’s widow’s hand. And yours.” Of course.

“To control Theon’s heirs and rule the Iron Islands in my nephew’s name. Or to kill my brother’s heirs and end my lord father’s line.”
“Aye.”

“Where is nuncle in this? Does he want to marry his nephew’s widow and sit on the Seastone Chair too?”

“I have not spoken to Victarion. But I sense these lords will try to match Euron’s boldness.” Yet he was killed by the very person they all seek to forcibly marry.

“My lady mother once told me to be bold. A Greyjoy has ruled the Iron Islands for hundreds of years. I am not going to let them take my brother’s throne from his children.” From me. It’s our birthright. They remained silent whilst Asha stewed. Damphair broke it half speaking to himself and to her,

“I saw my lord father in Theon. With his talk of not taking any salt wives, and bringing good maesters like the one he knew in the north. Theon did not object to reaving as much as your grandfather. Balon would have hated as much as old Quellon would have loved the marriage between Theon and Lady Sansa Stark.” Father wanted to bring back the glory days and the return of the Old Way.

“What should I do?” she blurted out. Asha did not know whether she was asking about the situation with the lords and Sansa or whether to continue her lord father’s goals or try some reforms that her little brother never had the chance to implement. She took a breath of the salty wind and stared at Black Wind.

Lady Leonette Tyrell beamed happily as she told her husband’s mother and grandmother of her joyous news. Almost four moons along. Her good mother smiled and kissed her cheeks.

“I am so delighted for you and Garlan. Have you written him and Mace?” Leonette nodded.

“I sent a letter the moment I felt the babe quicken. I wish Garlan was here.” Lady Alerie patted her hand.

“I’m sure he misses you as well. Mother, what was it that you wanted to tell us?”

“I am not your mother. It can wait till Willas gets here.” Leonette stiffened. It can wait till Mace and Willas gets here. Lady Olenna had said the same thing before they were told about the Red Wedding. Garlan had been there and his shouting that he wanted to go his younger siblings matching Lord Mace’s bellowing. Lord Mace and Willas had told him no. Lady Alerie had cried. You can’t come home in the same condition and die as Loras did. King’s Landing was far enough. The North was practically a world’s away. Lady Alerie’s smile faltered.

“Is about my daughter or Mace? Tell me now,” Alerie asked sharply. Not Garlan, please not Garlan. Leonette almost threw up at the thought of her husband being burned to death by dragons or killed in some other terrible manner.

“She never went to King’s Landing, Willas told you that. But Stannis’ Hand has written letters to all the lords that the North supports Stannis and he is legitimizing a bastard of King Robert’s. Not the acknowledged Florent boy. Well to be honest, Jon Connington may have killed him by now.”

“Perhaps, Margaery and Robb Stark were not aware of each other’s support of Lord Stannis and the dragon queen?” suggested Leonette trying not to be timid around her husband’s family. She was rarely included in these family talks, whenever Garlan was not home.
“Mayhaps, but I find it unlikely.”

“Who do we support?” asked Lady Alerie. Leonette cut her apple tart awaiting Lady Olenna’s answer. I would support the dragon queen out of fear. They all turned at the sound of Willas’ cane. Dressed opulently in green and gold, he entered the terrace. He greeted his mother and grandmother with a kiss on the cheek. He gave Leonette a warm smile as he sat down.

“I would rather we remained neutral for as long as possible. We should wait the outcome of the happenings at the Wall. Margaery has written that there may be another contender for the throne. One that is of relation with the Starks.” Willas said this as he stroked his groomed moustache thoughtfully. Leonette blinked confused. Who gives a twat about the Night’s Watch? Two or three armies were heading for King’s Landing. Yes, Lord Mace had the largest army and navy in Westeros but numbers did not always guarantee a victory.

“I believe we are distressing Leonette, Willas,” stated Olenna staring at her. Lady Alerie grasped her hand in hers.

“You should rest, for the baby’s sake.”

“Garlan will be fine,” soothed Willas. Leonette felt a spark of anger as they all looked at her as if she were a mere child. She was dainty and bright eyed but she wasn’t at all daft or unworthy of respect. I am a member of this family, my voice in these matters count. She had won the respect of her good mother and Willas. However, Lord Mace had been at Highgarden infrequently in recent past moons for her to make an impressive impression. Leonette had figured Lady Olenna was merely busy with all of her grandchildren and political turmoil to pay much notice of her. Maybe she was wrong.

“Lord Mace should declare King’s Landing in Daenerys Targaryen’s name,” argued Leonette staring at Willas and Olenna. The Tyrells can’t choose the losing side this time. The next man or woman to sit on the Iron Throne may not be so forgiving as Robert Baratheon.

--------------------

He had remembered who he once was despite death. Benjen Stark, youngest son and child of Lord Rickard and Lyarra Stark. Brother of Brandon, Ned, and Lya. Uncle of six. First ranger of the Night’s Watch. How could he forget his guilt? He remembered being a boy and his castellan telling him that North would Remember as he howled in pain and grief over the news of his lord father and Brandon’s deaths.

I killed her, when I suggested and obtained the armor for the knight of the Laughing Tree. It was my idea that made him notice my sister. I helped her to her grave as I thought they were just going to talk like they did at Harrenhal. I let my own father and brother go to their death with my silence. Would he have listened to me if I had spoken up? I will never know, but at least I could say I tried. The guilt ate at me until I felt I had no choice but to run and take the black.

Benjen had known without Ned admitting it that Jon was Lya’s. Ben and Lya had been the closest with Ned at the Eyrie and Brandon’s developed interest in girls. The boy’s solemn face did not remind him of Ned. It reminded him of Lya’s sad resigned demeanor the weeks before the Prince came. Someone, maybe it was the mother he did not remember who jokingly said the world would know the day Brandon and Lya stopped smiling and laughing.

I just wanted you to smile again.

Ned’s youngest daughter had been painful to see during his rare visits. She was little Lya reborn. He
had wondered if Ned had a hard time noticing the similarities. If it caused him pain. His last visit
was only time he saw a glimmer of Lya in Ned’s older daughter. He had been walking with Ned,
when he heard her say the words, the Prince, a song. The same way Lya had said it full of
conviction. He had stared at Ned looking for the same look of horror he felt. The same look of
recognition that they shared when they watched little Arya. But Ned only had only smiled.

Benjen decided to keep silent once more. It’s different circumstances after all. A different prince. He
relaxed knowing Ned and Sansa weren't Father and Lya. He forgot the unexpected deja vu when
Jon told him of his intentions to join the Night’s Watch. Who was he to argue that fourteen was too
young when he himself had joined so young? You’ll feel the same regrets I felt. Never to have a wife
or child. Not that I had ever felt I deserved the chance to have those things.

I said I would be back by his name day. How much time had past since?

He had successfully buried a pile of obsidian daggers. Ben had held the belief (hope) that he would
make it back to Castle Black and warn Old Bear of what loomed in great numbers. But the wights
had attacked him and his men. He had received help from the Children of the Forest. And he had...

Melisandre had snapped her head up, when Robb Stark had confirmed her vision of three dragons
flying through a terrible snowstorm. She paced around the room. Her red gown swishing with her
every movement.

“She must be killed.” Stabbed through the heart by Azor Azhai to end the darkness. “Where is Jon?”
Who else could she be but Nissa Nissa? The bride of fire.

“We need her dragons,” countered King Robb who came from the old maester’s tower. The
Targaryen maester. She stared at Lightbringer that had been brought back and thought of Stannis’
bastard nephew who had skills as a blacksmith. It needs to be re-forged. "Shouldn't you see him in
your fire visions from your Lord of Light?" he added cynically.

"Shouldn't you sense him through your wolf, Your Grace?"

His blue eyes narrowed. "I haven't had any wolf dreams of Ghost."

“What shall you do when their purpose has been fulfilled, Your Grace?" she asked with a smile. The
king frowned running his hand through his dark auburn curls. "You won't have any need for them."

"I have an alliance with her. I won't break it without a reason. She's still Jon's aunt. Though I still
find it strange to believe he is half Targaryen."

"Jon needs to kill her to make Lightbringer work to end darkness and winter." Robb stared at the
sword and shook his head.

"I am to kill her dragons, whilst this is happening or before?" asked Robb with disbelief. "Jon won't
do it. The sword is a fake, even if there was an actual sword called Lightbringer. Dragon fire and
Valyrian swords are what we need."

"What will you do if it's not enough? If the power behind these Others is impervious to fire and the
Valyrian swords you and Jon carry?" At last, King Robb did not have a dismissive retort.

Chapter End Notes
It's not as long as I had hoped. I did scrap a lot of bits I didn't feel were right. Dany, Tyrion & les dragons will be at Castle Black next update.

Leave a comment/review :)}
Margaery and her army rode back with to Winterfell after seeing Ser Barristan Selmy and Daenery’s ailing army of Unsullied sail south to supposedly the Stormlands or the Crownlands. It changed from day to day. She had dispatched a letter to her lord father warning him to be prepared. From far away, Winterfell looked grim and desolate surrounded by the glittering snow. At least there are still a few hours of light each day. Margaery was happy to see Eddard, Elora, Rickon and Arya. But she desperately wanted to go to Castle Black. Especially, since she had received a raven from Robb stating that he had returned wounded but was on the mend. She wanted to see Robb, to hug him, to kiss his bearded face and hear his voice.

“Are you troubled?” asked Arya, her grey eyes scrutinizing Margaery’s face.

“No, I was just thinking of Robb that’s all.” She kissed her little daughter’s face, and smoothed Elora’s little embroidered bonnet.

“Hopefully, those dragons kill all the Others, so they can all come home.” Margaery nodded in agreement. “Is it true, that Lord Mormont laid with the Mother of Dragons?” Margaery scowled. Literally or figuratively. Perhaps both.

“It seems the furs I had offered weren’t adequate enough to keep her bed warm.” What did Jorah tell Daenerys about Robb and I? How did he get past the guards I posted outside his tent? She was not pleased at all. Arya misinterpreted Margaery’s frowns.

“Robb loves you, he wouldn’t dishonor you,” soothed Arya with conviction. Margaery smiled. The thoughts of Daenerys finding Robb attractive or Robb betraying his vows to her for the Dragon Queen hadn’t crossed Margaery’s mind.

“I know he does and I trust him.”

“What did the dragons look like? Are they bigger than Shaggydog?” asked Rickon as he burst into the nursery with Eddard and Shaggydog at his heels. She smiled at her son and her good brother.

“Much bigger. There are three. Two of them, the green one and the cream and gold are smaller than the black and red one called Drogon.” Eddard tugged on Rickon wanting his attention. “I don’t trust her ability to control Drogon,” she stated to Arya without thinking. They claimed Drogon was Balerion reborn, which made Margaery shudder at the thought. She had only seen three dragons from a safe distance, both admiring the beauty of their scales and nervously thinking about what on earth would they feast on at the Wall? A farmer claimed that the dark dragon had burnt his thatched roof. Margaery had compensated the man’s loss. Thankfully no man or animal was killed.

“Do you think she would recognize Gendry?” asked Arya slowly. Daenerys never seen Robert Baratheon. Maybe she heard about Robert from others but how would she know Gendry was the Usurper’s bastard? Tyrion would likely see the resemblance but would he say anything about it?

“He’s safe. He is just a blacksmith and knight of Winterfell. Not a threat to her. Robb won’t let her harm Gendry,” promised Margaery wrapping her free arm around Arya’s shoulders. Arya rested her head on Margaery’s shoulder gently. She let out a sound of frustration.

“I’m sick of sitting here waiting for scraps of news of what’s going on up there. I want them all to
come home. I want to do something. How can you stand waiting not knowing if they are going to come home alive or not? My sister is all alone again. Gendry is likely freezing his arse with Robb and Jon at Castle Black. Where is Bran? What if Uncle Ben became a wight and tries to kill Robb or Jon?”

Margaery almost remarked at how Arya sounded much like Lady Catelyn had at Riverrun lamenting her worries for her five children’s safety and the painful separation from her daughters and youngest sons. Margaery herself had a taste of what Lady Stark felt whilst she had been away to meet Daenerys. With her husband at the Wall, her children, Arya, and Rickon at Winterfell, widowed Sansa and her precious twins, her lord father and Garlan in King’s Landing, and the rest of her kin at Highgarden. She wonders how far and how long her heart will be stretched. There’s a heavy ache in her that’s growing like the amount of snow on the ground outside. The pressure to not make a mistake in dealing with Daenerys had been high. *If I get thrown into the fire, they all will.*

“You have done an excellent job in my absence, Arya. I think we are all frustrated with worry over the unknown fates of our loved ones.” Rickon was old enough to notice and understand his sister and Margaery’s angst. Though his playtime with Eddard, allowed him to escape the painful memories of the disruption of his family. She partially envied the innocence and worry free faces of her son and daughter. *I pray they never know any different.*

Daenerys made it to the grim dark castle known as Castle Black. Daenerys had seen many wondrously structured buildings in Essos, but the Wall was a sight to behold. She spoke to Drogon, Viserion, and Rhaegal in High Valyrian ordering them to stay. Most men of the Night’s Watch came from dubious backgrounds and committed crimes but they had been absolved from it by joining the Night’s Watch. She hoped the few ill and wounded horses the black brothers gave would satiate their hunger. The memory of the charred corpse of the little girl still haunted Daenerys.

“Doesn’t appear to have changed much since my last visit,” exclaimed Tyrion staring up at the Wall. Daenerys looked around at the men clad in all black, and the others with sigils on their armour. But her gaze rested upon a tall, stocky young bearded man who bore a bronze and iron crown on his dark red curls. *King Robb Stark.* He was a handsome man with bright blue eyes. *They make a pretty pair, he and Margaery are like out of a song of romance.* He was flanked by an older grey haired man with the same blue eyes and by the largest dog she had ever seen. *A wolf, she corrected, a direwolf.* It was smoky grey with large yellow eyes. It sniffed the air as she approached. On the other side of direwolf stood a black curly haired young man with a pretty face dressed in black.

“Welcome to Castle Black, Queen Daenerys,” greeted King Robb courteously. He addressed Tyrion stiffly, “Tyrion Lannister.” She smiled at his use of her title.

“It is nice to finally meet you, King Robb. I have heard much about you, the Young Wolf, the wolf that cannot be killed.” Introductions were made of the Lord Commander’s steward Satin, King Robb’s great uncle Ser Brynden Tully, and other lords. She requested that she’d be taken to see her own great uncle, the maester of Castle Black at once. Tyrion had told her Maester Aemon Targaryen was blind and was possibly the oldest man in Westeros at over a hundred years old. She wept as she saw him after entering the cluttered chambers of the Maester’s Tower.

“Daenerys Stormborn. Egg’s great granddaughter,” cried Maester Aemon softly as he brushed his papery thin fingers over her face. “I never thought I would hear the sounds of dragons. Or meet you.”

“It is lovely to know there is another dragon in this world. Even one dressed like a crow with a
maester’s chain.” She kissed his bald head. They spoke of her dragons, and their family history. He mentioned the Others, and his belief in her. She thought of her dream of riding a dragon and bathing an army armored by ice with dragonfire.

“Alas, I am too old to be a dragon rider alongside you. It must be you and Jon to defeat save us from the Others and winter. Rhaegar’s son with Lady Lyanna Stark.” The bastard son. My claim to the Iron Throne is greater. He spoke of Jon Snow with respect and fondness. Jorah’s late father had made Snow his steward and given him the Mormont ancestral sword. She remembered Jorah’s scratchy beard and lips against her skin. How warm he had made her as they made love. She had once swore she would never allow Jorah in her sight or be allowed to be alone with her again. The woman in me makes me weak that’s all. Jorah’s yellow shirt made her forget the anger and hurt over his betrayal temporarily or perhaps it was the time and distance apart. It reminded her of the all the good memories of their relationship. It might have been the desolate cold and unfamiliar surroundings of the North that made her want her bear back. It is nothing. It annoyed her that her defenses were broken down over sentimentality. Dany shook away the thoughts of Jorah Mormont from her mind. Save that for another day.

The more pressing thought was, Where is Lord Commander Jon Snow? Robb Stark told her that Lord Commander Snow was still beyond the Wall with a lord named Howland Reed. They sat next to each other in the dining hall at the high table. Dany looked from her wooden bowl of stew and noticed someone staring at her. A small young woman of seventeen or eighteen with short dark brown hair and green eyes stared at Dany’s eyes wistfully in a mournful manner.

“Who is that lady again?” asked Dany glancing back at Robb Stark.

“Her name is Lady Meera Reed. She is Lord Howland Reed’s daughter and heiress of Greywater Watch. Lord Howland Reed was a close friend of my lord father’s and my Aunt Lyanna.” She nodded and smiled at the lady, which Lady Meera smiled weakly back. But why is she staring at me so sadly? Daenerys’ attention was diverted by the entrance of a woman clad in red with scarlet red hair.

“I thought you said women were not allowed at the Wall.” Lady Meera appeared to be a warrior despite her height but this stranger dressed in a gown did not appear to be a member of King Robb’s army. Certainly not of the Night’s Watch unless she is actually a man. She glanced the Imp who sat on the other side of her.

“Ah Stannis’ red woman,” exclaimed Tyrion with mild surprise. “Am I correct, Your Grace? Though I was under the impression she served Stannis Baratheon unless he is hiding as wildling or with Lord Commander Snow.” King Robb casted a disparaging glance at the lady in red. Daenerys was inflamed that King Robb’s wife had not mentioned the presence of the Usurper’s brother and his army at Castle Black before Daenerys had took off with her dragons and Tyrion Lannister.

King Robb clarified, “Stannis Baratheon and his army have gone to Eastwatch-By-the-Sea after helping in getting the wildlings set up in the Gift and after his wife Lady Selyse died. Cotter Pyke sent a raven that Stannis has sailed south to retake control of the Stormlands and—“ My rightful throne. He halted from continuing and took a long sip from his cup of ale. They were wrong. I was right to believe that a dog is a dog, that there is no difference in their treachery.

“Lady Melisandre, a priestess of Asshai. She follows a god called Rh’ollar and believes in a savior named Azor Azhai that has been reborn to save us from darkness. She believed Stannis Baratheon was Azor Azhai for a long time,” explained King Robb. She thought of the masked priestess she had met. Perhaps this Melisandre can explain the words of her fellow priestess.

“I wish to speak to the priestess,” requested Dany. King Robb nodded and waved Melisandre to the
Lady Melisandre dipped into a curtsey. Daenerys noticed the red stone choker seemed to flicker, or perhaps it was merely a trick of the light. Before Daenerys could utter a word, the sound of a horn went off. She watched everyone stop and stare. King Robb, Satin, and many men stood up out of their seats. A few moments later, a young boy bursted into the hall letting in gusts of ice-cold wind. What is happening?

"It’s Lord Commander Snow, his wolf, and the crannogman lord, Your Grace,” gasped the boy out of breath. King Robb’s direwolf called Grey Wind let out a long howl.

“Are they alone?” asked King Robb as he stared at his wolf. The wolf made low growls as it sniffed the air. But whatever the young boy replied was drowned out by another blast of the horn. Once, twice, thrice.

“Three blasts. Oh Gods, the Others at the Wall,” choked Satin the personal steward of the absent Lord Commander. There was silence in the dimly lit hall. King Robb’s voice boomed with commands and other words that led to cheers, and vigorous nods. But she could not hear over the pounding of her beating heart. It’s time. Time to deliver the land of my birth from these monsters. Her lilac eyes met bright blue eyes.

“Burn them before we are overrun by them.” It was not said in a commanding way but in an urgent manner that matched how she felt. Life or death. Daenerys nodded. She and the King in the North ran out of the dining hall, their paths diverging as she ran to her dragons and he with his direwolf to likely find Jon Snow and fight on foot. She heard a female voice call after them.

“Nissa Nissa! Nissa Nissa!” But she kept on running. She found her children as she left them sulking in the snow with charred bones of the horses littered around them. Rhaegal shrieked at her approach. All three looked up at her with interest and excitement to see her. She dug for her small bag buried in the snow that carried her crop. Once, she found it she clamored onto Drogon’s back. Daenerys Targaryen commanded them in High Valyrian to fly and smiled as Drogon’s large wings flapped like the sound of thunder.

Robb ran through the tunnel with Grey Wind. They had to have made it through the gate by now. He shouted Jon’s name several times.

“Jon! Lord Howland!” he yelled his voice echoing. He saw a figure enter the outer gate. Robb could hear the roar of the dragons.

“Your Grace,” answered Lord Reed. “Jon has turned back to fight the Others as the dragonfire is killing them in great numbers.”

“Will the Wall hold?” asked Robb nervously. Less than six hundred men of the Night’s Watch from Shadow Tower to Eastwatch-by-the-Sea, Robb’s own army was not at its full numbers. There were still quite a number of wildling men and women who could fight. Lord Howland Reed stared at the ice walls.

“We shall see how strong the magic wards are.” Robb took note of giant bag made up of cloaks that Lord Howland carried.

“Daggers and arrows of dragonglass,” explained Reed. The gate made a loud clang as it began to lower. Robb without thinking ran out the gate before it closed on him with Grey Wind growling ahead. Robb climbed on to Grey Wind. He looked up to see the three dragons soaring above,
swooping down to let out a burning inferno on the Others. He spotted Daenerys riding the great black and red one. He turned his attention back to the ground. Jon was battling one that the dragonfire had missed. Robb spotted two Others heading for Jon and spurred Grey Wind faster. He cut off one head and stabbed one in the back.

“You made it back,” shouted both Jon and Robb with smiles on their faces over the loud roars of the dragons, and the high-pitched squeals of dying Others.

“I see Daenerys Targaryen has made it to Westeros,” noted Jon. Robb nodded. Robb had questions on the tip of his tongue but inhuman speed of the approaching Others had to be dealt with first. He could hear battle cries and shouts of men behind them. They likely came out to fight with the dragonglass Lord Howland Reed had brought. Ghost was snarling and snapping as he watched Jon’s back. He coughed from smell the smoke of burning trees. As he killed three Others, he saw a flying burning log or something land on half a dozen Others. His seconds long distraction kept him from preparing for Grey Wind’s sudden lurching jump.

'Covered in blood you shall drown

In a land of snow with Ice'

Why those words popped into his mind as he was thrown off the back of Grey Wind, he did not know. He scrambled up to his feet with Ice still in his hand looking around for any Others coming his way. Grey Wind growled at him and tugged at his leather boot. A murder of crows flew over head. So many that made the already dark ice cold evening seem like the hour of the ghosts. Grey Wind continued to growl. Robb took this as a sign to retreat. Before he could run the green dragon shrieked and descended a few feet away from Robb. The scaled beast shot flames of orange-yellow flecked with green fire. Robb turned away from the heat.

"Look out Robb!" he heard Jon's deep voice call out. The large dark green scaled tail was coming at him. Robb tried to duck in time but he was hit and flown back twenty feet away. Ice fell out of his hand as he landed hard on his back in 'remains' of the Others and blood. Wincing in sharp pain Robb slowly sat up. He saw the dead body that was front down on the ground.

No head. Robb screamed and scrambled away backwards to his sword, when he realized whose blood he had laid in.

Chapter End Notes

Okay. I don't know if dragonglass daggers are single use weapons. I can't remember if the dagger Sam used shattered after he used it cause I don't have my books with me.

Anyways! Chapter 25. Also it's been 25 chapters and no one has realized/or commented on the theory/crackship I have alluded to more than once.

Hope you had a happy and safe new year's! Leave a comment below ;)

Chapter Summary

Been over a month since I posted an update. I have an unedited snippet of a random outtake from one of the recent previous chapters.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Asha could feel Theon behind her leaning against the wall with his arms folded. *You sent them to their graves, his voice was less mocking, more harsher.* She pinched the bridge of her nose with two fingers. *I put them on my best ship, she argued back. He laughed at her.* She eyed the bottle and poured herself another cup of warmed wine with spices. Maybe he would go away.

*You sent my children away from their home. So in the end you are Balon’s heir after all.*

*Would you rather me separate them from their mother? Like you were? How many times did you visit our lady mother?*

*I thought I had more time, but I died. Why there of all places?*

*You know why, you live in my mind brother.*

*I lived in the north, sister. For years, I have heard people say them words. Winter is Coming. She shook her head. Even in her head, Theon had a touch of drama.*

*You listened too much to the northern ghost stories. I truly regret wishing to hear your voice again, little brother. Leave me in peace.*

*Asha, you promised me you wouldn’t let her get hurt. He’ll hurt her more than Lord and Lady Stark’s deaths and my death did. He’s a bastard after-all.*

*You threw my wife into the fire along with them.*

*You were sent to Drowned God’s watery halls to feast and whore with the mermaids. I doubt you of all people would be some seer-like apparition.*

Sansa was safe from the ‘rough’ wooing of the Ironborn lords or their heirs. The ship should be out of range by now. Parting from Theon’s children, *her niece and nephew,* was harder for Asha than she had expected. Perhaps that’s why she spent her evenings in solar that was once her lord father’s and Theon’s with plenty of drink and *Theon.* She had shipped off her House’s future and it could not be promised that they would ever come back.

*Perhaps you shall marry Erik Ironmaker or another lord in my wife’s stead? His laugh was both harshly mocking and yet full of pity.*
Daenerys stared at the tall, long faced man as he conversed with King Robb Stark in a quiet and grim manner. She could not help staring at him. She remembered first setting eyes on Lord Commander Jon Snow below her on the battlefield. Despite the filth and blood from the battle that dirtied his face and matted his dark hair, he was a handsome man. Not quite as a handsome as King Robb, she had to admit or by far not the most handsome man she’s ever met. Jon Snow was a cold and aloof man. She wondered if there was anything of her eldest brother in the young man. Physical appearance wise, he looked nothing like her. It would have been easy to believe that he was not her kin, her youngest nephew. *But he ran into the fire to save his giant white wolf from the flames.* Dany had been certain the man and the albino beast were dead from the orange-green flames of Rhaegal’s. She had screamed in horror at what one of her children had done. Her kin or not, the unprovoked death of the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch, an indisputable kin of the Starks by the flames of her dragon would be politically damaging to her. *Accident or not.* The lords and smallfolk would or could construe that it was a planned attack or that her dragons were uncontrollable and therefore she was as well. *Fire and blood are my words. But only necessary blood will be spilt.*

As she sat in the smoky dark dining hall of Castle Black, she thought of the irony that the dragon she had named after Rhaegar had almost killed Rhaegar’s son’s direwolf. He never smiled except the rare small smiles she spotted from a distance at something Robb or a man named Grenn who seemed to be a friend of his. Jon was nothing but polite and courteous towards her but she got the sense he was wary of her. *Even more so than Stark.*

“What was that letter I saw you reading earlier?” she overheard Robb Stark asked Jon.

“It was—nothing important,” answered Jon.

“I know my sister’s handwriting, Jon. Is she alright?”

“Then why’d you ask if you already knew? I have no clue, if she’s alive or not. She has to be alive. It was an old letter from sometime after Theon died.” Robb looked about to say something but Jon gave him a look and said, “We—I can’t do anything for her. I wish, I want to—but this war needs to be dealt with first.” Dany could hear the conflict in his voice. Robb nodded.

“But that wasn’t what I was going to say Jon.” Jon pushed away his empty bowl and turned his head. Dany looked down to make sure it did not look obvious that she had been staring and listening in on their conversation.

“Your Grace, if you are ready we would like to talk in my solar. You as well Lord Tyrion,” added Jon formally. Dany looked up from her plate and nodded. The four walked and climbed the steps to the solar followed by Ghost and Grey Wind. The size of the direwolves weren’t what made Daenerys uncomfortable. She did not like the way the unsettling pairs of red eyes and golden eyes stared at her.

Without going into the formalities, Lord Commander Jon went straight to the point. “We need a dragon at each castle. Eastwatch by the Sea, Castle Black, and Shadow Tower. The Others aren’t going to attack just Castle Black. Cotter Pyke has been begging me for more men.” Dany frowned. Her dragons obeyed her. How could she be in three places at once? “You have to be willing to let two others control two of your dragons until the war and winter is over.” She nodded and thought about who would be two dragon riders.

“Drogon will remain with me. He is hardest to control,” declared Dany. Jon nodded in agreement. “I assume you will want to use one of the dragons yourself, nephew.” Jon frowned uncomfortably at being called nephew.
“Yes, I’ll go to Shadow Tower. You’ll remain here with Drogon.”

“And who will ride Viserion to Eastwatch-by-the-Sea? You, Your Grace, the Young Wolf? Add dragon rider to your warging abilities.” asked Tyrion with a bemused smile.

“Not likely,” retorted Robb with a scoff patting his grey wolf behind the ears. Dany got the vibe that Robb Stark would rather see the dragons dead than ride one, which enraged her motherly instinct in her. It wasn’t a hard choice for her to make. There were limited persons who weren’t fearful of her dragons and glancing at Robb Stark. Thinking of that priestess imploring Robb Stark to the right thing before she was locked up in her chamber. Fewer that I trust with my children.

“You rode Viserion here, Tyrion. You know a great deal of invaluable knowledge about dragons and dragonlore. You will command Viserion to destroy the Others and their wights that attack Eastwatch-by-the-Sea.”

“As you command, Your Grace,” replied Tyrion with a smile.

“When do we leave for Shadow Tower, Jon? I can be ready at any moment to ride out there.”

“You’ll remain here in my stead. There’s no one here I can trust that I know the men will follow orders from in my absence. They might not listen to Queen Daenerys. She needs to use Drogon against the Others not any insubordinate men.” Dany felt angry that Jon implied because her sex, she was unable to garner the respect that was given to King Robb and Lord Commander Snow even by those who personally disliked the two men. I can make them respect me. Robb seemed to be just as pleased about this as she was. “No decision shall be made without conferring with the other, understood.” Jon gave them both a hard look. Dany suppress the desire to roll her eyes or remind him that she was the rightful Queen of the Iron Throne at being ordered about by her nephew to play nice with the northern king.

“I will do what is the best for my realm.”

“We shall have any remaining dead burned, then depart as soon as possible,” continued Jon. Tyrion Lannister bowed then left to prepare for his journey to Eastwatch-by-the-Sea with Viserion. Robb and Dany lingered waiting to talk to Jon in private. There was so much Dany needed to discuss and wished to speak about with Jon. Would he be her heir or both her heir and consort if he survived the war? With Jon alive, succession to the Iron Throne was secure if he outlived Daenerys. What troubled her was if he married and had children their blood would be less Targaryen than his. Dany did not want to think about the possibility of her brother and Lyanna Stark had married, giving Jon the higher claim to rule Westeros. She thought of the nights she slept with Jorah and touched her stomach. What if I can have an heir of my own blood? From my own body. She closed her eyes for a short moment.

“Lord Commander, I wish to speak to you before you go.” Her lilac eyes flickered to the King in the North giving him a clear message that he was not welcome to hear what she had to say. King Robb gave her a hard look in response.

“Certainly, Your Grace.” Jon turned to King Robb and informally said, “Go have Satin gather the men, I’ll be there to announce the plans with shortly.” The two seemed to be wordlessly communicating until Robb Stark spoke fiercely.

“We should stick together, Jon. It’s what Father would have wished. Uncle Ben wants us to. Bran was with us. He’ll have to choose which one of us to watch over.” Dany frowned not understanding
what King Robb meant by Bran. Tyrion Lannister had informed her about a brother of the King’s that was crippled after a fall. But she not seen a crippled boy and surely he would have been formally introduced to her. His spirit? She regretted not asking Jorah about the Old Gods.

"That wasn’t Uncle Benjen. He may have been a Stark or a friend of Starks once. If Uncle Benjen is alive, which I still have gut feeling he is; he’s still out there extremely weak trying to get back to Castle Black.” He paused, “Bran will choose you.”

“I don’t want him to have to choose. I don’t want give myself false hope that Uncle Benjen is alive and not a wight,” argued King Robb. With one final glare, he stomped out with Grey Wind.

“We all have had to make choices that we did not want to make,” said Jon lowly, staring at the door. Daenerys wondered what choices Jon disliked making. “I have a feeling you are going to ask me to make one in a few moments.” He looked at her knowingly.

“I need an heir. You are the only living member of my family that is young enough. My womb was cursed. I have gone east and now I am west, perhaps one day I shall birth a living child.”

“What do you want of me? I am still a bastard.”

“I can legitimize you. You’ll be Jon Targaryen.” He did not smile at that or give any indication that her proposal pleased him. “I want you as my heir.” His grey eyes gazed at her, as if trying to reveal Dany’s thoughts. He was so tall that she had to crane her head slightly back to look at his face. Jon’s face was young and handsome even with a full dark beard. Black suits him. Dany tried to imagine the red dragon sigil emblazoned on black armor on him. Thoughts of Daario and Jorah followed. Perhaps one day, you will be more than just my heir.

“Is that all, Your Grace?” He looked away in the direction of the door.

“For now. I’d prefer if you called me Daenerys the next time we see each other. In private of course.” He nodded then left with Ghost, leaving her alone in the solar. She realized after he had flown west with Rhaegal that he had not firmly agreed or pledged to be her heir.

Sansa held her daughter close as she looked upon the Shadow Tower. It was a lot grimmer than Castle Black and smaller. A battle seemed to be going on the other side of the Wall. She pursed her lips hoping she had not come to a castle overrun by Others and wights. Sansa looked behind her to see the nursemaid carrying Dagon. Loud unearthly shrieks pierced their ears and trembled the ice and snow covered ground. The nursemaid trembled.

“What was that, my lady? Oh, we should have stayed at Bear Island.”

“Lady Lyra and Lyanna Mormont barely had enough to feed themselves or a man to spare to bring us Winterfell. I was not going to burden them any longer. My brother will send us safely to Winterfell. Or Jon will.” The Mormonts would have gladly starved and suffered to show their deep loyalty to House Stark. What a contrast to the Ironborn in the wake of Theon’s death. Her voice was strong though she did not feel entirely confident in her plan. But what other choice did she have now? Sailing back to Bear Island seemed counterproductive. Was it wrong to want to see Robb or Jon after everything she had been through?

It was mad, a mad idea. To go to castle filled with men with dubious honor or none at all. Even with her few Ironborn guards that had not gone to the Drowned God with her it would not be enough to protect her and Yvaine.
“The grumpkins are going to come for us, my lady—” The nursemaid Yvaine’s voice was drowned out by the thunderous shrieks and roars, Sansa frowned staring up at the sky for the source. Young Lyanna Mormont had told her that the Targaryen queen had come to the Wall with her dragons. Her guards pounded at the gate.

“Go away, you wildlings,” shooed a surly voice.

“It’s the Lady Sansa Greyjoy, sister to the King in the North and the L—”

“I am the Lord Commander’s cousin,” interrupted Sansa.

“First the wildlings, then dead things coming out in the dark. Lord Snow and the bloody green dragon. Ordered to let in a giant red eyed white direwolf last week, now a bunch of Ironborn are knocking at the gate;” grumbled the voice as the gate groaned opened for them. Jon’s here.

“Where’s Jon?” asked Sansa urgently. The older grimy man pointed a gloved finger to the sky and the Wall.

“Out there. Riding that green dragon, burning them Others.”

“Where’s his chambers?”

“Oh, you’re that kind of cousin. Well if that dragon burns the Lord Commander to a crisp, you’re welcome to be my cousin.” Sansa wrinkled her nose and walked briskly away. Dalton, one of her guards led her and Yvaine away from the gatekeeper, whilst the other three remained.

“It won’t look good if they kill the gatekeeper,” warned Sansa.

“They are just teaching him some courtesies. They have been itching for a fight since we left home, my lady,” reassured the pimply man over the din of shouts and clamour of activity.

“Lord Commander is flying back! Get out of the way! Get it’s feeding out and ready or it’ll be you that gets roasted for it’s dinner!” Dagon started to cry and Alayne was starting to fuss against her shoulder. She reached out to her son and tried to soothe her daughter whilst the wind began to pick up.

“Back against the wall, my lady!” shouted Dalton as he stood in front of them. A large green-scaled dragon soared over the Wall. Sansa’s hood blew off her head and ducked her head from the flying snow. The dragon landed in the courtyard shaking the ground and knocking some off balance. A tall dark figure leaped off his back. Jon’s back was turned as he addressed an old white bearded man who seemed to be the commander of the Shadow Tower. She was about to call Jon’s name when she felt something nudge her elbow and looked to her side. It was Ghost sniffing her bundled daughter. Sansa smiled and rubbed the area behind his ear. Dagon let a out a squall that got everyone’s attention. Jon turned around and gaped with surprise and shock.

"Sansa?" She choked back a small sob at the sound of his deep voice.

Margaery rubbed her forehead tiredly. There was something clearly wrong with her. Resting in bed did nothing to stop or end this aching fatigue. Her chamber was the warmest in the castle yet she shivered under her many thick and heavy bed furs. It was now almost a fortnight of denying it to herself and to Maester Luwin.
She laughed and waved a hand dismissively, "I'm fine. I mustn't cause anyone to worry. Especially, my husband the King, Maester Luwin." Yet a few seconds later she coughed terribly.

"Your Grace, with all due respect, I believe His Grace would disagree with you." She nodded at last allowing Luwin to send a letter of her illness-fatigue.

OUTTAKE From a Previous Chapter

Jon, Lord Howland Reed and a man called Bayn followed Ghost. They were last of the few men who followed Jon. Poor Pyp. He hoped Grenn had made it back to Castle Black alive with Robb.

“I don’t believe I recognize you, Bayn. I know all the lords of the North.” The man had gone unnoticed; Jon had assumed he was just a survivor from one of the villages the wildlings’ attacked. But the man spoke eloquently and fought with impressive skill. Jon had complimented the man by stating he would have made a great knight. Bayn had a wry smile on his face. The comradeship between Lord Howland Reed and Bayn seemed to go further than their present situation as well, which also did not fit Jon’s assumption.

“I am not from the north though I have lived in the north for quite some time, Your Grace.” Jon scrutinized the tall man. The man was in his thirties and his head was shaved bald. Snow had covered his eyebrows, but a few hairs would be seen. Blond or white. He neither wore the black of the Night’s Watch or any sigil on his armor. “I lived on my sister’s lord husband’s land, my king.”

“I am not a king.” Jon frowned. Lady Catelyn had been the only southron bride of a northern lord in recent times as far as he knew. Lady Stark would have invited a southron lady wife of a northern bannerman at least once or twice.

“Jojen’s greendreams never lied.” But those words did not come from Lord Howland Reed’s lips but from the man. “He saw you on the Iron Throne, my king.” Jon stilled at his words and stared the man warily. Who are you?

Chapter End Notes

leave a review/comments xo. :)


Jon still felt slightly dazed in shock and surprise that Sansa and her babies were at Shadow Tower. He could have sent her to Castle Black with her guards or even to Winterfell. She never asked to go so he did not suggest that they leave. He would go out on Rhaegal to destroy the oncoming Others until it was pitch black out. It was odd yet so comforting to see Sansa in his chamber sitting up, wide awake waiting for him. Her worried face that would dissipate by a simple nod as he was too exhausted to articulate in words that he and the world would live another day.

“What was it like when she died?” whispered Sansa softly in the darkness of his chamber. He had come back with Rhaegal after searching for the Others. They were being lulled into believing that it was over; that they had won. It had been five days since the last attack. Jon had been lying awake unable to quiet his mind that he had not noticed Sansa had woken next to him. Jon frowned and turned his head slightly in the direction of Sansa's voice.

“It was hard. I thought and hoped I would see her during the battle. I wouldn’t have minded if she killed me, if only to see her again,” he spoke slowly as he remembered Ygritte's crooked teeth and her wild bright red hair. There was no point in mentioning that she had been killed by Robb's sword. Jon was sad that she had died but there was no bitterness. What would have I done had she survived? He would never know so he chose to simply remember her memory. “I gave her a proper burial.” He suddenly felt tired but he sensed Sansa wanted to finally talk about Theon and ‘them’. Sansa held his hand and rested a cheek on his shoulder.

“How do you become happy again without forgetting someone?” He knew that Sansa loved Theon and was still mourning him. He had been jealous and concerned about Sansa when she married Theon. But Jon wasn’t gloating or crowing with happiness that Theon had died and now Sansa was at Shadow Tower with him because of Theon's death. It made him sad that Sansa had been so happy and it had been ripped away from her so quickly. She wore a necklace that was in the Greyjoy colours, that she told him with sadness and a hint of shyness that it had been a gift from Theon.

"It's different for each person. But I don't think you'll forget Theon and you don’t have to forget him to be happy again. You'll be happy again when you are ready to be." He gave her hand a squeeze. Despite sharing a chamber and what everyone else believed based on that fact. Neither had done anything more intimate than handholding, some embraces, and a few light chaste kisses. There had been moments like the one they had back in the stables in Winterfell, but Jon always came back to reality and stopped them from going further. 'Sansa's not ready. It's not right. I won't father a bastard.'

Sansa remained quiet for a while but he knew she hadn't fallen asleep by the sound of her breathing.

“When I am ready, will you—would you. Never mind. I'll let you sleep, you have to wake so early.” He felt Sansa roll away from him. Jon knew what she was asking and was afraid of hearing. Sansa may have learned how to hide her emotions from her time in King’s Landing but the pointed questions and curious, jealous looks she had whenever a letter from Daenerys Targaryen arrived for him. Letters updating him on Castle Black and the Others. Robb wrote similar ones too.

"I'll wait for you, sweet girl.” Sansa curled up against him again hugging his arm. Jon kissed her on her forehead.
"Thank you," she murmured thickly.

"She wants you, Jon." Jon had been holding little Alayne as Sansa read the most recent letter from Daenerys. It was a strange yet nice little domestic tableau minus the absence of Sansa's son who was with his wet nurse. Ghost was lying on the floor on Jon's right. He had been staring at Sansa who was dressed in all black finally noting how the men came to call her, "Lord Snow's crow wife." Jon had ignored this because Sansa had to make dresses out of warmer cloth out of necessity not because she was trying to dress like Jon. Though he remembered she once jested that she was.

"Black or black?" Jon teased. "Sorry about the selection." He added apologetically. Sansa laughed as she lifted the dark fabric against her.

"I hope by emulating the great style of the Lord Commander Jon Snow that he may notice me. Though I fear my hair is neither dark nor curls as lovely as his does. My attempt may prove to be futile." Jon flushed awkwardly at his hair being called 'lovely'. It hadn't been washed for days. Jon felt as awkward and socially stupid as Sam was in the training yard as Sansa ran a hand through his filthy hair then caressing his beard. He made a mental note to try to bathe more often as possible. Sansa's face was so close to his.

"What do you think?" He blinked at the question as his head went fuzzy from her closeness.

"About?" She laughed; it was prettiest sound he has ever heard.

"Do you think the Lord Commander Snow would notice me dressed in black?" He tore his eyes away from her smiling lips to the fabric in her hands.

"He already has, my lady. I know he loves your hair the way it is. So please don't darken it," admitted Jon playing along. He backtracked, "Unless you feel a change would make you happy."

"I was asked to be her heir, yes." Sansa looked up from the letter and glanced at him with a roll of her eyes.

"I think she's changed her mind and wants you to make a heir with her." Jon looked away uncomfortable at how bluntly Sansa said it. Daenerys had all but implied it with her talk about her womb before he left. Sansa turned away so he couldn't see her face. "You'll have a duty to a different sort of vows." There was a pause and with all seriousness, she added, "You'll hate King's Landing." I don't doubt that. He stood up and with the free hand that wasn't holding a baby he tore the letter out of Sansa's hand.

"Once this war is over and there's no need for the Night's Watch. If I live, I want to be able to choose how—especially whom I share my life with. And the first reason won't be because of duty." They stared at each other for a long period of time. Sansa did not beam or kiss him right away, making him wonder if he had failed in conveying what he wanted to tell her.

"I hope you do. You would make a great father, Jon. And an even greater king." Sansa gave him a smile and kissed him gently on the lips. "I should put her down for a nap and reply to Robb's letter."

"Sansa, I don't have to marry her. I don't want to—"

"Yes, you do. The last thing I want is Robb and everyone at Winterfell burned. This isn't a song. You are my hero, Jon but you won't be mine alone. You were meant for more." Jon felt angry that she didn't feel she measured up to Daenerys or was worthy. Jon reached out to stop her from walking away as her mask cracked and a few tears slipped from her blue eyes. Ghost whined as she left. He
crumpled the letter in his fist then tossed it into the fire watching it burn, moodily. Sansa hadn't received a letter from Robb as a letter came from him two days later informing them that he had gone back to Winterfell with just Gendry.

Daenerys felt alone and isolated at Castle Black. She missed Sir Barristan and Missendei. *Even the Imp...* Robb Stark was courteous but he did not illicit her company at meals after Jon Snow flew away with her Rhaegal. Stark seemed to argue against or pick apart every idea of hers. His infuriating stubbornness reminded her of someone. She found herself thinking about Jorah not just when she and Robb disagreed on defence plans, or methods of disciplining refractory men. *Missing him.* She spent her time with her Great Uncle Aemon talking, and listening to him. Tears streamed from her eyes, when he mentioned Jorah's late father Lord Commander Jeor Mormont. He had been nicknamed Old Bear. *If Jorah were here, at my side.* She missed his counsel, his deep grumbling voice, and his scratchy beard. *Against my skin.*

No. *A dragon does not weep for lesser beasts.*

"You know Old Bear's son," he stated knowingly causing Dany looked up startled and flushing

"He was a knight in my service in Essos. The first knight in my Queensguard. But Jorah is a lord again and is in the service of Queen Margaery," conceded Dany flippantly.

"I was in love once too, a long time ago. Hard to imagine, I suppose." He smiled and patted her hand gently. Dany felt her face grow warm and her heart beat rise. She held back her feelings of distressed nausea.

"I am not in love with Jorah or anyone. He was my knight and my friend once. I don't think I have ever been in love. I want love." She hugged her stomach. *Jorah betrayed me for love.* So Dany believed for so long. Despite the fact Melisandre was kept under guard in her chamber by Jon's orders, Daenerys visited her. She was the only other person from Essos and she still had questions for the priestess. In a visit to the red priestess of Asshai, she feared she had been too candid with Lady Melisandre because of her curiosity about Jon. Probing for information about him and visions she had of Jon. *Visions of me.*

"He loves to be kissed by fire."

"I am fire and blood." Melisandre touched her silver blonde hair with a half smile. Melisandre said things had changed, that if an early death had not happened, things would have played out much differently.

"He would have sought your heart. But now all I see in the flames is that blood shall be spilt and the fires will liberate all of those non believers. The Snow shall harden to ice and you will never have his heart." Daenerys felt a little let down by the grim vision.

"What do you mean? He would have loved me? Things can't be set in stone so soon."

"Love brings light, Your Grace. It ends darkness." Dany smiled. *We are saviours destined together to love and bring our people out the darkness.*

Uncle Aemon did not respond so she continued on, "I have a duty to regain my father's throne. I am a Queen first. Jon and I will continue the Targaryen line. I won't let our dynasty end with me."

"Jon is handsome. He has great qualities needed in a king. Once we get to know one another as we
Learning of Margaery's illness panicked Robb. He sat there drinking, whilst staring at the letter. *I have to go home.* Robb had been angry with Jon for leaving him behind at Castle Black with the *Mother of Dragons.* He had been happy and concerned to learn that Sansa and her children were at Shadow Tower. As it had been quiet about Robb had been itching to leave and head to Shadow Tower to be reunited with his widowed sister before he received the letter from Winterfell. *The illness had to have come from her fucking barbaric horse lord and eunuch army.* Reports of a plague spreading wherever they went in the Crownlands and the Stormlands confirmed it. Robb was hoping it was just a small cold that was just a little bit worse because Margaery had not grown up in the north. He slammed his fist on the table in worry and frustration. His personal guard had been all but been decimated. He had supped, drank, laughed, fought, and rode south and north with those lords and heirs. His lady mother died for him as well. *You counseled me to marry Margaery.*

The thought of seeing his wife and children kept him going. He had been dreaming of riding back home to Winterfell, when he was awake. As his dreams at night and the mornings were plagued by the dead. The most reoccurring was of the battle against the Others. Uncle Brynden's blue eyes wide eyed and unseeing, he screamed and cried until he jerked himself awake. *I want to go home.* Seeing the grey castle, hugging Arya and Rickon. Meeting his daughter finally and seeing his son, older than the babe he had kissed goodbye. Kissing Margaery. Watching Margaery sleep, her clever mind at rest. Stroking her soft honey brown curls. Playing with his children. Working together with Margaery by each other's side in ruling their realm, no longer separated by distance.

Why was he still at the Wall? He had been here to fight, to help Jon. But dragons were doing the bulk of the killing of the Others and Jon flown away on one of the dragons. *They don't need me here. Margaery needs me at her side.* He heard someone enter the room. It wasn't Gendry for the footsteps were softer.

"Leave me be, Satin," growled Robb.

"I am afraid I am not the steward, Robb Stark." He turned his head to glance at the small silvery young woman.

"Your Grace. The Others?"

"It's eerily quiet out there. Not a single one. Drogon and I searched and searched." Robb nodded.

"That's what Jon said in his letter." Dany blinked in surprised.

"Oh, you received a letter from him. I assumed the ravens had lost their way or he was wounded."

"Aye, I got one a few days ago." Daenerys frowned.

"Jon has been infrequently replying to my letters since your sister showed up at Shadow Tower."
Her tone was accusatory. Robb shrugged.

"He's not known for being a timely correspondent, Your Grace. He would write if something were troubling. Sansa or Mallister would on his behalf if he couldn't."

"They say your sister is now my nephew's lover. That he beds her after he kills two hundred Others and wights. Even the priestess says a girl babe of red hair and grey eyes shall be born the eve of the end of winter." Daenerys seemed to take stock in prophecies. As well as rumours. Robb had been one of the last to hear this rumour as no one was brave or stupid enough to speak about it in front of the King in the North.

"Melisandre also claimed you needed to be stabbed in the heart to help end the Others and winter." Daenerys did not seem to hear him.

"As my heir, he must ask for my permission to wed." Her tone was still cold, so he carefully chose his words in replying.

"Jon is the Lord Commander still. Until it is disbanded, he is not the heir of anything, Your Grace. The men are likely annoyed that Jon is being protective of Sansa. Do you take issue with Jon keeping Sansa safe from rape?" Dany flinched slightly.

"Of course not. I would not want anything to happen to your lady sister, King Robb. I abhor the raping of women and girls," she spoke fiercely. Dany looked at him with a strange look. "I have heard your sister is very beautiful. Lord Tyrion considers she is the most beautiful highborn lady. I have been told some of what she went through at King's Landing as well." Robb's anger and grief at the Lannisters and Joffrey for the death of Father, the slaughter of all the Stark men, and Sansa's abuse awoke. Daenerys asked him a question.

"What was that again, Your Grace? It's a late hour."

"Does Jon love her?" Robb sighed.

"Jon knows honor and duty. He'll go south with you if the realm has need of him as the crown prince," he evaded the question.

"I'm asking about love, Your Grace. Love and desire conflicts with duty. I want to know if there's any foolishness in Jon like my eldest brother had when it came to a Stark lady."

"He is more like the man who raised him than the man who sired him. Are you done questioning the honour of my kin?" he snapped standing up, Grey Wind as well. Daenerys' eyes flashed with anger at him. Robb cut Dany before she could angrily retort, "My wife is ill from your fucking eunuch army so I don't care to hear your plans for Jon. Good night, Your Grace." Picking up the letter Luwin had written, he and Grey Wind walked away to his chamber.

Meera did not know how she felt about leaving Castle Black for Winterfell with her King. First off, her lord father was not coming as he felt Jon needed him. Secondly, she would be furthering the distance from Prince Bran and Hodor which caused her anxiety. Thirdly, she would miss her new friend who couldn't come with her on pain of death for desertion. Not that he would.

"If you ever travel down south by my father's lands. You are more than welcome to visit. That's quite
the honour as we crannogs don't allow many living outsiders to our homes. Haven't for almost twenty years." She glanced at her lord father who was talking to King Robb at a distance.

"I will. If I don't get lost and end up in the Vale." Meera smiled and laughed. She wondered if he knew that he would have to pass through the Neck to enter the Riverlands then the Vale, by land. Grenn was not the brightest or handsomest lad she had met. But she was terribly sad to be parted from the rusty bearded man. For he brought a change to her. He didn't mind she was a crannog, explaining that a friend of Jon's was a friend of his. Though Meera did not clarify that she barely knew Jon and what she knew was mostly from what Bran had told her. She had always been the uplifting one amongst a sullen group. His belief in and loyalty to Prince Jon reminded her of herself. Grenn shared his grief for his lost friends one in particular named Pyp. Whilst on the journey with an unconscious King Robb, she was wordlessly comforted by Grenn over her grief of Jojen's death.

"Mi' lady, we are departing soon," called out Gendry.

"Um, safe travels, my lady."

"Thanks, Grenn. Stay safe." He stared at the ground awkwardly.

"Could I kiss you?" His thick neck went slightly pink. "Jon kissed a girl. More than once I reckon." They were in spot where they were unseen from prying eyes. She leaned up and kissed him properly twice.

"Now you have too." They smiled at one another for a moment.

"I reckon he did more than kiss that girl." He was half serious, half joking. There's no time for that, I have to go now. She winked at him cheekily, wanting to leave with hope and positivity.

"Well, if you don't get lost. I'll welcome you to Greywater Watch."

Chapter End Notes

I haven't updated since February!!! Ack, sorry if this chapter is a bit off as I am worried I may be a little disconnected from this story. I have been trying to force myself to settle on ONE fate/end scenario for Dany, Jon, Sansa, and Robb x Margaery out of the 3-5 I have for each.

I have little snippets written about the second generation and have been searching tumblr for inspiration for them.

Anyways, leave a comment about this chapter or your own hopes about the end of the war/winter! :)
the best laid plans

"How did the boy die?" asked his lord father uneasily.

"Tommen was found with a golden satin pillow over his face, Father." Garlan added, "He was wearing his crown." Father gaped for a moment then spluttered shocked,

"But I ordered that all the jewels being taken away and locked up, once our armies took this blasted city. So the Lannisters could not bribe a guard to free them with gold. We had guards protecting the boy to keep him safe." And to make sure he didn't escape.

"I know, Father." Garlan shivered at the image of the poor boy's lifeless body. Garlan was no fool to believe that the boy would have been safe if Stannis Baratheon had not been focused on battling Aegon out in the open field somewhere in the Crownlands or the Stormlands. Maybe it was an assassin sent by Lord Baratheon. Nevertheless, Stannis or Daenerys Targaryen should have been the ones to decide his fate. But someone else had decided otherwise.

"They'll blame us for the boy's murder. I cannot be seen as a second Tywin Lannister. I was keeping him safe," blustered Lord Mace Tyrell. Yes, until someone conquered the Iron Throne and decided the fate of Tommen Waters and Cersei Lannister.

"I have drafted an announcement for you. As well letters to all the lords of the news and your lack of involvement. If they are to your liking all is needed is your signature. Would you like to write to Willas, and Margaery, yourself?" He placed the letters on the wooden table.

"Good, good. I'll look them over. Best you write them, I haven't the time to write to your brother and sister, myself. I have to make sure these people don't throw the food I have supplied them at me cause they think I had a bastard boy king murdered." Lord Mace heaved himself out his chair with some difficulty due to his weight. "Neutrality until someone gives us the best deal," he muttered. Garlan did not think his father had much cause to worry over the death of Tommen Waters, politically speaking. The pious Faith Militant would declare that the Gods had punished the boy for his incestuous parents and being a living sin. Others would not care really that Tommen had been killed. One less obstacle to the throne. The small folk would not care as long as it did not affect their access to food.

"Yes, Father. I shall do so after I go to the dungeons to inform Cersei Lannister about her son." Mace nodded and waved a hand for him to go on ahead. Garlan strode out of the council chamber still internally shuddering at the image of the dead golden boy.

Sansa was in a state of fright as Robb had left Castle Black suddenly with no proper explanation as to why. He had sent a short missive without stating the reason of his return to Winterfell. The war was far from over. It did not help that they still did not know why. Was there a power struggle between Robb and the dragon queen? What happened at Winterfell or Castle Black to have caused the King of the North to go to Winterfell? Sansa would not left the Wall if she were him.

What did it mean? Why so suddenly and without word sent to us?
"It's the dragon queen, my lady," Yvaine had hissed quietly.

"Jon says some of Robb's men have remained at Castle Black. If it was discord, then why would the northern men not follow my brother, their King?"

"It's not safe for you here, my lady." Nowhere is safe.

"I am safe here with Jon."

"I am sure you felt safe with the Lord Greyjoy before he died." Sansa felt a lump in her throat. Oh Theon. She touched her necklace and bit her lip, trying to keep tears at bay. Sansa frowned at the wet nurse.

"Jon won't let anything happen to myself or my children." And Jon won't get hurt or die. I couldn't stand it.

"My lady, that's exactly why the dragon queen does not want you standing in her way."

"How would I go to Winterfell now?" Robb has gone without me.

Yvaine had suggested she hide from the dragon queen somewhere most unlikely. Why do I need to hide? Not somewhere in the Riverlands or the North, Yvaine had suggested. The plan would be to dye her hair black to match her daughter and son's black hair, to remove her most recognizable feature. Sansa saw the flaws in this plan straight away. Jon would look for her. Ghost would know or sense something amiss. Robb would imagine the worst and the very bloodshed Sansa wished to avoid could ensue if she disappeared. Sansa did not want to leave Jon either.

What should I do?

"They say the horrible foreign fire priestess had the Lord Baratheon's younger brother killed. The handsome one who everyone liked. Got rid of his brother for him. Isn't she at Castle Black with the dragon queen? I know someone somewhere you can be safe from them."

After many long days alone with Yvaine and her paranoid talks, she came believe it was imperative that she leave Shadow Tower. As a result, Sansa always felt bolder as if it was the last time she would see Jon as if she were going to actually slip away with her twins and Yvaine. Sansa was bolder in her kisses and touches. When she felt the fleeting moment that this was it, she would sneak out Shadow Tower to hide at the Fingers or wherever Yvaine suggested. Jon held her by her waist, his fingers brushing the black woollen gown, whilst breathing heavily and his grey eyes flushed with desire. Sansa was disappointed he had ended their embrace.

"That was unexpected—Mallister or someone could walk in—we should go over the figures—", stammered Jon. You want to do accounting at this hour? His hands were still on her waist, holding her in the space between him and the desk. "I—I enjoyed that very much but—"

"I'll go then," Sansa murmured looking at the floor. This is it. Sansa went to kiss Jon goodbye. Don't start crying. But the look on Jon's face stopped her.

"If the twins didn't need that woman's teats to be fed. I would have sent her away by now." His voice was quietly angry.

"Oh?" feigned Sansa. "What has the wet nurse done to offend you?"

"I overheard her trying to endanger her charges by planning a trip." He knows. Sansa tried not to look him in eye but she wanted to see if he was angry or judged her a terrible mother. "Of all the
things to scared of, you don't need to be scared of me, Sansa."

"That's why Ghost snarled at her," she spoke aloud. She was about to berate him for warging, whilst riding Rhaegal. *What if you fell off? How foolish.*

"Sansa, talk to me."

"I—" Sansa began. There was a loud knock that caused Sansa to jump away.

"My Lord, another raven for you from the Mother of Dragons." Sansa's blue eyes narrowed. *Of course, she would interrupt even though she is far away. Dark wings, dark words.* The man came in and delivered the letter. As the man left, Sansa went to follow but Jon stopped her.

"Stay, Sansa. I want you to," pleaded Jon. She nodded and gestured to the unread letter on the desk.

"You should read it, Jon." Jon sighed and slowly unraveled the letter. Sansa waited and wondered what Daenerys wrote to Jon as he read it by the flickering taper. She kept herself from hovering over Jon's shoulder to read it herself. She watched his every facial and body movement though. His body stiffened and his calloused hands trembled with rage. "What is it Jon?" Jon didn't answer her. Sansa was going to press him to tell her what Daenerys wrote, but the horn sounded thrice, signaling an attack by the Others. Shouting of the men followed outside.

"Go to our chamber with Ghost," ordered Jon shoving the letter inside his pocket.

"Jon," insisted Sansa. Jon rose from his seat and bent his head to kiss her.

"I love you."

"And I you," declared Sansa but he had opened the door already and the wind was so loud that he likely didn't hear her.

Sansa stood on the ramparts of the Wall with Ghost that night. She would go to the chamber soon to wait for Jon as he asked her to do. Staying out of the way of the men who were catapulting flaming —well anything they could manage to spare—down at the Others and wights. Less and less men went out to fight the Others on foot as more and more became wights. She could hear Lord Mallister shouting orders as the men scrambled to ready the catapults for another round. But Sansa remained focused on the lone flying dragon as it weaved and dived down to burn the Others. Sansa never went near the green dragon even when Jon went to feed it. She did not marvel at the creature or see beauty in it. How can one see beauty in a creature of death and destruction? Aye, the giant scaled beast was a great aid in destroying the Others, but all Sansa could think of was it's capability to bring upon utter desolation to the North all the way to Dorne. Sansa questioned the strength of the connection between Jon and Rhaegal. There was never a fear of Ghost turning on Jon.

"If only you could scorch the Others, Ghost," sighed Sansa. "I'd be less worried if you were with him."

The journey from Castle Black to Winterfell was long and grueling. The wind was so harsh and bitter cold, that only the Mormonts, Ser Rodrik Cassel, and Lady Brienne of Tarth braved it to greet King Robb and his small retinue in the early hours of morning. He nodded at their greetings and thanked them. Robb answered their inquiries about the war at the Wall, but added he would answer in fuller detail in the council room later on in the day. Maester Luwin greeted him inside the warmth of the castle.

"How is she?" demanded Robb urgently. Maester Luwin sighed,
"Better and worsening at the same time, I am afraid. Thankfully, it's not the greyscale that I feared she contracted. She had all the symptoms at first apart from the skin turning grey and scaling. I have been scouring the books and writing to the Citadel. Don't fret, Your Grace."

"Only myself, her maid Gilly, and Lord Mormont have visited her." Luwin added, as the tall armored Lord Mormont held the wooden door open for his younger cousins as scampered in quickly. When Robb walked into Margaery's chamber, what he saw was not what he had expected. She was thinner and her heart shaped face was slightly gaunt. Her glossy honey brown hair was dull and limp. Margaery as petite as she may be was a sturdy young woman. Presently, she looked as fragile as one of those exotic glass vases. Robb sat down on the bed gently and placed a hand on her pale cheek. It wasn't feverish or cold as the dead. Her tired doe eyes fluttered open at his touch.

"Hello, sweetheart," breathed Robb before leaning down to kiss her dry lips. She smiled at him and her hands that had been under the furs reached out to touch his beard and curls, then clasped his hand.

"Hello, my wolf," greeted Margaery with a rasp. She turned her head to cough. She continued with a more normal voice, "I am so happy to see you."

"I've missed you so." Her brown eyes watered.

"I'm sorry, I told Maester Luwin you would worry. I'm not dying, you shouldn't have left the Wall." Margaery frowned.

"I would have made any excuse to come home anyway. You come first. They'll manage the same without me there for a bit."

"How are things up there? I'm positive they are keeping me uninformed on purpose to prevent me from becoming distressed. It's been driving me mad." Her eyes lit up with impatience.

"Well enough. Many men have been lost but with the dragons the war looks winnable," answered Robb. "Morale is high despite the awful conditions we are in with the stores of food and supplies going down." He left out the factions of opinion. Margaery nodded.

"Ships can't make port. White Harbor may soon be frozen over if it's not already." Margaery pursed her lips gloomily. "I have been so useless lately. Uncle Bear—Jorah has—" Robb kissed her gently interrupting her.

"Smile for me, love. I have missed that smile of yours," murmured Robb as he kissed her. She smiled as he kissed her neck. "Thank you."

"Go meet our daughter and see our boy, Robb." Robb ached to go see their children but he also did not want to leave Margaery's side so soon. Margaery nudge him. "Go. I want to brush my hair and changed into a fresh gown."

"I want you there too, sweetheart." Margaery's encouraging smile faltered and she looked away.

"No, Robb. I can't. I'm terrified Elora will get ill. She's so tiny. Take a hot bath or wash your hands and face with warm water. They say even a touch can spread illness." Her face was so fearful he went to pull into his arms and soothe her.

"Margaery—"

"Robb, please. I haven't seen her since I have taken ill. Or Eddard. I have been so afraid that I had gotten them ill or that I would pass my illness to them by even being in the same chamber as them.
I'll be overjoyed that one of us can see them and hold them.” She burst into tears, which caused her cough horribly. Robb felt scared and concerned.

"Should I call for Maester Luwin?” asked Robb rubbing her shoulder, not knowing what to do, other than holding her in his arms. He scanned the chamber for a pitcher of water or ale to give her to hopefully stop the coughs.

Margaery managed to gasp out in-between coughs, "No, it will pass. Just send for Gilly." Robb nodded numbly.

"I'll be back soon, sweetheart.” He gave her hand a squeeze before calling for Gilly.

"Has the coughing been like this or has it been worsening?” questioned Robb to Gilly who came down the corridor with a jug and linen in her hands. Gilly frowned and fidgeted.

"Some days ti's better and some days are so bad Her Grace can't rest. Ti's her lack of eating that worries me, Your Grace. Not grey death, thank the Gods. Maester Luwin pricks her finger to make sure. I should get this to her if you'll excuse me, sire.” Robb slowly made his way down the dark corridor digesting Gilly's words. He ordered for a washtub of warm water, remembering Margaery’s instructions. Robb splashed the water on his face until his beard was drenched and let his hands sit in the warm water until they went pink.

Robb found Grey Wind in the nursery already. Rickon shouted and hugged him. Shaggy Dog sniffed him. Rickon was taller, his face thinning out from his babyhood face. His hair was shorter yet still wild and unruly as his personality.

"I've missed you, Rickon."

"I saw you coming home. I smelt you and I smelt Lady Meera. She smells like a muddy pond," declared Rickon. "Arya ran off to see Gendry ages ago.” Robb noticed his son staring at him as Grey Wind sniffed him.

"What do I smell like?” Robb asked as he gave his youngest brother a second hug.

"Like my biggest brother." Robb kissed Rickon's red hair and when Rickon pulled away from his arms, "Eddard is far more interesting to play with now. Look! Eddard, it's your father."

"Come here, my boy," beckoned Robb with a broad smile, arms stretched out. Eddard gave him a toothy smile and made his way across the room to him. "Remember me.” Eddard smiled at him and shyly didn't say anything as Robb scooped him up.

"Fatha'," Eddard said as he jabbed a finger at his nose. He kissed his firstborn, which caused Eddard to squeal with laughter as his beard tickled.

"Mama?” queried the little boy who looked around Robb's head. "Mama?" Robb's heart hurt at his boy looking for Margaery's face.

"Your mama's is—sleeping," replied Robb lamely as he stroked his son's auburn curls.

"Mama!” insisted Eddard loudly. Robb was on the verge of breaking down, as his son's face grew distressed.

"Eddard, look Elora is awake,” called Rickon. Eddard continued to look for his mother. Robb walked over to the cradle.
"Can you tell me who this pretty little princess is?"

"Eh-lora," screeched Eddard who leaned down to jab a finger almost in his sister's eye.

"Gentle," reprimanded Robb as he moved Eddard's fingers away from Elora's eyes. "She needs those." Eddard squirmed out of Robb's arms, leaving Robb alone with his little girl. Soft straight red-brown poked out of her ivory cap. Her little gown was pale blush muslin. She had on stockings of warm soft grey wool. She appeared to have kicked off her knitted grey blankets in her pursuit to peer over the edge of the cradle. *Hello my baby.* He picked up Elora. *Light as a bird.* Robb soaked in every little detail of his daughter. He saw a miniature nose of Margaery's. His hair color, eyes, and his chin. Elora made squawking noises reminiscent of a seagull, then blew wet raspberries. Robb laughed. He stood silently, with his cheek softly against his baby's head. He was too emotional to speak aloud as Elora touched all the different textures of Robb's furs, armour, and leather jerkin.

"You are the most beautiful little girl I have seen," cooed Robb giving her a kiss on the cheek. *Let's pray your mother gets well soon.*

"Why won't they listen to me?" growled Dany furiously. She had been spat on by a wildling girl for punishing the man who tried to abduct and rape her.

"The free folk have different customs than the rest of Westeros," explained Maester Aemon patiently. "Much like the Dothraki people." Daenerys grimaced as she remembered the practices of the Dothraki. Dany had expected the peoples of Westeros to be different.

"It's utterly barbaric. They live on this side of the Wall now, they should abide by the customs of my kingdoms. This practice of stealing women has to end. Can you imagine if they practice this custom on farmers or village folks' wives and daughters?" She swore to protect her people from such cruelty and abuse. *You tried that with Mirra Maz Durr and look how she repaid you, her mind pointed out.*

"Lord Commander Jon has given them land to settle on in the Gift. The free folk won't trouble you in the South, my niece."

"I wasn't just talking about the wildlings, Uncle Aemon. Since Stark has left, I feel like everyone is not listening to me." *Only the fear of Dragon compels them to grudgingly listen. These wildlings aren't like the poor freed slaves who called me Mother or chanted my name. I am trying to be a good Queen.*

"You must be a little more diplomatic yet firm," suggested her elder.

"I am not a politician," exclaimed Daenerys dismissively. "I am the queen. Their queen."

"The skill of a politician is needed in ruling, Daenerys. You are still young enough to learn. Since, the North and the Trident have seceded, you may have only four kingdoms to rule but four won't be any easier to rule. Repairing relations with Dorne is also vital. I suggest, perhaps a marriage with Prince Doran's youngest son or appointing Princess Arianne a seat on the Small Council of your choosing."

"Prince Quentyn died in his quest to marry me. I am not interested in marrying any Martell." Dany was still intrigued by Lord Commander Snow. She had barely time to get to know him or discern if her interest in him was of a romantic nature. "Lady Sansa can marry Trystane or even my Hand Lord Tyrion." Tyrion found Sansa Stark beautiful and he was unwed. *They can marry, provided that Tyrion keeps her at Casterly Rock."

"Lady Sansa Stark is not a subject of yours," reminded Uncle Aemon. "Her brother, King Robb has
the rights to arrange a marriage for her."

"She is a Greyjoy now isn't she? The Iron Isles and her children are still subject to me," retorted Dany. She liked the idea more and more since Lady Melisandre had given her the inspiration to solve her problem of Sansa Stark Greyjoy. Melisandre and her fire god offered a way to achieve everything she wanted. Her rightful throne and a family.

Chapter End Notes

Spoiler Alert if you haven't watched any of Season Five yet.

Kinda borrowed the "I am not a politician.." line of Dany's from watching the leaked episodes. The wheel/spokes quote was too dramatic to listen to or try to incorporate that gem...

How are people liking Season Five? I haven't been watching, but I worry for Sansa. :( Ugh.

Leave a review/comment! xo.
Jon Connington grimaced in pain of his hidden affliction. It was worsening everyday. He knew had little time before it would become visible to everyone and his eventual death. He wished to see his Prince Rhaegar's son retake his rightful throne before the greyscale took him. Speaking of the young king, King Aegon was furious that Lord Stannis had managed to regain the loyalties of many of the lords of the Stormlands who did not take well to the Golden Company taking their ancestral seats. Jon's reclaimed ancestral seat of Griffin's Roost had been razed by the order of Stannis Baratheon. The upstart onion knight, Baratheon's 'Hand' was trying to gain support in the Crownlands. King Aegon and Jon Connington and their army were camped nearby Rosby. They were stalled and rerouted in their march for the capital by the attacks from Stannis Baratheon's army and now Ser Barristan Selmy's army of Unsullied. The latter was just a harbinger of death by the bloody flux. Jon hoped the bloody flux would wipe out Barristan and the army before it infected the men who flocked to Aegon's cause.

"You were certain that they did not love Stannis Baratheon. Yet I saw many sigils that pledged their sword to me, killing men of the Golden Company. What is taking the Dornish men so long? My Uncle Prince Doran promised to send aid to help my cause. I am beginning to think the promise of marriage to his daughter and heiress, my cousin Princess Arianne won’t ever come to fruition. I am beginning to see that the words of Westerosi men are wind. Especially of my kin."

"Like flatulence, Your Grace," added Septa Lemore adjusting her wimple.

Jon shook his head, "My king, you are loved by the small folk. They raise banners in your honour." Aegon nodded with a smile. "You have the support of Dorne, my king. Princess Arianne and the Dornish army are on their way. You are Princess Elia's son. The last Lannister usurper has been found killed." Aegon scoffed at Jon.

"A captive boy dead. Tommen Waters never was a true threat. He had no army. The Lannisters are ruined. Have you not heard Kevan Lannister has been found murdered by a band of rebels? Any remaining Lannisters will have no choice but to bend the knee. No, it is the Usurper's brother with his army and fleet that concern me. I took Storm's End myself. Now it is in the hands of Baratheon again."

"Focus on the King's Landing and the Iron Throne. Storm's End is not the Iron Throne. The Golden Company shall crush him. Stannis was never capable of inspiring men to his cause like his elder brother Robert Baratheon was. The lords and the smallfolk will be dubious of him after he denounced the New Gods and retracted soon after. This sheer luck of support will fade, once they realize you are the true and rightful king. The trueborn son of Prince Rhaegar."

"They will recede like his hairline," hiccupped Lemore. Aegon stood up and paced.

"Yes, they will. I have written to my aunt Princess Daenerys to inform her to have her commander join forces with us or I will have no choice but to crush her army of Unsullied if they continue to attack us." Or spread bloody flux and kill us all.

"There is another pretender, Your Grace." Connington looked at Lemore sharply.

"Yes, the North believes Lord Stark's bastard is my half brother. Hence, the Queen in the North has
insolently ignored my offer of marriage to Arya Stark. They even claim he is the son of Lord Stark's sister. My mother, a princess, was slighted by my father's lust for that northern girl. I won't endure any slights by that bastard." Aegon paused and his purple eyes flashed angrily, "I have though. My aunt has gifted him a dragon."

Septa Lemore nodded and added, "Yes, the dragon she named for your royal father. Some birds twitter that your aunt favors the bastard boy even offering to make him her heir as well husband." Jon Connington was still trying to process the idea of his beloved prince having a bastard child with the skinny Stark girl.

"This is not Dorne. She has no right to the Iron throne, whilst I live. If she wishes to be queen then she should offer herself to me, not a Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. She is just the princess of Dragonstone and the Mother of Dragons. Why is she even at the Wall?"

"Perhaps it is a plot between her and the Lord Commander against you, Your Grace. Childish mistake since the men sworn to the Night's Watch are barred from marriage." Aegon nodded.

"I shall give Daenerys Stormborn the benefit of doubt in this matter unless more evidence arises of course. We should unite to restore our House back to power. If not in marriage but ensure the survival of our family, we need to marry and have children. I marry Princess Arianne and she marries Willas Tyrell or Lord Robert Arryn. Lord Baelish seems reasonable." Mace Tyrell would be pleased. His daughter a queen and his heir married to the Princess of Dragonstone. One of the men in the Golden Company entered the royal tent.

"Sire, Barristan the Bold alongside the army of Unsullied in the name of Queen Daenerys have attempted to take the northern part of the Crownlands. Our scouts report Stannis Baratheon is sailing straight for King's Landing."

"The coward won't face me in battle. You are right, Lord Jon. He is nothing like his brother." Jon nodded at him. After he bowed and exited the tent, Jon stared at the waning sun. It is not only I who is running out of time.

"How's Jon?" asked Arya after Hot Pie left to return to his work in the kitchens.

"I haven't seen the Lord Commander since he left for Shadow Tower with one of the dragons," mumbled Gendry. Arya seemed prettier than he remembered and he averted his eyes flushing. It must be because he was still not used to seeing her in woolen gowns and longer hair.

"My sister's at the Wall again. I haven't been still," stated Arya.

"It's not a place to have a picnic." Arya's face grew thoughtful as she held her Needle.

"I know. But I haven't seen him since Sansa's wedding to Theon. I miss him." They heard King Robb's voice outside, Arya sighed, "Robb didn't go to her again. I know Margaery's ill but she's not dying. Sansa could at any moment. Our family is growing smaller and smaller with Uncle Brynden dead." He felt a cold shiver run down his back in the boiling hot smithy.

"The Lord Commander is with her." Arya looked like she was struggling to smile or cringe at the idea of Lord Commander Snow protecting her sister at Shadow Tower. He's a skilled fighter. At least that's how Gendry understood her facial expression.

"Yes, but Robb should brought her and her children home. It's safer here." Gendry kept silent as he moved around the smithy. He looked gloomily at the sky through the small cutout that let out the black smoke. "What's that Gendry?" Arya pointed at five black steel arrows.
"Nothing, I was supposed to fix them at the Wall. But the King decided to return here. So I brought them here to finish." They are finished except for one broken one.

"Are they for killing the Others?" queried Arya as she hopped down to inspect them more closely.

"No, I was told they are used for a specific purpose."

"They are huge. Are they for killing snow bears, ice lizards, or mammoths?"

"I am just a blacksmith and a knight. When I am given an order for armor or weapons, I make it. When I am called to fight, I fight. I don't ask questions." Arya looked annoyed by his tone.

"That's stupid, but fine. What was Queen Daenerys like to Robb and Jon?"

"I kept out of her way as the King advised me to. Lady Melisandre and Lady Meera were the only women who spoke to me at the Wall. You should ask Lady Meera these questions not me. I am just a bastard." With king's blood. There's power in king's blood.

"Oh don't use that as an excuse! You are more than that," she shouted fiercely. Her grey eyes were angry. "Melisandre is the one that said Robb would die but he didn't. I think she's a fraud."

"Perhaps, and 'haps not." Arya scoffed at him in disbelief. "She's the one who gave those arrows."

"So? Did she say what they were for?" To kill the winged monster.

"No."

"You're lying, stupid."

"I wasn't supposed to leave the Wall with them. I thought they were interesting or perhaps useful." Just in case. "A blacksmith interest you can say, you don't come across the likes of them in an ordinary smithy or even a smithy that serves kings."

"You look in much better health, Your Grace," greeted Jorah, when he arrived at Margaery's solar at her request. Margaery smiled at him. Her cheeks were a healthy pink today, not pallid as the days he sat by her bedside. Keeping her entertained with stories and updating her without distressing her; those hours distracted him from his thoughts of Dany and the nights they shared before she flew off with her children. Jorah was still disappointed Daenerys had flown to Castle Black without him and he ached to go to her. Jorah could not blame Queen Margaery for this for she didn't vocally forbid him to go with Dany.

"No, my bear. I remember you prayed for your home. She brought you home. Help Margaery Stark protect your home alongside your kin. I must go now."

You are my home.

He could have gone to Dany whilst the Queen in the North fell ill. But it would have made him (and more importantly Dany) look complicit in Margaery's sudden decline, which was untrue. She fiddled with her light brown curl as she spoke,

"I thank you for standing at my side, uncle. I think I may have been a little too selfish and perhaps a little overcautious." He stood silently perplexed. Margaery sighed before continuing,
"I think you should go to Daenerys. Robb coming here has made me think. You should stand at her side not at mine. You love her and you have proven yourself loyal to me. Go to Bear Island or go to her. Whatever you choose. You are welcome to back to the North if King's Landing grows tiresome." Jorah went to his knees and bowed his head. His mind swirling with the words Margaery said and his determination to see Dany rose again. He was being sent to the Wall not to take the black but to see his Daenerys. His Khaleesi.

"I have been honoured to meet you and serve you, Margaery." He looked up at Margaery and paused. The candlelight made her glow, golden. She was smiling brightly, with a tinge of sadness. A miniature Lynesse. Both beautiful and haughty yet in entirely different manner. He hated Lynesse as much he had loved her. But there was no hatred for this younger southron flower. Margaery Stark was a fair and just queen. He had seen first hand how much she cared for the small folk. Jorah Mormont respected and cared for the petite Rose Queen.

"Promise me, you won't forget the other queen you served for a blink of an eye," she cried giving him a tiny bear hug. "I'll miss you, Jorah Mormont."

"Go, Jorah! I release you from our vows. It's not enough for me, I tried. Why are you still standing there? He'll have you killed." Lynesse had been angry and exasperated. Lynesse's niece was now releasing him from a vow he made to her for Dany so he could go to Daenerys.

"Farewell, Margaery Stark, the Rose Queen of the North," he rasped with emotion as he smelled the fragrant scent of winter pine and roses in Margaery's perfume for the last time.

If I look back, I am lost.

Daenerys felt she was on a precipice with nothing to ground her from falling. Perhaps, she had been on it for a long time but having relied on good counsel for so long kept her from realizing it. Maester Aemon was a great source of counsel and stability. Yet, her eldest kin could not walk with her around Castle Black as she commanded it alone. No Ser Barristan or Grey Worm or even her gruff bear to give her strength. No Tyrion Lannister to mince her ideas until they were perfected. I must be a dragon to be a good mother to my people. Dragons were monsters, they said. If Drogon was a monster then she must be as well. Aemon, even Satin advised her to stay away from Melisandre.

"Your Grace, I think it's best if you don't speak with her anymore. Jon avoided it at all costs. You don't look so well."

"They say, your father was fed lies through whisperers." Dany was beginning to see the truth in their warnings. But the lure of knowing her future had been too enticing. She was losing control of herself. Worst and more dangerously, it was reflecting in Drogon. He was not listening to her commands in either High Valyrian, the Common Tongue or Dothraki. She cried in frustration and fear. I had everything in control. I could control my dragons. I could keep Drogon in check. Or had it been a delusion as well? Nevertheless, it was vital that she kept him under control. Dany needed him more than ever to destroy the Others. If he flies away like he did once how will I defend the Wall? She feared it would be more than livestock and little girls who were left charred and dead. She stared at her largest and more indiscriminate child.

"Please, Drogon, don't do anything that will be our undoing," she cried. I don't want to be remembered as Mad Queen Daenerys. She prayed Jon was not completely antagonized by her last letter and that he would come. I shouldn't have written it. Dany needed him and Tyrion to fly to Castle Black to help her regain control of Drogon.

I just wanted what I saw in the flames to be real. She had seen her grown child, not her son Rhaego.
A daughter, tall and willowy with Dany's hair.

She stood on the doorstep of the manse with the red door. Her daughter was happy to see her and smiled,

"Mother!" Dany reached for her daughter. But lately in her sleep the vision had changed into a nightmare. Her daughter's face looked at her with tiredness and anger.

"Go away Mother! We believed in you. We have loved you." Her daughter shook her head turned to go inside the manse. Dany shouted for her to wait. "No, you brought us all to our deaths. All of your children not just Rhaego and I. But I won't stand here and let you hurt him any further. We can hear them scream and smell them burn. It haunts him. Go now! You don't belong here anymore than that vain woman did!"

"But I love him!" Her daughter's fierce glare frightened her.

"We don't give a damn anymore, Mother." The red door slammed in her face. Dany pounded on the door, crying for her daughter to hear her out. She did not understand the accusations. She walked to the window and peered inside. Dany saw herself and Viserys as small children sitting by Ser Willem Darry. She blinked and she and Viserys were gone. Two unfamiliar children were sitting on a log bench. Dany looked inside and the interior was not of the manse she fondly remembered. It was dimly lit and was covered with rugs of animal skins on the floor and on the walls.

"You won't die, Ser Jorah," said the elder of the two confidently. "There's a cure for it. Lady Baratheon was cured as a child." Dany's eyes widened in shock. No. Why is my bear dying?

"Yes, there's still hope," agreed the young girl. The girl reached out to touch the old knight's arm.

"Don't, I may inflict you, princess. You are still under your aunt's protection until you become of age, King Eddard. Lady Brienne will take my place since your other aunt and uncle have grown. I am not your only protector left in this world. There are many who are loyal to the Starks." Dany couldn't see Jorah's face as he was seated facing the fireplace. She rapped on the windowpane trying to get their attention. I want to you see your face. Turn around please.

"They seem to be dying or disappearing faster than they can reach us."

"You have your father's wolf, my king." The two children turned away from their protector to look at the large smoke grey direwolf. Dany froze in fear as she recognized those large yellow eyes. No! No! What happened? Grey Wind was staring straight at Dany and light hit the children's hair revealing their colour. Dark auburn curls. The wolf snarled and in a flash it tried to burst through the window to rip her throat. Dany screamed and staggered away from the window. She turned around and Jon stood there.

"You don't have a gentle heart anymore, do you?" He stared at her then at his sword somberly.

"Jon, you have to help me. I need to control Drogon; the Others attacked Winterfell. Those children are like Viserys and I. My bear is dying! My daughter won't let me inside my home. Jon, we can't just stand here!"

"Fire and Blood. My grandfather was burned to death and my mother bled to death. They burned, whilst Robb bled. We all looked down on Jaime Lannister for killing Mad King Aerys. That was most minuscule of his crimes. Was it honorable? No. Was it necessary? I think so." Jon unsheathed his sword and made slow stride towards her.

"No, if you dare touch me, I will have you killed! Jorah! Ser Barristan! I am your aunt, why are you
Viserys suddenly appeared, "You just had to wake the dragon, didn't you?" Dany flinched. "No one will mourn you, sister. Like you and everyone else didn't mourn me. Where is your crown?"

"For love, Daenerys," answered Jon sadly. She gasped as he plunged his sword into her heart.

Dany woke up clutching her chest, breathing heavily. She could see the red stone pulsing red in the darkness.

"Get out of my chamber, Melisandre," she growled. "Get out of Castle Black before I make you Drogon’s morning feed. No, you will be Drogon’s morning feed.” Melisandre smirked down at her from the foot of the bed.

"Glamours are an useful trinket, Your Grace,” she said softly. “You seem tired, Daenerys Stormborn. In the theatrics for the wealthy, if one of the performers are ill, another would take on their role.”

“Get out!” She shouted for Satin. For anyone.

*I have been plunged off the precipice.*

Chapter End Notes

LEAVE A COMMENT! kay, bye. xo. :)

*Apologies for the lack of M x R and J x S in this chapter. I had a Sansa POV written that was way too similar for my liking to the one I wrote in Chapter 11. Scrapped it and redoing for the following one.

**shameless plug for my new 'what if' fic: The Bear and the Wolf Maid (Jorah x Lyanna) if y’all are interested.
He had made it to ice great cavern somewhere deep in the Land of Always Winter. His sharp ice blue eyes stared at the great terrible beast. He was a tall man yet he felt as small speck near it. He could have turned back for the Wall long ago. His brothers needed every man to defend it. It was his duty to inform them about the Others. Lord Commander Mormont always bemoaned about their low numbers and the quality of men they received as recruits. He felt compelled to journey further north into the uncharted lands. Even after all of his fellow rangers died and especially after the Children of the Forest told him what controlled the Others and gave them power lay in the Land of Always Winter. The child of Winterfell, the first ranger of the Night’s Watch froze in fear and incredulity at the sight of the ice dragon.

If the wildlings blow the horn knowing or not knowing it was real and the Wall…

"Brandon will fly." His brother has been dead for two decades. The wind howled. The Children of the Forest and the Old Gods needed the blood sacrifice of a Stark. Was that why he was still alive?

The weirwood face wept and for a moment he saw a familiar boy’s face. He could hear his lord father's deep timbre.

"There must always be a Stark at Winterfell, Ben. Defend it, my son."

"Please promise me, Ben." Snow fell around him and a sweet smell filled his nose."Oh Ben, you were always the last one out of us all in a race. I wish Ned did not catch up so soon." His heart hurt at the remembrance of her voice.

He was filled with longing to join them.

"We Starks don't back down from a fight, even when people think we should."

At times he wondered what his life would have been like, if he had not helped Lya and inadvertently caused their deaths. Would he have had a wife and children? Or would his path still lead him to the Wall?

"We will all be together again." Ben looked around him. Nothing but ice and the giant ice beast. He never heard Ned's voice in his thoughts. He remembered his last visit to Winterfell. It would be sweet to see Ned and his family again. He'll go with Jon on a visit. Ben was pained at the thought of Jon.

"Your watch hasn't ended yet, Stark." Stark! Stark! The caws echoed off the thick ice. The cavern boomed and shook. Ben looked up at the eyes of the terrible beast. He heard the desperate sobs of a boy from the tree. The breath would have froze him if he hadn't been cold for awhile now. He had the ice cold blood of the Kings of Winter in his veins. He did not show his fear to the wildlings or the Others. He would not now.

Uncle, the voice cried.

Margaery was still recovering from her illness, but this morning she had left her chamber and solar to
visit the nursery for the first time in awhile. It was still day but it was dark as night out. Both she and Robb sat in his solar talking after their babes were put down for their naps. Arya had disappeared with Rickon and their direwolves off somewhere in the castle.

"Eddard enjoyed seeing you today," remarked Robb as he kissed her cheek. "It was the first time we were together as a proper little family of four." Margaery leaned her head on his shoulder. Eddard had clung to her the whole time. His sweet curly head looking up at her with his big blue eyes and his rosy cheeks.

"It was. I missed him as well. I feel Elora has grown twice the size she was before I grew ill." Robb wrapped an arm around her.

"She's a beauty like you, especially when she naps. She sleeps so much. You both make the same face. Elora, our little sleeping beauty." Margaery laughed.

"Elora is still a babe. It's normal for them to sleep so much."

"You are ruining my fun. Our sleeping beauty, Princess Elora was protected in her grey castle surrounded by a barrier of thick brush of roses with steel thorns. Her—"

"Her dearest three friends dressed in sapphire blue, forest green, and rose pink," continued Margaery thinking of her own circle of little cousins and friends as a child. "I didn’t realize you dabbled in poetic stories." She laughed.

"Princess Elora liked to sing and play in the woods with her brothers and sisters. Her little sisters were troublesome little sprites, but she loved them very much. Her elder brother, Prince Eddard was a serious little boy but he enjoyed playing with his siblings as well."

"They were sweet children of spring. Princes and lords of faraway lands sought Princess Elora’s hand in marriage. Her father the King—"

"He had already promised her to his friend's son, the Lord of the Ir- the Seas." Margaery quirked an eyebrow.

"She's not even a year old, my love. What if Elora fell in love with a prince of sand or something?"

"The deserts are too far away from her loving father."

"And her equally loving mother. Hmm, what if she caught the eye of a dragon?" Margaery wondered how serious Robb was in wanting their Elora to end up marrying Dagon Greyjoy.

"Her father the King would protect her. The young Sea Lord would rise from the seas to her aid." Margaery couldn't imagine an older version of her baby daughter and her nephew. So she had the ridiculous image of the infant Greyjoy boy leading the Ironborn to her baby daughter's rescue. Margaery shook her head.

"I meant love not an attack or abduction." Margaery did not believe in songs but she wished for and envisioned a happy life for her children. No loss of a beloved one. Loras' face popped in her mind. How his curly hair was parted and the way he bit his lip in concentration even though his brown eyes were full of cockiness before he went out to joust. Margaery felt clammy as the music replayed in her mind and she remembered how Loras fell to his knees after the fifth stabbing. His mouth had opened to cry out to her but he fell before he could speak.

She's not Lyanna Stark or the girls. Not everything is doomed to repeat itself.
"Isn't that the same thing to dragons?" Robb's tone was gruff. His blue eyes were on the flickering flames in the fireplace.

"My brother Garlan wrote to me," she announced suddenly to change the subject. "Tommen Waters is dead." Jaime Lannister had been told by her and Lady Brienne. The golden man had been impassive in front of Margaery. Though she noted how his green eyes went dull as soon as she had announced Tommen's death.

"He was never mine really. I never even held him or the others. Is she?"

"Cersei is alive but still imprisoned, Ser Jaime."

"Her- my daughter? Is she safe in Dorne?"

"There's been little news from Dorne. I can write to my brother if he has heard anything about Myrcella," she answered lamely. Margaery exchanged a look with Brienne.

"We can sail to Dorne and find her," offered Brienne.

"What so Lancel can fuck her too?" he growled. Brienne went pink and Margeary's eyes went wide like saucers. "Where's Tyrion?"

"At Eastwatch by the Sea. He's riding one of Daenerys' dragons. I get reports from Castle Black and there was mention of a mission to Hardhome returning by ship."

"I'd ask to join my brother at the Wall but what use would I be with just this?" He held up his stump. Robb nodded, "My Uncle Edmure has written as well, informing me that Uncle Brynden's ashes had made it to Riverrun. I thought he would survive us all." He looked at the floor morosely. Margaery rubbed his chest comfortingly. "Oh, Roslin is expecting another child." Margaery wrinkled her nose at the mention of Roslin Frey. "Did your brother have anything else to report?"

"Father is still holding King's Landing and Garlan has given me an unsubtle hint that we should take the Iron Throne ourselves." Robb looked at her and caressed her chin.

"Do you want the Iron Throne, my love?" Margaery shook her head without pause. She had grown comfortable as the Queen in the North. Robb would never fit in the South or be happy there. Margaery had risen the highest since the Tyrells rose from stewards to the Lord of Highgarden and Warden of the Reach. With her lord father and his army in the capitol, it was tempting to rise even higher. Three hundred years of ruling and the House Targaryen was disposed of. Robert Baratheon only ruled for less than twenty years. The Lannisters with their bastards fell from power even more swiftly. She could see them ruling the seven kingdoms with peace and stability. Margaery looked up at her handsome husband. He appeared older than his actual age and Margaery wondered if she too looked older than seventeen years from her illness and everything they had been through.

"We have put so much effort trying to defend and protect the North. I want to see what spring is like in the North. The war to fight is at the Wall not in the crownlands." Perhaps another Tyrell girl would one day rise and become the Queen. "I think the days of one king ruling all of the realms may be over." There were murmurings of the Vale seceding but nothing concrete. "I have grown so preoccupied with the war at the Wall and winter. I have neglected to think more of the wars going on in the South." Margaery cringed at herself. Robb rubbed his bearded chin thoughtfully.

"Do you believe the man is the real Aegon? I know the Mountain was an indiscriminate brutal monster but the Targaryen hair and the eyes are hard to fake even in a babe. Wouldn't he have been hidden in Dorne or gone to Daenerys and her brother? She is a lot more skeptical of a murdered
nephew that was supposedly switched and brought to Essos for safety than she was of Jon."
Margaery almost snorted that the outwardly Stark looking Jon raised less skepticism than the reported
white blonde man invading the South.

"They say his body was-" Margaery shuddered then continued, "Yes, it seems odd. He has the
support of the Golden Company and we all know their history. They didn't support Daenerys or
Viserys? If they wanted to put a Targaryen back on the throne then why did they not cross the
Narrow Sea for the older Viserys? Or have all three Targaryens together? It would have been more
ominous if the three had came together to retake the Iron Throne."

"Perhaps, he is just a Blackfyre posing as Rhaegar's son?" But who's going to gain the most from this
man taking the Iron Throne as Aegon?

"He made a offer of marriage to Arya. Aegon wrote that he is the only dragon worth making an
alliance with. He could be the real deal. My brother writes of Aegon's popularity with the smallfolk.
But he's allied with Dorne, which Father won't like. I don't which of the two he would prefer to deal
with the least Stannis or the Martells." After a few minutes of silence, Robb stated,

"The only dragon worth making an alliance with is the one who doesn't want to be called a dragon." Margaery looked at Robb in surprise.

"Daenerys' interest in Jon isn't a crime. It could be just a fleeting fancy. She barely knows Jon. Bald
and un-charming as my uncle bear is, I think he gives her a sense of security and they had a very
close friendship before he got caught and was banished."

"You thought by sending Jorah to Daenerys that it was going to stop her attraction to Jon? I mean
maybe it will work, but when I left Castle Black she was like what's the word- possessed or-
obsessed, whenever Jon was mentioned. She kept muttering under breath about a baby, now that I
think about it." Margaery remembered that Jorah Mormont spent the nights in Daenerys' tent before
she flew to Castle Black.

"Oh maybe she is or was pregnant with Jorah's babe?" Margaery speculated.

"I should follow Mormont. It's time I returned to Castle Black, my love." Margaery rested her head
on Robb's chest. "But when I return, we'll start making one of our spring children."

I am going to go mad in this cell if I don’t freeze to death first.

Daenerys Targaryen did not know how many times she screamed that she was the Queen before she
was dragged into an ice cell. I am not a wildling girl. I can speak in High Valyrian, and Dothraki!
She shouted in every tongue she knew to prove who she was, yet she was locked in the cell and was
not with her Great Uncle Aemon in his tower or riding Drogon. Dany believed that Aemon knew
she was telling the truth and would make Melisandre set her free. She shivered in the cell but despite
her fear she did not shed a tear. She prayed Tyrion and Jon would come. Robb was too far away
even if one of his men believed her. Dany sat there wondering how, when, and if she would get out
of the ice cell. She should have known not to trust Melisandre. Dany had trusted the maegi with her
son’s life, and her moon and stars’. Melisandre had shouted, “Nissa Nissa! Nissa Nissat!” at Dany
the first time they saw each other.

“He needs your heart more than Sansa Stark’s. You woke stone dragons, Your Grace. You are
warm to touch and he is cold as ice. Your blood is more important than hers. You have king’s
blood.” Dany had refused Melisandre’s request to use leeches on her body.

How much of it had been Melisandre? Daenerys still desired Jon and was jealous of Jon's rumoured love for his cousin.

Jon's friend with the thick neck and rusty coloured hair came with a bowl of hot stew and bread.

"Your Grace, it's me, Grenn," he whispered urgently as he placed the bowl before her. "The dwarf, Lord Lannister is having difficulty with the Others and the ships full of wights from Hardhome. He can't come soon. Jon has been away from Shadow Tower for almost weeks according to Mallister. Maester Aemon, Satin, and I are trying to get you out of here. Your dragon is going berserk, it knows yo-she's a fake. We are trying to get people to believe us. It's not been like how Jon was voted Lord Commander, but Tormund is coming around now. You- I mean she had your dragon kill herself who was actually Mance. He shouted and screamed who he was. She didn't like that at all." Grenn whispered quickly. Dany tried to speak but he looked over his shoulder. "Someone is coming. Don't worry, a Stark is coming to help you, Your Grace."

"Wait," she rasped but he gave her a sad look before the ice door closed on her again. She sat staring at the door before she gingerly picked up the bowl and the bread. Dany slurped the stew messily as her mouth was so cold. It made her a tiny bit warmer and filled her hunger for the mean time. "Robb Stark is coming." No one disliked Melisandre more than Robb did, well except for now Dany. His direwolf will know she is posing as me. Dany was comforted by the news that Drogon hadn't flown off and sensed his mother was in danger. The dream won't come true. She would stay barren like Mirra Maz Durr said she would. Melisandre prophesied the birth of a girl babe of red hair. Dany was sad but she did not cry. Dragons don't weep. It must have meant that Jon would have a daughter with his red haired cousin.

But who was the father of my tall, beautiful daughter in the doorway of the manse in my dream?

She rested the bowl on her lap against her fuller stomach as she ripped the bread to sop up remaining broth. Perhaps it was man who claimed to be Aegon or another handsome and comely man. Or maybe Jon was meant to be married to both his red haired Stark cousin and Daenerys. She shook her head. Daenerys would have to endure watching Sansa Stark birth and mother children, whilst she remained a barren woman married or not. I will never have a little girl.

How long would it take for her to be freed? She recalled Viserys telling her of their father's six moon long imprisonment by Lord Duskendale. Her father King Aerys had been in a dungeon not an ice cell. He was rescued and so will I. Viserys did not tell her or even knew that the imprisonment furthered their father's madness.

Sansa pulled up her dark hood back over her head as she rode Ghost along the side of the Wall. Her black woollen clothes were white from the snow. She blended in with Ghost’s fur. Dagon was strapped to her chest. Alayne was in a basket strapped to her back.

"Are we going to the Eyrie at last?” complained Yvaine loudly from her garron.

"No, we are going to Castle Black, then hopefully Winterfell." Sansa had made the wet nurse believe that she wished to go into hiding in the Vale now that Jon had flown away.

"But my lady, you said so. I sent a message to-" Yvaine looked miserable with cold.

"I am answering Jon's steward's call for aide."
"We don't have time to wait for Jon, Lord Mallister!" shouted Sansa agitated. "She needs help getting that dragon back under control. Maybe I'll be of no use at all, but I can't just sit here and do nothing."

She continued, "It could kill the men of the Night's Watch, then who will man the Wall. There's still not enough already. Jon is their lord commander, something must be done; I can get to Castle Black with Ghost a lot sooner than Robb can from Winterfell."

"Let me accompany you, my lady," insisted Lord Mallister finally relenting. "Lord Commander Snow was adamant about you staying safe. I don't feel like getting chewed by his direwolf or burned by that green dragon for not following his orders."

"No. You command Shadow Tower. You must stay here. I'll be fine. When Jon returns and I am not here. He won't believe anyone but you, when he asks where I have gone. He'll assume—never mind." Sansa did not want to leave her children behind but did not want to foolishly bring them near an uncontrollable dragon. At the same time she did not want to leave them with Yvaine who was not trusted by Jon or Ghost. Lord Mallister grunted.

"If I fail at protecting two twin babes from a bloody wet nurse, then may the Gods help every soul in this crumbling tower." In the end she took her twins with her.

She wanted to cry that she was scared Jon would not return alive. With Samwell Tarly at the Citadel, Maester Aemon was short of a set of eyes to help with sift through the old books if there was anything of use to help contain the untamed dragon. Why was she leaving her children and her relative safety at Shadow Tower to help a woman who wanted Jon for herself?

Yvaine had the same question. "Why are you risking your life and your children's for her? Have you gone mad, my lady?" Sansa had asked Jon the same thing before he left.

"Are you mad? We need you here at the Wall."

"Coldhands knows the way. He has helped Bran."

"He's a wight. A dead brother of the Night's Watch." The raven had cawed Night! King! King! Snow! as it circled them.

Sansa tried again to persuade him against going alone. "The dragon hates the cold. It can barely stand it anymore. It wants to fly south, Jon. Take Ghost instead," she argued. "You have Longclaw." She touched his burned hand and stared at the burns he received in his rescue of Ghost from the dragon fire. His funeral pyre was an one time fluke.

"The wind outside is as cold as the ice dragons' roars Old Nan used to tell us about in her stories. I want Ghost with you and the twins." I don't care about songs anymore. I care about you surviving and coming back to me.

"You are leaving me after you fucked me, Jon Snow." Jon winced at her words. Sansa did not regret it all. But she imagined it would happen on their wedding night or when he was officially unsworn to his vows to the Night's Watch. Not because that's what she wanted per se, it was what she knew Jon wanted. The honorable way.

"I'm sorry. I thought I could leave the Wall without—I wanted to wait so you could have the perfect wedding. We should have." He looked at her with guilt and self loathing. "I shamed your honour." Someone said her lord father's honour did nothing to protect him. Honour can weigh us down just as well as shame. Sansa saw no shame in what she and Jon shared. "If I [die], I wanted to have-"
broke my vows— Sansa kissed him.

"You won’t, Jon. I won’t have another fatherless child," she growled fiercely. "I watched your pyre be lit once and thought you were dead for good." Jon's grey eyes widened.

"Sansa, we have to marry. Like now." Jon began to rise from the bed. Sansa pulled him back.

"You can't take a wife. I'm sure someone must have gotten a girl pregnant at Molestown in the history of the Night's Watch." Jon was not comforted by that. "If I do have a baby, I'll just tell people, I fucked a wolf." Like Maege Mormont slept with "bears."

"I swore I wouldn't father a bastard. Gods, Sansa, this isn't how I wanted things."

"I know, but I might not be with child from this. If I may be honest, I'd rather have a passel of your Snows than a Targaryen. Snow is of the North. No dragons, no Valyria." No Iron Throne in King's Landing. It was a place she never wanted to step foot in again, especially with Jon who looked so much like her lord father, Eddard Stark. Jon curled back under the furs.

"You aren't looking forward to the day I am legitimized?"

"I am not that shallow anymore. But Sansa Snow sounds nicer than Sansa Targaryen." Jon smiled at her.

"Complete butchery to your pretty name," he said. "My name has been Snow my whole life. I have only dreamt of ever having one name. But I felt guilty for dreaming of it as well."

"Robb could legitimize you. You have same amount of Stark blood as we do. Cousin Jon Stark, son of Lyanna Stark." She rested her head on his chest.

"He believed I was going to be a girl." It took her a minute to realize whom Jon was speaking of.

"I'm glad Rhaegar was wrong," she said with a yawn.

"Grey Worm has died, Ser Barristan," announced Missendai with tears in her large eyes. "The pale mare took him. That and the wounds." Barristan felt his age at the news of the young general's death.

"He was a brave man. I failed him. I failed our Queen."

"He was. One of the bravest I have ever met." They had a moment of silence, "Are we pressing on to King's Landing?"

"We need Queen Daenerys and her dragons. We can still do damage to Stannis' army."

"Not the pretender Aegon's as well, ser?"

"What if he is real though? I served Prince Rhaegar and to kill a young man who may very well be his trueborn son."

"But ser, you said his bloodied corpse was presented to the Usurper? Her Grace does not believe her nephew is truly alive." But she believes that Ned Stark's bastard son is Prince Rhaegar's son.

"I saw him lead his army. There's no doubt of his Targaryen blood. I even saw Princess Elia's jawline in him. All of the small folk are raising banners in his name. He and Daenerys will bring peace back to Westeros. Together."
"We don't have the numbers anymore to do much damage to Lord Stannis' army, ser." Our army is inflicted with a disease that can wipe out his armies. It pained Barristan that he had to stoop so low. But else would he do with thousands of Unsullied and Dothraki fighters that were dying daily from the bloody flux?

Chapter End Notes

I meant to write a chapter a week like I did last summer, but I haven't been super confident about the recent five chapters. Plus ongoing personal & medical stuff will be affecting my ability to write this summer. Aiming to have chapter 31 (and maybe 32) posted before/by the end of July.

I am going to finish this. I don't know how many more chapters are left, however I like even numbers and numbers that end with 5. Anyways, I am going to catch up with the last three episodes of Game of Thrones with a fresh box of kleenex.

leave a review! :)
Olly was tired of the dragon queen's constant flip flopping. She had sympathized with him, when he told her of the wildlings' savagery and murder of his family and village. Olly thought this queen would feed them all to her dragon's fire. The Lord Commander was a brave man but he was too soft with the wildlings to earn Olly's respect. Queen Daenerys was fond of Olly and promised to do something about the wildlings. Olly was disappointed at her methods of 'civilizing' them and her few demonstrations at breaches of what she considered civilized conduct. *Savages can’t learn. They aren’t like us.* With the exception of the burning of the priestess and the imprisonment of a wildling woman, Daenerys now believed the wildlings had an important role and would not hear of setting dragon fire on them. *Not yet, she smiled at him.* There were whispers of Melisandre’s cries that she was Mance before the flames consumed her. The Queen had been adamant that it had been the cries of madwoman set out to detract their belief in her. Olly had troubling believing she would follow through this time.

Olly mostly did odd jobs that the black brothers were too busy to do. He worked in the kitchens lately and brought flagons of drink to the towers. Satin or Grenn brought the meal trays to Maester Aemon and were brusque in refusals at Olly's offers. As he was bringing empty trays and jugs from Queen Daenerys' tower, he overheard the old bearded wildling with greying flame red hair hissing to another wildling about a horn. The beady blue eyes glared at the flying black dragon overhead, before he spat on the ground.

"It's dangerous to go boasting around about that horn. The dragon queen has already burned the fake along with Mance. It's a measly thing in comparison to the fine one she burned. Shame, we never found the real one. Tread carefully around her. The pretty boy is telling the truth. She hasn't gone near that damn black monster."

Olly's eyes had lit up. *A dragon horn.* Mance Rayder hadn't found the horn of Joramun. *He had found a dragon horn.* That was why Tormund was brash in his insolence to Queen Daenerys and the threat of her dragon. He didn't fear the dragon because he could sound the horn and control it if he wished to. Olly remembered, Queen Daenerys telling him the old dragon lords of Valyria had spells and horns to control their dragons, but she had to make do with her whip and commanding words. Later that evening, whilst the wildling men were dining with the men of the Night's Watch in the dining hall. Olly snuck in their sleeping quarters and pilfered through their belongings. He found some items of value but left them there. Olly wanted the horn, so he could punish the wildlings for slaughtering his mother and father. He wanted justice for his village. Whoever had hid it had hid it well for it was drawing time for the men to return to their cells. Olly had found it in the nick of time behind a loose brick high up on the wall. He tucked it inside a potato sack and scampered in the darkness unseen. Not even Grenn who was carrying a filthy wildling to the maester's tower saw him.

"What are you doing out, Olly?" questioned Satin suspiciously, stopping Olly in his tracks.

"Nothing, just going to the kitchens to clean up for the night."

"Very well," dismissed Satin who looked around furtively as he climbed up the steps to the maester's tower. Olly waited until the morning after he broke his fast. He slipped back into his cell and pulled out the horn. It was not as large as the eight foot long horn that was fake. It was certainly old and measly looking. Olly had traced over the golden brown runes before he went to sleep. In the morn, he covered the crack with another finger and blew the horn hard. No sound came out. He frowned and decided perhaps he needed to physically blow the horn in front of the dragon for it to work.

"Oi, Olly. Get the turnips from the ice cellar. Go on, be quick about it," barked the cook tersely. *I'll*
sneak out tonight to see the dragon. Olly went down to the ice cellar with the horn. It was damn cold in the cellars. He placed the horn on a crate and filled the sack with turnips. He was not looking, when the runes glowed. Olly dropped a withered turnip and as he bent down to pick up. This turnip is in better shape than the horn. He thought it wouldn't hurt to try the horn again. Olly tossed the turnip the bag.

"Broken piece of shit." He covered the crack and blew the horn as hard as he could to see if it would even make a weak noise. The blast that came out deafening, and shocked Olly so much that he staggered and tripped over a crate. Ghost stopped abruptly, sniffing the air and the ground. Dagon made a fussing noise at the lurching stop.

"What is it, Ghost?" said Sansa aloud looking around for something amiss. They were so close to Castle Black. Ghost soundlessly charged away from their path to Castle Black, sprinting Sansa and her twins south. "Ghost!"

"My lady! Wait! I can't keep up! My lady!" shouted Yvaine desperately. "Please, tell the wolf to slow down!" Sansa prodded and begged Ghost to slow his increasing speed. Her twins were agitated at the jerking movements. If I fall off, we are dead. She had lost sight of Yvaine. Ghost only slowed to a stop somewhere on the edge of the Gift and border of the North. Sansa could still see the Wall at a distance. Ghost took them to a small cave. He curled on the ground and made soft whines. His ears alert. A loud rumbling shook the ground, Sansa knelt down. Her face was confused and fearful.

"What's happening?" she cried. Cracks like thunder sounded intermittently. Sansa's throat choked in fear and realization. The Wall. She hummed northern songs and the prayers she once sang during the battle of Blackwater Bay. Sharp gales of wind blew snow and ice blew past, the cave walls shielding them from worst of it. Yvaine is likely dead. Sansa looked at Ghost's red eyes and stroked his thick white fur. Maester Aemon, Jon's steward, and Grenn. He brought me back to Castle Black. She hoped they had somehow survived. When the wind died down, they walked out of the cave. Sansa froze at the sight of the fallen Wall. Large chunks of ice were breaking off and crashing down. The groaning and thuds echoing all around, the ancient barrier that had kept the Others out for centuries was broken. She had no Valyrian steel or dragonglass dagger on her person. No torch. Jon and the dragon were thousands of leagues of away.

Robb must be warned that the Wall has fallen.

"Ghost to Winterfell! Hurry!" she yelped as she clambered on Jon's direwolf. Sansa remembered the unearthly speed of the Others from the attack in the Haunted Forest that left Smalljon Umber slain. Sansa yearned for the safety of the grey stone walls of Winterfell.

Rhaegal had fought against Jon's commands to continue their journey. They had attacked bands of Others marching towards the Wall until every last one was destroyed. Taking time and exhausting Rhaegal. They were a bit lucky there were some thralls of the Others for Rhaegal to feast on. But there was nothing but the deepest of snow here. Just a wasteland of winter. The dragon had decided it would go no further and turned back south. A shadow loomed around them in the blizzard. Jon had squinted to make out its shape. Is it lightening or a cyclone of snow? Rhaegal screeched as the shadow drew closer than it usually did.

"What is it, Lord Reed?" shouted Jon looking over his shoulder at the smaller yet older man. Green eyes gave a piercing glance around them, then looked below at the ground.
"I fear we may have to continue our journey on foot," informed Lord Howland. Jon looked down. They were too high up to survive a fall or a jump.

"That's suicide!" argued Jon with a frown. He shouted in High Valyrian commands Queen Daenerys had told him to use. Jon shouted commands to Rhaegal to descend and turn back north. Rhaegal paid no heed and continue its course back south.

"Are you sure you have his allegiance, Jon?" Sansa had questioned more than once. Her beautiful face pinched with worry.

"He lets me ride him and listens to my commands," responded Jon. Tyrion Lannister had been wrong, the process had been simple like how one tames a unridden wild horse. No, foreign practice or ritual required.

"Rhaegal! Turn back!" commanded Jon at the rogue dragon.

"He's too small and alone. The dragon won't stick around without its brothers flying with him." Rhaegal seem to be irate with Jon.

"I need him to burn the Others. To fly us back to the Wall after we have destroyed them all." Suddenly they lurched as if Rhaegal had been attacked. He groaned with high pitched shrieks and was flying downward. Jon clung on to Rhaegal tightly. "Have we been attacked?"

"Someone has warged into the dragon! Your cousin, if I am correct!" Jon gazed at the head of the green dragon.

"Bran?" After narrowly crashing into the frozen ground, Rhaegal suddenly flew properly and answered Jon's previous commands. Where are you taking us, Bran? The giant shadow no longer seemed to loom around them anymore. The snowfall cleared a bit as they descended near a fortress of ice on a small mountain ridge. "Thank you." He stroked Rhaegal's snout. Reed and Jon trudged through snow mountain pass to the fortress.

"There's different wards of magic here, quite unlike those of the Wall. Far less. I don't think whatever built this was concerned about security," assessed Howland as he touched the walls of ice. His green eyes were lit up with fascination and he stroked his greying beard as he spoke in tongues to the wall. "Impressive design."

"Archways aren't important at the moment, my lord." Jon held Longclaw in his hand, his grey eyes watching vigilantly for the inhuman speed of the Others.

"I think the Others have all left to march south, Jon." It appeared to be so. Jon's instincts told him something was still here. He looked at the entrance they come through and saw Rhaegal (and Bran) watching them. The dragon seemed to give him an encouraging head jerk. Jon continued his way through the fortress. They came into the main room. The only things not made of ice were a decaying pelt of black fur, and numerous trinkets that seemed abandoned and forgotten.

"Swaddling and blankets," identified Reed as he poked at the pile.

"The stolen babes of the wildlings." And Craster's sons. Howland Reed gave a nod in agreement. "Perhaps, you are right. I have come too late, every last one of the Others are marching for the Wall." He peered down the empty halls. Their journey couldn't have been a waste. I didn't leave Sansa alone to take a tour of an ice castle. A surge of panic hit him as he thought about Sansa and her twins in Shadow Tower. "We need to leave, Lord Reed." He wanted to see her alive and safe, even if just through Ghost.
"Jon," gasped Lord Howland urgently. A figure entered the large room. It was a she. A deathly and decaying form of a young woman. She must be over a thousand years old. Her gown was frozen ice and her hair was snowflakes mixed with the sparse remains of her original hair. There was a creepy prepossessing quality about this wight woman. A bride of death.

"Why are you are trying to wipe out men from Westeros?" questioned Jon with Longclaw raised menacingly. It was useless to speak to the Others as they had their own language and did not speak the Common Tongue (or feigned ignorance). The woman of ice cocked her head to the side and spoke.

"The Old Tongue." Howland Reed cleared his throat and spoke in the Old Tongue. Jon only made out one or two words at the speed of Howland's speech. Her piercing unearthly ice blue eyes flickered over to Howland and answered him. "To bring the end of the creed and greed of Greenhand and Lann the Clever. To spill the blood and let the fires burn out of the three invaders." She touched her rotting brown fur reverently.

"Innocents unrelated to them are being or going to be killed by your army of Others. Northerners like you once were," Jon disputed enraged. He spoke the last words brokenly in the Old Tongue.

"Magic here is too strong to control them anymore. They see us as nothing. The children of the Forest warned her of this long ago. She says all of man must die."

"No, that won't happen," Jon refuted. She smiled Howland Reed spoke in the Old Tongue, diverting her attention from Jon. Jon took this a chance to kill her, before she killed them. But the woman seemed to have expected it or had the same inhuman reflexes at the Others. She attacked back ferociously. He slammed into the wall made of blue ice. Her cold dead hands gripped Jon's throat, choking him. Longclaw fell from his hands as he struggled to breath. 

No.

The last thing he remembered seeing was Howland Reed over the woman's shoulder mouthing words with a dragonglass tipped fishing spear pointed at him. Giant ice spiders were barrelling for them.

_Run, Howland._

_Bran._

_Ghost._ Jon didn't have enough time to conjure the image of Sansa one last time.

Rickon woke up with a jolt from his dream. Shaggydog was growling and pacing his chamber. He had dreamed of his wolf brothers. The white one, Ghost was running from an avalanche of ice. Sansa is with Ghost. The other brother was running under a giant shadow in the sky, searching for the mud boy and girl's father and- Rickon gulped, Lord Reed and Jon. Bran toppled a ice fortress as he sprouted green flames at the ice lizards and spiders. Frantically, searching for someone.

"The Wall, Shaggy," shuddered Rickon, he could still smell the dead from his dream. He leaped out of bed and ran to Robb's chamber. He pounded on the door. "Robb! Robb! The Wall! It's fallen! I saw it fall!" Robb opened the door, shirtless and bleary eyed.

"Sansa," rasped Robb hoarsely, when the words sunk in to his tired head. "My men at the Wall." They heard Arya scream and Nymeria howl, doors down. Margaery rose her head up from the bed.

"What's happened, Robb?" asked Margaery urgently, her large brown eyes looking at them with confusion and concern. Lady Brienne came out of her chamber with her sword drawn, followed by Jaime.

"Princess Arya?" called Brienne, her blue eyes wide with concern.
"The Others have invaded. Shadow Tower was the first to fall. I looked and looked for Sansa. I couldn't find her. Where is she?" Arya with tears in her eyes, ran out of her chamber and hugged Robb. "Where's Jon? Why wasn't that dragon there?"

"Summer and the ice dragon are going to help him and Lord Reed," Rickon mumbled quietly with little confidence. He remembered Sansa with Ghost and spoke louder, "Sansa and Ghost are coming. He's taking her south." Arya exhaled in some relief at the news of Sansa. Robb's face was ashen and he exchanged a look with Margaery.

"I should wake the men and inform them." He no longer had the look of their scared brother, Margaery's husband. Robb's face was tense as he reached for Ice and his furs. He donned his crown as he strode quickly down the hall. Brienne and Jaime followed him with looks of perplex and wariness.

"Come here, you two," Margaery beckoned. Arya and Rickon climbed into the bed, but neither of the three fell asleep. Rickon's heart pounded as he wondered if Winterfell would hold. He exchanged a look with his sister in the darkness and knew she was thinking the same.

"The Wall has stood for so long. Why now of all fucking time?" cursed Grenn looking wildly through the sliver in the old stone walls. He was determined to not die today. Aye, he had sworn an oath to defend the Wall. Said wall was going to come down and kill him if they did not act quickly. Snow and I are the last. Sam is safe at the Citadel. Grenn wondered where Jon was and hoped he would return soon.

"Oh gods, we need to get out of here now!" shouted Satin with panic in his voice. The frightened shouts of the men and Wun Wun could be heard over the loud groaning of the cracking ice wall. Grenn shouldn't have kissed Lady Meera Reed. It had filled him with fanciful ideas of a life, if and when the Night's Watch disbanded. If Lady Meera did not want him as a husband, Grenn would follow Snow or find Sam.

How am I suppose to die bravely now?

"Your dragon, Daenerys. Go, before there's no more time," urged Maester Aemon softly.

"Not without you all. You helped me out of the ice cell. I won't fly off unless all of you are with me," declared Daenerys. She held Aemon's hand to her face.

"My Queen, I'm afraid I'm too old."

"Where is your dragon anyway?!" roared Grenn desperately. If the beast was smart it would have flown south by now. Daenerys stood up and opened the door allowing a hurricane of snow and ice shrapnel inside. "Maester Aemon, I am going to lift you. It is Grenn." The ancient maester was lighter than Grenn expected as he carried him carefully. The queen was shouting for Drogon. He felt a stab of shame, when a brother called him a traitor and a coward as they ran in terror. Jon would have stayed and died with our brothers. Pyp and Edd had died bravely. He did not have time to change his mind and go back to help them. He had to hold on to Old Maester Aemon as the dragon flew them away just in time. Grenn looked back and watched the Maester's tower be toppled by a large chunk of ice larger than the tallest tower of Castle Black.

Castle Black is no more.

The great black dragon did not take them that far south as Grenn had hoped. He had hoped for some place that wasn't ten or more feet deep in snow. To make matters worse, the dragon had flew off
without them not long after. Grenn covered his eyes as the giant black wings created a storm of snow and ice around them. The Queen shouted at her dragon to remain with them in vain. As the snow settled, the black brother looked around all directions and wondered how far they were from Winterfell. Or in general their location.

"The priestess is dead, Your Grace. You have your look back," exclaimed Satin. Grenn turned as she touched her dirty white blonde hair then looked north.

"Do you think many of the men survived? The remaining wildling recruits?" wondered Daenerys aloud. They were silent in knowing there was little chance. "The Stark girl at Shadow Tower?" Satin and Grenn exchanged a mournful glance in thinking of the King in the North's sister. The queen sat by the maester and tugged the ill fitting fur cloak around her tighter. Grenn was about to ask about what they were going to do now, when the maester spoke in an awed voice.

"Egg, I dreamed I was flying a dragon. I was old, Egg." Daenerys' amethyst eyes filled with concern. She bent down to touch Maester Aemon's forehead.

"He's burning up." Satin scrambled over. The queen shook the elderly man gently, "Uncle? It's Aerys' daughter. Rhaegar's sister, Daenerys. Uncle Aemon?" Grenn looked down as he heard the anguished cries of the young queen. How he wished Sam was here. His maester training could be of use or even just his kindly manner.
It had been a slow journey on Ghost with two babes who needed nourishment. Sansa longed to find a friendly face who could have some warm milk to answer the hungry cries of the babies. Her breasts still produced milk but not enough for Dagon and Alayne. Somewhere in the forest along the mountains she found a man with a familiar sigil.

"Lady Catelyn?" called out a tall, strong, and balding man. His booming voice echoed in the wintery, desolate forest. His beard was full of icy snow and his brows crinkling in confusion. Sansa said nothing and let Ghost decide if the man was trustworthy or not. As the man and his horse approached, Sansa noted the sigil of a standing bear. *Mormont. The exiled and disgraced knight.* The faces of young Lyanna and her elder sister Lyra, sitting proudly in the smoky hall of timber came to her mind. "Ned Stark's elder daughter." He said to himself. "May I ask what are you doing alone near the mountains, my lady?"

"I've come from the Wall, ser. I need to get to Winterfell and warn my brother, King Robb that the Wall has fallen. I'm sorry I cannot tarry, my lord." The man's face looked stricken as his gaze faced north in the direction of the collapsed wall.

"What has become of the Khaleesi? Her Grace, Queen Daenerys?" questioned the bear urgently.

"I don't know, my lord," she replied honestly.

"I must go and find her," he spoke desperately. He would find nothing but death and the loom of further death.

"You should go to your island and defend it with your young cousins. I sought refuge at Bear Hall on my journey to the Wall. Lady Lyanna and Lady Lyra were kind to my children and I." Even if Lady Lyanna had a snide comment about Greyjoys and questioned if Sansa was a still Stark despite her marriage to Theon. "I pray nothing shall be befall them and your ancestral home." Her words had caused a war in the bear's face and mind. "There's little chance Her Grace survived. There was barely enough time for Ghost to run. Go to your cousins' aid, when their lady mother cannot and does not know of their danger," she urged.

"What of you, my lady? You have a long ways to go with two small babes," he asked, staring at her twins.

"I shall seek shelter in the mountains. I have the blood of Arya Flint in my veins," she improvised.

What options did Sansa have? She could be brave as her great grandmother and her younger sister. Bran would have sought out the Flints or shelter there. She wondered if there was any Flints left to ask aid of. Jorah Mormont seemed to have the same line of thinking.
"I should help you back to Winterfell. I have journeyed from there and much of the Kingsroad is impassable." His eyes flickered back to the direction she and Ghost had come from. He wants to find Daenerys.

"Your prerogative, my lord." The decision made was to see Sansa safe under the protection of the Flints of the mountains, before Jorah Mormont would journey to his island and his hall. As they made it into the valley between the mountains, a dark winged shadow loomed overhead. The huge black and red dragon flew over them. Ghost's red eyes looked up at the dragon. Sansa gasped as she stared at the dragon. Her thoughts turned to Jon who was somewhere far away with the green dragon. Jorah Mormont stilled and had a hopeful, longing look in his face.

"Her dragon," she said quietly.

"Aye, Drogon. The largest of the three." Sansa knew that by knowing the size of Rhaegal. They continued their way at a more quickened pace after the dragon was no longer in view. Mormont's eyes scanned around them as if someone was going to appear. He hopes we shall find a specific someone. Sansa's mind was torn in wanting to reach the familiar, and comforting walls of Winterfell, where her family (minus Bran) was. Sansa thought of Jon, if he was alive and safe, if she would see him soon.

The eldest member of the trueborn Targaryen line's dead body was burned atop a pyre made by Grenn and Satin. Drogon had lit the pyre with his own fire, before again flying off unceremoniously. Daenerys wiped away her tears before they would freeze on their way down her cheeks. As she spoke an eulogy for Aemon Targaryen, the Maester of Castle Black, she thought of how he had given up his right to be king in favour of his brother. How he served the Night's Watch for the majority of his life, leaving his family behind to protect the hundreds of thousands of families of Westeros. She had failed to protect the men of the Night's Watch as the Wall fell. Her thoughts turn to of survival in the midst of the vast north, alone with only Satin and Grenn to find their way to a keep of the North or better Winterfell. She stared up at the sky for sign of Drogon.

"I'm from the Reach, Grenn. How the hell I am supposed to tell where we are?" Grenn looked grumpily at the tall evergreens and the barren oak that all the looked the same in each direction they took.

"Drogon will return and we shall fly to Winterfell," she tried to reassured them. "Then I shall go find Jon and Rhaegal." She looked up at the empty, grey sky again, hoping for the sight of her errant child.

"Look!" shouted Satin with excitement."Is that Winterfell?!" Dany looked at the direction, Satin was staring at.

"It's mountains not a castle," groaned Grenn with frustration and disappointment.

"Are the mountains nearby Winterfell?" she asked not wanting to lose hope. How little she knew of the geography of Westeros.

"I have been staring at trees, trees, and more trees for days now. If I remember correctly there's banner men of the Starks who live near or on the mountains," said Satin as he walked. Dany tried to remember the sigils of the minor northern houses that matched Satin's description.

"Winterfell is south of the mountains, I'm pretty sure," argued Grenn looking southward. "Are you a cartographer?" "
No? What is a cartographer?"

"We are making for the mountains," she ordered in her queenly voice. Her lilac eyes did not look away from the snowy mountains. Satin had a smug look on his pretty face, causing Grenn to shove him into the snow as he followed Daenerys.

Cersei smiled as she heard faint shouts of panic and pandemonium from her cell. King's Landing would burn down to the ground. The disgusting, useless small folk, and the upstart leeches of the so called nobility would burn to death by the wildfire. They killed her children, stolen her crown and had tried to break her pride. There was still sweetness to found in this hell. Tyrion and whatever younger and more beautiful queen would be unable to take the throne from her now. Qyburn had avoided an arrest by disappearing. He had appeared in her cell one night after she was told by the son of the odious Mace Tyrell of her sweet Tommen's murder.

"How did you come in without the guards? Where have you been this whole time?" she asked with a hoarse voice.

"It helps to have Strong, Your Grace. I was hidden deep underground. I had been thinking of a fire to keep us all warm." He had a twisted smile that matched his cold eyes. Cersei's green eyes shone with glee at the idea.

"I think King's Landing needs a fire to warm themselves from this cold. You will do that for me."

"With pleasure, Your Grace," replied Qyburn eagerly. She laughed genuinely and smiled for the first time since she had received the news of Tommen.

Strong had broke down the bars and door of her cell. Cersei walked up the steps in a slow procession. The screams of surprise and of fearful desperation grew louder. How sweet, the sound. Cersei walked with the grace of a queen that she was, despite her disheveled appearance due to her long imprisonment. Her beautiful golden hair had grown back unevenly. The green flames engulfing the city, manse by manse, hovel by hovel reflected in her glittering green eyes and off the melting ice and snow. She walked the same route she had once before. This time no smallfolk spat at her or called her names. All she heard and saw was their crying and trying to run for their lives. Had it been the same for Tommen and Myrcella, when their killer came? Cersei walked with urgency and determination to sit on the Iron Throne. She was the Queen and she would sit and watch the wildfire condemn the people of King's Landing to death. The Queen in the North's lord father, the murderer of her sweet baby boy, King Tommen, would roast like a fat suckling pig if he hadn't managed to escape yet.

A rider trampled through a throng of desperate people, Cersei recognized the tousled brown locks and the gold rose on a field of green. The young man's face who swore he and his lord father had no complicity in the death of Tommen was now dripping with sweat or tears. Lord Mace Tyrell has been abandoned by his gallant son. She did not watch Ser Garlan Tyrell struggle to escape the burning city along with his old father's army stationed inside the city. The wildfire had spread so quickly that her feet began to burn and she could feel it on the back of her neck trying to sear her flesh. When she had finally made it up to the Great Hall, the Iron Throne was hers and hers alone. Not Margaery Tyrell Stark's. Or the she-wolf Sansa Stark who had murdered her beloved Joffrey. Not even the Mother of Dragons, Daenerys Targaryen would be able to rip it away from her as her children had been cruelly ripped from her. Her eyes stung with the thoughts of her golden babes gone from the world as she sat on the Iron Throne. They would all burn and bleed for killing Joffrey, for Father's murder, for humiliating her, the rightful Queen of the Seven Kingdoms, for Myrcella and Tommen's murders. If only Jaime were here to share this moment with her. They had come into this world together, they were supposed to leave it together. Her smile froze on her proud and beautiful
face as she sat alone in the Great Hall of the Red Keep as the wildfire spread.

Margaery's pretty face was tight with worry as she watched her husband make his way across the courtyard to her.

"We have received a raven from Last Hearth," she announced as he embraced and kissed her. The smell of leather and Robb's woodsy scent comforted her in this living nightmare. Robb sighed and steeled himself for what news had come.

"Lord Umber's scouts have sighted the Others and some did not return," Margaery divulged, her heart pounding.

"Winter is coming," Robb said as he looked north with a brave face. His mask of strength broke and his blue eyes teared. "How-how am I to keep them out of our walls? How am I to kill an entire army, when I couldn't prevent an Other from killing Smalljon Umber? Gods, Margaery I am so sorry. I should have sent you all south moons ago. I thought-

"We survived so much already. We'll survive this as well," soothed Margaery as she rested her head against Robb's chest. Somehow.

"You'll make for Moat Cailin or as far south as you can. If you can make it to Riverrun, the better. Arya and Rickon will go with you and the children." Margaery shook her head.

"No, I'm staying by your side, Robb," she argued fiercely.

"I can't watch you [die]- like Mother did." Robb's face was taut and his eyes were dead with sorrow from the deaths he had seen. "Grey Wi-

"Is staying with you, Robb. I worry less when Grey Wind is with you," said Margaery firmly. Grey Wind had been by Robb's side during the Red Wedding.

"I dream of hunting. Every time I ripped the throat of the animal, I see a sign of spring. Leaf buds on an oak tree," he laughed harshly. "A wishful dream of spring. Winter seems to be here to stay for a long time."

"You still don't trust your wolf dreams?"

"Winterfell could be destroyed no matter how hard I try to prevent it," he whispered as he touched the grey stone bricks. His blue eyes flickered over to the tree line of the Godswood at a distance. "I don't know when spring will come exactly. Maybe a year from now or ten years." Margaery's blood went cold as she looked at the strong walls of Winterfell.

"Castles can always be rebuilt," she reminded him and herself. "And spring will come."

Drogon was hungry- no starving. It had been so long since he had filled his belly. His regular feedings had stopped abruptly, along with the visits of his Mother. He flew to the source of the strong smell of flesh and blood. The great grey mountain with tiny flames was teeming with food to satiate his hunger. Drogon swooped down to the grey mountain. He had been swallowing his charred meal, when something painfully pierced his underbelly. He turned his head around wildly, with anger. A two legged creature like his Mother but thrice the size stood unevenly on one of the peaks of the stone mountain. It roared at him. Drogon crushed the mountain to reach it. He roared back with flames at the two legged creature that dared interrupt his feast. He could smell the blood of many screaming two legged creatures as they fled for the trees.
Drogon was angry he had not immediately killed it. It set another flying stick to pierce Drogon, but it missed. With a blink of an eye, it had disappeared inside the mountain. Drogon, frustratedly clawed at and flew over the mountain, trying to smoke it out of the mountain. He had been distracted by running four legged creatures headed for the trees with grey fur that he had not seen the third flying stick coming. He howled with a tremendous roar that shook the ground and fell on top of the mountain in pain. He tried to feast on nearby charred meat but he felt pain as he swallowed the meat whole. Drogon flew away with great effort from the burning and broken mountain, headed back north to the cave he had found in the mountain.

The man shouted at the tall woman as she dragged the struggling thin faced girl away to safety. The Stark girl wanted to run after the blacksmith that goaded the dragon. Screams and shouts mingled with the roar of the great, terrible dragon, and crackling hiss of the flames engulfing the castle. He tried not to choke from the smoke.

"Go, Brienne! Now!" Those large blue eyes had turned back to look back at him, begging him to run with her. "I'm just making sure everyone has gotten out. I'll be right behind you." Brienne believed him and continued her way. Jaime did look for others still inside the castle. He found the maid of the Queen and a small crying boy struggling to find her way out of the inferno.

"What are you still doing here?!" he dragged her roughly.

"I couldn't leave m' boy, ser," cried the wildling maid.

"Run straight then turn left and make for the forest. Watch for falling timber," he ordered as he led her as far as the old, abandoned tower. The wide eyed maid hesitated for a moment in fear.

"Aren't you coming too, ser?" Jaime looked up the broken, old tower. The window, where it all began.

"No," he decided. "Tell Lady Brienne, I'm sorry I lied and broke my word." I won't be right behind you. It cut him to think of her betrayed blue eyes. The maid had broken into a run with her small child in her arms. Jaime only noticed when she was a small figure at a distance, he smiled. His mind turned to his twin sister, his lover. To the moments they shared before the War of the Five Kings, before she laid with their cousin Lancel, before he lost his sword hand, and before he- they- she changed. I'm the same, I've tried to change. His green eyes stung with tears from the increasing heat. The ground shook violently, the dragon clawing at the castle, shrieking the ugliest, and angriest song. He was brought to his knees, grimacing as he attempted to stand again.

"You have lost a hand not your feet, Jaime," accused Brienne's voice.

When they reached the mountains of the north, they came across an abandoned camp site. Daenerys stopped in her tracks as she stared at the human footprints and the large dog pawprints. Grenn had also took note of them as well.

"They look fairly fresh," he commented, his thick brows furrowing. Their eyes met with the same question burning regarding the pawprints. Sansa had to have died during the fall of the Wall. She felt sorrow and sympathy for the death of the Lady Sansa and her small children though she had never met her. Jealous of their bond and Jon's feelings for Lady Sansa, Daenerys deep down never wished for the younger woman's death. She could see Jon's long, somber, and solemn face etched with deepest grief. Dany thought of her own loss of her first husband and Rhaego. Jon won't mourn forever.
'Best keep our guard up.' Daenerys nodded in agreement. They camped in the same spot but were not bothered by anything or anyone except the bitter cold.

"I can see why whoever was here before left," shivered Satin. The particular spot was not well protected from the harsh winds.

"Perhaps we should press on as well," suggested Daenerys curled up against a boulder that fairly protected her from the icy wind. She heard the faraway shrieks of Drogon in the late evening. His dark figure loomed in the sky heading for the mountain.

"Drogon!" she shouted repeatedly as loud as she could. Her voice echoed. As Drogon was in better sight, she smiled with relief and fatigue as she walked slowly in the deep snows. Her hand outstretched to touch Drogon. "Take me to Jon."

_We shall burn the Others before they make it any further. I shall save my people - my children from death even if it means mine._

Jon's vision was blurry for a few minutes before it returned to normal. His head hurt and his ears rung. Jon slowly lifted his head up.

"Lord Reed?" he rasped.

"Alright, Your Grace?" asked Lord Reed's faraway voice.

"Yes. You, my lord?" Jon responded.

"Well as one can be after an attack of giant ice spiders," smiled Lord Howland Reed. Jon saw the burned and crushed ice spiders around them. He touched his throat remembering the icy cold grip laced around his neck.

"The- is she dead?" The Other.

"Aye, and Prince Bran has left us and so has your dragon not long after, I'm afraid." Jon reached for Longclaw from a giant dark puddle.

"He has just flown off?" Jon frowned as he hoisted himself up. His head disagreed with the movement. _How were they to return without Rhaegal?_

"Yes, I imagine it's headed south, after the shadow returned."

"What is the shadow?" asked Jon wearily as he glared at the carcass of giant ice spiders. _What does it want? He used Longclaw to steady himself as he breathed heavily._

"Come see for yourself, Jon," beckoned Lord Howland. Jon followed Lord Reed out of the ruined ice castle. His grey eyes warily looking at the dreary sky. The air was colder and bitter than he remembered. He gaped up at the source.

"I thought it was just some mystical beast from Old Nan's stories," exclaimed Jon as he took in the vast size of the icy scaled dragon. It was thrice the size of Queen Daenerys' dragons, even Drogon.
Please leave a comment, lovelies :)

luctor et emergo

Chapter Notes

I probably have said this numerous times before lol. I am trying to get back into this fic, so unfortunately this update is really short. I am thinking of working backwards. Meaning I reveal the ending then go back in time with the characters' flashbacks of the events. Please leave some polite feedback. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Arya had been with Gendry and Hot Pie, before they heard the thunderous wings of the large black and red dragon. Hot Pie had come from the kitchens and they had been snacking on some warm bread together. The three had been laughing as Hot Pie recounted the stumbling courtship between a stablehand and one of the female servants. It was Gendry who had first noted Nymeria's pacing and growls.

"What's wrong with it-her?" Hot Pie complained looking nervously at the large female direwolf. Arya leaped off her perch and strode over to Nymeria.

"I think your wolf needs to go hunting," suggested Gendry as he broke the piece of bread in half.

"Nymeria?" She tried to pat her but Nymeria bit at her clothes and tried to tug her along. That's when they heard the dragon over the din of the forge. It was inconceivable to think any of the three dragons was near Winterfell. After all, Queen Daenerys had promised so and the dragons were suppose to be fighting the Others. Hot Pie's rounded face was filled with confusion and fear. Arya instinctively grabbed Gendry's tanned calloused hand and she glanced up at him when she realized he had also done so with the same reflex.

"What's happenin'?" shouted Hot Pie. The three scanned the skies and the dragon loomed over the northern part of the castle. Arya was frozen in shock.

"Go, now!" ordered Gendry frowning deeply. "Run!" Hot Pie didn't need to be told twice for he broke out into a run. Arya bristled at being to told to run. This was her home, she would defend it.

"No," she argued defiantly. Gendry's blue eyes were filled with pride, amusement, and exasperation.

"Aye, tis' not my place to tell a lady to run for safety." Arya rolled her eyes annoyed.

"That's not my p-" The dragon let out a deafening roar and the towers and the thatched roofs were set aflame. Arya almost ran to them, hoping she could rescue the poor souls inside, but two strong arms held her back.

"They are trapped, Arya. You need to get out of here. I want you to." Arya struggled in his grasp. Lady Brienne's tall figure burst out the main castle with the kingslayer at her heels. Arya did not want to be rescued, for once she wanted to be a rescuer. If she could not save the stone walls of Winterfell, her home, from the dragon. Arya would save the people who made up her home, her family. Arya Stark had a duty. These were her people. Her father's people, her brother's people in danger.
"Princess Arya!" Brienne called out amidst the frightened people of Winterfell.

"I need to save them, Gendry!" she argued. "Let me go, stupid." She could sense he had smiled weakly at her common insult to him.

"Round up as many of the people you can and run for safety, Arya," reasoned Gendry in her ear. Her rash mind called for different action. Gendry called out to Brienne. "Take her." Arya scowled at Gendry as he released her from his strong arms. A part of her was not happy he had let go for some reason. It was silly to feel cold when she could feel the burning heat of the dragon fire.

"Come, Arya." Brienne took her forearm gently yet urgently. Her large blue eyes darting around.

"Why aren't you coming with us?" Arya cried at Gendry as she looked back. Her grey eyes were accusing and she saw the giant arrows. Her skinny face pinched with horror and fear. The screams of the fleeing people and the roars of the dragon were as loud as her heartbeat. Her mouth went dry, when she had so much to say.

"I have to do something," answered Gendry grimly. "Go find your family." You are my family too, remember stupid? Arya panicked, when she realized he was not promising to follow her or to get himself to safety. Brienne sensed her charge wished to stay with the blacksmith and picked her up like a doll. Gendry gave a nod to Brienne and with one last look at Arya who resisted.

"No, no, no, don't be stupid! You will get yourself killed," Arya screamed at his retreating form as he began to climb the thick stone walls. This had to be a horrible nightmare. It had to be for the walls of Winterfell had stood for centuries. They couldn't been toppling, before her eyes. She couldn't look away like she had during her lord father's execution, no matter how much she wished to bury her face into Brienne's shoulder to hide herself from the horror. Sansa was not even there yet she imagined hearing her elder sister's screams. Her sense of duty came to her when she glimpsed Robb in the chaos. Both seemed to find strength in the seconds long glance of each other. Brienne let go of Arya to help Maester Luwin. Arya tried her best to lead the frightened women and children as they made for the northern gate. She found a lone little girl in a brown shift with crying. Arya almost mistaken the girl for Weasel from another life long ago. She ran to the girl and lifted her into her skinny arms. She scanned around the burning castle and courtyard for her little brother. The dragon circled and swooped down- Arya covered the little girl's eyes. Nymeria was already by the gate and snarled at Arya.

"Hurry," urged Brienne loudly. Arya ignored the Kingslayer cursing her slowness.

"Come little prince," soothed Osha as she lead Rickon at a brisk pace. "To the Godswood, my little prince." Shaggydog aggressively tried to goad the dragon, his teeth bared.

"Arya!" called Rickon with relief. Arya ran as fast as she could with the child in her arms.

"Rickon!"

"Why?" howled Rickon as they both looked back at the dragon angrily clawing at the burning Winterfell, once they were at a safer distance. He could not manage anymore. Angry tears streamed down her brother's face as the two wolves snarled at the dragon invader.
The dark brown haired girl treaded carefully through the still smouldering rubble. With tears in her eyes, Arya ventured out into the smoking ruins of Winterfell. She wept as she saw the destruction of the ancient castle that had been her home. A place of happy memories, when her family was whole. Of her lady mother and lord father.

"Gendry!" she called over and over. Nymeria walked behind her, sniffting the air and howled intermittently. "Gendry, I swear if you don't answer. You have to answer, stupid!"

"Yes, mi'lady," coughed his hoarse voice. Arya ran in the direction of his coughing. He sat against the stone foundations all sooty, and sweaty. Arya gasped at his shoulder and a part of his neck had bubbled, blistered burns. "I fucking missed and wasted an arrow. Are you alright, Arya?" She bent down to wipe away the black soot from his tan face.

"I'm alive," she answered wanting to hug him and hit him all at the same time.

"Everyone is okay?" winced Gendry in pain. "Did your brother King Robb get out of here in time?"

"He and Grey Wind went to Wintertown to help evacuate the people," Arya answered. "I just realized that I haven't seen him since." Arya fiddled with her braid.

"I'm sure he survived. Ain't he the king who can't be beat?" Arya nodded.

"Come on," she offered her small hand. "I told Rickon I wouldn't be long to find you." He shook his head.

"My leg, Arya," he explained. "I fell." Arya stared at his legs properly and noticed how one was twisted wrong. She bit her lip stubbornly.

"I can help you. I will call for Lady Brienne. Here Nymeria can help. Hold on to her, Gendry." Gendry looked sceptical, but took Arya's hand and leaned some of his weight on Nymeria. He hissed in pain and they made their way slowly. Lady Brienne was nowhere to be found. One of the surviving stablehands, Wren, came over to help Arya and Gendry.

"My lady princess, the Queen has been asking for you." Gendry gestured for her to go.

"I'll be fine," promised Gendry. Arya squeezed his hand before she went to search for her good sister. Nymeria's paws made crunching noises in the snow behind her. She found Margaery with the she-bears at her side. Margaery's crown was askew on her head, face pale as the snow. Arya paled at the sight of her delicate hands bloodied.

"He'll be okay, Maester Luwin?" cried Margaery with fear. Her pretty face trembled violently. Arya froze and saw her eldest brother's boots from behind Luwin's crouched figure. Grey Wind whined by Robb's side. Maester Luwin murmured something. Margaery went to her knees in the snow by Robb's head. Arya's feet felt like lead as she walked to her brother. Margaery was frantically talking to Robb. Robb's blue eyes were open, flickering to Margaery's face.

"Robb?" whispered Arya. Tully blue eyes locked with her Stark grey eyes. Robb's muscles relaxed at the sight of her. Arya had a flashback of finding her mother's body in the water in her wolf dream. She wished Lord Beric Dondarrion and Thoros of Myr were here. They would help Robb. She closed her eyes and willed not to think back to the day her lord father died and Sansa's cries. Margaery's cries were terrible to hear. Arya felt an icy pain in her heart. No, no, no. Please, tell me Gods, how have we sinned to deserve this? Arya glared at the face of the old weirwood, untouched by the dragon fire, whilst her brave brother's blood trickled onto the snow before the Old Gods.

How could you? she screamed. What did it matter if the North was in an eternal winter if Robb was
"The Young Wolf," boomed Lord Umber looking down. "Our King in the North." He touched the air where his fingers once were. The She-Bears followed with their own intonement of the sentiments. The voices of the northerners melding into a rough choral. Some were rushing in search of things Maester Luwin requested, but most knelt in prayer to the Old Gods. Maester Luwin worked swiftly to stop the bleeding and to stitch his wound. Arya suddenly found herself aiding Maester Luwin in any capacity she could. Margaery's demeanour had calmed slightly and she spoke to Robb. His blue eyes flickered over her pretty pallid face. Their bloodied hands were entwined.

"Winterfell will be rebuilt. We will see it rebuilt. Eddard and Elora are safe. Your brother and sister are as well. Majority of everyone are alive. You were so brave, my love. We will endure this."

"You will live, Robb. You can't kill your mystique as the Young Wolf who can't be beat." Robb looked at Arya and his lips quirked into a smile. "Sansa, Bran, and Jon will come home to rebuild Winterfell. Our pack will reunite, Robb."

"I have stopped the bleeding, Your Grace. I am afraid I have no milk of the poppy for your pain. It was in my tower-

"I'll endure, Maester Luwin." Robb made an effort to smile. Margaery gave a shaky laugh and bent down to kiss Robb with immense relief. Arya looked at Grey Wind and felt some optimism in this horror. She tapped the shoulder of Maester Luwin. Robb, Margaery, and the great lords of the North were making plans for them to make for Moat Cailin.

"Gendry. His leg is broken." The grey man nodded.

"I'll see what I can do for him, my lady."

Roslin's eyes flickered open. She saw the maester, midwife, and the attendants moving about in the chamber. Roslin craned her head up looking for her baby.

"My baby? Where's my baby?" she asked with the fear that her baby had died or was born stillborn. There was a nervousness in the air, that made Roslin uneasy.

"My lady, the babe is well. Another girl with the Tully looks. Lord Tully is introducing her to Lady Minisa," the midwife answered as she gently wiped the sweat off Roslin's face. The tightness in Roslin's chest relaxed that her baby was well.

"Rest, my lady. You had a very difficult birth," soothed one of her younger half sisters. "I shall tell Lord Tully you have woken." Roslin leaned back in bed.

"I want to see my baby," Roslin demanded as she fought her tiredness. Roslin saw the red hair of her lord husband and the wet nurse with the babe after him.

"I'm sorry she's not a son, Edmure," she apologized, her pale eyes welling. Edmure bent down and kissed her. His bright blue eyes were filled with relief.

"You are alive. You both are." The nurse placed the newborn in Roslin's arms. The midwife had been right, the baby had the Tully red hair. "My lady mother birthed two girls before having me." She died in childbirth along with the baby boy. Edmure's elder sisters are dead.

"What shall we name her?"
"Lysa," he answered slowly. Roslin knew he saw his eldest sister in their second born daughter. She grasped his hand comfortingly. Edmure stroked the baby's fine red hair. "Lysa never had a daughter. My nephew Robin-" Catelyn died before she could be reunited with her daughters, went unsaid. Edmure's gaze was far away to the days, when the three Tully children were happy and all alive. As long as no one ever mentioned Lady Catelyn Stark, Roslin and everyone could forget that Roslin was a Frey and the daughter of the lord who betrayed the Tullys and the Starks.

"Lysa is a pretty name," she murmured looking down at the baby. "What happened to your sister Lysa?" Her question jolted Edmure back to the present. She had heard twitters from the lords and the servants, but not a word from Edmure's lips.

"The lords of the Vale said a minstrel pushed Lysa down the moon door. A vigilante group of bandits led by a mad woman murdered Petyr- Lord Baelish. Lord Harry Hardyng is the Lord of the Vale now." Roslin nodded remembering the news.

Daenerys had sobbed at the sight of her wounded child. Drogon was wounded from giant arrows in his underbelly. She had no idea on how to heal him or how or who did this to her child. Perhaps, Tyrion has an inkling on how to help. Daenerys felt compelled to fly them to where the Wall once stood and destroy as many Others, before searching for Jon Snow. She left Grenn and Satin in the snow covered valley of the mountains. She would check on Tyrion and Viserion as well.

Daenerys looked below and saw her bear, Jorah Mormont looking up at her. I can't turn back now. She had a duty to save her rightful kingdoms from the Others and winter. Her chest twisted in pain and she looked back up at the head of Drogon and the grey skies all around. Her violet eyes blinked away tears that froze in mere seconds on her cheeks.

She shuddered remembering the dream of Jon Snow plunging his sword into her heart. Dany couldn't help but to look over at him once more. Jorah did not look ill, perhaps cold and weary but not near death. Her violet eyes caught the sight of bright coppery hair near to Jorah Mormont. A tall young woman with long, thick, coppery red hair stood by Jorah, also looking at her and Drogon. Dany could barely make out Jon Snow's direwolf, Ghost against the white snow. The young woman could be no one other than Sansa Stark. Daenerys was surprised Sansa Stark had survived the fall of the Wall. She felt a sense of relief in seeing this girl she did not know alive. If I find Jon, I'll let him know that I saw her alive. Dany smiled knowing that Grenn and Satin would join Jorah and Sansa Stark. Hopefully they would all make it to the safety of Winterfell.

"Come on Drogon, we have to find Jon," she urged. Drogon was having none of it and shoved her off. She landed face first in the snow.

"Khaleesi!" Jorah's cry echoed off the mountain. She could hear his heavy tread through the snow coming closer as she struggled to get herself upright. Daenerys and Drogon never made it to Eastwatch-by-the-sea for Drogon never left the mountains of the North. Daenerys was helped up by Jorah.

"Thank you, my bear." He was staring at her with familiar intense love and cupped the side of her face. Her violet eyes locked with his pale blue eyes.

"You are alive," he breathed. "When Lady Sansa told me the Wall had fallen; I feared the worst." Daenerys smiled weakly and looked north worriedly, thinking of the dead men of the Night's Watch. The death of her wise, soft spoken uncle Maester Aemon was still fresh in her mind. Drogon was wounded and she likely could not fly far enough to find Jon. What was she going to do now? Dany looked over Jorah's shoulder and saw Sansa Stark slowly approach with a babe at her chest and another on her back.
"Your Grace," greeted Sansa Stark. Daenerys noted that Sansa was wrapped in Jon Snow's black furs. The tall red haired mother stared at her with an unreadable face. Dany gave a nod.

"Lady Sansa," she returned.

"Lord Mormont and I are making our way to Wintefell. To warn my brother about the Wall." Daenerys nodded lamely unsure what to say to this woman who she confusingly was jealous of and yet wished her well. Melisandre's influence was gone and there was no intense hatred for this rival.

"Maester Aemon? Is he-?"

"I'm sad to say that he has past," Dany divulged mournfully. Genuine sadness filled Sansa's beautiful face. Drogon began to climb the side of the mountain. Sansa Stark backed away, her blue eyes filled with wariness and fear. Drogon caused some snow to fall down. Jorah moved the two women out of harm's way. These elements were no place for anyone especially young babes. Dany turned to Jorah.

"Jorah, go and take Lady Sansa to Winterfell." Jorah opened his mouth to object. Her temper flashed. Her sharp voice accused, "You would abandon a lady and her children to die?"

"Come with us, Khaleesi," he argued. He looked up at the dragon. "Drogon, there's no saving him. You can't kill the Others without him." Dany looked down and with the argument on her lips, insisting that Drogon could make it. She choked back a sob, knowing that Jorah was likely right. There was a risk that Drogon could not last, even if they made to where the Wall once stood. She had no clue where Jon was. If Drogon can't hunt and eventually can no longer fly. Dany had to the choice to leave Drogon behind in order to survive.

"He's my child," she cried as she turned to look at her giant black and red dragon. He roared in pain in his attempts to lie down. She could not end his suffering like she had when she pressed the cushion over Drogo's face. She felt immense guilt as she rode with Jorah behind her on his horse. Sansa rode Ghost ahead of them. They would likely find Grenn and Satin soon. Tears streamed down her face as she could still hear Drogon's shrieks. Jorah's gruff voice spoke in her ear comfortingly. Her gloved hand covered his.

Chapter End Notes

According to my notes, Dany was originally suppose to fly north with a wounded Drogon but in the end I wasn't sure if he could realistically make a journey.

leave a review :)
first of his name

Chapter Notes

I have been stuck on this forever! It's been driving me insane.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Jon

All Jon felt was sadness and bittersweet relief as he stared up at the reforged throne. The throne looked nothing like it once did, not that Jon knew the appearance of the original. When Jon rode into to the burned capitol ravaged by the wildfire and the winter, he came across Queen Cersei's burnt corpse had been found on the former Iron Throne. Recognizable by some locks of golden hair. Like Winterfell, the city and the keep of King's Landing had to be rebuilt from the ground up. Progress was being made more swiftly as spring returned. Jon and Bran decided to make the throne to look like the Wall that once stood for thousands of years. Dragon glass daggers and swords were stabbed into the 'ice' of the throne as a reminder of the winter and the Others. This is your throne, Daenerys, not mine. Jon could see his reflection in the metal. His scarred, long, unsmiling face. His face seemed longer by the gauntness caused by starvation. There was little to smile about with so much to do with so many to grieve for. The dour black of his armour and clothing matched his face. The sigil of a white red eyed wolf and a white-blue ice dragon emblazoned on his chest. Jon's thoughts turned back in time to...

"It looks far better than I had envisioned," mused Bran, breaking Jon's reverie. He turned to see the young man atop Summer. Bran's auburn hair was long. It was darker, almost brown from the lack of sun from the years in the cave beyond the Wall. The lighter shades of dark red had returned from the spring sun. Bran's voice was deeper, more sonorous than Jon remembered. You were a broken boy in your bed the last time we saw each other.

"You did a good job, Bran," complimented Jon as he sat down. It wasn't a comfortable seat. Thrones were never meant to be comfortable, were they? Bran smiled and nodded. "I implore that you join my council, Bran."

"One day I shall return for good, Your Grace," answered Bran vaguely. Jon nodded. "No one is here Bran, I'm just Jon." Jon knew that Bran was leaving King's Landing to return to oversee the completion of the rebuilding of Winterfell. The living trueborn sons and daughters of Eddard and Catelyn Stark reunited. Sansa would be here with Jon if she could. He remembered the smell of her coppery hair and the sound of her voice as they had embraced, when he had made it to Moat Cailin half alive. Their happy reunion had been short lived for three year old Alayne had grown sick. Alayne Greyjoy was thought to be near death, when Jon had to reluctantly leave for King's Landing. Jon had prayed to the Old Gods in the remaining godswood of the ruined capital to spare Sansa's daughter's life. Too many have died already.

"Jon, you were meant for this." Jon stared at his burned hand.

"I was meant to die as the Lord Commander of the Night's Watch," argued Jon with a glum frown. He had cheated death several times. Jon thought of Old Bear Mormont, Eddard Stark, Uncle Benjen, Halfhand, and Ygritte. Jon had brought the remains of Lord Howland Reed to his daughter and...
heirress, Lady Meera Reed, Lady of Greywater Watch. The last person who knew of his lady mother, Lyanna Stark. And the many men, friend or foe who died on the Wall. Jon had opened his lady mother's crypt to place the remains of Uncle Benjen to rest with his sister.

Brave men.

"You sound like Robb," chuckled Bran sadly. Jon frowned. How could Robb believe he should have died? Robb who was born to be a lord, a king. A father and a husband. "He's been at war since he was fifteen. Robb cannot rest. He sees the fallen in his dreams and wakes thinking he must go to battle." Peace and the signs of spring had only come to all of Westeros for less than a year.

"Once Winterfell is rebuilt-"

"Like once Sansa is here with you? Once your friend arrives from the Citadel?" Jon looked away from Bran's knowing bright blue eyes.

"Is there anything you can do for Alayne?" he changed the subject, thinking of the black haired girl that shuddered and gasped for breath in Sansa's arms. "Something you know that can relieve Sansa of some of her worries." Bran said nothing and Jon's frowned deepened.

"Jon?" called out Daenerys as she entered the new throne room. The relics of her- their Targaryen ancestry had been destroyed in the wildfire. The slender, white blonde haired woman was dressed in a gown of crimson velvet. Her purple eyes were just as weary as his grey ones. Filled more with sorrow as Daenerys had lost her three dragon children in the war, Ser Barristan Selmy and her army killed by winter and disease. In the end she gave up her birthright to Jon in favour of co-ruling. Jon was willing to give it back and ride north with Bran if Dany had a change of mind.

"Princess Daenerys," Bran addressed courteously before he and Summer left the room. "I shall go and oversee the builders." Dany smiled at Bran then turned to Jon seated on the new throne.

"It suits you, Jon." Her voice was pleasant, no sound of jealousy or resentment. She sounded like a proud sister, a proud aunt.

"It should be yours." Daenerys looked around the room before shaking her head.

"I am happy with my new home in Dragonstone. I shall help you rule in anyway I can, you know that." She walked gracefully towards him, up the several stone steps. Her small hand covered his scarred one that rested on the armrest of the throne. "Your Grace,-" Her smile grew broader, "My nephew, you will be a good king." Jon scoffed.

"Queen Daenerys would be a better ruler than I."

"Would I be? I have no more children. I shall never have any at all. We conquered Westeros from winter. All those who have hurt our families has been dealt with. I will always be ready to fight for our people, but Fire and Blood is not what is needed at the moment." Her lilac eyes were sad. Jon leaned forward and cupped her chin.

"You weren't - you aren't your dragons. They are not easy beasts to control, Dany. The destruction of Winterfell is not your fault."

"I walked away as Drogon was dying - then I saw what he had done. I should have prevented him from flying away from me."

"Still not your fault. Your claim is greater than mine. I am a bastard. The lords of the Great Houses do not see me as their king. The Stormlands are without a definite lord. You have a better, a more
"Have you forgotten? King Robb and I legitimized you. You are a dragon and a wolf." Her pale finger traced the figures of his new sigil. "These petty lords will come to King's Landing and see you atop this throne and will know that your bravery kept them from their graves."

"You saved Westeros just as much as I," argued Jon humbly. Dany smiled a sad smile and continued as if Jon had not spoke,

"If they do not, we shall deal with them swiftly. Our peace must be maintained."

"There's been enough death and devastation," agreed Jon. Dany winced in sharp pain and became unsteady on her feet. Jon caught her, his face alarmed with concern.

"Dany!" he cried.

"It's nothing. I just need rest," dismissed Dany as she leaned her weight on Jon.

"You lie. I will call for the maester immediately." Dany shook her head no.

"Jon, it won't do much good. My sweet bear has had me seen by many maesters. We carry the scars, some visible and some not." Dany stared at his burned hand and the slash on his face. Dany sighed, "Fire and blood, Jon. I remembered in the end. We won, defeated the Others. A part of me wishes I died known as the Mother of Dragons, a saviour but it is sweet to know Westeros will be in good hands and to see the land begin to grow once again." Dany sighed wistfully as she rested her head against his chest, "I once wanted to plant trees and see them grow." Jon shook his head vehemently.

"No," he growled in dread. Dany's face, neck, and arms were unmarred. Dany glanced at her lower torso sadly. Her gowns were looser than the gowns worn by Westerosi women. Jon was not a man who paid attention to fashion, therefore he simply assumed it was just a fashion from Essos that Dany liked.

"You understand why you must be king," whispered Dany seriously. Jon felt sorrow for his young aunt who he had grown to admire.

"Why keep this from me? I could have-" Dany had worked tirelessly as he in the aftermath. He had believed her grief was what was taking a toll on her energy. "The infection can be removed-" Sam would know what to do.

"Forgive me, I did not wish to add more worries and burdens upon your shoulders," apologized Dany with tears streaming down her fair face. Jon nodded weakly. Deep sobs echoed in the cavernous room as Dany's face would join those of the dead that haunted him. The dying or dead smallfolk, men, women, children, and small babes. His friends, loved ones, and those he had never knew. They are my ghosts, thought Jon as he stared at a gaunt Ghost.

---

**Margaery**

Margaery stood comfortingly next to Sansa seated by Alayne's bedside. Little Alayne looked so tiny tucked in the child sized cot. Sansa and Margaery had sang to the sick little girl, before she fell asleep. Alayne and the other children had been comforted by song as Sansa and Margaery had sang the world had grown darker and direr.

"Gentle Mother, font of mercy,
Save our sons from war, we pray.
Stay the swords and stay the arrows,
Let them know a better day."

Sansa brushed her daughter's dark hair from her little pale face. Margaery had written letters to the Citadel, requesting a maester desperately. Maester Luwin had perished several moons ago, succumbing to the infection as he tirelessly healed the wounded and sick. Margaery and Sansa had sought out the orders of the blue septas in the Riverlands, until Lord Manderly had sent his maester to Moat Cailin.

"Gentle Mother, strength of women,
Help our daughters through this fray.
Soothe the wrath and tame the fury,
Teach us all a kinder way.
Gentle Mother, font of mercy,
Save our sons from war, we pray.
Stay the swords and stay the arrows,
Let them know a better day."*

"It was just the fever speaking, Sansa," soothed Margaery, giving Sansa a hug. "Alayne will soon be well." Sansa nodded and brushed away a tear.

"For a moment, I thought he was speaking to me." Margaery recalled the last time she had seen Lord Theon Greyjoy, tall, dark, and always smiling.

"Rest, Sansa," urged Margaery. "Osha will keep a vigil over her." Sansa shook her head. The bags under her Tully eyes were pronounced from lack of sleep and worry.

"I can't, Margaery. I keep dreaming of him and Alayne."

"I was in a castle in the water, Mama. A man talked to me. I have to keep watch." Sansa had gone rigid and ghostly pale. Her mouth quivered.

"He's right, little one," whispered Sansa, touching her gold and black necklace with a dainty golden kraken.

"Who is he, Mama? Why is he in the water?"

"Gilly will give you some dreamwine. You will make yourself ill, Sansa. Think of Dagon." Sansa kissed her daughter's forehead and reluctantly went to her chamber, which she shared with Arya. Margaery glanced at her sleeping niece, before following Sansa. Osha dipped her head to Margaery as she went to sit by Alayne's side. Margaery could hear her own two children, Dagon, and Gilly's son Sam in a chamber listening to a story from Old Nan. Margaery went down the stone steps. Arya, now a young woman of fourteen stood with the three Mormont sisters. Dacey was now the Mormont matriarch as their fierce lady mother, Lady Maege had been cut down brutally by the Others. Lady Lyra and Lyanna Mormont and Alysane's two children's fates were still unknown. A raven had come from Last Hearth pleading in vain for aid, which Robb could not give in time. Brienne sat
staring at her feet, her sapphire blue eyes stopped shining when Jaime Lannister died in the fires.

"Where is Sansa?" questioned Arya, her gray eyes full of concern. "Alayne is not-

"They are both sleeping, sister." Arya raced up the stone steps to her elder sister. The two Stark sisters who were night and day, had grown close in the years of winter. The two took to sleeping in the same bed as they had done as children. Whatever differences or jealousies that caused friction between them no longer mattered. Margaery had watched Sansa once embrace her shorter, younger sister and made her promise to not get herself killed. One of her two living brothers approached her.

"Margaery, may we speak?" asked her gallant brother. Margaery smiled and took his arm in hers. "I must journey back to the Reach." Margaery smiled sadly.

"Say goodbye to Father for me," requested Margaery. "Let me compose a letter to Mother, before you depart." Garlan nodded, his light brown eyes were glassy with unshed tears.

"Leonette says our son has Father's appetite and Loras' curls." Garlan had not met his son of near two yet. Margaery and Garlan had not known for certain if their lord father had made it out of King's Landing until confirmation was sent that Mace Tyrell had indeed burned to death in the wildfire. Yet again, Margaery could not grieve at her lady mother and lady grandmother's side. "I shall order some of the men to stay to help in the rebuilding of Winterfell and to keep the peace. Willas will send ships with timber and supplies to you. We won't let you starve." Margaery hugged her brother. The Reach was not nearly as ravaged as the realms to the north of it, however, the Reach had not been fortunate to be unaffected by the Others. The Others had made it as far as the Red Mountains and the Martells and the Tyrells had joined forces to hold the Others off until Daenerys came with deliverance.

"Thank you." She had no idea how her husband and she would pay Willas, the new lord of the Reach. The North was still covered in deep snows and the Riverlands was devastated by the War of Five Kings and the winter. A loan from the Iron Bank?

"You married into a hardy family," noted Garlan as he watched Arya's direwolf Nymeria gnawing on a carcass.

"Thank the Gods," whispered Margaery. Robb and Rickon with their direwolves were away at Winterfell, overseeing rebuilding. Margaery missed Robb, but she was so relieved that he had survived. She wept every time she thought of each time she came so close to losing her Robb.

"The Florents are already claiming the Stormlands with Robert's Florent eared bastard." Garlan regarded Gendry with interest. Margaery turned her head to watch with her brother. They watched the black haired and stormy blue eyed Gendry sort through the hundreds of dragon glass daggers and arrows. Margaery remembered her first husband in name only and his rainbow guard. Garlan was obviously remembering the same, due Gendry's similar looks with Renly Baratheon. Margaery had an inkling her brothers would plot against the Florents by backing Gendry as the true lord of Storm's End, being the eldest of Robert's bastard sons. If the stubborn bull of a man was at all amenable, of course. Gendry noticed their stares and bowed. His blue eyes flickered to Margaery with questions, but continued his work. Margaery stared at the dark obsidian.

"Bless the Gods for sending the prevailing winds, rerouting Stannis Baratheon from King's Landing to Dragonstone."

"Aye, but it does not excuse his murder of Renly or his abandonment of the Seven," added Garlan.

"Aye," agreed Margaery thinking of Loras' grief.
"We shall never know if Aegon was a real dragon or not," mused Garlan. Margaery pondered about Jon's rule and wondered if a rebellion would arise. The young man who claimed to be Aegon, the trueborn son of Rhaegar had inspired the small folk of Crownlands and Stormlands to his cause, setting a flame the belief that the Targaryen prince had survived. Time would tell if a Rhaenys or another Aegon would be 'found' to contest Jon's rule.

"I doubt he will be the last to claim to be Prince Aegon." Garlan nodded.

"Are you sure he is not truly Ned Stark's bastard?" asked Garlan skeptically. "He does not have the look of a Targaryen," Margaery trusted the word of Robb and Sansa. Daenerys firmly believed Jon was her nephew.

"Jon Snow rose from his pyre, unburnt. My husband and Sansa witnessed the black brothers set him on fire. You saw him in the flesh. Not every Targaryen has had white-gold hair and purple eyes. Princess Rhaenys was said to have her mother's look. Why is it unconceivable that Jon should have the Stark look?"

"It is not, sister," conceded Garlan. "The rule of a known bastard will not sit well-"

"Robb and Daenerys Targaryen have legitimized him," argued Margaery growing tired of the talk of Jon.

"It will give bastard sons of the nobles the notion that they can rise high," finished Garlan. "They have already begun to call him, King Snow." Margaery cut to the chase.

"Will Willas and you support Jon? Tell me, if we are to be against each other."

"Dorne will likely oppose him," mused Garlan vaguely with a faint smile. "We all know how our lady grandmother feels about the Martells."

Chapter End Notes

If you aren't satisfied by this, then join the club. I dibs being President.

* this song belongs to G.R.R.M. as all the characters etc.

Leave a comment :)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!