Tomb of the First Men

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Tomb of the First Men

by sifshadowheart

Summary

Jon wasn't sure whether fulfilling his Uncle's request was worth it or not. But nonetheless, Jon ventures North of the Wall in search of the Tomb of the First Men - and the secret the Starks have kept for over eight thousand years. What he finds there is exactly - and nothing at all - like he'd expected. Slash & Male Pregnancy, Non-Canon A/U.
The Warrior Who Waits

Chapter Summary

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The Tomb of the First Men

For StarLight Massacre

Warning! This story contains SLASH and MPREG

Introduction: This takes place in an altered timeline for GoT/ASoIaF. I’ve changed a couple of things around, most notably do to with Jon Snow. Most but not all events of the first season/book will be the same up to Ned’s execution except as they pertain to Jon. The changes should be rather self-evident but if there’s any confusion feel free to comment or review your question and I’ll be sure to clear it up.

The story as it stands, (canon and non-canon events): Robb Stark is currently Lord of Winterfell following his father’s beheading by the bastard-boy-king Joffery Waters (Baratheon, Lannister, etc.) but has not yet been crowned as king as he is waiting for Jon to return before holding a Council. Dany has killed the witch responsible for Drogo’s illness and her son’s death, bringing about the birth of the three dragon eggs. Aegon is still masquerading as a sell-sword with his minder Jon Connington, Arya and Gendry are on the Northern Road, Sansa is trapped in King’s Landing. Bran and Rickon are still safe in Winterfell along with their mother who has not joined her eldest son on his campaign. Theon is still at Robb’s side and Jorah has not been outed as a spy for the Spider. Tywin is Hand of the King and hasn’t yet marched North while Jaime lays siege to Riverrun in fury over Catelyn and Lysa’s treatment of Tyrion, Stannis and Renly are both raising armies to snatch the Crown. Jon was not sworn into the Night’s Watch but was at the Wall and saved the Lord Commander. The reason for his being at the Wall will be discussed later in the story. He has convinced the Lord Commander Mormont to have a Ranging into the Far North in search of Benjen and the truth of the Others. We join Jon and the Black Brothers at the Fist of the First Men. For convenience sake, this is the first happening of the second season rather than taking place later in the story. Harry has yet to appear.

Disclaimer: Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire and Harry Potter belong to their respective authors, publishers, etc. This is merely a work of fan-authored fiction with no claims to anything except for original characters and storylines used.

There is a portion of dialogue that comes almost word-for-word from the ASoIaF books. Kudos to whoever catches it first.

***This is a story told in several long acts. I’ve changed up a lot of things from both the show and the book, making it so this starts right after Ned Stark’s death and moving up the Ranging Mormont orders. I hope you enjoy this first installment of the Tomb of the First Men

Act I: The Warrior Who Waits

Jon pulled his white fur-lined cloak tight around his strong swordsman’s body, trembling inside from the bitter, soul-stealing cold of the Far North or Beyond-The-Wall or the Land of Eternal Winter or a dozen other names, depending on who you asked. He refused to show the weakness, giving away no sign of his bone-deep chill before the men of the Night’s Watch – including their sharp-eyed and grizzled-cheeked Lord Commander who owed him a life debt. It was his idea for this Ranging – and only by putting pressure on said Lord Commander had Jon been able to talk his way into their company, as Mormont had originally refused to allow Jon passage beyond the Wall, which had held him up for several turns at Castle Black as he tried to make the Old Bear see reason.

Men of the Night’s Watch were naturally suspicious, few if any ever joined of their own choice, most being disgraced sons of noblemen and the high born while the remaining numbers were swelled with the thieves, rapists, and sundry criminals from the prison cells of Westeros.

To bring along Jon who while highborn was rumored to be a bastard – though his status was frustratingly unclear to much of Westeros with only the Lord Commander and the Maester Aemon among the Watchmen having any idea of his true station – grated on most of the seasoned members of their party. An irritation and cause for grumbling that worsened with each and every night they spent in the unforgiving Far North.

He wasn’t about to give them any reason to strike out at him.

Not when such an encounter may very well cost his life and sunder his chances at fulfilling his purpose for leaving Winterfell and coming North in the first place.

Lifting his torch higher, shining a meager few sparks of light on the foreboding carved-rock wall of the cliff’s face located flush against the mountainside known to most as the Fist of the First Men, Jon lifted a gloved hand and delicately brushed away the fat flakes of new snow that attempted to shield the sigils and runes he spied from his sight. Such carvings were common-place this far North, where the remnants of the First Men were able to be found by those who knew how to look – those such as the Starks who were of the direct bloodlines of the First Men and the Age of Heroes. More than that, they also remembered their beginnings when others of their same kind – Lannisters, Arryns, etc. the oldest bloodlines of the noble houses of Westeros – forgot them in the wake of time.

Oh, they still sung songs about Lann the Clever or Bran the Builder, but they had slowly and surely forgotten their true origins in the test of time.

Leaving only the Starks to remember and to warn the others: Winter is Coming.

And hell follows with it.

Bran was too young and Theon not of their bloodline so neither recognized the danger of the deserter’s tale. A story and a warning to those canny enough to listen. There was a reason outside of fear for his life that had led that Black Brother to venture into the lands of the Starks.

The North Remembers.

Robb had had – and still does at that despite the awful turn their paths had taken – duties to Winterfell and the North and couldn’t be spared.

Lord Stark himself had planned this journey that Jon had undertaken but had been called to King’s Landing before he could set out – a delay that ultimately cost him his head.
Jon had gone to the Wall in his stead, and now with news of his murder – for that was what it truly was – was trying to succeed in the duty his uncle had given him.

A gust of fogged breath was the only sign of his relief and jubilation as he finally deciphered the riddle cut into the stone.

Wincing as he peeled off his glove, Jon quickly nicked his palm open on Longclaw as Ghost bounded over to his side with a warning growl, a moment later shouts sprang up around the camp.

“We’re under attack!”

Cursing, Jon slammed his palm down onto the “key” portion of the riddle, nerves wracking him for several long seconds as he heard the men surrounding him bellowing in pain or anger or death, the Lord Commander calling for them to form up and head off the attack.

“Stark!” Mormont cried out, swinging sword and torch in unison. “Where are ya lad? We’d best be usin’ that sword of yours I gave ya about now!”

Jon’s knees almost buckled in relief when the raucous “SNAP!” of ancient locks and mechanisms releasing reverberated across the snow, temporarily drowning out the sounds of the skirmish.

“Quickly!” Jon shouted back, shoving the door open with his shoulder and waving his torch, signaling to the Watch, Ghost bounding in and leading the way. “Into the tomb!”

Mormont paused for a split second eyes wide with shock at the sight of the gaping chasm where shear solid rock had stood mere seconds before.

“Aye!” He called, beheading another wraith with glowing eyes. “You heard the lad, boys! Into the tomb!”

With help from Samwell Tarly – who’d shockingly enough survived the attack – and a few others of the remaining number, Jon shoved the massive rock wall back into place, gusting out a sigh of relief when he heard the unmissable sound of the locks clicking back into place.

“Well, lad.” Mormont’s gruff voice sounded in the weak half-light of the torches. “Where, exactly, have you brought us?”

Jon grimaced. That was why he’d been hoping to undertake a Ranging North alone, without the sharp eyes of the Night’s Watch on his back. There were things House Stark kept secret with reason – and this secret was at the top of that list.

Face stony, Jon remained silent, walking over toward the far wall, searching with his sharp eyes and torch as Ghost did the same.

“Well?!” The Lord Commander barked when it seemed like no response was forth coming. Don’t mistake him, Mormont was happy to have lived through that little skirmish. That didn’t however mean that he was happy to be trapped in a tomb of all things in the middle of the Far North.

Under a gods-be-damned mountain no less.

A yip from Ghost had Jon loping a few yards down the deeply-black corridor, nearly disappearing into the darkness despite the torch he was carrying. The black brothers followed at his heels, none of them eager to be abandoned in the dark when Jon was the only one who had any information about
their current location – such as how to get back out again.

Jon spun on his heels, Mormont and Sam easily making out the cocky smirk and the devilment dancing in the younger-man’s eyes as he spoke with grand drama.

“Welcome, Lord Commander,” he gave a short bow. “And honorable members of the Night’s Watch. I humbly present: The Tomb of the First Men!” And without further ado, Jon plunged his torch into the hidden niche in the wall – and setting alight the precious oil waiting for just such a moment.

“By all the gods.” The Lord Commander breathed in awe as Jon turned to take in the spectacle as well, the rest of their company stunned into silence. “What - ?”

Jon shook his head in wonder. He’d read descriptions and heard the tales all passed down by Bran the Builder of this place but never thought he would see it for himself. Only one member of House Stark made pilgrimages here every generation – in fact Benjen joining the Watch was to carry out the maintenance of the tomb, beyond the vastly more urgent reason to him taking the Black. It outstripped every expectation he’d had of it.

With the first spark of flame, fire had rushed all along the hidden track inside the walls – illuminating a massive man-made cavern shaped like an elongated D with the massive cliff-face doors occupying the flat of the shape. The cavern was long – longer than the Great Hall of Winterfell or the hall of Castle Black. Perhaps bigger even than the catacombs beneath his Northern home. And spaced evenly all along that great length were statues finely carved and hewn from rock of all kinds and colors – largely untouched by age as they were protected from harm inside the Tomb.

Marching all down the chamber in pairs of two facing each other across the wide aisle were the visages of long-forgotten heroes and kings from before the days of the Seven when the Olde Gods ruled Westeros – some even, Jon thought, were older still than that.

And it was one of those that he had come to seek.

Huddling together, the men of the Night’s Watch followed as their Lord Commander kept pace with the strange Stark (or Snow?).

Jon pointed out a few of the more notable – or recognizable – figures.

“Bran the Builder,” he waved a hand at a sober-looking edifice with painted storm-grey eyes. “Lann the Clever, Garth Greenhand, Symeon Star-Eyes,” and on and on it went.

The Lord Commander – and former Lord of House Mormont – cursed under his breath as he saw a familiar jaw-line here or a brow-ridge there. Forged in stone for all to see were the very beginnings of the great houses of Westeros.

But the farther in they went, the less he recognized, for the warriors and heroes of the Age of Heroes – a time shrouded in more myth and legend than facts – were only at the very beginning of the Tomb.

With an exception.

He’d noted – but made no mention – of the newest member of the statues placed closest to the mouth of the chamber.

A statue with an extremely familiar if not infamous likeness, depicted in modern tools and stone with white-silver hair and purple gemstone eyes.
Now what, Mormont couldn’t help but wonder. Was a statue of Rhaegar Targaryen doing in the Tomb of the First Men?

The company came to a stop at the very far end of the chamber opposite the doors – and the first sign of an actual tomb in the Tomb of the First Men.

“Long ago,” Jon spoke softly in reverence for where they were. “Before Winterfell or the Wall were built with might and magic or Lann the Clever won Casterly Rock, the Epoch of Ice and Fire began from the ashes of the last Epoch – one where magic and technology warred, eventually ending their world in a series of disasters beyond what any of us alive today could fathom.”

He gestured to the series of carvings on the walls above the clear diamond tomb – a tomb that contained more than dust and bones.

“But before that epoch ended – or was even close to doing so – a Prophecy was given.”

Mormont arched a furry brow. “Like that of the “Prince Who Was Promised?”” He asked warily. The Lord Commander had no tolerance for witchcraft, sorcery, or soothsaying. Unless he could see it and touch it, he had no truck with it save for his belief in the Warrior and the Stranger.

“Nothing so benign.” Jon scoffed, nearly rolling his eyes at the mention of that bit of drivel. “That prophecy set up a young child as the nemesis of a Dark Lord of Magic seventy years his senior. In the end the child defeated the monster and became Lord of two Houses. A warrior and more powerful than most, the love and adulation of his people swiftly turned to fear.”

“They killed him.” Samwell Tarly whispered, caught up in his friend’s tale. “Didn’t they?”

The men of the Watch winced, feeling for the child though Jon had told them nearly nothing about him. They knew what it was like to be hated and cast out.

Jon shook his head, violet eyes tracking across the tomb, searching.

“Again,” his voice was a bare whisper. “Nothing so benign. His people were a distinctly cruel people, and selfish with it. They feared him, yes. But they feared more what might happen if they had need of him once more and they’d done away with him. They’d gotten fat and complacent knowing the child-turned-warrior would solve their problems for them, fight the battles they weren’t able or willing to risk themselves to fight. So,” he drawled, eyes alighting on the object of his search. “They came up with a new idea. Or an old one depending on how you look at it. There was a legend in that era of a great king who had been encased in a crystal tomb in a magical cave and left, sleeping and unaging, until it was time for him to rise again and lead his people once more.”

“Gods be good.” The Lord Commander leaned in closer to the tomb. “You’re not suggesting…?”

He shrugged. Honestly, Jon had no idea if the story was true or a pack of riddles and half-lies. But he did know that his ancestors had believed it – and that was enough for him in these dark days.

“Perhaps.” Jon allowed, tracing several symbols carved into the stone with a blooded finger. “Perhaps not. We’ll have to ask him – once he’s been awoken.”

“What are you about lad?” The Lord Commander barked in demand of an answer.

“Whether he is the child of that prophecy left to sleep forever unless needed or simply an early king under an enchantment – I have no idea.” Jon stared up at Mormont with dark eyes filled with a curious combination of fire and ice. “But my Lord uncle – may he rest – believed in this the way he did little else when it came to things of legend and myth. This is why I’ve come. To wake a subject
of a Prophecy that my family has held sacred and secret since the beginnings of this Epoch.”

“Prophecy?” Samwell’s ears pricked up. “You mean a new prophecy, not the one from his childhood?” If it was the same warrior and defeater of Dark Lords of Magic as Jon had spoken of.

“Yes.” Jon stepped back, done with tracing the symbols and runes and drawing Longclaw. “One given to the very first Stark of the North when he found this very tomb in the Age before that of Heroes – from the time of the First Men:

When the comet burns red across the sky –
And the Red God rises;

When the Long Night knocks upon the Wall –
And the Dead are once more Walking;

When the innocent blood spilled is dead no more –
And Fire is enjoined in Winter;

When the stallion is struck down by slave –
And the Dragons are born anew;

When the Lion Roars alone upon the Throne –
And Winter comes a-hunting;

When the Red Stag flounders -
And the Little Stag is sundered;

Here these words!

Head my warning!

There is no hope but that of Mourning!

An Age shall End in with a Roar and Fury –
And none shall bar the way;

But, a Word of Caution to this tale –
Should the Warrior Fight –

The Usurpers shall Fail.”

Samwell and the Lord Commander rolled this new – and strange – Prophecy around in their heads. Not unexpectedly, Samwell broke first.

“Dead walking?” His voice was nearly a whimper as his eyes were the size of dinner plates. “The White Walkers?”

“Aye, laddie.” Mormont’s voice was grim – a stark contrast to the boy’s whimpering he thought. He knew now what the Stark lad was about. If he were another man he would try and stop him.
But he was the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch – and the concerns and squabbles of the Seven Kingdoms were no concern of his. If the lad had joined like his Bearer before him that would be another thing.

But he hadn’t.

And with his current course he never will.

If he even lives long enough to consider it.

“And the red comet, the stags, and lions, and dragons.” Samwell continued. “That’s all happening now, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Sam.” Jon spared his friend a glance over his shoulder. “It is. All of it – it’s happening right now.”

“And what of the Usurpers your words spoke of?” A grim voice spoke up as one of the men of the Watch shouldered his way through the remaining men of the Ranging. “Who might they be, exactly?”

“Hard to say.” Jon said nonchalantly. “But if I had to level a guess – I’d bet on it being the bastard who decided to lop off my uncle’s head, as word has it he’s the product of Queen,” he all but spit on the title. “Cersei’s great affection for those of Lannister blood.”

Making Joffery the Evil Cunt a Usurper in any way you chose to look at it.

Jon truly feared for what sweet, naïve spoiled Sansa was going through caught in the clutches of the Lannisters.

Without another word, Jon took his Valyrian steel sword and thrust it into one of the braziers that had lit along with the fuel for the oil-light track in the walls, setting the sword aflame. Bracing himself, he sliced the flaming sword across his hand, the fire cauterizing the wound once his blood had marked the blade. Angling it downward, he centered it on the well-concealed sigil at the base of the diamond tomb, speaking his words in High Valyrian:

“Fire and Blood.”

And struck down, burying the sword to the hilt in the bedrock of the tomb.

The tomb surrounding them quaked and shook, a crack forming around the sigil and instantly branching out, racing towards the diamond tomb.

As it hit, fire leapt up from the seven symbols Jon had traced in his blood, six symbols separated from the casket and shooting outwards with a dizzying spin and a hiss of releasing pressure and air. The flames in the braziers and tucked along the walls sprang higher – though those who might’ve witnessed it were blinded to it by their focus on the diamond tomb as a thin, elegant hand reached out and curled around the edge of the now-freed lid of the coffin. Before their disbelieving eyes the hand flexed and the next thing they knew the lid – which had to weigh at least a half-tonne – was flung away and crashed against the near wall.

“By all the gods…” Mormont gasped, his knees giving way along with those of all his men as that hand now wrapped tightly around the edge of the tomb, its owner using it to leverage himself – and it was definitely a male though not like one he’d ever seen before – up and out of the tomb, landing with a cat-like grace in a half-crouch before the stunned Jon.
Jon sucked in a startled breath as he caught his first glimpse of the man (mage? Warrior?) that his family had kept secret for century upon century.

One only thought made any sense in the muck his jumbled thoughts had become:

Green.

The man had green eyes, like none he’d ever seen, outshining even the fabled green-eyes of the Lannisters, comparing the two like comparing emeralds to first green of spring shoots – both beautiful but one infinitely more precious than the other.

A smirk crossed what could only be described as a “pretty” face, the green-eyed man raising to his full height – smaller than Jon’s or most grown men he’d ever met – after having clearly cataloged them all and dismissed them as threats.

He cocked his head and spoke in High Valyrian to the shock and surprise of his audience.

“You summoned me, Master?” There was a definite heated drawl on the last word, making Jon gulp.

…Well. Jon decided after a moment. That was unexpected.

…

Harry James Potter-Black could not believe the very fucked-off detour his life had taken.

Or was this more of an after-life, he was a little fuzzy on that considering the many times he was supposed to have died already.

After, after-life?

Who knew but not really the point.

First, first, came the revelation that he had to fucking die to kill Voldemort.

Okay.

Fine.

He could – and did – deal with that, including making sure that all the Horcruxes went down.

Then he woke the fuck back up after one twisted version of The Five People You Meet In Heaven. Only he didn’t get to meet his five people. No. Not Harry James Potter. He only got to meet one.

And it had to be the one that had consistently manipulated him and set him up for abuse his entire life after his parents died.

Honestly, he’d rather have met literally anyone other than Dumbledore.

Although, he could see the purpose in that particular mind-fuck at least. If they’d sent anyone else to him he’d probably have decided to stay and move on rather than go back and finish off Tommy-Boy. After all, who would want to risk being stuck in a damn train station with the architect of their abuse for their afterlife?

Not him, that was for sure.
Get presented as dead to all his friends, enemies, and allies?

Check.

Jump up and kill the megalomaniac when he was busy with his stereotypical-batshit-insane-villain speech?

Check, check.

Be glorified for killing Voldemort…again?

Check, check, check.

Have said friends, enemies, and allies turn on him?

Yep.

That happened too.

He couldn’t even say it was a surprise. The track record wasn’t exactly stellar in the Wizarding World for treating him with anything approaching respect or as a sentient human being. Nope. Heroes aren’t real in the minds of the Wizarding World.

And Merlin forbid they do anything outside of the expectations of the general populace or the ruling establishment or there would be hell to pay.

Literally.

In his case it was years incalculable spent trapped in his own mind and a box that was too much like a coffin for his comfort with only the highlights of current events being transmitted to his half-awake and half-sleeping consciousness.

And the reason why he was cast into what any reasonable person would consider hell?

Because the Mrs. Minister of Magic a.k.a. Molly Weasley nee Prewett was pissed that instead of “settling-down” with her darling-daughter-dearest and making Ginny Lady Potter-Black (and wasn’t he pissed to find out about that) thereby giving her daughter and his in-laws access to his vaults and holdings…Harry wanted to travel.

See the world.

Sample the fare in far off places.

But the kicker – and what knocked her right off her rocker and launched the vendetta that would ultimately end in his imprisonment – was when he decided he liked blokes as much as birds…if not more.

Apparently Mrs. Weasley had not taken the pictures of him snogging Blaise Zabini on the Amalfi Coast well. At all.

Which kicked off the series of unfortunate events that led him to the here-and-now: alive, somehow, in a strange age and era far removed from that of his own birth, and in service to the amethyst-eyed teen-warrior before him.

Fan-bloody-tastic.
The teenager wasn’t alone, having been accompanied by a group of men all in black, *The Night’s Watch* his mind whispered.

Thank god for the spell Teddy had cast when he found him trapped. His wolf-cub hadn’t been able to free him from his tomb in the bowels of the Chamber of Secrets but he *was* able to make it so when or if he truly awoke he wouldn’t be completely lost and at sea in a new time. His cub was a miracle and the only reason Harry still had anything even resembling sanity left.

None of them however save for the teen who set him free and the massive white wolf he spied lurking in the shadows was a threat.

Small blessings.

Arching a brow, he smirked ready to tease.

“You summoned me, Master?”

…

Harry waited patiently for the amethyst-eyed teen to respond while mentally cataloging everything he knew about the current Age.

It was odd.

For one, he seemed to know more about this Age than he did many others since he’d been locked away like the weird love-child of Snow White and Sleeping Beauty.

Minus the kiss-of-love to wake him.

His eyes sharpened as he studied the whispering group behind his new…well…parole officer for lack of a better term.

They were injured, some of them quite badly.

Hissing under his breath, he strode around the pretty one and up to the most injured of the men, summoning his wand from the holster with a flick of his wrist. In the aftermath of the Final Battle, his “friends” had pushed for him to return the Elder Wand to Dumbledore’s tomb…but that had never sat quite right with him. A hunch that was proven true when the tomb was broken into…again…mere days after the Final Battle once it’d been bandied about that that was where he’d hidden it.

Idiots.

He was occasionally oblivious and ridiculously hard-headed, not a total tool.

On leaving the battlefield he’d gone straight to Gringotts to make amends there – something that hadn’t been necessary after all since he’d both attempted to *cough* return *cough* the Sword of Gryffindor to the goblins *and* been able to make it through their venerated security. Apparently the Goblin Nation appreciated that. They waved off his attempts to pay for repairs, telling him that since Bellatrix had violated the account-holder bylaws by storing a soul-leech in their vaults that they’d taken…*reparations*…from both her personal holdings and that of House LeStrange.

What didn’t go to her and her husband and brother-in-law’s victims went straight into the pockets of the goblins.
And all was well in the land of Gold.

They’d been the ones to reveal the entirety of his estates, holdings, and titles in the wake of his attempt to buy their forgiveness; before ushering him to Siri’s personal vault upon hearing what he was after. One appropriated Hit-Wizard-Grade wand holster in Hungarian-Horntail Dragonhide later and he’d been set to conceal the Elder Wand for the rest of his life…no matter how short that time in the Wizarding World had turned out to be in the end.

The Elder wood and Thestral heart-string wand in his hand felt…warm…comforting…

It felt like coming home as his wand and magic reconnected after centuries beyond measure of being parted.

With a flick he diagnosed the bleeding man who had been lowered to the cold stone floor by his companion. Reading the parchment that popped into being after the spell was finished, he ignored the gasps and shocked glances – even the frightened stumbles back and away from him – his entire focus on the dying man he was now kneeling beside. Rocking back on his heels, he cast a glance over towards the bear-like older man who had that air of “in-charge” about him, seeking consent.

There was no way his erstwhile patient was capable of giving it, someone would have to in his stead.

“If I don’t heal this man he will die.” Harry said plainly, then at a sudden thought cast a wide-area diagnostic that made the gathered watchmen light up to signify various stages of health. He grimaced at the results.

Not one of them was in the green or “healthy” zone.

Gotta love the toll living in the equivalent of his former society’s Dark-to-Middle Ages had on the human body.

Not.

“Those two as well.” He said, pointing to the two that had lit up red, though a milder shade than the man he was beside. With a swish he had them unconscious and in stasis – the most he could do without some form of consent since these were men bound by Vows and Oaths, not the everyday man. Their bodies and lives were not their own.

The leader-ish older man turned to Harry’s pretty purple-eyed (Targaryen his mind whispered) rescuer, the bear-like man speaking in a language that was familiar and complete gibberish all at the same time.

Teddy’s translation spell wasn’t working on the chamber anymore now that he was awake and aware.

That might be a problem.

Sword-teen snapped out of his semi-trance (shock, magical overload?) and spoke in a heavily but sexily accented voice:

“You have the Lord Commander’s leave to treat his men.”

Harry grinned, wand already moving in patterns familiar to his post-Hogwarts training he’d undertaken in the guise of country-hopping.

“Brilliant.” He said absently, eyes focusing back on his work. “Then at least this time I landed
around someone in authority that has half a brain.”

Jon choked at the sheer irreverence coming from the warrior-of-old when he wasn’t busy healing the men, an act that had most of them semi-hypnotized due to never having seen magic performed before. The closest thing Westeros had anymore that even came close was when the Red Priest Thoros of Myr lit his sword on fire during the melee at tourneys.

To see a man who mere minutes before had been as if dead, rise and walk around and heal?

Even for these men of the Night’s Watch who had seen the White Walkers it was a bit much to process.

…

While the Warrior of Old – who had yet to give his name – healed the watchmen; Mormont, Samwell, and Jon inspected the Tomb, searching for anything that might be of use.

There wasn’t much of anything to be found. After all it was a tomb. Magical beings waking from an enchanted sleep or not, the Tomb of the First Men wasn’t equipped to billet a squad of watchmen for however long it would take the White Walkers to get bored and wander off – or if Jon’s suspicions were right to be ordered away.

They would have to make do with what they had – for as long as they could.

That was, unless the Warrior of Old had a better idea.

Jon meant to ask him…as soon as he wasn’t wobbling on his feet.

Spying the nearly-exhausted and sweating form as the Warrior of Old climbed shakily to his feet after treating the last of the more-serious wounds – there were still a handful of men who had minor wounds that could use a cleansing if nothing else – Jon rushed to his side from where he was examining the diamond coffin and slipped his arm around the smaller man’s waist, tucking him into his side for support.

“Thanks,” the Warrior of Old breathed out still in High Valyrian. It had been moderately entertaining for Jon watching as the smaller man managed to communicate with the watchmen using mimes while Jon was occupied elsewhere and unable to translate for him. “Not quite used to being…alive…again yet I think.” He smirked up at Jon and shrugged. “Overdid it as usual.”

The Lord Commander watched out of wary eyes as the Stark boy led the risen sorcerer over towards the pair of cots the Stark had cobbled together out of his own supplies and heavy-fur cloak as well as the few expensive-looking silken-velvet pillows and blankets that the sorcerer had laid upon in his stone coffin. Making a decision he walked over as Benjen’s boy lowered the smaller boy onto the cot, reaching into his own pack and digging out some salted dried meat and his skin filled with stout.

“Here.” Mormont offered the handful of things to Jon. “Give him these and thank him for saving my men.”

Jon nodded, carefully hiding his surprise at the action. They’d brought little-enough supplies with them – and Mormont was a bigger man than most. Jon had assumed – wrongly it appeared – that he’d be the one sharing his rations with the Warrior.

Harry looked up at Jon with steadfast patience, waiting for the teen to translate.

“The Lord Commander thanks you for looking after his men and has given you a small form of
payment towards that debt.” Jon said handing him the meat and skin as his curiosity took hold of him. “What is your name? I am Jon Balerion of the Houses of Targaryen and Stark.” He figured it would be safe enough since with Robert dead and armies marching there were worse things to be than the son of the much-beloved Prince Rhaegar – at least much-beloved by the smallfolk.

“Give the Lord Commander my thanks for the meal.” Harry said with a small smile and polite nod towards the much-larger man. “My name is Harry James, Lord of the Houses of Black and Potter, last of the House of Peverell, Jon Targaryen-Stark.”

“He thanks you for the meal.” Jon translated quickly. “And says his name is Harry James, Lord of the Houses of Black and Potter, last of the House of Peverell.”

“Highborn then?” Mormont arched a brow, scratching at his beard before giving a nod. “Very well. Once he’s up to it see if that hokum of his can do anything about the walking-bloody-dead outside.”

“Yes, Lord Commander.” Jon gave a polite nod as he agreed – though he was under no real obligation to follow the man’s commands, he would do so anyway as long as he was a member of this company.

Harry tasted the contents of the skin with caution that rapidly was undone in the face of the hoppy-grain contents of the skin. He did enjoy a good beer – and with this being the olden days or close to them beer and wine were certain to be a much safer beverage than the water, unless it was water conjured by Harry himself. The meat when he tried it was a tough salted jerky but not bad either. At least it was better than starving now that his systems were working again as he was no longer under the stasis spell.

His younger companion settled down next to him with a skin and meat of his own – though Harry’s nose smelled wine rather than beer.

Nobility then, rather than a watchman. Not that he didn’t know of Jon’s lack of Vows by the white fur the teen wore in place of the all-black attire of the watch. It made sense to him now why the sometimes-visitors to his tomb called the brothers of the watch “crows”, they made him strangely nostalgic for his former Potions Professor.

Then his mind wandered to wondering if potions was even a viable subject in the current Epoch.

He rather supposed he would find out – one way or another.

Much like everything else with his new home.

Including just who it was Jon of Houses Stark and Targaryen – and wasn’t the looks on the other men’s faces interesting when Jon had said the latter? - had woken him to fight.

…

The sound of stone grinding on stone snapped Jon from his deep, exhausted slumber. A brief moment of confusion quickly passed as he blinked in the gloom of the tomb, the vague flickers from the lone remaining lit torch casting licks of light on the statues that instantly reminded him of where he had bedded down for the night. Another moment confirmed that the sounds that woke him were coming from behind him towards the back of the tomb not ahead of him where the massive doors stayed sealed thank the gods.

With the knowledge that he wasn’t about to be slain by the frozen-walking-dead, Jon climbed stealthily to his feet, casting his glance around the shadowed tomb, the low light a result of Harry.
somehow snuffing the flames in the braziers and lit trench along the walls once all were bedded down for the night.

*Harry.*

Jon’s head snapped around with a crack as his conscious mind caught up with his sleep-hazed images from his first waking.

*Harry wasn’t in his pallet.*

Jumping to his feet, he padded softly towards the sounds, squinting blearily in the dim light of the braziers, Harry having extinguished most of the oil lights to let the exhausted Night’s Watch sleep. Rounding the casket, he was confused for a quick moment when he noticed that the edge of it was off-center, as if the massively heavy coffin had been rotated. Coming up next to a curious Ghost – the traitor hadn’t woken him whenever Harry had gotten up to do…whatever he was doing – he crouched down, letting out a soft gasp and shooting a worried look over at the sleeping forms of the Night’s Watch.

“Don’t worry.” Harry called up to Jon from the chamber that had been hidden by the tomb where he had wasted away, locked in stasis for an epoch or more. “I cast a ward around them when I woke, they won’t wake or hear anything until I remove it.” Harry moved to stand at the base of the stairs, craning his head up at the man and his direwolf. “Come down, it’s safe enough.”

Shaking off his surprise at the hidden chamber and its golden inset carvings along every surface he could see along the stair and walls – the cause of his initial worry regarding the Night’s Watch awakening, Mormont and a few others had proven themselves honorable, the rest…not so much – Jon rose to his full height and smoothly descended the stairs, Ghost padding softly at his heels.

“When I was condemned to the long night.” Harry’s voice echoed as the warrior-mage led the way down the golden and silvered gilded tunnel that led into the under-chamber of the tomb.

An under-chamber that no one in the long histories of Jon’s two royal Houses had ever known existed.

“It didn’t happen all at once.” Harry said, almost to himself as he told his tale to the man that he was now bound to – if only in the loosest of senses. Honestly, if it wasn’t for the spell Teddy had cast on both him and the tomb, Harry wouldn’t have *any* autonomy to speak of once woken – it was certainly that outcome the Wizengamot had desired to occur. But thanks to his cub and his cub’s spellwork as well as Harry’s own allies among the magical races, he wasn’t the slave or mindless automaton he should have been.

No.

Now he could make his own decisions about how much – or how little – he would help his, to put it bluntly no matter how it grated at his pride, his *rescuer.*

Harry knew much of the current generation and their woes thanks to a common visitor named “Benjen” who had come often – more often than any other save Teddy himself – to speak to the statue of his lost lover. It was thanks to this knowledge that he now knew who his rescuer was – the child of Benjen, who must have been a Stark as he visited the tomb, and a Targaryen Crown Prince. Making his rescuer the rightful Heir to the Iron Throne if he understood the way things worked in his new world.

“Your imprisonment?” Jon asked as he studied the various engravings on the walls as he followed at
Harry’s heels.

Harry made a vague noise of agreement.

“It took them years to manage it.” He supplied. “More than a decade passed after my glorious,” he rolled his eyes. “Defeat of Tom passed before I was locked in that coffin above our heads. Oh,” he waved a hand. “It wasn’t immediate by any means. There were some rumbles after the shock of the Battle calmed down but – for the most part – people were happy the war was once again over and they could go back to their lives. A friend of mine was in office,” Harry smiled at the thought of Kingsley with his colorful robes sitting in the doom-and-gloom of the Wizengamot chambers trying to herd the cats of the old houses and the department heads into some sort of order. “And things were good.” He shook his head in mourning for that too-brief golden age. “So very good.”

“What happened?” Jon pried as they came around a bend and he lost his senses with a gasp as Harry flicked his wand and sent out a spell illuminating the under-chamber. “By the Gods.”

“No.” Harry laughed, correcting his new friend. “By the goblins. The same who helped prevent the worst parts of the spell I was placed under, with some help from my foster-son and the knowledge he had access to from our family library.”

Jon didn’t know what goblins might be but he knew what he saw – and that was breathtaking indeed.

For this under-chamber that Harry had led him down to – concealed by the very expensive and very heavy casket he had half-slumbered in – was as large as the great Hall of Winterfell. And filled from rough-hewn stone floor to the smooth-worn ceiling that showed signs of a stonemason’s hammer and chisel along with the same gold and silver inlays, with piles and stacks and mountains of gold, silver, copper, and bronze; besides the metals Jon’s eyes didn’t automatically recognize. Weapons were mounted on the walls, the like of which he’d never seen. Bolts and spools were wound with the gleam of silk and the gilt of real-gold and real-silver thread and delicate gauzes, stands and racks draped with fine leather and furs and materials Jon couldn’t even identify.

It was a treasure-trove to beggar even the gold-shitting Lannisters and their prosperous mines or the fine material merchants of Myr and Lys, Tyrosh and Volantis, Dorne and the Summer Isles.

There were even casks and crates that held untold treasures, shelves filled with books and tomes and scrolls – even the sparkle and splash of precious stones both cut and uncut.

Jon turned back to his companion when he’d had enough of goggling over the riches no one had ever known existed, only to find Harry was no longer at his side. Rather, while Jon was fiddling with a pile of golden coins and warning Ghost away from a cask of who-knew-what, Harry’d made his way over to a shadowed corner Jon had initially missed in his inspection of the trove. Moving closer, he saw a cloth-and-wood training dummy like those used by young boys just learning the sword or bow or axe.

In the time it’d taken his new royal friend to regain his senses and press for more answers from the enigmatic warrior, Harry had stripped himself down to his skin, giving himself a brisk rubdown with a cotton cloth bespelled both damp and warm, and then washed and re-braided his hair with a flick of his wand, followed by a drying spell.

Jon’s eyes widened at the sight of him, a warm blush hidden by the low light of the chamber – and warming other places hidden by his restrictive leather and wool trousers. Harry was all golden-cream skin and ebony hair, jewel eyes hidden as he was turned to his task of stripping the clothes and armor from the dummy that had spent far-too-many-years waiting for this moment. But he wasn’t
perfection, like a pampered princeling such as Joffrey nor unmarred by the war he’d fought and won. Jon’s clever purple eyes spotted and catalogued more than one scar marring the otherwise unblemished skin as Harry quickly donned the finely spun wool leggings, undertunic, and socks, hiding himself from view.

For Harry, he welcomed the feeling of his old battle-leathers, untouched by age thanks to the enchantments powered by the goblins’ impeccable spellweaving and drawing on the power of the world for sustenance.

On went his basilisk-hide trousers and shirt along with the mithril under-vest that rested between the undertunic that kept him warm and protected him from chafing at the rub of the armor and the heavy hide. Over that came gauntlets and greaves made of a combination of mithril and dragonhide as well as the heavy – though he’d eventually gotten used to it – dragonhide robe embroidered with his family crests upon the back. Every piece from his boots to the hood of his sleeveless overrobe was done in a combination of black and gray, the only color showing from the silver of the Black crest and the deep ruby of the Potter.

His wand slipped seamlessly into the holster protected by the gauntlet on his right arm, and around his waist Harry buckled a sword-belt of mithril links which had a basilisk hide sheath in black studded with rubies and diamonds hanging from it. Jon watched with cautious eyes – Harry making a much more intimidating figure in his armor than he’d ever thought possible from the smaller man – as the warrior-mage turned to another hidden figure, this one a statue wrought of a stone Jon had never seen before, and picked up the sword held there on the statue’s outstretched palms.

“Hello, old friend.” Harry whispered to himself as he checked the ancient blade, rolling his wrist and rubbing one thumb along the edge to test the cut. A smile lit his face as the blade sliced true, just as razor sharp as ever.

“What kind of blade is that?” Jon asked, no longer able to keep his curiosity in check.

He’d never seen the like of it – though the same could be said of many things he’d seen since entering the Tomb of the First Men – it was made of a dark and menacing metal, without the rippling effect of Valyrian steel or the weakness of old iron.

Nor was it common to set jewels upon the hilt of a sword nor have another for the pommel.

All in all, it was a strange sword for all its dark beauty.

In that way, it was not unlike its master.

“The finest.” Harry said with a knowing smile that showed his humor at Jon’s befuddlement. “We called it Stygian steel.”

Jon tested that new and strange word on his tongue as Harry continued.

“Though the origins of it were lost,” Harry admitted with a shrug as he slipped the sword with its black and white diamond hilt and pommel into its sheath at his hip. “I found it in one of my family’s oldest vaults and have kept it with me ever since – save for the day of my confinement before being sentenced to the waking death.”

“Yes.” Jon shook his head, angry with himself for letting the riches of the hidden chamber distract him. “You were telling me of how that came about.”

“Like every other thing that’s cursed me in my first life.” Harry’s voice and face were bitter at the memory as he turned, bag in hand, to pack a few more things. Now that he was free he would be
able to summon things from his vault at will – thanks, thanks, a thousand thanks to the goblins – but there was no need to let Jon or anyone else know that. Not yet. Not while he was still uncertain about the lay of the land. “It began with a prophecy.” He sighed shaking his head at that bit of idiotic irony.

Jon moved to inspect the construct of the statue closer, moving always to be within earshot as Harry collected up things and shrinking them down before stuffing them in his pack – a cask here, a crate there, gold and silver and bronze coins, more weapons, and other things that Jon either missed entirely as he was also looking around or that he simply didn’t recognize.

“There was a Seer in my old world.” Harry’s voice was nearly hypnotic to the ear as his companions – both with and without fur – followed him and listed to his tale. “She made a pair of prophecies that affected me in various ways before I even came of age: one predicting my defeat of the Dark Lord which was the direct cause of my parents’ deaths and the other that a servant of that same Lord would break free and join him, causing the Dark Lord’s second rise: greater and more terrible than ever before. They were the only two true prophecies she ever made…up until she made another on the back of a friend of mine, Firenze, making the prophecy you told your companions just before freeing me.”

“You heard that?” Jon asked in shock, staring over at the mage with wide eyes as he absently played with a dagger he'd taken a liking to.

“Yes.” Harry said drily. “I’ve heard every word spoken in the Tomb since the time of my imprisonment, but more on that later.” He looked over at his friend and smirked at the sight of the dagger in his hand. “You can have that by the way.” He nodded to the goblin-forged weapon with the wolf carving and inset ruby in the hilt. “Matches your sword and that particular dagger never took to me.”

Since it was an heirloom of the LeStrange family…it never would as he’d personally done away with the last of that line.

Better it be used than rust away in the vault.

“Anyway.” Harry got back on topic before Jon could stutter out his gratitude once he got his blush under control at his ill-mannered fondling of Harry’s treasure. “I forget the exact wording but it suggested that a ‘Light-Scion’ was going to turn Dark and lead to the ruin of Wizarding Britain.”

“Britain?” Jon tested out another new and strange word.

“The land I called home.” Was the answer he was given. “By that time I’d refused the bride everyone tried to push on me, refused to join the Aurors – a peacekeeping force.” He explained before Jon could ask. “And had spent the preceding eight or so name-days,” he decided to use rather than years given the strange time-keeping measure of his new world. “Traveling and learning and basically doing as I pleased with my time, power, and wealth. Much of that was spent taking care of my,” Harry struggled for a second with the concept of godson before decided on, “foster-son, whose father was a great teacher of mine and close friend of my late-father’s before he died in battle against the Dark Lord. My so-called rebellion and refusal to do as told made some people in power very angry. One of whom was the wife of the then-Minister who was infuriated when I decided against marrying the bride selected by others for me, without my knowledge or consent – her only daughter.”

Jon winced, thinking of Cersei and the wrath she would have visited upon any man who had done the same to her or her daughter. And had if you consider that Rhaegar’s father had refused to wed him to Tywin’s only girl – the now-Queen Mother Cersei.
Harry gave him a knowing look. He was well-informed thanks to Benjen about just who Jon might be thinking of that would – and had – acted just like Molly.

“I trained.” He said, tucking a familiar and very worn soft pink-and-purple drawstring lady’s bag into his satchel. It had once seen him through awful times before being repurposed as a potion’s kit. It was only right it would go with him on an adventure once more. “And I learned. But I never expected that a woman I had once seen as a mother would use that damned prophecy to convince the Wizengamot and the public that I was dangerous and in need of being put-down like a rabid dog.”

Again, Harry used an unfamiliar term to Jon, but he followed the idea this time, not needing help with the phrase. Instead, he found nothing in him but sympathy for that betrayal. One he was all-too-familiar with given the Lady Catelyn’s attempts to shunt him off into the Black Brothers despite him being his Uncle Ned’s nephew rather than some bastard by-blow as rumors called him. She simply couldn’t stand the whispers and over time that meant she could no longer stand him when she’d raised him for much of his life in the halls of her husband’s home when he couldn’t be with his bearer on Benjen’s travels.

“It took her time.” Harry had to give the Wizarding World that. They didn’t turn on him overnight. But nonetheless eventually they did turn. “The better part of two namedays. By the time she’d finished her work, I had seen her coming – and I knew that I was likely to lose unless I was willing to live in hiding the rest of my days and condemn those who stood alongside me. But,” he gave a victorious if grim smile, eyes dark. “She didn’t win. I’d learned that I couldn’t make my foster-son my heir – not entirely. And I didn’t want my inheritance and vaults seized. Fortunately,” he gave a chuckle. “Goblins were warlike creature who honored those like them. Like me. They were contracted to set the spellweaving around my tomb – and knowing the place from that built this,” he waved a hand encompassing the chamber. “Spelling it with preservation charms and secrecy charms. Charms that would return Teddy’s inheritance to here once he and his heirs were gone. Others that would funnel gold and artifacts those who shared even the smallest relation to me into this place once they were dead as well. And others.” He shrugged not knowing everything about how goblin magic worked or what all they’d done or otherwise not wanting to share what he did know.

“Question.” Jon held up a gold coin, truly confused. “How is this a gold dragon if it’s a remnant of your old world?”

“Goblin magic.” Harry said in a dry deadpan. Shouldering his pack, he shrugged not having any other answer for the nobleborn man. “Even now it keeps aware of the outside world. Much like the spells layered over the upper chamber where I was kept that allowed me to hear and to know what was going on in the outer world. I slept,” he looked off into the distance, still horrified by the magnitude of what had been done to him. “But it was a half-sleep. One without dreams. Or nightmares. Or rest. Merely locked in my mind and body, unable to move or communicate or even breathe. That,” he said eyes nearly dead. “Was what a woman who I loved like a mother did to me for the sake of a prophecy and petty revenge over a slight.”

…

After calling Ghost back to his side in the echoing silence following Harry’s words, Jon thought over all he’d been told.

He still didn’t know much about the warrior, most of what he’d learned was more from his own inferences from the tale Harry had spun and what he’d seen around the lower chamber that Harry was at that moment securing before waking the others to eat and plan.

But of one thing he was certain.
His Uncle’s final task he’d set him had not been in vain.

If anyone was capable of helping him save his cousins from those Lannister twats in the capitol it was the lithe mage climbing to his feet and dusting off his hands after using his blood to seal the entrance to the lower chamber.

Come what may, the Starks might survive this Long Winter yet.

...

With a look that clearly told Jon to keep silent about the lower chamber – not that he really thought Jon would say anything but it was better to be safe than sorry – Harry slid the lower facing panels on the casket to the side, making it appear that his armor and supplies had been stored underneath, and then took down the warding he’d set around the sleeping watchmen.

After hustling Jon and Ghost back to their pallets and encouraging them to eat and fortify themselves, Harry even dipping into his pack for a haunch of beef for the direwolf which gained him an arched brow from the dark-haired Targaryen, Harry padded on quiet feet around the hunched and sleeping forms of the men, casting diagnostics and healing those with minor wounds he’d not been able to take care of before the exhaustion of being woken and then doing major healing knocked him out for the night.

By the time he made it to the side of the grizzled Lord Commander it was to the sight of watery blue eyes watching him carefully as the older man rested with his back against the wall, sipping from his skein and tearing at salted meat.

Remembering the night before, Harry concentrated and then cast a spell, completing the information-sharing that Jon’s bloodletting had begun when the Stark-Targaryen had broken the enchantments on his tomb.

“Well?” Mormont all-but-barked. “Stark get over here and translate for our newly-risen friend.”

“No need.” Harry said haltingly as he assimilated the rest of the knowledge he’d gained from Jon’s blood.

And what blood it was.

It…tingled…for lack of a better word. Like firewhiskey but with less of a burn and without the literal fire-breath.

This information-sharing was the backbone of the spell that Teddy had cast, altering his imprisonment.

The last of the Blacks had made it not only so that he would hear and assimilate what was spoken in his tomb despite his waking-not-waking sate but also that whoever woke him would unknowingly create a link – albeit a temporary one Harry could sever at any time – allowing Harry to take what information he’d need without being bound permanently to his waker if he didn’t care to be.

And thank god for that.

The thought of being woken by someone like Dumbledore or gods-forbid Umbridge and being stuck to them for the rest of his life was enough to make him nauseas. If such a thing had come to pass he very well might’ve AK’d himself before living as a slave and glorified tool for someone like them to use as they saw fit.
Hours and hours it had taken Harry to learn what he needed and then minimize the connection, but now he had at least the minimum he needed to make a start in this new epoch, keeping the connection as a backup in case he needed it. It wasn’t as if being tethered – at least in part – to Jon Targaryen had been onerous thus far.

Now he knew the common tongue, and that his native tongue was now known as High Valyrian. The man before him was the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch…and he’d given Jon his impressive sword. Jon’s uncle had been beheaded by a vicious and juvenile false-king. And his cousin had called up an army to first rescue the Starks trapped in King’s Landing.

All this and more Harry now had access to.

Though for the most part he tried to keep from peeking at the more dirty bits he’d found lurking in Jon’s mind.

Like what the outrageously handsome man looked like naked for starters…or his equally impressive cousin.

Harry blinked, shoving those thoughts to the back of his mind and focusing on the gaping old soldier before him.

“You can speak the common tongue after all, can ya lad?” Mormont grunted after his shock had passed.

“It’s what Benjen?” He cocked his head to the side in a gesture of pretend thought. It was as good of an excuse as any for his sudden knowledge. And only talking to Jon would curtail his ability to get to the gritty bottom of the fight going on that he’d been awakened to help with. “Always spoke when he came to talk to Rhaegar?” He shrugged. “And change out the oil in the braziers and such. The Starks have maintained my tomb for more than eight thousand years if I have my counting right.”

“That’s right.” Jon confirmed quietly, nodding from his spot sitting beside Ghost not far from the Lord Commander. His words were nearly hidden under the sound of the men getting up and moving about, seeing to their needs and unwrapping bandages no longer needed and stowing them away, some sharpening their swords or fiddling with wrappings. “A Stark every generation from the first of us has come and taken care of this place. When it was first found by the First Men we were selected to be the Keepers – both of the tomb and of the prophecy that was discovered with it.”

“Prophecy.” Mormont leaned to the side and spit into one of the braziers, the flames sizzling before recovering from the onslaught. “Smoke and hokum for all the good its ever done.”

“Couldn’t agree more.” Harry said drily, thinking of how he wound up among this malodorous group. It was as if none but Jon had ever even heard of the concept of bathing.

“Now, lad.” Mormont rose to his feet with a stretch. “You healed my men and me – no small power that. Is there any sorcery in your prophesied self that will help against the white-walkers or will we have to either die in here or die out there?”

“Oh.” Harry said with a half-grin, twirling his wand between his fingers as he thought. “I’ve got a trick or two up my sleeve for them…”

…

“Remember,” Harry commanded Jon and the men of the Night’s Watch. “Stay at my back. What I’m about to do is dangerous – if you get out in front of me I might not be able to pull it back in
“Aye lads.” Mormont nodded, hoisting his sword. He and his men were to watch for stragglers and guard the sorcerer as he did his magic. Naught else. “You heard ‘im.”

“Yes, Lord Commander.” The Watchmen sounded out, Jon giving Harry a nod.

The sorcerer had explained – in detail – just how nasty the spell he was going to use against the wraiths was. And not a man of them were eager to taste it for themselves.

“Good.” Harry breathed, hardly able to believe that not only was he free but that he was once more getting thrown head-long into someone else’s fight. “Now: stay back.”

With that, Harry cast the spell to open the secondary escape hatch out of the tomb. On silent feet, the company strode into the dark stair that led upwards, winding around and around in pitch black, not one of them so much as breathing hard. Harry wasn’t able to guarantee that the tunnel the goblins and Teddy had used – one that used to lead from a bathroom down to another hidden Chamber – was completely intact or that it had remained unbreeched by the White Walkers. Thankfully, save for a few spots where Harry had needed to cast some reinforcement charms at signs of the walls beginning to buckle under the strain of erosion and age, they made it to the end without incident.

Taking a deep breath, he lit his wand and hissed: “§Open§” much to the discomfort of his companions at the sibilant sounds of Parseltongue.

The old marble panel opened into darkness, the snow pack having buried the escape route under several feet of snow and ice. Cancelling the wand-light, Harry used a series of Incendios to melt away the snow, casting another charm over himself and the others to protect them from the sudden downpour as his spell reached further and further out, until the tunnel was bared beneath the harsh Northern sun and they were freely able to venture forth without having to climb up through feet of snow pack.

Stepping out into a new world, Harry paused a long moment, staring at the ice-and-rock-and-snow that made up his current view of his new life. It was a stark as his companion’s bearer’s House name and just as wildly beautiful as Jon himself. He loved it – and hated the bitter cold – in equal measure.

“Harry.” Hissed Jon, reminding him that he was blocking the exit.

“No.” Harry waved for them to stay down. “Stay there a moment. I see them.”

Without further discussion or fanfare, Harry lifted his wand and cast a spell that once-upon-a-time he swore to himself he would never use after seeing its fatal beauty at far-too-close of range:

“Fiendfyre.”

The deadliest of cursed fire shot and raged from his wand, fueled by his own hate of the undead and his view of Jon’s fear of the creatures who only seemed to die by fire. Sweat beaded upon his brow as he stared out at the creatures that were still surging against the door at the bottom of the cliff-face, the escape tunnel having released him at the top of the mountain Jon’s memories dubbed “The Fist of the First Men.” It was a gift, the view his exit had given him, allowing him to rain down a storm of fire on the creatures before most – but not all – were able to react.

All but those at the very back were swept up in the deadly jaws of the great serpent made of naught but fire – and none were there to see it save for a sorcerer long displaced in time and a general on a dead steed with a crown of ice and burning blue eyes.
“Up! Up!” Harry called as the few remaining White Walked raced up the hill at the command – a boney, skeletal finger pointing at Harry’s still form, fire still raining down on them from his wand – of the Other. “On my flank! I can’t use another spell until this one is done!”

As it was it took all his concentration to speak, let alone attempt to break the spell. Fiendfyre was nearly impossible to control, taking a massive among of strength and an iron will to subdue it. And it only took the slightest bit of direction, leading to Harry needing someone to watch his back as he tried to turn it back towards himself and scorch the remaining undead rather than race towards the massive trees of the Far North. If it made the trees, it could very well consume the entire Land of Eternal Winter before sundering against the Wall.

And Harry wasn’t even sure the Wall might be enough to stop it if it raged out of control with the wild magic of the land to fuel it.

“Positions!” Mormont called as they circled the sorcerer backs to him – but none getting between him and the great fire snake he was attempting to control. “Swords away lads! Torches in hand!”

After what seemed like an age of seeing the Wraiths run closer and closer – knowing that some of them may very well die this time – they heard what might as well have been music to their ears:

“Tintreach stalic!” Harry cried out, a burst of lightning striking from his wand and hitting the closest Wraith before branching out and hitting the others close to it.

Harry had been able to stop the Fiendfyre.

Not that the lightning strike spell had done much but put a hole through the Wraith and knock them down…but it had been worth a shot.

Setting his jaw, Harry took hold of his sword and raised it, setting it aflame with a wordless spell as the lead Wraith regained its feet, quickly catching up to the others.

Fine then. He thought, glad he’d traveled and trained after Hogwarts now more than ever. Fire spells it is then.

“Mastix ignatio.” He intoned, calling up a spell favored by his former Headmaster: a lash made of solid fire. Though in his case it was the much nastier mastix curse which created a cat-o-nine rather than the simple flagellum hex Dumbledore had used.

With flaming sword and fire whip in hand, Harry set to work against the Wraiths, the men of the Watch at his back and protecting him from any that would try and take him out at his flank.

The Other that had ordered them up the hill hadn’t seen the Watchmen before having its Wraiths attack the sorcerer, or perhaps it might have favored a withdrawal over losing the rest of its force.

As that was what happened.

Time passed in a blur as Harry faced off with undead after undead, his ears steadily ignoring the battle cries of his company, instead focusing utterly on the task at hand, loping off heads and setting body after body aflame at the kiss of his cursed fire.

When all that remained of the blue-eyed attackers were smoking, burned-out husks, Harry stood on the edge of the precipice and stared down at the Other and its pale, dead horse, letting out a mighty challenging roar not unlike the lion he had spent so much of his teens being compared to.

The Other merely nodded, acknowledging the field as lost, and melted away into the snow and
coming storm.

Perhaps the age of magic and dragons wasn’t as gone as the Others had thought.

…

“Damned it we couldn’t use your sorcery at Castle Black, Lord Potter-Black.” Mormont said once the men had recovered and had whatever wounds needed seeing to healed.

Harry had to laugh at that jab over his titles.

“Maybe so.” Harry agreed easily. “But I’m not one to take vows. Especially ones I’m not sure I’ll be able to keep, Lord Commander. I’m rather fond of bed-sport you see…” He laughed with a remorseless smirk. “Not to mention children.”

“That’s a shame.” The old warrior shook his head, resting one hand on his pommel of his sheathed sword. “A damned shame. What’ll you do now that you’re freed from your sleep, lad?”

“Well.” Harry said looking off over the frozen landscape. “If I’m not mistaken, there’s a war brewing. Sounds like the place for a prophesized warrior, wouldn’t you say?”

“Aye.” Mormont sighed. “That sounded like the size of it to me. But if you ever decide to take the Black, we’d be glad to have ya lad.”

“I’ll keep that in mind.” Harry gave a half-smile. “A word of advice before we set out for Castle Black: I’ve heard many things over the ages between my being bespelled and being awakened. The last Long Night was pushed back by the building of the Wall, and kept away by the coming of the Dragons. But before the Dragons came, and Bran built his Wall, the First Men had to fight against the dead that walked and their generals of blue eyes and dead mounts. They did it with something called ‘dragon-glass’ in addition to fire.” Harry looked over at Mormont from his position beside Jon. “Just something to think about in case I’m not there the next time the Wraiths and the Others attack.”


“He hasn’t been to my tomb in some time.” Harry admitted taking out his wand. “But there’s one way to know for sure…” He trailed off, looking over at Benjen’s son Jon for permission.

“Point-Me: Benjen Stark.”

The wand laid as if dead, not even moving a hair.

Harry looked up at Jon, the other already guessing as to the result of the spell if the look in his eyes was any clue.

“I’m sorry, Jon.” Harry clasped one hand to the teen’s shoulder, thinking quickly of how to speak his news in a way that wasn’t unfeeling but that Jon would understand, switching between Westron and High Valyrian. “He has been called by the Stranger. His watch has ended.”

Jon bowed his head, as did many of the others who knew Benjen Stark, the Lord Commander included. After seeing what the mage was capable of not one man among them doubt his words.

“His watch has ended.” The others murmured.
“Go on.” Harry motioned towards where he could feel the great magic imbued in the Wall. “No point in stumbling about in the Far North when you have your answers, Lord Commander. Jon and I will catch up.”


…

Jon was quiet and numb during most of the match back to the ancient castle and garrison of the Night’s Watch, speaking mostly in monosyllables save to Harry or Ghost who could draw him out of the shell created by the confirmation of his bearer’s death. He’d had the idea in his head when Benjen failed to report back that he’d finally fallen prey to a wildling or the bitter far northern dangers or even to a White Walker. But having it confirmed was another thing entirely.

Moreover, Jon knew that this was his only time to grieve.

The second he was back in Westeros proper, he’d have to make a decision about what to do next.

Did he try for the throne that was his birthright?

Did he join Robb in going south to save Sansa and Arya?

Would his cousins even support his claim to the throne?

Questions and questions that he had no answers to, so he set them aside, preferring instead to think of the good times he spent with his bearer and his uncle, learning of his history – and his birthright.

Jon had been raised knowing that someday the time might come where he could make a bid for the throne – if that was indeed what he wanted.

And with the way the Lannisters had shat all over his uncle and half of Jon’s blood, he was leaning more and more towards shoving the Iron Throne right up the Lannisters’ collective arses.

He also knew that if they haven’t already one or both of Robert Baratheon’s brothers would be making bids for the crown now that his uncle’s suspicions regarding Joffery and his siblings had been made public. The Old Gods love his uncle – even in penning that news to Stannis Baratheon he hadn’t betrayed the truth of Jon’s own existence to anyone. No. If there was one thing Benjen and Ned Stark had disagreed on it was that Jon should be able to choose for himself whether to cast his lot for the crown or not.

Benjen had taken steps all Jon’s life to prepare him for such a thing, making sure that the men of the Vale were loyal to his trueborn son as an Heir of the Eyrie through Benjen’s mother, the sister of Jon Arryn. Robert Arryn was known to be a whimpering pup of a boy – and weak and crazed like his mother with it. None of the men of the Vale would support him over Jon, despite the boy and his mother currently acting as Lord and Regent of the Vale.

And by leaving Jon to spend much time with his cousins at Winterfell, Benjen had allowed him to gain strong ties to both the Heirs of the North and of Riverrun as Edmure Tully, his cousins’ uncle, had yet to take a bride or sire a legitimate heir, leaving Bran to be second in line for the Riverlands.

The Martells would support a Targaryen for the Throne, especially after Tywin’s butchery of the Princess Elia and her two children, giving Jon the support of much of the seven kingdoms or at least their neutrality in the case of the Vale and Riverlands.
And then there was King’s Landing and the Crownlands, both of which had suffered greatly under Robert Baratheon and had even less love for the Lannisters.

The Stormlands would be fought over by the Baratheon brothers and in the end would likely be split down the middle, while the West would of course throw in for Joffery out of fear of Tywin if nothing else.

Jon also knew that the Tyrells could throw the support of the Reach behind Renly Baratheon – at least at first. Should he fail, they would likely come crawling to whoever was likely to elevate them the highest. Mace Tyrell had spent more time feasting during Robert’s rebellion than actually supporting Jon’s father Rhaegar after all.

It was a muddle – and that was before you threw in the Lords and Houses who had remained loyal to the Targaryens and the idea of a Targaryen king or queen with the Beggar Prince in Essos.

He didn’t want to fight against his own blood for the throne, but rumor had it there was too much of the Mad King in his uncle Viserys Targaryen for Jon to ever support him to the throne of Westeros.

A moot point since of the two of them – three if he included his aunt Daenerys – Jon as the legitimate son of Rhaegar had the best claim to the Iron Throne, better even than his Baratheon cousins with Joffery being a bastard.

And even after considering all of that…Jon was still no closer to an answer in his grieving state.

…

They returned to Castle Black with little fanfare, bringing with them naught but a new ally and grim news.

Mormont went at once to treat with Maester Aemon while Jon retreated to pack his bags.

He’d made one decision at least: he would join Robb. But first he would speak with his uncle Aemon before anything else. Robb’s council could wait until Jon joined him, Uncle-Maester Aemon’s was much nearer – and more related to Jon’s situation.

Before taking their leave, Jon and Harry stopped by the Maester’s chambers, Harry interested in picking the old man’s brain before spending who knew how long on the road.

Thankfully, Jon had brought a pair of horses with him in case one didn’t survive the journey or died while on a Ranging with his bearer – which had happened in the past leaving him stranded until his uncle Ned sent him another to ride back to Winterfell. A lesson well-learned, especially with the knowledge that this time he might be bringing back a guest.

Though Jon still didn’t know what to think about Harry – a feeling that was all-too-mutual between them.

…

“I know that step.” Aemon said in his craggy voice as the pair entered his solar. “That’s the step of a Targaryen no longer hiding his blood.”

The elderly Maester’s eyes stared blindly at the wall as his apprentice Samwell showed them in before scurrying away to fetch Aemon’s dinner.

“But who comes with him, I wonder?” The scholar mused. “Who’s boots sound unlike any other
I’ve heard before, and walks with a stride closer to that of a cat than a man? A stranger, I think.” Aemon observed. “Though not The Stranger just yet, I hope.”

“I’ve been called many things, Maester Aemon.” Harry noted with good-humor. “But never Death himself.”

“And you, young Jon?” Aemon probed. “Are you still denying your blood? Our blood?”

“No, Nuncle Aemon.” Jon gave a bow, knowing the eldest living Targaryen would sense it even if he couldn’t see it. “The Usurper is dead; the kingdoms are fracturing as we speak. If ever there was a time to claim my blood it is now – or never.”

“A usurper is dead, my Black Dread.” Aemon warned. “It seems to be a title growing in popularity according to the ravens at least.”

Aemon felt along the table before him and passed over several sheets of parchment.

“Renly Baratheon has made claim to the throne, while Stannis Baratheon flounders in his thoughts and desires – save to have a bastard born of adulterous incest heaved from the Iron Throne.” Jon summed up as he read. “The Stormlands have split – as you said they would – and the Tyrells have declared for Renly with him taking the girl Margery as his bride and would-be Queen.” The Targaryen Heir shook his head in disgust at the blatant grasping for the crown. Of them all, Renly had one of the weakest claims to the throne, second only to the Lannister bastards. “Cersei has been displaced as Hand in favor of her brother Tyrion.” Jon mused. “Now that is actually a matter for concern. I liked the dwarf well enough when I met him and found him rather cunning and intelligent.”

“The most dangerous of the Lions, is Tyrion Lannister.” Aemon observed. “Though the least respected among them, he’s that much deadlier for being underestimated.”

“Hmm.” Jon hummed under his breath, eyes casting over the letters. “Lady Stark is holding Winterfell secure and Robb is making his way to the Twins with the Northern army to lift the siege at Riverrun where Jaime Lannister somehow captured Robb’s uncle Edmure.”

“Keeping Hoster Tully trapped instead his fortress and unable to strike back at the Lions.” Aemon said. “A good strategy of Tywin’s of that there is no doubt. Now that Joffery has declared your cousin Robb a traitor and demanded his head, Tywin comes North to try and collect it.”

“Well,” Harry spoke at least, watching the two Targaryens plot. “It seems your cousin might be in need of some reinforcements then. Have you decided to try for the throne?”

“A good question, stranger.” Aemon huffed a laugh. “With Viserys killed by Daenerys’s husband and the Khaleesi widowed, there is only one other besides our young Jon here who might have claim to the throne.”

“Who?” Jon all-but-demanded of his great-great-great-uncle. He, like his father before him, trusted Aemon’s council above all others. If Aemon said there was another besides they two and Daenerys who had claim to the throne, Jon believed him.

“A son of a disgraced line, my Black Dread.” Aemon disclosed, referencing Jon’s second Naming for the legendary dragon. “In the East a son of the Blackfyres who wedded with a descendent of Aerion Brightflame has been raised in secret by Jon Connington at the behest of Illyrio Mopatis. He is claimed to be the son of Rhaegar and Jon’s elder half-brother Aegon.” Here Aemon shook his head. “Which is the truth is hard to determine. Is he the son of Rhaegar or the son of the
Blackfyres? Jon Connington claims one to me while the Spider claims the other. Regardless his claim is suspect while that of our Black Dread and the Stormborn are both unquestionable.”

“By the gods.” Jon traded a look with Harry. “What should be done about this ‘Aegon Targaryen’?”

“Nothing.” Aemon said at once. “At least – not yet. He is still half the world away and has only the support of an exiled Lord and a cheesemonger besides that of the Golden Company. You, my Dragon, are the true-born son of Rhaegar Targaryen and his second-spouse Benjen Stark. You will have the support of the North and Lords from all over Westeros while young Aegon will have to scrap and scrape for the mildest of welcome here.” Aemon shook his head. “Worry about the Lions at your neck, young Dragon, before the shadows on the other side of the sea. I will do what I can to find the truth of the matter – and news of your aunt. You do what you can to secure your claim and see our blood back on the throne where it belongs.”

“Yes, Nuncle Aemon.” Jon bowed his head.

Harry took his chance to speak up.

“That’s how you view the game afoot?” Harry asked the old Maester. “A Targaryen on the Iron Throne as the only acceptable outcome?”

“Yes.” Aemon said. “All members of the Watch are tested at least once. I have been tested more than that – but none were so grievous as that of knowing my great nephew was betrayed by the Kingsguard – mad or not – and my beloved great-great-nephew, Jon’s own father who’d seen him but once, was dead at the hands of that bastard Baratheon, Elia a Princess of Dorne raped and stabbed in her bed with her sweet children murdered. No.” Aemon shook his head. “A Westeros under Lannister or Baratheon rule is not a place where anything resembling justice or honor will reign. I believe my Black Dread with his Targaryen fire and Stark honor will be the King Westeros needs, if not the one it deserves as well.”

“Thank you for your council, Maester Aemon.” Harry said, rolling that around in his mind. He needed to speak with some others, having already gotten Jeor Mormont’s and Jon’s views on the subject. Until he saw all sides he couldn’t make a firm decision about what was to be done. Or who to support.

“You are welcome, Warrior.” Aemon gave a crooked smile, showing his knowledge of what his young princeling had done. “And, my young Dragon?”

“Yes, Nuncle?”

“Come closer,” Aemon said. “Let me see you one last time, in case the Stranger comes for me in truth before we meet again.”

With that, Jon leaned over, placing Aemon’s fragile but steady hands one his smooth face, having taken the time to rid himself of his beard from the ranging upon reaching his guest quarters along with having a bath – a luxury Harry also indulged in.

“Allow me to give my nephew one last piece of counsel”, the old man said in a bare whisper, “the same council that I once gave my brother when we parted for the last time. He was three-and-thirty when the Great Council chose him to mount the Iron Throne. A man grown with sons of his own, yet in some ways still a boy. Egg had an innocence to him, a sweetness we all loved. Kill the boy within you, I told him the day I took the ship for the Wall. It takes a man to rule. An Aegon, not an Egg. Kill the boy and let the man be born.”
The old man felt Jon’s face, committing it to his memory.

“You are half the age that Egg was, and your own burden is a crueler one, I fear. You may have little joy of your rule, but I think you have the strength in you to do the things that must be done. Kill the boy, my young Dragon. Winter is almost upon us. Kill the boy and let the man be born.”

…

Jon thought of his uncle’s words as they rode through the gift down the Kingsroad to Winterfell.

And when he wasn’t thinking of the wisdom of one of the greatest among living men, he was worrying away at how to best make his play for the Iron Throne.

One thing was certain: something had to be done about his missing cousins.

He’d already taken steps to at least secure the alliance of the few holdouts among the Lords of Westeros, using Aemon’s ravens with the Maester’s permission to send out a missive throughout the land that read:

To All the Lords and Men of the Seven Kingdoms and its dominions –

Let it be known that the bastard styling himself as King Joffery Baratheon first of his name, is no more than the product of incest and adultery foisted on the late King Robert the Usurper by his Lannister bride Cersei.

She is henceforth convicted of high treason and line-theft and sentenced to death for her crimes, along with her son the Pretender to the Throne Joffery Waters.

May all the gods Old and new strike them down for their crimes.

Also let it be known this day, that I, Jon Balerion, true-born son of the Crown Prince Rhaegar I Targaryen, First of His Name, and his bound-Consort Benjen Stark, do lay claim to the Throne of Westeros and shall be henceforth known as King Jon I Targaryen, First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, Protector of the Realm.

May the gods judge my claim.

Winter is Coming and it brings Fire and Blood.

He signed it: King Jon I Targaryen, First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, Protector of the Realm, and beneath it pressed his personal sigil into the wax: a direwolf rampant facing a three-headed dragon.

A second series of letters went out after the first: one to Robb letting his cousin know when he should be joining him, another to the Martells and other Targaryen loyalists still in hiding, a third to the loyal men of the Eyrie who were working behind the scenes to keep Robert in check, and more. One to Varys, another to the Iron Bank of Braavos so that he might have access to the Targaryen fortune there that had been lost to Westeros along with Queen Rhaella’s death, and one to his Aunt Daenerys letting her know of his existence and claim. With the last, he sent it to Varys by the way the Spider used for such things, knowing that it may or may not arrive.

But at least he could say he’d tried.

More letters went out to the Targaryen men who his uncle Ned had hidden among the North, allowing them to watch over him and protect him while remaining dead to all others.
All in all, Jon was cursing himself and was blessing Harry for being able to cast a copying charm for the first letter, making it so all he had to do was sign them and seal them with his sigil while working on his second batch of letters that could have only been done in his own hand.

At least by using the Watch’s ravens they had a chance of reaching their destinations. He couldn’t say that the Lannisters had eyes and ears in Winterfell – but he couldn’t be certain they didn’t either. And besides that, the last person the now Dowager Lady Stark wanted cluttering up her solar was her late husband’s dragon-born nephew who most called Ned’s bastard in their ignorance of his true parentage – and thank the gods for that.

It was long days and nights on the road to Winterfell, time that Jon spent mulling over plans and talking to Harry.

One such talk had him learning that the sorcerer could disappear and reappear from sight at will as well as travel long distances in a moment – but only if he knew where he was going.

“I need at least coordinates.” Harry told him when Jon asked about the possibility of him popping into King’s Landing and rescuing his cousins. “Besides which from the maps I saw in Aemon’s chambers Westeros is a large country – larger than the one I was born in by far. I could never Apparate from King’s Landing to Winterfell while bringing passengers with me.” The sorcerer shook his head. “Even for me – that’s just not possible.”

Which led to several conversations about the limitations of Harry’s magic, though Jon knew that the warrior wasn’t being entirely forthcoming.

Not that Jon could blame him.

He awoke in a new and strange reality with only Jon to rely on – and even that was only due to Jon’s ability to wake him from his sleep which created a bond of sorts.

In Harry’s place…Jon couldn’t say he would’ve been all that open either.

“Tell me.” Harry said one time. “Tell me all you know about the state of the realms.”

Jon obliged, speaking of the Lannisters and Baratheons, the Martells and Tyrells, his uncle’s murder and his aunt in the East. Through it all Harry simply watched him from calm jewel-green eyes, Jon getting the feeling that Harry was paying more attention to how he chose to say things than what he chose to say.

A feeling that if he but knew it was all too true.

Harry had gotten a crash-course in Westerosi politics thanks to his bond with the Targaryen would-be-King. And more that he’d picked up from picking the brains of Mormont and Samwell Tarly and the common men who made up the Night’s Watch. He’d learned from being silent and hearing what the men didn’t say when Jon was around, and from playing invisible when Jon had his audiences with Mormont and Maester Aemon.

He may not be the best Legilimense ever born but he didn’t need to be in a world with a serious lack of true magic.

In fact, the only two people he’d met thus far who’d had any sort of defenses against his casual mind-sweeps were Jon and Aemon – defenses Harry attributed to either their highborn training to control themselves or their strange blood.

There was magic in their blood.
Magic that Jon had used to free Harry, though he hadn’t known that for certain at the time.

He knew it now.

Jon’s blood was even stronger than Maester Aemon’s from what he could tell without directly testing it.

A dangerous thing as from what the good Maester knew, one of the few remaining forms of magic left in this world relied on the darkest of blood rites.

His new friend’s blood would be a powerful tool to someone like the warlocks of Qarth or the Red priests. A situation that Harry had decided he would try and prevent at all costs. There was nothing more dangerous than someone who’d had a taste of power coming into contact with a tool that could advance them ten-fold.

…

“We’ll make Winterfell on the morrow.” Jon said over the remains of their campfire after they’d enjoyed a brace of rabbits, giving the entrails and bones to Ghost before cleaning up. Harry had just returned from a trip to the bushes and gathered more fuel for the fire from the many trees surrounding them.

He didn’t know if he’d ever get used to the massive forests Jon had led him through – or the perpetual snow and winter.

At least his underclothes beneath his armor were all charmed for warmth and to deal with sweat and smell. He didn’t even want to know what he would smell like otherwise.

Probably like something had died in his tunic.

“That’s good.” Harry said, tossing a few more hunks of wood on the fire. “We’ll rest a day there before heading South towards the Twins, yeah?”

Jon gave a nod in agreement, fiddling with Longclaw as it lay beside him.

“You have two cousins there still, don’t you?” Harry asked, trying to draw his companion from his shell and find out what was bothering him. “Bran and Rickon? And their mother?”

The uncrowned King gave a laugh at that confiding:

“Robb had to keep her there under guard.” Jon continued chuckling. “After that shit she pulled with Tyrion Lannister he wasn’t about to have her with him causing trouble with his bannermen – and good for him.”

“Kidnapped him right?” Harry kicked back on his furs, running one hand down Ghost’s spine when the direwolf came over for a rub and cuddle before returning to his master’s side. “Kicked off this whole mess with the Lannisters and Starks and Tullys?”

“Hmm.” Jon nodded pillowing his head on his arms, the warmth of the fire working on his exhausted bones.

It would be another hard ride south after their day’s respite in the warmed halls of Winterfell.

And sleep was calling for them, Harry’s wards up and enough to warn them of danger without needed to keep a guard beyond Ghost’s excellent ears and nose.
“Should be interesting.” Harry commented as he closed his eyes and tugged his furs up over his shoulders. “Meeting the woman who started a war.”

“That’s one way to look at it.” Jon said drily, cracking an eye open to glare at the other man. “Now get some sleep if you want to meet her on the morrow.”

“Yes,” Harry said with mocking gravitas. “My King.”

“Asshole.”

“Twat.”

…

“Your Grace.”

With that singular phrase the captain of Winterfell’s guards stepped forward with a bow to Jon, opening the great door to the hall in a smooth motion perfected over years of practice. At once, Jon knew that in the North at least, his claim to the Throne was being held as legitimate. He’d expected – hoped – as much after being raised there, half-Stark, and having his Targaryen loyalists scattered around the kingdom but here, in Winterfell, where he’d always felt the lash and sting of Lady Catelyn’s disapproval, an attitude that had trickled down through all the layers of the castlefolk as such things do, being greeted as King wasn’t something he’d really counted on.

Though once he stepped into the great hall and noted a most notable absence, he started to get a clear view of just why the folk of Winterfell were being gracious over who they’d long thought was Ned’s bastard boy rising to the Iron Throne.

Lady Catelyn was nowhere to be found.

“Jon!” A pair of young voices called out, the older of the two following up with a sheepish: “Your Grace” after a cough from elderly Maester Luwin.

“Your Grace.” The Maester and Bran’s attendant Osha and the others gathered all murmured, dipping curtseys or making their bows.

“Thank you,” he said after a nudge to the ribs from Harry. He wasn’t used to the formalities yet, so sue him. He would grow accustomed…in time…or so his uncles Ned and Aemon had always sworn. “Please rise.”

“On behalf of your House and family.” Maester Luwin rose and began, Catelyn’s absence all the more obvious for his preparation.

Either she wasn’t willing to bow to the boy she’d spent all her life resenting and had secluded herself in her chambers or she was under house arrest on orders of Robb, the only person, other than Jon himself, capable of making such an order within the walls of Winterfell regarding its Lady and having them obeyed.

He supposed he would discover which it was in due time, gods knew Robb was furious over her running off and starting a war which cost his father his head.

Robb may be a Tully in looks but he was certainly a Stark by blood, and like the rest of them he could carry on in cold and righteous anger for years without giving way.

“We welcome Your Grace to Winterfell.”
Thank you for your gracious welcome, Maester Luwin.” Jon said with a genial nod, motioning for everyone to sit and return to the evening meal which their arrival had interrupted, quickly climbing to the two spots showing signs of being quickly made up for himself and Harry. When he reached Rickon he stopped and tousled his youngest cousin’s hair, giving him a clap on the shoulder before leaning down and doing the same to Bran. “Good to see you both well.” Jon said, truly happy to see Bran back up – if not hopping around due to his injury.

Motioning Harry forward he introduced him to them before they took their seats.

“Bran, Rickon, this is Lord Harry Potter-Black, last of the Peverells and a friend. Harry these are my younger cousins: Bran, presumptive heir to Riverrun and Winterfell and Rickon who is currently Robb’s secondary heir presumptive of Winterfell.”

“Pleased to meet you both.” Harry gave them a manly hand-clasp, much to the young Rickon’s delight, before taking his seat between Jon and the Maester on Jon’s right, the uncrowned-king’s cousins seated to his left as the table had shifted seats to make room for Jon at the head and center of the table.

“I apologize, Lord Potter-Black.” Maester Luwin said with a frown on his face as the two weary travelers dug into their meals with noble grace barely concealing their pleasure at a hot meal they’d not had to hunt, clean, skin, and cook. “But I do not recognize your family Names, nor have I ever heard of the Peverells.”

“Blast.” Jon cursed under his breath. “We’re going to have to do something about that Harry. As things stand you’re a Lord without lands or vassals or anything.”

“A worry for another day, Jon.” Harry waved him off before turning towards the Maester, well aware of all the ears who were listening closely. No doubt some if not most of them were in the pockets of another who would be most interested in the origins of King Jon, the first of his name’s Lordly friend who appeared out of thin air. “I would have been surprised if you had known my names, Maester.” Harry explained simply. “I’m afraid myself and my origins have been a closely-held secret of the Starks going back beyond the days of the Kings of Winter. I hail from the Far North and the Land of Perpetual Winter. And as the King has already said: I am the last of my kind, come to support Jon as he takes the Iron Throne of Westeros.”

“Speaking of which.” Jon turned towards Bran. “We will only be here this night, we must needs meet Robb and the Northern Army.”

“I wish you could stay.” Bran sighed, looking down at his useless legs. “But I understand.”

“Everyone goes away.” Rickon said with all the solemnity a young child was capable of. “But only Mama came back. And you. Now you’re leaving again.”

“But I,” Jon said with fanfare, delighting his youngest cousin. “Like your mother will come back. As will your brothers and sisters if I have anything to say about it. I promise, Rickon. I’ll send them back to you.”

“That’s okay then.” Rickon decided after a moment’s debate, making his audience chuckle.

Jon lowered his voice so that only Harry and Bran flanking him could hear.

“Where’s Lady Stark?”

Bran winced sucking in a breath and answered in a bare – and embarrassed – whisper.
“She tried to disobey Robb and run off to join the Army making its way to Riverrun, said she needed to support her father and brother. Robb about blew his top. He assigned his best men to her guard and secured her to her quarters.” Bran looked up and then away when he caught sight of his cousin’s shock. “She’s not allowed visitors except for me and Rickon and the Maester to go over accounts. Not even a Septon or Septa. Even the maids can’t enter. Just us and the guards.”

Jon blew out a low whistle. Robb was furious then. He never thought he’d see the day where Catelyn Tully’s pride-and-joy would buck her this way but then…that’s Robb. He tucks it all in and away but when that red-headed temper of his goes it goes. One of the only times he ever saw his Nuncle Ned truly wroth with his heir was when he lost his temper during a spar with Jon and broke his arm in his rage.

“I’ll go speak to her after the meal.” Jon decided. “Has she been allowed ravens at all?”

“No, your Grace.” Maester Luwin answered with a wince of his own. “Lady Stark is truly under house arrest until your Lord cousin sees fit to lift it, though she manages to stay informed nonetheless.”

“Very well.” Jon sighed. This visit was going to be nothing less than delightful. He caught sight of the merriment in Harry’s eyes, biting out a “Shut it you.” After listening to Jon talk about his wonderful relationship with his uncle’s wife, Harry would be entertained by him having to beard her like a lioness in her den.

The prat.

…

“So.”

The voice could have frozen the surface of the sun it was so glacial.

“You have returned – and a King now no less.” Catelyn Stark looked up from her embroidery, blue eyes like the first frost. “But I do not see a crown…your grace.”

“I have returned, milady.” Jon said calmly, with the flat Stark stoicism that he knew bothered her so. “And no, I am not yet crowned. I thought my cousin might like the honor.”

Catelyn scoffed.

Ignoring her – and knowing that nothing he could say would ever endear him to her, the Lady Catelyn hating him with a passion unchanging due to his Targaryen blood and the whispers his presence in his uncle’s house had caused – Jon carried on with the purpose behind his visit.

“I have news.” He said, giving her a simple report before going to join Harry in the baths. “Sansa remains a prisoner in King’s Landing. However, my sources have found that the Lannisters do not have Arya. Indeed, that they never had. She escaped with the help of her Braavosi dancing master who died to give her time to run. Last word was that she’d started making her way North, hidden within a caravan.”

Catelyn gasped as hope filled her anew, rising to her feet and her embroidery frame falling from limp fingers as she strode to stand before him, searching those violet eyes identical to his father that she hated so.

“You speak truly.” Her voice broke as she stared, searching for any sense of cruel entertainment at her raised spirits. For any sign that he planned to dash them back down. “Arya is safe?”
“Safe might be overreaching.” Jon observed drily. “Back she’s away from the Crownlands and – currently at least – free from the Lannisters. At this point…it really is the best we could have hoped for.”

“Yes.” Catelyn sucked in a breath stiffening her spine before striding back to her seat and picking up her sewing once more. “Yes, I suppose it is.”

“With your leave, milady.” Jon gave a perfunctory nod and spun for the solar door.

“Your Grace.” Catelyn called after him, causing him to pause at the door. “Thank you.”

A last nod was all the acknowledgement he gave her.

Fitting, as a nod at most was all the acknowledgement she ever gave him once she’d turned bitter against him by his third nameday.

…

While Jon was bearding a would-be lioness in her den, Harry was dealing with a female of another sort – more of a guard-dragoness than a lioness for his part – Osha, the wildling woman who looked after Bran and Rickon.

“I’m one of the free-folk, I am.” Osha declared proudly, arms folded across her ample chest as she studied the Lord before her with a gimlet eye. “From beyond the wall. And I ain’t never heard of no Lord Potter or Lord Black or Peverells from up there, have I? So’s I’m not about to be leavin’ you with one-a my charges, am I?” She snorted in derision and leaned back against the closed door leading to the little Bran’s room. “No matter what you or your King say.”

“You’re right.” Harry said with a quirk of his lips. “You’re from where I came from but you’ve never heard of me or mine. That’s with reason, Osha. And I understand that you don’t trust me: I wouldn’t trust me either under those conditions. But I do need to speak to the Stark boy and I can’t very well do it from out here now can I?”

Osha opened her mouth, likely to let loose another round of scathing denials, only to be stymied by a raised voice from inside the room she was guarding.

“It’s alright, Osha.” Bran called, having heard every word. The two of them hadn’t exactly been quiet. “Let him in. Hodor will stay with me.”

“Hodor.” The manservant repeated with his vacant smile from his pallet beside Bran’s bed. “Hodor.”

“As he says.” Osha stepped aside with a heavy scowl and sneering lips. “But I’ll wait right out here, I will.”

“As you will,” Harry gave a genial nod to the mother bear guarding her cubs. “Thank you, Osha.” He said pausing with one hand on the door latch. “For taking care of them with what has happened.”

Osha’s face softened into something not quite a smile.

“Saved me life, that boy did.” She brushed his kneeler’s thanks off with a jerk of her shoulder as she settled into the chair between two little lords’ rooms. “Just repayin’ a debt that’s owed is all.”

“Either way.” Harry smiled. “I’ll thank you just the same, as I know the other ‘kneelers’ never
“Do as ya will.” Was his answer. “Kneelers always do.”

Without another word exchanged between the two – a shame he was pressed for time, Harry found Osha quite entertaining and much like a metamorphmagus he once knew – Harry lifted the latch and entered young Bran’s room.

The signs were clear as his gaze swept over the room’s contents. This was the quarters of a once very active child who was now infirm. There were plans for a special saddle up on one wall that would allow for the boy to ride again. His bow was unstrung in one corner, the string and his quiver resting in a pile beside it along with his bracer. A boy’s treasure from his adventures were displayed on his dressing table: a shining stone, an iridescent raven’s feather, an old iron arrowhead. And of course: his direwolf Summer and personal manservant/aide Hodor who made up in brute strength what he lacked in intelligence.

“What did you need, Lord Harry?” Bran asked politely from his reclining position against the head of his bed.

His cousin had certainly returned with a strange companion this time from his travels, Bran couldn’t help but think.

“You fell, or so your cousin told me.” Harry cut to the chase. “And nearly died, surviving but then unable to walk again – is that correct?”

“Yes.” Bran bit out at the reminder of his accident – and the permanent scar it has left behind.

“I see.” Harry nodded once. Spinal damage most likely. Not much else could’ve caused that. In the lower vertebras as only his legs were effected. “Do you have any feeling or sensation at all?”

Bran was startled at this new question. Most, including his parents and the Maester, had only been concerned with whether he could move his legs. Not if he could still feel them at all.

“Some.” He answered honestly. “It comes and goes sometimes. I feel my hips and upper legs the most – my toes almost not at all.”

“Damaged then.” Harry murmured to himself. “Not severed completely.”

Harry paced over, crouching down to be on eye-level with the young boy. This was the heir of Winterfell or even Riverrun if anything happened to Jon’s eldest cousin or the lad’s grandfather and uncle. Having him so hindered by his fall wouldn’t do if there was even the smallest of measures Harry could enact to help him.

“What I’m about to do.” Harry spoke softly, too low for even the manservant to hear let alone the canny-eared Osha with her ears pressed against the wood of the door. “Must never be spoken of Bran: it never happened. Let them think you recovered slowly, gradually healing on your own. Do you think you can do that?”

“You can heal me?” Bran breathed, eyes wide as saucers. “Yes, anything, yes!”

“It might not be a complete cure.” Harry warned, removing the Elder Wand from his gauntlet. “All I might be able to do is restore some small sensation or the ability to curl your toes. There is no telling until I begin. But I need your word, Brandon Stark.” Harry’s voice and eyes pinned the young boy with his intensity. “Not. A. Word.”
“You have it.” Bran swore.

“On your life?”

“On my life.”

“On your family and blood?”

“Yes, yes!”

Harry nodded. “Very well then. Repeat after me: I Brandon Stark, second son of Eddard Stark and Catelyn Tully”

“I Brandon Stark, second son of Eddard Stark and Catelyn Tully.” Bran parroted obediently.

“Do swear on my blood and family and life.”

“Do swear on my blood and family and life.”

“To hold secret onto myself the healing done by Harry James, Lord Potter-Black, Last of the Peverell Line.”

“To hold secret onto myself the healing done by Harry James, Lord Potter-Black, Last of the Peverell Line.”

“Telling none, not even the gods of his work.”

“Telling none, not even the gods of his work.”

“From this day, until my last day.”

“From this day, until my last day.”

“In the name of the Stranger and the old gods, So Mote It Be.”

“In the name of the Stranger and the old gods, So Mote It Be.”

As the last word was spoken by the young boy, a flash lit between them, sealing Bran’s vow.

“What was that?” Bran twitched restlessly.

“That was the gods sealing your vow, Brandon Stark.” Harry’s mouth twitched with the need to smile at the child. “Let this be a lesson to you: sometimes your words have more power than you know – if they’re the right words.”

With no more ado, Harry flicked his wand, quickly casting a diagnostic and his intelligent eyes picking out the remaining damage that time and the Maester’s work hadn’t yet healed. And likely never would have.

“I was right.” Harry murmured to himself. “Nerve damage, some mishealed bone shards.” He grimaced thinking of the wounds he saw both during and after the Wizarding War. Unfortunately, the boy’s wounds weren’t nearly as serious as that caused by the Cruciatus or some of the other worst of the Dark curses. He’d seen all too much of curse damage. Harry couldn’t help but be glad that he was unlikely to run into much of it in his new reality.

Taking a deep breath, he set to work, first giving Bran a foul-tasting potion to numb him from the
waist down, allowing Harry to work unhindered by the boy flinching or moving involuntarily. With poorly set bone fragments all that there was to be done was rebreak the bone, splint it with his magic, and feed the child Skelegrow.

Merlin bless perseverance charms that are fueled by the land’s magic.

He didn’t even want to think about what he was going to do once his potion stores were exhausted. Guaranteed that ninety-nine percent of the ingredients he’d need to replenish them weren’t available in this new world.

On the bright side though…it was a rather massive stock Teddy and the goblins had laid in for him.

Bran moaned and bitched all the way through his beaker of Skelegrow, not that it mattered with Harry standing there tapping his foot and waiting for the boy to get on with it and “stop being such a ruddy baby, it’s only a potion for the Stranger’s sake!”

And with his spine numbed it wasn’t like Bran was dealing with the pins-and-needles-from-hell that came with having bones regrown or reset.

Harry wished Pomfrey had known how to do that. It would’ve made his frequent stays in the hospital wing a lot better.

He recast his diagnostic, checking for any additional damage from having the shards removed or rebroken and then the vertebras regrown. His Potter Luck must be holding out because there was only some small extra bruising from the first procedure. Nothing that would hinder his spells to heal the bruising and smooth the nerves, allowing them to reattach and realign.

It wouldn’t be an immediate fix, nor an easy one.

Bran would have to do a lot of work to regain his strength and reteach his brain and legs to work together. The boy would likely never be a master swordsman or a knight of the Kingsguard as Jon had told Harry was Bran’s one-time dream.

But he would walk.

And ride.

And most of all, fight.

That was good enough for Harry.

Rolling up his sleeves, the wizard cracked his neck and rolled his shoulders.

Now the difficult part was at hand.

…

It was an exhausted Harry that strode into the Lord’s bath in the depths of Winterfell, steam rising all around him as the baths, fed by the hot springs, were in full use, Jon having beaten him there by some time judging from his position seated half-submerged in the bubbling water, back to the bath wall and dark head resting back on a pillow with his eyes closed.

“You’re late.” Jon said as Harry began stripping off his armor and underclothes, gently setting his sword and sheathed wand near the edge of the bath across from his new King.

It was an odd sensation – having a King.
Yes, he was British in his old life and “God save the Queen” and all that. But the United Kingdoms of his old world – his former reality – was a constitutional monarchy, a far cry from the absolute monarchy practiced in Westeros.

Here a King had so much more power than any constitutional monarch could claim. A King was a warrior and general who took the field alongside his troops – if he were any kind of King at all – and a diplomat and a lawmaker and, and, and.

Jon had already proven to Harry – knowingly or not – just how different being a King in Westeros was than anything Harry had ever seen before.

Ravens upon ravens, sending out his Claim and his orders to various men and Lords who’d known of him in advance of the death of Robert Baratheon and Eddard Stark. Seeking information from the Targaryen loyalists hidden all over or even those who were sickened by Robert’s rule and the grasping of his Lannister good-family. Displaced men who’d been ignored or replaced in favor of the pride of the foolish Whoremonger King and his blonde-haired horde.

“I went to see Bran.” Harry admitted with a sigh as he sank into the heated water.

Now this was more like it. His experience of bathing so far in Westeros had left much to be desired. The hot springs of Winterfell were the first time in the last three to four weeks since his waking that he’d felt clean.

Another new experience for Harry – keeping time in a land that revolved around Summers that lasted ten years and Winters could last as long or longer.

A strange new world was Westeros.

And strangely enough, Harry was quickly finding he liked it.

He felt more…real. More alive, than he had since he was fighting against Tom.

Hermione, damn her, was right after all. Harry just didn’t do well without a battle to fight, in one way or another. He’d been trained all-too-well to be a warrior and mage and man of action. Maybe he did have a saving-people-thing.

But at least in his new life it would be something to admire rather than scorn.

Jon lifted his head up, facing his new friend, violet eyes wide with hope.

“And?” It was just shy of being a kingly demand, much to Harry’s visible amusement.

“It’ll take work.” Harry said then filled his King in on the amount of potions he had left with the wildling woman and Bran, as well as the spells he’d cast, ending with: “If he follows my instructions he’ll be able to walk, run, climb, even wield a sword or a bow. He won’t be a legendary warrior by any stretch, but with his brain and some work he’ll be a fine Lord of Riverrun.”

Jon quirked a brow, gaining him a scoffing laugh and a roll of Harry’s eyes.

“I wasn’t struck deaf or blind when we were visiting your ‘Uncle Maester’.” Harry drawled, scrubbing at his hair with some spicy-scented potion from his satchel, then dipping under the water to rinse and continued. “I saw and heard how things are. The Lord of Riverrun is dying and his Heir is the captive of Jaime Lannister.” He tsked. “Besides which from what I understand, the Tullys were the cause of much grief to your father, the actions of Catelyn and Lysa started a damn war, and Lady Catelyn has never been kind to you. Why would you reward such behavior by keeping Riverrun in
the direct line?” He snorted. “You’ll make Bran, who is the secondary Heir to Hoster Tully, Lord or I’ll eat my sword.”

Jon hummed under his breath, following Harry’s example and taking a handful of the offered bottle. It was a different one than Harry had used, smelled more like ice and winter and the sea than the spice and musk Harry preferred. The new King found himself liking it very much, especially how clean he felt afterwards, cleaner than even the nice ladies’ milled soap he’d grown up using as Ned’s nephew.

And much better than the simple tallow-and-lye concoction they used at the Wall – if any at all.

“I think Thanatos is safe enough.” He said, using the name Harry had given his sword when he’d learned of the tradition. Jon frowned. “I wish I knew what became of Ice. That bastard Joffery refused to return my Uncle’s bones or armor or the Stark Greatsword. Vile, grasping creature.”

“Ice?” Harry perked up, peering over at his companion. “Is it the only sword named that in these lands?”

“Oh course.” Jon shrugged. “No man would name his sword after another, especially after one of the ancestral swords of the great houses. Too afraid a Lord would be offended and might make them pay in blood. Several of the great Valyrian steel swords have been lost, like the Targaryen swords Blackfyre and Dark Sister or the Lannister sword Brightroar. But still, none would try and take the names for their own steel.”

“You don’t say.” Harry murmured to himself, an idea tickling at the back of his mind. “That’s… interesting.” Closing his eyes, he rested back against the wall, his ablutions complete but enjoying the heat of the water and the fragrant steam, not to mention Jon’s company, too much to move and dress.

Lifting his head with a sigh, knowing he would need a good night’s sleep if he was to be of any use on the start of the ride south in the morning, Harry opened his eyes only to let out a little gasp in surprise. Jon had moved silently through the bubbling water and steam and come to stand before him, hands on the bath ledge and arms bracketing Harry’s smaller, lithe figure with Jon’s broad swordsman’s frame and long arms. The new-King’s eyes, a normally lovely and startling combination of his father’s violet and his bearer’s light silvery-grey, looked more like a star-flecked sky the purple was so dark. His ebony hair spilled down his neck and onto his strong shoulders and well-muscled chest in damp waves, his ivory skin clear of stubble and beaded with the remains of water droplets and a sheen from Harry’s potions.

He was beautiful.

And if Harry’s eyes and senses hadn’t been dulled by years locked away and his overuse of magics to heal Bran…aroused.

Hands in Harry’s golden-cream darted up and pressed against pectorals flexing with the need to move, to get closer, leaving the wizard feeling as if he was trying to hold a dragon at bay with a feather.

Peering up through water-clumped lashes, emerald met starry-night in a dichotomous combination of playful and bashfulness.

Jon gave a growl at the look and leaned closer pressing himself firmly against hands that he would give anything to have move lower or even just twine around his neck, anything that was a sign that he hadn’t been misreading the occasional poorly-concealed looks from those jeweled eyes and the
heated blushes when caught.

“Did you…need something, your Grace?” Harry asked breathily, then cursed himself. That most definitely wasn’t what he’d meant to say.

“Tell me.” The demand was raspy with desire, as Jon leaned down and nipped lightly at the delicate curve of a golden-cream shoulder, Harry’s bracing hands no more a deterrent than a piece of gauze might be. “Tell me I haven’t been imagining it.” Jon pressed a heated kiss to Harry’s quivering jaw, as the wizard’s pearly teeth worried at one plump ruby lip. “Tell me it’s not just me that feels it.”

“It’s not just you.” Harry whispered, meeting Jon’s burning eyes once more as he lifted his hands and twined them gently in Jon’s ebony hair, running the silky-wet strands through his fingers. “But…you’re a king, or you will be. And I’m…”

“Whoever I say you are.” Jon interrupted, knowing this was coming back around to Harry being Lord-of-Nothing with his world dead and gone, despite his name and titles. “If I say you’re a Lord, you are.” Jon breathed as he moved forward that single step that had separated them, nestling himself between Harry’s sprawled legs, bringing his throbbing cock into the cradle of Harry’s silky legs. “If I say you’re a worthy match for any man – or gods forfend woman – you are.”

Harry swallowed harshly, biting his lip before speaking so softly Jon had to bend his head to hear his words.

“Even…a match for a King?”

Jon laughed, delighted at the return of the irrepressible spirit he’d come to adore about the smaller warrior.

“Especially for a King.” Jon gave a blinding smile at Harry’s transparent pleasure in his words.

Leaning down, Jon lifted one sword-callused hand and gently turned Harry’s face up to meet his, finally taking those ruby-tinged lips for his own. It was gentle – at first. Jon couldn’t believe how soft and pillowy Harry’d managed to keep his lips despite the burning wind and hard riding they’d done almost without pause for more than a moon’s turn. Soft, and gentle, nearly sweet between two strong and hot-blooded men.

Then it changed.

Harry gave a low growl, one that Jon could feel in his own chest as if the predatory sound had been his own. Hands that had been careful firmed in ebony hair, tugging his head and pressing them closer together, as if Harry wanted to climb inside his newfound lover. Harry could feel the rapid beating of Jon’s heart, Jon tasting the spiced apple custard and sweet mead Harry had had for afters while Jon declined in favor of a strong whiskey.

One of them gave a soft moan, or was it both, as Harry’s tongue did battle with Jon’s for dominance, Jon drawing Harry into his own mouth and then trapping his tongue gently with his teeth before freeing it and allowing the wizard to taste him. Jon’s hands were busy while Harry’s played with his hair, one skimming along the wizard’s firm jaw before caressing the length of an arm and tangling their fingers together in the end. The other found Harry’s knee beneath the bubbly surface of the water, lifting his leg to wrap around Jon’s lean hips, letting his arousal slot firmly against Harry’s own erect weapon. Harry’s lungs screamed for air, the wizard dragging his lips away from his lover’s with a gasp, throwing his head back in a moan as Jon immediately attacked his lithe neck with nips and suckling kisses destined to leave a mark, their hips rubbing and grinding against each other in a dance as old as time, racing to completion.
“Say it!” Jon demanded, biting roughly at the curve where neck met shoulder. “Say you’re mine! Vow it!”

Harry’s whine was nearly feral, the warrior-wizard almost insensate as he bucked his hips up, seeking more and harder and more, his words matching his desire-drenched thoughts.

“Say it!” This time the demand was punctuated by a rough pull of Harry’s long hair, Jon’s seeking mouth latching onto where a throbbing vein pressed against the tender underside of an aristocratic jaw.

“Yours!” Harry capitulated. “I vow I’m yours!”

“Mine.” Jon growled, finally pressing harder with his hips, trapping Harry’s cock against his own and wrapping one long-fingered hand around them both, jerking them quickly to a hot and furious climax as his mouth reconquered Harry’s own.

The two lovers gasped and growled their completion in near-unison, hot fluid spilling between them and being carried away by the waters of the hot springs as Jon collapsed against his lover’s smaller body, Harry holding him up more on instinct than actual thought.

“Mine.” Jon repeated in a rough whisper as he regained his senses, turning his head on Harry’s shoulder to look over at the emerald-eyed man.

“Yours,” Harry agreed with a roll of those jewel-toned eyes. “You possessive prat.”

“King.” Jon reminded him, with smug self-satisfaction ripe in his voice and an arched brow as he levered himself back onto his feet and out of the baths, lowering a hand to help lift Harry out to join him as they swiftly toweled off, Harry drying and tying back their hair with a few swishes of his wand.

“Yeah, King.” Harry said with a sigh, belting his sword back in place over clean underclothes and bundling his armor into his satchel. He wouldn’t need that until the morning and he wasn’t keen to put it on before then, cleaning and freshening charms or no. “How is this,” he waved a hand between them. “Going to work with that anyway? It’s not like you can marry me or anything.”

Not that Harry was even sure that was what he wanted from the violet-eyed King. Yes, he’d gotten to know Jon, and admired him for his honorable-but-pragmatic nature and desire to do what was best for his rightful kingdom. He knew, now, that Jon wanted to rule not out of some sense of entitlement but rather because he’d seen for himself how Westeros had fared under the joint rule of Baratheon and Lannister – and he wanted better for his people than the deprivations they’d been plagued with under the Stags and Lions.

But he wasn’t in love with the Stark-Targaryen Scion.

Not yet at least.

And he refused to marry for less than that.

For less than what his parents had had: a love to make even death itself take notice and halt.

A love that saved their only son.

And he knew Jon wanted the same.

Not a political marriage like that of his father and step-mother but a love-match like his father and
A love to defy lords and Kings to have and hold.

In that, at least, they were well-matched.

“Not true.” Jon said nonchalantly as he finished lacing his trousers. “We both know men are capable of bearing children – if they’re from families who have that trait. I’m a product of such a match after all. And if Targaryens are known for anything it’s marrying where and who we please – even if sometimes we choose less-than-wisely.”

Harry nodded knowingly, thinking of the “coin-flip” offspring Targaryen matches were known to produce.

You could get a Rhaegar or Aegon the Conqueror but you were just as likely to get a Mad King Aerys or a Maegor the Cruel.

“Lovers.” Harry said decisively, ignoring the half-wounded look Jon gave him at his pronouncement. “For now.” The wizard shook his head and leaned up on his toes giving him a swift kiss before the King could break into a very un-kingly pout. “I want to wed for love, as I know you do. Tell me true: do you love me already?”

“I think I loved you the moment you pinned me to the floor with those jewel eyes of yours.” Jon said head cocked to one side teasingly, a half-smile flirting with his lips.

“Be serious, Jon.” Harry chided with a sigh.

“I am serious.” Jon laughed. “Just ask my cousins, they always accuse me of being too dour, too much a Stark.”

“Jon.” Harry drawled, arching a brow as they entered Jon’s rooms in Winterfell.

They were lush for a member of the household that many had thought a bastard son. Nearly the equal of the Lord’s chambers, a sure sign of Eddard’s regard for his brother’s son. Ned wasn’t the kind of man to treat people based on what might be but what was and had been. And from what Jon had been told by his bearer, Ned had respected Rhaegar as a price and a warrior, if not been enraged by the actions of Rhaegar’s father Aerys and the deaths of Rickard and Brandon Stark.

Ned never knew if Jon would seek the Iron Throne or not…but he had certainly prepared for the eventuality that he had the right to do so as the true heir to the Throne.

Just as that good man had counseled patience, the sight of Robert stepping over the bodies of babes to mount that cursed chair never far from his mind when he saw his beloved nephew and feared for his death at Ned’s foster-brother’s hands.

“Not yet,” Jon admitted, running one hand down Harry’s hair. “But I could, easily.”

Harry flashed a bashfully-pleased smile at that. After all, Jon was one of the handsomest men he’d ever even, along with the most powerful. To have his high regard was no small matter. Moreover, it was something Harry had earned in his own right, not due to an empty defeat of a Dark Lord or expectations of what Harry might be able to accomplish.

Just him.

Just Harry.
“Lovers.” Harry repeated, crawling into the bedfurs beside his reclining king, placing Thanatos on the floor beside him, Jon echoing his movement with Longclaw.

“Lovers,” Jon agreed, then blew the candle out.

…

The next morning, after another round of frotting due to neither of them truly being ready for more, nor wanting to be sore on the ride despite their hot blood for each other, Harry and Jon broke their fast and were bidding Jon’s youngest two cousins goodbye in the courtyard when the gates of Winterfell opened, allowing a handful of mounted knights to come thundering into the yard.

What was more, one held a banner high: a sable field with a three-headed dragon in blood red.

Jon whooped in joy as the knights reined their horses and dismounted, Harry taking them in as Bran and Rickon burst into excited chatter.

“What cloaks!” Rickon’s eyes were wide with awe.

“The Kingsguard,” Bran breathed in bittersweet pleasure. Harry had been quite clear: Bran’s legs would heal, enough so he could fight and train with his men when he became a Lord. But being a member of his cousin’s Kingsguard was a dream now out-of-reach.

“You’ve made good time.” Jon called out as the four white-cloaked knights strode forward and took a knee before him, their companion wearing the sea-green and silver seahorse of House Velaryon of Driftmark doing the same just behind them. “Rise, loyal men of the Kingsguard, who have you brought with you, Arthur?”

Ser Arthur Dayne, Lord Commander of Jon’s Kingsguard and his father’s most loyal friend, rose to his feet and studied the lad-now-king grown that he’d trained and watched over ever since Eddard Stark invited him and his fellows to keep to their vows and protect his nephew. Arthur might not have agreed, save that Ned Stark had borne with him a missive from Rhaegar’s consort Benjen, asking him, pleading with them to let their names die to appease Robert’s bloodlust and in turn protect Jon. It was a hard thing that Benjen had asked of them, but they’d done it nonetheless.

If nothing else, it was easier by far to watch over and train and grow to love the boy with dark hair and Rhaegar’s eyes than to watch as that same boy’s grandfather was burned alive, along with scores of others.

A far kinder order than many the Kingsguard had obeyed under the Mad King.

The Old Bull had chosen to go into exile with Viserys and Daenerys, only to die of a fever in Braavos, leaving the ‘Beggar Prince’ and his sister without protection.

That was the one time Arthur and his friends and brothers-in-arms had felt true regret over their choice. But they couldn’t divide their force once more and send another to watch over the exiled Targaryens. No. It would’ve opened up too much speculation over what had truly happened at the Tower of Joy – and what other secrets Ned Stark might be hiding.

Better by far to stay dead and keep Rhaegar’s boy, the true king, safe.

Now they were proud to once more unearth their white cloaks and take up their duty in honesty and honor, guarding the first king in memory worthy of the office.

Were Arthur a less-contained man he might have shed a tear to see Jon so tall and strong, ready to
ride out at the head of an army and take back what was his all these long years.

“Your Grace.” Arthur smiled. “You know my brothers and the rest of your current Kingsguard: Prince Lewen Martell, Ser Oswell Whent, and your own appointment, Ser Mark Ryswell. We bring with us, Aurane Waters, eldest blood-son of House Velaryon, he has news from his father Lord Monford Velaryon, Admiral of the Targaryen Fleet.”

“Very well,” Jon nodded. “Rise, Aurane Waters.” Jon commanded taking in the silver hair and indigo eyes that marked him as being of Valyrian blood. His father claimed him or else he wouldn’t be there and wearing the Velaryon sigil but he hadn’t been legitimized, likely out of sheer bloody-mindedness on the part of late Robert Baratheon.

Robert had to watch himself with the Lords of the Crownlands such as Monford who was the Lord of the Driftmark. Squashing a weak rebellion such as that of “Balon’s Folly” was one thing, having strong supporters of the Targaryens pissed at you and on your doorstep was another thing entirely. But never had he done anything to benefit the Lords of the Crownlands either, a mistake that was now coming home to roost as they moved to support a Targaryen once more, as they always had in ages past.

The men of the Crownlands, save for those Robert had displaced or who had died out during his Rebellion, were to a man the blood of old Valyria, men and families who had followed the ancestors of Aegon the Conqueror in the days before the Doom. And they were loyal to the Targaryens in ways Robert and others like Tywin Lannister could never understand, neither being men who inspired that kind of feeling in their fellow man. Fear, disgust, yes. Both were good at those. But loyalty? Never.

Stannis Baratheon had respect, Renly Baratheon love or laughter for his seeming ‘good-nature’. Tywin fear, Balon hate, but the Targaryens instilled passionate loyalty while the Starks’ honor commanded it. Against the Scion of both those Great Houses, the would-be Usurpers had better hope an assassin gets lucky or an archer has a good day, otherwise there was little that could keep Jon from the Iron Throne.

“What news do you have for me from your father?” Jon asked as Harry came to stand at his side, Rickon ushered inside leaving only Bran and his retainers as well as the Maester and Captain of the Winterfell men-at-arms in the courtyard.

“My Kingsguard were accompanied by just over three thousand men-at-arms.” Jon looked at his young cousin with solemn eyes. “By your leave I will leave the majority of them – Targaryen supporters all – for the protection of my kin and of Winterfell.” He glanced between Bran and the Captain-at-Arms. “I know Robb took most of the men and banners south. With the Iron Islands so close, and Balon so unpredictable, I would feel better if you would allow this.”

“Of course, your Grace.” Bran said with a bow. “We are honored by your concern and welcome
your protection.”

Jon smiled, gesturing to one of the guards as Aurane ran to the gate and called for someone to advance.

Once the knight had ridden in and dismounted, Jon introduced him.

“This is Ser Crispan Celtigar, Heir of House Celtigar and one of Our most loyal men.” Jon gestured for Crispan to remove his helm. “Cris, this is Brandon Stark, my cousin and Heir of Riverrun, currently holding Winterfell for Lord Stark. These are Maester Luwin and the Winterfell Castellan and Master-at-Arms Ser Rodrick Cassell.”

After they had exchanged greetings, Crispan turned to Jon with a half-woebegone look on his handsome Valyrian features.

“I wish you’d let me ride with you, your Grace.” Crispan smiled, belying his grief. “It’s panning out to be one hells of a fight ahead.”

“You’ll get your turn for bloody glory, Cris.” Jon rolled his eyes. “Just take care of my cousins and good-aunt, will you? And try to keep the number of maids seduced to a reasonable number.” Jon japed as he swung onto his mount, bidding Bran and the others a parting nod and goodbye.

“Reasonable?!” Crispan called to his King’s back. “When it comes to maids to seduce there’s no such thing as a reasonable number!”

Jon laughed and shot a crude gesture over his shoulder as he and his lover and the Kingsguard clattered out of the yard, meeting up with the score of men that were to ride south with them to meet the rest of the Targaryen banners who had been commanded North under Tywin’s very nose, before joining with the Northern Army.

It was shaping up to be a good fight, indeed.
Act II - The Blood of the First Men

Chapter Summary

Uploaded edited chapter 12/19/16

Tomb of the First Men

Author’s Note: Lots of love for the last chapter, I love it! Remember this is the first time I’ve done a GoT/ASoIaF story so I’m in search of feedback over my portrayal of the characters both good and bad. I know I’m not going to make everyone happy with this, (as shown by the guest reviewer on FF.net who wished I would die) but I still love to hear from you guys.

This part of the story catches up with the other main players in the George R.R. worlds, as well as Harry being powerful-wizard-Harry. Rampant use of the Cloak of Invisibility, sneaky!Harry, and some dealing with grief and PTSD.

Also there is another easter-egg of dialogue from ASoIaF, kudos to the first who spots it.

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Act II – The Blood of the First Men

They made excellent time that first day, Harry finding himself waking up almost halfway to Cerwyn, the closest holding of the Northern Lords to Winterfell. For the sake of making that excellent time, they’d only set the most minimal of necessary encampment measures, Jon spurring them on once they’d met up with his Targaryen men who he wasn’t leaving at Winterfell. Mostly knights and men of the Crownlands where Targaryen loyalties have always been strongest with the glut of Valyrian blood running through those Lords and even the smallfolk.

But there were others as well, men who thanks to Ned’s surreptitious moves to have his nephew in as secure of a position as possible, had sworn themselves to Jon’s cause through Eddard’s maneuvering.

Jon’s uncle had long feared – and with good reason – that House Stark would be branded as traitors by Robert Baratheon and his Lannister good-family.

A fear that had indeed come true…if not for the reason Ned had prepared for.

Ned had assumed that eventually the smoke-screen of Jon being someone’s byblow or Benjen’s true-born son by some random man with the blood of Old Valyria would collapse, Robert discovering or simply assuming that Rhaegar was Jon’s true father.

Though most including Robert would’ve thought him the son of Lyanna Stark, not Benjen, as Ned’s brother had been at the Eyrie recovering from Jon’s birth many turns before while Lyanna kept Jon safe at the Tower of Joy. Jon’s birth hadn’t been easy, and Benjen was weak for over a year afterwards, being whisked away to the safety of the Eyrie by his uncle – though Jon Arryn had no idea as to the cause of Benjen’s malaise – while baby Jon was entrusted in secret to Lyanna by
Rhaegar, the Crown Prince playing a deadly game of misdirection to keep both his Consort and his son alive and well.

No one living save the remaining of the Targaryen Kingsguard knew of Lyanna agreeing to play a mummer’s tale to secure more freedoms for herself while protecting her favorite brother at the same time. Even Jon only had that information second-hand, the Lady herself dying of a too-convenient fever when Rhaegar had allowed a Maester to visit the Tower of Joy to ascertain her good health. Poison was the likely cause of her murder, the Lady being too robust and healthy for anything else to make sense.

That that Maester disappeared afterwards only compounded Ned and Benjen’s suspicions – and increasing their paranoia surrounding Jon’s safety.

Putting that from his mind – for the moment – Harry turned and spoke to Jon who was sipping at mead heated over the fire for breaking his fast along with oatcakes and dried apples, the same meal as the rest of the five hundred or so mounted knights sworn to House Targaryen that met Jon outside the gates of Winterfell were enjoying, having left only a handful of Sers and the bulk of the foot soldiers to guard his bearer’s House seat.

“How long will it take this force to rendezvous with the Northern Army and your Cousin?”

Jon studied his lover over the rim of his cup with steady violet eyes, an idea of what that question heralded turning in his mind.

“Between ten days and a fortnight, depending. What’s brewing in that tricky mind of your’s, Harry?”

The Kingsguard, Jon’s trainers and friends, all perked up from their positions surrounding the pair, providing a sense of privacy among the hundreds of camping men in their furs and crouched around fires in the Wolfswood. At least the trees – of which there seems no end to the mostly southron force – gave them cover from the worst of the snow and ice drifts and bitter northern wind.

Harry cocked his head – making him entirely too adorable for Jon’s peace of mind – a purely mischievous grin crossing his pretty face as his jeweled eyes lit with the glee of having devilment afoot.

“I’ve listened, and watched, and read over your shoulder.” Harry prompted the King. “You woke me for a purpose, Jon. Now let me set to it. There are a few things brewing that I might be able to help with, dangers that my very presence might be able to avert. At least let me try.”

Jon shifted uncomfortably at the reminder – however gentle – Harry put to him with his words. As much as Jon had grown to enjoy his company, and took pleasure in having him near, he had woken him for a purpose. And as much as the boy and man and King in him wanted to keep him near, out of enjoyment or desire or possessiveness…Jon wasn’t foolish or conceited enough to think that the sun and moon revolved around him.

Of course there were events taking place as they spoke, or that would or could take place, that Harry couldn’t effect from his side.

Oh, he was sure in his ability to lead an army and take his throne. He’d been raised for this very purpose after all. But he was as certain as Winter coming that it would be far less difficult if he would allow Harry to do…whatever it was Harry thought he could do.

Jon wasn’t sure of all the Warrior Who Waits was capable of…but he was damned excited to find
“Besides.” Harry’s grin was pure evil incarnate. “Imagine how badly Tywin and all the rest are going to be shitting themselves when they hear – or see – a ruddy dragon flying across the length and breadth of Westeros and the Narrow Sea.”

The King and his Kingsguard all whipped to face him so quickly one could almost hear them give themselves whiplash in unison.

Once he’d stopped coughing and choking on his spiced mead, Ser Arthur questioned him after seeing that his liege was simply sitting stone-faced save for his eyelids rapidly blinking in shock.

“I beg pardon, milord.” The Sword of Morning probed incredulously. “But did my ears hear you say something about a dragon in Westeros?!”

Harry gave them all a cat-who-caught-the-whole-flock-of-canaries smile and took a deep draught of his mead, putting aside the empty cup and rising to his feet, the others scrambling after him like goslings after a mother goose as he moved towards a wide empty clearing covered in snow.

…

1 day gone.

Harry winged over the countryside of Westeros, reveling in the sensation of true unfettered freedom for the first time since that damned prophecy was made that ended in his imprisonment. He let out a draconic hissing growl that passed for a laugh in his current form, scaring the shit – literally – out of a small murder of crows as he flew over them, the creatures cawing and winging away as quickly as they could glide. That was normal – and honestly the dragonfear that he inspired in his Animagus form Stormwing never got old.

Over the years since gaining his form he’d seen stern tough men and women who stood firm against all comers quail at the sight of him - even those who knew there was a wizard’s mind behind the jewel-green eyes, Harry like his godfather before him keeping his eye color as his distinguishing feature in his other body.

Though, he had to admit, watching the brave and courageous Knights of the Kingsguard shriek in fear like little children and stumble back away from his growing form had to top ninety-nine percent of the dragonfear impulses he’d seen. Not that he blamed them or thought less of them for it. No, on the contrary. He would have been shocked if they hadn’t reacted that way. They can’t help it, no one can.

Except, apparently, for those descended of the “Blood of the Dragon.”

If anyone in Jon’s host had even the slightest of questions about his parentage it evaporated with the sight of him standing firm and tall and stoic as a Celtic Spearridge that was approximately the size of a three-storied house with a wingspan to blot out the sun and spines along its back and cresting its head and tail up to four-feet-long. Harry’s maw could – and has on a dare before – swallow a cow whole, its bones no match for the crushing power of his jaw, one of the strongest of all dragons, nor the cutting edge of his teeth and fangs that would shame a fine sword. He was huge, and impressive, and so fierce that wise men and beasts did tremble in fear and terror. Those made of sterner stuff ran without messing themselves in the process.

But the Targaryen King stood there, eyed him up and down, and said:

“You’re scarier as a man, Harry. Your man’s form is small and lithe and deceptive, belying the
danger you’re capable of. There’s no surprise or shock from a dragon. All know on sight that you’re going to burn the local village to the ground.”

It was things like that – shocking, wonderful things – that made it so damn hard for Harry to keep one step back from him. He was teetering on the edge of tumbling arse over teakettle for the fucking King of Westeros for Death’s sake. Possibly one of the most foolish and idiotic acts he’s done in his life.

Harry could hear Professor Snape now in the back of his mind:

“Idiotic, arrogant dunderhead. Falling for a King! The utter cheek! A million points from Gryffindor!”

The sudden wave of nostalgia-tinged-grief shook him, making his dragon eyes burn from the salted water building behind them and the burning accompanying it low in his throat, threatening to choke him. Harry’s wings trembled as he fought to stay in his Animagus form.

Dragon’s weren’t built to experience grief, the strange commands coming from Harry’s human mind and soul confusing the draconic body, threatening to force a shift back in mid-air if he couldn’t shove his grief aside – lost, gone, dead, dead, DEAD. Everything, everyONE destroyed. Dead, dead, DEAD! Why did they leave me, everyone leaves me! – block it out, force it down, stiff-upper-lip-Harry. Ignoring the pain – as he’s done since long before he woke – won’t kill him…at the moment…but reveling in it certainly will if it returns him to his wizard form.

Gritting his teeth and clenching his jaw, treating his grief as any other form of pain he’d learned to ignore or endure in his life, Harry angled downward out of the cloudbank and for a nice, soft patch of grass or grain or something to cushion his fall if he can’t get a hold on himself.

Fortunately for Harry’s ability to distract himself (and the random farmer’s hay field that was looking quite choice for a crash-landing of Death-From-Above) a hue and cry from his left pulled his dragon’s attention away from his silly human feelings.

As a dragon he didn’t have the full color-spectrum, trading some color for the ability to telescope in on an area and read heat signatures. But he certainly did recognize a lion standard when he saw it, even if he couldn’t tell that the yellowish color was gold and the pinky one red.

Plus…

Colors aside, bows being raised and arrows shot off in a panic was really like waving a flag in front of a bull.

Honestly.

Idiots.

Unless those were Valyrian-steel tipped arrows shot from a trebuchet or scorpion bolts the size of a knight’s lance…what did they really think they were going to accomplish by shooting a volley at a fucking dragon?! This wasn’t the fucking Hobbit for Merlin’s sake!

Did they truly believe a simple arrow could take down a dragon?

Apparently Lannister gold could by sell-swords, obedience, and fear but it couldn’t buy two brain cells to rub together or the sense the gods gave literally any other creature.

Harry huffed out a draconic laugh before finding an excellent use for the burning sensation his
human desire to cry had created in his draconic form: creating a wall of dragonfire and burning that volley-of-stupidity to ashes.

Roaring out a trumpeting cry, birds and deer and creatures both great and small running far, far away from the apex predator of apex predators, Harry collapsed his wings to his sides like a skydiver seeking maximum velocity and shot towards the ground, laying down another line of fire towards the Lannister men and spooking the few horses that hadn’t already ran in fear.

Shrieking and crying in terror, the war-trained and war-blooded horses tossed their heads, snapping their tethers and galloping away in every direction, the Lannister men hot on their heels.

Sucking in another massive breath, lungs expanding like a massive bellows, he set about burning the camp to the ground, keeping the fire contained to the clearing before giving an all-to-human nod of satisfaction at the wanton destruction and with a few great beats of his wings climbing back into the air, just another bird as far as those on the ground were concerned he flew so high.

…

2 days gone.

Harry was still snickering later the next day when he landed in a clearing in the Kingswood. He’d stopped several miles previous to wrap himself in his father’s Cloak before shifting back into his Animagus form. It was just one of the abilities of the Hallows that he didn’t discover until he… well…died. And then didn’t manage to stay that way.

Damn Dumbledore, the twinkly-eyed bastard making him think he had sooo much worth living for.

The manipulative-even-from-beyond-the-grave fuckheaded twat that he was.

It was only by sheer force of will that Harry’d resisted trying the Stone after waking in Westeros.

Mainly because he wasn’t sure which outcome would be worse:

One, it doesn’t work and he’s really, truly alone and cut off from everything and everyone he used to know.

Or, alternatively and possibly worse if he wanted to have anything close to a productive if not happy life:

It does work. And he wastes away into nothing because he spends all his time, to paraphrase the goat-loving-clotpole himself: dwelling on dreams and forgetting to live.

The wizard wasn’t sure what was going on with his magic.

He’d always been powerful, more so once he wasn’t devoting over half his reserves to powering the blood wards at the Dursleys and forcing back Tom’s shitty soul leech.

Case-in-point: Dragon Animagus.

Defeating-Voldemort, corporeal Patronus at thirteen, dueling Lucius Malfoy and surviving (which was almost as big a deal in Harry’s opinion as the Dark Lord murder), yeah, he’d done a lot of things that required an excess of power but not necessarily much in the way of brain power.

Waking up in Westeros had taken it to a whole ‘nother level.

He shouldn’t be as powerful as he was after waking.
Technically, he should’ve been barely able to stumble into a bed, fall into a coma, and lay there until his core recharged after spending over eight thousand years in the evil lovechild of a daydream and the Living Death.

Not Superman press his way out of a seriously heavy coffin, jump to his feet, and start healing everyone right-left-and-center.

And the delicate work he did on Bran just weeks later was even stranger, though in that case it wasn’t that he did something he wasn’t capable of but that he was able to walk, flirt, talk, and get off less than an hour after setting down his healing spells on the boy.

Magic was acting in ways that it simply…shouldn’t.

Not by any theory or law or just plain experience Harry had ever had or been taught.

It was almost as if…

But no.

It couldn’t be.

There were magical people and beings in Westeros.

Harry had seen them, met them, healed some of them for Merlin’s sake!

And yet the land was acting as if Harry was one of, if not the only, outlet it had to release its magic back into the world.

As if he was the only tree in the middle of a vast plain during a lightning storm, the natural magic of the land was using him as a conduit to decompress and balance itself.

It was strange, and odd, and so very, very wrong.

Shaking his head, Harry brought his mind back to the task at hand: using some of that excess power to Apparate blind. From where he crouched invisible in the open field leading to King’s Landing, Harry waited patiently for an opening to appear on the wall – and prayed that where he landed was part of the walk and not an open area or else it would be a very quick, very deadly fall. Taking a deep breath, he was his chance and with a spin and a nearly silent ‘pop’, he was gone.

…

Creeping through the halls of Maegor’s Holdfast in search of Sansa Stark – as well as seeking confirmation of certain information or spying out (one could call it stealing but…) evidence to support a cause he knew Jon had in the works – Harry felt as if he was swimming through treacle.

His head felt thick and muzzy, his breaths were shallow and jagged, his steps occasionally scuffling or staggering forcing him to use silencing and extra disillusion and notice-me-not charms in addition to his Cloak.

At his wits end, Harry reached into the enchanted bag that was ever attached to his hip and summoned an amulet from the vault once more hidden beneath the ice and snow and rock of the Fist of the First Men. Settling it about his neck with hands trembling from the effort, he pressed it roughly to his skin unfeeling of the sharp edges of the old gold pressing against bone and nicking him, drawing blood and activating the enchantment on the “special” piece of Snape’s collection he’d found in the Headmaster’s office after the Battle of Hogwarts.
In his old life, he’d wondered how Severus Snape had managed to stand being a spy and Death Eater while constantly coming into contact with the oppressive magic that surrounded Tom Riddle and saturated any place where the Dark Lord stayed stationary for too long a time. Other, less magically sensitive wizards or witches would have had much less of an issue. But no man or woman could become as renowned a Potions Master as Severus Snape without the ability to sense – at least in part – the magic given off by beings, people, and things of magical origins.

Dumbledore was perhaps the most famous for his magical air, most everyone who ever met him or came into contact with him felt it at some point. But that was an intentional projection of his magic used to put people at ease. To make them trust him.

Tom didn’t bother with that bullshit.

He was what he was: an insanely powerful Dark Lord, emphasis on the insane, and was highly entertained when others showed their discomfort of his Dark, cruel aura.

But it was impossible for an effective spy – and Snape was certainly that – to do his damn job if he was too busy being beaten down by the magical presence of the person he was supposed to be spying on. Snape was highly skilled and intelligent, realizing the difficulty he turned a token he was known to keep on him at all times, a silly bit of enchanted gold from his childhood, into a nullification ward for magical senses.

Harry hated the fucking thing.

It made him feel deaf, dumb, and blind the last time he’d used it before being frozen in time.

But needs must, and better to be operating on half his abilities than to be constantly suffering from his senses being magically overloaded.

Harry grimaced as the magic around him dampened down to nearly non-existent, straightening from his place propped against the wall in one of the many hidden alcoves riddling the fortress-within-a-fortress.

If nothing else was taken from this little solo jaunt of his, Harry had learned that there was something deeply wrong about King’s Landing – and it went back further than this little attempt at throne-grabbing by the Lannisters.

It was there in the very stones and mortar of the city – dark blood magics and layers and layers of spells that he hadn’t seen the like of before.

The only thing he could compare it too in his experience was that King’s Landing was like Hogwarts’ evil twin, the layering of enchantments was similar in a way, both being buildings built to a certain purpose and powered for it…but what the cloying, decaying, diseased magics layered into King’s Landing were intended to do Harry had no idea, having no point-of-reference for what it was his magic was trying to tell him about this place.

At this point all he could do was carry on and finish the task that had brought him to this gods-forsaken place as quickly as magically possible.

Before the scent/taste/feel of the disgusting magic seeped so deeply into his skin that a thousand dips in the Winterfell hot springs wouldn’t suffice to make him clean again.

Harry huffed out a breath and knocked his head back against the stone wall then propelling himself forward determined to be done with King’s Landing.
Maybe if he was lucky one of the armies running around Westeros would burn the fucking place to the ground. Abrasive magical residue aside…Harry was pretty sure that was the only cure of the pure stench of the place. Seriously. The things Harry would have done to have indoor plumbing already invented.

But noo….

Westeros hasn’t undergone an industrial revolution or renaissance yet, much to his dismay.

It was like being chucked head-long into the wizarding world…only it was a wizarding world without any of the creature comforts he’d grown up with and none of the same that magic could provide.

But before he could find an auburn haired young lady among the rest of the silk-wearing flutterers of the Red Keep, he did come across a meeting that he found quite interesting indeed:

“Dragons?” A thin, weaselly-looking man with dark hair demanded of his companion, a bald man wearing more silk than Harry found advisable for well, anyone. “I thought you said the girl was still in Essos?”

“Yes, that is true.” The bald man said in a nearly feminine sighing whisper. “Daenerys is most bereaved at the loss of her Horse Lord and their son but his buoyed by her dragon-children. But the Dragonstone Princess is not who my little birds have whispered about in my ears.”

“Who then?”

“Jon I Targaryen,” the man who must be none but the Spider Varys fanned himself languidly. “Who has been the subject of rumors and whispers for years. He sends out his ravens that has the young Lion roaring for blood and his grandfather rushing to give it to him and then lo! Not weeks later a dragon is spotted in the skies over Westeros.”

The weaselly man’s swarthy complexion paled dramatically as his companion continued to sashay through the stone walls of the Keep as if nothing was at all wrong.

“How…” the dark-haired man swallowed, eyed wide. “How large of a dragon have your little birds told you of? The Princess’s you told Joffery and Cersei were the size of cats, hardly something to worry over at the moment.”

Varys chuckled.

“No cat, that is for certain: but a dragon grown the size of which hasn’t been seen in Westeros since the time of Maegor the Cruel’s Balerion the Black Dread. Beautiful,” Varys could appreciate beauty in all forms no matter how deadly. “With wings and scales in greys and whites and blues, making it nearly blend with the clouded and stormy skies further north. But deadly. It supposedly destroyed a dozen men and burned an entire Lannister patrol’s camp to the ground. Even worse…” Varys trailed off with a sigh.

“Worse?”

“Why, yes,” Varys gave a serene smile. “Strangely: it had no rider upon its back, my dear Master of Coin.”

Ahh, Harry thought, once the two had parted and he returned to searching for Sansa. That must have been Petyr Baelish, the architect of Eddard Stark’s imprisonment and subsequent execution. Interesting…that the Master of Whispers and Master of Coin would discuss such things…away from
the others of the Small Council.

Perhaps there were other things the two discussed without an audience of Lannisters as well.

But that would be a matter for Jon’s eyes and ears in the Keep to discover, Harry had to focus now as he was coming up to the rooms where his point-me spell was saying Sansa was. He hoped she was alone; his luck today wasn’t even worth speaking of. It would suck to have to stand against the wall as a group of ladies did needlepoint or something, not able to leave until he finally caught her without company.

Ducking through a partially open door, ignoring the guard that stood outside it, Harry let out a soundless breath at the sight of the pretty auburn-haired maid who was standing by the expensive glass window, staring out – wistfully if Harry was any judge of female melancholy – towards the North.

Before he could make a sound or otherwise reveal his presence, the Lady Sansa Stark narrowed her Tully blue eyes and whirled in a tempest of silken-gauze skirts searching the corners of the room with her piercing gaze.

_Huh._ Harry thought to himself, in genuine surprise. _Not a delicate southron flower after all._

There was a strength in Sansa Stark that he’d not expected from Jon’s memories of her as a girl, before he went North and she South, and of a maid enchanted with a pretty golden-haired princeling blinded by infatuation to the evil that lurked beneath the façade. Not one of the Starks had been pleased by the match between Joffery and Sansa – save her mother and the girl herself. Perhaps Harry’s own plans regarding her will have to change, as she herself must have in order to survive the Red Keep, but it would all depend on the girl.

Stepping up to her side he whispered:

“Close the door Lady Sansa, I bring news of the North.”

Blue eyes stared right at where the person speaking must have been, all her instincts screaming at her that she wasn’t alone, no matter how foolish it was to believe another was present when her eyes were telling her otherwise.

But if there was one lesson the court and Red Keep had taught Sansa, it was that one’s eyes often lied or simply failed to perceive the truth of things.

Had she trusted her instincts a year ago, she might not be in this situation now, a captive and hostage against the behavior of her older brother and cousin, and constantly in danger from Joffery and Cersei’s mercurial moods besides.

At the very least, had she trusted herself and stood beside her sister...Lady might be alive instead of dead along the Kingsroad...much like Arya herself might very well be.

After several long moments of Sansa debating with herself she gave a bare nod, then turned and sent the guard away in search of her handmaidens under the pretense of desiring a bath. Closing and barring the door, Sansa whirled around once more just in time to see a black-haired man with pretty looks to shame the Knight of Flowers or Renly Baratheon seem to part the very air and appear from under a cloak made of some strange shimmering fabric.

“You could sense me.” Harry said cocking his head to one side, studying her from head to toe in an assessing manner. “Couldn’t you, Lady Sansa? Despite what your eyes and ears told you, you knew I was there before I spoke.”
"I could." Sansa said before adding after studying the quality of his dress with an appraising glance: "my lord."

Harry waved that off, telling her at once to call him Harry.

"The blood of the First Men." He said as if to himself, a humming sound in his tone. "It runs richly through you Starks it seems. At first I thought it might just be Jon with his Valyrian blood but no: Mormont was the same – but weaker, while yourself and your brother Bran are nearly as in tune with the magics of this world as your royal cousin. An intriguing puzzle for when I have time to contemplate it. Now," his voice and eyes sharpened on Sansa’s face, watching him with an air of befuddlement as he temporarily lost himself in the conundrum that was magic in Westeros. His ability to focus was one of the skills that seemed to have grown some rust from his imprisonment. "You have three choices Lady Sansa."

"Choices?" Sansa echoed, never had a man of any kind given Sansa or any lady she knew of a choice not in anything. Even Cersei Lannister and her own mother Catelyn, both the strongest women she knew, weren’t given such things as choices. Jewels, silks, expensive wines and other gifts for going along with decisions made by others with ladylike grace, yes. A cuff for misbehaving or backtalking, yes. An actual choice, no.

"Choices." Harry confirmed with a nearly regal tilt of his ebony head. "I can take you from here, Lady Sansa if that is what you wish." He promised, sympathy in his emerald eyes. It wasn’t an easy thing he was about to put to her by any means. "We can be gone from here in a moment if that is your choice. I can even promise you that you will be safe in Winterfell before the sun sets, safe in the bosom of your lady mother and supping with your younger brothers – if that is your choice."

"Safe with mother and the boys." A tear of joy glinted in her eye as her longing briefly overrode her hard-won good sense. "How?" She demanded with the next breath. "Travel to Winterfell takes weeks, a moon-turn or more depending on the road or path you take. And the River Lands are under siege. It’s impossible that any man could have me there by sun set."

"Ah." Harry held up a hand still holding his Cloak, his voice playful. "But I am not any man." He teased and tested her. "But a wizard the likes of which does not exist any longer in Westeros. I could have you in Winterfell or Castle Black or even so far as the Fist of the First Men. All it takes is a few words and some power and there you will be."

"Yes, yes!" Sansa cried out, the lone tear finally falling freely down her smooth creamy cheek. "Then send me home good Ser, Harry, away from this awful, evil place."

"Are you certain?" Harry arched a brow, continuing to test what Sansa Stark was made of. "You haven’t even heard the other choices yet."

She sucked in a breath, beating her hope and rising joy back. Straightening her spine and shoulders, Sansa nodded, fully aware that he wasn’t likely to do anything let alone something so miraculous as send her home without her hearing him in full. "Very well, Ser. Harry. What are the other options?"

"First." Harry held up a gloved finger. "I could send you home, to the safety of your family. Second, which you’ve already discarded from what I can make of your words, I can leave you here and interfere no further."

Sansa nodded, waving him on. She had the sense there was something more he wanted to say. Another possibility, one he clearly wanted her to choose if she’d learned anything of men this last year.
“And last.” Harry grimaced. He really didn’t want to do this. Jon was going to be furious and his cousin Robb likely enraged. But he believed she could handle it. More, he believed she would excel at it. And something in him truly wanted to give her that opportunity. To be more than a nobleman’s property for once in her young life. “You can stay, and watch, and listen. And pass along every word out of that cunt Joffery’s mouth and every plan Cersei whispers in your ear thinking you beaten down and broken. Trapped and powerless, like a cat toying with a cornered mouse.”

A grin kicked up the side of his mouth as a fire lit in those blue eyes, making them burn in a way he once saw Ron’s eyes burn just before a difficult chess match he was determined to win.

Oh yes.

Sansa was a Stark indeed.

“A chance.” Harry’s voice was hypnotic in its cadence and with the picture he painted with his words for his red-haired audience of one. “To show these silly, stupid lions what happens when they play with a direwolf, thinking it alone and friendless. But…”

“When the wind howls and the snows are deep.” Sansa whispered the proverb that might as well be the words of House Stark. “The lone wolf dies and the pack survives.”

“Yes.” Harry nodded. “Your pack isn’t dead and gone but riled and baying for blood. Lannister blood. And with them comes the half-wolf and half-dragon that is going to serve it up by the gallon if Jon has his way.”

Sansa girded herself, determination glinting in her Tully eyes as she nodded firmly.

“I shall do as you ask, my Lord.” She said formally, hands folded serenely before her. “But, I do fear myself in danger. Joffery has been enraged ever since news of Jon’s claim reached the Keep. He even…” She blushed mortified over what she was about to reveal to a stranger despite the pin on his armor – the direwolf and dragon of her cousin Jon’s personal sigil. Any man can claim to be of the North or a Targaryen spy. But only someone who knew Jon would dare use his personal sigil. “Stripped me.” The words were a broken whisper with the shame of it. Though there was something to be said for how Lord Tyrion tore into the blond monster. “In the middle of court for all to see.”

Harry growled at that. It would be so easy to slip in and cut the fucker’s throat. But no. His magic and instincts screamed against the possibility. Joffery was a malignant little twat but he was predictable and to a point controllable. Better to deal with him than enrage the lions further or risk weakening them for Renly Baratheon and his Tyrell supporters.

The Lannisters were challenge enough for two armies at the moment, he wasn’t going to risk upsetting the status quo…too much at least.

“I cannot promise that you’ll be safe from such attacks if you stay.” He warned her, wanting to make an informed decision. “But I can protect you from physical harm – and give you a means of escape.”

Reaching into his bag in an echo of his earlier action, he searched this time for a different necklace, this one suited to the strong woman before him that reminded him very much of a young Lily Evans from all the stories he was ever told of her, both in looks save for the eyes and the steel spine Sansa was rapidly developing.
Summoning the bauble he was thinking of, he lifted it from the bag and laid it gently on the table near the window, Sansa following him and commenting as he lifted his wand to enchant the piece:

“It’s lovely, Ser.” Sansa said of the pair of enamel stargazer lilies on the bed of pearls and silver.

“It was my mother’s.” Harry told her absently as he set the enchantments into the metal. Silver was good, excellent in fact for this sort of work. It was known for protective properties, allowing for less forcing of the piece to take the spells without too much fiddling about. “My grandfather commissioned it on her day of birth and then presented it to her on her sixteenth nameday.” Satisfied that the enchantments and the portkey spell had taken hold nearly fifteen minutes later, he lifted it from the wooden surface and prompted the girl to lift her hair so he could fasten it and seal it to her.

Stepping back, he studied the effect as she turned and glanced at her reflection in the polished metal mirror.

“Truly Ser.” Sansa said lifting one hand. “This is too much.”

“No.” Harry shook his head, banishing the memories of pictures showing Lily looking just as young and fresh and lovely wearing that same expression of bashful pleasure when her father fastened that same jewel around her neck. “No, it’s just enough. Pretty things like my mother’s necklace are meant to be worn by those who would appreciate them, not mold away in a bag or a drawer or even a vault. You do more to improve that bauble than it does for you, and I’ve known my share of pretty girls and beautiful women. Besides which: it’s functional.”

“I don’t take your meaning, Ser.”

Harry tapped one finger against the silver, banishing it from sight.

“I’ve enchanted it to protect you from all physical harm while showing a mummery to those who look for the evidence an attack would leave. If Joffery strikes you, your body will react as normal – but without pain or mark. They will see blood or bruises or what have you.” Soft emerald eyes met thankful blue. “But it will do no real damage. Likewise, no other will ever see it or know it’s there. And none but myself will ever be able to remove it from around your neck – not even you.”

Another pretty tear spilled down her strawberry-and-cream cheek, Sansa too overwrought at his foresight and care to speak.

Sensing others moving towards the room, Harry twirled his Cloak about his shoulders, holding out a book he’d removed at the same time as the necklace towards her.

“The book is concealed as well.” He hurried through the words in a hushed whisper as Sansa moved to unbar the door without prompting. “Write in it and others will see pretty poetry while your true words will show up on the twin in my possession. I will be able to write back. One last thing, Lady Sansa.”

“Yes?” Sansa turned her head a fraction, resting with one hand on the now-lowered bar.

“I promised you an escape.” He nodded towards the necklace before finishing wrapping himself with the Cloak. “The necklace is also a tool as well as a shield: it will take you away from here if your position becomes too untenable. Simply hold it in your hand and speak the words: There’s no place like home. Do you think you’ll remember them?”

Sansa turned the strange words around in her mind. They were High or perhaps Old Valyrian in nature. Dutifully she repeated them, hands well away from the necklace, then nodded. Strange words, but memorable ones, that was for certain.
“I will, Ser.”

Harry smiled, though invisible to his audience and said: “Good. Farewell until we meet again, Lady Sansa.” Slipping from the room as she opened the door to await her handmaidens with her bath.

“Farewell, Lord Harry.” She whispered, words following him down the hall before being lost in the noise of her maids clambering up the stairs with buckets of hot and cold water, as requested, the guard dogging their steps.

…

Without the oppressive decayed magic pressing down on Harry, he was free to wander around the Keep, indulging in his not-so-secret vice of snooping.

It was a vice and habit and personality trait all rolled into one, and the reason he’d gotten into so much trouble – and then back out of it – in his old world. And being in a place that had no magical protections to keep him from the more…interesting…areas, it was a vice that was paying dividends in spades. He didn’t know if some of the denizens of the Keep had gotten lazy or complacent with Robert Baratheon, Jon Arryn, and Ned Stark all in the grave, but he couldn’t believe some of what he found.

Some was just interesting.

Other things ended up copied or out-and-out stolen.

Really, was Maester Pycelle an idiot?

The man kept a record – hidden of course – of all correspondence that came through the official ravens, a ridiculous practice…but one that explained how he’d managed to successfully break his vows for decades without censure by either Robert or Aerys.

Still…in the current climate it wasn’t worth the risk.

Varys and Petyr Baelish were still roaming the damn place and Tywin Lannister was utterly ruthless, whether he was in place to capitalize on one’s secrets or not, and that was before one considered that Tyrion Lannister, freshly delivered the week before by a sell-sword named Bronn, was nearly on par with Varys himself when it came to knowing things he oughtn’t.

Maybe it was the wine that swam through the Keep that made normally cautious men dumb as a sack of hammers. Ned Stark had certainly taken one-too-many risks upon entering the palace. They all thought they were invulnerable…until they weren’t and ended up a head shorter or poisoned by their wives or their wives’ lovers.

Regardless, Harry was glad to be quit of the place, all but ripping the amulet suppressing his senses – and his power – from his neck and breathing in great gulps of air once he was free of the walls and stench of King’s Landing. Stuffing the amulet back away in his pack with agitated hands as his magic bombarded him with a deluge of information he’d been blind to with the suppressor on, he cast a cleansing charm over himself, feeling inextricably filthy from his hours inside the Keep.

Moving towards a flat plain, he secured his Cloak around himself once more, and shifted into his dragon, shaking himself from snout to tail like a dog shaking off water, and took to the air with a mighty thrust of his wings.

He had two more stops to make before he could return to his King’s side, and little enough time to make them.
Jon would reach the Northern troops within a week, eight or nine days at most.

They were making good time but it was costing Harry time he could use to more thoroughly investigate matters in the Capitol, and from what he’d seen in the Grand Maester’s rooms, the Citadel as well.

But.

Needs must.

And Jon needed him – and his power – more than Harry needed to get to the bottom of the possible conspiracy he thought he’d uncovered.

Mind turned firmly away from matters that he couldn’t do anything about for now, Harry turned East.

Jon had left Harry’s mission south mostly up to his own judgement, trusting that the wizard would know better than Jon what he could and couldn’t affect, which situations he could help with or resolve altogether and which he wasn’t to interfere with lest he anger the gods. Harry liked living, now that he was actually living again, thank you. He had no desire to piss off beings capable of wiping him out just when he was starting to have fun in this new world.

He just had to trust his magic.

It had never failed him yet.

Death willing, it never would.

…

The flight to Dragonstone wasn’t long, the ancient fortress sitting at the mouth of Blackwater Bay, but due to Harry’s cat-like curiosity and snooping, by the time he came into sight of the volcanic island much of the citadel was asleep.

Hovering lightly over one of the dragon-shaped towers, Harry shifted back into his human form and dropped the last few feet to the stone walkway.

Closing his eyes as he crouched under his Cloak, he took in a deep breath tasting the magic of the ancient fortress and original Seat of the Targaryen Dynasty. Unconsciously he began to smile, feeling welcomed by this place in a way he hadn’t felt since he reached the Wall. The magic was different here, less repressed and restrained, as if whatever had caused the sickness that pervaded Westeros hadn’t yet sunk its claws into the castle built into the face of a living volcano, the Dragonmont.

Energy trickled into him, the ancient magic of the fortress restoring reserves steadily drained from the long flight enhanced by magic first to King’s Landing and then to Dragonstone, washing away the sensation of being tainted that had remained even after flying through a burst of his own dragonfire high above the clouds upon leaving the Red Keep and its decay.

The hot springs and godswood of Winterfell had impacted him as well, bolstering him after his long waking sleep and the many weeks it took him and Jon to reach the northern capitol after waking, but it was a mere Pepper-Up to Dragonstone’s Elixir of Life, and tainted in part by the magic oppression throughout the Seven Kingdoms.

Feeling the ancient power of Dragonstone, Harry reiterated to himself an earlier thought: something
was *rotten* in the land of Westeros.

Knowing that sneaking around the castle in the dead of night wasn’t a *great* idea with nobles and men-at-arms and smallfolk sleeping here and there and everywhere, Harry set off to find the godsdwod.

He would pass the night under the protective branches of the weirwood trees and do Jon’s bidding while fresh in the morning.

Harry had had enough of intrigues and politics for one day, his next bout of them would keep.

Decided, Harry cast a point-me spell for the godsdwod and mounted his Firebolt, retrieved from his expanded pack rather than his vault, and kicked off.

He wished, feeling wistful for a moment at the sensation of the sleek broom handle and the wind in his hair, that his flight southron could have been done on Siri’s gift rather than with his own two wings. It wasn’t logistically sound, of course. A flying dragon in the skies was one thing, and near impossible to take down. A man on a broom was something else entirely.

Besides, he rather doubted his arse could take *that* kind of punishment…and flying as Stormwing was faster anyway, especially when he lightened himself and boosted his speed with his magic.

Sleep. He decided steering himself down towards the white-barked weirwoods with a nod when he found himself making BDSM jokes with himself as his only audience. He definitely needed sleep.

Now that he thought about it…

Food and an actual bathroom would probably be good ideas too…Harry having treated being in Westeros much like he would’ve going to the distant past in his former world. There was no way he could introduce anyone to the technology in his wizarding tent without worrying about the repercussions it could have on the natural development the people of his new reality were capable of. They had already done things no one had managed in his old world – Dragonstone was proof of that. He didn’t want to cripple their potential…and dear Merlin Hermione’s lectures on time-travel ethics and standards had really sunk in after their adventure during Third Year.

Thanking the gods for wizarding tents, muggle-repelling wards, and disillusionment charms, he had a temporary camp to set up, all the while having flashbacks to Hogwarts, his dead friends (while they still remained his friends), and the Seventh-Year-That-Wasn’t.

…

*Harry dreamed.*

*A three-eyed-crow watching him, cawing in anger and fear.*

“*Wyrd!*” It cawed. “*The wyrd has gone! Blind! Blind!*”

The crow cawed once more before taking wing, a storm of feathers tipped in blood raining down on Stormwing’s spear-tipped head.

*Harry lifted a claw and flexed, staring down in shock as it shifted to a furred paw.*

*Drawing in a deep breath through his now-canine nose, he reared back in disgust as the copper-and-rot scent of old blood assailed him, the misty scene around him melting, replaced with a strange hall.*
Banners draped the grey stone, showing the Tully fish Jon had told him of and another he didn’t recognize of two blue towers, united by a bridge, on a silver-grey field.

The banners were splashed and edged in blood, pools of the same staining the stone and wooden trestles and benches.

Standing in the center of the empty hall, the scene of a massacre if his nose was true in this dreamscape, were a trio of ghostly figures: a direwolf, darker than Ghost but lighter than Harry’s pure-black dream-form, a pregnant woman draped in finery with bloody stab wounds marring her belly and grief straining her beautiful Valyrian features. The last made him gasp: a man with features he recognized from meeting Sansa and Bran, ghostly blue eyes burning, with a crown upon his curls and a headsman’s smile gaping across his neck.

Another figure appeared, wreathed in shadows and black flames, carrying an infamous weapon. With a wave of his legendary scythe, Death – for who else could it be? – banished the dreamscape, returning it to a vast colorless plane where Harry had spent thousands of years locked away save when someone entered his tomb and allowed him half-life with their presence.

“Wyrd.” Death’s voice was deep and raspy but strangely welcoming, like the sound of a warm fire in Fall as the leaves are turning. “The wyrd has changed.”

Harry closed his eyes, only to open them in his human form. Death was still watching him out of fathomless eyes as a series of scenes flipped past, most too quick for even Harry’s Seeker’s eyes to mark. There was a girl with blinded eyes being beaten in a stone chamber, here a woman with golden hair being paraded through King’s Landing in naught but her skin. Jon wearing a cloak of black fighting the Others, Sansa being nearly raped and then saved by a man with a burned face, a silver-haired woman seated upon a throne at the top of a pyramid, and more. So many, many more.

And lastly, Jon, beautiful Jon, lying dead at the base of a weirwood tree surrounded by ice and snow.

“The wyrd has changed.” Death intoned once more, drawing Harry’s full attention back to his shadowed figure.

“Then why show me this?” Harry finally found his voice. “What was the point?”

“The wyrd has changed, Warrior-Who-Waits.” Death said, folding his black-gloved hands elegantly around the handle of his scythe. “The people have not. This was only a glimpse, a gift if you take note of it. All the gods of this epoch are pleased you have been awoken by the Young Dragon. With,” Death’s voice smiled, though Harry couldn’t say the same of his mouth as his face was still wreathed in shadow. “A few exceptions.”

“So…” Harry thought rapidly. “Some of these things could still happen.”

“The wyrd has changed, Harry, Last of the Peverells.” Death waved a hand towards the flickering images, bringing up the moment Jon broke the spell binding him. “You were never meant to be here. You should have come to me long, long ago. And yet,” his voice smiled once more. “I admit to being eager to see what else you can change, my Warrior-Who-Waits. You fulfilled your wyrd once. Let us see if you can do it again, lest this epoch fall into an age of Ice and Fire.”

“And if I can?” Harry challenged the god. “I am ready to greet you, old friend. I have been ready since I was seventeen. And what reward awaits a hero but that of yourself?”

“Ah,” Death tapped the base of the scythe on the misty plane, changing the scene. “You found my
Hallows but refused to become my Master and exist for all time at my side. What boon would you ask from Death, from the Stranger, from the God-of-Many-Faces, Warrior-Who-Waits? You are owed. Though I think you will find that if you fulfill your wyrd once more that that will be reward enough. This time your wyrd may end with joy, that you might drink as deeply of that as you have of grief and pain and bitterness all these long years, my oldest friend, Last of the House of Peverell."

“I would give you a boon in turn for my request.” Harry said shrewdly, not wanting to risk becoming indebted to the embodiment of the End of All Things. “Your Stone, returned once more.”

“And in exchange for my Stone and your unclaimed boon?”

“That any whom with I bond,” Harry said promptly. “Should have the same gift you once gave my line: reprieve from all deaths but that of old age, a fatal blow, or suicide.”

Death chuckled darkly at that. Yes, this was the last of the Peverells after all. The being hoped the Warrior-Who-Waits would manage to reproduce before coming to him at last. This epoch would be so much more amusing with Peverells populating it with their irreverent cheek.

“It shall be as you ask.” Death tapped the base of the scythe once more as a golden chain appeared winding down the scythe – the symbol of Death’s eternal powers – before darting across the space between them and locking around Harry’s wrist. “Not from disease nor poison nor plot save that of a fatal final blow will you and yours pass to me unless through true old age or suicide. So mote it be.”

The Resurrection Stone appeared in Harry’s hand, the wizard floating it through the air to Death with a thought, sealing their agreement.

“Beware, Last of the Peverells.” Death cautioned. “Not everything you’ve been shown can be prevented. Wyrd has changed but some will still make the same choices. Take caution, lest the joy you are due be snatched from you before you can fulfill your wyrd, as others seek to fulfill theirs.”

…

The dream changed, bringing with it the utter horror of being locked away in his mind unable to move or speak or even breathe, his body held in a timeless suspension where a thousand years passed in a second and a second felt like a thousand years.

Next came words.

The haunting words mixed and mashed and tossed together of the prophecies that ruined his before and the one that was his salvation from his endless waking-sleep.

...The one who...

...Dark Lord...

...greater and more terrible...

...Scion of the Light...

...The great darkness shall fall...

...The dead walk...

...Red god rises...
Harry tossed and turned as the title that he can’t seem to escape echoed through his drifting mind. Then he turned, dreaming eyes open, as he realized the last wasn’t in the voice of Jon or Death or any other from his current world. No. It was a voice from his past.

“Please no.” He whispered to himself. “Not this. Not again. Haven’t I suffered this dream enough in my past reality?”

But it seemed there wasn’t a compassionate deity around to hear his plea as the voice came again, this time in with clear condescension, the same as it had sounded the last time he heard it just before they locked him away in his ‘stasis chamber’ that was no more than an expensive coffin.

“Warrior?”

His head turned and there she was, a woman he’d loved like a sister, sneer marring her lovely face that always refused to age when he suffered through nightmares featuring her.

“Oh, Harry.” Dream-Hermione sighed, shaking her head ruefully. “You’re no Warrior, Harry. If you were a Warrior, you would have woken when we called for you. Woken and saved us all. But no. You slept on. You failed us. Just like you failed Sirius and Remus and Tonks and most of all Teddy. You’re no Warrior, Harry.”

The look on her face clearly said ‘who are you trying to fool, silly boy?’ before it shifted, another apparition taking her place…and giving their two-pence to torment him.

“You? Warrior of prophecy?” Malfoy’s icy silver-blue eyes rolled in his too-handsome face. “Please, Potter. Do your glory-seeking delusions know no bounds?”

Another face, then another, filled with the same accusations he’d heard all through his previous life.

Liar.

Attention-hound.

Conceited prat.

Dangerous.

Dark.

Mad.

Then it changed, the faces becoming soft, almost kind.

And that was infinity worse.

“Mio amore.” Blaise sighed, brown eyes soft. “The spell is lifted; won’t you join us now? Won’t you at last join me? I’ve waited for you, Tesoro.”
“Hey mate,” Fred grinned.

“We’re missing,” George continued, ear still missing in his dream.

“Our partner in crime, join us.”

“Join us.”

“Join us.”

“Join us.”

Voice after voice rose, taking up the call.

And then the worst. The same who came to escort him to his end, once-upon-a-time. His mother, father, Siri and Remus.

“Join us.” They said. “It’s time, Harry.”

“WARRIOR,” they thundered in his mind. “JOIN US.”

...

4 days gone, – Approximately Midday – 5 ½ days to return to Jon’s side

Harry shot up from his bed, hands slapping over his ears as if he could shut that voice, that great terrible voice, out through blocking his physical sense of sound. Panting his eyes wheeled wildly around the room, seeking out the familiar and comfortable items. Reminding himself of just where and when he was.

And who.

Emerald eyes narrowed as he lowered his hands, his gaze catching on something out of place.

It wasn’t inside the wards and enchantments.

No.

On the contrary it sat just outside of them – a large bonfire the wood piled high but as yet unlit.

Growling low in his throat he stormed into the tent’s bathroom.

“Someone is playing games.” He hissed, furious that the magical being he could sense in the fortress, much weaker than himself but stronger than any other he’d sensed in Westeros, had tried to influence him in his dreams. “Someone is going to pay dearly for that stunt.”

Oh yes, they were going to pay in spades.

This half-arse excuse for a sorcerer clearly did not know who they were fucking with.

No matter.

Harry would quite enjoy the process of educating them.

...

A hot shower and fresh clothes later – not armor as he wasn’t there to fight a physical battle, but
dragonhide leather trousers and battle-robe in Targaryen blood-red with a black silk undertunic and dragonhide boots that came up over his knees in black as well. Harry had his hair dry and dressed in intricate battle braids, fastened with a red tie, his sword belt strapped at his hip and his wand tucked away in its holster inside his sleeve. He had to admit, it felt good to be dressed purely as a wizard again without his heavy battle armor or riding leathers. A black silk cloak was clasped at his shoulder with the sword and triquetra he’d taken as his personal crest after much thought and discussion with Jon, filling in the silences that weren’t relieved on the long road from the Fist to Winterfell by talk of the new world Harry found himself living in or about Jon or Jon’s families.

They had talked about many things, especially in the weeks between Castle Black and Winterfell.

With no audience to hear and judge or perhaps slip a raven to King’s Landing or Storm’s End, Jon told him more and Harry trusted his new King with tales of his life in turn.

Debating Maester Aemon’s final advice had filled a whole day’s ride with debates on the ethics of sovereign rule, the ideal traits of a king, and more all sparked by Aemon’s words.

By the time Jon cornered Harry in the hot springs, Harry could say with total honesty that he knew his King better than any person from his former life, save perhaps Malfoy. For who do you know better and they you in turn, than your closest and most bitter rival?

Jon, however, as yet did not know Harry as well as he knew Jon.

Harry had been indelibly marked by the constant strain and trials and betrayals that had controlled much of his former life. His King was as yet still remarkably unspoiled. In that, Harry for his dislike of Aemon’s words from an ethical standpoint, had to admit the wise old man made a fair point. There was still much of the boy left in Jon Targaryen.

One that wasn’t likely to survive his first battle and kill.

A shame, that.

Harry rather liked the boyish part of Jon.

It was that part of him that urged Jon into acting in that hot springs, into taking a chance on Harry, that he otherwise would have likely waited until he knew more of him to do so.

Deciding he at last that he looked as presentable as he could get without the help of a native Westron and a royal seamstress, Harry finished packing up, tucking his Cloak away in preference of using a disillusionment charm.

If there was somewhere in Dragonstone who wanted to play games, he wasn’t about to reveal his cards without gaining something in return.

Besides which, from what he could tell of the lack of magic users, appearing out of nowhere due to a simple charm would likely be more impressive to them than the Cloak would be. Unlike in the wizarding world, they wouldn’t understand just how impressive the Cloak was. To them it would just be another magical tool.

They wouldn’t…appreciate it the way Harry and his former people did.

They had no scale to judge the true awesome quotient of the Cloak and so it would stay away unless he had need of it.

Taking down the tent with a wave of his wand, Harry banished it back to the vault before scattering
the stacked bonfire wood. He left the wards in place, secure in the knowledge that whatever mischief was planned for the godswood it was at least temporarily stymied by his protections. With a sigh he cast the spell he seemed to be getting a veritable ton of use out of since waking:

"Point me: Stannis Baratheon."

The wand spun and pointed and away he went, a silencing charm on his boots and clothes and a disillusionment charm covering him.

... Dragonstone during the day was a vastly different fortress than the eerie black castle glowing in the light of Dragonmont volcano during the night.

Oh, it was still kind of eerie in that massive-ancient-fortress way but its magic was so welcoming Harry barely even noticed it.

No, it was the sheer life of the smallfolk bustling about with much more purpose and less fear than those of King’s Landing. Men-at-arms sparred and trained and laughed at crude jokes in the yard. Maids catcalled and teased after a quick glance to make sure that their stern Lord wasn’t about.

It wasn’t a cheery place by any stretch of the imagination but it was filled with life.

After dodging around a dozen servants, a Maester, and a Septon, Harry finally found himself at the very top of the Stone Drum, in a room that was dominated by a massive painted table that had a curious mix of people gathered around it.

Arguing rather passionately by the sound of it.

A dour, stern looking man who had at one time probably possessed a stark kind of handsomeness before the weight of being an unloved and unappreciated younger brother to a degenerate king had taken its toll on him, sat in a throne-like chair at the very place Dragonstone stood on the massive map, alternating between watching the others argue and staring down at the map, a parchment clasped tightly in one hand.

Ignoring the argument for the moment, Harry crept closer to the map, coming to stand next to who had to be Stannis Baratheon, Lord of Dragonstone.

Seeing what Stannis saw as he stared, Harry noted the placement of a wolf and a dragon between two labels reading: Moat Cailin and the Twins. At the Twins a banner had been placed, showing a pair of blue castles Harry recognized from his dreams. Beware the Twins. Whispered his instincts, spurring him on to finish his mission as quickly as possible and return to Jon’s side.

There was no way to tell exactly which of the glimpses Death showed him could yet come true – or when.

He wasn’t going to leave Jon without his Warrior when it came time to make passage across the Twins.

A Stag and a Rose were marked as being at a place called Bitterridge, with a smaller Stag at Storm’s End.

The Tully Fish remained at Riverrun with a Lion just on the other side of the River. A second Lion was shown to be moving in that same direction up from Harrenhal – and wasn’t that tidbit interesting – while more Lions (lions, lions, every-fucking-where) marked King’s Landing and Casterly Rock.
More wolves were in the North, while a Kraken marked the Iron Islands.

Each and every major player were represented as well as a large amount of their respective sworn Lords and landed knights.

Dorne, the Vale of Arryn, and some powerful lords weren’t shown, likely Stannis being unaware of their current locations or allegiances.

“He is Azor Ahai reborn!” A finely dressed lady, if somewhat wan and limp appearing, cried out, finally drawing Harry’s attention away from the finest map of Westeros he had seen yet. And he’d seen a few between Castle Black, Winterfell, and the Red Keep. “Lady Melissandre swears it by our Lord of Light Rh’llor! Stannis must declare himself for the throne!”

“Must?” A craggy, older Maester than the one Harry had passed in the halls scoffed. “That’s treason talking, no matter how you look at it. You’d have your Lord husband lose his head because some red witch says so?! Has your illness rotted your head, Lady Selsye?”

“Careful.” Another man warned, this one shy a few knuckles on one hand. “Of how you speak to the Lady of Dragonstone. Folly or not, she is still Lord Stannis’s lady wife.”

“Thank you, Ser Davos.” Lady Selsye nodded her head, the red woman who could only be Melissandre remaining silent for the moment, simply watching Stannis with a strange light in her dark eyes.

Red witch, is she? Harry thought to himself, moving with predatory grace to circle his current target. This must be the architect of my most pleasant waking this morning. I shall have to repay her.

“And what of the Targaryen bastard boy?” Selsye pressed as the Maester was temporarily chastened. “You can’t possibly expect my Lord husband to support that farce of a Snow to the Throne?!”

“I wouldn’t be too certain of that, my Lady wife.” Stannis spoke at last, contradicting her to her fury. “Eddard Stark was many things, and I never liked him. But I respected him. If there was a man born who could hide the last Targaryen from my hateful, grasping brother Robert, it was Ned Stark.”

“A dragon was spotted in the skies of Westeros once more, Lady Selsye.” Maester Cressen reminded her. “No false Targaryen would ever be able to bring forth another dragon…let alone have any control over the beast.”

Harry felt a moment’s amusement over just how close to the mark the old Maester was.

Only a powerful magical being of royal blood would have been able to wake him from his living hell. Which based on what Harry knew gave him four prospects: Jon, his aunt Daenerys, his uncle Aemon, and his distant cousin Aegon Blackfyre, though the last was conjecture at best. Daenerys was obvious as she had managed to hatch dragons anew in Essos while he’d met Jon and Aemon for himself and felt the power that ran in their blood. Stannis wasn’t magical enough, his power suppressed from the same taint that was rotting away Westeros and his daughter and brother were likely the same.

Though…perhaps the Starks might’ve managed it. They had been Kings of Winter for thousands of years after all. But none had ever tried, preferring to wait for the current Prophecy to play out.

“Dragons.” Selsye scoffed with a roll of her eyes. “What’s next, snarks and grumpkins?”
"It is said." Melissandre spoke, her voice richly accented and exotic to Harry’s ear. It had a near-hypnotic tenor that he would find interesting—if it wasn’t being used to sway a man to treason. "That dragons will be reborn in a place of smoke and salt. They will come again, my Lady. Of that, I have no doubt. Though whether that time is now, I cannot say. I can only hope it is so. For the Night is Dark and full of Terrors."

"But…" Selsye looked like her favorite toy had just been taken from her at the censure implicit in the witch’s words.

"Leave us, Selsye." Stannis commanded with a small grimace. "This discussion is too much for someone of your…delicate health."

The Lady put on a wounded face as she wrapped her fine shawl around her shoulders, sweeping from the room in high dudgeon at her husband’s rebuke.

"There’s been no word from Driftmark, Claw Island, or any of the holds of Crackclaw Point.” Maester Cressen reported after several long moments of silence passed. “Most of the Storm Lords save a few loyal to yourself my Lord have sworn to Renly.”

"Of course there’s been no word.” Ser Davos sighed, shaking his head. “King Robert did many things but he did not endear himself or the Baratheon name to the Lords of the Crownlands. Even almost twenty years after the Rebellion and just rule under Lord Stannis, they stayed loyal to the Targaryens. My sons and I have done some scouting – just here and there. There is no sign of any ships but those belonging to King’s Landing, merchants, or Dragonstone anywhere near the Blackwater. They’ve gone to support King Jon I Targaryen or I’ll eat my boots.”

"No need to go that far.” Stannis said drily, rubbing his forehead with one hand. “Robert knew it was a likelihood if it ever came to a true Targaryen making a claim to the Iron Throne – as did I. I never asked for Dragonstone. I never wanted it. I took it because Robert's enemies were here and he commanded me to root them out. I built his fleet and did his work, dutifully as a younger brother should be to an elder, as Renly should be to me. And what was Robert's thanks? He names me Lord of Dragonstone, and gives Storm's End and its incomes to Renly. Storm's End belonged to House Baratheon for three hundred years; by rights it should have passed to me when Robert took the Iron Throne.” Stannis waved his rant away. This wasn’t the time to examine old injustices. “The Targaryen loyalists have all gone to support their beloved Young Dragon – and that's as it should be, no matter what I think or feel on the matter. The only way they would have remained was under orders from Targaryen – and that is the last thing I would want going on among my own men.”

"Making a claim to the Throne would allow you to correct your brother’s wrongs, my Lord.” Lady Melissandre pointed out softly, seductively. “Your grandmother was Princess Rhaelle Targaryen; you are just as much a Dragon as you are a Stag. You have a legitimate claim to the Iron Throne.”

Stannis smoothed the parchment in his hand out once more studying the words inked upon it.

"I’ve heard similar words before secondhand.” Stannis commented, voice hard. “They were the ones Jon Arryn used to place my brother on the Iron Throne, stepping in the blood of a Princess and her babies to do so. I’ve no wish to ever hear them again, Melissandre.” His eyes burned with inner fire as he looked up from the missive. “Am I in any way unclear?”

“No, my Lord.” The Red Woman bowed her head submissively.

Having heard and seen enough, Harry spoke as he seemed to the remaining quartet to melt from the wall.
“I’m afraid.” Harry said drily, directing his words towards the Lord of Dragonstone. “That you might not get your wish in that, Lord Stannis.”

“Who - how?!” Multiple voices cried – all but the Lord’s own, Stannis’s eyes zeroing in at once on the cloak pin of a direwolf face a three-headed dragon on the opposite shoulder from a sigil-pin he did not recognize of a sword piercing a strangely elegant knot.

Stannis silenced them with a raised hand, preferring to not shout over his closest advisors.

“You’re a Targaryen man.”

“Yes, Lord Stannis.” Harry gave an incline of his head. “Lord Harry Potter-Black, Last of the Peverell Line.” He waved towards the appraising Red Woman. “Your Red Witch would know me as the Warrior-Who-Waits.” Emerald eyes pinned her to the floor as her pale skin turned nearly transparent at his announcement.

“You are a powerful sorcerer.” Melissandre observed, voice shaky. “Effortless in your use of the magical arts. Nothing ever written of the Warrior-Who-Waits mentioned this.”

Harry gave a little chuckle.

“I’d hope not.” He quirked a brow. “Considering all the effort the Kings of Winter underwent to keep the Prophecy regarding myself as well as my resting place a secret from those who might abuse it.

Such as you and yours. Was implied but not out-right stated.

The interaction between the two gave the others more reason for thought. The Red Woman was widely considered the most powerful of Rh’llor’s servants. For her to genuinely fear this Lord Potter-Black was a warning to any man with sense to heed it.

“Melissandre of Asshai.” Harry’s voice was dangerous in its soft tenor. “The rightful King of Westeros has ordered all followers of the Red god to the Wall, to support the Night’s Watch in the currently on-going battle against the Great Other. If you wish to remain within the borders of Westeros, you will obey his order and take your acolytes capable of even a wisp of fire or holding a sword with you.”

“And if I do not?” She arched a brow, appearing much like a cat hissing at the threat of a bath.

“Then I will remove you from Westeros.” Harry shrugged, as if it made no difference to him…and honestly it really didn’t. These were Jon’s orders, not his own desires. “And make it so you can never return.”

Melissandre and the others sucked in a shocked breath at the threat. The power such a thing must take…

There wasn’t a doubt in any of their minds that he was capable of it.

The Warrior-Who-Waits didn’t appear a man to make idle threats.

“I will go.” The Red Woman nodded her head in submission. “The Long Night comes and with it death…death for everyone and everything. A great and lasting darkness will fall upon the land if the Great Other takes the lands. I will do as the King commands and fight the darkness where it thrives. For the Night is Dark and full of Terrors.”
Without saying a word, Harry reached out and grabbed her by the jaw staring deep into her eyes, his own starting to glow brighter and brighter as several long moments passed, the pressure of his magic felt by all those in his presence.

And then he looked away, releasing her, and the pressure was gone as if it had never been.

“You have until tomorrow morning, Priestess.” Harry commanded. “Then I will cast the spell to take you and your followers to the Wall. One day.” He held up a single finger. “One. That is all I will allow.”

Melissandre nodded once more and strode from the room as if on auto-pilot.

After she was gone, Maester Cressen spoke, shaken to his bones.

“What did you do to her?”

“Placed her under a gaes.” Harry turned and moved to the painted table, resting his hands on the edge and studying it once more as the other men studied him in turn. “To prevent her from attempting anything in the time she has left here. It will also prevent her from running to another part of Westeros or attempting to flee the Wall once she arrives. Melissandre is a fanatic. And fanatics are most definitely not to be trusted. Had I been even a day later she would have attempted – and likely succeeded – in burning the sept and the godswood.”

He pressed on finger hard against the painted surface of the table in emphasis.

“She is a dangerous being of little to no ethics or morals when it came to accomplishing her objective of converting or killing the people of Westeros. I will not allow her to roam free. My King is a follower of the old gods, therefore Melissandre is a threat that must be managed.” His eyes glinted with his hidden power for a moment as he swept his gaze over the trio. “I hope I am understood.”

“Perfectly.” Stannis commented with carefully hidden humor. “I would have done the same in your place and with your information.”

“Good.” Harry said with a genial nod. “Now, Lord Stannis.” He reached into his cloak and removed a pair of parchments, one a missive the other an official scroll. “I have come to ascertain your stance on the current political climate in Westeros. With me I bring a message from your blood-kin King Jon I.”

Harry passed the missive sealed with Jon’s personal sigil over to the stern man, Stannis taking it with what to a trained eye appeared equal parts dread and anticipation.

The others allowed him to read it in peace and at his leisure, Harry idly chatting with Ser Davos about the seas to the East of Westeros and the Onion Knight’s unique injury while Maester Cressen appeared simply overwrought.

Before Stannis could finish reading the letter – and digesting its contents – the Maester excused himself with the charge of checking on the Lady Selsye’s nerves after the trying morning…not to mention the coming news of Melissandre’s forced defection to the Wall.

If the woman wasn’t watched she’d likely try and join the witch in her exile…for the Maester is fully aware that that was what it was, and found himself pleased by it if not unnerved by the manner in which it was accomplished.

“Do you know what is written here?” Stannis asked Lord Harry, drawing the attention of the Targaryen loyalist and his own truest friend Ser Davos from their quiet conversation hovering near
the location of the Narrow Sea and the Stepstones on the painted table.

Harry gave a noble incline of his head.

“I was there when it was written, Lord Stannis.” He confirmed, voice calm and quiet.

“What is it, my Lord?” Ser Davos asked, unable to read it for himself like many Lords’ trusted knight would have been able.

“This letter.” Stannis couldn’t believe it himself, let alone know what to make of it. “Asks that I swear myself to my blood-cousin’s cause. For my allegiance and ‘best and honorable service to my kin’ I shall be granted Storm’s End and be made Lord Paramount of the Storm Lands.”

“He also will gain the title of Master of Law, with it a place on the Small Council.” Harry added, proving his knowledge and close companionship to the Young Dragon. “His daughter will be made Heiress after him and a worthy match provided to seal the alliance.”

“And in return all I have to do is support the true king of Westeros.” Stannis was almost tempted to laugh. “Take back my rightful inheritance in the Storm Lands, and return a holding and lordship I never wanted back to its rightful inheritor.”

Davos’s eyes widened as he had a clear ‘ah-hah’ moment.

“The King wants Dragonstone.”

Harry did laugh. “The King wants Dragonstone.” He agreed. “It is my plan that I treat with his Aunt, Daenerys Stormborn, rightful Princess of Dragonstone, and return her to their ancestral seat until another heir is sired when she will be able to choose to remain or go to another of their House holdings as she desires – unless she chooses to wed before then.”

“You’ll be his Hand.” Stannis said in a moment of blunt clarity. “Mark my words, Lord Potter-Black. If you both survive this war, my cousin the King will make you his Hand of the King. Now,” he leaned forward. “What’s this about taking Storm’s End and confirming Shireen as my Heiress…”

Later that day after conceding that crossing into Essos wasn’t viable at this time, Harry set up his tent once more in the godswood after refusing all offers of a room and then took himself off to the Maester’s chambers.

He’d spent hours discussing plans with Stannis and Davos regarding plans to take Storm’s End, along with how Jon plans to keep Dragonstone secure once Stannis and his men and family take their leave. The three of them had taken a meal together, then Davos had shown him to Shireen’s room so that Harry could get a first-hand look at the greyscale that afflicted her. Even with his diagnostic spells, Harry still didn’t have a firm grasp on the disease, hence his seeking out Maester Cressen who had nursed her through the initial bout, the girl surviving save for her disfigurement.

But said disfigurement was an issue.

Not for Harry, and certainly not for Davos, but Harry knew it was for others including her father.

Survival of the incurable disease carried a stigma Harry was all-too-familiar with from living once-upon-a-time in a land plagued with diseases that left those afflicted open to the worst sorts of mockery, mental illness being one of the worst, as he’d experienced for himself when the press made
him out to be mad or a delusional liar.

It hurt him that a girl who was otherwise perfectly healthy had had to deal with such small-mindedness.

For that reason alone, he would’ve given healing Shireen his best effort, even if political issues and pride weren’t at stake.

Finally reaching the Maester’s chambers in one of the dragon-shaped towers, Harry rapped sharply on the door, entering when bid by the elderly man.

It was time to get a crash-course in greyscale.

…

5 days gone.

Harry’s Patronus flew away towards Castle Black, giving the Lord Commander a much-needed warning (likely after shocking the life out of him), mere minutes before Melissandre’s time was about to run out.

Coming into the great hall centered under the Stone Drum of Dragonstone, Harry saw that the Red Witch was standing proud before a small congregation of two dozen men, each attired for the North and with a bag and a sword. For her part, the Priestess was in her standard red, a bag resting demurely at her booted feet. Slowly descending the steps, Harry sent out tendrils to anchor the gaes to Melissandre’s men as well as herself, twining in a command to do no harm to Maester Aemon.

He wasn’t fool enough to leave a practitioner of dark blood arts near a ready supply of powerful royal blood and just hope for the best.

That was a Dumbledore move, not that of a sensible wizard.

“Are you ready, Priestess?” Harry asked, coming to stand before her, ignoring that in her boots she was taller than him.

Freaking Westeros.

Damn-near-everyone was taller than him.

“We are, Warrior.” The Red Woman gave a regal incline of her head.

“Very well.” Harry took out the Elder want and conjured a length of rope, instructing them all to grab hold of it and any possessions they wished to take with them. “This will make you sick.” He warned. “The journey won’t be pleasant but it will be fast. And whatever you do, don’t let go.”

“As you will, Lord Potter-Black.”

Tapping the rope with his wand he intoned: “Portus,” followed immediately by the password: “Castle Black.”

Gasps went up from around the watching audience as the group disappeared from sight, as if they were never there to begin with.

Harry rolled his shoulders, feeling a weight lift off of them, then went to join Lord Stannis and his most trusted men in the Chamber of the Painted Table to break their fast and make preparations for the taking of Storm’s End.
6 days gone, 4 days left to return.

Ser Davos found the strange Lord Potter-Black alone – for once – in the Chamber of the Painted Table.

The smuggler-turned-Knight had to credit the wizard-warrior, he was dedicated.

No other man Davos had ever met would have taken the time to play with and comfort the little poppet Shireen, not even her father Lord Stannis as disloyal as that thought was. All the Maesters and supposed “healers”, all the learned men and wise-women that Davos’s liege lord had brought to see her, and not one had truly cared for the girl. No, all they saw when they looked at sweet, smart Shireen was a grotesque to pity and gold to line their pockets with promises of a cure.

When he wasn’t shut away with Stannis and his captains and knights planning and strategizing the taking of Storm’s End, Lord Potter-Black had been speaking with the Maesters regarding what they’d done for Shireen, or combing through their books and tomes, even searching out and finding some of the hidden caches of Targaryen scrolls and tomes that Stannis had known were hidden in the fortress but had never been able to locate.

All to help a little girl who had spent far too much time alone and locked away.

“Begging your pardon, milord.” Ser Davos brought his thoughts into order and announced his presence to the distracted warrior. “You seem troubled. It is the grayscale or the siege?”

Harry laughed hollowly.

“No,” he shook his head tiredly. He’d spent too much time on Dragonstone. If he pushed himself to the limit he might be able to cross the Narrow Sea and find one or the other of the missing Targaryens. Or to do what he really wanted which was get a dragon’s-eye-view of the makeup of his new world.

The wizard in him felt, well, crippled by his inability to travel when and where he pleased.

In the old world, he could program a portkey or Apparate blind to set points, he just had to feel for the magic in the designated portkey terminal or Apparation spot, or even just with a set of coordinates.

But Westeros and “The Known World” weren’t set up like that. They hadn’t advanced to the point of standardized measurements and coordinates, longitude and latitude didn’t exist. And there was no map accurate enough for Harry to be able to just take a glance and go.

The only way for Harry to gain the freedom of movement and travel he had taken for granted in Britain and Earth for that matter was for him to fly over the lands and memorize the landscape using Occlumency.

He had no other solution to the problem.

As it was, the only way he was going to be able to return to Jon’s side was because of the dagger he’d given him. He’d set a spell into it when he’d noticed Jon’s preoccupation with it that allowed it to be used as what was basically a portable Apparation point. A beacon for lack of a better term.

Sansa’s necklace would function much in the same way, as would the gaes he’d placed on Melissandre and her followers.
It was a tactic he didn’t like, it smacked of too much like the manipulations and controlling behavior he’d been subjected to before waking in Westeros for him to be at ease with it. But it was necessary. And shockingly easy without all the interference from other magic users.

Magic was so different here that his own personal usage of it made it easy to track.

That would change the longer he was awake and the more magic he used, but for the moment it was as if he had an internal map of the world with his own magic bright red pins piercing it.

It was how he knew Jon was indeed making very good time towards Greywater Watch and the Northern Armies…and the cause of his current debate, which Ser Davos had noted and was being very good about letting him struggle silently for long moments, patiently waiting for Harry to speak some more.

“It’s…” Harry gave a gusty sigh, sweeping an arm to encompass the Painted Table and the locations of troops and men and commanders that he and Stannis and the others had been laboring over for the past two days when he wasn’t dealing with Melissandre or trying to help the little girl. “All this.” He shook his head. “My King asked me to come and deliver his message, to be his envoy to his cousin-of-the-blood Lord Stannis. I allowed myself to become distracted while here and am now facing a difficult choice.”

“Perhaps another opinion might help things become clear?” Davos suggested. It was the least he could do as he was well aware that it was mostly trying to help the little poppet that had distracted the King’s man.

“I had plans to travel East, across the sea to Essos.” Harry confided in the Onion Knight.

“Ah,” Davos nodded, he’d seen the wanderlust that was lurking in the other man. He’d thought that might be the reason the King had sent such a powerful ally to treat with Stannis, allowing a man from the Far North to see more than the ice and snow and trees of Winterfell and the Wall. But perhaps he’d been mistaken and there was something more to it. More to this man than just a trusted confidant wrapped in a powerful weapon. “But you have a duty to the King that prevents this?”

Harry sighed. If only it was that simple.

“I do all I do.” Harry said slowly, tasting each word for veracity as it left him. “To serve the betterment of the people of Westeros, at the behest of the King. It was my desire to travel southron when King Jon would have preferred I stay at his side. But we both knew there were opportunities that might be missed or overlooked if I did not leave.”

Davos had to nod in agreement with that. Without Lord Harry’s intervention, Lady Selsye and her red witch might have convinced his lord to commit treason and try for the Throne. Davos was aware enough to realize that such an action would not have sat well with him or his lord when there was a true claimant rather than a handful of hopefuls squabbling over Robert’s tainted legacy.

They would have failed, likely at great cost, because neither Lord Stannis’s nor his men’s hearts would have truly been behind such a move.

No matter what sorcery the red witch worked upon them.

“And now,” Harry continued, head slumping with strain. “I face the enemy of all men: time. Even I have my limits and must make decisions based on the best use of my time. Which this day is forcing me to make a choice: East to cross the Narrow Sea and perhaps locate a possible ally or,” Harry swept his arm once more over the painted table. “Stay here in the West and find out for myself just
where the armies belonging to my King’s enemies are – and more importantly how they are numbered.”

The Onion Knight moved to the other man’s side and clapped one hand on his shoulder.

“I know I’m just a lowly Ser and a former criminal.” Davos said, with his calm demeanor. “And I have a stake in which you choose as one of those options would mean better preparations for battles I’ll likely have a part in. But only you can decide which it more important at this very moment: a possibility of an ally or knowing with certainty the full measure of your King’s enemies.” Davos buffeted his shoulder lightly. “I think I know which you’ll choose, having come to know some of your character these past few days Lord Harry. And my mind hopes that I’m right.” He gave the other man a commiserating grin when troubled green eyes peered up at him. “But the heart of a man who never quite managed to give up the sea hopes I’m wrong.”

With that Ser Davos left the Warrior-Who-Waits to his brooding over the map, looking back as the door closed behind him to see one elegant, long-fingered hand reach out and pick up the banner Stannis had had made with Harry’s personal sigil and place it next to the three-headed dragon with a sigh.

…

There would be time.

As he took off from Dragonstone with a massive thrust of his powerful wings, initial take-off boosted for ease by his magic, Harry had to believe that there would be time to travel East.

Wars, especially wars of mounted horse, foot soldiers, and protracted sieges, were long and often costly affairs, both in gold spent and lives lost.

There would be time for him to fly across the Narrow Sea to Essos and find the truth of the other Targaryens.

Maybe he would seek out the Smoking Sea and the ruins of Old Valyria or the Shadow Lands where magic and dragons were still supposed to exist in ways that had been nearly snuffed out in Westeros. The secondhand knowledge he’d gained from Jon whispered of islands filled with basilisks, manticores, and even unicorns if Harry would but take the time and find them. To the East there were great and terrible places to visit and sights to see.

It could be that there was even more to this new life than what was known.

Lands beyond Westeros, Essos, Sothoryos, and the Summer Isles.

Harry huffed out a laugh that was tinged with smoke at the thought of becoming the Westerosi equivalent of Leif Erikkson.

The next several days were spent exploring Westeros by air, occasionally landing to better scout an area on foot or to rest. Sometimes he let himself be seen, and reveled in the shrieks of fear as men in full-plate tried to run or were unseated when their horses threw them in terror. Other times stealth was more vital than causing the kingdoms to remember the dragons that united them – and that the dragons had returned.

He had to appreciate the cunning of Renly Baratheon when he saw how neatly and easily the claimant to the throne had cut off travel to King’s Landing and the Westerlands via the Roseroad. For the first time since waking he’d gotten a look at the size of forces a King could command in Westeros and was reluctantly impressed. The Tyrell-Baratheon alliance had yielded a massive
force…one that was apparently content to let the Lannisters and Stark-Targaryens fight it out before swooping in and taking down the weakened forces left behind.

It was cunning.

Something would have to be done about it.

But so long as Renly Baratheon and Mace Tyrell parked their arses in the Reach, there wasn’t much Harry could do, nor did he really have an idea of how to handle it.

Harry’d trained for what was basically the magical equivalent of guerrilla warfare.

Incursions against enemy forces, taking a city or a castle, harrying enemy troop movements and supply lines, those things he knew how to do. Stannis – a more seafaring commander than a field one – had certainly appreciated Harry’s knowledge on how to best use Stannis’s childhood at Storm’s End to the Baratheon-Martell force that was going to attack it. Even snatch-and-grabs for rescues or hostage-taking, Harry knew.

Not entrenched warfare between massive armies of foot soldiers, war machines, and mounted horse.

All he knew about those was what he’d learned in his muggle history classes as a child or from the telly – so not much at all.

Jon or one of his Lords or commanders would be able to make use of the information Harry had on the Reach army. He hoped. Otherwise he’d pissed away a day flying circles around the kingdom.

And he really hoped a scout had already told the Stark-Targaryen forces about the split Lannister army. Else he didn’t think they’d be able to make use of his information in time to prevent being flanked. He’d seen that most recently after taking a winged tour of Casterly Rock and its defenses along with getting a peek at which of the Westerland castles and holdfasts were most heavily garrisoned.

Between the Reach and the Westerlands, Harry had flown northwest to Pyke and the Iron Islands, raising a draconic brow at the fleet of heavy dromonds and longships that were floating out of sight of the Ironborn fleet. The islands were surrounded and as far as Harry could tell, they didn’t have the slightest idea.

As the ships all flew either the Targaryen standard or the bear of House Mormont, Harry had a damn good reckoning of just who had ordered that preemptive measure.

...

Jon groaned as he rolled over onto his side after another night on cold, hard ground.

It was a hard fortnight’s ride from Winterfell to the Twins, and he’d pushed him and his five-hundred horse even harder to shave several days off the trip. A good thing, as a raven had found him at one of the stops along the way with news that Robb and the easily mustered half of the northern army had made it through Greywater Watch and would be making the Twins within days. Robb had originally only called up enough banners to break a siege, not a long, protracted war.

Ravens had been sent out to muster the remaining men, Jon knew that Lord Howland Reed had met Robb with himself at the head of 5,000 men, including over a three thousand archers, when Robb had finally found him in the Neck. Lord Manderley was another who had been prepared, as a close ally of Ned Stark, he captained a fleet of over fifty ships and close to five thousand soldiers and sailors that were already on their way to Dragonstone and will blockade the Blackwater.
But the remaining northern bannermen and their forces wouldn’t make the Neck in time to break the siege, the best they could hope for was reinforcement after the fact.

For a moment Jon thought wistfully of Harry and his mission as well as the twenty-five hundred men they’d left behind at Winterfell. He shook it off. He’d left Ser Crispan along with Ser Dystan Massey and Aurane Waters behind for a reason, one they should be well on their way to carrying out.

Once their own mission was done, Cris and Aurane would march out with fifteen-hundred of the foot soldiers and hold Moat Cailin and the Neck against an attempt at an attack on the North.

With a sigh, Jon climbed to his feet and strapped himself into his armor after seeing to his morning needs.

So far everything had gone somewhat well with claiming the throne. The deaths, his beloved uncle’s included, had all stemmed from hostilities between the Tullys and Lannisters, not his direct claim to the throne. But the one thing he’d learned from studying warfare was that his thoroughly prepared plans weren’t like to survive the first contact with the Lannister host.

Meeting his Kingsguard ready and waiting near the fire, Jon accepted a hot mug of mead and some dried apples and salt pork. Nodding his thanks to Ser Oswell for the food, he gave the order to break camp.

Throwing his leg over the saddle and taking the reins in one hand as he finished breaking his fast, Jon grumbled good-naturedly to his father’s closest friend the Lord Commander of the Kingsguard Ser Arthur Dayne:

“Harry better get his arse here or he’s going to miss the war altogether.” He japed, only to start and turn in the saddle at the dry response coming from behind him.

“The way events are moving,” Harry rolled his eyes, leaning forward on his horse’s pommel. Well, he called it his horse, really it was one of the horses Jon had brought to Castle Black and then let Harry use but…semantics. “I would have to travel all the way to the Shadow Lands and back to miss this war.”

Though Harry still didn’t think that was possible with the speed he could fly and judicious use of portkeys and Apparation.

Still…

It would be a fascinating challenge to see how long it would take him to do it, making a trip that takes years to go there and back in a week or perhaps a bit longer.

“Harry!” Jon gave him a blinding smile, reaching out to smack his shoulder affectionately. “Calling it close, how long have you been back?” And why didn’t Harry or the Kingsguard inform him.

“Don’t blame your minders, Jon.” Harry snarked, knowing full well what Jon was thinking. “They didn’t know as I arrived late in the night and set up camp away from the rest. Besides,” Harry smirked. “I was keeping an eye…of sorts…on you. I knew when I’d need to come back to beat your meeting with your cousin Lord Robb.”

Jon held up a hand and ordered the men to move out, riding side-by-side with his lover as the two talked in low voices.

“Any word?”
"Yes," Harry whispered back. "Nothing that can’t wait until the coming war council, save one or two things for your ears alone. I had to make some... *unauthorized*... decisions in a few places. But I have reports on troop movements, army sizes, an alliance, and a spy in King’s Landing."

The King sat back in the saddle, honestly shocked at the amount of work Harry had gotten done in less than a fortnight.

"Did you make it to Essos?"

"No," Harry shook his head, tone mournful. "Not enough time. I had to choose getting a dragon’s-eye-view of Westeros or going on a dragon-chase in Essos. Of the two, Westeros is more pressing."

"Thank you for that, lover." Jon whispered, leaning closer in his saddle to speak nearly in the ebon-haired man’s ear. "I know how bad you want to go and explore the truth of the stories I shared with you."

"Dragons, basilisks, and manticores?" Harry gave a half-smile. "Sounds like my kind of place. But for now at least, I was woken for a purpose – both by you and the gods. I mean to see it through. Essos will still be there after the siege is broken and the Lannisters repelled."

Without further ado, Harry handed over the missive from Lord Stannis, Jon taking it with equal parts anticipation and anxiety, nearly mirroring the other man’s reaction to getting a letter from a Targaryen.

Ripping it open, Jon scanned it furiously before letting out a most-un-kingly whoop of exhilaration.

"You beauty!" Jon crowed, nearly falling out of the saddle as he threw his arms around Harry, giving him a smacking kiss to the corner of his mouth, the Kingsguard crying out in warning as Jon was stretched between the two horses before righting himself and waving off their concerns. "You glorious, glorious creature!" He chimed, waving the open letter in his exuberance. "This *almost* makes all those cold, lonely nights without you worth it."

"If bringing you Dragonstone on a silver platter isn’t worth my absence for less than a fortnight."

Harry jibed. "I wonder what sort of treasure you’ll demand should I ever venture to Essos? A fleet of dromonds filled with gold, jewels, and other treasures? An army of Dothraki screamers?"

"A dragon." Jon arched a knowing brow as he answered the facetious question. "Bring me a dragon – other than your wonderful, glorious self, and I would forgive nearly any transgression. Even one so grievous as denying me the comfort of yourself for weeks on end."

"Hmm." Harry flicked the King a flirtatious glance from under lowered lashes. It was a good thing he had a lead on where to find a trio of his spirit animal then, no matter how small they were at the moment. The size of cats? According to the Master of Whispers.

It was no matter.

They would *grow* soon enough.

Dragons always did, unless they were twisted and stunted somehow like some of the skeletons he found in the bowels of the Red Keep, the discovery of which – and the implications that arose from his snoopy-ery – were some of the things they needed to discuss with true privacy.

Harry was an excellent wizard but trying to maintain a moving silencing ward while on horseback was more of a fiddly piece of magic than he wanted to muck about with when he was coming off of days of nearly non-stop flight and heading into what promised to be a massive battle.
If it wasn’t for the ease of siphoning the natural magic of Westeros into himself there was no way he would’ve been able to augment the speed of his dragon, let alone keep doing so as long as he had in addition to using magic to deal with the Red Woman, enchant items to keep Lady Sansa safe, and work on healing Lady Shireen. The constant nightmares hadn’t made resting all that easy either, whether they were repeating scenes from the glimpse at fate Death had given him or old nightmares from his past, it kept him from recharging the way he should when he slept.

Which wasn’t often, Harry having felt the spur of advancing time since his arrival at Dragonstone.

“I’ll have to take that under consideration.” Harry said lightly as they crest the hill that overlooked the Twins and the army camped below the duel castles that guarded the main crossing of the Trident. A frown flitted over Harry’s handsome face as the ghosts he’d encountered in his dreamscape reappeared in his mind’s eye.

Come what may, he’d been left with a constant feeling that nagged at him anew as he saw the Frey stronghold for the first time from the ground rather than the air: danger and darkness lurked here.

“Jon?” Harry asked for the King’s attention quietly as the Targaryen knights and mounted horse swung out around them banners held high, surrounding the pair and the members of the Kingsguard as a group of men mounted on destriers rode to meet them.

“Yes, Harry?” Jon turned his head from drinking in the sight of the beginnings of his army to meet his lover’s worried green eyes.

“Be careful, here.” Harry warned him, the scent of old blood filling his nostrils for several long moments. His eyes darted restlessly from Jon’s gaze to the Twins and the army nestled down below it. “Something about this place…” He shook his head, unable to explain it in a way that would make sense of the other man. “Just be careful.”

“I hear you, Harry.” Jon nodded solemnly, taking his words to heart. “Lord Frey is known to be a grasping and craven man. I will watch my step and my words.” He gave a grin to the Kingsguard who were listening to the pair while simultaneously watching the approaching party. “And the Kingsguard will watch my flank.”

“That is all I ask, my King.” Harry gave him a small smile, eyes lightening for a moment before going back to watching all around them with a hard look.

He blinked in shock as the group approaching came within sight.

Harry knew that face. It was one that had haunted his dreams and waking thoughts since Dragonstone. Only this time it was very much alive and all-but-beaming in delight at the sight of Jon rather than drawn and pale in death.

The man Harry recognized spoke as the party drew rein a few paces from them.

“Hail King Jon Stark-Targaryen, the first of his name!” The man shouted in a resounding tenor, voice ringing with respect and joy. “Be welcome to the Army of the North! We await your orders, your Grace!”

The riders with him pounded on their shields, sending up a cacophony and shouting:

“Dragon of the North! Dragon of the North! Dragon of the NORTH!”

Jon held up his hands in a calming gesture, inclining his head in thanks to the Lords of the North.
“We thank our cousin, Lord Robb Stark for the welcome.” Jon said with regal control. “As well as these Lords of the North. Let us meet in council.” Nodding to Robb, he said: “At your leisure, Cousin Robb.”

“Aye, your Grace.” Robb gave a mischievous grin. “Cousin Jon. Your men are welcome to set up camp around the central area we’ve kept clear for your arrival. While they do allow me to show you to the accommodations we’ve prepared in anticipation of your arrival as word is sent for the rest of the Lords and commanders to gather.”

“Very well,” Jon waved his hand. “Lead the way.”

…

“How’s the morale of the men?” Was one of the first questions out of Jon’s mouth after all had been gathered for the needed war council. All of the Northern Lords had gathered, many bringing their sons and heirs as well as any knights or commanders of renown.

The Northmen and Jon’s own Targaryen loyalists who hailed mainly from the crownlands and Dorne all eyed each other warily – some more than others.

Most couldn’t believe their eyes when they entered the tent and saw the thought-long-dead members of the Kingsguard Ser Arthur Dayne, Ser Oswell Whent, and Prince Lewen Martell. Even Ser Mark Ryswell, a Northman supposedly dead at the Tower of Joy, alive and bearing a white cloak. A few of them had heard rumors that the late Ned Stark had been doing more than preparing his Lords for a clash with the southron king, but they’d never thought the stoic, honorable, Ned Stark had been capable of playing so deep a game. Though many of them weren’t surprised, the southron lords and kings liked to forget, thinking they’ve muzzled the direwolves, but the North remembers.

Many a Northern babe was weaned on the stories of the Kings of Winter who had ruled unchecked and unchallenged for over eight thousand years.

You didn’t do that through honor alone.

No.

A family like that – a dynasty like that – had to have a nerve and spine of steel, and the ferociousness to back it up.

Now through Benjen Stark and Rhaegar Targaryen the might of the direwolves had been wedded and bedded into the fire of the dragons who had gotten the stiff-necked Starks to bend the knee almost three-hundred years ago.

Dragons had won the North, and now a dragon was going to show the southron lords why discounting and disregarding the North as without power or nerve was a deadly mistake to make.

“Could be better, Cousin.” Lord Robb Stark admitted after exchanging a glance with a few of his more outspoken lords such as Greatjon and Smalljon Umber and Lord Karstark. “Weeks stymied at Moat Cailin waiting for Greywater Watch to pass and then being stuck again at the Twins while we wait for Lord Frey to pull his head out hasn’t been easy. Plus, news has come that Tywin Lannister has marched North after sacking everything south of Harrenhal, including the castle itself. He means to engage us here and cut us off from breaking the siege at Riverrun.”

“How do you know this?” Ser Gerold ‘Darkstar’ Dayne leaned forward intently, his beautiful face shadowed by his silver hair with its streak of black. A fierce knight with a wicked reputation, Jon didn’t trust him anywhere but where his cousin Ser Arthur could keep a wary eye on him.
He was the sort of knight that lusted for glory and advancement, and one that didn’t much care how he got it. Unleashing a man like him without someone to hold his chain would be tantamount to begging to be betrayed. A situation neither Jon nor Arthur had any intention of allowing, especially with Lord Edric Dayne missing alongside Lady Allryia Dayne’s betrothed Lord Beric Dondarrion.

Neither man had been seen since late Lord Eddard Stark sent them after the Mountain the Rides.

Rumor had it that the Mountain slew them, but no bodies or even horse or armor had ever been recovered before the Riverlands came under siege and Ned Stark was executed.

“Caught ourselves a scout.” Greatjon Umber boomed in his larger-than-life voice that matched his massive-grizzled-bear appearance. The Greatjon was Robb Stark’s most ardent supporter after questioning the young Lord had cost him three fingers to the lad’s direwolf Grey Wind. “Sent him back crawling to the Old Lion with a flea in his ear, we did.”

Jon arched a brow at Robb for an explanation as the Kingsguard and Targaryen loyalists exchanged surprised or concerned glances.

“He wasn’t the brightest.” Robb said with a roll of his eyes. “And to a man worried about keeping his hide intact, a report of 20,000 men and horse coming down via the Green Fork after being stymied at the Twins is a blessing that’ll keep his hide intact as he was released with his head still upon his shoulders – or at least allowed to escape.”

“Current count with his Grace’s knights put us at almost 24,000, Lord Stark.” Harry commented, with voice calm as he studied the contrasts the Northern men made against the southron knights. “Plus a…” He smirked down at his seated lover who rolled his eyes. “Surprise or two up our sleeves.”

“That would be the dragon we’ve had reports of, wouldn’t it?” Lord Bolton leaned forward, a greedy light in his eyes.

Harry frowned lightly, before meeting the man’s strange blank eyes with his own probing gaze. What he found behind that flat look sickened him. Another topic to take up with Jon once they were alone. This one was already planting seeds of betrayal amongst the Northern lords. He was a threat that would have to be yanked out, stem and root, before his sickness was allowed to fester within the ranks.

If need be, Harry would deal with it himself, quietly.

Men died in battle by the droves. One more that fell wouldn’t gain notice. At least, not as long as he took care of it the smart way.

But it would all depend on Jon and how he wanted it handled.

Harry had never killed a man outside of Voldemort and the Death Eater skirmishes after the war. If there was one thing he hated about the world he woke up to, it was that it was making a killer out of him, something Dumbledore and Tom had failed to do. And Morgana knows they tried.

This was a different world than his last, a crueler, bloodier world, with no sheen of civilization or sophistication to gloss over the savage underbelly.

He would adjust.

He just hoped that would still be himself once everything was said and done and his fate was once more conquered.
Jon and Harry traded guarded looks.

“Of a sort.” Was Jon’s clipped answer. “I went into the Land of Always Winter for a reason, and now that it has been fulfilled I have returned. I’ll tell you this.” He gave the lords and knights a grim look. “None of the lions will be ready for what we have to unleash. Now,” he looked up at Harry. “I do believe I’ve waited long enough for your report, Harry. What have you learned on your travels?”

“Stannis accepted your terms.” He began to murrmers of the lords and knights, many surprised that a Baratheon would bend the knee to a Targaryen. “He has embraced his Targaryen blood and should, if things have gone along correctly, be meeting the Dornish fleet to ready the siege of Storm’s End. Renly Baratheon as you know has joined with the Reach and the Tyrells and declared himself king, despite your Grace’s claim to the throne.”

The mutters turned angry at that. For the lions to grasp at the crown was one thing, but Renly was only able to make a play for the throne through his Targaryen blood, the same as Robert. By all rights he should have ceded to either Stannis or Jon, and not a northern lord nor Targaryen man would support him, making the youngest Stag have one hells of an uphill battle to fight.

“However,” Harry continued dryly. “He’s a cunning little shit, I’ll give him that. He’s going to try and wait, making a progress through the Reach to bolster his numbers and cut off the food supply to King’s Landing and the crownlands, and let our army and the Lions wear each other down before swooping in and tearing apart the remains.”

“But.” Smalljon Umber said, a dawning look of realization on his shaggy face. “With Stannis laying siege to the Storm Lands he’ll have to fight. He’ll have no choice.”

“Baratheon doesn’t know that.” Ser Gerold said speaking spitefully of the youngest Stag. “It’d never occur to the ponce that his big brother would try and snatch his rightful inheritance from under Renly’s entitled arse.”

“Harry?” Jon prompted. “Did you meet with Renly while you were southron?”

“No.” Harry shook his head, regretfully. “There was no way to make that happen within the time limit. He’s surrounded himself with what he calls his ‘Rainbow Guard’ and retainers, plus a force of 100,000 men and horse that’s only growing as he moves through the Reach.”

The Lords and knights roared as they heard the number of men Baratheon had to command.

“However,” Harry shouted to be heard, the lords calming down at a motion from Jon. “If I were a betting man I’d say that once Stannis takes Storm’s End in the name of his grace King Jon I Targaryen, Renly will run straight for King’s Landing and the Crownlands. If he could take the city, with his force of numbers, he’d be able to hold it for years, especially if he can keep food coming in from the Reach.”

“We need to push the Lions southron.” Robb spoke after several long moments as the war council considered Harry’s report. “Force the two armies into an engagement the way Baratheon is trying to wait us out. If we can break the siege of Riverrun we can force the Lions either back to the Westerlands or keep them pinned at Harrenhal and the southron Riverlands.”

“Exactly.” Harry nodded, approving of the plan. It was almost identical to the one Jon and he had already discussed as they waited for the lords to gather.

“And my Vale Lords?” Jon asked, leaning forward. Technically the Vale was still controlled by Jon
Arryn’s son Robyn. But there were rumors regarding Lysa Tully and her affection for Petyr Baelish that had many questioning the legitimacy of the boy, as with each passing year he grows more unstable and looks less like a man from the line of Arryn.

With Jon’s rightful claim to the Eyrie as Jon Arryn’s great-nephew, no matter what orders came from the Eyrie many were likely to support Jon as he took the Iron Throne.

“An army is making its way down the High Road as we speak.” Harry smiled grimly. It was one of the only good things he had to report beyond Stannis’s alliance.

“Excellent.” Jon stood and started pointing to various spots on the map as he enlightened the war council as to the current state of his forces, including their men. “With Stannis’s alliance, Lord Manderley will have no trouble blockading the Blackwater by sea with the northern fleet.” Jon set the merman banner of House Manderley at the opening of the Blackwater to the Narrow Sea. “And some of our loyal Targaryen forces will hold Dragonstone, using it as a base of operations for the fleet. Stannis and a portion of the Dornish men led by Prince Oberyn Martell will move to take Storm’s End within a turn, while another contingent led by Prince Quentyn Martell clears out the riff raff from the Stepstones and retakes Bloodstone Castle for House Targaryen.”

Eyes widened at that, the Stepstones having been out of control for years, ever since a Targaryen king stopped garrisoning it. Bloodstone Castle was an old Valaryian stronghold, much like Dragonstone. If the Dornish could clear out the pirates, Jon would control commerce that needed to pass from the Narrow Sea into the Summer Sea and vice versa.

It had the potential to ruin the economy of the Reach and the Westerlands.

Which was undoubtedly the point.

Jon continued:

“Word has come that Balon Greyjoy has declared himself King,” the Targaryen scion sneered. “Of the Iron Islands and the North.”

An uproar from the Northern lords liked to have deafened Harry, so great was their collective outrage.

“My lords, my lords!” Ser Arthur Dayne stepped forward, calling for them to control themselves.

“Thank you, Ser Arthur.” Jon nodded his head regally to the Lord Commander. “As I was saying.” Jon paused to give his lords a censuring look. “Greyjoy has declared himself, but,” he stressed. “Is currently pinned down in Pyke as our Targaryen Fleet was ready for such a maneuver and already stationed to blockade the Islands.” Jon snorted. “He didn’t wait to recall the Iron fleet nor that of his Ironborn Lords, most of whom were busy reaving the Westerlands under a Targaryen charter. By the time they return,” Jon gave a vicious smirk. “It will be to a King that has lost their home. The Ironborn are currently outnumbered by over fifty ships and a thousand men. The Greyjoys can choose the Wall or their heads, their lordship is finished.”

Theon Greyjoy, one of Robb’s closest friends and Heir to the Iron Islands made a strangling gasp at that pronouncement, gaining him a flat look from the King.

“Problem, Greyjoy?” Jon demanded.

“No.” Theon bit out, shoving back his rage. “Your Grace.”

Turning away from the seething Theon, Jon turned back to the map.
“The rest of the Dornish fleet is making its way north, to reinforce the siege at Pyke.” Jon said. “Once the Iron Islands have fallen, and Stannis has taken Storm’s End, the Targaryen and Dornish fleets will move to blockade the Westerlands and the Reach.” He swept his hands across the map with a flourish. “After we break the siege at Riverrun, and the men of the Vale have met us, half the forces will force Tywin south while the rest move to take the West. We will squeeze them.” He stabbed a finger viciously against the location of Casterly Rock. “And harry them until they climb back into their Rock.”

“Where the fleet will be waiting.” Robb commented, a half-grin on his smooth face. “They’ll have nowhere to run or hide.”

“Exactly.” Harry nodded. “But the crux of the matter is to force Tywin’s half of the Lannister forces south to meet Renly’s advance. Even with reinforcements from the Vale and Dorne, Renly’s current army is just too vast to take on without a shit-ton of luck on our side.”

“Still.” Robb shrugged, giving the other Lords a shit-eating grin. “We do have a dragon on our side.”

“Dragon or no dragon.” Jon said once all the lords and knights had gotten a chuckle out of that. “I’ve no intention of winning the Seven Kingdoms the same way my forefathers did. They won with dragons and then what?” He demanded of the lords. “A mere two hundred and eighty years, give or take, before they were overthrown. Men of Westeros may fear dragons but they respect strength of arms, and that is how I will take back what is rightfully mine.” He spoke with passion, raising the blood of every sword-wielding man there. “By strength of arms and with the blade of my sword!” He shouted, slamming one fist down on the table. “With Fire and Blood! We will take the Iron Throne!”

“Dragon in the North!” The lords shouted once more.

“THE DRAGON IN THE NORTH!”

Jon sat back, reveling in the shouts and chants of the men, the force outside the tent walls picking up the refrain.

His lover leaned down and whispered in his ear.

“And you doubted them.” Harry breathed. “These are your men, your Grace.” He smiled against ebony hair. “Jon Targaryen, the first of your Name. King of the First Men.”

“Yes, they’re mine.” Jon agreed to Harry under his breath. “Now I just need to get them across the fucking Trident!”

…

Later that day found Harry along with Lord Robb Stark and an honor guard which included Ser Oswell Whent of the Kingsguard, riding up to the Twins to treat with Lord Walder Frey.

He was anxious at taking Robb Stark with him, if only from the nightmares the man had starred in over the last fortnight.

The Twins still gave him a shudder, Harry had to use Occlumency to hide his unease from his companions. It wouldn’t do for the King’s trusted right-hand to be jumping out of his skin at the thought of entering an unknown situation. As they rode, Robb filled him in on Lord Walder Frey and the history of House Frey.
“...my mother always said that my grandfather called him ‘The Late Walder Frey.’” Robb summed up. “His family has a history of not taking sides until battles are nearly decided and then trying to steal glory.” The young northern Lord sneered at the very thought. “Cravens, the lot.” He snorted. “Better to stay neutral altogether than try and claim rewards that weren’t yours to begin with.”

“As you say.” Harry nodded before asking: “Bad blood between the Tullys and Freys then?”

“You could say that.” Robb shifted restlessly in his saddle as a small group of Frey knights rode out to meet them and escort them to their Lord. “Lord Hoster refused a match recently between my uncle Edmure and any of Lord Frey’s many daughters or granddaughters.”

Harry winced at that. It was no less than a slap in the face to the Freys, who were one of the most powerful of the Riverlords despite being a relatively young House. He was starting to get an idea about how the massacre in his dreaming vision might have come about.

“Their standing with the rest of the Houses King Jon has won?”

“Shaky.” Robb said with a shake of his handsome auburn head. “The Freys aren’t widely liked or respected despite their wealth and influence. Their closest alliance is with the Lannisters, Lord Walder’s second son Emmon married Genna Lannister, Lord Tywin’s sister, though Lord Tywin disapproved of the match at the time.”

“Hmm.” Harry commented, speaking too low for the approaching Frey men to overhear. “Jon hasn’t asked for anything less than a miracle with this endeavor, has he?”

“No,” Robb gave a chuckle. “A miracle may be what it takes, all of my overtures were spurned. It wasn’t until scouts reported Jon’s coming that the Frey’s sent for a parlay.”

“Wonderful.” Harry cursed under his breath before greeting the Frey party, which included the second son that Robb had just spoken of.

“Lord Robb Stark,” Emmon Frey nodded curtly towards the Lord Paramount of the North, his face sour enough to curdle milk. “My father, the Lord of the Crossing, welcomes your party to the Twins. Follow me.”

They were shown in silence through the halls of the first castle, where Walder Frey lived in opulence if not good taste.

Emmon Frey led them into a large open hall, at the head of which, blind, toothless Lord Walder Frey sat in state, his newest wife, taken a few turns before on his ninetieth name-day at his side with about half of his hundred legitimate children and grandchildren arrayed at his side and at tables spread throughout the room. Knights and guards lined the walls, staring stonily out at the party of northern men and the sole member of the Kingsguard. For his part, Harry was thrown back into that night at Dragonstone, where the ghostly figures of a murdered Robb Stark and his direwolf – who even now padded along silently at Robb’s side to much consternation and even fear from the Frey’s – and the scent of old blood filled his senses.

“Lord of the Crossing, Lord Walder Frey,” his eldest son and heir Stavron Frey stood and took charge of the gathering as Emmon stepped aside with poor manners at being upstaged once more by his elder and much-beloved brother.

Harry was already sneaking out the rifts in the united fabric the Freys were trying to present, eyes darting to-and-fro as he sensed the general current of thought among them.
Many were grasping and avaricious, mostly thinking of what they can demand to allow the northern army to cross.

But none so much as their Lord.

Of them all, Harry would chuck the lot.

Except, perhaps, for Ser Stavron who was still speaking.

There, at least, seemed to be one Frey worth redeeming. Only time would tell if more were to be found among the grasping, greedy offspring of the Lord of the Crossing. Time that Harry wasn’t sure he had.

Jon’s entire campaign hinged on making this Crossing.

Harry would ensure it for him, if he had to kill every last Frey there.

And the truth of that ruthlessness inside him scared him down to his toes.

Westeros was changing him, in both subtle and unsubtle ways.

And it terrified him.

“…greets Lord of the North Robb Stark and the envoys for the joined North and Targaryen armies.” Stavron said grandly. “Who greets the Lord of the Crossing?”

Robb stepped forward.

“The Lord of the North greets the Lord of the Crossing.” Robb said correctly. “Along with the Lord of Always Winter, Lord Harry Potter-Black, right hand of the true King, King Jon Targaryen, first of his name. With us are Ser Oswell Whent, knight of the Kingsguard, Ser Smalljon Umber, Ser Cley Cerwyn, and Ser Rickard Karstark.”

“Lord of Always Winter?” Lord Walder Frey wheezed, a scoffing look on his aged and sagging face. “Who are you Lord of? Wildlings, direwolves, and giants?”

The gathered Freys joined in their lord’s derisive laughter, to much disdain from the northern knights, Robb, and Ser Oswell.

Harry simply answered him mildly, not allowing the old bastard to have the pleasure of getting his goat.

“You might find, Lord Frey.” He said, Grey Wind surging forward with a growl at a joint gesture from Harry and Robb. “That being a lord over direwolves is worth more than a southerm army.” Grey Wind snarled and snapped, making several ladies cry out in fear or even faint at the sight.

“Hush, Grey Wind.” Robb commanded once the laughter had cut off abruptly, the direwolf falling silent immediately at the command, twirling with a flourish of his tail and trotting back to his human’s side.

“Moreover.” Harry continued as if hadn’t just implicitly threatened the Lord of the Crossing. “Title or not, I am the right hand of the King. You would do well to respect that, if you respect nothing else, Late Lord Frey.”

“Late Lord Frey, this man calls me.” Walder Frey huffed to his offspring. “And yet he wanted to treat with me to open the gates of the Twins and allow him and an army passage over the Trident.
Why should I allow such a thing, when he and others like him spit on the name of Frey? Why I…”

Before the Lord of the Crossing could continue, Harry cut him off at the pass.

“There will be no negotiation.” Harry’s voice could freeze the land from whence he came. “No treating.”

“Then why have you come, Lord of Always Winter?” Lord Frey sneered, spitting at where he heard them stop in contempt.

“To take your measure, Lord Frey.” Harry answered. “And order you to open the gates of the Twins for crossing. This is not another Lord you are testing, Lord Frey.” He reminded them all. “This is a King, a scion of the Dragons and of House Targaryen. King Jon will not bring you gold and marriages and honors for doing your duty. But he will bring you Fire and Blood if you do not.” He warned. “You have until dawn tomorrow to make your decision.” He swept his gaze meaningfully to Ser Stavron. “I hope for the sake of your children and descendants that it’s the right one, else House Frey will go the way of King Harren the Black, another man who thought he could take a stand against the dragons.”

…

Robb stared between his cousin Jon, who he’d thought he knew better than any other man living, and his cousin’s new ‘right-hand’ Lord Harry, completely mystified by what had gone on between Lord Harry and Lord Frey.

“Why?” Robb asked helplessly, completely at sea with this new, ruthless version of the man who’d grown up at his side. Jon had always been a bit…cold…much like Robb’s father Ned. But Robb had blamed that on his mother Catelyn’s disdain for his cousin. He never even considered that one day Jon might try for the Iron Throne, or if he did what it might mean. Perhaps he should have. Then the way Jon was acting wouldn’t have been such a shock to his system.

This wasn’t the same boy that had left Winterfell at his father’s behest.

No.

That much had been made clear to him.

What remained to be seen was what place Robb would have in the life of the man and king that had replaced said boy.

Once, he was firm in knowing that he was Jon’s closest friend.

Now that confidence is gone, and with it much of his security in where he stood with Jon, both as a friend and cousin.

He’d also taken note of a most…strange…closeness between Jon and Lord Harry. It was almost as if… No. It couldn’t be. Jon would’ve told him if he preferred males to females like his father and bearer…wouldn’t he have?

“Why what?” Jon asked as he brushed one hand down Ghost’s back in an absent gesture of affection as he and Harry poured over missives that were continuing to arrive via raven, placing and replacing markers on the map as information arrived and was discussed.

Robb was supposed to be helping but he was still trying to process the trip to the Twins.
“Why what, he asks.” Robb grumbled, flinging up his arms. “Why did you send me on a pointless mission maybe? Why you had Lord Harry threaten the Lord of the Crossing? Why bother having me press them for a meeting when you had no intention of discussing a toll for the Crossing?” Robb was truly building up a head of steam, his redheaded half-southron temper about to blow. “Why didn’t you tell me that was your plan in the first place? Or maybe,” Robb’s voice turned sharp. “Why Lord Harry seems to be your closest confidant and advisor when a few turns ago no one had ever heard of the Lord of Always Winter.” Robb was officially done with Jon’s shit, King or not, they were friends as well as blood and he’d have a damn answer from the ‘Young Dragon’ if it was the last thing he did.

He wasn’t called the ‘Young Wolf’ for nothing, he didn’t know how to give up on something once he had it in his jaws.

“Who the fuck is he, Jon?” Robb barked. “And where the fuck did he come from to be your right-fucking-hand?!”

Outside the tent, the Kingsguard winced at the volume of Lord Stark’s question, even if the privacy spells Lord Harry had put up prevented them from actually hearing what was said. It was a testament to the power of Lord Stark’s lungs that they were able to hear as much as they did. The couple of times Lord Harry had made camp with King Jon previously, they never heard a thing. Something they had to be grateful for, knowing full-well the type of relationship their King shared with his right-hand.

There were certain things the Kingsguard had previously been subjected to that they were grateful this King and his lover took steps to prevent repeating. The Mad King’s continual rapes of his sister-wife the gentle Queen Rhaella scraped at their consciences, while his dishonoring of his marriage vows with mistresses – like the one who poisoned his baby-son Jaehaerys – was a milder offence. Thus far the Mad King’s grandson had proven to be cut from a far different cloth, much like his father before him.

They could only hope that this difference remained once King Jon took the Iron Throne.

Inside the tent, Jon gave Harry a look, the latter moving to the far side of the tent and the screened-off bed area to give the cousins an illusion of privacy, settling into lotus position and meditating until he was needed again.

“Robb.” Jon’s voice was soft, almost dangerously so. He loved his cousin, this was true, and found him to be a good man and a compelling commander as evidenced by him mustering over half of the Northern forces in a matter of weeks. But there was something else lurking in Robb’s words and it had nothing to do with their blood connection and everything to do with who they themselves were.

And Jon needed to ferret it out before it blew up in his face, most likely in the middle of a war council or at the least opportune time for Jon to deal with it.

Robb looked away from that gentle voice and those beautiful violet eyes that were a deep purple in the candlelit tent, shamed that he let his temper and hidden thoughts explode in such a manner.

And in front of a veritable stranger no less!

Were Ned Stark alive to see it, Robb would be getting a hiding for that little scene, grown man or no.

“First of all.” Jon continued, sitting back in his chair and steepling his hands before him, Ghost moving to going over to Grey Wind and joining his pack-brother in curling up before the fire in the
brazier near the bed. “The mission wasn’t pointless, though it must seem that way to you. I, we,” he corrected himself to include Harry. “Didn’t tell you the real plan because neither I nor Harry were sure which tack he was going to take once he was inside the castle. The point of the mission was that: getting Harry inside the Twins.”

“Why?” Robb asked, still baffled but calmer. “Why was getting one man inside a secure fortress so very important that you made a fool of me and the others with me?”

“Because.” Jon answered simply. “Harry is the Warrior-Who-Waits.” Jon explained, Robb’s eyes growing in shock and surprise with every word. “He has magical powers not seen ever before in Westeros. One of those, and one of the most necessary to my victory, is his ability to know the thoughts and feelings of others.” Jon waved a reassuring hand when Robb went pale at that news. “Oh, he doesn’t do it often and he rather hates doing it on my order, but it saves a lot of time and a lot of blood knowing who I can trust and exactly how far I can trust them.”

“Then the threat…” Robb trailed off thinking. “He’d seen something he didn’t like and was trying to provoke thoughts and reactions to the forefront. And…” Robb continued turning the scene over in his mind. “He saw something he did like in Ser Stavron.”

“That’s my take on it, yes.” Jon nodded, “though I haven’t had a chance to quiz him in private to know for certain.”

“That’s why you trust him.” Robb shook his head in realization. “And why father sent you north of the wall in the first place. You went to the Tomb and woke him to fight for you.”

“Not necessarily.” Jon had to admit with the faintest of sheepish blushes. “I knew Uncle Ned wanted me to wake him but I had no guarantee that he’d fight for me. The legend was rather vague on what the Warrior would do once woken, only that it would eventually lead to the Usurpers failing to take the Throne. There was no way to know if he would support myself, my aunt, or even this Aegon Blackfyre my uncle Aemon has spoken of.” Jon shrugged, helplessly. “But it was the last thing Uncle Ned ever asked of me, so…”

“You saw it done.” Robb finished for him, understanding completely.

His father had had that way about him, he was compelling, commanding respect from all who knew him.

It had left Robb with rather large boots to fill in the wake of his murder.

Thankfully, of the two of them, Jon had the bigger shadow to step out of with having Crown Prince Rhaegar Targaryen as a father. He’d been beloved by nobles and smallfolk alike, and was known for being the pinnacle of what a Knight of the Realms should be. Robb wouldn’t want a legend like that to live up to.

Ned Stark cast a big enough shadow without adding the weight of Seven Kingdoms behind it.

“That’s why you trust him, then?” Robb asked, voice half-hopeful that that was all it was. “Because he’s the Warrior-Who-Waits?”

Jon shook his head with a sigh, resting heavily against the chair back.

He should’ve foreseen this when he took Harry as a lover, but he had no way of knowing it would come up this soon or from Robb no less. He thought he’d have more time before others started to question his relationship with Harry. Or gods forbid, try and convince him to wed some insipid Lord’s daughter to provide an Heir to the Throne the way Lord Cerwyn had thrown his daughter at
Robb, trying to make her Lady of the North.

At least Robb had had more sense than to fall for that scheme, though both of them knew it wouldn’t be the last.

“I trust him at my back because he fought an army of White Walkers to protect myself and the men of the Night’s Watch.” Jon answered, tip-toeing with great care around the hidden question-in-a-question. “I trust his advice because he’s proven himself, bringing back a hard-won alliance and valuable information on my enemies.” He blew out a breath and faced Robb dead-on, purple eyes clashing with Tully blue. “And I trust him with myself because he’s trustworthy but mostly because he’s Harry, and he doesn’t know the meaning of betrayal, having been betrayed in the past.”

If there was one thing Jon was sure of with Harry, it was that he would die first before even the faintest flicker of thought of turning his cloak crossed his mind.

His heart may be at risk with the other man, but never his throne or his secrets, and there weren’t many that Jon would be willing to chance such things with.

Especially in the current climate of Westeros.

“I see.” Robb said with a small nod, turning towards the tent flap. “I will leave you be then, with your Harry.”

And before Jon could call him back, Robb was gone, out to take his turn at watch as the camp had quietly been put on alert for an attack in the night.

“He loves you, you know.” Harry commented as he came to sit on one arm of Jon’s chair, the King’s arm coming up to wrap around his lithe waist. “Robb.” He clarified at Jon’s half-confused look. “Loves you.”

“Oh course he does.” Jon brushed off his lover’s implication. “He’s my family.”

“I think he wants to be your family in a whole ‘nother context, Jon.” Harry said drily, holding up one hand to cut off Jon’s protests. “He loves you.” Harry repeated. “Whether you return his feelings or could, is between you and him. Just don’t take him for granted.” Harry counseled. “In times of war, we should hold tightly to what little happiness is to be found, it might disappear on the morrow.”

Jon arched a brow at that.

“You’re telling me you wouldn’t be jealous if I took Robb to bed?” He challenged his lover.

“Not so long as I was invited.” Harry gave Jon a lascivious smile, casting his eyes up and down Jon’s sprawled-out length. “He’s not exactly hard on the eyes.”

“It’s pointless.” Jon sighed, rising to his feet and swooping his lover up in his arms to carry him towards the bed, Harry circling his neck with his strong arms as he gave a little gasp of surprise at the romantic gesture. “Robb will need an Heir for Winterfell and I’ll need Heirs for the Iron Throne and Dragonstone and whatever other holdings I keep for my line after this infernal war is done.”

He laid Harry down gently on his bedfurs, leaning propped over him on his outstretched arms, Harry still circling his neck and shoulders, hands tugging lightly at Jon’s dark hair.

“It’s pointless.” He reiterated, stealing Harry’s plump rosy lips with a breath-taking kiss. Lips bruised under the pressure as tongues tangled and cloaks and armor and shirts were frantically
shucked off, hands grabbing and stroking whatever skin they came in contact with.

“Missed you,” Jon gasped as Harry latched on and suckled at the base of his throat, the ebony-haired King pulling back to a whine from his lover before quickly unlacing and shedding first his own then Harry’s boots and leather leggings, almost dropping Harry’s sword belt in the process, his own dagger – the gift from Harry – falling to the tent floor with a thud.

“Missed you.” Harry echoed as he leaned up and with a flex of hidden strength flipped them, straddling Jon and nestling his taut arse on top of Jon’s pulsing cock. The other man was so stiff and long that he nearly touched his navel before Harry scooted back to grind against him, Jon’s hands shooting to gasp Harry by the hips and try to control his rolling, seductive movements.

If Jon had had any notion of Harry being in any way innocent they were quickly dispelled as the wizard moved in ways better able to incite lust and desire than that of the most practiced whore.

Hands more used to casting magic than wielding a sword – though he was no slouch after more than a decade of practice before being locked away, skills quickly coming back to him as he dueled Jon – flicked and rubbed at Jon’s tight nipples, bringing another set of gasps and moans pouring from the royal’s lust-parted mouth, his eyes appearing black with his blown pupils and desire-darkened purple irises.

Growling low as a particular roll of Harry’s hips had the head of his heated cock brushing over the wizard’s rosebud, Jon latched onto his shoulder and leg and flipped them over once more, taking the dominant position back from the teasing little minx.

Keeping one hand on Harry, pinning him to the furs, Jon reached over and dug in the pack waiting beside the bed, searching. Turning his attention back to the naked and panting vision in his bed, Jon gave him a wicked grin and an arch of a brow as he held up a bottle of scented oil for his lover’s approval. Which he rapidly got, Harry’s eyes blowing wide with desire as his mind caught up with what he was seeing, only able to gasp, “yes” in answer to the implied question.

This was Westeros on the eve of an expected ambush. Harry wasn’t about to risk having Jon die on him before being able to consummate their relationship. Too many times had people died on him with things left undone or words unsaid. He wouldn’t let that happen here, not with Jon. Until or even if, they were bonded, Jon was just as easy to kill as any other warrior in Westeros. Harry could lose him this night to a soldier having a lucky day or the next to a cold. That was the risk inherent in loving anyone in this place and age.

But Harry was willing to risk it nonetheless.

Otherwise, why bother waking at all?

Coating three fingers with the sweet almond oil, Jon positioned himself kneeling between Harry’s eagerly spread legs, moving one thigh to rest against the other man’s chest, gentle even in his lusty haste.

With a soft touch but firm pressure, Jon circled Harry’s winking rosebud, the wizard having cast a pair of spells to ease his way when Jon was distracted searching for the oil. He could’ve done this part via spell as well, but he enjoyed the sensation of having his lover stretch and tease him manually. And, he gave a groan, Jon was so damned good at it.

Jon moved up as he pumped first two, then three fingers into Harry’s tight heat. It was the tightest, hottest thing he could ever remember feeling and could barely wait to feel it on his cock. But wait he would, not wanting to hurt Harry. No, never hurt Harry. Leaning forward he stole Harry’s parted,
Harry sighed into Jon’s kiss, feet planted on the furs and hips thrusting back against Jon’s teasing fingers that were flirting with his pleasure-button but not really hitting it. He loved the taste he found as his tongue played and dueled with Jon’s own, chasing it back into the king’s mouth and craving more of the taste of him. Harry tangled his hands in Jon’s black hair, tugging and playing as he wrapped one leg around his lover’s hips, returning his kiss most ardently.

“I can’t get enough of you.” He panted, hips arching. “Please, Jon. Please more.”

Nipping lightly at Harry’s kiss-bruised lips, Jon pulled back just enough to coat his burning erection with the oil remaining on his hand before positioning himself at Harry’s now pulsing hole. Staring deep into dazed emerald eyes, Jon pressed forward, hands coming to bracket his lover’s silken-gold shoulders. Pushing forward relentlessly, Jon buried himself deep inside Harry’s hot, oil-slicked channel, mesmerized by the expression of stunned and stunning pleasure on his lover’s pretty face and deep within his gorgeous eyes.

“Fuck,” Harry panted, twisting his head back and forth on the furs, wrapping his second leg around Jon, pulling himself up and into Jon’s excruciatingly slow penetration. “Bastard.” He gasped out. “Tease.”

Jon chuckled low, holding onto his control by the skin of his teeth as Harry clenched around him in waves, sending pleasure spiking up and down his spine, his lover’s lean-but-strong body writhing under him, making his golden skin and pearly-white-and-pink scars gleam with sweat and the light from the low-burning brazier.

Ghost and Grey Wind were content to sleep and ignore the mating humans that disturbed their sleep, Grey Wind even sleeping through his human’s departure.

“Teasing am I?” Jon gasped out as Harry bore down at the same time as he thrust up with his hips, forcing Jon harder into him and finally piercing his prostate with a rough thrust. “Bastard?” He gave a sharp jab against the prostate, making Harry keen low in his throat and tug on his hair, forcing a gasp from Jon’s lips in turn as he clenched down on his sensitive cock-head.

“Know you are.” Harry taunted. “Tease. Been teasing me for weeks.”

Jon growled, thrusting harder and biting sharply at Harry’s neck and the curve of his shoulder, control snapping as Harry cried out for more and harder and yes!

Feeling it tingle at the base of his arousal that signaled an imminent end, Jon reached between them and stroked Harry viciously in time to his hard thrusts at the same time angling his own cock to grind ceaselessly at Harry’s pleasure gland, his lover giving another of his dick-hardening keens at the attention to his neglected cock and throbbing prostate.

“Jon!” Harry cried out, back arcing off the bed as his legs squeezed harshly against his lover’s back and hips. “Oh gods, Jon!”

As he arched and cried out, Harry’s cock pulsed once, twice, three or more times, his hot come arcing between their two sweat-and-passion-slicked bodies, landing in spurts on Harry’s sun-tanned golden chest, pooling in the valleys formed by his rippling musculature.

His lover gave another nip to his parted and panting lips, before thrusting harshly into him, his swinging balls slapping lewdly against Harry’s tight arse. Feeling the heat wash over him in waves, Jon bit down on the curve of where Harry’s shoulder met his neck, marking him as his own on the
outside as he buried his cock to the hilt and marked him from the inside with his burning seed. He thrust a few more times in little motions as it poured from him in rivers of come, filling his lover to the brim.

Finished at last, Jon let go of his biting hold on Harry shoulder, soothing the sting of the mark with a soft lap of his tongue, as his now-quietsent prick released from his lover’s channel allowing him to collapse next to the still-gently-panting Harry on the furs.

Jon reached up and caressed one downy cheek above the sharp line of Harry’s trimmed and close-cropped beard. Green eyes fluttered open, Harry turning on his side to face Jon, a pretty pink blush burnishing his golden skin into a light bronze. Pursing his lips, Harry bussed him with a whisper of a kiss on the meat of his hand below Jon’s thumb.

“What?” He asked, fighting to keep his eyes open in his post-coital drowsiness.

“Nothing.” Jon answered, laughter ripe in his voice. Harry was being the very picture of a sleepy-kitten with his drooping eyelids and sleepy-purring question. “Just thinking.”

“‘Bout wha?” Harry yawned around the query, shifting restlessly, arms curling around the pillows as he turned onto his stomach and burrowed deeper into the bedfurs.

“You.” Jon tucked himself around his lover as Harry finally stopped twisting this way and that, the wizard remembering at the last moment to cast a cleaning charm over them and the bed to prevent any unfortunate stickiness when the Kingsguard woke them in a few hours. “How gods-damned-glad I am that I was the one who managed to wake you in all the thousands upon thousands of years you laid alone in that tomb.”

Harry turned to face him, placing a gentle kiss on Jon’s furrowed brow.

“No one else would’ve been able to.” He lifted Jon’s unvoiced worries, intuiting that the young King was worrying over the bond forged through his waking was affecting them, forcing their emotions. His Jon was such a King already, worried about things that didn’t even exist and if Harry had it his way, they never would. He would never manipulate the bond between them to advance their relationship. That wasn’t what it was for and he would die before abusing it in that fashion.

The bond existed to teach him quickly about his new world and then later for him to be able to act in the best interest of the true King or leader of his world. That was all. It was how he was able to ignore his own desires to travel and instead seek out reconnaissance on the King’s enemies. He was imprisoned with the intent of being both shield-and-sword to whoever woke him. Perhaps it was time to enlighten Jon on just what his being able to do so entailed.

“Only the rightful ruler of these lands would’ve been able to wake me.” Harry propped himself up on one arm, staring down at Jon with an uncommon look of soberness on his pretty face. “One who had claim to the Throne not just by right of inheritance, but also by magic and by blood.” He revealed his conclusions regarding what he’d found from using magics on various people in the seven kingdoms – both with and without their consent. “The Blood of the First Men.” He announced. “And that of Old Valyria. Both have magic running strong in their veins. And without magic and a sacrifice of blood, claimant after claimant and king after king could have marched up to my crypt and did as you did, and still I would have slept on.”

He leaned down and nipped sharply at Jon’s pouting lower lip, still kissed with darkened color from their furious kisses and passionate coming together. Swiping his index finger through the droplet of crimson he’d brought to the surface, Harry held it up to the light, illustrating his point in a visceral way.
“Blood.” He said simply, then cast his Patronus, the ghostly-silver of Harry’s dragon animagus form lighting up the tent with its unearthly glow. “Magic.” And lastly swept a thumb gently under the Targaryen-violet of Jon’s eyes. “And right of rule. Only with all three bound into the same being would I have awoken, so complex was the enchantment that trapped me. It had to be.”

He admitted the last anxiously, nibbling lightly on his lower lip as he thought, casting his mind back to the time that came before, a time that was slowly being worn away as his memory integrated thousands and thousands of years of half-remembered conversations picked up from the spells Teddy cast over his tomb and the many years where someone was present near-constantly. It was a lot for one mind to comprehend, so his magic had protected him, only allowing him to assimilate so much at once.

It was also one of the reasons why his personality was slowly changing, as he grew accustomed to the Westerosi ways, as barbaric and bloody as his former people would have found them.

Above all, Harry Potter was highly adaptable.

It was what would have made him such an excellent Slytherin had he chosen greatness over conformity.

And it was what would make him an excellent Consort and Hand-of-the-King, if Jon could convince him to accept both or either position at his side.

Jon Belarion of Houses Stark and Targaryen might not have all the information about Harry’s past or even his capabilities, but he knew power when he saw it, and Harry had it in spades. And power above all, was intoxicating to his Targaryen blood, its draw only tempered by the wisdom and steely control of his Stark half, the two side of the young King often at war over his wants and desires versus the honor and justice that helped form him at his very core. Had he been raised a Targaryen by his father Rhaegar in the southron Court, Jon would likely have been a very different King.

As it stood, he’d been raised in turns by his bearer and his uncle in the very heart of the North and even Beyond-the-Wall, creating as different a creature from a purely Targaryen prince as Winter was to Summer.

Perhaps the Seven Kingdoms would be better for it, though only time would tell the tale.

“Nothing less than a three-fold enchantment based in blood would have held me.” Harry continued. “Especially since at the time of my imprisonment a case could have been made that I had a right to rule my homeland due to both who I was by birth and who I defeated. The Dark Lord I killed had in effect made himself the supreme leader of my homeland, when I killed him magic endowed me with everything of his, making me his magical Heir. I could very well have declared myself a King or Lord or even Emperor of Wizarding Britain and there would’ve been nothing they could’ve done about it.” Harry shook his head in bemusement at the very thought. Who the fuck would want to rule those idiotic sheeple? It would’ve been a thankless effort in herding cats with a constant migraine attached.

No, Thank You.

“And absolutely nothing,” he stressed coming to the point of his speech. “About any of it forced either of us to feel anything but the bond between King and vassal – and even that might be giving it too much credit. I have no doubt, with as suppressed as magical ability is in Westeros, that I could’ve broken the bond between us at any time if I found it distasteful. But I haven’t.” Harry leaned down and gave Jon one last, deep kiss before burying himself back into his pillow. “And I won’t, not unless you asked me to three times spread out over a series of time so I knew you were
serious and not simply reacting in the heat of the moment.”

“You won’t, will you?” Jon gave a relieved chuckle as his worries, undefinable even to himself though Harry seemed to have a good read on them, slid away in the wash of his lover’s words. “No matter how much I beg?”

“One: I’ve yet to meet a King or ruler worthy of the title who ever begged.” Harry popped one emerald eye open to glare up at Jon balefully, the picture of a riled kitten. “And two: I’m your sword-and-shield. I’ll protect you, even from yourself. And I fail to foresee any situation where being permanently parted from your Warrior-Who-Waits as a good or necessary action for either you or your realms. Sleep.” He demanded, smacking his smirking king lightly with a pillow thanks to a well-controlled levitation charm.

“All right, all right.” Jon laughed into the pillow as he grabbed it out of the air. “As my Lord Potter-Black commands.”


…

Sometimes, Harry mused to himself in the darkest hour of the early morning as he blocked a wildly-swung sword with an upward thrust of his Stygian steel blade Thanatos, the other castle-forged steel shattering upon the contact, the backlash forcing the Frey man-at-arm’s arm to fall limp at the blow, he really hated being right.

The attack had come as expected, Lord Frey and his more intemperate sons calling for an ambush of the encamped army in the dead of night when the men would be asleep save for a few weary-eyed sentries.

Or at least, that was what the Freys had hoped for.

Instead they found a fully-alert and battle-ready force more than seven times their size.

It wasn’t a battle; it was a slaughter.

One made even worse when the mounted horse of Jon’s Targaryen loyalists chased the retreating Frey foot back across the first gate and onto the Crossing proper, only for the retreating force to be pinned against the second gate that refused to open and allow them passage to the safety waiting on the other side.

Ser Stavron Frey, Lord Walder’s eldest son and Heir, had disdained to join what he’d renounced as a craven attack and had returned to his command of the second and most westerly castle that made up the paired twins. It was on his order that the gates remained closed and the way shut for his father’s half of the foot, the other fifteen-hundred men and all of the one-thousand horse having been garrisoned in the western castle and the fields surrounding it in anticipation of marching orders. A measure that saved them from being cut-down by the advancing Northern army.

And that would save them a second time as in their bloodlust it was unlikely that the angry and tired men belonging to King Jon Targaryen would have taken note of who were loyal to Ser Stavron and who to Lord Walder, the shut gate preventing a total annihilation of every man-at-arms belonging to House Frey.

Harry saw Jon and Robb fighting against Ser Emmon Frey and several of his brothers with assistance from the Kingsguard as he stopped for a moment to cast an eye over the blood-drenched bridge in search of a new target.
Pickings were slim on the ground, as with their preparations made, the Targaryen-Northern army had quickly responded when the first torch thrown by Ser Emmon set one of the tents at the edge of the encampment alight, the sentries quickly sounding the alarm as the Freys watched in shock for long moments as the fire was smothered but not before illuminating the soldiers pouring out from their bedrolls in full armor, the knights quickly swinging into the saddle and giving chase when it became apparent that rather than a quick-and-dirty rout, it was to be a bloody slaughter of the Freys.

Moving with the Seeker’s speed he’d been known for in Britain and that had made him so hard for the Death Eaters to pin down and just fucking kill already, Harry blocked a blow to the back that would’ve paralyzed or killed one of the Karstarks, gaining a grunt and a nod in thanks as the Ser quickly put an end to that Frey man with a swing of his axe.

Regaining his horse, Harry swung up into the saddle and trotted carefully over the wounded or dead bodies of the Frey men, coming to a stop next to the still-seated Jon and Rob who’d handily dispatched their opponents and were in the process of giving orders for their own wounded to be moved back to camp.

They’d routed the Freys and not lost a single man, though there might be some causalities from their wounds during the next day or two, depending on how many men were wounded and how many Harry was able to see to.

He’d learned the hard way that the closer the man was to the blood of the First Men or Old Valyria, the better they took to magical healing.

“You knew this was a possibility.” Robb commented, eyeing Harry with an expressionless mask.

“How? Harry arched a brow with a quirk that wasn’t quite a smile on his lips. “I incited it.”

“Why?” Robb repeated his question from earlier that evening in bafflement. “Why would you incite a battle when we have another and another after that waiting for us against the Lannister?”

“Who were you just fighting against, Lord Stark?” Harry asked pointing to the motionless body of Ser Emmon Frey. “Emmon Frey, husband of Genna Lannister. Of their children three,” Harry held up a trio of fingers. “Three serve under Jaime Lannister’s forces while another is a page at Casterly Rock.” He snorted. “Any man who thought that Walder Frey wouldn’t take a deal from Jon and then turn around and stab him in the back for more of Lannister’s gold and begrudging favor is a fool.” Harry shook his head, emerald eyes locking with Tully blue. “Your grandfather Hoster Tully decided the fate of this battle long before you were even born when he refused to respect the power Walder Frey could command. Tytos Lannister, for all the bad that is said about him, wasn’t entirely a fool, nor is his son Tywin. No matter what words dripped from Walder’s mouth, the only Lord he was about to ally with is his good-family: the Lannisters.”

“Better now, when we were ready Robb.” Jon said leaning over to give his two-coppers. “Then later when Frey turning his cloak could have cost us dearly.”

“I see the wisdom of it.” Robb admitted shaking his head as he looked down at the blood coating his sword and turning the grey stones of the Crossing red. “But inciting a fight when we’re already committed to spilling Westerland blood doesn’t sit easy with me.”

“Good.” Harry said, surprising Robb. “Taking a life should never be easy. That’s one thing I thought your father had already taught you, Robb Stark. Whether it’s in battle, by your order or your sword, or carrying out the King’s Justice, loss-of-life is always a tragedy. Even when it belongs to your greatest and most fearsome enemy.”
With that, Harry put spurs to his horse’s flanks, riding out to take up his position in the healing tents, seeing to the wounded and the dying, leaving the others to continue without him for the time being.

“Alright.” Greatjon Umber spat onto the bloody stones of the Crossing, an arch look on this bearded face. “Where in the hells did you dig that one up, you Young Dragon? He lectures like a Maester, preaches like a Septon, and fights like a demon from the seven hells, him.”

“The Fist of the First Men.” Robb answered wryly, ignoring the look his cousin sent him. “Jon dug him up as you say, at the Fist of the First Men.”

There were gasps and sounds of shock from the Lords and knights and smallfolk who made up the foot who hailed from the North and knew of the story of the tomb hidden deep in the North, though only the Starks were known to know the actual location of it – and of the Warrior who was said to Wait there.

“By all the gods.” Greatjon cursed loudly and at length, buffeting Jon on the shoulder with a blow that would’ve knocked most men to the ground if they weren’t prepared for it. Jon having known as such from personal experience had made sure to tighten his hold with his legs around the horse’s sides so he kept his seat in the saddle, only rocking a bit in reaction. “Dragons and Warriors and direwolves. I tell ya, laddie, if ever there was a war that was going into songs and story books, it’ll be this one for that alone!”

The next afternoon, after taking the eastern castle of the Twins and recovering from a night spent on watch, the joined Northern-Targaryen Army marched through the second gate of the Twins, making camp once more on the Western side of the Trident.

Lord Cerwyn at the head of the entirety of the Northern foot, led them down the Green Fork in hopes to cut off – or at least distract – Tywin Lannister’s thirty thousand men and prevent them from joining with his son Jaime’s force besieging Riverrun.

Jon would be leading the horse himself with Lord Robb and the rest of the Northern and Targaryen lords and knights at his side.

Or at least he would be as soon as the messy business of cleaning up Walder Frey’s folly was done and over.

In the great hall of the Twins, where a mere day before Lord Walder Frey had presided in state over most of his many descendants and spat on the emissary sent by a King, that same King sat in his former chair and levied judgement down upon him and those of his men and family who were loyal to him.

Harry had already done the dirty work of discovering who was truly loyal to Walder, who was guilty of treason or other misdeeds in their own right, and who was trustworthy enough to hold blameless in the actions of yestereen.

Now there was only sentencing and passing Lordship of the Crossing onto another to be done, then they can move out to rendezvous with Lord Mallister and his troops before moving southron with all haste to break the siege before Tywin can ride to Jaime’s aid.

“Walder Frey, formerly known as Lord Walder of House Frey and Lord of the Crossing.” Jon spoke formally, for all that he was attired in his blood-stained riding leathers due to his imminent departure. “You, and those with you some seventy members of House Frey, have all been found guilty of high
treason, conspiracy, and attempted regicide.”

Walder Frey sat stoically before the Young Dragon, unrepentant to the end, and cursing his son and Heir to the skies on the inside. His only regrets were not taking at least one of the damned Wolves or the Dragon himself with him. Or least keelhauling Stavron’s betraying hide.

Though he could appreciate both his Heir’s and the Young Dragon’s cunning.

He’d been bested of that there was no doubt.

Even worse, he’d been tempted and baited into creating his own destruction, and that was what chafed him sour.

“The sentence for your crimes is death.” Jon announced the punishment with a stone face, not an ounce of expression showing. “Those of your male descendants that so choose may have their sentence communicated in exchange for taking the Black. Rise to your feet, if life in service at the Wall is your choice over execution.”

About two dozen of the seventy rose, ranging from a fifty-year-old bastard son of Walder to his sixteen-year-old grandson by one of his trueborn heirs.

“Very well.” Harry spoke, gesturing for those who were to take the Black to follow him as he shot of a Patronus in warning to the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch. “Follow me.”

Harry led them out to an antechamber before conjuring a large rope that wrapped around the wrist of each man’s sword-hand, spreading a gaes on them with each twine of the rope much like the one he cast over the Red Woman and her acolytes. Before a single one could speak a word of surprise, Harry tapped the rope with his wand intoning: “Portus: Castle Black.” The men feeling a fish-hook behind their bellies as their only warning before being whisked away to the eternal cold and aches of the Wall.

Re-entering the great hall, Harry nodded towards the King, signaling that it had been done.

What came next was going to be the hardest action yet that the wizard would be a party to. But even he, with his renowned-soft-heart in his old world had to admit that in this world it had to be done. They couldn’t allow traitors to live. Not now, not ever. It set a precedent that would swiftly lead to a short life and an inglorious death.

Jon had to be seen as strong, just, but above all firm in his actions and leadership. Any sign of weakness would be exploited, not only by his enemies but by his own men as well. As luck would have it, they’d barely dodged an uprising among the northmen, Lord Roose Bolton’s wicked tongue being silenced with the charge of treason he as well as facing, having helped plan the attack the previous night, his bastard Ramsey being found dressed in the blue of the Freys and with a Frey blade and shield in his hands. That along with the evidence Harry had gathered in King’s Landing of his plotting with Tywin Lannister was the end of the Dreadfort Lord, Harry having sent a Patronus to Ser Crispian Celtigar and Ser Dystan Massey to attack and take the Bolton seat if Roose’s men-at-arms wouldn’t surrender it.

Once they’d taken it, Ser Dystan would stay to hold it along with five-hundred men while another five-hundred marched those who chose the Black to the Wall under Aurane Waters before returning to garrison Winterfell once more. The other fifteen-hundred troops, minus whoever fell in taking the Dreadfort, would march to Moat Cailin and support the men of Greywater Watch with another five-hundred souls, the rest coming to hold the Twins in the name of the Targaryen King, allowing whoever stayed on Jon’s order now to come and join the rest of the army wherever they might be in
the turn or so the troop movements would take.

“Lord Roose Bolton.” There were grumbles and outcries from the Northern men, the Lords having taken it hard that Roose had turned his cloak for Lannister gold. “You have been found guilty of high treason, collusion with enemies of the crown, and conspiracy to commit murder and regicide, for which I, Jon Targaryen, first of my name, sentence you to death by hanging, your titles and lands hereby stripped from House Bolton from this day until the end of days. May the gods have mercy on all your souls.” Jon’s eyes were hot with rage even as his voice was icy and coldly in control. “For We will not.”

In the end, over fifty men and women of Houses Frey and Bolton were swung on ropes over the Crossing, hung until dead and then left to rot and serve as a warning to all comers of what awaited a traitor under the reign of King Jon Targaryen, the first of his name.

Ser Stavron was raised to Lord of the Western Crossing, Jon splitting the Twins as penalty for the majority of House Frey colluding with the Lannisters, giving the title of Lord of the Eastern Crossing and the castle, land, levies, and income that came with it over to Lord Howland Reed, the ancient rival of House Frey, to administer until the war was over and Jon could distribute the lands and titles as rewards to his greatest and most loyal followers and allies.

For the moment, both castles were held by a loyal Reed knight with a force of five hundred men in the east and a Targaryen-loyalist Velaryon knight in the west with a force of the same, both Lord Howland and Lord Stavron riding out with King Jon as they put the Twins behind them and rode for Riverrun, meeting Lord Mallister and his three-hundred horse and one-thousand foot on the way to break the siege.

Altogether, fifteen hundred foot joined the Northern men from Lord Stavron’s forces, Jon leaving those loyal to him and not the Freys behind at the Twins. Ser Stavron joined the horse with a thousand horse, which along with the three hundred under Lord Mallister brought the numbers of the combined Northern-Targaryen cavalry up to five thousand horse with the men Jon had brought, as well as the horse supplied by Lords Reed, Frey, and Mallister in addition to the Northern force. The foot marching to meet Tywin was around eighteen thousand, making them nearly outdone by two-to-one.

Not that it would matter.

If they could manage to break the siege at Riverrun while still severely outnumbered by the sheer size of the foot Jaime had at his command, it would be a decisive victory for the Targaryen cause and the North.

…

“Jaime Lannister is many things,” the newly-minted Lord Stavron Frey commented in council for the upcoming offensive against the siege. “But a patient man is not one of them.”

“He’s right.” Robb nodded in agreement, leaning over the map that was marked with the most current locations they had of Jaime Lannister’s army that was sitting mostly idle outside the moat and walls of Riverrun. “The Kingslayer is a man of action, he doesn’t have the temperament for a long, protracted siege, your Grace.” Robb lifted his head and cast a glance over at Jon and Harry where they sat side-by-side at the head of the table. “A cunning commander could take advantage of that.”

“Aye,” the Greatjon boomed. “What do ya have in mind, lad?”

Jon gave a slow, vicious smile. “You’re thinking like a wolf, aren’t you cousin?”
“Like a wolf.” Robb grinned. “We take several small forces, with archers and those who know how to move stealthily in the forest surrounding Riverrun. Make the Lannisters think that they’re being raided and their supply lines disrupted by petty thieves and reavers.”

“No way the Kingslayer will let that pass.” Lord Mallister agreed with a nod, having seen first-hand how Jaime was riding rough-shod over the Riverlands.

“No, he won’t.” Robb’s smirk was met by one nearly identical from Jon. “He’ll ride out to catch them himself, leaving his army leaderless and leading himself right into a trap.”

“It’s cunning,” Harry shook his head amused. “And very like a wolf hunting prey. Good show, Stark.”

Robb nodded genially at the compliment, not all of his frost towards his cousin’s right-hand and probable lover melted by his first-hand experience at just how good Harry was at protecting Jon’s interests. Rumors were running amok in camp about the green-eyed Warrior on the back of who’s plan Jon had taken the Twins. Many of them were in awe of the sorcerer with his healing abilities and strange ways. Others were leery of just how much time he spent closeted with the King when he wasn’t tending the injured or sitting in council with the other Lords.

“You’ll lead the forces to bait and trap the Kingslayer, Lord Stark.” Jon made his decision. “Choose the men you want with you and ride out at first light.”

“As you will, your Grace.” Robb nodded, secretly beaming inside at the trust Jon was placing in him by going not only with his plan, but allowing him to see it through.

Harry hid a laugh with a cough, though his amusement was plain for his lover to see easy enough. If Robb had had a tail it would be wagging like a puppy, he was so pleased. But the duty would be good for him, allow him to show his mettle and worth to the other more seasoned knights and lords.

Much like seeing Jon willing and able to pass sentence on the Frey and Bolton traitors had been a statement to the same of just what Jon Targaryen, the first of his name, was made of. What sort of King he would be? It was a test, and others like it, that would likely play out over and over again, all the way to King’s Landing.

“Once Lord Stark has lured the Kingslayer out,” Jon continued with making the plan to break the siege. “We have to be in place to attack the remaining besieging force. Lord Mallister, how many are there all told?”

“Around thirty thousand and holding steady at that number.” The lord of Seagard reported. “With archers and siege machines, and about five thousand horse.”

“Ser Brynden,” Jon turned to the younger brother of Lord Hoster Tully, known as Brynden the Blackfish. He was infamously at odds with his elder brother, but that hadn’t kept him from doing all he could to help the resistance against the Lannister occupation in the Riverlands. “I would like you and your archers to take up posts in the woods all around Riverrun and our approach from the North. Shoot down every raven and capture or kill every outrider that would announce us to the Lannister host.”

“As you will, your Grace.” Ser Brynden nodded, easily agreeing to the task that would have him watching his Cat’s son’s back. Robb looked so much like Catelyn it took him aback when he first saw him as a man riding in with the new King at his side. It was good to be around blood again, even if it was under such wretched circumstances.
“Good.” Jon nodded. “Reports have Ser Marq Piper already working to harry the Lannister supply lines, some of our men in Tully colors will work as bait for the Kingslayer, who has known only early victory in the Riverlands.” Jon’s grin was brutal. “Let us change that.”

“Ser Jaime!” One of his outriders called to their leader. “Tully colors! A few hundred men at most riding North!”

The Kingslayer laughed at the news. “Most be hoping to meet up with the Young Wolf and his band who are stuck sitting on their thumbs at the Twins!” Jaime roared to his men, roughly two thousand horse comprised of knights and Lords of the West, including many Lannister cousins. “Let’s hurry them along, my lads!”

The Westermen shouted in approval, setting spur to their horses and giving chase through a small valley and into the whispering wood before the Tully men, fleeing in fear at the greater force at their heels, came into range.

But before they could strike the first blow, the outriders fell to the damned arrows of the Piper bratling’s ramshackle group of half-a-hundred men who had been harrying his supply lines. Enraged, and discounting that he was now blinded as to what was coming from the North and all sides, Jaime pressed on, following the group of Tully troutlings farther into the wooded valley. To his well-honed ear, the Kingslayer caught the sounds of a warhorn, and then he thought no more except for the next swing of his sword as the Kingslayer found himself under attack on all sides, the valley pinched off ahead and behind, with sheer forested cliff walls to the east and west.

Trapped.

Jaime cursed the gods as he hacked at another man, this time bearing the two towers of House Frey, and betrayed, Lord Walder having promised that he would hold the Northern men as long as possible and give them no aid.

Someone would bleed for this, Jaime swore.

Moreover, someone would die for it.

Grass-green eyes scouting the field, Jaime felt his heart drop and his blood heat anew as he saw the battle lost.

*There.* He decided setting his sight on Stark white and grey, set off by a massive beast of a grey direwolf both on the armor and on the ground, tearing into men at his master’s side. *Lord Robb Stark,* no doubt the architect of Jaime’s defeat, the foul trap veritably stank of wolf cunning.

Target found.

It was time this direwolf learned the cost of taking on a pride of lions.

A price paid in Northern blood.

…

A series of war horn blasts sounded, starting at the whispering wood and continuing south until it reached the gates of Riverrun.

The Lannister forces, split into three camps, each facing a wall of the castle-turned-island by Hoster
Tully opening the sluice gate and flooding the deep trench on the castle’s third side, were just waking when the horns sounded and were confused. Only a few lords and commanders remained, most under Lord Brax at the camp between the northernmost camp which was supposed to be under the leadership of Ser Jaime, and the southernmost camp which was controlled by Ser Forley Prester.

Before the Lannister forces could rally or send out scouts to see what was going on with Ser Jaime’s forces, the vanguard of the Targaryen Army swept down on the leaderless army, King Jon the First at its helm.

Lord Brax, startled and caught off-guard by the roaring horde of Northmen and southron knights flying the banners of Houses Stark and Targaryen as well as that of all the Houses present, including to his shock the lavender field and falling star of House Dayne of Dorne, ordered his men as quickly as they could onto the rafts to cross the Tumblestone and come to the aid of the leaderless Northern camp that is being ridden down by the advancing vanguard.

Jon slashed and hacked his way through the enemy lines, his Kingsguard at his side and Ghost tearing out throats and savaging any arm that held a weapon at his heels. It was ugly, brutal, and bloody as man after man poured out of the Lannister tents. Briefly, Jon wondered at the honor and the glory always espoused about warfare. As far as he could tell, there was naught of it to be found save in the imaginations of bards who had never so much as seen a battle ground.

A Lannister knight almost had himself a real good day, making it passed Jon’s guard and nicking his thigh where it was unprotected at the joint plate.

The King cursed as he struck back, harder and faster, his blade finding the weaker mail at the neck of the knight’s armor and finishing him with a bloody arc of arterial spray, coating Jon’s already red-and-black Targaryen armor with dripping blood.

He paused a moment to clear his vision from the gush, searching out the four white cloaks of his Kingsguard and being pleased to see them still standing, Ghost leaping and tearing at a knight wearing the quartered devices of Houses Frey and Lannister – one of Emmon Lannister’s get.

A soft ‘pop’ a few feet away had him slicing a bloody swathe through the Lannister forces, reaching Harry once he’d cleared a path to the wizard’s side as the Lord of Always Winter slashed and hacked with his bastard sword in one hand and a vicious long-dagger in the other, the dagger finding the weak spots in any armor with ease.

“Did you do it?” Jon called out to his right-hand, letting out a punch-drunk laugh as Harry gave him a high salute with his sword before turning back-to-back with the bloody King.

“Aye!” Harry shouted back. “And I bring news! Lord Brax and his men have fallen into the river, drowned for their folly!”

“Smalljon!” The King shouted towards the massive man with the warhorn hanging from his belt a good ten yards away and doing battle with a trio of foot soldiers who quickly fell with a few efficiently brutal swings of his great axe. “Sound the advance!”

“Yes, your Grace!” Smalljon smashed another soldier to the ground, then lifted the horn and blew three sharp blasts.

At this signal, the troops of House Umber and House Mallister, led by the same Lords, poured from the south, having moved to flank the southernmost camp under the very gates and walls of Riverrun. Lord Mallister commanded the troops while Greatjon Umber led a smaller contingent to rescue the hostages Jaime Lannister had paraded before the walls of Riverrun ever since the Tully force had lost
the battle beneath the walls.

Seeing the attack, a Lannister knight ordered a shield wall to stymie the coming charge.

A mistake as it turned out, as it left their backs open to the gates, a situation that Lord Blackwood quickly took advantage of, leading the survivors of the Battle of Riverrun out of the gates they’d sheltered behind and attacking the Lannister flank.

Ser Forley Prester, seeing men fall and Lord Brax drown, the siege being pressed against the walls that they’d thought to conquer, knew the day was lost. Discarding the thought to wait for an absent Ser Jaime to ride to their rescue, Ser Forley ordered a retreat, mounting his horse and corraling what men he could to break the line and run west towards Golden Tooth and safety with the surviving men.

“Retreat!” The Lions shouted. “Retreat to the West!”

“Hear that, my King?” Harry shouted over his shoulder to the man still back-to-back with him as together they cut a bloody gash in the collective minds of all the enemy men who saw them.

“You’ve one the day, Jon!”

“I hear it!” Jon laughed, battle-lust singing in his veins. “I hear it!”

Before Harry could continue the banter, Ghost halted, his head whipping north towards the whispering woods and let out a great howl of grief and rage.

“Harry,” Jon whispered seeing his own terrible suspicion at the cause of Ghost’s mournful song echoed in his lover’s eyes. “Grey Wind. Robb. Go!” He commanded, calling for a horse. Ser Arthur Dayne, his white cloak splattered with blood and viscera led a pair over, taking his place at the King’s side once Jon was in the saddle. “Go, Harry! The Sword of Morning has my back now! Now go have Robb’s!”

“Yes, your Grace.” Harry nodded his head jerkily before spinning on his heel and disappearing with a soft ‘pop’ to those who were close enough to hear it under the clamor of the still-raging but-slowing battle.

“Come, Ser Arthur.” Jon set his jaw, rage flaring his nostrils. “The battle’s won but I want this to be a decisive victory. Let us see how much a dragon can make a lion bleed.”

…

Harry appeared in the midst of another bloody field, this one bordered by trees with a river cutting through it.

Seeing the banner of House Stark and the furious clash taking place under it, Harry spun on his heel once more, reappearing just to the left of the battling Robb Stark and Jaime Lannister. Robb seemed to have battled Lannister back, an impressive feat in itself, in an attempt to keep the knight from finishing his work of savaging Robb’s familiar, Grey Wind. Seeing the pain in those wild eyes, Harry quickly stunned the animal and placed it in a healing stasis, the only use of magic he used during these confrontations as Jon preferred, save under special circumstances such as his use of Apparation to quickly move from one battlefield to another.

Knowing that Grey Wind was as safe as Harry could make him for the moment, Harry turned back to the dueling knight-and-lord in time to see Robb stumble back, falling from a crushing blow with the flat of Lannister’s blade.
Jaime raised his sword with both hands, preparing to cut down the so-called Young Wolf once and for all if he couldn’t have Jon Targaryen’s head itself. Lowering it with all the might inherent in his tall, muscular frame and buoyed by both battle-rage and actual rage at the knowledge that this battle at least was lost – a first for the Kingslayer, he made to thrust his sword straight through Stark’s armor, sundering the breastplate and killing him near-instantly. As the blade lowered, Robb’s eyes wide with fear at his near-certain death, another sword appeared, the black blade striking upward with great force and blocking the killing blow.

Robb turned and beheld the face of his rescuer, recognizing the roaring dragon helm Jon had had forged for his right-hand and let out a gust of breath in relief.

If Harry was here, then it meant Jon had succeeding in breaking the siege.

Climbing to his feet, no easy task in half-plate armor though at least he wasn’t wearing full-plate like some pretty Ser in a tourney, Robb jumped into the fray, joining Harry in beating back the Kingslayer who’s own shock had lasted a mere heartbeat before he’d picked his sword back up in his head despite the numbness caused by the fouled strike and set to taking on this new challenger, one close to the new king if Jaime knew anything about armor.

The Kingslayer found himself reluctantly impressed.

This new opponent didn’t have the superior form of Jaime himself nor the brute strength he’d found preferred amongst the northmen. But what he lacked in style, the swordsman made up in sheer speed. The little bastard – Jaime was nearly a head taller than the fighter as if he was some damned crannogman – easily danced out of the way of Jaime’s own strikes while making the most of his own with both the shorter bastard blade he wielded strangely enough in his off-hand and the long-dagger in his main.

He had a simple strategy that Jaime found infuriatingly effective: dodge, strike while Jaime recovered, and dodge back again.

But simple strategies are often predictable strategies by skilled opponents like the Kingslayer, Jaime fainting a missed blow only to swing back aiming for disarming the fucker’s dagger-hand as it was the one finding the chinks in Jaime’s plate and mail.

And it would’ve worked too.

Except Jaime made a critical error as his dancing partner kept his focus. He only focused on the dragon knight, ignoring all else. Including the Young Wolf that he’d failed to end though he thought he’d at least injured him with the fall.

If so, it wasn’t enough, as Robb surged back to his feet and much like Harry before him, parried the Kingslayer’s blow and kept him from once more gaining the upper hand.

Darting backward as he was now faced with two opponents out for his blood and tiring from the battle, Jaime chanced a quick glance around, seeing at once that the day was lost and he was one of the few battling on.

Deciding to live another day and wait on his father to either ransom or rescue him, Jaime waited for an opportune moment, one that came too late as the pair, falling into unison, pressed him until he stumbled back, falling and tripping over the body of one of his own men, losing the sword that he’d failed to fully grip after being dealt a numbing blow in the process.

Two swords came to press down at the gap between his helm and his breastplate, the smaller man –
or normal-sized-woman Jaime wasn’t sure at this point, they’d certainly fought vindictively enough
to be a female – kicking Jaime’s sword out of his reach and taking it one step further stepping on his
right wrist and pinning it to the ground.

“Surrender Ser Jaime.” Lord Robb Stark commanded in his – when he chose to make it so –
thundering voice. “Or die here and now.”

“He’ll do it.” The other man said, putting away his dagger and stripping off his helm. What was
revealed was quite possibly the prettiest man Jaime had ever seen outside of those with pure
Valaryian looks. “You hurt his direwolf, he’s after your blood.”

Jaime gulped at that reminder. The animal had guarded its charge just as fiercely as he’d
remembered from the visit to Winterfell and the chunk the girl’s wolf had taken out of Joffery. From
what he recalled the Starks were ridiculously attached to the animals, a cause for concern now that
he’d failed to kill the hardy little northern fucker.

“You’re no good to anyone dead, Ser Jaime.” The pretty man continued, his green eyes that Cersei
would kill to possess gleaming amused and emerald in that shapely face. “Let alone your bastard
children and your brother-fucking sister.”

The northern men who had moved to surround them as they watched the play of Ser Jaime’s
downfall roared with laughter at the pun with had Jaime gritting his teeth and tasting blood.

Damn Stannis Baratheon, Jon Arryn, and Eddard Stark to the seven hells. If it wasn’t for those
nosey interfering bastards, none of this would be happening. Well. Jaime had to correct himself.
Some of it might. After getting to know Rhaegar Targaryen, the Mad King, and the late Queen
Rhaella, he didn’t truly believe Jon Targaryen would have ever rested until he either took the Iron
Throne or died trying.

It was like a madness in them, right alongside their adoration for fire, and desire to bring back the
ancient dragons of old.

“I surrender.” Jaime at last bit out before they could make any more of a mummery of his capture
than they already had.

Massive Lord Rickard Karstark moved forward and pulled him to his feet, quickly stripping him of
any weapons and binding his hands tightly behind his back, silently glaring holes into Jaime all the
while.

“Collect the wounded, the dead, and the hostages!” Robb Stark called out. “Bind the wounds as
best you can, the siege is broken at Riverrun and we’ll dine around victory fires tonight!”

A roar went up from the gathered men at the news, the hostages all feeling the deep, shameful sting
of being utterly routed.

When Robb turned back to Harry, he found him already crouched over Grey Wind and having
traded his sword and dagger for the wand he rarely saw him use except to heal.

One of the Lords had asked the wizard why that was in the aftermath of the Twins, only to be told
that healing was “rather fiddly and precise, most of the time things can be done magic-wise with
enough power and force of will. Healing’s not like that, you can’t force it to do what you want.
You have to caress and seduce it like the most skittish of lovers or it’ll all go sideways…like having
your lover’s husband come through the door while you’re in mid-thrust.”

The lords and men had gotten a laugh out of that, but those who heard him believed his explanation
nonetheless.

And it confirmed one thing in many minds at least: Lord Potter-Black didn’t need a crutch for his power, he was power. He only used tools on occasion to direct it, not create it in the first place. With that, all thought of perhaps stealing the wizard’s wand which had taken root in at least some minds was banished.

There was no point in stealing a tool when the one you stole it from could easily make another and you yourself couldn’t get any use from it nor sell it on.

“Can you save him?” Robb asked, even knowing it was likely hopeless from the massive gash Lannister had cut along Grey Wind’s shoulder and back. If that strike didn’t sever the direwolf’s spine it would be a miracle, let alone whatever magic Lord Harry was capable of working on him.

“Perhaps.” Harry answered absently as he focused on fixing the worst of the damage.

He’d at least arrived within minutes of the blow being struck, Ghost having somehow felt the first blow and howled before the second and more deadly even landed.

“Direwolves are creatures of magic.” Harry explained as he worked. “Or at least have magical roots, much like those who claim the blood of the first men or old Valyria. That means in theory I can heal Grey Wind.” Harry shook his head and set his jaw mulishly. “Except I’m not a gods-bammadned vet!”

“Can you help him at all?” Robb asked, desperation filling his voice as he understood the point the wizard made even if he didn’t understand the final word which had been spat in some form of Valryian.

“Maybe.” Harry said with a sigh as he continued to work over the intelligent familiar. “He’s a familiar – which means he’s been linked to human magic before. But the fact remains that I know only the barest amount about animal physiology and even less about direwolves as they didn’t exist in my old life. I’ll do what I can for him.” Harry looked up into worried, pain-filled blue eyes for the first time, his own turning gentle at the obvious sign of distress. “You’ve my word on that.”

Harry spotted a wound seeping blood on the crouching Lord of the North. “Go get yourself seen to, at least wash that out and wrap it up until I can see to you as well as your wolf.” He jerked his head towards where Lady Dacey Mormont had set up a triage line. “Go on. You’re no good to Grey Wind or Jon dead or crippled now are you?”

Harry felt zero shame in guilting the fuck out of Robb Stark, even using the same argument they’d pressed on Ser Jaime to force his surrender.

Blowing out a breath as he turned back towards his canine patient, Harry eyed the direwolf warily.

“We’re about to get extremely close to one another, Grey Wind.” Harry warned the unconscious canine. “I hope you don’t take it personally when you wake up. I like all my bits and pieces right where they are instead of as direwolf chew-toys.”

Hunching over the furry form, he set back to work, taking his best guess as to the physiology and sending out a prayer to the old gods and Death to do what they could to guide his hands.

He did not want to have to break Robb Stark’s heart. Something about the hopeful look in those blue eyes as he stared at Harry over Grey Wind’s head. Damn pretty bastards and their pretty, pretty eyes.

Yes.
Harry had a weakness and well he knew it.

However, this once he would have to abstain…unless an arrangement could be made with his lover and King.

Well.

That was an intriguing thought to consider another day.

For the moment he had to worry about healing a direwolf if he ever wanted a shot at shagging Grey Wind’s tight-arsed and pretty-eyed owner/familiar.

…

On another field of victory, Tywin Lannister looked out at the ruins of the Northern army in satisfaction but felt a lingering sense of unease.

Both the Stark direwolf and the Targaryen three-headed-dragon had been flown by the twenty-thousand strong foot army that his forces had routed and sent scurrying back towards the Neck, but there’d been no sign of the personal sigil of Jon Targaryen nor of his rumored right-hand.

He had seen the banners of many northern lords – but not them all.

Most concerning, he’d also seen banners traditionally sworn to the crownlands, many currently to Dragonstone and Stannis Baratheon, which either meant the Snow bastard who was parading himself as a prince of the Targaryen line had struck an alliance with Stannis – a stiff-necked idiot but not a stupid man for all his pride – or the hotbed of Targaryen loyalists had flocked to Snow’s banner regardless of Stannis’s own loyalties.

Both were worrisome in their own ways.

At the moment however, he wasn’t sure just which of the two problems would be easier to handle.

A rider on a lathered horse about ready to drop thundered into the victorious Lannister encampment, all but flying from the saddle in his haste to make it to Tywin’s side, a splinter of worry shoving its way into Tywin’s cold and dead heart.

No messenger would treat a horse like that unless the news was both urgent and dire.

Unease crept up his spine as the man stumbled to a stop before Tywin who stood in stoic repose outside the flap to his command tent.

“News, Lord Tywin.” The man gasped out, hand shaking as he offered up a hastily-sealed missive. “From Ser Prester.”

Dread coiled in the pit of Tywin’s stomach.

The Presters had been attached to Jaime’s army at Riverrun.

Tywin ripped open the missive as the messenger took to his heels, running for safety in the anonymity of the camp. He didn’t want to be anywhere within leagues of Lord Lion right now if he could help it. Nor would anyone of sense.

“They have my son.” Tywin bit out quietly at first before roaring in enraged fury at the news the missive held. The siege broken, hundreds of hostages taken, and the army scattered. The casualties were estimated to number in the range of ten thousand men with hundreds more noblemen held for
ransom. Including his son, his pride, Jaime. “They have my son!” Tywin roared again like the wounded visage of his House’s sigil.

Grabbing the nearest of his Lords, he snapped out orders to be carried out immediately.

They were retreating to Harrenhal.

He would not risk staying any farther north until he had word of Jaime – and where he was being kept.

Word of what gods-forsaken place he would burn to the ground to reclaim his golden son and return him to his side.

And while he searched for that he would have his shame Tyrion, current Hand of the King, see if he could control Cersei’s arrogant whelp and perhaps prove himself useful for once and ransom his true son.

Oh, yes. Before this war was over, the Starks and their bastard pretender would hear him roar.

…
Act III - Paying the Iron Price

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/19/16

The Tomb of the First Men

Author’s Note: As the wave of inspiration is still going strong for this fic, Avalon Seven and my others keep being neglected. But, I’ve learned that waves that this should be milked for every last drop of inspiration and every last letter on the page so I’m going to keep going with TotFM until it dries up.

Warning: This fic contains SLASH AND MPREG

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Act III: Paying the Iron Price

Lady Sansa Stark answered the summons sent for her, joining the monster Joffery as he insisted on having her presence at his side.

He took her arm in a mockery of a gentle, honorable, Lord’s duty to his Lady, leading her out to the Traitor’s walk.

Every step she took was filled with dread as Sandor Clegane, in his pure white cloak, followed after them the rest of the Kingsguard remaining behind at Joffery’s order.

“I have a gift for you my Lady.” Joffery said with a twisted grin on his pointed face. “I do so hope you’ll like it.”

Sansa gasped, barely holding back a cry, and a tear dripped from her lashes trekking down her porcelain face. He’d done it. She couldn’t believe it, couldn’t believe that his mother the Queen had allowed it. If Jon and Robb weren’t enraged enough, this desecration would have them up in arms and killing without offering terms or mercy to any Lannister force that came their way.

There, on the spikes decorating the Traitor’s Walk for all of the Red Keep and King’s Landing to see, was the head of her noble Lord and father Eddard Stark. Her tear-filled eyes gazed up at the macabre display before finally seeing the rest. Every man and woman that had come southron with Lord Stark had been beheaded and now decorated the wall.

That Arya’s head wasn’t there as well as her own was down to the Queen having some measure of control over the rancid fruit of her womb.

Sansa didn’t fool herself into thinking that her continued survival was due to anything resembling mercy from Joffery and his Lannister kin. No. She knew that she was a political hostage, and thanks to Lord Harry now a spy for the north and her cousin the true King, surety against an attack on King’s Landing directly.
“Your brother defeated my uncle Jaime. My mother says it was treachery and deceit. She wept when she heard.” Joffery bit out viciously, grabbing Sansa roughly by the arms and turning her to face him. “I’m going to put his head on a spike as well,” he pointed to one of the open spikes flanking Lord Eddard’s severed head. “And your bastard cousin along with them.”

“You’ll never defeat Jon.” Sansa snapped out defiantly, pushing him away and breaking his hold on her. “Not in a thousand-thousand years. He is the rightful king of Westeros, the blood of the Dragon reborn, and you,” she sneered. “Are nothing but a bastard son of a noble whore and her turncloak, kingslaying brother!”

Slap!

Sansa had never been more glad for Lord Harry’s gift than at that moment as her head turned and her cheek pinkened but she felt no pain.

Joffery held his hand, rubbing at the sting striking the traitor’s bitch had caused.

“Mother says a King oughtn’t strike his lady.” He said idly, rage bringing an unhinged light to his pale green eyes. “Dog.” He snapped out. “Discipline her for me.”

Face stony, Sandor Clegane turned and backhanded the Lady sharply, spinning her around and forcing her to fall onto her side on the rough cobblestones of the Traitor’s Walk.

“I am King.” Joffery hissed out, kicking at her slumped form. “And you will be my wife, your loyalty belongs to me. Perhaps now you will remember that when you speak to me.”

Lady Sansa climbed back to her feet with stately dignity before bobbing a perfectly correct curtsey, face blank despite the bruising and blood the men saw from the illusion of her protective amulet.

“Yes, your Grace.” She answered, voice bland.

Joffery whirled and stormed back inside the Keep, Sandor moving slowly to catch him but not before silently offering Sansa a clean white handkerchief.

“Thank you, Ser.” Sansa said with true gratitude, taking the offering with one delicate, white hand.

“Ain’t no Ser, little bird.” Sandor replied gruffly. “Keep that.” He nodded towards the kerchief, eyes troubled. “You’re goin’ to need it, I think.”

…

Lord-Captain Victarion Greyjoy cursed the air blue as he and his men were repelled from Moat Cailin.

Balon’s brat had reported that the Northern army had taken most of the able-bodied men capable of fighting southron with the armies of the Young Dragon and Wolf.

By the time Victarion and some of the Iron Fleet had managed to run the Targaryen blockade surrounding the Iron Islands and make it to the swamplands that guarded the easiest access point to the North, either the troops had been reinforced by reserves or Theon had lied, for the thousand foot commanded by a southron knight were much more heavily supplied and ready for battle than a simple holding force should be.

The southron Ser, Victarion sneered at the green-lander fancy title, had flown the same colors as the fleet blockading Pyke and the other islands, that of the three-headed dragon as well as the sigil of
They’d been out-flanked before the Iron Fleet even attempted to run the blockade.

Now Victarion was absent a full half of the ships he’d managed to lead through the blockade, a devastating loss in the wake of the fire and death rained down on the Iron Fleet by the Targaryen vessels.

Lord-Admiral Velaryon himself was behind that, Victarion would wager. The green-lander’s father had been a close friend of the Mad King, right along that madman Rossart and his wildfire. Whatever the concoction the Dragon Fleet was using against Balon, it wasn’t wildfire but it was damned close. Some old Valyrian trick.

Growling, Victarion slammed one fist down on the railing of his ship and the flagship of the Iron Fleet the \textit{Iron Victory}.

“What now, Captain?” His navigator asked wary of a knife to his gullet at braving the black-temper of the Greyjoy Captain.

“No?” Victarion narrowed his eyes as he traced the fluid lines of the remaining dozen longships under his command at sea. The rest of the Iron Fleet was keeping the Dragon Fleet busy and waiting for the reaving Iron Island captains to return from pillaging the Reach and the Westerlands in the wake of the war.

They’d done so originally under a writ from the Targaryen King, a writ that was rescinded the moment Balon got it in his head to declare himself King \textit{again}.

Victerion obeyed his brother without question as the Lord of the Seastone Chair but that didn’t stop him from knowing a fool when he saw it.

This Targaryen wasn’t of the same cut of cloth as his Mad King grandfather or a pretty southron prince like his father, nor was he a craven willing to sue for peace like his Baratheon cousin.

No.

This was a Targaryen tempered by the ice of Winter and the blood of the Starks.

Even Victarion, who wasn’t known as the sharpest of minds, knew better than to tickle that sleeping dragon’s temper lest he rain down on them just what his family words promised: fire and blood.

“We’re running the blockade south.” Victarion ordered the fleet. “Prepare to raid Lannisport!”

He had no plans to be anywhere near the North or Pyke when Jon Targaryen finally had enough of Balon’s horse shit. Victarion had done what Balon had ordered under false information provided by Balon’s weak green-land raised runt. There would be seven-hells to pay before Balon’s second folly had run its course, Victarion had plans to build up a nice store of Lion gold before that day came.

…”

Lord Jon Connington, exile of Westeros and close friend of the late Crown Prince Rhaegar Targaryen, tapped the opened letter on the ship’s table before him.

It was addressed to Aegon, Rhaegar’s boy who he’d raised over the past years as his own son, the child being slipped out of the Red Keep as a babe under the noses of the Gold Cloaks and the attacking Lannister troops, courtesy of Varys.
A truth he’d believed for years.

Now with one letter to his ward, Lord Jon, also known as the sell-sword Griff of the Golden Company, found that it might all have been a lie designed by Varys in the pay of Illyrio Mopatis – though for what purpose Jon was reluctant to guess at.

The bastard cheesemonger, who lived an opulent life in Pentos, dared to make a play for putting his son on the Iron Throne in place of a legitimate heir.

Jon shuddered to think of the death of the real Aegon Targaryen, bashed against a wall like a rodent by Tywin Lannister’s dogs.

If, that is, this letter to ‘Aegon Blackfyre’ from Rhaegar’s son Jon was to be believed.

A situation that had Jon Connington doubting himself all over again.

Everyone back then knew Rhaegar was looking to take either a second wife or a consort. It wasn’t a secret though now that Robert’s Rebellion was successful it was a fact along with many others that were swept under the rug. Such as that Robert Baratheon who waged a war and won a crown on the backbone of ending the Targaryen dynasty, was a Targaryen himself through his own family – and more than once had the Baratheon line and that of House Targaryen crossed through marriage. It was the only way the nobles would have accepted him on the Iron Throne in the first place, despite his successful military campaign.

Which…honestly…wasn’t all that successful.

Tywin Lannister was the one who took King’s Landing and he did so by having his Kingsguard son slay the very man he was supposed to protect and opening the gates of the city through deceit.

There was no grand victory for the rebellion troops.

Even Rhaegar’s death was an ignoble drowning after having his ribs caved in by Robert’s massive warhammer rather than an honorable one in single combat.

The rebels defeated the ‘evil’ Targaryen line on the backs of murdered children, a turncloak kingsguard, and a drowned crown prince.

Not the best basis for founding a new dynasty, a fact that had since been proved out with the newest outbreak of war in Westeros.

Still, none of that resolved the problem of Aegon or of what and who to believe. It was a sticky situation all around. Even if Aegon was Rhaegar’s son, it was still possible that he wasn’t the Targaryen with the best claim to the throne. Connington knew that Rhaegar had started having an affair with Benjen Stark before the Tourney at Harrenhal that gave birth to so much trouble and strife. Learning now that they had bonded before Benjen gave Rhaegar a son was no surprise at all, not like the strange accusations of Rhaegar having kidnapped Benjen’s sister Lyanna.

Aegon Targaryen was born in the last half of the year 282 AC, “dying” within six months when the Lannister troops sacked the city.

If Jon’s Aegon was that Aegon then he was the younger son of Rhaegar, giving Jon Targaryen the foremost claim to the Iron Throne above his younger brother and his Aunt Daenerys.

If, if, if.
If he wasn’t Rhaegar’s Aegon then he was likely either the Blackfyre/Brightflame scion that Jon Targaryen suspects or simply a Volantene or Lysene child with old Valyrian looks, neither of which gives him a claim to the Iron Throne.

It was all a muddle, caused in equal parts by the concerns of the two Targaryens in Westeros, Jon and old Maester Aemon, and that of the architects of Aegon’s very existence on way or another, Illyrio Mopatis and Varys the Spider who brought Aegon to Jon in the first place.

Aegon, seeing his distraction wandered over.

“What is it, Lord Connington?” He asked formally, still not used to their new dynamic in the wake of the revelation of his true identity.

“Troublesome news.” Jon answered after several moments of searching that young handsome face for any sign of his old friend. But it was a fool’s prospect. It had been too long since he’d seen Rhaegar, and the old Valyrian blood too strong. Discerning one from another was hard without being on close acquaintance with them at times.

“Anything I can help with?”

“No, Aegon.” Jon brushed him off. “Go back to your studies. We’ll be meeting up with Harry and the others soon.”

“Oh?” Aegon perked up, his interested peeked anew. “Why? Something to do with the letter?”

“Something like that.” Jon nodded, lips thinly set in a grim line.

No matter what course Jon took from here on out, he would need his old friends of the Golden Company at his side.

It was time to get some straight answers out of that fat old bastard in his Pentosi palace, before choosing the wrong path cost his ward his pretty silver head.

…

Daenerys Stormborn, proud daughter House Targaryen and Princess of Dragonstone, stared out from her tent at the just-shy of a thousand Dothraki and former slaves that had stayed with her after Drogo had been poisoned and bespelled by a godswife.

Proving herself a daughter of Fire and Blood, she had done what was necessary to free her beloved Khal before strapping that damned witch, who had betrayed her trust and cost her both beloved husband and unborn son, to Drogo’s funeral pyre. Taking her family’s ancient words to heart, Daenerys had placed the petrified dragon eggs that still burned with internal fire at the feet of Mizzi Maz Dur as the witch burned for her crimes against a Dragon Princess, before entering the flames herself.

*Fire cannot harm a dragon.* She thought once more as the largest of her clutch, Drogon, climbed up her braid to perch on her shoulder.

It was a great price she had paid to become the Mother of Dragons: husband, son, adopted people. But she couldn’t say that if given the choice to go back and undo time to before the witch had set it all in motion that she would take a different path. Targaryens had been trying to rebirth the age of dragons for over a hundred years, only for it to be accomplished be a lone princess betrayed and far from home.
Such things were the events songs were made of, she decided a bit whimsically, thinking of Viserys’s tales.

When he’d been in a good mood at least, and more of a mind to pet her hair and tell stories than pinch, shout, or slap at her.

Jorah walked towards her with a bowl, likely holding whatever Rakharo had managed to hunt for their meal. With the rest of the khalasar divided among Drogo’s former blood-riders, food was slim but so far they’d managed to get by. It was an untenable situation they were in, she acknowledged.

Drogo’s blood-riders had insisted on her going back to Vaas Dothrak and joining the Dosh Khaleen, the widows of the great Khals, as another wise woman.

They’d left her to grieve in relative peace but she knew it wouldn’t last long before they returned and slaughtered everyone that tried to keep them from taking her away — either taking or killing her dragon children in the process.

Once Jorah joined her, Daenerys giving him a soft smile in thanks as she took her bowl, she pointed out at the barren plain they’d been walking alongside for the last several days, staying to the border region between Lhazar and the desert.

“What is that place, Jorah?” She asked tipping the bowl up at her lips and drinking some of the watery broth before picking out the chunks of meat to share between herself and her children.

“It’s the Red Waste, khaleesi.” Jorah Mormont answered in his strange accent that was half-northern-Westerosi and half-Dothraki. “Hundreds of leagues of barren wastelands without grass or water. Populated by a few ruined cities. Crossing it would be the shortest route to Qarth and the more eastern Essosi cities but no khalasar would dare it. Their horses would die by the hundreds if they tried.”

“No khalasar would cross it?” Daenerys repeated, arching a brow. She had another idea, likely just as insane as climbing onto her husband’s funeral pyre in an attempt to hatch dragon eggs.

But the khalasars were getting closer every day and Daenerys could almost feel the patience ending inside of Drogo’s blood-riders.

“It would be suicide khaleesi.” Jorah lowered his voice to a bare whisper, not wanting to give away their topic to the remnants of a khalasar that followed the silver-haired Mother-of-Dragons. “The Red Waste would kill most of your people and all but a few of the animals — if not every living thing — before we were able to cross it. There are no markers, no way to navigate the landscape. Entering it we could very well wander the desert until all of us died…including your dragons.”

“Yes, Jorah.” Daenerys said with a sigh, tilting her head to look up into his worried gaze with her determined violet eyes. “But if we do not dare it my dragons will either be taken or dead and I might as well be as a prisoner at Vaas Dothrak among the dosh khaleen.” She looked away at the barren red plain and nodded, decision made. “We’ll try it. We have no choice.”

Jorah sighed. “As you will, khaleesi.”

…

Harry tucked his wand away in its holster hidden in his mithril and leather gauntlet before rocking back on his heels and giving his neck a much-needed and relief-giving crack.
Rolling his shoulders the wizard-cum-healer looked right and left, searching for another body in need of healing. After doing what he could for Grey Wind and wrapping the remaining superficial wounds in clean bandages he’d conjured, he’d transfigured a stretcher and helped Robb attach it to his horse’s tack, the direwolf safely asleep in a healing coma. Animal anatomy might be different from human or the creatures he’d studied in his old world, but thankfully some spells and potions worked no matter who or even what you used them on…so long as the recipient was magical in nature.

And the direwolves are definitely magical, of that Harry had no doubts.

Seeing Grey Wind taken care of, he’d turned to the direwolf’s master and healed up a couple of wounds that Robb had either ignored or simply not noticed in the adrenaline rush from the battle.

From there, he’d moved throughout the whispering woods, seeing to their wounded and making sure all the hostages and prisoners were securely bound before using one of his favorite tricks in this new world and turning their bonds into a port-key, sending them along with some of Robb’s men to guard them to the gates outside Riverrun.

Now, what seemed like days but was probably only a couple hours later, Harry looked around for another person to treat and found himself without work to do in the middle of a field of bodies, the prisoners all having been taken away via port-key and only a few dozen Northern men waiting on him and guarding him and the injured as he moved through the field. Feeling a few aches and pains of his own that he’d ignored, Harry grimaced and got his wand back out with a sigh, a *Scourgify* and a *Episkey* taking care of a gash on his leg and another on his shoulder, both from Jaime Lannister’s wicked swordwork. With another few flicks of his wand he was clean from head-to-toe after being elbow-deep in blood and guts since the battle began both as a fighter or a healer.

“That’s a handy trick.” A young, compelling voice said from behind him. “It was impressive the way you healed, of that there’s no doubt.” Robb Stark continued, one hand on the reins of his horse as he watched Harry from deep blue eyes, meeting the wizard’s gaze easily when he turned to face him as his words. “But being able to get clean without soap or water has to be a boon.”

“Comes in handy, you’re right.” Harry rolled his shoulders once more, feeling every ache now that he didn’t have anything else to focus on. “But nothing beats the hot springs under Winterfell for cleaning up.”

*And for other things*, he thought himself with a gleam in his eye, remembering being pinned against a wall by a randy king.

“Quite.” Robb said dryly with a hidden roll of his eyes. He had a damned good idea what the wizard/warrior was thinking about with that look in his emerald eyes. “Come on then,” he jerked his head towards the horse. “You’ve done what you can here, Jon’s going to think I kidnapped you if we dally here much longer.”

“There wasn’t much *dallying* going on, more the shame.” Harry shot back with a flirtatious grin and a sad sigh and shrug of his shoulders. “But there’s likely a thousand more men needing seeing to at Riverrun, I’ll take a moment to catch my breath were I can.”

Robb shook his head with a snort. You’d think he’d been raised by Ned Stark alongside him and his cousin with Harry’s ethic of work and duty. “If you think Jon’s going to let you heal yourself into the ground you’re mad.” He told him plainly. “You fought in two battles, held your own in single combat, and then healed Grey Wind and dozens of my men. You need rest, not a thousand injured men to heal, or to use any more energy in that disappearing trick you have.” He patted the saddle of his horse in an inviting manner after swinging himself up as he spoke. “Come on, then, let’s get you
back to Riverrun and a soft bed. Promise I won’t bite.”

“Where’s the fun in that?” Harry joked half-heartedly as he took the offered hand and allowed Robb to help him swing into the saddle behind the Northern lord.

“Hold on,” Robb commanded, clicking quietly at his courser as the other knights who’d remained with him to guard the wizard and wounded fell in, many of them also with stretchers attached to their tack. Most of the men had been able to walk or ride back to Riverrun but a few of the more severely injured had to be carried. Thankfully, Harry was able to whip up a stretcher in no time at all with his wand. “Don’t be shy about falling asleep if you need to.” He added after lean arms wrapped around his waist. Robb tapped the back of one arm gently with a gloved finger. “I won’t let you fall.”

“M’kay.” Harry said, tucking his cheek in close against Robb’s rich fur, the Lord having put it back on after scrubbing the worst of the blood off his armor after helping Harry with Grey Wind and some of the worst injuries.

“Sleep, Harry.” Robb chuckled under his breath, former resentment having dissolved after having the wizard save both his arse and Grey Wind’s. It was hard to hate a man that took such care with his canine best-friend. “I’ll get you back to Riverrun in one piece.”

This time the only answer from the wizard at his back was a soft sleepy-sigh, the man already more than half-asleep.

“Move out!” Robb ordered, nudging his horse with his heels. “Let the Lannisters return for their dead…if they dare!”

…

“It’s having an effect.”

Harry knew that echoing voice anywhere.

Death had once more come to visit.

Opening his dreaming-eyes, Harry cast a glance around himself and climbed to his feet. He was in the middle of the Whispering Wood, the battlefield still strewn with the bodies of dead soldiers and knights, the shadow-and-flame wreathed figure at his side. Always with the dramatics, Death, Harry mused to himself with an internal chuckle.

“What’s having an effect?” He asked the deity once he was certain of the dream. He knew his body was still on the back of a horse bound for Winterfell, the Lord of the North watching over him. He hadn’t suddenly fallen or keeled over and wound up dead and was finally greeting his oldest friend for the last time.

No.

It was just a dream.

“Your magic.” Death turned to face him after reaping another soul from the field.

Wars were always so much work.

And this one was shaping up to be especially bloody, though with his Harry’s help the death toll will hopefully not be as high as it had once been fated to be.
“My magic?” Harry furrowed his brow. Maybe it was the aftereffects of the fighting and all the healing he’d done but he felt particularly slow. “My magic always has an effect, that’s rather the point of it.”

“No.” If Death could sound exasperated with his smoked-ice voice, then that was what Harry was hearing. “Not in that way. Your magic is having a greater effect than a port-key here or a healing spell there.”

The spectre waved one cloaked arm gesturing towards the wider world.

“Magic is waking.” Death intoned with heavy meaning. “Waking in the land and in the people.”

“Traveling.” Harry breathed, eyes wide with shock. “I used magic to travel all over Westeros from the moment I woke. And I used magic while I traveled as well. Heating charms, cleaning charms, Incendios, wards, plus what I used to augment my animagus form’s speed. And the people…”

“Yes.” Death nodded, giving the feeling of smiling at Harry from within the shadowed depths of his cloak. “There had always been magic in this world. The Children of the Forests, the First Men, the Rhoynar aquamancers, the blood of Old Valyria with their dragonlords and pyromancers. Direwolves, dragons, and other magical creatures. But then…” He sighed, weary with the pain of what had been forced upon this world. It was never meant to be this way.

“It was smothered.” Harry tilted his head to one side, remembering the theories he’d come up with on his travels. “Suppressed somehow in Westeros that has even started to effect the other continents. The only word of magic I’ve heard has been of Qarth and Asshai, all the way on the eastern half of Essos.”

“And then a Targaryen princeling with Stark blood in his veins traveled to the Far North and woke a sleeping man from time beyond memory.” Death tapped his scythe on the chest of another dead body, reaping the soul. “Now magic is starting to wake once more. With every potion you offer those of magical blood that was suppressed for generations. Every port-key and enchanted item that passes into other hands. Every Charm and Transfiguration and even Curse.” Death looked at Harry with eyes wreathed in flames from the depths of his hood. “You wake the ancient magics a little more and allow the gods to wake with them.”

“I knew it.” Harry rolled his eyes and threw his arms in the air in outraged disgust. “I knew you twats were playing with me again. All that shite about fate and bonds and rewards. I knew there was something more to it. Jon’s blood is some of the most magical I’ve seen in Westeros but there was no way it was enough to undo a set of enchantments that hadn’t been broken in over ten thousand years – or was it even more, even longer than that?” Harry asked bitterly. “All the gods were content to let me rot in my punishing sleep, until, at last, they had a use for me.”

“You have cause to be angered.” Death’s voice was implacable. “This I allow. However, not all of us were as content in your state as you’ve charged us. But even the gods have laws, Harry Potter. Even Death has rules that must be obeyed. Jon Stark-Targaryen was the tool we used to wake you, yes. But only because without him we were unable to interfere.”

Harry cursed once more, knowing his oldest friend was right.

The divine had rules and laws, just as those who worshipped them did.

He knew they required a catalyst to work in the mortal realms, often a most-devout believer or one of their half-mortal children.
But when all he knew was dead and gone away, leaving him in a world as strange to his eyes as the dark side of the moon, logical arguments like Death’s weren’t the most welcome to his ears.

Grief, betrayal, heartbreak: none of these were ever pretty or easy to deal with, and Harry had been unable to work through them in his waking-sleep, leaving them to fester for millennia. Blaming the gods was easier than blaming the woman who was once a mother to him, or the best-friend who’d betrayed him, the lover who didn’t have enough influence to save him, or even his own conceit that they’d never be able to move against him. All those and hundreds more thoughts whirled through the bowels of his mind, welling up at the most inconvenient moments and forcing him to shove them back down or meet them head on.

Shoving them down was his preference, allowing him to lose himself in facing the challenges of this place and time, reveling in the violent part of his nature that he’d spent most of his living years suppressing and his sleeping years unable to unleash.

There was a catharsis in bloodshed that he’d never known before and gave him a better understanding of Tom after all the years that had passed since Harry had killed him.

“So, now what?” Harry asked with an exhausted sigh. “You’re here to tell me good-show-old-boy for helping wake magic or is there some other shitty thing the gods want me to take care of?”

“I don’t know, Harry.” Death said obliquely. “You called me here – I was just supplying conversation. A moot point anyway.” Death gave an amused chuckle. “It’s time to wake up, Harry. Just continue being yourself, child. It’ll all work out in the end.”

“See now,” Harry complained even as he felt himself being awoken. “I was enjoying our little chat and you had to go all Dumbledore on me…”

Death laughed.

…

The sound of Death’s laughter was still ringing in Harry’s ears as he woke to the sight and sensation of Robb Stark gently shaking him awake, the cessation of motion from the horse originally starting the process of pulling him from his lucid dream.

“Wake up, Harry.” Robb demanded gruffly. “We’re here and there’s a King flying this way.”

“M’kay.” Harry groaned, sitting up and releasing his hold on the Northern Lord. “I’m awake.”

Robb gave a chuckle and a quirked brow at that. “If you say so.” He held out his arm for Harry to clasp and helped lower the sleepy man to his feet, swinging off to join him.

Harry gave Robb a very mature extended tongue in response, unable to do or say much of anything else as he was swept up in a crushing hug by a very worried king, Jon’s guards for the night Ser Arthur and Ser Oswell looking on with expressions of humor, which broke into an out-right grin from Arthur and a smirk from Oswell when Harry repeated his childish action of sticking out his tongue at them when he saw their amusement at his predicament.

His predicament being a very rapid and strung together outpouring of concern, demands, and chides as Jon searched him for any signs of injury that would’ve prevented him from just popping back to the king’s side after checking on Robb.

“Jon, Jon, Jon.” Harry finally barked in exasperation, batting away his hands as the king tried to prod at a scratch on his cheek, the other man having finally slowed his rant down while the others
around them had broken into smothered chuckles and guffaws at the sight. “I’m fine, lover.” He stressed, not bothering to hide their relationship with only Robb and the Kingsguard within earshot, though many more were observing them with vary displays of amusement, shock, or even disapprobation on their faces.

“You didn’t come back.” Jon narrowed his eyes, emotions bouncing between relief, concern, irritation, and something like jealousy ever since he was given word that Robb and Harry had finally arrived with the rest of the men from the Whispering Woods. Though the jealousy hadn’t appeared until he’d seen Harry snuggled up against his cousin without a care in the world.

Not that he was jealous.

Nope.

Jealousy was an emotion unbecoming in a King.

He was just…worried over whatever injuries Harry might’ve had that kept him from coming back magically after the battles.

Yes.

Jon was certain that was it.

There was also zero confusion over which of them he’d been jealous of.

Not at all confused.

And any confusion that might be present was all Harry’s fault anyway for putting the idea about Robb in his head.

Sure, Jon might’ve noticed that Robb was handsome and fit beneath the piles of furs they wore in the North. As close as they’ve always been, it would’ve been impossible for him not to notice. But that was all it was just…noticing.

Now that Harry had brought attention Robb’s possible feelings for him, Jon was doing a lot more than simply noticing, much to his own chagrin. This wasn’t the man, the king, his uncle had raised him to be. Ned had taken a lead in Jon’s upbringing with Rhaegar dead and Benjen taking the Black to keep questions regarding Jon’s parentage quiet. Anyone seeing him standing alongside Robb or Arya wouldn’t question that he was a Stark.

But put him next to his bearer and it became very evident that whoever was Jon’s other parent, they were of Old Valyrian blood, which could have led to someone remembering that Benjen and Rhaegar had struck up a friendship over the course of both visiting the Eyrie at the same time: Benjen to see his uncle and tour lands that he might inherit and Rhaegar on a progress of the Seven Kingdoms.

It was a risk Benjen hadn’t been willing to take, allowing Ned to become in many ways both father and mother to his son.

Jon had tutors and lessons from the Kingsguard in disguise, he went on trips to the various southron holdings of the Targaryen loyalists and struck up friendships with their sons. Through much of it Robb was at his side, the two of them only separated when Benjen took him to the Wall for lessons with Maester Aemon or southron with the Kingsguard to the Targaryen loyalists. That much time among the Starks had reinforced their ideals of behavior and lordly conduct.
As it had been meant to.

However, the other times, the times away from Northern sensibilities, times rich with tales of the Targaryen dynasty and Old Valyria, those lessons stuck as well; creating a king with equal parts Stark honor and pragmatism married to Targaryen sensuality and passion.

And it was the Targaryen side that was roused at the sight of his lover riding so closely in saddle with Robb, at the sight of hips and buttocks snugged tight and lean arms wrapped around a strong waist.

His Uncle Ned would have chided him for the thoughts and images that sight had conjured in him, Ser Arthur would have said he reminded him of his father, the southron lords would have laughed at his Stark prudishness and his Targaryen appetite.

Jon found himself stuck on what Maester Aemon would council.

Aemon Targaryen, the blood of the dragon rich in his veins, would have told him that true dragons of their line were intoxicated by two things above all else: power and passion. And once found, like a dragon, Targaryens tended to want to horde it for themselves. What that could mean for his Black Dread, Aemon would say, was up for Jon himself to decide.

“There was healing to be done once the Kingslayer was dealt with, your Grace.” Harry quirked a brow. “You know how I am about healing.”

“I know.” Jon shook his head, not bothering to hide a roll of his eyes. “I know. Let me guess,” he spoke over Harry’s head to the amused Robb. “He didn’t stop until nearly unconscious and then you had to badger him onto a horse instead of draining himself further?”

“Something like that, Cousin.” Robb gave a small laugh at how well Jon called Harry’s behavior. “He started with Grey Wind moments after we knocked down Lannister and didn’t stop until the last man of ours was seen to.”

“Speaking of,” Harry removed his wand and pointed it at the sleeping direwolf, giving a swish-and-flick at had Grey Wind hovering in the air. “Where am I taking him?”

“Rooms have been given over in Riverrun for myself and the other Lords and high nobles.” Jon told his lover. “Robb’s is across from my room.” He leaned closer and whispered in Harry’s ear as the Kingsguard led the way at Jon’s gesture forward. “You’re in a connecting room beside me while the Kingsguard have another on the opposite side of my suite. But your door connects to my bedchamber, theirs to the antechamber.”

“Most excellent planning your Grace.” Harry shot him a coy look from under inky lashes, keeping Grey Wind levitated with barely a thought as he followed the King and his guard through the warm halls of the Tully stronghold. “I take it we’re not even pretending before the southron lords to be anything but lovers?”

“If they even say anything which they likely won’t.” Jon answered with a firm look. “I’ll not hide you like some shameful secret. You’re my lover and strong right-arm. I won’t give you up to please some prudish southron lord or lady.”

“Hmm.” Harry gave a pleased hum under his breath. They hadn’t exactly been discrete on the march southron from Greywater Watch where Harry rejoined Jon, nor had they been in the day between coming together at Winterfell and Harry leaving for his travels. But they hadn’t been shouting it from the rooftops either and he wasn’t sure what his place would be once Jon started
dealing with nobles that didn’t know him or owe him any allegiance outside of his royal name.

Jon wouldn’t have been the first claimant to a throne or even a lordship to bow to the presiding attitudes of the day.

Choosing to lay with men rather than women wasn’t forbidden or a sin in the eyes of the people but neither was it celebrated. And children borne of such unions were even rarer than the couples themselves. Most noble men preferred not to take a chance on a male lover being unable to bear children over a female who unless having an affliction of some sort, would easily be able to give them heirs.

Even Jon’s father Rhaegar hadn’t bonded Benjen as his consort until Benjen was with child according to what Jon had said his bearer told him of his relationship with his father.

They had loved each other yes, deeply enough that Rhaegar was willing to help Lyanna escape a betrothal she abhorred.

But Rhaegar had needed his next spouse to give him strong sons and heirs to the throne, which would have precluded Benjen unless he, as had happened, proved himself capable of supplying the needed offspring.

Thanks to the magic that was utilized in his former reality, Harry already knew he had the ability to bear children, and had been using contraceptive charms whenever he’d taken a dominant male lover.

A practice he’d maintained after waking in Westeros, though he was unsure how effective would be with the amount of wild magic he was exposed to on a daily basis with the native magics of the land forcing their way through him, all but begging to be used.

Male pregnancy required magic. Period. The end. In that way he wasn’t surprised that lines with close ties to the First Men or Old Valyria, both rich with magical heritage, were able to claim male bearers.

Children from a male pregnancy tended to have a deeper connection to magic as well, which was why Jon ended up being an effective conduit for the gods to work their will in waking Harry. Being born through magical means such as male pregnancy effected the offspring all their lives. Jon was already showing signs of being a warg and was taking well to the meditation and rudimentary Occlumency Harry had introduced him to as a way of calming and ordering his thoughts as he made plans regarding the Seven Kingdoms.

Jon ordering a connecting chamber was as good as a declaration. As far as his people were concerned, Harry was either his betrothed or his official, royal, lover. It was up to Harry which he would prefer, Jon’s decision shouting to him loud and clear through his declarative action.

It should have been an easy choice to make, especially in light of knowing he could provide heirs and that if he didn’t stake some sort of official claim on his dragon that Jon would have prospects thrust under his nose and trying to worm their way into his bed constantly.

And to another, it would have been.

Another, however, wouldn’t be Harry.

And, for Harry, deciding on whether or not to accept an unvoiced proposal from a King was not an easy decision to make.

Before he could wind himself up any further over the implications of his room’s location and what he
was going to do with them or about them, they reached the hall where said room was located. Jon motioned to what was to be Robb’s room, Harry quickly entering and laying Grey Wind down on the furs amassed next to the fire. With a flick of his wand, Harry checked the direwolf’s status and satisfied for the moment, removed the magical healing coma.

“He’ll sleep naturally now.” Harry rose to his feet and reported to the handsome northern lord watching him with unfathomable blue eyes. “So far he’s doing fine, healing quickly with a little help from the magical boost I gave him but,” he gave a lightning-quick grin, white teeth flashing in the dim room. It was only the two of them, Jon and the Kingsguard waiting patiently or not-so-patiently in the hall. “Try and keep him as calm as you can. Bring him meals and let him walk – not run or jump walk,” he stressed. “In the yard as much as he wants for now. He should be back to normal in a week or so.” Harry scrubbed one hand through his hair, mussing the long strands that he’d tied back. “But that’s just a guess. I’ve never worked on a creature like him before.”

“Thank you, Harry.” Robb’s eyes gleamed in the firelight, his face warming from its usual stern demeanor with the relieved smile he gave. “I know I should’ve said it before, what with you saving my hide from the Kingslayer and then turning around and looking after my mutt of a direwolf but I’m saying it now: thank you.” He clasped Harry’s shoulders with both hands, giving them a firm squeeze, staring the other man straight in the eye. “You’ll always be welcome at Winterfell and have a friend in the Starks after this night, I swear it.”

“You’re welcome, Lord Stark.” Harry reached up and gently echoed Robb’s clasping of his shoulders, not prolonging the contact. Robb’s hands followed his own, somewhat reluctantly to Harry’s observant eye, releasing him. “I was only doing what my heart and honor demanded of me. Nothing more and nothing less.”

“Then it’s all the more impressive for it.” Robb answered, before turning and allowing the smaller man to walk to the door. “You’re an interesting and intriguing man, Harry Potter-Black, and not at all what I’d thought you.”

“Same, Robb Stark.” Harry flashed another grin over his shoulder before slipping through the door. “You’re much less surly than you’d appeared.”

Harry took his leave, Robb’s chuckle following him out the door, to the sight of a patently-impatient king awaiting him, back against the opposite door and foot tapping on the flagstones.

“You’re there.” Jon jerked his head towards one of the doors flanking his own before opening the door he’d leaned against and ushering Harry through it. “More for appearances than anything.” Jon explained, shooing the wizard over to a steaming tub. “But I wanted you to have your own space nonetheless, that way you can come-and-go at will without having to worry about popping into anyone on accident and splinching.” Jon tested out the strange word on his tongue, remembering it from when Harry was explaining his various methods of magical travel.

Part of him was snarling over whatever had kept Harry longer than required in Robb’s rooms – and whatever that had made Robb laugh to boot – but he ruthlessly pushed it down.

Harry was safe, in his rooms and soon his arms.

They’d won, a decisive victory, in both the battle to break the siege and the trap for Jaime Lannister. And they both made it out safe with only a few wounds to account for being in battle at all. They’d won.

Jon felt his blood heat, both at the sight of Harry stripping down and sinking into the water with a sigh, and at the reminder of battle.
His lover eyed him from the depths of the hammered-copper tub, a sure sign that Riverrun had hosted royalty before. “Aren’t you going to join me?” Harry asked with mock-innocence in his tone and a smirk on his lips.

The Targaryen scion gave a little growl, eyes eating up the sight of golden-cream skin half-hidden and half-revealed by the clear water. His strong hands made quick work of the fur cloak and clean linen shirt and leather pants and boots, shucking them without care of the richness of the materials for once, and striding over to join his lover in the tub. Or, at least he was.

Right up until Harry shot forward from his reclining position with a harsh scowl on his face.

Oh.

Right.

*That.*

“And when, your grace.” Harry’s voice was silky with danger, his eyes glinting in the light, as he reached over and collected his wand from the low table beside the tub. “Were you going to inform your lover and healer that you’d been wounded?”

“Ser Arthur cleaned it.” Jon tried to defend himself, arousal temporarily dampened at the chiding look and tone Harry had taken. “It didn’t seem that serious.”

Harry gave a growl of his own at that shoddy defense. In Westeros there was no such thing as a minor wound. With their lack of wound hygiene measures and medicine against infection, *every* wound *every* illness could turn fatal in a blink of an eye.

“Scourgify.” Harry snapped out the cleansing charm, following it up with another, deeper wound disinfecting spell when he saw that the gash went several inches into the meat of his lover’s side. Thankfully it didn’t hit anything *vital* and was a clean cut, not a ragged gash or tear, but Jon still should’ve reported it as soon as Harry returned to Riverrun.

And if not Jon then the Kingsguard, something he would be taking up with Lord Commander Dayne at the first opportunity.

“Merlin, Jon, it’s deep.” Harry continued to scold in between healing spells, shaking his head as he searched out any other injuries the King might’ve forgotten to mention. He knew Jon’s blood still had to be up after the battle, and was eager to sate himself in his lover, but that was no excuse for neglecting himself when he was trying to claim the Seven Kingdoms!

“But clean.” Jon reminded him. “Ser Arthur cleaned it and wrapped it, a Maester was offered but I knew you’d want to deal with it yourself. I simply was…distracted before I could tell you.”

Harry snorted at that. *Distracted his arse.* More like distracted *by* his arse.

“There’s no hope for it.” Harry sighed under his breath. “Going to take more than a simple healing charm on this. Hold still.” He ordered. “This will sting. *No more than you deserve.*” Harry muttered under his breath and then began chanting while circling his wand over the wound with hypnotic twirls, remembering sharply the first time he ever saw this spell used – to heal damage Harry himself had caused.

“*Vulnera sarentur. Vulnera sarentur. Vulnera sarentur.*” He half-sang half-chanted the spell that Severus Snape had created as a counter to his vicious *Sectumsempra.* It was a testament to that man’s genius that it worked as a powerful wound healing charm as well, working on open wounds
too serious for a simple Episkey.

Eyeing the wounds as they mended, Harry gave a firm nod setting his wand aside and absently sending out a wordless/wandless summons of his pack. He gave a knowing smirk at Jon when it flew out from the king’s bedchamber instead of the room next door that was ostensibly for Harry’s usage. Reaching into it, he drew out a delicate, beaded, women’s drawstring bag and began to dig through the enchanted space for the potions he sought. Finally locating them he handed them over to Jon.

“Here,” he ordered, retying the closure on the bag and placing it once more in the larger pack before setting it aside. “Basic healing draught and a blood-replenisher. They’ll taste like dragon-piss.” Harry told him honestly but utterly without sympathy. “But they’ll stave off infection and any nasty bugs that might’ve infected you while you ran around with an open wound.”

“Yes, Harry.” Jon replied obediently, not wanting to irritate his lover further. Grimacing all the way through, he knocked the two vials back before exchanging the empties for a glass of wine Harry had poured to wash the potions down. Healing completed, Jon joined Harry in the tub, the wizard casting a heating charm on the rapidly-cooling water.

A question rang in Jon’s mind and he posed it to the healer before he could be once again distracted by miles and miles of gleaming-wet-golden-skin.

“Why don’t you use your potions more often?”

“Supply.” Was the answer Harry gave with a shrug as he let down his hair and began to scrub it clean. “Many of them require ingredients I may not be able to find easily or at all. Until I have a chance to experiment with what’s readily available in Westeros or can be procured from other locales, I don’t want to waste the stock I have.” Ducking his head, he flipped his hair back as he came out of the water and shrugged an unrepentant look on his face. “Are there men outside who I can easily heal with a potion: of course. Am I going to?” He arched a brow and shook his head. “Probably not. I have a great supply of potions but I have to weigh saving a stranger’s life now versus possibly saving your life, or my life, or even Ghost’s life later.”

“It bothers you.” Jon said, knowing what he did about the other man. “Having the means to save lives or even improve them but being held back by your own logic and practicality.”

“In the extreme.” Harry sighed and rested his head against Jon’s chest, the king having climbed in behind him. “I hate this part of it. This part of being in a strange place. I did what I always did in the Tomb: used what I had on hand regardless of thought or consequences. That’s my nature, or used to be.” Harry rolled his eyes. “Jump in feet-first without looking. Always ready to save someone else, always fearless in the face of danger.”

“I could see that.” Jon nodded his head thoughtfully, reaching up to rub at Harry’s tense shoulders and back. “I’ve seen you do it a time or two myself. It’s why I had no issue with you running off to save Robb during the battle.”

“Harry Potter: the Golden-Boy of Gryffindor.” He laughed derisively. “That’s what some used to call me, when I was younger and in school. Gryffindors prided ourselves for our courage and bravery you see.” He explained, rolling his eyes. “Or as a teacher once called it our ‘reckless idiocy’,” he held up his hands making air quotes to Jon’s puzzlement at the gesture. “I want to save them.” He whispered. “But I’ve learned to count the cost of every life. If it means that in a decade I won’t have a potion to save someone I love?” He shook his head, a tear running unchecked down
his cheek. “That’s a sacrifice I’ve been trying to come to terms with.”

“Sacrifice.” Jon rumbled, wrapping his strong arms around his lover’s bare shoulders, nose nuzzling into damp hair. “Maybe that’s what we should use for your words. From what you’ve told me…I’d say it’s accurate.”

Harry huffed another laugh, swiping away the wayward tear. “What shall it say?” He joked. “Magic, idiocy, sacrifice?”

Jon squeezed his arms around Harry, a silent chide for his dismissiveness. Family and even personal words were important in Westeros. If Harry was going to actually be a Lord here, then he would need words.

“I was thinking more: Magic, Honor, Sacrifice.” Jon spoke solemnly. “The words of House Potter-Black, words worthy of a consort to the Iron Throne.”

“ Consort.” Harry breathed out shakily. He knew Jon was going to bring it up he just didn’t think it would be this soon. “Jon…”

“I’m not rushing you.” The King rose from the water, wrapping a drying sheet around himself that had been warming by the fire and tying it securely, before turning and offering the second to Harry, helping him from the tub and wrapping and tying him in the warmed cotton in turn. “I’m not. But.” He stared down into shadowed emerald eyes. He could see Harry’s warring feelings within them, his eyes always giving him away even when he presented a blank, controlled aspect to the world. “I want you to consider, carefully, whether when the time comes for me to make a decision if you would even want to be a part of it. We’ve known each other for several turns, Harry.” Jon reminded him. “A chance I’m not likely to get again. I will have to take a consort. And likely soon with the way the Lords have started behaving after our win at the Twins. A King needs a Queen or in this case a Consort at his side.”

“I know that.” Harry’s breathing was still not-quite-steady. “I do. And I know in Westeros people marry quickly after knowing each other a short time or not at all due to contracts and betrothals and trying to preserve family lines.” His smile was a little wobbly but at least it was there. “I promise to consider it, Jon, and give you an answer soon…but I want you to consider something in turn.”

“Anything.” Jon promised his little lover, gently palming Harry’s cheek.

“Do you think, honestly,” Harry quirked a half-smile. “That a single lover for the rest of your days is going to be enough? Ah!” He stopped whatever denials were sure to spill from Jon’s opening lips. “I just want you to consider it, lover. You’re only eighteen.” Harry’s eyes and voice turned gentle with understanding. “Fresh off a major victory and on the verge of a long, uphill battle to claim your throne. I know you need a consort but if I am the one you want then you need to know that the magical bonds I would insist on using would keep you true to only me, unless we jointly chose to add another into our bond.”

Jon’s eyes went wide at that. It wasn’t the first time Harry had suggested a plural relationship but it was the first time he told him of the magical bonding vows. His lover was right to insist he consider all possibilities before they shackled themselves together for life.

“No.” Harry gave him a flirtatious glance heated eyes, his mood turning on a dime. “Take me to bed and show me why I should consider binding myself to you for all time.”

“Your wish, my command, little minx.” Jon vowed, picking the smaller wizard up over his shoulder and tossing him onto the bedfurs, Harry’s laughter echoing in the chamber and out into the hall.
Robb rested his forehead against the smooth solid wood door that blocked his room from the long corridor. The door was thick, made of sturdy northern wood and banded with wide steel bands. His room was finished with the same thick wooden planks over solid stonework several inches thick, and cushioned with fine tapestries from Lys and Volantis to keep in the warmth from the wide fireplace.

And yet, none of these fine finishing’s nor excellent workmanship served to block the sound of Lord Harry’s laughter.

It tormented him, that joyful sound.

For, when Lord Harry was just a strange hanger-on to his Cousin, one of many that were sure to come-and-go in Jon’s life and bed, it was easy to overlook him, to ignore the smiles that Jon smiled only for Harry and the laughter and soft looks that Harry reserved only to Jon. Many weeks his cousin the King had traveled with Robb’s northern Lords and their joined army, Jon’s loyal men from the southron lands meeting them at the Twins, having landed at White Harbor and met Jon at Winterfell for the march south. Robb had resented Harry, after the wizard had worked his magics at the Twins and seemed to make a fool of the Lord of the North before his men. And resented Jon with him for allowing it.

It was easier, after all, to resent them then to admit to himself that he envied them their comfort in each other.

He’d always loved Jon. First, as a companion closer to him than his own siblings or Theon could ever hope to be. Sansa was too dissimilar to himself, very much their mother’s pampered perfect lady. Arya was too young for all that she enjoyed the more rough-and-tumble games that Robb and Jon got up to. The same with Bran and Rickon, Robb at times substituting for a father when their Lord and Father was busy with the affairs of Winterfell.

And Theon…

Theon never allowed himself to become too at home, too close to Robb, always speaking of the Iron Islands and puffing himself up with endless nattering on ‘soft green-lander ways’ and ‘paying the Iron price’.

The Heir of the Iron Islands looked down on Jon as well, believing him to be a bastard and having no problem showing it and treating Jon as such, behavior that had created a block between himself and gaining the trust and true friendship of Robb.

Robb had always had Jon. Even when the other boy would go off with Uncle Benjen for turns at a time, they would send ravens back-and-forth, keeping each other abreast of their lives. Then when Jon would return, it often seemed as if he brought the sun back with him.

Jon had always been the light in Robb’s life.

And now, it seemed no matter what Robb did, Jon was set on leaving him behind.

*Lord Robb Stark, Lord of Winterfell and Lord Paramount of the North.* Robb scoffed to himself. While Jon went and wed with some snippet of a girl with the blood of old Valyria, warming the Iron Throne with his hot-blooded arse, his pet wizard by his side and warming his bed.

Eventually, the love Robb had for Jon turned, as sometimes, with some measures of closeness, it did.

For years now, since they’d come of age together in the same long summer, Robb had coveted a new
Lord Robb Stark-Targaryen, Consort to the King Jon Targaryen, first of his name.

Yes, that was what he’d wanted for years now, ever since his father Ned had sat them both down and explained just what it was a man did with a woman, and due to Jon being the product of two men, what a man did with another man.

It had been a time of stutters and embarrassed blushes, but also of new ideas.

Jon Targaryen was a beautiful man, the perfect melding of the blood of the dragon and that of the north. His silver-flecked purple eyes had caused many a maiden to swoon and many a man think lusty thoughts. Robb had never been blind to the way others looked at Jon, and once the idea had taken root in his brain, gods help him, but he’d looked at him that way too.

He’d hated with a passion every courtesan Jon had told him of when they drank with Theon, the Iron heir joining in with his tales of naughty Ros and the ‘ladies’ from the local brothel.

He’d hated even more the few men Jon had told him of in secret, not wanting to hear Theon’s jibes over him ‘trying a bit of strange’ the men of the Iron Islands holding nothing but disdain for men who laid with each other as with a woman.

But fearful of ruining their close relationship, Robb had kept his feelings close, locked away in his heart for himself to brood over and carefully nurture, knowing that one day his parents were like to betroth him to some northern Lord’s daughter or pretty southron lady, while Jon was destined for the Iron Throne and all that came with it.

Right up until the day when he’d thundered out of the camp near the Twins to meet his cousin and seen the pretty man at Jon’s side with eyes so green they shamed the emeralds Queen Cersei had been so proud of when the royals visited Winterfell before everything went to shit.

Robb had learned how to hate anew, as he’d known from seeing them whispering back and forth together, that this strange creature with blazing green eyes and lithe body had made a place for himself in his Jon’s bed and heart.

‘Lord’ Harry Potter-Black was beautiful and powerful, he had no fear to speak of that Robb had ever seen. It was as if he didn’t know what it was to fear for his own life, though Robb had seen in time that he did fear for others. He treated Jon first like a man and second like a King, something Robb knew Jon needed very much to keep his Targaryen conceit in check. Harry healed with a flick of his wand and appeared from place-to-place with the blink of an eye. Made alliances that were thought to be impossible and brought back information that saved lives by the thousands.

And with each and every day, Robb watched Jon fall a little bit more in love with him, though another who didn’t know the King half so well as Robb might have missed it.

It was there.

In the soft glances, the hidden touches, the way Jon will ask Harry rather than ordering him. It was in the smiles and the jokes, but most especially in the laughter.

Jon was always one to brood, like the tales said his father had been.

Harry jostled him out of his dark moods and his brooding with little more than a flirtatious glance and a rude comment, making the ebony-haired Targaryen king roar with laughter, his mirth shining in his bright violet eyes.
And Robb fell a little bit more in love with Jon and a little bit more in hate with Harry with each and every sign of their closeness, a closeness that was threatening to eclipse Robb’s own place by Jon’s side.

Robb lifted his head and let it fall back against the door with a soft thud as new, even more torturous sounds came from the room across the way, Grey Wind lifting his head sleepily at the noise and giving a soft croon for his person to stop being an idiot and come scratch his ears the way he likes it.

Sighing, Robb moved away from the door, hoping that the distance will muffle the noises further so he can stop torturing himself with thoughts of what has never been and will probably never be.

Grey Wind gave a soft thump of his tail against the furs he was cushioned on, too tired from the wizard’s healing to do much more. He liked the strange green-eyed one who smelled of spices and lightning storms. The strange one always had a hand ready to scratch behind the ears or to pet along Grey Wind’s back, and never did either long enough to irritate his skin. He was handy with a treat and was willing to share his food as well, the sign of a good Alpha, just like his brother Ghost was turning out to be after being born a runt and with different eyes than the rest of the pack.

Scratching behind Grey Wind’s ears, Robb spoke his thoughts to the patient direwolf, who had been his steady companion through all his complaints about Harry and Jon, only giving him a nip every now and then when he started to lose himself in his rants.

“You like him, don’t you?” Robb’s question was more resigned than it was an accusation the way it would have been just a day before. “After he saved you, and me, from the Kingslayer and kept you from dying or not being able to walk, I can’t even blame you for it. He makes it damned hard to keep hating him doesn’t he?” Robb’s sigh was heavy with regret. “But if I don’t hate him…” He shook his head, closing his eyes as he moved to smooth one hand down his direwolf’s soft fur. “It was heartache enough,” he confided in one grey-and-white tipped ear. “Loving Jon and hating Harry. If I give up on hating the damned wizard, what is left for me to do? I don’t think I can stand it Grey Wind,” he buried his face in the direwolf’s scruff. “As hard as it was to hate him, it would be so easy to love him, and with him bound – or nearly – to Jon, that’s just more heartache than one man should have to bear.”

Grey Wind gave his human a comforting lick on the cheek as Robb lifted his head and hands, scrubbing at his face.

“Sleep.” He decided, stripping away his clothes and scrubbing himself down furiously with the lukewarm water sitting beside the fire. “Then I’ll wake up in the morning and forget all about loving anyone, not Jon, not his lover, and maybe once this war is over I’ll finally allow mother to make a match for me.”

His direwolf gave a disbelieving huff and laid his head back down on the furs, closing his eyes. If his human was going to be ridiculous, there was no reason for Grey Wind to humor him with an audience for his insanity.

Allowing the prickly-red-haired-one to choose his mate. Grey Wind grumbled low in his throat. That was human-stupidness at its finest if ever Grey Wind had heard it.

…

Harry fell asleep to the rhythmic lullaby of Jon's heartbeat and steady breathing, and the gentle feeling of Jon's fingers as they occasionally threaded through his hair. His sleep was deep and completely uninterrupted. He couldn't even remember the last time he had woken feeling so well rested, and charged with energy.
Harry actually woke first, which surprised him.

The two of them hadn’t changed their positions much during the night, after falling asleep after Jon thoroughly explored and reclaimed the territory that was Harry. Harry couldn’t even fool himself into thinking it was anything other than a reclaiming. Between the victory in battle, seeing him being a wee bit cozy with his cousin, and the lack of an affirmative response to his not-a-proposal, Jon had been feeling very territorial when he’d swooped Harry off to the bedfurs. Jon was lying on his back with his right arm sprawled lazily on the bed at his side. His left arm was still under Harry and wrapped loosely around him, resting on Harry’s back, making a claim on his lover even in his sleep. Harry was mostly on his stomach, but propped slightly on his side as he rested on Jon. His arm was resting across Jon's tightly-muscled cobbled-stomach and heavily muscled chest with his hand curled into a relaxed fist directly over-top of Jon’s pectoral. Harry let his hand open slowly and his fingertips comb lazily through the medium-fine dusting of dark curls that covered Jon’s chest before arrowing down into a fine pleasure-map to Jon’s impressive arousal.

Harry absently brushed his fingers, somehow entranced with the soft feel of them. His eyes traveled over Jon's beautifully handsome face and observed how peaceful and relaxed the other man looked in his sleep. The hard, stern, so-ver-Stark look that he held most of the time was missing from his sharply carved features, they were soft, relaxed, and calm. He looked so completely beautiful to Harry. Without even realizing it, Harry's hand came up from his playful exploration of Jon's chest hair and he brushed his fingertips over the hollow of his lover’s cheek, tracing his face down until his index finger came to rest upon his wind-chapped lips.

Following his instincts, Harry moved upwards and pressed his lips against the sleeping man’s, knowing that soon enough the castle surrounding them would wake and pull them in different directions as they each dealt with the aftermath of the battle. Jon would be locked in preliminary meetings with his uninjured lords, taking in casualty counts and making rounds of the men while Harry saw to the injured and tried to help prevent loss-of-life-and-limb where he could. Once nightfall reached them, Harry would undoubtedly be exhausted once more, knowing full-well that between healing and brewing not-quite-potions due to lack of supplies that his magic was going to be pressed to the breaking point.

But that time hadn’t come yet, and Jon was starting to wake up, his lips firming against Harry’s own.

The King hummed with groggy approval and his loose arm came up so that both his arms now wrapped around Harry's waist and held him close. After a long lingering kiss the two pulled apart and Harry found Jon smirking up at him, violet eyes dancing.

“My third favorite way to wake up.” The King declared, nipping lightly at his lover’s soft bottom lip.

“Third?!” Harry gasped in mock-indignation. “My waking kiss ranks only third? And what or who prey tell took first and second in your heart and affections?”

“Well…” Jon drawled, shifting Harry in his arms so that the wizard straddled Jon’s waist with his lean legs, taut arse pressed pleasingly up against the King’s morning erection. “There was this teasing little minx from the Far North who woke me one day with a Lord’s kiss to the kingly staff.”

Harry nearly giggled at the reminder of him introducing Jon to the concept of the morning blow-job, his humor not helped in any way by the fact that giving someone head was called a “Lord’s Kiss” in Westeros.

“Very well.” Harry waved that aside regally, arching his back teasingly as he ground his arse slowly against Jon’s hard staff, one of the king’s hands flexing on his hip as the other moved north to bury
itself in Harry’s unbound hair, tugging him lightly down towards Jon’s waiting kiss. Harry twined
their tongues together as he kept his hips moving in a slow, sensual tease of a movement, feeling
every bit the minx that Jon had dubbed him. “And first?”

“First?” Jon murmured, sucking a bruise into the side of Harry’s neck that was arching at an insistent
pressure from Jon’s light but arousing pull of Harry’s hair. “First hasn’t happened yet.” Jon nipped
at one ear lobe as he breathed his heated answer into the shell of one delicate ear. “But I have high
hopes for it this very morning.”

Closing his eyes, Harry silently cast the needed spells. He may prefer having his lover(s) stretch him
manually, but he didn’t want to ruin the mood by having to search out the oil in his pack. A trio of
spells had him cleaned, lubed, and stretched, and a moment later had him slicking Jon’s pulsing
arousal from root to tip, giving him a squeeze that had Jon arching his back with a gasp while he was
at it.

Rising up on his knees and placing the head of Jon’s slick cock at his entrance, he locked eyes with
his lover, interlacing his left hand’s fingers with Jon’s still holding his hip, and sheathed Jon inside
himself in a slow, sensual movement that seemed to take eons and a mere moment all at once.

Jon groaned, throwing back his head and his hands clenching on Harry’s hip and in his hair, the
wizard gently untangling Jon’s hand and twining it with his own, pressing it back onto the bedfurs.
Hands thus holding onto each other, Harry rose once more onto his knees and began to ride his
dragon king, hips rolling in a movement that had Jon’s eyes closing and tormented-pleasured moans
spilling from between parted royal lips. It was the most fiendish of tortures and most erotic of
indulgences all at once.

Hands, eyes, and bodies joined together, Harry set a pace that had them both gasping and moaning in
exquisite sensation, set on showing Jon everything he felt even if he still couldn’t quite bring himself
to say the words.

All things must come to an end, and so it was for them after an uncountable time locked together,
Harry at last seeing the telling flush taking over Jon’s cheekbones and the feral glint in his eye that
heralded his lover’s completion.

Moving faster, Harry set a new pace that spurred them both on, determined to finish at the same time
as his fierce lover. Tilting his hips, he aimed just so very right, using Jon’s pulsing cock to hit his
prostate over and over. Throwing his head back, Harry gave a keening cry as Jon’s hands clenched
on his own, the fiery liquid of Jon’s climax spilling inside his heated channel, Harry’s own proof of
satisfaction spurting out onto Jon’s sweat-slicked chest, coming from the thrust and burn of having
Jon inside him alone.

Cleaning his spurt from his lover’s chest with an absent flick of power, Harry collapsed onto that
same chest with a pleased-and-pained groan. At the time it had seemed like a good idea but in
hindsight, Harry was feeling the aftereffects from fighting a battle, riding a horse for several hours,
healing, and then having a territorial king wear his arse out before letting him sleep. Adding another
go-around in that morning wasn’t the best idea he’d ever had, as now that the post-sleep fuzziness
and the post-coital glow was wearing down, he was feeling every suppressed ache and pain.

It was worth it, of that there was no doubt.

But still…not one of his best ideas.

“Need a potion, lover?” Jon asked, voice concerned, as he finger-combed ebony locks away from
Harry’s sweaty-and-ecstatic glowing face.
“Mhmm.” Harry groaned under his breath, then found his voice long enough to give directions, Jon already knowing how to work Harry’s pack and the potions bag. “Pearly-white with blue flecks. Label should read ‘General Restorative and Soothing Draught’ in High Valyrian.”

Or, you know, English.

The whole Valyrian vs. Harry’s old reality thing still blowing his mind a little but for the most part he’s able to shrug it off as a case of tomato-tomahto.

Jon nodded and slid carefully out from under Harry’s limp and quiescent form, padded softly over to their belongings that had been stored in a wooden wardrobe by the Kingsguard. Digging through Harry’s things, and trying to ignore glimpses of strange devices – was that a polearm? And there, a sword with rubies encrusted in the hilt? – he finally located the strange worn-down bag and the draught his lover had requested, putting the bag and pack away and returning to Harry’s side along with a small cup of morning mead left no doubt by the Kingsguard before they woke.

Harry chugged the draught with a grimace, it wasn’t the worst potion he’d ever tasted, Polyjuice still took the prize for sheer nastiness, but it wasn’t the nicest either, making him thankful for Jon’s forethought in bringing something to wash it down with.

While Harry was busy with taking his draught and spelling away the evidence of their activities, both on and in himself and the bedfurs, Jon opened the door letting a patiently waiting Ghost back in from the guards putting him out for his morning run, calling for fresh bathing water as he was at it before ducking back inside before a passing maid could catch a glimpse of him in naught but his skin.

A now-vertical Harry passed him a robe and a sweet kiss before taking his place at the table in the antechamber, serving them both from the tray of fruits and fresh bread with preserves and honey someone – Harry was betting on Ser Arthur, knowing that the Kingsguard had changed shifts at least once during the night – had brought along with the mead.

All of the Kingsguard took excellent care of Jon, guarding him from all threats, but Ser Arthur, in Harry’s opinion, took it that one step further, seeing to his needs before Jon or Harry could say a word to a page or a servant. Harry was betting it stemmed from the knight being Rhaegar’s best and closest friend before Jon’s father had been killed. A way for the Sword of Morning to try and fill the gap caused by Rhaegar’s death and Benjen having to keep himself a step back out of fear of Jon’s parentage being discovered.

“What do you have planned for the day, your Grace?” Harry asked after Jon had wrapped himself in the silken robe and joined him at table, pouring himself a tall mug of mead before digging into the plate Harry had made for him.

“Touring the surviving troops,” Jon shrugged, slathering a scone in thick honey and strawberry preserves. “Taking tallies of needed repairs to Riverrun as this is to serve as a southeron base for the armies, for the time being until we take Harrenhal. Meeting with the Lords and Sers who are uninjured, discussing supply lines and the anticipated reinforcements from the North and the Vale. Making arrangements for bodies to either be burned or returned to homes for burial. The hostages will wait until the Council in a few days, once more of the men have been tended to. You’re for the healing tents, I’d wager?”

“I need to brew first.” Harry admitted, nibbling lightly at some sort of berry he hadn’t had before waking in the Tomb. It was tart and sweet, a bit like a cross between a strawberry and a blueberry, with the rich purple color to match. “I don’t have many supplies, but I saw fresh mint and a few other herbs I could use to make tonics that will help but won’t be as magical as what I’m used to producing.”
“I’m ordering a member of the Kingsguard to watch over you.” Jon told his stubborn lover with a firm look that brooked no objections. “With having hostages in the camps and the Lannister army scattered, your safety is paramount next to my own and they know this. Tell them what you need and they’ll have it sent for if possible.”

Harry groaned and grumbled but gave in after a few moments. He knew Jon’s mind was set on this point. And it wasn’t like he couldn’t lose them if he really wanted to. It would put Jon’s mind at ease while he was out among the camps and the wounded at least.

“Can I at least have Prince Lewen?” He half-asked, half-pleaded. “He’ll at least be of use with his education when I’m brewing and isn’t useless in the healing tents. I know Ser Arthur won’t leave your side or I’d ask for him, the other two are far too serious for my taste and are a bit squeamish around blood and viscera if they’re going to be following in my shadow all the time.”

“Knights are better at dealing damage than they are at healing it other than a simple cleaning and bandage, Harry.” Jon reminded him, barely concealing a roll of his eyes. Harry had originally found it funny when Ser Oswell turned green at the sight of him putting someone’s arm back together with a deft hand and a furious wand. It had become less funny as he’d learned that almost none of the men-at-arms had any kind of medic training outside of the most basic. Jon thought his ears were still ringing over that tirade. “And, yes, I’ll see to it that you have either Ser Arthur or Prince Lewen as your guard when you’re working at brewing or in the healing tents.”

“Good.” Harry grunted around a mouth full of biscuit, chewing furiously as he brooded over the difficulty of potions brewing in Westeros, mind a thousand leagues away from their conversation. “I don’t need to be reviving my guard because they turn into little pussies around a bit of blood and gore off the battle field.”

Days passed, bringing the day of the Council ever nearer as Harry brewed his half-magical half-herbal concoctions and fed them to the men as he healed wound after wound, trying his best and hardest to stave off a tide of infection or illness that ran rampant through army camps in Westeros. Jon busied himself with his Lords and his ravens, while Harry and the Maester, Septas, and even a few knights or soldiers or woods-witches with their herbal lore did their best to ensure Jon still had an army to lead at the end of the day.

Harry might not have been the best study of history either magical or muggle, but he remembered hearing stories about the Great War and the Napoleonic wars where more men were lost to starvation, illness, and sepsis than battle. He knew it was an uphill climb that he might never conquer, but he was attempting to stave off what complications he could for Jon’s men. Even going so far as to teach them how to put together a tonic of ginger, mint, and fruit peel that were all easily found in the Riverlands to help keep colds and sickness at bay.

Granted, what the men could make for themselves and what Harry could provide were vastly different, Harry having active magic to infuse into his brews that the men did not, but still…it was better than nothing as the nights grew longer and the days colder with every turn of the moon.

Still, through it all, at the end of the day when Jon weary and angered from dealing with petty lords and a lack of news from his allies returned to his rooms, it was to a tiredly-smiling Harry and a glass of mulled wine, Harry checking his wounds and health, never allowing Jon to slip into melancholy.

A main cause of Jon’s bad mood was the ever-declining health of Lord Hoster Tully.

His heir Edmure had been captured by Jaime Lannister during the Battle of Riverrun, sending the
aging and ailing Lord to his bed.

The Lannister host had passed the time during the siege by parading Edmure and a score of other noble-born hostages on a gallows with a noose around their necks as a warning to their fathers within the walls of the stronghold and commanding forces at a dozen other holds throughout the Riverlands.

A trick that backfired.

Due to the display, Jon’s men had known exactly where to strike to free the hostages and remove the impediment that had the River Lords sitting on their hands rather than taking up arms against the invading Westerland host.

It also put the idea into one none-too-bright mind that the hostages had no worth, the craven knight Ser Cleos Lannister abandoning his position among the Lannister army and seeing that the day was lost, slipped into the hostage hold and began slitting necks in retribution for his own father’s death at the Twins.

He started with Ser Edmure Tully and managed to dispatch nearly a dozen young Sers, all heirs to noble houses, before the hostages could be rescued by Jon’s forces.

Which left Jon with a problem the size of, well, Riverrun.

Lord Hoster Tully was dying and his primary Heir dead. Ser Bryndan Tully had already refused to have anything to do with becoming Lord of the River Lands, leaving Jon with just one option: his young cousin Brandon Stark.

Robb was already a Lord in his own right and the River Lords would never agree to joining the two Kingdoms. That left just Brandon or Rickon, the latter much too young for anyone to truly consider. Bran was already Robb’s heir by default, a duty which would pass to Rickon if it was decided that Riverrun would go to the young Stark boy.

The problem then became, who was to hold the River Lands with Bran tucked away in the North and too young to become a Lord without a Regent?

Jon had already rejected all mention of Catelyn Stark, his Lords knowing full-well that he blamed her and her crazed sister for the initial outbreak of hostilities between the Riverlands and the North versus the Lannisters. And that was in addition to the fact that Jon truly couldn’t stand the bitter bitch and Robb had ordered her placed under guard at Winterfell. An order that Robb had no intention of lifting any time soon.

It was another headache to be decided at the Council and Jon was no nearer seeing a way clear of it unless he could, by some miracle, convince Ser Bryndan to step in as Regent until the war was ended.

The whole clusterfuck also brought the matter of Heirs back to bear against both Jon and Robb, the Targaryen loyalists and the Northern Lords using the issue of Riverrun to press their King or Lord Paramount into making a decision regarding a betrothal at the very least if not marrying outright. And every single one of those Lords and Heirs and Sers that pressed the issue had a sister or a daughter or a niece or even a granddaughter or cousin to put forward for the position of either Queen or Lady of Winterfell. Robb and Jon felt besieged on all sides regarding the Heir-Issue as they’d started calling it between themselves, making them wish faintly for the healing tents and Harry’s company which served as a shield of sorts against matchmaking.

More for Jon than Robb but the Lord of the North had no qualms about intruding on their time
together if it meant evading matchmakers, though even he drew the line at interrupting their private hours at rest in their quarters.

No matter how much he might secretly or not-so-secretly desire to do just that.

…

“You made it.” Jon leaned over and whispered with a bright smile at Harry as the visibly-exhausted wizard all-but-fell into the chair Jon had reserved for him in the great hall of Riverrun. It was time for the Council to commence, Harry and the others having done all they could to get the injured Lords and knights of renown back on their feet – or at least coherent and healthy enough to sit in on the Council in a couple cases.

Disease and hunger had taken its toll on the people under siege for several turns at Riverrun just as the three battles and several smaller scrimmages that had played out in the fields and woods surrounding the main seat of the River lands had lent to the number of men down with either injury or illness.

“Of course.” Harry said, taking Jon’s hand beneath the cloth table covering and giving it a squeeze. “I may be a healer at heart but I was a warrior first. There is no other place for your strong right arm than at your side when events such as this take place. This Council may very well determine the ongoing course of the war. My unique perspective could end up being very valuable.”

“Thank you.” Jon said under his breath before he stood to call the Council to order. “Really, thank you for not leaving me to deal with this on my own.”

“The first item before us.” Jon stood and spoke, his voice resonating throughout the Hall. “Is that of Riverrun itself. Lord Tully is not expected to last another turn, his son and Heir murdered by a craven,” rumbles and shouts sounded from the gathered Lords at this reminder. Many had been waiting impatiently for the Council in order to sate their lust for vengeance on some of the prisoners and hostages. “Which leaves Lord Robb’s younger brother and Heir Brandon Stark as the next in line for the Lordship as Ser Bryndan has refused to take up Lordship of the River Lands.” Jon turned to his cousin seated at his left hand. “Lord Robb it is your Heir in question, what say you?”

Robb rose to his feet, turning to look down the table towards where Ser Bryndan himself was seated among others that were counted among Jon’s most trusted men and placed at his insistence at the high table, the rest of the Lords and their Heirs and Knights filling seats at the trestles.

“If Ser Bryndan will consent to taking up Stewardship of the River Lands until either Bran is of age or the war is over and my cousin is seated upon the Iron Throne,” here Robb had to pause for the cries of “The Dragon of the North! The Dragon of the North!” to calm down before continuing. “Then I will cede Bran to my grandfather Lord Hoster Tully as Heir.”

Conversations and murmurs broke out among the gathered as Robb retook his seat, Jon remaining standing as he waited for the response to the posed legacy of the River Lands.

Ser Marq Piper, who had harried Jaime Lannister’s supply lines and opened up the opportunity for Robb to lead the Kingslayer into a trap, stood and stated: “Brandon Stark is as much a Tully as the late Edmure was, gods rest him.” He motioned with one hand to Robb’s traditional Tully looks. “You only have to look at Lord Stark himself to see that the Tully blood runs true. If Ser Bryndan will agree to Steward the River Lands according to Lord Robb’s wishes, then I will stand behind this course.”

“And I!”
“And I!”

The River Lords called out, only a few who had hoped to gain the boon for themselves staying silent in the wake of the majority calling out in favor, the voices of Northern Lords lending their support to the posed idea keeping their objections behind their teeth.

“Ser Bryndan?” Jon leaned forward, propping himself on the table for stability. “We await an answer.”

“Very well, you young wolf-dragon.” Ser Bryndan agreed gruffly with a jerk of his greying head. “I’ll do it. But the second you take that blasted throne, I want my nephew on his way to take up the mantle. I’ve never wanted Riverrun before and I don’t want it now. But,” he waved a hand, acceding to the wishes of the King. “I will do what is in the best interests of my people.”

“Then it’s agreed.” Jon nodded once, heating some wax and then pressing his sigil into the prepared order naming Bran as the Heir to Riverrun after Lord Tully with Ser Bryndan as his Steward, the dying Lord Hoster having already signed it and affixed his seal after much arguing and persuasion on the part of Jon and Robb. Handing it to Robb, who was holding everything for copies to be distributed later, Jon took up the next piece of business.

“The single greatest threat we now face is that of the Tyrell-Baratheon alliance.” Jon sat, knowing this was going to be like herding cats and wanting to be comfortable while he attempted it. “Renly Baratheon has wed Lord Mace Tyrell’s daughter Margery and named himself King with most of the Reach and Storm Lords swearing for him. Altogether they’ve mustered a force of over a hundred thousand men,” shouts from the gathering, “and have been content so far to sit on their arses dining on Arbor gold and pheasant and letting us and the Lannisters kill each other off.” Jon gave a brutal smile. “We are not content to let this go on any longer.”

“Old Mace was a friend of your fathers, your Grace.” Lord Rickard Karstark pointed out. “Offer to marry the bint yourself if she suddenly becomes a widow and the Lord of Flowers will slit the Stagling’s throat himself.”

Jon held up a hand for silence after the outpouring of shouts and rage that gem of a suggestion caused.

“We have a plan for dealing with it.” He said, holding onto his calm by his fingertips. “One that does not involve murder or marriage.” Thank the gods. “For now we will wait and allow Lord Stannis his chance at unseating Renly and his supporters from Storm’s End. With Stannis sworn to Our cause, many of the Storm Lords will turn their cloaks as soon as Stannis puts out a call to arms from Storm’s End.”

“Aye, laddie.” Greatjon Umber observed with a nod of his shaggy head. “That be true enough. And what’s to be done about the Old Lion and the damned Kraken?”

“According to word from the men garrisoning Moat Cailin.” Robb stood and addressed the crowd. “Lord Captain Victarion Greyjoy managed to lead an estimated thirty ships through Lord Velaryon’s blockade of the Iron Islands and attacked Moat Cailin under orders from King,” Robb and the other Northern lords sneered at the damned squid’s conceit, ignoring or simply not noticing Theon’s barely-hidden rage. “Balon. The attack failed and the Greyjoy lost half the ships he’d led through the blockade. Last reports had them heading south towards Lannisport.”

“So,” Ser Bryndan mused. “They’re either joining up with the Lions or making to raid while the Lions are distracted elsewhere since their incursion against the North proved a costly failure.”
“Agreed.” Jon nodded his head. “The only question that remains is whether Captain Greyjoy is doing so under orders from his usurper-brother or not.”

“Not.” Theon grunted from his standing position behind Robb and next to Ser Mark Ryswell of the Kingsguard. “My father would’ve ordered them North at all costs, so long as there was a single ship under my uncle’s command. That’s his way. If Captain Victarion was sailed southron its to reave and follow the Ironborn way.”

A sharp silence followed the reminder of just what house Theon belonged to, one that Jon covered over with the next piece up for debate. And one that was going to cause a riot.

“There were over a hundred hostages and prisoners taken during the two battles that broke the siege.” Jon spoke clearly and concisely. He knew that this was where they were going to have the most friction and clashes out of everything on the docket. “Several including Ser,” he sneered again at the title bestowed on a craven. “Cleos Frey have committed crimes worthy of execution or exile to the Wall and a lifetime of service among the Black Brothers. The question before the Council is which prisoners will be executed, which exiled, and which will be held while for ransom or as surety against a Lannister reprisal.”

“We want the Mountain.” One of the River Lords stood and roared out his demand. “We want his head for his rapine, pillaging, and burning our lands!”

“I lay claim to the Kingslayer’s head!” Lord Rickard Karstark roared. “He nearly killed one of my two sons as they protected Lord Stark in the Whispering Woods. The Karstarks are your kin! My boys’ injuries demand blood! As does that of your own father’s father and of that of your uncle, slaughtered by the Kingslayer’s spawn!”

Other, countless roars for blood and vengeance swept through the hall like fiendfyre, Harry, Jon, and Robb leaning back in their chairs and engaging the Knights of the Kingsguard in hurried conversation. Several of the demands had been foreseen, but others like the one from Lord Karstark had blindsided them. Of them all they struggled with that of the Kingslayer. Jaime Lannister had earned his death, of that there was no doubt. But, at the moment at least, he served a better purpose alive until the war was ended and his father was dead.

“We can’t kill Jaime Lannister.” Lady Maege Mormont spoke up as a voice of reason among the baying Lords. “Lest you all forget that the Lions have hostages of their own. Kill old Tywin’s pride and joy and you might as well slit the Ladies Stark’s throats yourselves.”

“Lady Mormont makes the point that stays Our hand, as much as it sticks in Our craw.” Jon agreed with a ferocious glare at all those who would object. “So long as We hold the Kingslayer’s life in Our hands, the Lion won’t dare move against either them or us for fear of reprisals, especially in light of Cleos Frey’s actions during the breaking of the siege.”

“Aye.” Lord Karstark spat in disgust. “I hear your words, both of you.” He nodded towards Lady Meage before turning towards the King. “But I want your word, young Dragon,” he jabbed a finger at the high table. “That once this war is over and your and our kin are secured that the Kingslayer’s head will roll.”

“You have it.” Jon nodded solemnly. “Jaime Lannister will pay for his crimes in blood. As you yourself said: it wasn’t just your sons who he is guilty of harming. For make no mistake.” Jon’s Targaryen eyes pinned the gathered Lords to their seats. “He stabbed my grandfather in the back. Mad King or no, that is nothing less than murder and he’ll pay it back in blood.”

“And what of the Mountain?” Ser Bryndan broached the original demand.

“The Mountain and Ser Amory Lorch were located and abducted by Lord Harry during the initial panic at the Camps and the trap of the Whispering Wood.” Jon leaned forward, speaking earnestly. “I ordered it done as their heads are to be an initial payment on the alliance crafted between Us and Dorne. They will be executed with the dawn, alongside Cleos Frey, and their heads sent by magical means to Sunspear.”

“And what of our claim?” Cried the same River Lands Lord who’d originally laid claim to the Mountain’s head.

“One would think,” Lord Command Dayne spoke from his place behind Jon’s chair. “That the oldest and most grievous offense would have the greatest claim. Gregor Clegane has committed such crimes that debating who has the greatest right to his head would take weeks. But of any,” the Sword of Morning’s violet eyes searched the crowd, cowing them as he spoke. “Most would find that the rape and murder of an ill princess and the vicious murder of her children must be addressed lest we risk war with Dorne.”

That silenced even the most steadfast of naysayers of Jon’s proposed plan, few wanting to argue with the legendary knight, with the King bringing the discussion once more around to the next topic.

“As for the Lannisters,” Jon waved towards Harry. “Lord Potter-Black snuck into King’s Landing and confirmed that the Lannisters have Our Lady Cousin Sansa Stark as a hostage and are still planning on marrying her off to that foul little cunt Joffery Waters.”

“Ha!” Smalljon Umber roared. “A strong Northern woman like that will have that little bastard’s cock and balls as a necklace and earrings before she’d let the runt defile her!”

An agreeing roar went up from the Northerners, Harry having to hide a smirk behind his hand at the agghst looks on some of the southron Lords’ faces at the vulgarity.

“That was my impression of Lady Sansa,” Harry spoke up for the first time in Council since planning the battles that ended up lifting the siege of Riverrun. “I offered to sneak her away but she was determined to stay and keep abreast of tidings in the capitol. Though,” this time his smirk shone for all to see. “I did leave her with a few presents to tide her over until her cousin arrives in force.”

“I’ll bet you did, sorcerer.” Theon sneered under his breath, but not quietly enough to escape the notice of those near him, including Harry himself.

“And as suspected,” Harry continued. “Lady Sansa reported that the Lannisters had never managed to get their hands on Lady Arya, though there have been no valid reports regarding the youngest Stark daughter at all.”

This sobered the crowd. Half of the reason the Northerners had drummed their way south was to come to the aid of Lord Stark and his daughters. That he was killed, another trapped, and a third presumed lost was a heavy blow, victory over the Westerland forces or not.

“My younger sister is a She-Wolf to make even Ghost and Grey Wind proud.” Robb spoke up, resting his chin on his upraised and folded hands. “I have to believe that she will make her way North. We will simply have to bring the North a bit closer to her.”

“Aye.” Greatjon Umber boomed. “The Young Wolf’s the right of it! If the She-Wolves canna come to the North, the North will have to come to the She-Wolves!”

Robb’s bannermen shouted and stomped their feet, banging their tankards on the table in a true
rollicking cry.

“Lord Tywin is stymied – for now – by the Vale men that have marched down the High Road and closed off the East and the Kingsroad to the North.” Jon reported once the men had once more settled. “As soon as our reinforcements from the North arrive, we will march on the West.” Jon’s eyes gleamed with a vicious fire in the flames of the candlelight. “Let’s see how the old Lion likes it when it’s his people under siege and his crops being plundered by an aggressing army!”

“The Dragon of the North! The Dragon of the North!”

“THE DRAGON OF THE NORTH!”

…

“They’re pressing me for a coronation.” Jon leaned against the back of the massive wooden bed in his rooms as Harry took his sweet time stripping down to join him, as had become their daily ritual. “And to choose a Queen.”

Harry almost groaned at that topic being raised again.

“Can’t you put them off with talk of the Great Sept?” Harry neatly sidestepped the hint of him needing to make a decision regarding bonding his King.

“Not really.” Jon cracked open one violet eye and gave him a gimlet look at the evasion, though he was feeling too mellow to pursue a migraine-inducing topic. “Since they know I follow the old gods all we really need are a crown, a cloak, and a godswood.”

“So…” Harry drawled leadingly. “What’s the hold up? You have a sacking, several executions, and two decisive victories under your belt.” Harry rolled his eyes. “Face it: you’re a King, Jon Stark-Targaryen. Even if it’s not over all Seven Kingdoms and their territories as yet, you are, in fact, a King. Kings have to deal with things like coronations and your lords and retainers pressuring you for an Heir. It kinda goes with the job title, the ugly chair, and the sparklies.” Harry finished dryly as he lowered himself to face his lover and put his own back against the opposite side of the carved bed, nestling his toes against Jon’s firm horseman’s thighs.

Jon would deny it to his dying day but he pouted, genuinely pouted, at the lack of sympathy from his lover over the issue.

“I want it to be our coronation.” He admitted softly, raising suddenly vulnerable eyes to meet startled emerald-green. “For a King and his Consort. I want us to be wed before the gods and then sworn, together, as the rightful King and Consort of the Iron Throne.” He waited for a second searching his mind for anything else that was delaying his agreement before adding: “And I want Uncle-Maester Aemon to preside over it as the only other Targaryen of the Name in Westeros.”

Well, Harry thought to himself ruefully. He didn’t want much, did he?

Taking a deep breath, Harry marshalled his inner strength that had seen him through so many trials before and prepared for a fight that wasn’t going to be pretty. He hated this part of himself. The part that always takes a step back from what he wanted and his own desires and places those of others first.

Just once he would like to be truly selfish.

But he knew that today was not that day.
“Who am I, lover?” He asked softly, gazing into fierce violet eyes with a saddened but firm stare.

“What?” Jon replied flabbergasted at what Harry had asked. “You know who you are, Harry. What are you playing at?”

“No.” Harry shook his head, his hair free from confinement swishing around him before settling once more against the pillow. “Answer the question, Jon. Who am I?”

“You’re my lover.” Jon raked one hand over his eyes in exasperation. “You’re Lord Harry Potter-Black, a wizard of great renown. You’re the Warrior-Who-Waits, a fierce and noble hero who has slept for time immemorial. You’re my love.” He bit out, his expression fierce. “And the only one I’ll accept as my consort.”

“I am your lover.” Harry nodded. “This is true. And I pray I have your love. But you have said it yourself: I am also a wizard.” He looked away swallowing harshly. “And I know you’ve heard the whispers, the same as I, asking if I’ve bewitched you or cast a spell, enchanted you to take me from the wilds of the North and raise me up as both lover and right-hand. I know you have, don’t try and gull me.”

“Who the fuck cares what a bunch of old biddies and sour maids who I won’t look twice at think?” Jon burst out, unbelieving of the tripe that was spilling from Harry’s mouth. “Let them gossip, let them wonder, it makes no difference! I know and you know that what we feel is true and that’s all that matters! Why would I want one of them anyway?” Jon scoffed at the notion. “Some simpering slip of a lady?” He slashed a hand through the air in aggravation. “Not when I could have a powerful match, the same choice that any of the Targaryen Kings and Lords before me would make. The same as any of the Starks. Power should be wedded to power.” His eyes gleamed. “That was how the blood of the direwolves stayed strong when others floundered. Forcing my uncle to marry the Tully bitch instead of Ashara Dayne was one of the worst mistakes grandfather Rickard ever made – including trying to demand justice from a mad king. She’s brought nothing but strife to the North ever since she set foot in Winterfell, despite her giving uncle Ned three strong sons and a pair of daughters.”

“You don’t think Sansa and Arya are strong?” Harry half-laughed at the very idea.

“Don’t even.” Jon warned pointing at his lover with a jab of his finger. “I know that they are both strong in their own ways but the value of her children aside, marrying Catelyn Tully instead of Ashara Dayne was an insult to that ancient House as well as his own.”

“Agreed.” Harry waved Jon’s ire off. “But still not the point. If you take me as Consort there will be whispers following your reign from the day we wed until the day we die. No matter how many worthy Heirs we give the Throne or how many years of peace and prosperity we bring the realm. They will still talk about your wizard lover who bewitched you into making him your Consort – and Hand.” He added dryly, knowing full-well that Jon was going to hoist that thankless cunt of a position onto his shoulders at some point.

Jon stared off, a light blush covering his cheeks at being found out. He hadn’t thought he’d been that obvious about it. But then…this was Harry. It was hard to keep secrets from a man that could literally read minds.

Not that he thought Harry did that indiscriminately.

But still.

His point stands.
The King turned Harry’s arguments over in his mind for several long silent minutes, musing on what he thought was the sticking point for Harry over joining him as Consort.

“You think the Lords won’t be appeased unless I wed with one of the Great Houses?” Jon asked, finding the heart of the matter.

Harry shrugged in response. It was what he’d seen and heard for himself. Due to his size and ability to slip around quietly, even with Prince Lewen of the Kingsguard dogging his heels, he tended to hear more than people intended or wanted him to hear.

“They were only half-joking about a match with Margery Tyrell.” He revealed, voice unfathomably morose. “Other factions want Arianne Martell, or Allyria Dayne now that her betrothed is missing and assumed dead, there’s even been talk of your cousin Sansa or your aunt Daenerys. Still and all,” he shook his head, eyes shuttered. “Not a single one speaks positively about you taking me for a Consort. Not. One.”

Jon sat back heavily against the pillows, shocked at what Harry had discovered. In his mind, binding Harry, a powerful sorcerer and warrior who would bring fresh blood to the lines of Stark and Targaryen, would be a sound tactical move. Power-to-power, as his family had done for thousands of years.

That his closest supporters disagreed was an ugly shock to his system.

“Most feel that I would make an adequate Hand of the King.” Harry continued to speak, his voice dead. “A feeling reinforced with the information I’ve provided and my ability to help turn the tide of any battle or future conflict.” He gave a humorless chuckle. “They want me in service to the Throne…just not in personal service to the King.” His smile was bitter. “Though they’ll probably keep their peace if you keep me as a discrete bed-warmer so long as I don’t attempt to provide an Heir or harm the true Consort to the Crown.”

“That.” Jon said viciously, an unholy light burning in his eyes. “Will not do.” He all but spat the words. “I will not have them speaking of you in that way. I won’t have it. You’re more than some, some,” Harry could nearly see steam rising from Jon’s head the man was so infuriated. “Catamite with a few petty mummer’s tricks. Do they not see that?”

“Oh, they see it.” Harry tilted his head, intrigued by Jon’s fury on his behalf. It had been a long, long time since anyone had defended him so fiercely. Other than Teddy, that was. “That’s the problem: they fear me.” He shrugged, it wasn’t the first time he’d been marginalized in an effort to make others feel more secure. At least this time they weren’t trying to paint him as insane and unhinged in the process. “If I’m the Hand of the King then I’m in service to the Crown and controllable. As your male Consort, I’d be your equal and with the powers I wield, that scares the ever-loving-fuck out of them.”

An idea sparked in a wicked Targaryen mind, an equally wicked smile coursing over Jon’s handsome face making Harry sit back and eye him warily.

“Harry, love?” Jon’s voice was oh-so-innocent. “How do you feel about becoming the Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands?”

…

Ser Davos Seaworth piloted the small craft around the cliffs of Storm’s End, one hand steady on the rudder as he watched the stones and walls of the cliffs, keeping the boat from breaching on the rocks and taking him and the party he led down with it.
His Lord and friend Stannis Baratheon had laid siege to Storm’s End and treated with Ser Cortnay Penrose as a distraction allowing Ser Davos and his – to his eyes – odd assortment of fighters to smuggle their way into the castle and open the gates. Never before, in so far as Davos had heard tell of, had a Prince of Dorne, two Sand Snakes, a smuggler-turned-knight, and a pirate captain had made to breach the walls of Storm’s End. Ser Davos himself had been sent to treat with the Lysene pirate captain and sellsail mercenary Sallador Saan while Davos’s sons had sailed throughout Westeros with proclamations of the Lannister bastard and his siblings as well as that of the true King – and Lord Stannis’s support of the Targaryen claimant.

After returning from gaining an alliance with the infamous pirate, Ser Davos had arrived in the Storm Lands to the sight of a joint Baratheon and Martell fleet, Prince Oberyn Martell in command along with several of his ‘Sand Snakes’ his base-born daughters who were legendary for their cunning and viciousness, as had been promised by the Targaryen King’s envoy Lord Harry.

Davos had found himself enjoying the wizard’s company for all that his magics went against many teaching of the Faith of the Seven, Davos considering himself to be a devout man for all his previous crimes from when he was younger. But even a blind man would have been able to tell the difference between the magics Harry used – for all their power and might – and the vileness that was the Red Witch. If nothing else, Davos was grateful to the wizard for removing her spreading wickedness from Lord Stannis’s household.

It had even been worth the weeks of tantrums thrown by Lady Selsye when she’d been informed that her ‘friend’ and priestess had been sent North to the Wall at the behest of the Targaryen King, a behest that had been carried out through Lord Harry’s own magics.

So it was that as ravens had arrived with news of the breaking of the Riverrun siege and a decisive Targaryen victory in the River Lands that Stannis had marched on Storm’s End, the fleet blockading the fortress by sea after carrying the combined army of ten thousand men to mount the siege of the fortress.

A fool’s folly most would say, Davos had to admit, as never in its long and rich history had Storm’s End ever fallen to a siege.

But Ser Cortnay Penrose wasn’t a man who’d been born and raised in the fortress as Lord Stannis had done, nor was he a smuggler that had risen to knighthood by being able to find a way that wasn’t supposed to exist through the massive curtain wall.

Together, Stannis and Davos knew every crook and cranny of the mighty keep and had no qualms about using their knowledge to end its unblemished history once Ser Cortnay refused to yield it to Stannis by order of the true King, Jon Targaryen the first of his name, with some help in the form of a tricky-minded wizard who ken a thing or two about bringing down supposedly unassailable fortresses.

Using only the light of the full moon, Ser Davos steered his way around the cliffs to the hidden seaside door that was able to be breeched at the lowest point of the tide. It was a deadly endeavor, a single misstep in timing would have them smashed against the cliff’s face as the water of Shipbreaker Bay rose once more, dashing their little boat to pieces on the rocks. But it was a gamble Davos had made once before and that he was betting on again, having only revealed the existence of the door to Stannis in the days after Eddard Stark lifted the Tyrell siege during the end days of Robert’s Rebellion.

To his knowledge, and by Lord Stannis’s own recollection, Renly Baratheon knew nothing of it,
therefor neither would his castellan Ser Penrose.

After all, it was impossible to guard against a threat you didn’t know even existed.

As he brought the craft alongside, Davos signaled to Prince Oberyn and Sallador where to set the pry-bars to open the hidden door. The two strong men set to work, peering through narrowed eyes as they wrenched the rock-and-steel door open through force and leverage as quietly as possible. All five of the party froze as they heard the guards on the curtain wall far above their heads call out.

They’d been heard though not yet seen.

“Hurry now.” Davos ushered them into the pitch-black tunnel. “No lights until we’re inside. Step lightly lasses,” he handed up the Sand Snakes to their waiting father. “Before we’re seen.”

Picking up the waiting-to-be-lit torches from the bottom of the boat, Davos handed them off before making the jump himself, his good friend Sallador catching him when his foot made to slip, sending him back into the punishing waves at were rising before their eyes.

Davos gave Sallador a quick nod of thanks before lending his shoulder into resealing the door before the returning tide could flood the hidden tunnel. A grate of flint on stone by one of the Sand Snakes had light flaring up, temporarily blinding them, her sister moving to set the others alight as Sallador and Davos finished leveraging the door back into place. Sallador clapped one hand to Davos’s shoulder with a wide grin saying in a whisper: “Almost lost you, old friend.”

“What is this place?” Prince Oberyn asked, tilting his head to get a closer look at some of the carvings on the rock face. “A smuggler’s den?”

“Aye,” Davos answered, leading the way through the winding tunnel that led up into the castle. “And nay. It was known to me and I used it to smuggle food to the fortress during the Tyrell siege: aye. But it existed long before then, Prince Oberyn.”

“An escape route.” Oberyn’s second-eldest daughter Nymeria, known as ‘Lady Nym’ for her mother having been a noblewoman in Volantis, commented perceptively. “One that the Baratheons were unknowing of as they weren’t the original builders of the fortress.”

“It could be, Lady Nym.” Davos nodded genially. “Or it could have had a different purpose altogether. We will likely never know.” He held up a hand, listening deeply with a frown on his face. Lowering his voice, he warned them: “We’re approaching the outcropping inside the curtain wall where the tunnel ends. From there we’ll have to cross the length of the curtain wall to reach the gates on the far side, including a well-lit courtyard that abuts the gates.”

“Leave that to us.” Obara said, exchanging a glance with her younger sister. “This is where underestimating women becomes the folly of men.”

…

Obara’s words proved true, as the two Sand Snakes easily put on a mummer’s play of being maids or harlots, ladies or fishwives, depending on those they encountered. Many a guardsman pressed them to a wall for a kiss only to find a silent blade slitting their throat from the second sister. It was a mummery that Davos watched with distaste but knew the necessity of nonetheless, one suggested by Lord Potter-Black himself, along with the false-siege.

If they couldn’t make it to the gates and release them, then all their planning and troubles would be for nought.
Ser Davos wouldn’t fail his friend and Lord due to an attack of ill-timed scruples, though he found himself grateful that Oberyn had only brought a pair of his daughters with him, leaving the youngest four in Dorne with the two missing daughters elsewhere in Westeros but still participating in their ways to the campaign.

Making it at last to the gates, the Sand Snakes cat-called the watchmen and distracted them while Sallador entered the tower on the left and Oberyn on the right, fighting their way through the few watchmen — quietly — that hadn’t been drawn out by the Sand Snakes. Inside the towers laid the levers that would release the portcullis, allowing Davos to dart inside the gateway tunnel with numerous murder-holes overhead to the final lever that would release the gates themselves. The archers had been alerted by the commotion, as had the remaining men-at-arms which called to muster a defense as the portcullis was raised, Ser Davos lifting a shield the length of a man that he’d taken from one of the downed defenders to protect himself from the arrows raining down on him, the former smuggler running as fast as his old sea-legs could carry him towards the small group of men-at-arms that surrounded the gate mechanism.

It was quick and bloody, Davos ignoring whether a strike of his sword killed, crippled, or simply knocked one of the four men aside, even going so far as to bash one in the helm with the shield he still held, the Onion Knight making it at last to the lever and kicking it free with a furious smash of his boot.

The sound of the mechanism releasing reverberated through the fortress and the open plain below to Lord Stannis’s forces, Davos hearing the sound of the Lord himself calling for the advance as Davos set the shield once more to protect him from the flying arrows as he set his jaw, prepared to hold the gate alone as long as necessary until the advancing army could relieve him.

He’d never failed Lord Stannis before; Ser Davos wasn’t about to start now.

…

With the cunning and daring of Ser Davos and his strange party, the fortress fell quickly to Stannis’s forces, Renly having only left a thousand men under Ser Penrose to hold the seat of the Storm Lands.

For his part, Ser Cortnay was glad to have survived the taking of the castle, a feeling that doubled when he discovered that Stannis had no intention of harming his older brother’s bastard son Edric Storm who had been fostered at Storm’s End under Renly at Robert’s behest to protect him from retaliation by Cersei.

Word had already spread far and wide over the Lannister Queen’s ‘cleansing’ of the lands she controlled through her son of Robert’s bastard children. Though whether it was the work of Cersei herself or her own bastard Joffery many were unsure.

In the days that followed the taking of Storm’s End, many of the Storm Lords who had previously sworn to Renly turned their cloaks and flocked back to the seat of the Storm lands, bending the knee to Lord Stannis as Lord Paramount of the Storm Lands and Jon Targaryen as King of the Seven Kingdoms.

Once the siege was over and the fortress secure, Prince Oberyn and his Sand Snakes gathered the rest of the Dornishmen and their portion of the Dornish fleet and set sail to reinforce the blockade of the Reach as had previously been arranged between Oberyn and Jon Targaryen.

It was while supping in the Great Hall of the Arbor which the Dornish Fleet had already taken before being reinforced by Oberyn’s ships and planning attacks on Blackcrown and Oldtown, the Three Towers having been taken as well by their land troops, that word reached the Prince of the
Targaryen’s gift of the heads of the murderers of his most-beloved sister and her young children.

Prince Oberyn raised a goblet in toast to the Young Dragon saying:

“The blood of Dorne is avenged but our vengeance is not yet done. I will fight for the Young Dragon until the blood of Tywin Lannister and all his get runs the Blackwater red.”

…

“I can’t believe I let him talk me into this.” Harry complained to his companions a full turn after Jon’s initial question had been posed to Harry, as they waited to set boots down on the island of Pyke, the capitol of the Iron Islands.

Balon Greyjoy, so called “King” of the Iron Islands, had called for a parlay between the admiral of the blockading Targaryen fleet and himself once word had reached him that his brother had taken fifteen ships to go reaving the Westerlands after the failed sack of Moat Cailin.

The Iron Captains were up in arms, infuriated that their Lord had lost them their right to reave the Reach and the Westerlands by trying to once again make himself King.

Especially since this wasn’t against Robert Baratheon that Balon had rebelled but against a dragon-sister-fucking-Targaryen, who word had it, had an actual-fucking-dragon in his service!

Of the five hundred longships that made up the entirety of the Iron Islands fleet, only a fraction had answered Balon’s call to raid the North, those thirty being halved by the Northern troops, and the remaining joining the rest of the fleet in raiding the southerm waters. All the captains knew that eventually, if Balon didn’t stop with his delusions of grandeur, the rest of the Dornish fleet would be done with the Stepstones and the Storm Lands and would join the Targaryen Fleet and the second half of their own men and ships and start striking at the Iron Islands and their fleet, no longer content with blockading and small sea skirmishes. The Iron Fleet was fierce, but against a combined assault by the green-lander dromonds and Northern longships, they wouldn’t stand a chance in a protracted battle where the greater speed and agility of their fleet would flounder against the sheer power in the extra men and arms the bigger vessels commanded.

And that was if the Targaryen didn’t simply unleash his dragon on them and saved himself the hassle of a prolonged sea campaign.

A raven was sent to Lord Admiral Velaryon asking for a parlay between the Iron Islands and the Admiral of the Targaryen Fleet, a raven which kicked off a series of events that culminated in Harry getting sucked into Jon’s harebrained plot to piss off his Lords.

At least, that was how Harry saw it.

Accompanying him on this mad adventure were Theon Greyjoy, the newly-knighted Lord Ser Robb Stark, Grey Wind staying behind at Riverrun much to the direwolf’s disgust, as well as a score of knights of mixed Northern and southerm origins, and Prince Lewen Martell, Jon having ordered him along to keep Harry out of “unnecessary trouble.”

Harry wished him luck as trouble tended to follow him like ticks on a bitch, this latest scheme, (though not of his own making even if his words to Jon had sowed the seed that had ended in this insane harvest of a madcap plan), being only the most recent in strange and horrible things that had occurred over the course of Harry’s life.

If successful, it would serve two purposes: first, making Harry a more “suitable” prospect as Consort to the King and second, due to the complement of men with him, proving to the Lords and knights of
the realm that Harry was more than – as Jon had put it – “a catamite with a few mummer’s tricks.”

Honestly, Harry thought Jon was being a bit optimistic.

If standing against the Kingslayer in single combat, as well as everything else Harry had done without the aid of magic didn’t prove that to the Lords and knights, he wasn’t sure what this plot of Jon’s would accomplish. But Harry had gone along with it, too in love with the idiot to naysay him when he had his heart and mind set on this course. Harry wasn’t holding out hope for the outcome Jon was seeking, however. Life had taught him too many lessons about the stubbornness of the masses for him to believe this would or even could work.

The only bright light Harry saw in this whole mess was that he might be able to take out some of his anger and aggression this whole quagmire had spawned on some of the Ironborn.

Theon Greyjoy gave a derisive snort to Harry’s back at his words. He had no problem believing that the Targaryen bastard had gulled his lover into being part of the Targaryen envoy to the Iron Islands. The dragon-fucker had probably battied his pretty purple eyes and shook his arse for his pet wizard and he’d fallen in line the way Robb Stark always had when they were striplings in Winterfell.

Granted, even Theon had been shocked when he himself had been selected. The Targaryen cunt had been too firm against Theon acting as sole envoy for the King that his late addition to the party had been strange to say the least. The group had already been set to leave in days when the dragon-bastard had danced right into the planning meeting and had Theon as well as Robb and ‘Lord’ Harry summoned, ordering them and a dozen others along on what had originally been a simple parlay.

Now, they weren’t entirely certain of what their purpose in the Iron Islands was.

It seemed that only the King’s pet wizard knew – a state of things that didn’t give any of them comfort considering the last time those two kept something to themselves the Twins ended up sacked and dozens of men and women hung from the Crossing as a warning against treason for all to see, Roose Bolton among them, the Lord of the Dreadfort losing his life, title, and lands for his reward in partaking in a failed plot.

The Greyjoy Heir had an itch between his shoulder blades that simply wouldn’t abate.

As if someone had painted a target on his back and had him in their sights at that very moment.

He shuddered at the feeling.

Sooner this clusterfuck of a mission was over, the better as far as Theon was concerned. Then he could either get back to killing Lannisters with the army or finally take his place as a Captain of his own ship. Either way he didn’t give a fuck. So long as there was blood on his blade and women to rut at the end of the day.

Theon had always known there was something off about the Stark bastard. In that way him being one of the sister-fucking Targaryens wasn’t much of a surprise. That Jon-not-a-Snow liked to lay with men…well. The Targaryens were known for their perverse nature.

Sickening was what it was to the Greyjoy Heir, that some of the green-landers would cross swords in that manner. His father had always railed against the perverseness of the green-landers and their soft ways that made some men more woman than man. At least, if Theon’s plan worked as he thought it might, there will be one less perverse green-lander polluting Iron air before the end of the day…
They crossed towards the ancient stronghold of Pyke after landing at Lordsport, escorted all the way by a woman with sandy blonde hair and a cross look on her comely face.

Harry and the rest took no notice of her beyond that of an escort, all save the Greyjoy whelp who couldn’t seem to help himself when in the presence of anything with a nice pair of teats. Robb looked particularly embarrassed by Theon making an ass of himself and boasting about being the newly-returned Greyjoy heir, while the woman herself was merely amused at his antics.

She showed them into the Great Hall of Pyke, where the Seastone Chair, the ancient seat of the Kings and Lords of the Iron Islands was kept. Legend had it that the first men found the kraken, carved from a solid piece of oily black rock of unknown kind on a beach at Great Wyk, and it had been the seat of Lords and Kings of the Ironborn ever since. On this day, it held the weather-beaten figure of Balon Greyjoy, his captains and Lords who had either returned for the parlay or had been in and on the Iron Islands before the blockade, arrayed around the Great Hall and eyeing the emissaries warily.

There was no telling who might be among the group of green-landers, sent to speak with the Greyjoy on behalf of the Young Dragon King who was already making his mark on Westeros.

The Ironborn respected military strength and paying the iron price above all else, the Young Dragon’s stated desire to rule from the Iron Throne only after conquering the length and breadth of Westeros had won him much respect from the Lords and Captains of the Iron Islands, especially after his swift actions at the Twins and Riverrun and his foresight in leaving Moat Cailin and the Western coast of the Northlands protected against raids by the Ironborn.

Murmurs broke out among the Ironborn in the Great Hall as they caught sight of one man in particular, shadowed as he was by his taller companions.

Wearing strange leather armor that showed wear, and having a sword with an inky black blade, the Ironborn recognized the rumors of the Young Dragon’s pet wizard, the so-called Warrior-Who-Waits with his deep black hair and blazing green eyes that shamed any emerald the Ironborn had laid hands on through their raids.

“Who have you brought before the King of the Iron Islands and the North, daughter?”

Theon started in confused shock and stared at the sandy-blonde woman as she smirked at him and moved to stand to one side of the Seastone Chair.

“A group of green-landers, father.” Asha Greyjoy reported. “Come to parlay.”

“A group of green-landers, father.” Asha Greyjoy reported. “Come to parlay.”

“King of the Iron Islands and the North is it?” Harry asked mildly, arching a brow as he moved to stand at the head of the party, pushing Theon to one side as an afterthought. “King of the Iron Islands – of that we’ll see.” His smirk was pure wicked spite as the Ironborn surrounding him and his party began to rumble in discontent. Whether at the truth of his words or at him speaking them at all while patently outnumbered, only time would tell. “But King of the North?” He tsked, shaking his head. “My understanding of paying the iron price,” he spat out the words jerking one thumb towards the gaping Theon. “Is that you must pay in blood for that which you would claim. You haven’t blooded the North, Ironborn.” Harry’s voice turned soft. “Or did your only living son and Heir lie?”

“He spoke the truth, green-lander.” A thin man in a grey tunic, hair wild with sea salt spoke from the side of the Seastone Chair from Asha Greyjoy.

To Harry’s eyes this could only be Aeron Greyjoy, who Theon claimed was mad and a fanatic priest
of the Drowned God.

“In all things a true Ironborn must pay the Iron price.” Aeron Greyjoy agreed, though it clearly sat ill with his elder brother who scowled at the implied reprimand.

Never had it occurred to Balon that with the Starks marching south of the Neck that they would have left the Northern coasts as well-defended as they had. Even less likely to the Greyjoy Lord that his ever-loyal brother Victarion would abandon him to raid the Westerlands rather than return for more orders when the incursion failed. Now having these green-landers arrive and shove his failures and his weakling son in his face was more salt in his eyes.

“The fact remains.” Balon barked out, silencing the mutters of his captains. “That you have not presented yourself to the Seastone Chair.”

“Pardon then.” Harry tilted his head, a smirk still playing with his lips.

If Robb didn’t know any better he’d swear that Harry was having fun rattling the kraken’s cage, recognizing his intentionally-irritating manner from when he was trying to drive the Frey’s into bringing to mind the information he needs.


You could hear a pin drop the hall was so silent as Harry continued to rattle off his many and varied titles, each and every one earned, of that they had no doubt after hearing him take Balon to task.

It made his companions look at him with whole new eyes, and the Ironborn with something akin to respect.

“Undesireable No. 1,” he almost cracked a smile at that title but managed to keep his smirk and flamboyant mask in place. “Foster-father and pater familias of Lord Edward Remus Lupin-Black, and most recently,” he arched a brow getting to the meat of the matter. “Lord of the Land of Always Winter and the Fist of the First Men, Strong-Right-Arm of his Grace King Jon Targaryen, the first of His Name, also known as the Warrior-Who-Waits or the Warrior of Old.”

As predicted, it was the final chain of names and titles that brought the most reaction, the rest of them being strange to Ironborn and Westeron ears.

“There has never been a Lord of Always Winter nor the Fist of the First Men,” one of the Ironborn captains pointed out, leaning forward eagerly to hear the green-lander’s response. It was sure to rile Balon, something Lord Baelor Blacktyde was always eager to see, the Blacktydes of Blacktyde having been Kings and rulers of the Iron Islands long before the Greyjoys rose to power in the wake of Aegon’s Conquering.

“No.” Harry agreed with an easy smile. “There hasn’t. But as my Tomb laid beneath the Fist for thousands of years beyond counting – until that is, the new King woke me up – King Jon found it fitting to name me ruler over them, especially as one of the first things I did after waking was defeat a horde of White Walkers, allowing the King and some men of the Night’s Watch to make it back to the Wall and safety from the dreaded undead.”

“The Warrior-Who-Waits.” Aeron Greyjoy spoke, his voice craggy but musing. “A heavy title, for such small shoulders.”
Some of the Ironborn captains roared at the jape, while a few others Lord Baelor among them did not, knowing of the title from their own family stories handed down by the First Men, as had been done in the North for thousands of years. If the Greyjoys had kept more of their history after the invasion of the Andals, they wouldn’t laugh so easily at the title, it being from a tale old long before the Grey King defeated the sea dragon Nagga and built the first longship.

Harry’s companions muttered amongst themselves at the blatant disrespect being shown the envoy of the Targaryen King, Theon notably not among them, having laughed along with the others among the Ironborn at his uncle’s jest.

“White Walkers,” Balon scoffed. “Next you’ll spin tale of snarks and grumpkins pouring over the Wall.” He waved a hand. “These are soft, green-lander tales and have no place in the halls of the Iron Islands, Strong-Right-Arm of the dragon-fucker King.”

“Green-lander tales they might be.” Lord Baelor spoke up once more, having no fear of Balon Greyjoy. The only Greyjoy that would give him pause was Euron Crow’s Eye, and he had been exiled for a dozen years. “But even I know of the Warrior-Who-Waits, Greyjoy.” Baelor gave a firm nod in recognition to the man. “I say the captains will hear him and the message he bears from his King.”

“I am King!” Balon shouted, rising to his feet and raising a threatening fist to the Blacktyde of Blacktyde. “I say when and who will speak, not you Blacktyde!”

“Well then.” Harry cracked his neck and took out an axe. “Let’s do something about that little problem then.” He gave a bloodthirsty grin at the taken-aback would-be King. “Care to dance, King of the Iron Islands or are you afraid to lose to a green-lander?”

“No Ironborn would be afraid to finger-dance with a green-lander.” Theon scoffed. Honestly, Harry couldn’t have planned that little outburst of Theon’s better if he tried.

“Well.” Balon managed to agree from between gritted teeth. “Terms?”

“When I win,” Harry gave a rakish smile to the laughing Ironborn. “When I win, I’ll take the Seastone Chair.”

Silence rang throughout the hall.

If this green-lander who claimed to be a hero of old won the finger-dance against Balon, it would make him Lord of the Iron Islands.

“No man not faithful to the Drowned God can sit in the Seastone Chair as Lord or King of the Iron Islands.” Aeron claimed, voice heated with zealotry.

“I do not know this god of yours.” Harry said, voice steady. “Nor will I convert. There is only one god I serve, though he is known by many names and many faces. For in the end.” Harry’s voice chilled even the Ironborn to their very bones. “Death comes for us all.”

“If you will risk this folly.” Aeron dismissed his words. “Then on your own head be it.”

“Agreed.” Balon sneered. “If you win: The Seastone Chair and Lordship over the Iron Islands.” His eyes gleamed with avarice. “And if I win you come serve me, as the pet wizard and strong-arm of the King of the Iron Islands.”

“Done.” Harry nodded his head then intoned: “So mote it be.” Creating a flash and a visible chain
of golden light that linked them: An Unbreakable Vow, thought the others simply dismissed it as the wizard’s magic binding their bet.

“Clear the floor.” Balon demanded as he began shucking his armor, readying his axe as Harry did the same. “No one is to interfere.”

Harry shrugged off his outer layers as Robb and Lewen tried to hurriedly convince him to change his mind only to give up when he proved to give their words no heed.

It wouldn’t be the first time Lordship of the Iron Islands was decided by the finger-dance, but it certainly had the makings of being the most memorable.

“Which axe shall be used?” Harry called out across the Great Hall to Balon who had moved to a clear area in front of the Seastone Chair. “Yours or mine?”

A thrown hand-axe was his answer, Harry dodging it and then tossing his own away with a laugh. Bets were called and rang out, both among the Ironborn and the green-landers who had come with Harry, though the two didn’t intermingle. The game was as simple as it was dangerous: two or more people throwing a hand-axe between them, the game only stopping when one concedes to the other or is too injured to play on. It had been dubbed the “finger-dance” due to the high likelihood of losing a finger while attempting to catch or dodge the axe thrown by one’s opponent.

However, with Harry playing, who had spent years dodging bludgers that moved much faster and with more force in mid-air while avoiding other players and trying to catch a much-smaller object, the game wasn’t as difficult as the Ironborn had expected him to find it.

Harry picked up the axe from where it had imbedded itself against the wall, testing the balance a moment before hurling it with great force, sending it on its deadly way towards Balon who only managed to dodge it by jumping to one side, it moving far too quickly for him to attempt a catch.

They exchanged throws for several turns, neither making an attempt to catch the axe, Harry showing off his agility a bit as he leapt and dodged, laughing a time or two at a near miss – incidentally inciting Balon’s rage, which was the purpose behind his showmanship. Angry men were cold and calculating men, 

enraged men were blinded and made mistakes. Unfortunately, they also tended to be stronger, as Harry was reminded when the axe came towards him in a furious blur, the wizard barely ducking down in time to miss an axe to the skull.

“Not bad!” Harry shouted, working the axe out of the wall once more. “Almost had me, though you would’ve been shy a wizard as a result!”

Setting his jaw and grip firming, though only a few noticed the small tells, an anxiously watching Robb among them, Harry lifted the axe once more and sent it flying towards Balon, almost faster than the eye could see.

Almost at once the watchers realized that the smaller of the two opponents had been underutilizing his strength the whole time, while working to enrage Balon and wear him down.

A strategy that proved itself true as the axe buried itself several inches deep in the shoulder of Balon’s throwing arm, the Greyjoy unable to dodge completely out of the way of the blade.

Asha moved to help her father only to be waved off with a snarl and a curse.

No one could help him lest he forfeit to the green-lander pillow-biting sorcerer.

Oh, yes. Balon had heard tell of the depravity the wizard got up to with his dragon-fucking King.
And over his dead body would a man such as that take the Seastone Chair.

With a grunt and a groaning curse, Balon managed to rip the axe from his shoulder and bind the wound quickly with a scrap off his tunic, staunching the blood flow before it had him light-headed. Regaining his feet, Balon shot the axe back towards the green-lander with all his strength, only to stare in disbeliefing shock as the man snatched it out of the very air, making the first true catch of the game, another one of those taunting smiles on his too-pretty face.

“This is a nice axe.” Harry noted lightly. “Looks better with red coating the blade.”

As he said blade, he gave another powerful throw, this time anticipating how Balon would dodge.

Anticipating a bit too well as it turned out, Harry catching the Greyjoy in mid-move, the axe-blade burying itself to the hilt in Balon’s breastbone with the force of his throw.

Gasp of shock rang out from the watching Ironborn, Asha and Theon both running towards their father with denials on their lips. Aeron followed them, a bit more slowly, as he took in the carefully blank face of the green-lander who had just cut down the King of the Iron Islands in the guise of a game and a bet. This was no green-lander to take lightly, despite his earlier jibes. A fact that the Greyjoys were learning too slowly it seemed.

Aeron hoped that his other brothers wouldn’t prove as foolish as Balon, though knowing the Crow’s Eye, that would be, no doubt, too much to hope for.

Balon gasped his last few words for only his brother and remaining children to hear, blood running like rivers from his mouth as he bled out from the still-buried axe wound.

Once it was done, Aeron reached down and gave a mighty heave, pulling the axe from his brother’s chest with a wrench and a loud sucking sound as the corpse gave up the weapon albeit reluctantly.

“You have won the right to the Seastone Chair.” Aeron nodded, holding out the bloodied axe for all to see. “But that does not mean you will be able to take it, green-lander. Nor that you will be able to keep it. The Drowned God will strike down the unfaithful and unworthy.”

“Drowned God my arse.” Theon snarled, jumping to his feet, face a furious red. “I challenge you here and now!” The Greyjoy Heir cried out, pointing a hand coated in his father’s blood at the implacable Harry.

“You don’t want to do that, Greyjoy.” Harry’s voice was low and chilling, nearly matching that of when he spoke of Death.

“What, are you craven?” Theon demanded. “I know you’re a pillow-boy for that sister-fucker you call King, but are you a coward as well?”

“Be careful, Theon.” Robb warned from behind closed eyes and a stoic mien. “That’s my cousin you’re insulting. A cousin you bent the knee to, if you care to recall.”

“Fuck Jon Targaryen! And fuck you, the Great Lord Robb Stark!” Theon spat at them, his spittle marring the stone floor. “I have demanded a challenge by single-combat and I shall have it as blood-rights demand!”

“Nephew.” Euron Crow’s Eye melted from the shadows, no longer having to hide his face in shadows and secret as his exile was instantly lifted with his brother’s death.

The other Ironborn grumbled angrily among themselves as his brother Aeron took several fearful
steps back and away from the handsome Greyjoy with his distinctive eyepatch. But there was nothing the Ironborn captains could do in the wake of Balon’s death and a new Lord of the Iron Islands not yet selected. None of them were deluded enough to think that however events played out that the Targaryen King would allow them their independence.

“Perhaps you should heed their warning. Methinks there is more to this green-lander Warrior than meets my eye.”

Harry gave the newcomer an appraising look. There was a glint in his good eye that reminded the wizard most vividly of the two most dangerous wizards he ever met, wizards that were constantly underestimated by everyone around them, including their own family. Everyone thought Fred and George Weasley were do-nothings and no-good pranksters, they saw their craziness and dismissed them as nothing. And in the end, they were two of the fiercest and most effective members of the Order of the Phoenix, taking down more Death Eaters between them than most of the rest combined. George had even assisted Harry and the Aurors in hunting down the remnants after the final battle, often fatally.

This Greyjoy was dangerous in ways Balon or Theon or even Aeron with his zealotry couldn’t match. The Crow’s Eye had a *thirst* in him, one that wouldn’t be satisfied even if he drank the world dry. Dismissing him because he might be mad would be a fatal mistake.

“I accept your challenge to single-combat, Theon of House Greyjoy.” Harry spoke, words soft and quiet but no less piercing through the jeering of the Ironborn who all had an opinion about Theon’s challenge or the green-landers or the appearance of Euron Greyjoy when the last was supposed to be anywhere but in the Iron islands. “The terms?”

“To the death.” Theon’s eyes gleamed with his maddened grief and his unrelenting desire to spill Harry’s blood. The dragon-fucker’s would be better, but he’ll settle, for now, for his catamite.

Harry nodded, accepting the terms.

“And the weapon, Lord Potter-Black?” Aeron Greyjoy prompted. As the challenger his nephew was able to choose the terms of single-combat, but as the challenged the green-lander had the right to choose the weapon unless he forfeited the right to Theon.

“Daggers.” Harry gave a vicious grin, having seen the Greyjoy’s disdain for Harry’s main weapon after his wand and sword.

“A woman’s weapon.” Theon sneered with disgust, spitting again to clear the distaste from his mouth. “But then, perhaps you’re a woman under your leathers, it would explain how the dragon-fucker king can stand to plow you night after night.”

“Ah, Theon.” Harry gave him a too-sweet smile as he twirled a pair of daggers he’d taken from his pile of armor in his hands. All he was wearing was his basilisk-hide tunic, trousers, and boots over his underclothes, ignoring the mithril and steel armor and dragonhide leather battle robes that made up his armor. He’d stripped down for the finger-dance, knowing that the extra protection wasn’t worth the loss of agility as Balon had proved in the end.

And against a dagger he didn’t *need* any protection beyond that of the basilisk hide.

“I always knew you wanted to get in my trousers.” Harry smirked as the Ironborn guffawed around them, the Greyjoy heir’s face turning an ugly shade of puce at the mockery. “No need to cover it up behind talk of my secretly being a woman. I assure you.” He gave a joking leer. “I’m *all* male under my clothes.”
The Ironborn and Harry’s companions made a circle enclosing the two but leaving them with room to maneuver, Robb grabbing Harry at the final moments of preparations in what looked to the others as an embrace, whispering as he hid his mouth on the far side of Harry’s face, having turned the wizard’s profile towards Theon and the Ironborn with his grab.

“He’s quick to strike.” Robb whispered rapidly, the words almost tripping over themselves as he tried to give Harry what edge against the Ironborn that he could. Theon was one hells of a fighter, even if Harry had chosen a weapon the cocky bastard wasn’t all that used to. He was still familiar with it, Robb’s late father not standing for anything less. “But slow to recover, and has no problem taking the low blow or dirty strike at an opponent’s back.” Robb glanced sideways at the furiously pacing man who was once one of his closest friends. That time was well gone now. “Your daggers are better and longer than his but it won’t make up for his extra reach.” Robb pressed his lips to the side of Harry’s head in a halfway-kiss. “And try, whatever you do, to stay out of reach of his bow arm. He’s twice the power with it as the other.”

Harry pulled back and quirked a small smile, knowing that they were giving rise to a flurry of rumors with every moment he stayed tucked away in Robb’s strong arms. Even if it was innocent – which it mostly was for both of them – it didn’t appear that way. And when one of you is the Cousin of the King and the other his Right-Arm and acknowledged lover, it was the appearance of things that mattered.

“I’ll try.” Harry turned and started for the center of the circle. “But no promises.”

“Speak your words.” Aeron commanded the combatants.

“What is Dead may never Die.” Theon snarled like a true Ironborn, much to Aeron’s approval, hands clenching in rage around the pair of daggers his sister Asha had slipped him.

Harry’s educated gaze saw the tell, picking up on it at once. Theon was going into a death-duel with strange weaponry. That would hinder him greatly, perhaps even enough to counteract his greater reach. In all honesty, choosing daggers could end up being a deadly gamble for the wizard, his personal comfort with the weapon being outweighed by Theon’s greater reach and strength.

But only the conclusion of the match would decide that.

At this point there was no way to tell for sure, despite the new rash of betting that had broken out, this time the Ironborn and Harry’s companions intermingling now that the Greyjoy was dead and unable to stop them.

“Dead is dead.” Harry shot back. “In the end, death comes for all men.”

Aeron nodded, acknowledging the words though not accepting them, and stepped back out of the circle.

Once his brother was out of the way, Euron began the match, calling for them to “Begin!”

Theon struck first, or attempted to anyway, planning to take advantage of Harry having already spent the better part of an hour throwing a hand axe and dodging it in turn. And against an opponent who wasn’t used to prolonged activity, much as your average southron knight who trained at various martial skills only bringing them to bear for extended periods of time during rare battles, the occasional tourney, and the now on-going war, Theon’s plan would have worked in all likelihood.

Harry wasn’t your average southron knight.

Instead he was an athlete before he began to study things like swordplay and edged weapons, even
hand-to-hand combat. And the sport he was the star of required extended physical workouts in case of a match taking hours or even days. The person who said that staying steady on a broom going 150km per hour wasn’t a workout had no idea of things like physics and wind shear. Harry hadn’t stopped playing either just because school was over. No. He kept up with his regimen as he traveled and learned the healing arts and the magics of communities outside of Britain.

Quidditch, like any other sport, tended to cross normal boundaries and relieve the initial tension caused by being a stranger in a strange land, as Harry had seen first-hand at the Quidditch World Cup.

So instead of a tired, weary opponent who was slow to react and slower to strike, Theon Greyjoy found himself up against a highly-honed athlete, who hadn’t even found need of a second wind yet, due to the throw-wait-dodge-banter-throw pace of the finger-dance.

An advantage Harry took good use of, as Theon overestimated his first strike, causing him to overextend his dominant arm, giving the more-experienced dagger-user to dodge forward instead of back, easily blocking the covering strike from Theon’s second blade with one hand and slicing savagely at the Ironborn’s extended arm, that as Robb had predicted was slow to recover from the first strike, ripping a deep gash into Theon’s bicep and kicking out with his left leg, shoving the Ironborn back at the same time as Harry used to momentum to flip away in a strange move neither the Ironborn nor the green-landers had ever seen before.

Well.

Most of them.

Euron Crow’s Eye arched a brow. The well-traveled and infamous pirate had seen similar tactics from a few fighters on the Summer Isles. He’d been right. There was more to the littlest green-lander than met his eye.

“You’ll have to do better than that, nephew.” Euron called out as Harry claimed first-blood, in half-encouragement and half-jeer. “This green-lander knows skills a whelp like you could only dream of! And not just between the sheets, boy!” Euron gave the roaring crowd a careful study. He prided himself on being the most cunning of the Greyjoys but you didn’t need to be particularly quick to see which way the wind was turning. The Young Dragon had chosen his envoy and champion well when it came to dealing with the Ironborn, it seemed. “Ten dragons on the green-lander!”

“Brother!” Aeron rebuked him as Theon charged again, once more missing his target though this time making the same mistake as Jaime Lannister had at first: not counting on Harry’s speed, it was hard to strike at what was already gone, Harry shoving the point home as he used the speed of his whirling dodge to tag Theon again, this time on his opposite leg just behind the knee.

“You don’t have to have two good eyes to see which way this is going, Aeron.” Euron spoke lowly for only his brother’s ears. “The little vicious one is bleeding him, toying with him. Theon’s death was certain the moment he challenged the green-lander king-fucker, the same as our rapidly-cooling Balon.”

The Crow’s Eye’s words proved to be prophetic, as Harry took the offensive, knocking aside every attempt by his larger and stronger opponent, each flashing strike of his daggers finding a weakness in Theon’s armor, the Greyjoy heir turning into a mass of cuts both great-and-small, deep-and-shallow before their watchful eyes.

Then Harry, tired of the game, tossed his main dagger into the air and caught it in a blaze of
showmanship, now wielding it so the blade was protruding from his fist rather than as an extension of his arm.

Knocking the dagger in Theon’s left hand loose and sending it clattering away with his off-hand, Harry took advantage of Theon’s shock with his main, cutting a brutal slash from Theon’s cheekbone to his jaw in a jagged cut that even if Theon survived the match would mark his handsome face for all time, Harry’s change in grip making his once-smooth cuts and slashes turn into cruel, gaping wounds nearly to the bone.

Theon cried out and stumbled, holding his now-empty hand up to his cheek where he felt with his probing tongue that the wound in places was through-and-through. The little cocksucker had torn all the way through the meat of his face, leaving sagging flesh to drip down from both bone and jaw, having nothing to anchor it in-between.

Snarling once more, Theon gave a blood-filled baring of teeth too malicious to be called a smile and charged the patiently-waiting little cunt, who was watching him with calm green-eyes as if he was a particularly amusing insect trying to escape being pinned to a collection board. Shifting his own grip on his dagger, he echoed that which tore apart his face, stabbing downward with the full of his remaining strength in a jab that would pierce right through the green-lander’s shiny leathers.

Only to stop and choke, arm still raised, as another dagger, the one in Harry’s off-hand that he’d rarely used except to shield against Theon’s strikes, buried itself to the hilt in the vulnerable gap between mail shirt and leather pants that had been left open by Theon’s highly raised arm, his mail shirt moving with him and leaving his soft belly exposed.

Harry gave a cold, cruel sneer before giving the blade a vicious twist and jerking it loose, Theon’s legs buckling and sending him to his hands and knees, blood and viscera pouring from the jagged tear in his abdomen, now longer able to keep his feet without leaning on the weapon that had wounded him.

“My name.” Harry’s voice was as cold and cruel as the sneer he’d given Theon. “Is Harry, son of James. I am the last of my Line and the last, so far as I know, of my Kind.” Fisting one hand in Theon’s hair he heaved him up on his knees as the Greyjoy Heir bled out, coughing up blood in a macabre repetition of his father’s own death less than an hour before, and at the same hand. “My words are Magic, Honor, and Sacrifice.” His iced-over green eyes chilled each of the Ironborn and even those who had accompanied him to Pyke as he cast his gaze over each of the assembled. “Make no mistake;” he pointed the bloodied dagger around the circle. “I survived a Dark Lord after my blood from before I was even born. Fuck with me and I’ll sacrifice each and every one of you squid-fucking rapists to Death and lay down a hail of Fire and Blood on these Islands so thick and deep they’ll still be smoking in a thousand years.”

Turning back to Theon, Harry placed the tip of his dagger at the base of the Greyjoy Heir’s ear and jerked from side to side, slitting his throat handily, the blood spraying out or coming down in rivers from the gaping wound.

“Anyone else want to pick a fight today?” Harry demanded, wiping his daggers clean on a dry patch on Theon’s tunic before he let go of the body, allowing it to slump to the ground in a pool of its own blood. “I have some more of that the Greyjoys reaped if so.”

A figure melted from the shadows, passing through the Seastone Chair and the ring of men as if made of nothing more than air and smoke. The men who felt its touch shuddered from a cold so deep and so bitter it rivaled that of the harshest of winters. As it came to a stop at Harry’s side it clapped, once, twice, thrice, in a joke of applause for Harry’s performance.
And when it spoke, all who heard it gasped or cried out in fear for their very lives, a fear that the Ironborn had rarely if ever felt before.

“Well done.”

Death’s voice was the same as in his dreamings, Harry noted absently, cocking his head to one side and studying the figure as it reaped the soul of Theon Greyjoy in the same manner as Harry had seen before.

“Can they see you?” Harry asked what seemed like the pertinent question.

“Oh,” Death’s chuckle was no more than a rasp, like a handful of dried leaves rubbing together in the Fall. “Not so well as you can, my Warrior-Who-Waits. But they can hear me speak, nonetheless. The Wyrd has changed once more, it seems you cannot help yourself. And once more I have come to see if you would like a reward.”

“I accept no boons from the gods that are not freely given, as you know, old friend.” Harry replied, watching the reactions of those around him with care.

If they weren’t at least shitting their knickers at the thought of him raining down fire and blood, they were now at the sight of him easily conversing with the visage of Death.

He may never have the respect of some of them due to who he chose to love and have as his lover, but he would have their fear, something Harry was struggling to accept as a consequence of his position in his new life.

Part of him couldn’t help but wonder how soon the first assassination attempt would arrive or the first Septon declaring him hellspawn.

At least the more things change the more they stay the same.

Harry got the sense that Death was once more smiling at him. It was fucking creepy that he’d spent enough time are the deity for him to even be able to sense that without being able to see whatever is hiding within that shadowed hood. Beyond eyes that at times burned with wreaths of flames, anyway.

Death should not be amused at his antics as if he was a mostly entertaining incorrigible puppy.

“Very well.” Death rapped his scythe once against the stone floor, making a ringing sound that was almost visible to the naked eye as Harry sensed waves of power rippling out from the seemingly-simple action. “That does not mean that a reward has not been tendered, Warrior-Who-Waits, Lord of the Iron Islands.”

And with that, Death faded away as if he’d never been, the bodies of Theon and Balon Greyjoy fading with him, leaving only the pools of blood they had laid in as proof of their existence.

As the gathered’s gazes were no longer locked on the spectre, they began to shuffle and shift, retaking their seats to sounds of outraged cries as they saw just what the deity had meant. With the single rap of his scythe and a flex of his power, the great hall and the Seastone Chair had been changed. Where once sat an oily black slab of rock shaped in the visage of a kraken now stood the gleaming black triquetra and sword of Harry’s sigil, the two held up on the paws and claws of facing griffon and dragon rampants standing taller than a man’s head. The two great beasts reared, their far wings up and spread, the detail so fine that you could count the scales and feathers. Their near wings were flowing down, forming the seat of the Chair as their planted claws and paws formed the base.
Inscribed down the length of the sword was Harry’s words: Magic, Honor, Sacrifice in High Valyrian script.

“What kind of stone is that?” Robb asked in awe at the blatant show of power.

The Lord of the North had seen many things done through magic, though Harry tried to keep his usage of it to simple, sedate things like heating charms unless he was transporting himself or others from one place to another.

He’d yet to show off his animagus form since joining with the bulk of Jon’s army, not wanting to spook the men and horses, no matter how much some of the Lords had hinted at a proof of his ability that Jon’s Targaryen loyalist knights had spoken of with awed fear and near-reverence.

“Obsidian.” Euron Crow’s Eye answered even as Harry opened his mouth. “Also called Dragonglass. There’s rich deposits of it in volcanic locales such as Dragonstone, old Valyria, and the Shadowlands.”

“That’s right.” Harry nodded his head, an inscrutable look on his face as he traded between glancing at the reformed Chair and the formerly-exiled Greyjoy.

“A Lordsmoot!” Aeron’s enraged voice cried out, his eyes burning with suppressed grief. “I call for a Lordsmoot to select the new Lord of the Iron Islands and of the Seastone Chair, though that creature,” he snarled. “Has defiled it.”

Little did any of them know, it wasn’t just the Chair. Everything that had belonged to Balon Greyjoy as Lord or King of the Iron Islands and bore his kraken sigil had changed as Death’s power reached farther and farther beyond the walls of Pyke. All of them now bore the sword and triquetra of House Potter-Black. Including the flagship of the Iron Fleet, captained by Victarion Greyjoy, which was renamed the Black Victory in honor of its new Lord and Commander.

“Balon lost the Iron Islands to Lord Harry.” Robb shouted, angered by the double-dealing on the part of the Drowned Priest.

“The Ironborn believe in paying the Iron Price, brother.” Euron’s voice interjected in the burgeoning fight between the green-landers and Aeron and his priests. “If the Chair accepts the man who has fought for it and paid for it in blood, his own and that of our kin.” The Crow’s Eye stood hip-shot, one shoulder leaning against a stone pillar as he spoke and above all watched the crowded hall.

“Then he is Lord of the Iron Islands by right of paying the iron price.” He sneered at the gaping priests. “No matter what you preach Damphair, nor what the other Drowned Men spout. I have seen a god today: and his name was Death not the Drowned.”

“Godless creature!” Aeron spat back shaking a cudgel made of driftwood at his older brother. “Pray that you never have need of the Drowned God for you have spurned him one time too many with your impious words!”

“Enough.” Harry commanded, backing his words with a silent flex of his power, the first he’d shown of it since stepping foot in Lordsport. “Let us hear from the gathered Ironborn rather than your family squabbles. What say you, Ironborn? Have I paid the Iron Price? Shall we see which will reign supreme, the Iron Price or the Damphair’s prophecy?”

“Let him try it!” Lord Blacktyde’s voice rang out once more. “The green-lander has paid the Iron Price, as demanded by the Old Ways. Let him try. If he fails and is struck down, then we shall call a lordsmoot. If it accepts him then we shall claim him as Ironborn: salt and stone and steel and Lord of
Nodding, Harry slipped his dagger back into their sheathes in his boots, and rose. Not even pausing long enough to take a steadying breath, Harry glanced once at a stoic Robb before turning and striding down the length of the hall, ascending the steps to the Seastone Chair without faltering. Taking the new design in once more, he turned on his heel and facing the Great Hall of Pyke lowered himself with regal nonchalance onto the glassy surface of the seat.

A bitter cry rang out through the hall, Aeron and the Drowned men wailing and tearing at their roughspun clothes when it became obvious that whatever gods had prevailed that day, they accepted Harry as the Lord of the Seastone Chair.

“All Hail,” Euron’s voice tore like a lightning bolt through the cacophony. “Lord Harry Potter-Black, Lord of the Seastone Chair, Lord Reaper of Pyke, and Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands.”

“HAIL THE LORD OF THE SEASTONE CHAIR!”

Later, in the private Lord’s solar in the Sea Tower, Harry barely waited for the door to close behind his other companions, leaving him alone with Robb before he shoved the larger Lord of the North against the solid rock wall, pinning him with a hand around his throat and keeping him in place.

They’d spent hours with the Ironborn captains, including Euron Crow’s Eye, planning the sacking of the Westerlands and the Reach. Harry’s plan had them spreading out the some four-hundred and fifty ships the Iron Islands commanded, leaving a force of fifty behind to guard their native waters while the rest joined the Martell and Targaryen fleets in harrying the Westerlands and the Reach from Faircastle to Oldtown, but taking care to not sack Casterly Rock or Lannisport. They wanted the Old Lion feeling pissed off and impotent, not enraged enough to follow them west. The Martells had already held off attacks by the Redwyne Fleet before being supported by Prince Oberyn’s ships and men fresh off a successful siege of Storm’s End, adding the strength of the Iron Islands to the combined forces of the Targaryen-Martell alliance would allow them to control the western seas of Westeros in their entirety as they had the Lannister fleet pinned down and blockaded at Lannisport.

The Ironborn weren’t happy about the new rules set down by the King, preventing them from killing outside of open battle and forbidding them their ancient ways of raping and stealing women from the green-landers and taking the men as thralls and slaves to work their lands.

No, they weren’t happy about it in the least, but at the moment none dared to test their new Lord.

Harry was sure he’d have to execute a captain or a hundred before the message sank into their thick skulls but eventually their fear of reprisal would gain a victory over their ancestral barbarity.

The combined Ironborn-Targaryen-Martell fleet would be a thing of wonder and fear, its creation a tale to go down in songs thanks to the pacts forged by Ned Stark and enforced by his nephew Jon.

Eddard Stark had planned well, Harry had to give the man that, creating alliances and fleets and armies all in secret waiting for the day Jon was ready to take the Iron Throne.

A rare man was Eddard Stark, Harry was sad to have never met him.

Though at this very moment he could consign the man to the seven hells and his eldest son and Heir with him.

“What the fuck was that?” Harry snarled, slamming Robb’s head back against the stones in a show
of power when the Northern Lord tried to move. “What the hells were you thinking with that little show of yours, hmm? I accepted the challenge and chose the weapons to plant seeds of respect and fear among the Ironborn and those noble arseholes who’ve been giving Jon trouble over me. Instead they get a show of Jon’s loyal cousin and right-hand looking like sweet-summer-loves, the Lord of the North embracing and gods-be-damned cooing at his cousin’s lover and right-hand!” Harry was thankful for silencing charms as otherwise he was sure they would hear his rage all the way down at Lordsport. “Do you have any fucking idea what those twats are going to say from Winterfell to Sunspear once word of what happened today spreads? Well?” He demanded, pushing away from Robb at last lest he strangle the life out of him. “Do you?!”

“I just wanted to help.” Robb said, his voice raspy from the punishment his throat had taken, one hand moving to rub at the bruised flesh. “Theon was a dangerous foe, especially when his blood was up like that. I was trying to help.”

“Help, he says.” Harry jammed the heels of his hands roughly against his eye sockets, trying to get ahold of his temper before he tore the Sea Tower down around their heads. “Help. Help, how?” He asked, voice scarcely calm after his outburst. “By making me look like a disloyal slattern in front of a dozen southron and Northern knights and over a hundred Ironborn? How was that in any way helpful Robb?”

“I was worried for you!” Robb finally lost his grip on his fearsome temper and shouted back. “Worried that whether win or lose we were all going to be slaughtered by the Ironborn! Worried that you were tired after a long trip to Pyke followed by a finger-dance against Balon! Worried that Theon was going to gut you like a trout! I. Was. Worried.” He bit out from beneath clenched teeth, visibly trying to rein in his impulses.

Harry gave him a mystified look. “Worried?” He echoed, narrowing his emerald eyes as he searched for something that was eluding him. “For me?”

“Yes.” Robb rolled his eyes exasperated with the man’s inability to believe someone would worry for or about him. It was a trait Jon had complained of before when the wizard would be off healing or doing whatever it was he did among the armies, leaving the two cousins to plot and plan the westerlands invasion alone. Or, you know, drink themselves into a stupor. Striding over to Harry’s side, he cupped the frozen beauty’s cheeks between his two strong hands. “You oblivious little idiot.”

And leaning down, Robb stole a kiss from his King’s lover for his own, to keep him warm at night when the men he loved were busy warming each other, leaving him alone to a cold southron wife and an even colder marriage bed.

Robb wasn’t sure when his feelings for Harry had gotten so strong, though he was well aware of when he began to change: as he appeared out of nowhere in the Whispering Wood and protected him from the Kingslayer’s deadly sword.

The wizard had left Jon’s side, before casting his magics blindly, all to help a man, to help Robb who had shown him nothing more than icy politeness at best and disdain at worst.

Then, as if that wasn’t shock enough, Harry spent hours healing Grey Wind as well as Robb and his men of the North, working himself unto exhaustion when all he wanted to do was return to Jon’s side.

It was then that the question that had kept him awake in the night was answered: what was it about Harry that had Jon cleaving to him when all others before him had so quickly been cast off. It was a simple answer. One so concise and yet profound that Robb was left dazed in the shock of it:
It was *everything* about Harry that endeared him to Robb’s royal cousin.

Harry simply was *Harry*, a singular being in a world that couldn’t replicate him no matter how hard it tried. It was utterly impossible. As Harry himself had said to the Ironborn: he was the last of his kind.

But somehow Robb believed that even if wizards were a copper a dozen, Harry would still be unique among them all.

Slim, elegant hands rose and wrapped themselves around strong wrists, even as Harry pressed closer, unable to deny himself a taste of what Robb was implicitly offering him.

And *gods* how badly did Harry want to accept.

He couldn’t.

He couldn’t do that to Jon, but more importantly he couldn’t do it to *himself*.

Allowing Robb his way, letting him in regardless of how it would affect Jon, that wasn’t who Harry was or had ever been. Moreover, that wasn’t who he would allow himself to *become*.

Harry wasn’t stupid.

He knew Death and the other gods were insidiously changing him even as being awake and a part of events in Westeros were changing him from the wizarding hero he used to be into a fearsome creature worthy of the title of Warrior-Who-Waits.

But breaking faith with his lover, *that* was where Harry, just *Harry* without all his fancy titles and accolades both earned and unearned, drew the line.

“No, Robb.” Harry broke the kiss, panting lightly as he fought back his arousal long enough to speak, his hold on the Northern Lord’s wrists all that was grounding him against the unskilled but fervent onslaught.

“We can’t.” He gasped as Robb, denied access to Harry’s plump lips, attacked his vulnerable neck, showering it with kisses and nips and soothing swipes of his busy tongue.

For a supposed-novice at loving men, Harry reflected, the Lord of the North certainly wasn’t faltering in the field.

Firming his resolve, Harry pushed Robb away by dint of his hands on the much taller – and stronger – Lord’s wrists.

“Robb.” He stated firmly, staring into riveting blue eyes lit with furious desire. “We can’t.”

“No one would know.” Robb whispered, his inner wolf howling to continue, pushing him forward past what he knew was acceptable. Jon could forgive a kiss or a glance. He would *never* forgive either of them if it went further. “Not even Jon. I swear it. I would never…”

“Everyone would know.” Harry interrupted before Robb could damn himself – damn them both – with his words. “The moment they saw us together. *Especially* Jon. Ah-ah.” He released one of Robb’s wrists and pressed his fingers firmly against Robb’s too-tempting mouth before it could spill any more honeyed lies and arguments designed to break down his resolve. “No, Robb. We can’t.” A calculating look came into his eyes as an idea that he’d been musing over since seeing the two cousins together returned to the forefront of his mind. “At least…” He drawled, eyes flashing as a
plan came together. “We can’t yet.”

“Yet?” Robb turned his face away from Harry’s silencing hand after placing a sensual kiss to his fingers.

“One day.” Harry nodded, taking a step back from the talking-breathing-temptation that was Robb Stark. “Can you wait one more day? Our company leave tomorrow to return to Riverrun. If I take you, Prince Lewen, and myself back through magical means we can beat the men – and the gossip – by a fortnight at least. Tomorrow night, once I’m alone with Jon in his chambers, I’ll leave the door cracked for you to join us and we can discuss together,” he stressed. “With Jon what has happened. As well as the possibility of it happening again as well as more.”

“More?” Robb asked weakly, his pupils desire-blown at the implication ripe within that single word.

He was going to have to wank himself raw to get to sleep tonight, he knew it after everything that danced through his mind at Harry’s suggestive phrasing.

Harry arched a knowing brow. “Unless you’ve somehow fallen out of love with your cousin in the last turn, yes.” He said sardonically. “More. But…” He trailed off teasingly. “We may have to persuade the King to see things our way…”

…

Renly Baratheon, known as the King in Highgarden or the King in the South despite his claim to the Seven Kingdoms, sat in council with his good-father and other Lords and knights of renown of the Reach and some of the Storm Lands.

His wife Queen Margery of Highgarden sat at his right hand while her brother (and Renly’s lover) Ser Loras Tyrell stood behind him as his Lord Commander of Renly’s Rainbow Guard. Renly’s good-father Lord Mace Tyrell was seated at Renly’s left with Mace’s own mother the indomitable ‘Queen of Thorns’ herself Olenna Redwyne in place beside her granddaughter. They were arrayed as such to present a united front before the bickering lords and knights – even when the truth was far from a unified whole, mainly stemming from Margery’s as-yet-still-virginal state and Loras’s heartsore fury over being excluded as a choice of Consort by none other than his own parents.

Lord Mace Tyrell had been resolute in making his precious flower Margery a Queen, fulfilling her grasping desires, and took no note of that of his third son’s despite Loras being as good of a match for Renly as Margery was.

The problem at hand: Renly’s brother Stannis and the taking of Storm’s End and with it much of the support of the Storm Lords and more importantly their armies reverting to Stannis and with him to the Targaryen claimant to the Iron Throne, the product of a Stark-Targaryen union that many lords of note had tried to prevent through guile, manipulations, and out-right rebellion and murder.

No southron Lord had wanted those two lines to ever join, perhaps save the Martells who tended to stay as much out of the backdoor-dealings of the Seven Kingdoms as possible, preferring entertaining their lovers over social-climbing.

The Direwolves of the North and the Dragons of Old Valyria had been two bloodlines too rich in power for the status-quo to be maintained. It couldn’t be allowed or so spoke the Hightowers. Hoster Tully had gladly joined the game when it appeared he was due to lose advancing his House through his daughters to first Mad Aerys’s spite and then to a daughter of Starfall.

But no matter their machinations, in the end, they’d been too late.
A Direwolf had wedded and bedded a Dragon, giving root to a son and Heir to the Iron Throne that was tying a noose around the Lions, hoping to hang old Tywin with it.

Renly had been content to let this “Jon Targaryen, first of his name” have at it – and the Lannisters, slowly building his strength and biding his time until the opportune moment to sweep in and take the Iron Throne when the other contenders were weak.

His plan had crumbled before him like so much ash in the wind after Stannis – cold, stern Stannis – had sworn for the Young Dragon and with help from Dorne led a successful siege against Storm’s End, taking the bulk of Renly’s Storm Lands army with it, the Storm Lords rushing in droves to the new southron stronghold of the Targaryen cause, some openly leaving under one pretext or another, others sneaking away in the dead of night.

Something had to be done, however what, exactly, was the crux of the matter and the issue that was turning the Reach Lords and few remaining Storm Lords onto each other’s necks like ravening jackals.

“I say that Stannis is a danger to you, leave him unblooded and he will only grow stronger, while your own power is diminished by battle. The Lannisters will not be beaten in a day, as the Young Dragon has proven. By the time you are done with them, Lord Stannis may be as strong as you ... or stronger with his support of the Targaryen King.” Lord Randyll Tarly swore, thumping his fist against the table in emphasis. “Lord Stannis is one of the most capable commanders in the Seven Kingdoms. If we do not turn and face him, regaining the strength of the Storm Lands, then by the time the Young Dragon is done in the Westerlands there will be no way to defeat the combined might of the two armies, even with the anticipated losses the Dragon will take in the West.”

“Your words have truth Lord Tarly.” Lord Mace acknowledged, respecting the man as one of the finest generals he had sworn to him. “But with the Lion’s eyes firmly fixed on the Northern advance and the Young Dragon having his favorite child hostage, there may never be a better time to move to take King’s Landing. With the Rose Road secured by our men, we could withstand a siege from within the safety of the Red Keep for years, all throughout the coming Winter and into the next Spring if need be.”

“How many men have we lost to my brother and the Dragon?” Renly asked as he lounged indolently in his throne carved with the sweeping flowers and trees motifs of the Reach. “How many have turned their cloaks in favor of my cousin?”

Renly had no issue noting the relation, unlike Robert.

He would let that particular hypocrisy die alongside his whoremonger brother’s legacy of bastards and debt.

“Ten thousand have left the encampment.” Ser Garlan Tyrell, known as Garlan the Gallant, one of the best knights the Reach could boast despite his lack of glory-seeking like his younger brother Loras, reported. “And another twenty thousand reserves that were garrisoned in the Storm Lands.”

“Thirty thousand total,” Renly mused, tapping one finger idly against the wooden arm of his throne. “Leaving us with ninety thousand men encamped without the ability to replenish with men from the Storm Lands.”

“It is only a matter of time before the Young Dragon brings the Ironborn to heel.” Lady Olenna cautioned. “Once that is done he will once again give them leave to raid our western border via the Sunset Sea, or I’m a maid anew. The Redwyne Fleet has already been pressed to the limit with the damned opportuning Dornish and it will only get worse with the Red Viper and the Crow’s Eye
both at the helms, beyond the sea-faring might of the Velaryons, the Celtigars, and the Manderlys."

“Pardon milady.” Randyll Tarly sneered. “But war is for men, and the birthing chamber for
women. That is the way the gods made us. Your words have no place at a council of war.”

“Lord Randyll…” Mace said waringly only to be waved off by his exasperated mother.

She had said her piece. If these pompous fools, her son chief among them, refused to listen it was no
concern of hers. The Lady Olenna would pick up the pieces and advance her family, once the Fat
Flower led them all astray, as she’d always done.

“We’ll move to take King’s Landing.” Renly decided. “I have no desire to be labeled kinslayer, and
at least in that city there is no chance of that.” He noted wryly. “Once I’ve taken the Throne,
Stannis will bend the knee, just as he has to a bit of dragon-blood and the promise of Storm’s End.”

“On your head be it.” Lord Randyll muttered ominously.

“You heard your King.” Lord Mace stood and began barking orders now that a decision had been
reached. “Break camp! We march on King’s Landing and will foist that monstrous bastard son-of-a-bitch’s arse off of the Iron Throne!”

…

Jon pressed Harry up against the barely-closed door of their joint quarters, Harry’s own room having
been unused save for brewing and healing over the six weeks they’d been stationed at Riverrun
waiting for wounds to heal and the reinforcements from the North and the Vale to arrive as ordered.

Which they had done so, the Vale men supporting the River Lords in holding back Tywin Lannister
and set to guard the Northern-Targaryen landed army as they moved into the Westerlands and the
Reach, most arriving after Harry’s departure for the Iron Islands.

With Harry’s overwhelming – albeit a bit frightening – success in becoming the Lord of the Iron
Islands, conquering the Ironborn and Pyke both, everything was set for them to move forward with
the campaign.

Even if Jon could tell there was something the three of them, Harry, Robb, and the Kingsguard
Prince Lewen were holding back from their report.

An omission that has to do with Harry and Robb if Jon is any judge of his cousin’s expressions and
body language.

But that wasn’t what the young king wanted to be thinking about now.

Not now with Harry’s luscious lithe body pressed up against his own so tightly that not even a piece
of parchment could fit between them and Harry’s wicked tongue doing things to his own that made
Jon’s eyes cross in lust.

Harry moved forward aggressively, one hand tugging sharply on Jon’s shoulder-length hair, the
other lingering for a moment on the door, opening it just a crack without severing the silencing ward
he’d placed on the rooms their second day at Riverrun after a morning of blushes thanks to the
teasing of Prince Lewen and the rest of the Kingsguard.

This wasn’t exactly the scenario he’d had in mind but…Harry shrugged mentally.

A man had to do what a man had to do, and with Jon’s hands tugging impatiently at his clothes,
searching and grasping and tracing the new pinkish scar he’d acquired from one of Theon’s luckier strikes, Harry most definitely had to do Jon.

Or at least set the stage, there was no telling when Robb would make his much-anticipated (by Harry) appearance after all.

And there was nothing wrong with softening up his quarry.

With some quick footwork and a shove, Harry had the now-shirtless and passion-flushed King of Westeros flat on his back on the wide bed, his legs dangling over the edge and his arms sprawled out like some pagan offering to a lustful god.

Bacchus or Pan, maybe. Harry eyed the arousal straining at Jon’s leather leggings. Perhaps Priapus was a better match.

Though his Jon was much better looking than that particular god had been reputed to be, Jon’s mixture of Stark and Targaryen creating a being of great masculine beauty and sensuality, whose warrior nature had sculpted a body indeed fit for the gods.

Starting with Jon’s sultry mouth, Harry pressed him with kisses, sending his lover’s arousal spiraling upwards as he moved ever-so-slowly towards his still-constrained arousal, lavishing extra time and attention on the sweet reddish-pink nubs hidden among Jon’s black curls, following the trail of hair ever downwards towards his treasure and reward. A darting teasing tongue danced whorls around cobblestone abs and bellybutton, while clever fingers unlaced the drawstrings on Jon’s leather trousers as the King’s sword-callused hands grasped in pleasured agony at the bedfurs. Harry mouthed him through the leather before moving back and kneeling at Jon’s feet, rapidly shucking the boots and woolen socks from shapely feet and toes.

Hands trailed teasingly up wide-spread legs as their tormented prey groaned low in his throat at his cruel lover’s play.

Harry was going to be the death of him, he knew it.

But oh, what a way to go.

It would be a death for the ages, much better than passing peacefully alone in his bed having acquired a great age.

Unless Harry was right there with him, still driving him mad until the night he passed.

The wizard had just reached his prize with his skilled hands when a gasp sounded from the archway leading to the antechamber, Harry turning his head idly but not stopping in his ministrations to the royal cock as Jon rose to his elbows and fixed the intruder with a maddened stare.

“Someone better be dying.” He barked out at his cousin before falling back onto the bed with a groan as a sudden flick of Harry’s tongue to the weeping head of his cock stole the strength from his limbs. “Void that, someone better be dead.”

Harry lifted his hands and began inching Jon’s trousers down, inch by excruciating inch as Jon watched with confusion slowly giving way to realization in his dark purple desire-drenched eyes. He turned his head from watching his lover to staring at Robb, his Robb, as he blushed vividly and began to haltingly, with trembling hands, to strip off his cloak, followed by the rest of his heavy Northern-style garb.

“I don’t think.” Harry said with a knowing quirk of his mouth and a teasing light in his gaze. “That
Lord Stark is here with *bad news*…per se.” With a final tug on the leggings in his hands Harry finished stripping his king bare before his cousin and Lord Paramount of the North, Robb’s burning blue eyes taking in the sight before him like a starving man being sat at a king’s feast.

“I *knew* something happened while you were gone.” Jon gasped out through his arousal at the sight of his tall, strong auburn-haired Robb with his equally long, thick cock nestled in a halo of reddish-brown curls, coming to surround the much smaller form of his lover, Harry being much too busy with his mouth on Jon’s cock, stealing the very breath from him with his wicked mouth and taunting tongue, to react with more than a lusty look up from emerald eyes as a new set of hands ghosted down the wizard’s scarred back, stripping the pants from him with a rend and a tear in an absent show of strength.

*Gods*, Jon thought while he was still capable, taking in the sight of Robb stroking and nipping and kissing Jon’s lover while Harry serviced him with abandon. *It was a sight to make a Septon forsake his vows.*

Harry set a demanding pace with his hands and mouth as Robb set to exploring every bit of both Harry and Jon that he could reach without removing his pulsing cock from where it was snugged tight between Harry’s tight, downy cheeks.

Jon swiftly found himself crying out in warning to his lover the weeks apart taking their toll, Harry responding by grasping him firmly and increasing the suction with his lips, hollowing his cheeks on every upstroke of his tongue and wet, lewd mouth.

The king filled the hungry cavern with laden spurts of dragon-seed, the offering lying heavy on Harry’s tongue before the wizard pulled off the barely-softened erection with a loud slurp, swallowing his lover’s climax with a randy and lascivious grin and heated eyes.

“What?” Jon gasped coming down from his high and rising back up onto his elbows to stare at the vision of his lover being embraced and caressed by Robb, a single telling pearly droplet clinging lewdly to one corner of that lush and wicked mouth. “*Exactly* happened at Pyke?”

Harry tilted his head in invitation to the Northern lord currently making himself at home with his bared body before pulling free of his arms, randy tongue darting out to collect that tantalizing droplet that had escaped from his hungry partaking of his lover’s salty present, as he settled himself into the bedfurs at Jon’s side, Robb climbing onto the bed cautiously to join them now that the objects of his desire weren’t otherwise occupied and therefore able to strike out at him either in word or deed.

“Robb’s vaunted Stark stoicism collapsed in pieces for the whole world to see is what happened.” Harry complained good-naturedly with a roll of his eyes. “There I was thinking he barely tolerated me after I saved Grey Wind and he went and just about made a declaration on bended knee in the middle of Pyke’s Great Hall!”

“It wasn’t that bad.” Robb defended himself, blood rising at the reminder of the peril they’d found themselves in. “I was trying to help while little-mister-shit-starter over there had the Ironborn up in arms and baying for green-lander blood.”

“*Not all* of them.” Harry reassured an alarmed looking Jon who was watching them trade verbal barbs with ever-widening eyes. “Only, like, ninety percent.” He estimated. “And only there at the beginning. By the time I axed Balon in the chest I’d brought it down to half, easy.”

“Oh, that’s *so* much better.” Robb scoffed, running a hand through his hair in aggravation. “*Only half* of the most vicious and bloodthirsty raider captains in the seas were out for our blood. I feel *so much better now.*”
Jon held up a hand, his arousal diminishing as a headache threatened just from listening to the two argue.

“Clearly this time.” He commanded. “And just Harry.” He pinned Robb with a look when the redhead made to open his mouth. “What happened?”

“Robb embraced,” Harry gave a too-adorable wrinkle of his nose much to his audience-of-two’s amusement. “The known lover of the Targaryen King before a mixed company of Northmen, Ironborn, and southron nobles.” He said dryly. “Including grasping my waist and whispering in my ear.”

Jon groaned, falling back onto the bed and throwing an arm over his eyes to block out the light. That was going to be murder to manage. The rumors were going to be nothing less than vicious and the pressure to take a Queen increased ten-fold. “And the rest of it?” He knew there had to be more to lead to where they were now. A hug or simple embrace would not have led to Harry inviting Robb into their bed.

And Jon knew full-well that Harry had done so.

He knew his cousin too well to believe that Robb wouldn’t ever have considered such a bold move in the slightest without Harry having done something. And it was the something that worried him. As hot as he’d found the vision of the two of them together, Jon didn’t want to spend the rest of his life worried about losing Harry to Robb someday because they’d gotten a taste of each other and wanted more.

“Harry nearly throttled me.” Robb waved one hand towards the still-forming bruises around the front of his throat. “And about yelled me deaf. Until…”

He cleared his throat after trailing off, finding himself unable to finish the sentence.

“Until?” Jon prompted with an arched brow, lifting his arm to stare at the shame-faced picture his naked Northern Lord was making in his bed.

“He got fed up and yelled back.” Harry shrugged. Better to tell him plain than let his curiosity fester into something rotten and nasty. “Then kissed the breath out of me.”

“Excuse me?” The King drawled in a venomous purr, eyes glinting with his rising temper. That he would dare…

“Harry stopped me.” Robb hurried to say, scooting back against the headboard and away from the glint in Jon’s eyes. He knew that look. It promised pain to whoever was bestowed with it. “Said that it couldn’t go any further without coming to you. He suggested…”

Jon closed his eyes barely holding in a groan before turning to look at his lover who was sitting among the furs looking like the cat that had gotten into a whole castle’s worth of cream. That little minx… Jon thought amazed. He had no idea how but Harry always seemed to come up with a solution to every problem they were presented with – even solutions to problems that hadn’t even been presented before the King yet.

He was definitely going to make him his Hand after this little fiasco.

“Robb’s been naughty.” Harry all-but-chirped. “Can we punish him?”

Robb gulped at being the focus of two such predatory smirks, then Jon whipped out a hand and snagged his lover by the arm, pulling him forcefully across his lap and giving him a sharp smack to
his luscious ass, the spank leaving a pinkish mark to the golden-cream skin.

“One.” Jon barked out, turning to enlighten Robb in-between counting out the numbers of his spanks to Harry’s ever-reddening bottom. “Harry, here, has been pressing me. Two. He’s of the opinion that the Lords won’t accept him as my one and only Consort. Three. To that end, he has suggested taking another into our bed. Four. And our eventual bonding. Five.”

“He’s right.” Robb admitted, eyes blown wide with lust as he watched Jon discipline his – their? – lover. “The rumors have grown rampant, especially the closer to leaving on campaign we get without you at least taking a betrothed.”

“Six, seven, eight.” Jon nodded, ignoring the whimpering bundle on his lap for the moment as Harry ground his throbbing cock against Jon’s hip, searching for a completion spurred on by the sensual punishment. “He’s mentioned you several times, cousin. Nine. He seems to be under the impression that you hold a tendré for me. Ten.” He laid down the final smack to both of the heated pink cheeks in sharp unison. “Now, you minx.” Jon flipped him over, revealing Harry’s weeping elegant cock to his and Robb’s hot eyes. “Are you sorry for manipulating my Lord of the North and Cousin, Lord Robb?”

Robb was confused for a moment pointing out: “But I kissed him.”

“He let you.” Jon dismissed the argument with a wave. “No matter how shocked he acted or indeed he was, if Harry didn’t want your kiss you wouldn’t have gotten within touching range of him, no matter how hot either of your tempers had flared. No.” He stroked one taunting finger up the pulsing length of Harry’s cock as he prevented the wizard from finding completion on his own terms, arms anchored to the bed with one of Jon’s large hands, Harry’s lithe frame a very cock-hardening vision of sensual submission to the predatory gazes of the harsh Westerosi men. “He knew what he was playing at when he let you have a taste. After all,” Jon finished softly, enclosing Harry’s cock in one callused hand. “What red-blooded creature could resist all of this.”

Jon stroked him once from root to tip, which was all Harry needed having been pushed to the brink by sucking his lover’s cock while Robb petted and stroked him in turn, his iron-hard erection coasting along in the pre-slicked channel separating his buttocks but never fully penetrating him, only to find himself over Jon’s lap for the most torturous of punishments.

“Sorry.” Harry keened as he spurted all over his stomach and his lover’s hand, panting as he came back down, eyes fluttering open to the sight of Robb tasting his seed by licking it up in hungry laps of his hot tongue from the back of Jon’s hand. “Fuck me.” He breathed, eyes lust-blown. “That’s the sexiest fucking thing I think I’ve ever seen.”

So worth the punishments Jon would be dealing out for weeks if he knew his lover, Harry decided right then and there if seeing sights like that was his reward for his scheming.

And he would ensure they would be.

The three of them fell into a tangle amidst the furs, all learning hands, seeking mouths, and thrusting cocks as the issue of Consorts was shelved until their lusts had been sated.

An effort which took hours upon hours before the triad at last succumbed to sleep, utterly spent from their activities.
The Return of House Blackfyre

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12.19.16

The Tomb of the First Men

Edited December 2016 for minor errors and content. Original word count: 34,137; edited: 34,352.

Act IV: The Return of House Blackfyre

A hand wearing a white mail glove ripped open the curtain cushioning the wide wooden bedstead in a warm cocoon of comfortable darkness, dark eyes popping wide with shock before the most mischievous member of the Kingsguard called softly over his shoulder to his Lord Commander:

“You’re going to need another place setting, Arthur.” Prince Lewen said with a knowing chuckle. “Our little dragonet seems to have collected another pretty for his horde.”

“I’m not a dragonet.” Jon popped open a glaring eye, cross at having his vague half-waking plans that included the extra body in his bed interrupted by his loyal guardsmen.

“’n’ we’re not a horde.” Harry complained grumpily rolling over onto his stomach and nuzzling into Robb’s arms for several long moments before rising with a grumble.

Weren’t the Kingsguard supposed to solely obey the King? Then why in the name of all the gods were they waking him so gods-be-damned early? Jon ended up voicing this last complaint as he shrugged into the silken velvet robe held out to him by a still-chuckling Lewen.

His Kingsguard had been more like a cadre of older brothers/uncles/foster-fathers rather than a brotherhood sworn to his protection, and when they were mostly alone in chambers it showed in their actions and behavior together.

Prince Lewen was the mischievous one, who always encouraged his “dragonet” to ask questions and rebel against the strictures placed upon him.

Ser Mark Ryswell had been a loyal companion to his uncle Eddard before joining the Kingsguard and being sworn into his service by Ned and Ser Arthur Dayne, taking a firm and guiding hand with Jon but still often finding himself searching for frogs and sparring with him as a young child, very much slotted into a fatherly-older-brother role.

Ser Oswell Whent was known for his dark humor and serious, quiet nature, and ended up being the one Jon turned to when he had hard questions about the way the Targaryens ruled and the methods of the separate Kingdoms and regions of Westeros from before Aegon the Conqueror. Ser Oswell never shied away from hard facts and harder truths, pounding the realities of life into him, never allowing him to slip into an idealized version of reality.

And then there was his late father’s best and oldest friend, who slipped into the role left vacant by
Rhaegar’s death and Benjen’s involuntary absence, the new Lord Commander of the Targaryen Kingsguard, Ser Arthur Dayne.

Together the four of them were his most constant teachers and companions, instructing him in everything from swordplay and court manners to the facts of life when he got his first cock-stand.

That they found him with an extra body in his bed wasn’t a matter for teasing as it was for settling of bets, Ser Arthur and Prince Lewen making out like bandits against their two brothers who had said that with Jon’s taking up with Harry that he’d never get around to acting on his feelings for Robb Stark.

A bet that had to be settled as lost considering the vividly-blushing Lord of the North currently climbing from the bed and accepting a robe from a sympathetic-looking Lord Harry.

“I know.” Harry slapped at a still-chuckling Prince Lewen as he passed the guard on the way to the table in the antechamber. “It takes a while to get used to: the lack of privacy that comes with being with Jon. But you will,” he handed over a steaming mug of spiced apple cider, the rich scent telling the wizard that Ser Arthur had delved into Harry’s own spice storage in his ‘room’ to make the hearty beverage. “And in time even come to appreciate the little things that come with having a king for a lover. For example:” he held up his own mug. “The service is excellent.”

Ser Arthur ignored the byplay between Robb and Harry, turning instead to the still-glaring King.

“It is nearly midday, your Grace.” He said dryly. “We held off the Lords as long as we could knowing you and your Iron Lord, and wasn’t that a kick in the arse? ‘Would need time to get reacquainted after your parting. But if you dally much longer in your rooms they’re going to start to wonder if you died on the upstroke and if all their schemes and plans have been for naught.”

“They got acquainted with something last night.” Lewen muttered under his breath to Ser Oswell, earning him a slap to the back of his head for his efforts from the Lord Commander.

“That’s enough Lewen,” Oswell rumbled in his deep basso voice. “You’ve made the Lord of the North blush enough for one rising.”

“What has the Lords in a tizzy this time?” Harry asked in exasperation as he looked up from his plate of roasted meats and fresh fruit. One thing he loved about being in the south was the abundance of fruit, a fact of life Jon enjoyed as well after spending most of his life in and around Winterfell save for the bi-yearly trips to meet with supporters of his claim.

Between the two of them there was always fresh, sweet fruit around unless they were riding hard in the saddle and didn’t have time to resupply.

Harry was excited to return to the Reach for the campaign for the fresh produce if nothing else.

“Choosing a spouse, of course.” Ser Arthur moved to sit in the seat left open for him at the table, folding his armored arms across his chest and arching a dark brow. “What else have they been bickering about since the campaign plans were decided. Each has a daughter or a niece or some other female relation that would be perfect as the new Queen of Westeros.”

“They’ve even tried bribing us to allow a lass or two into your bed.” Ser Mark tossed in from where he was tending the fire before rising and taking up his post opposite Ser Oswell beside the door, Lewen moving out to guard the hall with a grumble under his breath. “Got quite inventive trying to get around us once they saw we weren’t going to bite at the offerings.”

Jon scowled down into his mug grunting: “Spouse, spouse, spouse.” He slugged back the rest of the
cider before holding out his mug for a refill from Ser Arthur, who he thanked with a nearly-genial nod despite his black mood. “Do they think of nothing else but killing and who I’m bedding?”

“No really.” Robb spoke up without lifting his head from his trencher of tender pork and roasted Riverlands fowl. “The matter of the succession is on everyone’s minds after the Targaryen dynasty was pared down to two members of the name.” He gestured vaguely with a wave of his hand, looking up and seeing the surprised looks shot his way by the others. “I’m considered your closest companion after Harry here,” he pointed. “And the Kingsguard. They’ve been trying to get me to present their choices for possible Queen ever since you made your claim to the throne – earlier,” he added. “If they were one of the few who knew beforehand. They used to do the same with Father, your allies.”

“How have I never known all this?” Jon sat back, brow puckered. “Did I never notice?”

“They’re usually more subtle than recently, I’m sure.” Harry arched a sardonic brow and cast a look at Ser Arthur and Robb. “Am I right?” He asked them, continuing after getting a pair of nods in return. “It’s me.” He said once again bringing up the ongoing argument between himself and his lover. “They’re scared to death you’re going to pick me as your sole consort.” He leveled a serious look at Jon. “As I’ve been saying for several turns: they don’t want a sorcerer as Consort to the King.”

“It’s not that lad.” Ser Arthur corrected with a small shake of his head. “Oh, it’s part of it, don’t mistake me.” He added at getting a glare from the smaller man. “But mostly it’s that you’re uncontrollable. You have no secrets they could use against you; no power they could bring to bear that would keep your power in check. Together the two of you make a couple that would be so far beyond the reach of the nobles to keep you in check that they’re tossing every flowered maid – and some who are neither of those things – at your head hoping that you’ll pick anyone but a warrior from legend.”

“Because, no matter what Harry thinks.” Robb added. “There’s no way for them to seriously object to him as Consort, not now that he’s become the Lord of the Iron Islands. That was the only real argument against him they had: he didn’t bring anything but himself to the match. Now that the Ironborn have accepted him as their Lord.” He shrugged, going back to breaking his fast having said his piece.

“Jon?” Harry prompted after a long silence filled only with Ser Arthur sending Ser Mark out to join Prince Lewen as the Lord Commander took up the post beside the door, giving them an illusion of privacy to continue the conversation without his input.

Arthur had given his king, as good as his own son, what advice and information he could about this subject over the last weeks while Harry was gone but had refused, as he still did, to try and sway him, no matter how much pressure there was to do so from the noble lords of Westeros.

They’d raised a good, strong man: the Kingsguard and his relations had. Now it was time to let him get on with being a man. And part of that was making up his own mind about his affairs.

“When you joined us last night, Robb.” Jon spoke at last. “What was in your mind?”

The Northern Lord shifted, feeling every claiming mark and scratch Jon and Harry had left on him – and smirking internally at the reminder of a few he’d left on them. What was it he was after? Why did he let himself be talked into joining them by Harry? He knew he loved them – in very different ways and with different origins but he loved them nonetheless.

And just as clearly as his own emotions, he knew that they loved each other, though from his
understanding neither often admits to such.

“I wanted to try.” He admitted at last, staring between the two men watching him with gazes as different as their personalities. Harry’s was all soft consideration and encouragement while Jon’s was assessing, nearly appraising him, but with an almost-concealed warmth. “I wanted to see if there was a place for me with you – both of you” he made himself clear, knowing if he fumbled it he was like to never get another chance. “Or if it was a fool’s notion and best put aside for good and all.”

“And your conclusion?” Jon asked, eyes warming as he found what he was looking for in Robb’s answer.

He’d thought that Harry had been wrong all this time, that the only reason Robb came to them was out of desire for Harry not the both of them. That Robb was willing to share if it was the only way he could have a taste of Jon’s lover. Harry was never going to let him hear the end of this if he ever found out Jon was still doubting him when it came to his observational abilities.

Harry had been dead certain that Robb harbored a real passion for Jon, more than a silly boy’s crush on a handsome lad or the childhood infatuation Jon had dismissed it as. And dismissed Robb with it. He’d been right – there was far more to it – far more to Robb than a fleeting or childish notion of love.

Robb had been willing to risk the worst sort of heartache in order to reach for what he desired.

There was nothing fleeting or ephemeral about that.

“There is a place for me here,” Robb straightened his back, holding his head high. “Both in your bed and at your table. If you’ll have me.”

Harry swallowed a laugh at his phrasing commenting: “Oh, I think having will be the least of it, Robb Stark.” His voice was as dry as the Red Mountains of Dorne. “In fact, I do hope you be doing some having of your own…”

“Harry.” Jon chided him, even as Robb broke into relieved laughter when the rejection he’d still been half-expecting failed to come.

He’d said it best himself after all: there was a place for him with them.

He’d just had to step up and take it, and them, for his own.

As if he knew what Robb was thinking, and maybe he did, Harry gave him a beaming smile and reached over under the table, enfolding Robb’s larger, sword-callused hand in his own and tangling their fingers together before reaching over and repeating the gesture with Jon.

They all knew that they would have to face a measure of censure for their choice, especially from the most devout among the Faith of the Seven as among them only Robb gave nominal reverence to the Faith, Jon being quiet but firm in his following of the old gods and Harry being outspoken in his reverence to no god, not even Death. The Faith of the Seven and the High Septon would have pushed for Jon to marry a noble female from a family like the Hightowers or the Tyrells who were open in their support of the Andal Faith. That Jon was marrying outside of the Faith – mostly – and two men besides wasn’t going to sit easy with them and their most devout.

But as far as they three were concerned, it was just another trial to face and overcome in the same manner that they had dealt with the Siege of Riverrun: decisively and together.

…
Later that day they were in council for the first time since Harry and Robb had left several weeks before to reach the Iron Islands. The Lords, knights, and Maesters weren’t best pleased that Harry had used his magic to whisk himself, Prince Lewen, and Lord Robb from Pyke to Riverrun in a matter of moments while leaving the rest of the party to travel by ship and horse, but they were wise enough to hold their tongues after mere moments of observing the new dynamic between the triad. Where before it was not hard to tell that there was a growing distance between the Lord of the North and his Cousin the King, as well as a sense of unease between Lord Stark and the new Lord Reaper of Pyke, now they were presenting a united, solid front, as if the ever-increasing rift had not only been mended over, but that it had never existed in the first place.

It wasn’t hard to figure out how this change had come about either, the maids being all atwitter over the pristine bedfurs in the Lord of the North’s rooms and the trio arriving in the great hall together with the Kingsguard surrounding them as always.

Honestly, a number of the Lords would kill to know what had happened between Lords Stark and Potter-Black leaving Riverrun and what had precipitated their arrival so far in advance of their party.

A few others would kill as well over the development, but it was more out of a desire to be a fly on the wall of the King’s chambers the night before than it was a thirst for information.

As things stood, they kept silent on their thoughts regarding the change – for good or ill – focusing instead on the last-minute business at hand before the King and his army were due to march for Golden Tooth and beginning the conquest of the Westerlands.

“Ravens arrive by the day from King’s Landing.” Ser Bryndan reported, leaning forward to speak with his hands clasped before him on the long table they used for these meetings regarding matters of State. “From Grand Maester Pycelle, Tyrion Lannister who is acting as Hand-of-the-King for his bastard nephew, even Petyr Baelish and Varys. They all are inquiring about ransom or prisoner exchange – mostly for the Kingslayer’s golden head.”

“I thought Petyr was in disgrace following the evidence presented that marked Lysa’s son Robyn as his get and a bastard rather than the rightful Lord of the Vale?” Harry asked, brow furrowed. “That’s changed in the last turn?”

“His usefulness outshone his ability to scheme – for the moment.” Jon answered dryly. “And in light of the colossal debt left after the ruin of Baratheon’s reign it was no surprise that Cersei demanded him back when the royal court was threatened with economies by her brother the Hand. But,” he shrugged, smirking. “It served its purpose: Lysa and Robyn are under house-arrest by the Eyrie’s steward and those men not needed to keep the borders and the High Road safe both from the Lannisters and the mountain tribes have marched to join their rightful Lord.”

“His Grace Jon Targaryen.” Harry finished the thought, concealing an eye roll. “Of course they have. How many men?”

“Fifteen thousand arrived at Riverrun last week, Lord Harry.” Lord Mallister reported, one of the few River Lords who wasn’t bothered by whatever the King chose to do in his bedroom. “Another, equal, number have blockaded the High Road to the East and the Kingsroad from fifty miles North of Harrenhal. Together the Vale Lords and the River Lords will be responsible for holding the Lannisters back from advancing North or East while the army marches West.”

“An envoy to King’s Landing is needed.” Robb commented, scowling at the thought of entertaining those bastards while they kept Sansa captive and Arya was still missing.

“But who to send, young wolf?” The Greatjon asked in his penetrating boom of a voice. “We can’t
risk a hostage – you never know what information they’ve gleaned and might let slip. And any man of ours we send we risk losing altogether either as a hostage in turn or to Ilyn Payne’s bloody sword.”

“How long is the march to the Golden Tooth?” Harry posed the question, idly twirling a dagger in one hand as he lounged against the chair at Jon’s side, face showing he was deep in thought.

“Over five hundred leagues from Riverrun.” Ser Byndan estimated. “Depending on what path you take. The best one for a force march is around five hundred and forty leagues from gate to gate.”

“That’ll take an army what?” Harry speculated. “A fortnight, maybe more, to march and prepare an offensive once they arrive?”

“About that.” Jon confirmed. “What’s in that tricky mind of yours?”

“Any envoy we sent presents an unacceptable level of risk, that’s true.” Harry nodded, meeting his two lovers’ concerned gazes. They knew when his voice got that tone that it meant trouble – in one way or another. “All but one.”

Robb groaned and Jon slowly closed his eyes, the King not risking any greater expression of worry such as his other lover was able to show, as they at once understood his meaning.

“You want to go to King’s Landing and treat with the Lannisters.” Jon clarified for those who didn’t know how Harry’s tricky mind worked. “Alone. Without guard or support.”

“I’m not exactly defenseless.” Harry stated flatly, pausing in his dagger-twirling for emphasis. “As the krakens found out for themselves. Besides which, I can make it there in a matter of moments and send word back just as quick before leaving to see to a few other errands that have thus far been postponed.”

The last was directed solely at Jon, the King knowing full-well Harry spoke of trying to track the two remaining possible claimants to the Throne. It had been put off since Harry went to treat with Stannis at Dragonstone, several turns by now. If either of them had already set their sights on the Iron Throne and were gathering support it would be much harder to turn their eyes away from it and onto other prizes.

Harry was determined to try nonetheless.

The blood of the dragon was too weak in the present day for them to be fighting amongst each other, you would have thought the Dance of Dragons had taught them that.

“I can leave the same day as the army.” Harry continued. “And return to your side before the battle – the same as I did for the ride from Winterfell. You know this is needed, your Grace.”

“What of the Ironborn?” Lady Mormont prodded. “With you out of sight, don’t we run a risk of them kicking the traces and turning on us?”

The others present all muttered amongst themselves at this reminder of the unsteady state of things with the naval power of the Seastone Chair.

“I expect them to try and test me.” Harry slipped his dagger away in preference of placing his hands flat on the table and rising to his feet, addressing all of them, skeptical and otherwise. “That’s their way. But I have my ways.” He smirked as more than a few shifted anxiously at the reminder that he held more power in his little finger than most had in their entire garrisons. “And I have set monitors on the captains that were present at Pyke that will allow me to nip any little rebellion in the blood.
Victarion and Aeron Greyjoy are going to be the biggest challenges with managing the Ironborn.” His look was nothing short of malicious. “But I’m more than capable of handling a few more squids.”

Before the council could continue – though at this point they’d covered the most pressing matter of an envoy – a cloaked knight burst into the room, several guards with bruises or blooded heads running at his heels.

“We’re sorry, your Grace!” One of them cried out as the King and his two lovers rose, the other lords and sers still frozen in shock at the disruption, the Kingsguard moving swiftly to block the cloaked knight from reaching the King, becoming a stout barricade of white armor and whiter cloaks between the stranger and the King. “We tried to stop him when he came towards the hall but he was too much for us!”

The knight in his dull armor and rough-spun cloak came to a sharp halt within an arm’s length of the Sword of Morning.

Blue eyes, still bright despite their owner being in his sixth decade, shone with strength and sadness as the knight lifted his head and stared out from the hood of the cloak that concealed his face.

“I know your face, Sword of Morning.” The elder knight said in a voice raspy from disuse. His head turned towards the right. “And yours, Prince Lewen.” Then left. “And yours, Ser Oswell.” Lean hands with long fingers still strong and steady despite their owner’s age lifted to the hood of the cloak and lowered it to a stunned gasp from more than one lord. “How is it that my brothers for whom I mourned deep and long are standing before me now?” Ser Barristan Selmy, known as Barristan the Bold, demanded, his eyes piercing. “And with one among their number who I have never broken bread with, let alone welcomed among us?”

“Ser Barristan,” Ser Arthur’s eyes gleamed with pleasure and brotherly love at the sight of the still-strong and noble knight of the Kingsguard. The finest knight Ser Arthur ever served with, including those brothers who followed him North or joined him there. “Word had reached us of Joffery’s actions. And we beg your forgiveness for our own.” The Sword of Morning acknowledged the wrong they had done the noble knight in leaving him in service to Robert Baratheon, but his presence at the Ruby Ford had been too visible for them to risk staging his death and stealing him away as they had done for themselves. “It is good,” so very good. “To see you once again, brother Barristan.”

“Aye, brother Barristan.” Lewen and Oswell called out, Mark simply nodding in agreement as he only knew the knight from reputation.

“You did what you must to protect the rightful King.” Barristan waved off the notion of forgiveness. To his mind, no matter the pain and grief it had caused him, their actions were just. He more than any other knew what would have happened had Robert known of the young Dragon’s life. After watching that butcher cleave in the breastplate of a man he loved like his own son over a woman that was never going to be his – and wasn’t Rhaegar’s either – Barristan would have done just the same to protect his son’s only living child. “I would have done the same, my brothers.”

Jon, Harry, and Robb exchanged wordless looks as the drama of the Kingsguard brotherhood played out at their feet, coming to a decision as Barristan clasped arms with Ser Arthur and found himself buffeted on the shoulders and back by Ser Oswell and Prince Lewen.

The triad moved, coming around to stand before the group of guardsmen, Jon at the point of their arrow with Robb and Harry flanking him, Harry having removed the Elder wand from its holster hidden up his sleeve.
When Barristan caught sight of the trio, he gently moved his sworn brothers aside, coming to kneel before the son of a boy he’d loved as his own and had mourned just as fiercely.

“You took Baratheon’s pardon after he cut my father down.” Jon began sternly. “Abandoned my family while your King yet lived. For all that my Lord Commander of my Kingsguard is joyous to behold your face, and you his, what reason do I have to trust you among my men, let alone holding you to your oaths and allowing you to join your sworn brothers among my Kingsguard?” Jon put the charge to him, though having already made up his mind, wanting to hear what the Bold Barristan would have to say.

“I took Robert’s pardon, aye. I served him in Kingsguard and council. Served with the Kingslayer and others near as bad, who soiled the white cloak I wore. Nothing will excuse that, your Grace.” Barristan made no move to excuse himself. He knew full well the measure of all that he’d done since the first moments of his grief. “I might be serving in King’s Landing still if the vile boy upon the Iron Throne had not cast me aside, it shames me anew to admit. But when he took the cloak the White Bull had draped about my shoulders, and sent men to kill me that selfsame day, it was as though he’d ripped a caul off mine eyes. That was when I knew I must find my true king, and die in his service.” He lifted his head and stared up resolutely into Targaryen violet eyes. “If you allow me, I will serve you as a member of the Kingsguard, alongside my true sworn brothers, and die for you if and when that time comes.”

Jon gave Harry a nod and the wizard banished the rough-spun cloak clasped around Ser Barristan’s neck, spelling him clean and fresh, and transfiguring his armor into the pure white enameled scale armor chased with silver that matched that of the other members of Jon’s Kingsguard, a dragon-helm appeared beside Barristan’s bent knee. Another move of his wand and a pure white cloak with a silver edging appeared, the border slimmer than that of Ser Arthur’s Lord Commander cloak, but fine nonetheless. Harry held the cloak out, giving it over to Ser Arthur as the Sword of Morning stepped forward and began the oaths:

“Ser Barristan of House Selmy, known as Barristan the Bold, do you so swear before all the gods, old and new, and the members of this brotherhood, these gathered Lords and Ladies, and your King, to protect the King from harm or threat, with your every lifeblood if need be?”

Barristan’s voice was rich with fervent meaning. “I do so swear.”

“Do you swear to protect those of royal blood from harm or threat, trading your life for theirs if that is the price?”

“I do so swear.”

“Do you swear to serve the king’s pleasure, keep the king’s secrets, protect his name and honor, and follow his orders, and those of whom as the king directs you?”

“I do so swear.”

“Do you swear to father no sons, hold no titles, nor take any wives, leaving your family and house, serving only as a member of this sworn brotherhood of the Kingsguard?”

Barristan held back the upwelling of emotion he felt as the white cloak once again laid heavy on his shoulders, Ser Arthur waiting upon the final oath before clasping it firmly, meeting Barristan’s still-sad but now-renewed blue eyes with his own violet of old Valyria.

“I do so swear.”
Applause and whoops rang out from the gathered lords and ladies, as well as the members of the
Kingsguard, all ecstatic at having one of the finest knights in the kingdoms once more by the side of
the Targaryen King.

For his part Jon nodded regally to Ser Barristan saying simply: “Welcome to the Kingsguard, Ser
Barristan. Ser Arthur and the others have been waiting on you for several turns now. I am glad to
have you in my service.”

…

Jon Connington watched as the leaders of the sellsword company the Golden Company gathered in a
rented room in a bawdy house in Myr.

Aegon had stared in a mixed of shock and wonder as they passed through the silk-draped and
perfumed halls that were filled with women and some men of every shape, color, and size for the
delecction and delight of the house’s customers. The seventeen-year-old’s eyes had trailed
helplessly over scented and oiled flesh as the bawds called to him, a few even offering to bed him for
free due to his very handsome face and strong form. A situation that had Connington making a noise
deep in his throat in disgust and towing him away from the clinging and caressing hands of the
workers.

If it had been up to the self-exiled Lord, he would have left Aegon behind. But at seventeen and
blooded in battle, he was a man in all the known world and to keep him away would have cost
Connington more than he wanted to pay in terms of their ongoing pseudo-paternal relationship.
Aegon struggled with trusting him as it was after finding the letter, addressed to Aegon from Jon
Targaryen, among the captain’s papers when he was looking for a copy of their last sell-sword
contract.

It was one shock too many for their relationship to recover from, and things had been strained ever
since in the weeks it had taken to set the meeting with the Golden Company.

Once the handful of men who controlled the most powerful sell-sword company in the known world
were all settled with glasses of fine Myrish wine, Connington got right to the point.

“What do you know of him, Connington?” Harry Strickland leaned forward, eyes piercing. “You
were a good friend of the late Rhaegar. First our young Griff is his son, now he isn’t. First Rhaegar
was in love with a she-wolf and now it’s bonded to her brother with this Jon Targaryen as his heir.
What’s the meat of the matter?”

“The timing fits.” Jon admitted, leaning back heavily in his chair. “Rhaegar knew Benjen, was
friends with him, which was how he came to know Lyanna. It could be true. Aegon was brought to
me by Mopatis, supposedly smuggled out of King’s Landing by Varys, this could also be true.”

“You and what you say.” Rivers held up a hand. “But what matters more: what could be true or what the
people believe? If our Aegon is believed to be the son of Rhaegar, then who’s to say he isn’t?”

“The nobles will say.” Ser Laswell shook his head. “This Jon Targaryen has the word of his bearer,
the support of the North and the Targaryen loyalists in Westeros, and is older than Aegon. Not one
of the nobles will rally to Aegon’s cause so long as Jon Targaryen breathes. The plan is shot.”

“Which plan?” Tristan demanded. “The fat man’s plan? The one that changes every time the moon turns? First Viserys Targaryen was to join us with fifty thousand Dothraki screamers at his back. Then the Beggar King was dead, and it was to be his sister, a pliable young child queen who was on her way to Pentos with three new-hatched dragons. Instead the girl is lost in the Red Waste and nowhere to be found. I have had enough of Illyrio’s plans. Robert Baratheon won the Iron Throne without the benefit of dragons. We can do the same.”

“We won’t need to.” Aegon spoke up, brow furrowed. “Because first we will go to Illyrio’s fine estate and wring the truth from his fat neck – guards bedamned. Then either I am the son of a bastard line or I’m the second-born son of Rhaegar Targaryen. Either way.” His eyes gleamed. “There’s a war being fought in Westeros, and to the winners go the spoils. Who better to have a share in those spoils than the Golden Company?” He rose to his feet, blood hot as the others started to exchanged looks, pleased with his idea. “The Stepstones, the Reach, the Westerlands, all are ripe for the taking!” He slammed one hand on the table. “All we have to do is back the winning Dragon.”

“The lad speaks true.” Lysono rubbed at his chin. “There are spoils to be had – both at the Pentoshi palace of Mopatis and the rich kingdoms of Westeros. All of it is nothing but profit.”

“Could it be done?” Homeless Harry posed to the three Westerosi. “Could the Golden Company have success in taking part of Westeros for our own – and would this Targaryen let us keep it?”

“Even after a century, some of us still have friends in the Reach. The power of Highgarden may not be what Mace Tyrell imagines.” Ser Laswell stated after sharing glances with Rivers and Connington. “It could be done. A castle or two would sit fine with our men.”

“Well, young Griff.” Homeless Harry sat forward. “At heart the Golden Company are wanderers looking for a home. You promise us that and we’ll follow you into hell.” He smirked. “Or in this case against Mopatis’s eunuch guardsmen and sell-swords. ‘Can you do that?’”

Aegon thinks on the charge before him a moment before giving a solemn nod and extending his hand to seal the deal between them, Homeless Harry taking his hand and his word.

“Ready the men.” Strickland orders his commanders. “We’re breaking our contract with Myr. We’ve been made a better offer.”

…

Cersei swanned through the door to the Small Council chamber, Joffery at her side with Sansa following three steps behind him as commanded.

His latest game was to have her always at hand, either just behind him or even sitting on the hard stone steps in the Throne room as he played at being King. Sansa had gained quite a bit of interesting information that way, information she hadn’t hesitated in passing along to Lord Harry to benefit her Cousin’s campaign. They kept such a strict watch on her, waiting for her to flower, and not allowing her the use of ravens to write her family unless supervised that Cersei saw no harm in letting Joffery play his little game of making her his unwilling shadow.

Little did they know that nearly everything said around her ended up either in Varys or Baelish’s ears through their personal cadre of spies or being passed on to Lord Harry via Sansa.

To anyone who cared to check – and check they had – her little book was a simple diary filled with
fluff-brained nonsense, homesickness, and the occasional poem.

All of it completely innocuous.

Sansa was still in awe of what Lord Harry’s magics were able to accomplish, her amulet had never failed to protect her even during that awful riot.

Sandor Clegane’s rescue had been an unexpected event, one that she knew Lord Tyrion had rewarded the man handsomely for, though she had a feeling the Kingsguard didn’t appreciate or require it.

He wasn’t one for thanks, though Sansa never failed to do so when he looked after her following Joffery’s latest ‘punishments’ or during isolated incidents such as the riot.

If only he could protect her from flowering, she didn’t want to have to leave the Red Keep and lose Jon and Robb a steady and reliable source of information, but she wouldn’t allow that cretin Joffery to defile her either, so-called ‘marriage’ or no.

“Well, we’re here.” Cersei said gracelessly as she took the offered seat, Sansa to her right after Tyrion insisted. “What is the emergency?”

“First.” Tyrion tapped his hand slowly against the documents in front of the Baelish, Pycelle, and the other members of the Small Council including the Spider shifting uncomfortably. “Since the matter was just forcibly drawn to my attention, what, nephew,” he coughed. “Do you think you’re doing forcing Lady Sansa to sit on the cold stone floor?” His voice was pleasant – too pleasant to anyone that knew him.

And Joffery had gotten to know his uncle the Imp quite well – especially the back of his hand.

“She’s my betrothed, uncle.” He sneered. “I can do with her as I please.”

“Maybe so, though I’m sure your mother would disagree on principle if nothing else.” Tyrion scowled at the whelp. “The reason I asked was because, though it seems to have eluded your few remaining wits,” he waved a hand to the Lady sitting with a straight spine and a lowered head, particularly to the bruise that shone black on her graceful cheek. “Lady Sansa is the only thing keeping your uncle Jaime alive!” He shouted startling the others and nearly causing Cersei to spill her wine.

“Uncle Jaime is too valuable…” Joffery started to say only to be cut off at a swift gesture from Tyrion.

“Your uncle and my beloved brother is many things.” Tyrion’s voice was glacial. “Including the Kingslayer. The very King he slayed to earn that title being the grandfather of the man who now holds him prisoner.”

“That pretender…” Cersei scoffed only to be cut down in turn.

“Let us not equivocate amongst ourselves.” Tyrion demanded. “Jon Targaryen is the son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Benjen Stark. The evidence is incontrovertible. And unless it has escaped anyone’s notice he also he doing a damned fine job of cutting his way through the Seven Kingdoms to reclaim his ancestral heritage. No.” Tyrion held up a hand in a wordless command for silence. “The only reason your dead husband was able to claim the Iron Throne in the first place my sweet sister was because of his Targaryen mother. Jon Targaryen is many things, including the rightful King.” He lowered his hand slowly back to the table. “Nonetheless, it is Joffery who sits on the Iron Throne. Now that we have all been reacquainted with the facts.” He stated with exquisite
sarcasm. “Let us return to the issue at hand: Lady Sansa. We will not give her up as she is one of the Heirs of Winterfell and the only thing keeping Jaime alive. That means, nephew,” he fixed Joffery with a gimlet eye. “That it is in all of our best interests to treat her with the utmost courtesy and respect. We are blockaded from the Narrow Sea by a fleet of Northern sails. The only thing keeping those ships from sailing into the Blackwater and making war on the city is Lady Sansa’s good health.” He gave her a genial look. “Let’s keep it that way, shall we?”

Joffery fumed silently, slumping back in his chair, his games regarding his favorite toy stymied for the moment.

“Now.” Tyrion took a deep draught of his wine. “Onto other issues. Jon Targaryen sent a company of men, his sorcerer among them, to treat with Balon Greyjoy – Varys?”

“I do not know the entirety of what passed on Pyke,” Varys reported in his silken whisper. “However I do happen to have heard that this sorcerer styling himself as the ‘Warrior-Who-Waits’ or Lord Harry Potter-Black of the Land of Always Winter and the Fist of the First Men, first killed Balon Greyjoy with an axe during a finger-dance, the wager of which was either Lordship of the Iron Islands or Lord Harry’s turning his cloak to serve Balon, and then struck down Theon Greyjoy after the young man challenged Lord Harry to single combat.”

Silence surrounded the Small Council as the others who were unaware – which was everyone save Varys and Tyrion – took in the news.

They’d been counting on Balon’s latest rebellion to force the Targaryen army back North to protect the Stark holdings. With this turn of events there was no reason for the Northern faction to return home.

“And is he?” Baelish asked the pertinent question. “Is this so-called sorcerer now Lord of the Iron Islands?”

“He is.” Varys gave a regretful nod of his shiny bald head. “The Ironborn are to join the Targaryen and Martell fleets in pressing the Westerlands and the Reach from the coast.”

“Father must be furious.” Cersei commented as if to herself. “He counted on Greyjoy to defang the Dragon, now he’s more powerful than ever.”

“Quite.” Tyrion said. “And still not the most pressing concern. With our failure to rouse the Crownlands men-at-arms to action, we have only six-thousand gold cloaks left to patrol and guard the city. Not nearly enough as our latest adventure as proven.” He folded his hands before him. “Especially since Lord Varys’s spies in Renly Baratheon’s men have reported that the ‘King of Highgarden’ as they’re calling him is marching up the Rose Road as we speak.”

“To meet Uncle Stannis at Storm’s End?” Joffery suggested, brow furrowed.

“No, nephew.” Tyrion answered with a grim smile. “He’s on his way to King’s Landing: he means to lay siege to the Red Keep.”

…

While the King and his two lovers adjourned to the King’s chambers to enjoy a private evening meal, one of the few occasions they would have to do so before Harry had to set off for a fortnight apart, the Kingsguard gathered in their adjoining chamber to discuss their shifts and other concerns as well as welcome Ser Barristan back into the fold.

Ser Barristan set down the travel pack that he’d retrieved from the woods bordering Riverrun down
on one of the empty beds in the chamber. He’d stayed at Riverrun before during his time serving the three kings before his newest liege Jon Targaryen, the sight of the empty beds giving him a moment’s pang from the true, valiant knights of the realm who had served beside him in that time that were now gone. He’d immediately asked about the previous Lord Commander Ser Gerold Hightower, the same ‘White Bull’ that had given him his first white cloak.

He found himself saddened at the White Bull’s death in exile with the late Queen Rhaella’s son and daughter, but pleased that Ser Gerold had served a more noble death than being slaughtered at the Tower of Joy.

The Kingsguard of the rightful King now numbered five with his return to the fold, leaving room for two more sworn brothers.

A state that was very much on his mind as he took a seat near the fire with his brothers.

“Ser Mark Ryswell.” Ser Barristan commented on the sole member he’d been unable to place before. “I remember you well from the war. You were a great friend of Eddard Stark if I recall.”

“That’s right.” Ser Mark nodded his head. “Ned didn’t want to appoint men to the Kingsguard if he could help it, but with the Lord Commander deciding to travel with Viserys and Daenerys Targaryen, he and Ser Arthur asked if I would be willing, I swore then and there and have served as a member of the Kingsguard ever since. It has been the privilege of my life to serve King Jon and watch him grow into the strong man and King he is today.”

“Lord Stark chose you as the new Lord Commander, Ser Arthur?” Barristan asked. “Or was it the White Bull.”

“Ser Gerold chose me.” Ser Arthur confirmed his second guess. “But Lord Stark approved of the advancement. I’ve been the father to Jon that I wish Rhaegar could have been, though I know I’ve not done as well as my friend would have. I have done my best.”

“That’s all anyone could ask of us, brother.” Barristan said with a shake of his head, his hair long turned white with age. “And what of my King?” He inquired. “What do I need to know as a member of his Kingsguard?”

“He’s warm in private.” Ser Oswell put in his two pennies. “But formal and stern in public.”

“Has that rigid Stark honor.” Prince Lewen pointed out. “And Rhaegar’s own formidable temper to go with it.”

“Secrets?”

“Not many,” Ser Arthur allowed. “And none that you need know until they come up. His relationship with Lord Harry was one but they seem to have come to an accord and are now making no attempts at subtlety. Lord Robb has recently joined them though, and King Jon is speaking of bonding and consorts.”

Barristan arched a brow at that.

He couldn’t remember the last time a King openly took a male consort. It must have been near two hundred years, at the beginnings of the Targaryen reign of Westeros. Most of the time the prospects of Heirs were too uncertain with a male consort. And Jon was taking a pair of them.

“Who are we to protect and obey other than the King?”
“Lord Harry for one.” Prince Lewen supplied. “Though he usually requests me. He likes my sense of mischief and my education. The rest are of little use in the healing tents save for Ser Arthur and he’s the King’s own shadow.”

“We don’t have to obey anyone but Jon, not yet.” Ser Arthur explained more clearly. “That may change once they bond. Though if Harry speaks you’d do well to listen. His abilities make him able to sense trouble, I’m certain of it. Even from a thousand leagues away.”

“He’s a sorcerer.” Ser Barristan nodded thoughtfully. “There’d been rumors of him, and of a dragon flying across Westeros, several turns ago. Until I saw his magics with my own eyes I didn’t believe it. Still have trouble with it even though I’m wearing the proof.”

“That’s one of the secrets we’re to keep.” Ser Oswell spoke up. “We’re not to speak of Lord Harry’s abilities to anyone save amongst ourselves or to the King.”

“Very well.” Barristan agreed easily. It was much less burdensome than many of the royal secrets he’d had to keep in his time.

“We protect Lord Robb when he’s about.” Ser Mark added to the list. “The same with the rest of the Stark children. We are to use our own discretion as far as their mother Lady Catelyn but not to the extent of costing us our own lives.” Ser Mark’s eyes were serious. “There’s bad blood between the two of them. Not so much that he’d have her killed, but he wouldn’t weep if she dropped dead either.”

“Jon fights his own battles.” Ser Arthur’s tone was almost a complaint. “We protect him in battle as much as we can but he fights and fights well. If he’s injured one of us goes to fetch Lord Harry. The new Lord of the Iron Islands can do many things with his magics but he prefers to heal.”

They spoke for many long minutes of things related and unrelated to their duties, Barristan passing on what he knew of Princess Daenerys and the others doing the same. Their meeting had about been completed and Sers Oswell and Mark going to take their shifts guarding the hall doors when a knock sounded on the connecting door between the King’s antechamber and their room. Lewen being the closest rose and ushered in Lords Harry and Robb, the former speaking to Ser Barristan rather bluntly.

“You need a better sword.” Harry eyed the simple castle-forged steel with distaste. “You’re to come with myself and Robb to a place where we can find one.”

“Will you need protection, Harry?” Prince Lewen asked, knowing he could kiss sleep goodbye if the sorcerer said yes.

Harry snorted. That was funny, though only to him. The rest weren’t in on the joke though they’d get it once they understood what Harry had planned.

“We aren’t going anywhere where there’s living enemies about.” He said obliquely. “Just Ser Barristan will be fine.”

“Very well.” Barristan the Bold stood and pulled on his cloak. “Lead the way, Lord Harry.”

The sorcerer pulled out a hammered piece of steel about the size of a cyvasse piece, Lewen groaning in sympathy at the sight.

“Good luck, Barristan.” The Martell Prince commented. “And hold onto your stomach. I’ve yet to find traveling by Harry’s magic anything less than nauseating.”
“Pussy.” Harry grinned as he shot the good-natured insult at the prince. “Robb’s not complaining.”

“Well Robb.” Lewen shot back as Barristan came to stand beside the sorcerer. “Has to stay in your good books if he wants to get laid later, I do not.”

Harry rolled his eyes and directed Barristan to grab hold of the metal piece and warned him that it could upset his stomach, Robb already touching the port-key if looking a little pale-but-resolved.

And with a word, they whirled away, leaving the rest of the Kingsguard behind.

“Two gold dragons says Barristan loses his lunch.” Lewen bet after a moment.

“Done.” Ser Mark slapped hands with the Dornishman. “I’ll take your gold Lewen. I have no problem taking your gold.”

…

They touched down, Robb and Barristan both barely holding onto the contents of their stomachs after the sickening form of travel, into pitch black with was quickly lightened by a flash and spark from Harry’s wand, setting the oil troughs inset in the walls alight.

“Where are we?” Robb asked once he got control of himself, straightening from his bent over position, Ser Barristan following his example, one hand on his sword.

“The Hall of Ancient Heroes.” Harry spoke in a hushed voice that still resonated throughout the vast chamber, bouncing off of silent statues and an empty diamond coffin that stood at the far end. “Or at least,” he added. “That’s what Jon’s decided to call it. Now that I’m awake, calling it a Tomb no longer seems appropriate.”

“This is where…?” Robb trailed off his question at the pained look on his new lover’s face.

“Yes.” Harry answered, voice bleak. “Yes it was.”

“I recognize some of these faces from tomes and tapestries.” Ser Barristan commented, having come to a halt in his searching before the visage of Crown Prince Rhaegar Targaryen, who he’d loved as his own son. “And other places.”

“As I said.” Harry repeated himself. “The Hall of Ancient Heroes.” He waved a hand pointing towards some of the statues whose construction he half-remembered from his waking sleep. “Garth Greenhand, Bran the Builder, the Grey King, but there are more, many more.” He said thoughtfully. “Who I cannot place. I have no true idea of how long I slept – nor how many ages passed. I hope that it was just the one – the ending of mine and the beginning of yours. But there is no way to ever know save for finding a record of what came before.” He shrugged, waving the idea off. “A quest for my winter years, perhaps. Not something like as to help us now.”

“You said you knew a place to get a better sword?” Robb reminded him, pulling Harry from his burgeoning melancholy.

“Indeed.” Harry gave his companions a bright smile before moving over to the coffin and speaking the password in what Jon said was Old Valyrian. Funny. He’d known it before as Latin.

Barristan and Robb watched with wide eyes as the empty casket moved aside with a great groan of stone-on-stone, a curving stairwell decorated in gold leaf beckoning them downwards.

“Well,” Harry started to descend. “Shall we?”
“I can’t believe that all this was lying under the Fist all these thousands of years.” Robb commented as they stood in awe – much like Jon had before them – at the great treasure trove beneath the floor of the Hall.

“Not all of it, lad.” Ser Barristan pointed towards a shelf on a rack filled with old tomes. “That’s written in the Common Tongue. Some of these treasures are new.” He cast his gaze around with a more discerning eye and corrected himself. “Well, newer.”

“Two reasons,” Harry supplied. “This is where I store anything I find on my travels and secondly, the original spellwork.” Harry enlightened them as he led them towards an antechamber tucked against one wall. The vault beneath the Hall was a warren of rooms, one he hadn’t time to explore upon waking. But he remembered commissioning this section well enough. “Which was fashioned so that anything belonging to my Houses or those that came from them would return here once the members of the houses died away.” He shrugged. “It was altered at some point by the goblins who did the work to include any item of great value or worth, like a mystical trove of lost treasures. From what I can tell, nothing within these walls has any owner that can make a current claim to them, having passed into the age of ‘claiming rights’ by even the highest of law-minded men.”

Pricking his finger, Harry swiped the welling blood against the door of the chamber, causing the locks to click open.

“One thing in particular I found on my own while I was exploring King’s Landing before the Twins.” Harry confided, turning to a stand holding a very infamous greatsword. “Robb?” He said with a smile and a wave toward the sword. “I believe this belongs to you.”

“Ice!” Robb shouted in disbelieving joy, darting forward to snatch up and examine the weapon.

Leaving him to it, Harry turned to Ser Barristan, waving his hand in invitation before pointing out a single exception for removal from the armory.

“You may choose any of these, Ser Barristan.” He offered. “And select any you think may suit your sworn brothers Lewen, Oswell, and Mark as well. Any but that one.” He pointed towards a hand-and-a-half or bastard sword, much the same length as Jon’s sword Longclaw or the one of Stygian steel at his back. It was finer work than any Barristan had seen before, including some of Valryian steel though the knight could plainly tell it was not of that make. It shone silver in the dim chamber light, with rubies on the pommel and hilt.

“Why not that one?” He couldn’t help but ask, the warrior in him aching at seeing such a weapon laying at rest in a hidden treasure trove.

“That.” Harry explained patiently, moving to stand under the sword that was mounted high on the wall, far too high for anyone to reach. “Is the Sword of Gryffindor, the ancient sword of my family. Its legend was great among my people, and it had greater abilities than many knew.” Harry sighed and turned away. “It’s also deadly. A single nick from that blade will kill a man within minutes. I used it once to slay the Queen of Serpents and the blade was thereafter imbued with her venom. It cannot be used save as an instrument of death, and is far too great a weapon for every day.”

“A shame.” Robb commented from where he’d finished admiring Ice and now had it strapped to his back in the sheath that he’d found resting below it. It was a different sheath than his late father had used, and looked of Harry’s magic to Robb’s eyes with the hide it was made of and the simple but pleasing jewel and metal work. “That’s truly a beautiful sword.”
“That it is.” Harry gave a half-smile. “And I can use it, it comes to my call. I haven’t needed it thus far upon waking however.” He patted the sword at his side. “Thanatos does just fine for me.”

Barristan began investigating the other swords present on racks and fine displays like that that had held Ice, rapidly coming to the realization that Ice wasn’t the only Valyrian steel blade Harry had tucked away among his treasures.

There were five in total he recognized from legend and by examining the sigils marking them, but there were many more that he did not, in addition to daggers and spears and even arrowheads made of the material.

“Lost treasures indeed.” Barristan commented, bringing the other men over to his side where he pointed out the five swords long thought lost. “Vigilance, the lost ancestral sword of House Hightower. Lamentation and Orphan-Maker, two more ancestral swords. Truth, which belonged to a Lysene nobleman. And last but not least: Brightroar.”

“Brightroar?” Harry arched a brow, having no idea that the spells worked quite that well. He’d sent Ice here through his magic, the others must truly have been lost. That Brightroar was in his vault when Tywin Lannister would pay a king’s ransom for it was an interesting turn of events.

“Brightroar.” Barristan pointed to the rubies and lions. “There is no mistaking it.”

“Hmm.” Harry cast his gaze around the chamber, wondering what other treasures he might have hiding away under several tons of rock, ice, and snow. “Robb, help Ser Barristan move the swords once he makes his selection, there’s a chamber I need to visit and you won’t be able to follow.”

“Why?” The swordsman asked as he look up from examining the bounty Ser Barristan had found alongside the elder knight.

“It’s spelled against anyone not of my blood.” Harry called out his explanation over his shoulder as he darted from the chamber and into another one on the opposite side of the central treasure room.

And with good reason, the vault Harry left to explore being the jewelry vault, filled to the brim with the Potter, Black, and Peverell jewels as well as other branches of the families such as Gryffindor and even Slytherin. As the blood had died out in Harry’s world, more and more treasures were considered 'lost' as the last people who had a valid claim to them died away. If he was willing to take the time and sort through the warren of rooms, he would likely find valuables belonging to every wizarding family among the mess.

Some items, however, were automatically sorted into specific rooms based on value both in gold and renown.

Which was why he thought he might find what he was looking for in the jewel vault, where wearable items of renown were placed.

Opening the door and stepping inside he let out a laugh as his eyes made sense of what he was seeing.

His hunch had been correct.

What used to be filled with nothing more than jewelry, both male and female, was now home to a much more regal assortment of gems.

Still laughing to himself after noting the location of the pertinent treasures, Harry reclosed the vault and met with Barristan and Robb.
“Which swords did you pick?”

“Vigilance for myself.” Barristan said, showing him the hilt of the longsword etched with simple, clean lines and without extra ornamentation. He wouldn’t have even recognized it for an ancestral sword if it hadn’t had its name engraved along the blade. “Truth for Lewen, black-bladed Orphan-Maker for Ser Oswell, and Lamentation for Ser Mark.”

Lamentation had a smooth pommel engraved with runes as well as runes etching the blade spelling out the words of House Royce: “We Remember.”

“Very well.” Harry held out a hand and summoned Brightroar. He was sure he could find some use for the Lannister ancestral blade, he smirked to himself. Sheathed sword in hand, Harry held out the port-key once again after they’d exited the vaults and Harry moved the casket back into place.

“Time to go.”

…

 Jon listened indulgently as Robb waxed poetic over Harry’s armory and vaults beneath the Hall of Ancient Heroes. He knew what the other man was going through, having felt something similar at seeing the massive cache beneath the Fist. But from what it sounded like, and from seeing the swords they’d brought back with them, he’d barely scratched the surface of what was down there.

“What I don’t understand Harry,” Robb finally wound down and turned to face their joint lover, gesturing with his tankard of ale, the three of them enjoying a late drink before retiring. “Is why you haven’t brought any of the weapons out before for the army to use?” He asked. “We’re always in need of weapons and you have a stockpile of some of the best in the known world just sitting around gathering dust.”

“Dragon.” Jon coughed to cover the word. He’d already considered that very question on the way from the Fist to the Wall and thought now that he knew about Harry’s other form that he had the answer.

“What was that, lover?” Harry arched an unimpressed brow at the chuckling king.

“He’s a dragon.” Jon said aloud for Robb’s enlightenment. “What he showed you is his horde.”

“What?” Robb was dumbfounded. “I thought that was just an illusion or something that Harry made. You’re talking about him being an actual fire-breathing dragon. With a horde nonetheless?”

“Excuse me.” Harry said, flat-voice. “Right here.”

They paid him no mind.

“Yes.” Jon nodded. “I saw it with my very own eyes. The dragon that was seen flying over Westeros was Harry in his other form. He’s a dragon at heart. That he let you, Ser Barristan, and myself see and take things from his horde is impressive as it is. Dragons aren’t known for their sharing nature.”

“You make me sound like I’m an animal in human skin.” Harry pouted, sulking. “It’s just the Animagus transformation,” Robb mouthed the unfamiliar words. “I’m a dragon at heart so I can turn into one with my magic. I’m not an actual dragon walking around as a human. There’s no such thing.” He thought a moment considering some of the tales he’d heard during his long sleep. “I don’t think.”

“You’re still a dragon at heart, as you said, little minx.” Jon pointed out, an indulgent smile on his
handsome face. “Dragons have hordes. Yours is just a little more mixed than plain gold and
gemstones.”

Harry kept on pouting, not willing to be mollified. The way Jon talked about him you’d think he ran
around raiding sheep herds for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He was more than his Animagus form
damn it!

…even if Jon had a point about the hording treasure thing…

Still. Harry wasn’t about to let it go anytime soon. The next time he shifted form he was so
threatening to light Jon’s arse on fire. See if he joked about it then.

Prat.

Robb chuckled at the adorable face the normally even-tempered (at least most of the time) wizard
was making, leaning over the table and taking his mouth in a deep kiss before gathering Harry in his
arms and pulling him over and into his lap, knocking the empty drinkware and pitcher to the ground
in his bold haste.

Harry moaned deep in this throat as Robb’s mouth and tongue worked to silence his objections over
being so thoroughly manhandled as Jon leaned back in his chair and loosened his legging ties,
finishing his drink and setting it aside content to watch his partners for the moment, heat beginning to
build in his violet-purple eyes.

“Bond with us.” Harry gasped the demand, staring up into gorgeous blue eyes, as he pulled away
from the deep, wet, arousing tangle of lips and teeth and tongues. “Be ours, our lover, our husband,
our consort.”

“Both of you wish this?” Robb asked, arching a brow in question over Harry’s ebony head, staring
straight into Jon’s glinting eyes.

He’d gotten the impression over the previous day and night that it was Harry pushing for his
inclusion and Jon just going along with his lover’s desires, however happily.

Jon palmed himself at the sight they made before him, Robb desire-flushed and demanding, his blue
eyes piercing while Harry was sprawled out, straddling Robb’s lap, his pert arse on display as he
arched down onto what Jon knew from their activities yestereen was an impressive manhood.

Tugging his lip lightly between his teeth, Jon nodded barely holding back a growl and explained
when Robb still look skeptical: “Harry encouraged the idea, pushed me at first I’ll admit but…” he
groaned at the picture the two made as Harry carefully turned around and pushed back into Robb,
-facing Jon with parted panting lips and lust-shot eyes. “If our little tease was yet still sleeping, there
would be no other match for me but you, my wolf.”

“We all bring our unique gifts and talents to the match, Robb.” Harry said, voice forcibly calm as he
gave Robb what amounted to a lap dance and Jon one hells of a show. Tangling his hands in his
tunic he quickly stripped it off over his head and tossed it away, revealing his cut chest and abs
covered in golden-cream skin to his appreciative audience, Robb wasting no time in caressing the
bared flesh while at the same time attempting to listen to Harry’s words. “We fit each other: you
with your keen sense of honor and devotion to justice.” Harry waved to the hotly-watching Jon.
“Our beloved King with his passion and drive, and myself,” he gave a quirk of his lips, though it
wasn’t bitter, after many years and more than a few betrayals, Harry was comfortable with himself
both the worst and the best of him. “With my often idiotic bravery, complete disregard for rules or
laws, and willingness to break both if it would help someone I love.” He chuckled. “If anything we
need you to keep us grounded and inline more than you need us, Robb Stark.”

“That’s true enough.” Jon barked a laugh, distracted for the moment from the display before him. “ Besides, I’m not ashamed to admit that with the demands of state I might need help now and again managing my little lover.”

Harry almost pouted anew at that before his mouth fell open on a moan, Robb having latched himself onto the tender and sensitive curve of his neck just below his ear.

“Will you have us, Robb Stark, Lord of the North?” He moaned again as Robb nipped him lightly, then sucked a bruise into the spot he’d discovered, loving the way it made his delectable lapful writhe. “Will you be ours, forever?”

“I’ll be yours.” Robb swore, his breath tickling at Harry’s ear and sending shivers down his arching spin. “And you’ll be mine. Forevermore.”

“Forevermore.” Jon intoned, sealing the pact between them. It wasn’t a formal betrothal but at least it was a solid and solemn step forward after spending several turns trying to pin down his wily wizard with his teasing minx ways.

“Excellent.” Harry breathed. “Now someone better fuck me until I can’t walk or I shall be quite cross with both of you.” He said teasingly, with a saucy swivel of his hips and bum that had Robb groaning and clutching at him in tortured pleasure.

Jon rose languidly to his feet, crossing the distance between the two chairs and bracketing his seated lovers with his strong body.

“Of course, little minx.” He nipped lightly at a pouting bottom lip. “We shall make it our duty to sate you in all ways this night. It wouldn’t do for you to forget us on your wanderings.”

Suddenly, Jon was attacking his lips. Harry instantly reciprocated and Jon’s tongue entered the young man’s mouth, claiming the first bit of territory in his conquest. Harry arched back and pressed himself against Robb as much as he could manage. Robb held his wrists tightly in his fists and the restraining force caused a strangely powerful reaction in Harry that he remembered well from his old life but hadn’t explored with either of his lovers, one he knew he liked.

For Robb’s part, before he’d joined in the relationship with Jon and Harry would have thought that Harry was completely submissive to Jon – but that wasn’t the case at all. Harry remained just as independent and demanding in the bed chamber as he’d seen him be in private discussions with the King. In no way did Robb find the smaller man anything close to submissive as a bed partner, despite him bottoming most of the time.

Robb moved his hands, still holding Harry’s wrists up to above Harry’s head and switched so he was holding both hands with just one of his. He then reached over with his now free hand and grabbed a fistful of Harry’s hair, pulling his head to the side, forcefully to expose his neck. He and Jon both latched onto it, biting and sucking, lavishing Harry with sinful delights and had him writhing and moaning senselessly in their grasp.

Jon gave Robb a meaningful look before swiftly pulling their lover into his arms and bearing him over to their shared bedfurs like some kind of pagan sacrifice to their desires, Robb following and quickly shucking his own clothes as he went, joining Harry on the bed as he and Jon stripped their lover, hands roaming and touching every inch of skin from head to toe before Jon stepped back and out of his own clothes, eyes hot while watching his lovers together.
Harry's senses were all on overload and he couldn't make heads or tails of anything for several long minutes. There was only pleasure, sensation, pain, control, and heat. So much heat. Robb's hands, tongue, teeth, and his cock brushing and rubbing deliciously against his own, bringing him so close to the edge, but then pulling away when he sensed that Harry was nearing his completion, driving him absolutely mad with need. Jon's arms were strong and heated steel around him his mouth driving him to distraction, and then Robb returned and the two resumed their maddening caresses.

The damned wolf and wolf-dragon were a pair of teases, that's what they were.

Bringing him to the edge and then pulling him back before he could tip over, keeping him locked in a state of high arousal as they handled him as expertly as they did their swords, Robb having lost much of his former tentativeness as his natural confidence reasserted itself with the knowledge that he had a permanent place with them – that this wasn't some kind of fleeting fancy.

Finally, they pulled back, causing Harry to whimper in shock at the sudden loss of sensation, Jon and Robb trading a glance before the ebony-haired Targaryen moved to the side and returned to his earlier watching. If Robb was to have a place with them it had to be with both of them, not just with one or the other. He had to have time to learn both of them equally as bedmates. Time that Jon and Robb would have during the march to Golden Tooth. Robb was due a bit of one-on-one with Harry.

Robb didn't stop as Jon pulled back, ceding to him for the moment. He released Harry's wrists and hair then began to move south. His tongue trailed over Harry's nipples and then trailed down his stomach, to dip, momentarily, into his belly button, giving no sign of unease as he attempted something very new for the Northern Lord. Robb's hands gripped almost painfully at Harry's hips, holding him still for an agonizing moment while he tried to arch his pelvis up towards the other man but was restrained.

Robb smirked up at his lover with a cocky wickedness that made Harry moan loudly with desire and need. Finally, Robb trailed his hands over Harry's hips with a grasp of his large hands, Harry found himself naked and pinned once more to the silk sheets, as Robb lowered his auburn head.

Harry's eyes widened as he saw Robb's tongue dart out and lave a long, torturous trail of warm saliva along his cock. He almost cried out at the touch and the wave of different sensations it brought with it. But, the next moment, he was completely engulfed with warmth and wetness and then he did call out. He nearly screamed at the sensation and had to fight, hard, to keep himself from bucking up into Robb's face.

For a novice, he showed a great deal of innate talent at his newest task.

Robb pulled back, releasing Harry from his mouth. The young wolf walked up the bed on his knees teasing the younger man with brushes of his hands and searing-hot cock along his abs, then his breastbone and chest. Finally, Robb straddled Harry's waist, a look of tenderness in his eyes as Jon moved over to join them once more.

The night before Jon – who was both thicker and smaller in length than Robb – had taken him first, leaving him well prepared for the entirety of Robb’s mighty sword. He didn’t have that luxury today. They needed to prepare him well for what they had in mind.

Harry was panting and his mind was buzzing from the mountain of overwhelming forces waging war on his senses so he wasn't even fully aware of what was going on until he felt something cool and wet probing at his entrance. He gasped as he felt one of Robb's fingers circling and massaging him.

"Relax," Robb soothed.
Harry nodded his head quickly, not trusting himself to get anything sensible past his lips, though he thought he might have an idea of what they were up to. It wouldn’t be the first time he’d done this particular act, though it had been several years even before his waking sleep during a rather wild night with his on-again-off-again boyfriend Blaise and Blaise’s new flame Adrian Pucey who wanted to try the various incarnations of a threesome. It had been fun – and interesting – then, he knew it was going to be so much better now, with two lovers who he planned to keep forever.

Robb continued to massage around his entrance and Harry gasped and then moaned in enjoyment of how good it felt. He was already so aroused, and so sensitive that every little thing seemed intense and wonderful. Robb moved deeper then inserted a second finger. Harry gasped quietly at the added presence but then cried out in pleasure as the two fingers deep inside him pressed against that amazing button hidden inside his channel. He arched his back involuntarily before pressing back down, wanting to feel that again.

With each inward thrust of his fingers Robb pressed up against that spot and Harry quickly dissolved into a writhing mass of gooey wizard, Jon nipping at his neck and pressing kisses to his face and mouth to distract him from the pinch of first penetration and stretching. He knew the other men didn’t want to hurt him, that they wanted this to be good. Harry just wanted it to happen already.

Robb made a scissoring motion with his fingers a few times, before adding a third and fourth, stretching Harry wide in an attempt to prepare him for the imminent intrusions. Finally, he pulled his fingers out, causing Harry to whimper in distress at the loss.

The warrior crawled upwards and pulled Harry's mouth to his own, kissing him with an intensity he was slowly becoming accustomed to, the heady passion hidden inside that stoic Northern façade where with Jon everyone knew that under the skin lived a dragon in all but name, few tempting to rouse it. Finally, Robb turned them over, seating Harry up over his cock as Jon moved back to support him from behind but not yet making any attempt to penetrate him. He felt the intense pressure as Robb began to press at his entrance and clenched his teeth together to keep from crying out as the head of Robb’s member breached the ring of muscle.

That felt so good after the ages Robb had spent preparing him.

Robb gasped quietly and, before Harry could register much else, he was suddenly thrust into, deep and hard as Jon – who had been waiting patiently, thrust up alongside Robb as Harry lowered himself down onto their cocks that pressed and rubbed against each other, finding every spot inside Harry – Jon groaning at the sensation, hands clinging to Harry’s biceps as Robb held his hips, control fraying with each second as their smaller lover adjusted to the duel penetration.

Harry screamed out but the pain was good. His hand flew up and his nails dug into Robb's chest, scratching marks of ownership into the tallest of his lovers as they tormented him by not moving but not allowing him to move either – though whether it would be to get closer to the cocks piercing him or away, he didn’t know. His knees dug into the mattress, pushing him up deeper into the punishing thrusts as they began to move inside him, Jon setting the pace at a slow, dragging glide that had him whimpering and writhing on their manhoods.

Jon pulled back slightly and then thrust back in a moment later. Again, Harry cried out from the motion and Robb groaned as he gave an echoing thrust of his hips. Everything was too much. Too tight, too hot, too hard as cock dragged against cock and discovered every square inch of Harry’s channel.

Again and again, Jon thrust up into Harry dragging against Robb before Robb mirrored him, building up a furious pace as sweat dripped in rivers down their fit and toned bodies. Their lover found himself panting and screaming out nonsense in time with Jon’s powerful, rhythmic thrusts and
Robb’s hard, short jabs.

“Gods!” Harry shouted out back arching into Jon at the pressure coiling tighter and tighter inside of him.

“So lovely.” Robb chuckled breathlessly, somehow finding humor in the moment as his brain felt like it was going to melt and leak out of his ears. “So irreverent.”

Jon purred his agreement as he gave a particularly brutal stroke into Harry.

Harry moaned at that, tossing his head wildly.

“Robb…gods.” Harry cried. “Gods…Jon…Robb, coming!”

Groaning, Harry clamped down on their grinding lengths as his own spurted his seed between them and onto Robb’s sculpted chest, starting a chain reaction as Robb shouted at the additional pleasure and released deep within Harry’s supple lithe body, Jon quickly following the two other men into completion.

Late, or early depending on how you looked at it, the next morning Robb woke to find an empty space where Harry was supposed to be, he held out a hand feeling that the furs were cool to the touch. Looking further, he saw Jon sprawled out on his stomach, sleeping well and deeply after their exertions during the night. Robb gave a soft smile and brushed away the hair that had fallen forward into his betrothed’s eyes.

It never failed to steal his breath, the beauty of Jon Targaryen.

Harry, their shared lover, was a beauty in his own right but it was a prettier beauty, boyish almost if it wasn’t for the short, sharp-defined beard the other man grew.

Jon even with his smooth cheeks and lush lips would never be confused with being either a boy or a pretty maid like Harry would without the beard. Jon’s looks were strictly masculine for all their otherworldly charm.

Shifting, Robb rose and left the bed, shoving his legs into a pair of leathers let hanging off the dressing table in their rush to the bed hours before, going in search of his errant lover. Coming to the low-burning fire, near which Ghost and his own direwolf Grey Wind were curled around each other, he stopped a moment to feed it up, sending the flames flaring high before they crackled merrily around the fuel he gave them. Rubbing his hands together he held them up to warm them in the early-morning bite of the room, then came around the edge of the screen before finding himself halting at the sight that met him.

Harry was sitting in the wide window alcove in the ante chamber outer wall, his legs folded together in a child’s pose with his hands cupped together and laying with serene repose in the concave created by his seated position. His missing lover was facing out the window, towards the East and the rising sun, his eyes closed but with flickering under the lids showing that he was both awake and active inside the statue he made, his chest barely giving evidence to life as it rose and fell in slow measured breaths.

But all that was mere context compared to the first thing Robb noticed and the reason he ground to such a fast stop: Harry was glowing.

Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say his power was glowing, surrounding him like Old
Nan’s stories of great sorcerers with auras so bright and strong they could be seen pulsing out and extending from the sorcerer’s very skin. It was more than that as well. Not just a circle of golden-hued light but there were ribbons woven through it as well, extending from different places and wrapping around Harry in a colorful weave before darting back into the wizard in a different place than where they began. There were more, as if he’d grown roots, sinking down into the cushions and stones below him in greens and browns and blacks, a few in russets and deep red and oranges, colors usually associated with the land and the seasons changing from summer to winter, of the transition phase known as fall or harvest.

As if sensing he had an audience, Harry opened his eyes, Robb uttering a startled gasp.

His lover’s eyes, while at times deepening or lightening a shade or two due to lighting or his emotion, tended to stay a vivid and breathtaking emerald green. But whatever Harry had been doing which summoned the lights around him, that were now dimming and disappearing as he started breaking whatever connection he’d had with them on sensing Robb, had turned Harry’s eyes a bright and startling burning green, the color of flames when the fire was set with driftwood gathered from the Shivering Sea and allowed to dry for half a year. Sacred wood, according to Old Nan and some of the more devout who followed the Old Gods, wood that burned in honor of Winter and the ancient powers.

Powers such as the being Death that Harry could somehow both summon and that he held as a close friend.

“I didn’t mean to wake you.” Harry said, his voice having a faint echo that occurred when he allowed himself to fall into a deep trance, letting himself commune with the natural magic of the land. It wasn’t often that he felt the need to augment himself and his powers this way, normally just using his core and the ambient magic around him was more than enough. But with the coming trip to King’s Landing and then beyond, he would need all the reserves he could muster, especially as he was planning to add some enchantments to the swords they’d brought back from his vault, as well as Longclaw, before he left.

There was no way to tell what kind of trouble his lovers and the Kingsguard might get into while he was half a world away.

Harry wouldn’t go off for a fortnight without leaving them as well protected as he could manage from a distance.

Especially Jon and Robb.

Until they bonded, Death’s promise regarding their state wouldn’t come into effect; they were still vulnerable in many ways. And Jon had ideas about what he wanted for their bonding, dreams that Harry had no problem waiting a little longer to make them possible. Besides which, once Harry’s elevation to Lord of the Iron Islands spread there would be much less resistance to their union than otherwise.

If waiting a while longer can avert even a fraction of the future political issues Jon will face, and by extension his consorts, then Harry would do so with gladness, despite his own wishes to see them as protected as possible.

“What were you doing just there?” Robb asked, head canted to one side as his clever eyes tracked the last few of Harry’s lights before they faded. “It looked…strange.” He decided. “But I could almost taste the power of it.”

“I was communing with the natural powers of the land.” Harry answered, rising to his feet and
shaking out the tingles caused by staying in one position for too long. “I can do the same with the
air, water, fire.” He waved a hand vaguely. “Any element really. But my long sleep was powered
by spells linked to the land’s magic and I find it easier to access even now that I’ve been awake near
to six turns.” He sighed, looking out the window towards where the sun was just beginning to
lighten the horizon. “I slept so long that I likely always will, despite having a greater affinity for air
and fire – before.”

Robb moved to his side as Harry stayed turned towards the window and wrapped his long arms
around him, snuggling the man in his light cotton tunic and naught else back against his broad chest.

They were a study in contrasts, the three of them. Harry mused. Jon was all long legs and strong,
lean muscles, topping Harry’s five foot seven inches by a head, putting him at a good six foot three
or four, with Robb several inches taller still and just as long of limb but more heavily muscled do to
his heavier dose of River Land and Northern blood. Old Valyrian genes tended towards being
dominate giving Jon his more elegant and less bulked out musculature. And of course, Harry’s own
smaller, lither, swimmer’s figure. All three of them had brightly colored eyes that resembled jewels
and were each very handsome in their own unique ways.

Women would swoon, Harry laughed to himself, the moment the three of them presented themselves
in a court setting.

“Is that what you’ve been teaching Jon?” Robb asked perceptively, gaining himself a startled glance
from still-too-bright green eyes. “I’ve noticed a difference.” He added, voice gentle and soft. “He
recalls information faster than I’ve ever seen him – though he’s never been slow. He keeps his
temper better and shows less, and his connection to Ghost has grown even stronger.” And that
connection had always been the strongest of the six. Robb admitted as such to himself even if he
never would out loud. “I knew you had to be teaching him
something
. I’ve heard you speak too
much about magic and different ways various peoples used it in your first life to think otherwise.”
Robb cracked a half-smile. “You were planting seeds among the men, making them wonder if some
of the old tales are true and they might be able to do such things – if they tried or were taught.”

“Pretty much.” Harry admitted, sucking on his bottom lip sheepishly, eyelids half-lowered. “With
Jon I told him: there’s power in his blood and I offered to teach him how to use it.” He shrugged.
“He won’t be able to do what I do: the way I use magic is pretty restricted to my kind. But there are
other ways, ways that have nothing to do with waving a wand and that’s what I think anyone with
the right heritage can learn.” Harry gestured towards the window in illustration, encompassing all of
the land with his wave. “Westeros is a land teeming with magic that has been suppressed: it’s
begging to be used. Foreign sorcerers who come from Essos like Thoros of Myr or the Red Woman
often find themselves more powerful here and for a simple reason.” Harry sighed, almost slumping.
“The magical creatures have been hunted, the magic of her people forgotten. It’s like living at the
edge of a volcano and trying to stopper the vent: all it does is make the eruption come that much
sooner and more violently.”

Robb mulled that over for a moment, shifting them so that he was sitting with his back to the window
and Harry was cradled between his legs.

“What I can do…” He said slowly, struggling to admit even to himself who – or rather what – he
was let alone another person, even one as in-your-face-magical as Harry. “Warging. I have magical
blood as well…don’t I?”

“All the Starks do – from what I can tell.” Harry admitted. “I scanned Lord Hoster to see if there
was anything that I could do for him from a magical standpoint but his blood is weaker than yours.
More Andal than First Men or Children of the Forest or even Old Valyrian. He’s too weak to
survive any intervention I might attempt. But Bran…” He trailed off, trusting Robb would be able to follow the thought without Harry spelling it out for him.

“He’s almost recovered and gets better every day since you saw him.” Robb couldn’t help but smile, as he had when he’d first heard the news from Jon’s own lips. “You were able to heal him – or mostly anyway.”

Harry nodded. “There are things I can teach you, like I’ve started to with Jon over the last few turns. You’ll probably take to different skills than our beloved king, but that’s the way it goes. Everyone is different when it comes to magic, even twins excel in different subjects as I’ve had cause to experience.”

“Can you teach me to do what you were just doing?” Robb asked, very much intrigued by the vision he’d come upon.

“Maybe, in time.” Harry gave a ponderous nod. “But first we’ll start at the same place as I did with Jon before branching out: meditation and strengthening your bond with Grey Wind. Now,” Harry’s voice turned all business. “Crisscross your legs before you and follow my voice…”

... 

Sansa started as she heard her name called from the depths of the shadows covering the eastern half of her chambers.

“Lady Sansa.” She heard again, eyes searching for the voice’s owner.

Knowing he had her firm attention Harry stepped from the shadows, slowly unravelling his disillusionment charm so that it seemed as if shadows were dripping from him as he walked forward.

He’d left Riverrun just that morning, after awaying his lovers and soon-to-be-bondeds as they marched out with the Targaryen forces on the way to Golden Tooth. It was going to be a hard fortnight – for them and him – as they made a hard march, attempting to cover the ground at a pace that would get them there well ahead of any scouts that could warn the town and fortress that guarded the road to the West, while Harry first dared the lions in their stolen den before going off in what could be a fool’s errand. He had no choice. He had to risk it, to see what it was in the East that was pulling at him so insistently – and the feeling was only growing stronger with every day that passed.

But first – King’s Landing and the bastard-usurper’s small council.

Much rode on the outcome of today, of how skillful Harry proved to be in an arena that was pure social maneuvers and politics, neither of which he had ever learned to enjoy no matter how good he got at them.

Give him a blunt-speaking and hard-hitting group like the Ironborn any day over the venomous and sophisticated dangers of a court or a small council. Every member of the Lannister-led small council was a snake in the grass, each more viperous than the one before. The only exception may very well be the only one who was as yet a Lannister by name if Jon’s remembrances and instincts regarding Tyrion Lannister ring true. It would be a fine turn of irony if it were so: the only named-lion of the bunch being the most lion-like rather than the poisonous cretins and Queens his own observations and information sources – such as Sansa Stark – have reported.

Lord Tywin was still cooling his heels at Harrenhal as far as Lady Sansa’s last report. Harry was hoping that state of affairs remained. Of all the enemies his Jon was facing, it was old Tywin that
gave Harry pause. He’d only dealt with him second-hand through upsetting his plans with the Freys, Boltons, and even his nudges given to Balon Greyjoy. Any single one of those plans had had the potential to cost the North the war and Jon, Robb, or any other Stark or person who bucked the old lion their lives.

Nope.

Harry would never take Lord Tywin lightly, which was why he was approaching Lady Sansa in advance of his ‘official’ entrance to the city and his audience with the Lannister bastard child and his small council.

“Lady Sansa.” Harry greeted giving his future good-sister a courtly bow. “You are well?”

“Very well, Lord Harry.” Sansa rushed over extending her hands to grasp his own. “What need do you have of me?”

“Has Lord Tywin returned?”

“No, milord.” Sansa shook her elegantly-coiffed auburn head. “Lord Tyrion is still acting Hand in his father’s absence, much to Queen Cersei’s,” she gave a delicate sneer that the name of the woman that has made her life a living hell in continuing with the farce of a betrothal to Joffery. “Disgust and disdain at having to listen to the Imp. He’s very unpopular with Joffery and Cersei as well as most of the court but he seems to manage them all well enough.”

Harry gestured for her to sit in the window seat, coming down on one knee before her, keeping her hands in his as he gave them a reassuring squeeze or stroke of this thumbs.


Jon was very conflicted regarding this sole member of House Lannister. Cersei’s two youngest children could always be parceled off to a septry or a marriage to a loyal Northern house for Myrcella with the Citadel or the Black as options for Tommen. But Tyrion…Tyrion had become a friend to Jon during the ‘royal’ visit to Winterfell before the game of thrones began anew in Westeros.

It was one of the times where the boy and the man in Jon have come into conflict, as Maester Aemon had warned would happen as Jon fought to claim the Iron Throne.

Harry loved that there was still that bit of wide-eyed idealism in his lover.

He was jaded enough for a dozen men, if he could take some of the harder choices Jon would have to make into his own hands to keep them from weighing down or bowing those strong shoulders he loved, he would do so.

“He’s…different than others I’ve met in the capitol.” Sansa chose her words with care, knowing full-well that they could impact Harry’s and therefore her cousin’s choices. “He drinks and wenches, he has a woman who was a harlot as a lover. But he is fair, and far kinder than I’ve known the Lannisters to be.” She looked away from Harry’s kind eyes. “He tries to protect me from Joffery.” She admitted in a rush. “I can feel that I’m due to flower soon…I don’t want to have to leave here but I’m terrified at the thought of marrying that…that…”

“It won’t come to that Sansa.” Harry soothed her immediately before she could become overwrought. “Your place here is important, yes, but there are other ways to gain the knowledge I need if necessary. You don’t have to stay and marry that creature if you flower before Jon lays siege to King’s Landing. You have my word.”
“Thank you, Lord Harry.” She gave him a brilliant smile, blue eyes shining. “You’re very good to me.” She blushed a moment before letting go of his hands and rising, crossing over to her chest and removing a token from it, holding it out to him. “I was there when Varys reported that you’d been made Lord of the Iron Islands.” She explained, pointing to the sigil embroidered on the red silk kerchief. “I made this for you in thanks for the protection you’ve extended to me and those of my family.”

“It’s my honor, Lady Sansa.” Harry thanked her with a short bow, rubbing a thumb over the fine stitches. “I don’t think I’ve ever owned something with such fine stitches. I’ll take good care of it, and show it off to your brother and cousin when I return to them.”

“She rushed back over having rummaged through her chest once more, taking out a few other smaller items like the kerchief she gave him. “I made these for Robb and Jon…” She looked down at her hands bashfully. “It gives me something to help control myself when I have to join Queen Cersei and the other ladies in the solar for needlepoint.”

“I’ll make sure they get them, I promise.” Harry chucked her under the chin. “Now,” his tone firmed. “I’m about to make quite the scene and meet with the small council and possibly the Lannister brat and his mother. If summoned will you be able to treat me as you should? As a stranger and traitor to the crown?”

“I think so Lord Harry.” Sansa said, eyes hardening with resolve. “If I’m summoned I shall do my best or simply keep my eyes lowered, that’s all they expect from me anyway.” Her last words were tinged with bitterness at the disregard and disdain she was shown by her captors.

“There’s the she-wolf.” Harry gave a small smile. “Speaking of which.” Harry remembered a scene he’d been shown by Death, one that he was quite confident hadn’t been overridden by his changing of Wyrd. “A particular direwolf female as started leading her pack towards Riverrun, perhaps to rendezvous with another of her errant packmates?”

“Arya?” Sansa gasped, hands rising to her mouth as if to keep her words quiet. “She’s safe?”

“Well,” Harry had to equivocate a bit on that. “She’s alive, and that’s more than I can say for many who are in that war-torn area. She’s making steady progress North, and is in interesting company. I’m sure she’ll make it back into your family’s loving arms in due time.” He laughed a little. “I’d go myself and fetch her but I doubt she’d take my word for it, and with time being what it is, so long as she’s somewhat safe and alive, it’s best to let her and her companions travel North alone.”

“If you say so, Lord Harry.” Sansa nodded her head trustingly.

“Now remember;” he cautioned her. “I must be a stranger to you. My arrival was too well-known for us to pass off previous acquaintance…”

They talked for a few more moments before Harry melted back into the shadows, recasting his disillusionment charm and patting the amulet he wore in the capitol to make sure it was tucked away and out of sight before Apparating back to the Kingswood where he’d left a horse rented from a nearby manse. Harry didn’t want to have to worry about Apparating both himself and a horse all over Westeros, and no horse he’d ever seen would allow a dragon to carry it in its claws, not even Harry in his dragon Animagus form. A flick of his wand and the plain saddle blanket was replaced with on in the blood-red of House Targaryen, the simple tack Transfigured into fine leather and steel, and a pole and banner were conjured with the duel banners of House Targaryen and Jon’s personal sigil, a plain white flag flying beneath the two banners.

Mounting up, he galloped from the tree line and to the gates of the city, reining in his horse in a
dramatic spectacle of a rearing plunge, calling out to the Gold Cloaks manning the wall above the Gate of the Gods:

“Lord Harry Potter-Black, Lord of the Iron Islands, envoy of the rightful King Jon Targaryen, the first of his name, requests admittance to the city and the Red Keep to treat with Lord Tyrion Lannister, Hand of the King to discuss the ransom and exchange of prisoners acquired through the recent offensives.”

Harry figured the words would get extremely garbled as he kept his seat on the prancing horse, on hand resting lightly on the banner, the other deceptively on his thigh, his wand hidden by the flowing lines of his cloak and tunic.

If they thought to take him prisoner without ado, they would find it much harder if not outright-impossible to accomplish than anticipated.

He might be entertained to see them try though, he mused to himself as after a long wait that neared torturous in its boredom outside of having curious citizens peeking around the open gates or over the walls to get a good look at the first person with the balls to fly Targaryen colors in more than a decade within sight of King’s Landing or any Baratheon holding.

Some appeared more excited than others, though all seemed at least thoughtful at the sight of him.

King’s Landing, after all, had been built by the Targaryens and had been their home for more than two centuries, the common-folk there often enjoying long periods of peace and prosperity.

That Tywin Lannister’s men had sacked the city: raping, burning, pillaging, and murdering their way through both the Targaryens and everyone else inside its walls, and then been rewarded for it, certainly hadn’t endeared either the Lannisters or the Baratheons to the populace of King’s Landing.

A fact that had recently been driven home when the starving small-folk rioted against the Gold Cloaks, Kingsguard, and royal court, killing over a dozen men and women in the process both low and high born.

Rumor had it that the High Septon was one of those who narrowly escaped with his life in hand – though his purse had been considerably lightened.

All to the better for their cause in Harry’s opinion, if the small-folk were fed up with their greedy clergy.

It would pave the way for a further tightening of the restrictions as far as the Faith of the Seven was concerned. The clergy had become corrupted from being men of service and faith to accepting bribes and lusting for power as well as other sins decried in their holy text. That they sneered at the old gods and “heathen” magic only fed Harry’s and Jon’s determination to pare down their power in Westeros.

Before he’d been waiting long enough for it to be considered an actual offense against an envoy rather than a showy snub, a small squad of Gold Cloaks headed by a massive man in all white – one of the false Kingsguard Harry had no doubt, most likely Sandor Clegane based on the man’s size – riding a snorting destrier in all black, came forward and surrounded him. A tubby, balding man who was puffed up on his own importance sneered at Harry, spitting at his horse’s hooves, saying:

“You’re to be escorted to the Throne Room, Lord Potter-Black, envoy of the pretender to the Throne.”

“Strong words,” Harry observed, “for a man who can’t keep peace in a single city: Janos Slynt
Captain of the City Guard.” He arched a brow when the mounted man choked back a gruff snort. “Unless I’m mistaken as to your identity guardsman?”

With that final word, drawled in his best Malfoy-esque I’m-better-than-you tone, Harry cowed the Gold Cloaks but also felt himself become of much greater interest to the infamous Lannister “Dog”. Which could be a good thing or a bad thing considering Harry captured the man’s brother for Jon, directly leading to the man’s beheading. Rumor had it that the two: Mountain and Dog, loathed the very sight of each other, even to the point of fratricide. That didn’t however mean that the Dog would be complacent over another killing his kin.

Families could be peculiar like that in Harry’s experience.

He’d seen it for himself play out in Britain’s second war against Voldemort, families who couldn’t stand to breathe the same air banding together against an external threat.

Whether the Cleganes were the same only time would tell…likely by Harry either having to fight off an enraged Dog…or not.

“Your sword.” The puce-faced Slynt demanded.

Ah. He’d had it right then, he decided when the man didn’t deny Harry’s educated guess. Good to know.

Harry gave a rakish smile, crossing his wrists over the saddle pommel, unobtrusively tucking his wand away and responded: “Over my dead and decaying body will you take my weaponry, Captain Slynt.” His smile became a smirk. “What with riots and Valyrian steel swords of legend such as Ice going missing in King’s Landing, and all. You understand.”

“You can’t enter the city…” Slynt began to splutter, his words cut short by Clegane speaking up in his rough way.

“Shut up, fat man.” Sandor Clegane commanded as his destrier danced a bit over the lack of movement. “He is to enter by order of the King. The Gold Cloaks can protect the city from one man, can’t you?”

With that, Clegane set spurs to his mount’s sides, Harry following a pace as the City Watch scrambled after them, unable to keep up on foot with the mounted riders.

As they rode through the streets, Harry would reach into his purse every few strides and toss out golden dragons that had the Targaryen sigil on one side and Jon’s face in profile on the other with the words: ‘Fire and Blood’ surrounding the dragon and ‘King Jon I Targaryen’ around his profile, fashioned via his will and power as his vaults responded to his wishes. He also tossed out silver “stags” only the coinage while being of the correct weight and size were engraved and embossed with the Stark sigil and words on one side and with the combination of Jon’s name and profile on the other. It was a blatant attempt at buying the good-will of the public but Harry knew full-well the value of good press – and the cost of bad.

To paraphrase one of his favorite movies from his old world: The mob is power. The mob rules Rome, and as one controls the mob, they control everything.

King’s Landing reminded Harry all too well of Ancient Rome only without the white-washing of the Senate to allow even the idea of the small-folk having a say in their own governance.

Spying a group of too-thin children begging in Fishmonger’s Square as he and Clegane clattered all down River Row before taking a left turn onto the Hook which would lead to the main entrance of
the Red Keep rather than a postern door off the second half of River Row, Harry centered his pack between his thighs and gave with both hands as he used to legs to guide his rented horse, tossing out some of his stored provisions summoned to hand: dried apples and other fruit he’d seen in peddler’s carts and served at table in Riverrun, loaves of bread still good from when he’d baked them before applying preservation charms, and even dried meats and aged cheeses. To his concern, the children fought more over the food than they did the coins. Things had deteriorated quite a bit in the city for that to be the case.

The small-folk were hard pressed from the Roseroad being blockaded, Renly Baratheon was doing a fine job of starving his would-be people and causing havoc, as the riot had proven.

But when people fought over food given with free hand more than coin in a city of a half-million people, things were in dire straits indeed.

He’d have to think on the issue. There may be something he or Jon or even the River Lords could do to help the starving small-folk. And it would only heighten the pro-Targaryen sentiment growing in the city.

After all…apparently Stannis knew a good smuggler. Maybe Ser Davos could give him the name of someone interested in a bit of coin in exchange for helping the common man and woman in King’s Landing. Lifting the sea blockade by Lord Manderley would never do. No. While it would help the small-folk it would benefit the Lannister-led nobility in the city more – and that was very much contrary to what Jon wanted to happen here.

It was a tangle, and one that he would seek to unwind…when he had a moment to spare.

Which, to his own dismay, was not this moment as he should be preparing himself to deal with a pompous arse of a would-be villain and his minders.

Though Joffery from all accounts was giving becoming an actual evil tyrant his all, even if he did lack the brain cells necessary to climb the evil-careers ladder from tyrant to mastermind, or even villain.

No the first was most definitely the province of his grandfather with the latter reserved for his oh-so-loving mother.

Joffery was a psychopath from what Harry could tell, but he was also a thug for all his illusion of power. More Crabbe than Riddle, thank Death. One sociopathic, intelligent, megalomaniac is more than enough for two lifetimes. He could do without finding another in Westeros, whether this theoretical-second-Tom had magic or not.

The real problem Harry would face here was in the real power that ruled the Iron Throne at the moment: the Queen Regent and the Small Council.

They reined to a halt in the yard of the Red Keep, Harry casting a discrete protection, anti-theft, and anti-tampering spells on his mount…not that he thought he would actually end up getting back to it any time soon. He wasn’t a fool; he knew it was more than plausible that he would have to use magic to leave the Red Keep given recent history. But, just in case, he made it so his rented horse was safe and the spells would wear off after twelve hours. If he didn’t return to it by then, then it would be free to return to its master.

And while he could have used magic to pop into the Great Hall and make the spoiled brat sitting on the Iron Throne soil his breeches, he was trying for discretion, as amazing as that would seem to…well…just about everyone who knew him before he killed the Dark Lord.
The less the Lannisters, and everyone else, knew about his abilities and their limits the better he liked it.

Harry had definitely had cause to unleash his “inner-Slytherin” since waking up in Westeros.

He had a feeling Tom would be rather proud of him, if Albus less so.

Ironic, that, as it was Dumbledore’s shaping him into a powerful weapon that gave him purpose in Westeros. After all, like the Sword of Gryffindor hanging useless and near-forgotten in his secret vault, what good was a weapon, was Harry, if it/he wasn’t being used? If, as for all the years of this epoch and however many others came between his sleeping and his waking, he remained frozen in time of no more use than a sword left to rust away for want of bleeding.

Jon had given Harry a purpose again, but more than that, he did what Albus tried so hard to accomplish and Tom tried so hard to prevent: he gave him a motivation beyond simple purpose of thought and action.

His friends and lost family had been his motivation, once.

Justice, revenge, love; all had been wielded by him as both sword against his enemies and shield for those he sought to protect.

In that way, both Albus and Tom had known him well.

As long as Harry had someone or something he sought to protect, he was one of the most formidable enemies you could make.

Molly knew him well too, using that same deep well of emotion and protection against him by using Teddy and his wellbeing and inheritance in the Wizarding World to secure Harry’s compliance when otherwise he might have fought – and more terrifying yet – won once more.

Before he could lose himself further into his thoughts, riding and tossing coin and food by rote as his body managed on auto-pilot as his mind was distracted, they arrived at the portcullis of the Red Keep, Clegane riding first through the deadly tunnel richly littered with murder-holes and downspouts for boiling oil and wildfire, Harry and his borrowed mount just on his heels before both reined to a stop beside the red-stone stairs leading up to the wide double entrance banded in black iron that yawned wide, welcoming them like a gaping maw leading to unknown horrors.

Four more members of the Kingsguard were lined up waiting for Clegane to arrive with Harry in tow, much to the wizard’s amusement. They were more concerned with a show of force and trying to intimidate Jon’s envoy that they left Joffery and the rest of the royal family with only a pair of Kingsguard to keep them safe, though Cersei did have a retinue of Lannister guardsmen known as “Red Cloaks” that Tywin had given her for her protection upon her marriage to Robert. Of the two, from what Barristan had relayed, the Red Cloaks were likely more effective and dangerous than the Kingsguard.

If for no other reason than Cersei regularly fucked them to keep them happy and loyal.

Poor Jaime had been distraught when Harry had gone to see him, the wizard showing no compunction about ripping away the pretty golden knight’s extremely naïve view of his treacherous twin sister.

The poor deluded fool had actually believed Cersei saved herself for him alone, outside of her rapes via her husband of course.
Honestly.

How could anyone raised by Tywin Lannister, and surviving a pair of kings while a Kingsguard whilst living in and among the royal courts, be that blind?

Love, Harry supposed.

He’d always thought that rather than love being blind, it was self-deluding.

People didn’t want to know or believe in their loved one’s faults so they willfully ignored all evidence that ran contrary to their own personal beliefs regarding that person.

It was an interesting – and idiotic – phenomena that Harry had seen over and over in the Wizarding World in the furor and first blush following Voldemort’s downfall. Everyone and their brother rushing to-and-fro “falling in love” and marrying within weeks or even days. To no surprise, he’d also seen an increase in wizarding marriage counselors and divorce solicitors in the years following the glut of victory-weddings.

The “Old Guard” of the Wizarding World had been scandalized – no matter which side of the conflict they’d originally fought on – over the relatively new professions.

Harry’d been entertained for weeks when he’d noticed it, much to Blaise’s own amusement.

“Come.” Clegane barked out when they’d both dismounted, the other members of the Kingsguard falling in around them like an amalgamation of an honor guard and a prisoner escort.

They didn’t try and take his weapons, unlike the Gold Cloaks, the oldest among them exchanging a quick glance with Clegane before giving an abrupt nod and falling in line.

Interesting.

Clegane wielded more power in the Red Keep than Harry would have thought.

Though it made sense.

Those that cowered among the Court here did so either in pursuit of power or from fear of reprisals – either on the part of the Lannisters or one of the claimants to the Throne. To them, Clegane would be a fierce sight indeed. Favoried by the petulant boy-king, his House long having served the Lannisters, and now the head of said house with his brother’s capture and execution – despite his oaths against such things when he joined the Kingsguard. And above all, strong, one of the only men able to stand against his dead brother but with a discipline the Mountain had lacked.

A trained attack dog versus a rabid one held back by only the thinnest of chains.

Yes, Harry could see why Clegane’s “sworn brothers” feared him, as well as why Lady Sansa seemed to in turn fear and respect him.

They walked in silence save for the clank of the Kingsguards’ armor and their boots on the stones of the Keep, Harry’s own softer-soled footwear designed for stealth and speed making no noise at all in comparison.

Before long, they led him into a hall with tall narrow windows marching along the entirety of the stone and marble walls on either side of the cavernous room. It could easily fit a thousand souls inside of it to Harry’s canny eye, though much less than that number were present. Shining marble floors and pillars shone in the light from the torches on polished silver holders, massive tapestries
hanging where Jon’s stories of dragon skulls used to reside. And at the end, a wide iron dais with narrow stairs, upon which a truly ugly throne fashioned from swords and dragonfire sat, a much comelier lady’s chair made of soft golden-sheened wood with red-and-gold cushions beside it.

An uglier version of Draco Malfoy sat upon the Iron Throne, a sneer marring what might have been an attractive face despite the unfortunate pointiness it had, his eyes a bit too close together and a weak shade of green rather than Malfoy’s refined features and striking silver eyes.

*Joffery Waters.* Harry thought to himself. *We meet at last.*

At his side in the lady’s chair sat a lovely woman who had aged well and still retained much of her younger beauty who could only be Cersei Lannister, the whelp’s bitch of a mother.

Much like Joffery’s weak resemblance to Draco, Cersei’s blondeness and haughty looks were a poor version of Narcissa to Harry’s mind.

She lacked somewhat in comparison to that mother-viper who could – and did – defy even a Dark Lord to protect her child, while never so much as dirtying her hem in the process, coming out of the second war as pristine and proud as she’d gone into it. Cersei had little of that same dignity for all her airs. A mummer’s Queen to Aerys’ mummer’s dragon. More Gryffindor than Slytherin, this one, despite her high sense of her own value and abilities.

The red lines marring her nose under her powder didn’t help his impression of her.

Though, Harry had to concede, if he’d been married to Robert Baratheon he’d likely have taken to drink and affairs as well.

Harry turned his head to the handful of audience members present: the Small Council and Cersei’s few ladies, Sansa included; breaking himself of the ghosts of his former life for the moment.

They’ll be back in time, he knew.

They always came back, and in all likelihood always would. Despite all the years and nightmares and waking dreams between him and them, they still were all he had to compare, though as time passed and more of what he heard in his waking-sleep was assimilated he was able to draw forward recollections of others.

Others, such as Bran the Builder and those who came before him into his tomb, and those such as Benjen Stark who came to speak to the still figures of those who came before.

Sometime he would have to tell Jon of just how very much his parents had been in love. There was a melancholy around Benjen, and an air that his memories of the Ranger speaking to Rhaegar’s statue had, that told him Benjen didn’t speak much of his relationship with Jon’s father to his son. It was too painful for the man, from what Harry could tell, much like it had pained Severus to speak of Harry’s mother and Remus to speak of any of them.

Jon knew his parents had loved each other, of course he did. But that knowledge was tainted at least in part, by everything that had come after. By his father’s death, Robert’s Rebellion, and his bearer having to hide within the Night’s Watch, lest someone look a bit too hard at Jon’s own parentage. Buried under such stressors as those, it came as no surprise that the first thing Jon thought when it came to his parents was that his father had been killed by Robert and his bearer had hidden to keep him safe – no mention of love at all.

But then, in Westeros, love is often an afterthought if it’s thought of at all.
It was almost similar to England and Western Europe in the Dark Ages just before the rise of the Middle Ages and the ideal of “courtly love.”

An interesting period to Harry since it revolved around the adulation of adultery versus honor and duty.

Tyrion Lannister was everything and nothing like Harry had expected, more solemn than in Jon’s recitations of his time spent in the “Imp’s” company but also more restrained and less of a “disgrace” than he’d heard jests made of the man known as “Lord Tywin’s Bane.”

Grand Maester Pycelle, on the other hand, as well as Petyr Baelish and Varys the Spider, were all as he’d remembered from his previous visit that included much sneaking about. Though the bright light shining through the many windows did none of them any favors, it highlighting each and every flaw in Pycelle’s crepe-paper skin, Baelish’s dissolute eyes and face, and Varys’ powdered and pampered excess. In this, Cersei showed her feminine skills, only showing a little worse for the unforgiving light than she would in the soft and forgiving glow of fine beeswax candles.

Sansa, with her youthful looks, had no fear of sunlight save for that it might mar her pale skin with a freckle or two.

After a glance from Harry and a wave from Cersei, Lady Sansa stepped forward to announce him as the only other member of the Stark-Targaryen alliance present in the Red Keep – as far as the court knew at least. She at least knew of his titles and appointments from the criers who had alerted the pretender to the throne and his council of his presence outside the Gates. Any other knowledge she had of him would have to be well-concealed as Cersei and Joffery had acted as he and Sansa had thought they might by demanding her presence during his audience before Joffery, the “Queen Regent”, and the Small Council.

“Your Graces and members of the Small Council.” Sansa spoke in her clear soprano, head lifted high but eyes focused well over crowns adorning a pair of golden heads. “May I present the Lord Harry Potter-Black, Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands, and envoy of Jon Targaryen, first of his name.”

“Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands?” Joffery scoffed his derision doing little good for either his looks or his whiny voice. “By whose order? Certainly not Ours nor the Throne’s, Pretender-Lord Potter-Black.”

“My son…” Cersei immediately jumped into the fray to try and smooth over the outlandish display of bad manners in her faux-sweet-and-proper way only to be cut off by a dry drawl in an accent none of them save Sansa had ever heard before.

“You will find, child.” Harry arched a brow at the bratling as he spoke. “That as my King currently controls over half of the Seven Kingdoms that what he has to say carries much more weight than that of whatever ass warms that rather ugly chair. If I were you, child.” He gave the creature the cut-direct, turning so that he faced Tyrion fully and only his profile was towards the brat and his mother. “I would be silent before your loose tongue costs you more than even your noble grandsire can afford to pay.”

“You?!” Joffery bit off before his mother’s suddenly-dagger-like claws on his arm shut him up, a fiery warning in her spring-green eyes and the slight shake of her head.

“Now.” Harry nodded with proper deference to the current Hand, Lord Tyrion. “Perhaps we could discuss the reason we’re all here and that of all those many many ravens sent between King’s Landing and Riverrun?”
“Very well, Lord Potter-Black.” Tyrion stepped forward, his face no longer shadowed by patches of grey and black cast by the Iron Throne as he descended a single step to face Harry head-on. “Let’s. Prisoner exchange and ransom.” Tyrion waved a grandiose hand. “We have some of your men and knights and Lords, you have some of ours. What will it take to afford ransom or exchange, for say,” he gave a charming smile. “My brother Jaime?”

“An act of the gods.” Harry shot back with a wry, knowing smirk, eyes alight with entertainment. Yes. Tyrion Lannister was much more than rumor would have him, even more than Jon had seen and his royal lover was quite excellent at finding the usefulness of other men. Where Tywin saw his bane, Jon saw an excellent manipulator and skilled political mind wanting only a purpose. Tyrion had one, at the moment, in attempting to prove his worth to an undeserving family and House. Time would tell if Harry or Jon could offer him a better one in turn.

“My Jaime…!” Cersei began only to be cut off once more.

Harry had no intention of entertaining either her or her son, and had no problems showing it. “Come now.” He rolled his eyes in an overblown manner, holding out his arms wide from his sides. “Let us not act as fools before each other. The only thing keeping the illustrious and infamous Tywin prowling behind the gates of Harrenhal instead of scratching at the gates of Riverrun is Jaime’s golden head – especially with the nasty precedent set by your own Lannister kin regarding hostages.” Harry’s smirk turned vicious, more a baring of teeth than a quirk of his lips. “It is a tenuous status-quo but its working for the moment: we have your Jaime. You have our Sansa. We won’t attempt to take King’s Landing. You won’t attempt to move further North than Harrenhal.” Harry clapped his hands together. “And as long as our beloved Sansa is safe there is no reason to fear for Jaime’s pretty golden head, no matter how much the Northern lords bay for his blood. Clear?”

“Crystal.” Tyrion bit out, hands tapping thoughtfully against his tunic, his green eyes shooting out another warning at Joffery when he saw the boy start to open his mouth from the corner of his eye.

“Not to interrupt…” Varys spoke, all knowing full-well that he was intending just that. “However, I am still puzzling over your claim, Lord Potter-Black of the Iron Islands, that your king Jon Targaryen has taken over half of the kingdoms?” Varys tittered behind his fan. “The North is large, yes, but it alone does not make up half of the Seven Kingdoms in anything other than size.”

The wizard among them was patently amused at his lack of information, as was the Imp if he was reading the Imp right.

“You’re slipping Master of Whispers.” Baelish looked a strange cross between gleeful and mortified. “By my count the Targaryen claimant controls the North, half the Riverlands, the Iron Islands, a bulk of the Crownlands, and Dorne if I’m not mistaken.” Baelish smirked, his voice soft. “Coin never lies: and none of them have paid their taxes since the start of hostilities between Jaime Lannister and the Starks.”

They didn’t know about the Vale. Harry mused to himself, gaze unfocused for a split-second as he processed the omission. Let’s keep it that way…for the moment. It would be hard to conceal after all, the first time Tywin’s troops and patrols ran into Vale men in the Riverlands keeping him from moving North or East.

But for the moment at least…none of the little birds in the Eyrie were singing.

Jon’s visits there had borne more fruit than they’d thought, alongside his inheriting the Lordship in the wake of Lysa’s infidelity and attempted line-theft.
Speaking of line-theft…

“If we cannot come to an accord over the cessation of hostilities,” a foregone conclusion to Tyrion’s eyes. “Or prisoner exchange, then why, pray tell, are you here Lord Potter-Black?”

Tyrion gave him the opening he’d been waiting for.

Reaching in and removing a sealed scroll with a flourish, he handed it over to the Hand, as there currently as no Master of Laws in King’s Landing in the wake of Renly’s grab for the Throne.

“We may not agree on much, such as who should rule,” Harry’s voice was semi-exasperated with Renly Baratheon and more than half-way sarcastic. Tyrion could learn to like the cheeky fellow…if they weren’t on opposite sides of an ever-bloodier war. “But in one thing at least Jon I Targaryen, King of the Seven Kingdoms and the pretender-to-the-Throne Renly Baratheon, so-called King of Highgarden are agreed, as is Renly’s brother Stannis, the new Lord of Storm’s End: that charges must be brought against the pretender Joffery Waters and his traitorous mother the Pretender-Regent Cersei of House Lannister.”

“Charges?” Grand Maester Pycelle gasped in his croaking voice as Cersei shrieked and Joffery turned an interesting shade of plum as her nails dug into his arm at reminded Harry sharply of Vernon Dursley at his most irate.

“Charges.” Tyrion echoed in disbelief, clever eyes scanning the document in his hands – written in High Valyrian no less! – that he’d broken the two seals on.

One was the Baratheon Stag favored by Renly, the other the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen.

His almost-friend Jon had been busy indeed.

“Of what kind?” Cersei finally composed herself enough to ask through her frozen polite-lady mask.

“Line theft.” Harry said in a calm tone that irritated more than any amount of smugness or gloating could have done. “Treason, and adultery.” Though he did clarify: “The charge of Adultery is against both Cersei and Jaime Lannister, as well as Cersei’s known lovers Lancel Lannister and the others, many others listed in the scroll. Joffery Waters is charged with both line-theft and treason as well as murder.” Emerald eyes gleamed as a cloud cast shadows over his handsome features, giving him a sinister mien. “As he has no claim to the Throne, the Lannister line being utterly devoid of Targaryen blood, Joffery had no authority to order Lord Eddard Stark’s death among the host of others he’s commanded. They are therefore ruled murders under the laws of Westeros and Old Valyria – and he shall be made to pay for them.”

“I’ve entertained.” Joffery exploded. “This farce long enough! Guards!” He shrieked. “Seize him!”

Harry through back his head and laughed in delight.

Perfect. He couldn’t have planned that reaction better if he’d tried.

With a flex of his will at the sound of swords leaving scabbards and the Kingsguard moving to circle him, Harry knocked them back with no more effort than he would have used to manually swat aside a fly buzzing around his head, the Kingsguard collapsing like paper-soldiers, falling onto their backs on the marble floor, only Sandor Clegane managing to regain his feet before Harry took his leave.

“Consider this your warning.” Harry clapped twice and all the torches burned high, catching alight
the many heavy tapestries that glorified Robert Baratheon, his rebellion and rule. “The Trident has been reclaimed: the Lannister forces pushed back beyond the safety of the Golden Tooth and southron to Harrenhal. Meanwhile Renly Baratheon comes for the Iron Throne his brother’s hammer and their shared Targaryen heritage won. Of dust and ashes all men come, and to dust and ashes all return. All must pay for their sins in the end. And the time for the Lannisters to pay their debts has come due.”

Twisting on the spot, Harry disappeared with a great and showy crack! Leaving Tyrion and the rest to run from the blazing room, shouting orders for the guards and servants to put out the fire before the entire Keep went up in flames.

…

“Well.” Tyrion Lannister mused to himself, after returning to the Tower of the Hand and opening a flagon of Arbor gold to share with his near-constant companion the sell-sword Bronn, who had kept to the shadows and out of his bitch sister’s sight during the confrontation. “That was delightfully dramatic. I must applaud this Lord Harry’s ability to set Cersei and Joffery into simultaneous histrionics: even if his choice of doing so has left the unfortunate stench of burnt wool and silk in the Great Hall.”

“Aye.” Bronn tipped his goblet towards his friend and employer in casual agreement. “That’ll take weeks or more to air out it will.”

“Yes.” The Imp gave a vicious smirk of savage enjoyment. He was sure Cersei was going to run up one hells of a bill for their father to pay with the candlemaker in an attempt to cover the scent. Too bad it wasn’t one that was so easily cast aside, much like the man, wizard?, sorcerer?, who caused it. “I rather think it will at that.”

The two clinked glasses in mocking toast to Lord Harry getting one over on Cersei in such an oblique way. Tyrion found himself rather enjoying the man’s style. Much like that of the King he served. He had had some interesting discussions with the then-Jon Snow.

But of all the intrigues and the secrets and the mummer’s farces that had played out during the sixteen years between Rhaegar’s death and Robert’s ascent to the Iron Throne, Tyrion believed that the one he found himself appreciating the most wasn’t that of Jon Targaryen to play the irate-shamed-rebellious-bastard-son to such a perfect degree but rather that of his Uncle Eddard.

How much had it scourged him to know, having seen it with his own eyes, that his former foster-brother and best-friend would do the same to his nephew as Tyrion’s father had had done to Elia’s babes?

How much had it chafed at his honor to have to hide and lie about the life of said nephew in order to protect him, even so it was rumored, to the point of faking the deaths of several of Aerys’s Kingsguard?

How disappointed had Ned Stark been when faced with the truth of Robert Baratheon, and the lust for power that seemed to run right alongside the fiery temper that was the hallmark of Targaryen blood, blood that his best friend swore to stamp out root-and-branch, despite the utter hypocrisy of Robert being of Targaryen blood himself?

How much had all this and so much more hurt Eddard Stark for the man often thought of as too honorable, too proud, too stiff-necked to dabble in such devices as deceit and deception, too much a Northman the Stark of House Stark, to bring him to play the southron Game of Thrones?
Tyrion was no fool, and if there was anything he understood it was politics having studied the ways of his father, of Robert, of the Targaryen dynasty and the ways of the eastern continent. Tyrion had a voracious appetite for all things – knowledge and learning included. And no conquest began as well and true as Jon Targaryen’s without ample preparations, preparations that had to be seeded and sown years before their harvest, such as Targaryen was currently in the process of doing with his great Targaryen army filled to brimming with men of the North, the River lands, the Crown lands, even the Dornish and with Lord Harry’s actions the bloody Ironborn! No. All that – or at least much of it – stank of years of talks and plans and secret meetings, things that in the beginning Jon Targaryen was much too young to be part of except, perhaps, as a rallying point and central unifying symbol.

People, both noble, small-folk, and that tenuous station betwixt and between those two, had had one thing in common after Robert’s Rebellion, even more so after Greyjoy’s Folly and years of Robert’s rule: they bloody hated Robert Baratheon and how he let Cersei and Tywin run roughshod over him and in turn the people.

Robert could win a war but he couldn’t win the hearts and minds of the mob, a talent Jon and his Lord Harry were already showing in abundance, only matched, perhaps, in their ability thus by Renly Baratheon.

And then there was stiff-necked-Stannis.

Tyrion would have bet his dragons on the stern former Lord of Dragonstone and current Lord of Storm’s End declaring for himself and fighting his own side to the already-complex clash of kings.

However, something, and Tyrion was willing to wager it was more along the lines of someone had turned Stannis’s eyes away from trying to take the Throne for himself and instead, the just Lord of Dragonstone had thrown his not-inconsiderable power and might behind his second cousin Jon Targaryen.

“We live in interesting times, Bronn.” Tyrion observed almost to himself.

“Aye, that we do.” Bronn finished the dregs in his cup before setting it down on the table with a thud, reaching with his uncontained zest for life for the flagon to refill it. “Best figure out how to survive them, then.”

“Just so, my friend.” Tyrion chuckled darkly, eyes glinting with wicked delight. “Just so.”

…

Illyrio Mopatis watched with shock and no-little-amount of despair as a seeming-unending stream of sell-swords smashed through his manse’s walls upon the backs of armored elephants or poured through the gates both on foot and mounted horse.

Truly, when he’d heard that the Golden Company had severed their contract with Myr as hostilities began to heat between the three city-states of Myr, Tyrosh, and Pentos, he’d been a bit…concerned but not overly worried.

Homeless Harry was still his ally, he’d assured himself.

They were simply preparing to agree to his current plan of action and sail to Pentos to make ready for Daenerys’s inevitable return to the safety of his home. After all, he’d been nothing but supportive of her and her beggar-king brother, why wouldn’t the simple, biddable girl return to his protection? And that, he feared, was where his plans had begun to fall apart.
Viserys Targaryen had never been intended to take the Iron Throne, not in any of Illyrio’s many, many contingencies.

No, all along the true plan behind the wealthy merchant’s helping hand and “wise” guidance to the Targaryen siblings was to secure an army of Dothraki via Daenerys’s marriage to Khal Drogo, have them meet up with the Golden Company, and have that stunning combination of might and strategy sweep through Westeros like a tide, defeating all who opposed them.

Drogo, of course, would inevitably fall in battle, either to an honest soldier or knight having a very good day or to an assassin’s blade, it didn’t make any difference to Illyrio which, Viserys meeting much the same end only much sooner, leaving Daenerys the clear Heiress to the Iron Throne.

Illyrio had cursed the air blue and kicked any slave that crossed his path for a week or more when news of Drogo’s poisoning via a godswife and witch, reached his ears.

Without Drogo, there was no army to be had beyond the Golden Company.

And yet, with Daenerys somehow hatching the dragon eggs he’d given her, there was still hope to salvage the mess.

If only his men and spies could find the damned girl!

All the while, ravens and whispers had reached him, coming in flocks and droves from the shores of Westeros.

Targaryen blood. Said the whispers.

A true heir to the Iron Throne. Read the ravens.

At that moment, confirming that news, Illyrio had felt his blood chill and the dream he grasped for: the one that led him to wedding with a Lysene courtesan who had the blood of Aerion Brightflame in her veins instead of the girl he loved at his mother’s urging, the dream that Nerys Mopatis born of the blood of Blackfyre had whispered in her son’s ear from the cradle, the dream of retaking the Iron Throne for the blood of Daemon Blackfyre, who was a Targaryen twice-over; shatter and crumble before him.

Still, Illyrio allowed himself to cling to the scattered shards of a once-firm and fine plan.

Aegon still believed himself the trueborn son of Rhaegar Targaryen and Elia Martell, and now Daenerys was (while it was much earlier than planned) a widow.

Wedding Daenerys would silence any who would throw doubt on Aegon’s claim, Illyrio’s trueborn son and penultimate achievement could still take the Iron Throne.

And that was the new goal Illyrio Mopatis schemed and worked towards, with help from his good friend Varys, sending out more and more trackers to find Daenerys and spies to discover just what Connington and his comrades in the Golden Company were up to.

Until, that is, he found the Golden Company himself.

Or rather…the Golden Company found him.

Illyrio could do naught but watch, locked away in his secured rooms and peering out from the thinnest of windows, windows that a man of his bulk could never hope to disappear through. What was a simple precaution in case of attack became his undoing, as his “secure” failsafe locked him
inside... when a wise man would be fleeing, slipping away under the assault of the feared Golden Company. Even Illyrio’s highly trained and so-very-expensive band of Unsullied were no match against the sheer numbers the sell-swords brought to bear. And there, leading the charge alongside Harry Strickland and Jon Connington, was his prized achievement cutting down one after another of his father’s guards, though Illyrio supposed he could forgive that offense alone, as his handsome, strong Aegon had no idea that he’d taken up arms against his own blood.

As far as his perfect heir and accomplishment was concerned, Illyrio was just another rich merchant that had somehow gotten on the bad side of his friends in the Golden Company.

There was no reason for any of that force ten-thousand strong to believe otherwise.

Gods knew, if Harry Strickland or Jon Connington had any idea of the true depths of Illyrio’s scheming, they would have come for his head much sooner than sixteen years after he’d first set his plans in motion with the successful breeding of his expensively-bought wife with the blood of Aerion Brightflame running through her dirty, pillow-house born veins.

Serra, of no known father, a bastard born of bastards for several generations until that of Aerion Targaryen, known as both Aerion Brightflame and Aerion the Monstrous, had done her duty by him and given him a trueborn son with rich and ripe Targaryen looks.

He had no use of her thereafter and quickly disposed of her, lest his machinations reach the ears of the then-living Targaryen dynasty, as small as it had shrunk.

Rhaegar would have stayed his hand and allowed the boy to live had Illyrio’s plotting been discovered, taking only the merchant’s wealthy head.

Aerys would have had no such compunction or compassion, and would have had the deed done, either by the hand of one of his supporters or through a bought blade from the Faceless Men.

Despite the fact that it was against him, Illyrio couldn’t help but feel pride as he watched Aegon cut through guard after guard, until he and the others breeched the walls of Illyrio’s Pentosi palace, and thereby moved out of Illyrio’s sight.

Leaving the cheesemonger with only one thing left to do: hope and pray that the leaders of the Golden Company would hear him out…rather than following their usual ways and simply taking his head and be done with it.

And it was on the likelihood of that matter that Illyrio spent the rest of the siege of his home contemplating, leaving the shards of his broken plans and plots to rot in the past, much like all those of the Blackfyres who came before him.

…

Aegon studied the fat man with a canny eye and a head cocked like a curious puppy as he circled the Pentosi merchant who Tristan Rivers had found cowering in his own sweat and piss in a secured room, no bigger than a closet, hidden in the far reaches of an empty portion of the man’s manse.

They may never have found him, were it not for the tracking abilities of the Riverlands bastard and outlaw who used to use those self-same abilities to escape from justice in the Westerosi forests and hills before turning it into a skill worth his weight in gold among the Golden Company. Tristan had noticed dust on some of the internal guards of the palace, tracking the traces of that sign back through the place until he reached a blank wall, the guards’ footsteps showing clearly in the dust coating much of the disused room. It made no sense to the tracker, until he’d seen a barely-there sickle
carved into the ground approximately three hand-lengths long. Just the size required for a door to
swing open enough for a large man to squeeze through.

Tristan had thought he’d found an escape tunnel and called out for torches and backup before
starting to search for the release level or switch.

Before long he’d been joined by several other sell-swords and the tools and items he’d requested,
only to find his request useless.

Yes, the door had swung loose in time once the release had been found.

But no, it didn’t lead to the escape route Mopatis took.

It led to the fat fucker himself, cowering and pissing himself in fear of discovery.

Now he’d been moved to his former study, where Jon Connington was busy ransacking his desk and
books, scrolls, and documents for anything that pertained even in the slightest way to the Targaryens
while Harry Strickland, Lysono Mar, and Tristan Rivers searched for both treasures to call their own
and anything else (jewelry, seals, weapons…) that might give an answer to the question they were
there to ask:

Who was Aegon?

And what were Mopatis’s true plans regarding him and Daenerys Targaryen?

Mopatis had been bound and gagged before being dragged in all his stinking-glory and now-ruined
silks to the office and slammed to sit in a huddle on the ground.

Aegon had been studying him ever since, searching his face over and over for any feature that even
in the slightest way, resembled Aegon’s own face and form.

An impossible task, as the merchant had grown so large on his own wares and fine wines that any
such clue had long been hidden under his grotesque weight gain, much as the once handsome and
brave bravo had been lost to the wily and gluttonous magister of Pentos.

Truly, had they not been friends since a young age, even Varys would not have been able to see any
remnant of the youth in the grown man.

And then should that same friend view Aegon through the lens of time, Varys would have to admit
that the son has much of the father in him, merely strengthened and refined and polished by the
influx of Targaryen blood through his whore mother.

So different were they: Illyrio the Bravo and Mopatis the Magister.

How very high had he risen, only to fall in many and varied ways just the same.

“What have you found?” Aegon asked of the returning Strickland and Rivers.

“Steel.” Homeless Harry said with a grin and a kick at the humbled magister. “Valyrian steel.”

The leader of the Golden Company laid down a pair of Valyrian steel swords, one a hand-and-a-half
sword with the motif of dragons curling around two great rubies imbedded on either face of the hit,
and the other a slender longsword again with a motif of dragons but without the jeweled
embellishment.

“Blackfyre.” Lord Jon Connington breathed out, eyes wide as the documents he’d been reading
slipped from his nerveless hands. “And Dark Sister. By the gods…it can’t be.”

“There’s more.” Tristan Rivers held up a pair of golden objects: one a slim golden crown embossed with the three-headed dragon and inscribed inside the band and the other a pendant again of the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen. “Though none of us can read the markings inside the crown.”

Holding out one elegant hand, Aegon motioned for Tristan to hand over the circlet, studying the markings intently as he moved under a torch for more light.

“Can you make it out?” Strickland asked, eyes watchful on that handsome Valryian face.

“Of course.” Aegon answered simply. “It’s worn down from wear but still…” He titled the crown, for that was what it was to his eyes, and squinted his purple eyes, made all the richer in color for the return of his silver-gold hair as Jon Connington had finally acquiesced to him forgoing the blue dye.

“What is it?” Rivers leaned forward in eager curiosity. “What does it say?”

“It’s High Valryian.” Aegon deciphered after long moments where Jon, recovering from his shock, returned to pawing through all of Mopatis’s correspondence. “It says: Princess Daena Targaryen, beloved daughter of King Aegon Targaryen, third of his name, in the year after conquest one-hundred and forty-five.”

He breathed out, head whipping over to stare down at the shattered man at their feet. “By the gods.” Aegon’s voice was little more than a whisper. “It’s the crown of Daena the Defiant, and that her pendant gifted to her by her father the King. Targaryen relics belonging to the mother of Daemon Blackfyre.”

Aegon set the crown down with gentle and reverent hands beside the resting Blackfyre and Dark Sister, motioning for Tristan to do the same with the pendant, before crouching beside Mopatis and cutting away the tight gag.

“Now.” His voice was as hard as his sword and just as sharp. “You’re going to tell me, Magister Mopatis, just what you have been up to.”

The leaders of the Golden Company sat hard on the plush cushions of Illyrio’s manse, Connington and Aegon joining them, after Mopatis wound down from his confession.

“So.” Aegon’s voice and face were flat, all emotion tucked away and hidden until he was in private and could express it as he saw fit. “I’m a Blackfyre after all. And a Targaryen from a bastard line twice over.” His chuckle was mirthless at the irony. “I’ve probably got more dragon-blood running through my veins than any Velaryon or Celtigar or Lysene whore.” He rested his head back against the lush chair he occupied. “But none so much as my royal cousins or even the youngest Baratheon brother.” He set his jaw and said what all were thinking. “And I’ve no legitimate claim to the Iron Throne for all the ‘Fire and Blood’ running in my veins.”

He rubbed his thumb over the dragon pendant he’d picked up halfway through Illyrio’s recitation of his plots and actions: son of a Blackfyre, married the bastard daughter of the Brightflame, scheming and scrapping to put his trueborn son, to put Aegon on the Iron Throne.

And more…much, much more all corroborated by the missives and letters both written and awaiting sending and received that Lord Connington had found in Mopatis’s rooms.
“That’s true enough.” Connington leaned forward, face showing that he was yet deep in thought and trying to see a way clear through the mess Mopatis had made. “But you are still a Targaryen by blood. If you support your distant cousin’s claim, both with men, and deeds, and gifts, there will still be a place for us in Westeros if Jon Targaryen is anything like his father before him.”

“Aye lad.” Strickland bolstered the sixteen-year-olds spirits in his gruff way, emphasizing his words with a rough jab to Aegon’s lean shoulder. “Nothing wins the favor of a king like conquest. We help him win what’s his, and he’ll make a place for us.”

“Return the ancestral swords of House Targaryen.” Lysono suggested in his wily way. “For such a gift even Tywin Lannister would give a ransom of gold.”

“Besides all that.” Rivers cut to the meat of the matter, as he preferred. “You’re family to him, young Griff. And if there’s one thing a dying dynasty values above all else it’s family.”

“Then we’re agreed?” Aegon met each man’s gaze in turn, his shoulders lifting and squaring. “We’ll still try for it?”

“Aye.” Came the resounding cry.

“If Mopatis is right,” Connington said, rubbing at his chin and thinking on what they’d learned. “It seems that there’s a Dornish prince in the Stepstones in need of some help. I think Bloodstone is just the place to start with the Golden Company’s support of the conquest of Jon Targaryen, the first of his name.”

The bleached-bone white walls of the forgotten city newly-dubbed Vaes Tolorro soared high above the bent silver-gilt head of Daenerys Targaryen, khaleesi and Princess of Dragonstone.

It had taken them almost two turns following the red comet across the desolate Red Waste to reach the abandoned city, losing many of the weaker members of the khalasar along the way as Jorah had warned her was probable with food and water scarce in the desert beyond what they were able to carry with them from the greener fields of Lhazar.

Now both the khaleesi and her dragon offspring as well as the remnants of her people, numbering a mere four hundred men, women, and some of the strongest children in total were waiting and recovering from the long, slow trek across the barren red sands as her three strongest blood riders rode out towards each of the distant points save for whence they came, looking for somewhere, anywhere that the remnants of the khalasaar could travel to without further decimating their numbers or wandering right into the waiting swords of the remaining Dothraki khals.

Daenerys might be willing to risk her people, but she would never risk her dragon-children who had suckled at her swollen breasts, taking in the milk that had been meant for Rhaego her lost son.

And she was very well aware that if she made the wrong decision about where to go from Vaes Tolorro, death could well be the best of possible outcomes awaiting them.

Before she could brood any longer, a cry from Jorah had her sitting forward and turning toward his voice, hand rising up to shade her violet eyes.

“Khaleesi!” Jorah cried out, the knight dashing toward her full-tilt across the sand from the ruins of the tower he’d been keeping watch in, one hand pointing to a shadow that had Daenerys checking at once to see if her children were still slumbering in the shade beside her. That shadow coming from the West was far too large to be a mere bird, even one of the large scavengers that preyed on the

“I see it Jorah.” Daenerys called back calmly, swallowing down her own fear in the face of her people’s apprehension. “I see it.” She whispered to herself as her children stirred and cried, Drogon flying up to perch on one of the bleached-white monoliths of the abandoned city while his smaller siblings Viserion with his cream and gold markings and Rhaegal with his green and bronze either crowded into her arms or balanced on her shoulder.

And as it flew closer, so did her people.

Massive, even at this distance, and blending in well with the sky, was a fully-grown and fledged dragon, who in comparison to her own children showed her just how small her hatchlings were.

Drogon, her fiercest and most aggressive offspring, spread his wings and roared in defiance at the approaching beast.

Only to be answered with a clear and frightening reprimand moments later, the mostly blue and grey dragon roaring in reply before diving down with an inward snap of its wings and landing with a resounding thud against the sand mere feet from Daenerys and her dragon-children. It studied her, and she knew dragon-fear for the first time, before opening its maw once more and bellowing another roar, answered in turn by all three of her hatchlings.

“Khaleesi.” Jorah’s whisper as fraught with straining fear and disbelief to her ears.

Daenerys blinked. “I see him, Jorah.” She repeated only to shake her head as the dragon melted away and a man stood before her. “But I’ve never heard of his like before. Not in any of the tales.”

“No.” The stranger-who-was-a-dragon commented in High Valyrian, amusement plain in his jewel-green eyes. “You wouldn’t have. I’m afraid Princess, that I’m the only one of my kind in this world…so far as I know.”

“And who am I speaking with?” Daenerys answered, holding onto her calm dignity by her fingertips, ignoring the shock reverberating through her people as well as herself. Her children sensed her unease and hissed softly, though even Drogon didn’t dare to roar or spit his small flames at this man…creature…whatever he might be.

Even hatchling dragons had more sense than that.


“Nephew?” Daenerys lost a little of her composure at that, her hand faltering from where it was passing soothing strokes down Viserion’s back. Regaining herself she answered. “I have no more family, Lord Potter-Black. Explain yourself.”

“With pleasure, Princess.” Harry gave her a soft, understanding look before flicking a knowing glance at the people around them. “But first, a bit of privacy is in order…”

…

Harry found Essos fascinating as he flew from Dragonstone after making sure it was cleared of Stannis’s household following his meeting in King’s Landing, across the Narrow Sea.

He wished he had time to stop and land more often than merely to take rest breaks or to eat.
Everything was at once more civilized and yet wilder than Westeros, as well as being much more spread out. There were a few clusters of neighboring cities or city-states from what he’d seen, but the leagues between one cluster and the next or even a larger stand-alone city were massive, most being a thousand leagues or more between each “civilized” pocket of society, and each as different from the next as they were from Westeros itself. He’d flown over Myr and Lys, coasting high above the clouds over the disputed lands, before continuing East as his tracking spell demanded. There had been a scattering of cities all around the ruins of Old Valyria – a place his instincts tugged him towards quite sharply. Harry had made certain to carve some anchoring runes into a few places surrounding the former empire, fully intending to come back and explore what had his magic so excited about the ruined country.

The anchoring runes would allow him to easily lock onto his Apparation or port-key destination without having to worry about interference from anything between his starting and ending points, such as another follower of the R’hllor dabbling in shadow-binding.

Harry had mostly defanged Melissandre but that didn’t mean she was the only member of the Red god’s clergy capable of magics that could cause him problems mid-travel.

Slaver’s Bay had filled him with nothing but disgust.

He’d thought the Ironborn had been bad with their captive-taking, but it was nothing compared to the human trafficking practiced by the remnants of the Ghiscari empire.

It had taken much of his iron will to keep himself from doing something…regrettable…to the ‘Wise Masters’ in Astapor.

A situation to tackle another day, once Jon’s rule of Westeros was secure.

Then Harry could come back in his dragon form and break the back of the slave trade in Essos.

But his spell tugged him farther East and farther East he had flown. Days and nights passed swiftly with him making rare stops to carve anchoring runes or check his tracking spells. It didn’t slip by as fleetingly as his flight over Westeros had, but still time flew all too fast.

And then he found himself winging his way over a vast Red desert, one so large that he’d flown as high as he dared to take in the true scope of it.

If his spell wasn’t fixed on finding a live person, he would have assumed he had wasted his time tracking a corpse, so low was the chance that anything could survive a desert that large other than skirting the edges, which his spell made clear Daenerys and her people hadn’t done.

Though why they had travelled into the desert or perhaps what had chased them there was a matter of great concern to the wizard.

There were many motivations behind Harry’s trip across most of the breadth of Essos…and only a fraction of them actually had to do with locating Jon’s Targaryen blood-relatives. When he set wing from Dragonstone he would have said it was half of his reasoning behind his trip. But with all that he’s seen…bringing Jon’s aunt and possible-brother/possible-cousin back into the fold was far less engrossing and all-encompassing a task as it once was when faced with his magic running wild in the air over the continent and without him using the iron-will and hardhead he was once fames for, his return to Westeros would have been delayed significantly…if indeed, he’d managed to return at all.

Whatever or whoever had chased Daenerys and her dragons into this desolate wasteland could be
another block dropping into his path, yet another thing he will have to overcome before returning to his lovers and betrotheds.

His conscience demanded he *do something* about Slaver’s Bay and the slave-culture that remained in parts of Essos in large fashion among the remnants of the Ghiscari Empire.

His magic urged and taunted and *seduced* him to either Old Valyria or someplace…*else*. A someplace even further East. He could almost *taste* his tri-fold nature: Light/Potter, Grey/Peverell, and Dark/Black tugging him hither and yon to where each felt the deepest *Call*. His Potter side, carefully cultivated for years by Dumbledore and the Weasleys, wanted him to go back to the Far North and the Land of Always Winter, taking up his wand and sword against the *Others*. Then there was his Grey side that he attributed in great part to his basic core nature, from the most powerful lineage he could claim in his old world. The Peverells were, as Ollivander would say, both terrible and *great*, shunning no source of power or might in favor of another, leading to such achievements as giving rise to the legend of the Three Brothers but *also* managing to befriend Death itself. Grey-Harry *yearned* to land in Old Valyria, his ability to see and sense and *know* power amplified by there being so very few great sources of it in his new world. And the power-seeking Peverell in him *knew* that there was power to be found in Valyria.

It was his Dark side, as ever, that gave him pause.

Harry could almost *feel* his Black heritage, reinforced by Sirius’s blood-adoption, sit up and take notice of the Red Woman when he faced her on Dragonstone.

There was a deep *Darkness* in her that he’d been alternately drawn to and utterly repulsed by, sensing it came from not only Darkest magics but tainted sacrifices and blood magics. Black magics, like those his third family had become infamous for using and knowing, tugging and pulling at his senses. Harry had done some research on the “Red Woman” since he banished her to assist in the fight against the Others, and in all the whispers two remained the same: shadow-binder and the land of Asshai which dwelled in the Shadow Lands at the Far East of the known world, the closest living settlement within leagues of the cities of the dead and Stygai.

Oh, yes, Harry knew at last what was urging in him on, drawing his inner eye towards Essos, and tempting him to continue ever eastward and to abandon both of his lovers as well as his purpose for being in this world.

Much like the suppressed magics of Westeros, the forgotten Grey magic of Valyria and the Dark magics of Asshai and the Shadow Lands desired to be *used*.

One thing this unwanted attempted seduction had confirmed for Harry, however, was that no matter who or what dabbled and played with magics in this new world, not *one* was of the same kind of caliber as Harry.

Maybe it was similar to how this world was managing quite well for thousands and thousands of years under a feudal system or without the technology that ruled his old world: there just hadn’t *been* a magical era of great growth or change. In his old life, the founding of Hogwarts and the other great schools of magic in the Middle Ages had ushered in an almost “golden age” of magical growth and knowledge. One that both before his sleep and after, he’d never heard tell of being repeated, the magical world stagnating after that one great upswell of accomplishment and metamorphosis.

But no matter what had caused it, Harry found himself at times greatly saddened by the attempts at drawing him towards another path the magics of his new world played at. That magic, which for so long had been his first and only love, to be so *needful* of a single mage to acknowledge it and mold it, giving it usefulness and *purpose* in the current era once more was shocking to him. Harry had
come from a world where magic was prized even by most of the muggle populace for the very idea of its existence. Where it was great and mighty and joyful not suppressed and needing.

Still, with his will and strength of mind and purpose, Harry was able to harden himself against the outside magics, pulling what he needed and no more from the land, giving it shape and purpose: in this case tracking spells and sustaining his advanced flight he used in his dragon form.

Spells that had him flying hundreds of leagues into the red sand wastes east of Slaver’s Bay until his tracking spell warned him he was close to his target at the same time he spied the bleached white bones of an ancient abandoned city – then as he flew closer the tell-tale screeches of dragon hatchlings, a sound he would never forget after smuggling Norbert-turned-Norberta out of Hogwarts at eleven years old.

His inner dragon (that was currently also his outer dragon) reveled in the cries of fear and disbelief the few hundred ragged people gave as he flew close enough to the surface of the land for them to finally understand just what was making a beeline straight for them – and the silver-haired figure he could see from a mile away.

Landing with a thunderous roar, chastising the hatchlings for trying to assert dominance over him, in this form a fully grown and fledged dragon, Harry chuckled a bit to himself over his unerring sense of drama.

Daenerys was nearly shaking at the sight of him and her people – including someone that reminded Harry very much of Lord Commander Mormont before pegging the sandy-haired knight as said Lord Commander’s disgraced and exiled former-heir Jorah – seemed to be trying to scream, faint, or piss themselves at a grown dragon landing amongst them (some trying to accomplish all three at once it seemed to him).

Not wanting to give anyone a heart attack, and it being hard to convince Daenerys to return to Westeros when the only beings present he could talk two were a trio of just-over-two-turns-old hatchlings, Harry closed his massive dragon eyes and shifted slowly back into his human form before greeting the Princess of Dragonstone, impressed almost despite himself when Daenerys Stormborn kept her cool in the wake of her visible shock and disbelief at watching a dragon become a man.

Finally having enough of their eavesdropping audience, Harry suggested:

“…a bit of privacy is in order…”

…

Daenerys and Harry eyed each other inside the bleached-white building the khaleesi had claimed for her own, neither quite sure what to make of the other.

With an almost silent sigh, Harry gave in and took the first – metaphorical – step, opening his mouth and casting a privacy bubble around himself and the Princess of Dragonstone then reaching into his omnipresent pack which was charmed to always remain by his side unless he anchors it elsewhere (while sleeping, in the middle of battle, etc.) and removing a skein of fresh, clean water and a haunch of meat.

It wasn’t the greatest gift he’d ever presented to royalty, but, as he watched the sixteen-year-old Princess gasp in surprise before drinking down several mouthfuls of water before catching herself, eyes suddenly lowering and the back of her hand pressed against her shapely mouth in a bashful move that showed Harry she wasn’t quite the strong Targaryen Queen she aspired to be – at least not yet, Harry thought it might be one of the most sincerely appreciated.
The young girl, who’d rarely been given anything without having to pay an often severe price for it after the deaths of her and her brother’s guards/minders Sers Darry and Hightower, was still there in her veiled eyes as she used a dagger to cut off chunks of the preserved meat and tossing them to her dragons.

They were growing fast, strong, and to Harry’s keen eye, well despite the lack of easy sustenance during the last few turns in the Red Waste.

“Thank you for the food and water, Lord Harry.” Daenerys continued in the High Valryian tongue that the man, sorcerer?, warlock?, seemed to prefer. “It is most appreciative. Fresh water is scarce in the Red Waste.”

“A token, Princess.” Harry gave her a small nod and a soft smile as her eyes flew to meet his at the casual dismissal of any debt being incurred by her accepting the offerings. “No more, no less. And much less than you’re due from what I understand of your life up until now, khaleesi.”

Harry tasted the strange Dothraki word on his tongue that her knight and devout guard had used when trying to counsel the headstrong princess to at least allow Mormont’s own presence in the talk with herself and Harry. He’d never come across a Dothraki or their language from what he could remember. Nor had any ever visited his Tomb in the Hall of Ancient Heroes. The information his link with Jon provided told him that the title was a cross between a mark of ownership as a khaleesi was first and foremost the wife of a Dothraki horselord or khal, and that of status, as again, a khaleesi was a khal’s wife and therefore above the others among the Dothraki and to be obeyed as such.

At least until a khaleesi’s khal died, as Daenerys’s had.

And there, Harry believed, was the problem she currently faced and the issue that had driven her into the Red Waste.

No sixteen-year-old girl Harry had ever met or even heard of would have been content to have her life be over and would willingly choose to join a cadre of widowed wise women because her husband died. In this, Daenerys had acted exactly as any girl with a brain in her head would have reacted: avoiding those wanting to take her off and then running to a place where they would not or could not follow. Harry could see the Targaryen charisma has helped her thus far in her life. Rather than being carried off at once she had to have convinced her late husband’s blood riders to give her time to mourn him, time that she then used to convince those loyal to her to follow her into a vast desert one step up from following her into the gates of hell itself.

Yes, Harry could see that the girl she was and the woman she was becoming were fighting much like the boy and man in Jon and Robb and the others their age were struggling internally for dominance between codes and honor and expediency as the war progressed.

But like her King cousin, Harry saw much of the fire and passion that had allowed Aegon the Conqueror to unite the Seven Kingdoms in Daenerys Stormborn.

The only question that really remained, was whether Daenerys was willing to step back and stop working towards the Iron Throne or whether she was too much a Targaryen to yield, choosing to become Jon’s enemy rather than his ally.

Neither Harry nor Jon would ever be foolish enough to believe, as Robert Baratheon had for so many years, that having a Targaryen tucked away on another continent was a safe proposition for any man or woman who sat on the Iron Throne.

Especially one with a trio of dragons that she was just waiting to mature before she truly made a play
for her father’s lost throne.

“You claim this Jon Targaryen,” Daenerys couldn’t believe the name the man had been given. It was distinctly un-Targaryen. Centuries of naming traditions and her “nephew’s” bearer named him Jon of all things. “Is my nephew?” She arched a brow. “By which of my brothers? If that is, he’s a legitimate Targaryen at all?”

Harry snorted. As if anyone who’d met him since Jon had openly claimed his heritage had any problem believing his claims. The man was a Targaryen from his violet-purple eyes to his warrior’s toes.

“He’s Rhaegar’s son by his bonded consort and second-spouse, Benjen Stark, Princess.” Harry dropped that bombshell on her as gently as he could, his face stoic and voice calm. “His Grace is eighteen years old and the rightful Heir to the Iron Throne by all measures of inheritance the Targaryens have ever followed.”

Daenerys absorbed that blow to her personal ambitions with a bare wince and blink of her pretty light violet eyes. “I see.” It was meant to be a strong recognition of Lord Harry’s statement but instead came at as barely a whisper. “Then the Rebellion against my father?”

“Contrived, as far as we can tell.” Harry sighed, running one hand down his well-braided hair. “Though by who Jon, his uncle the late Lord Eddard, and the remaining Kingsguard and Targaryen supporters have never been able to fully discover.” He waved a hand in a vague motion. “There’s rumors, shadows, whispers of whispers…but nothing rock-solid and certain to bring charges against those guilty of inciting rebellion against House Targaryen.”

She thought that over in utter quiet, broken only by the sounds of her dragons play fighting with each other on the sheepskin rug beside the unlit brazier.

Desert nights were frigid and not kind to creatures with fire in their blood.

“House Stark rebelled against my father, led the Northern forces in the rebellion.” Was all she could bring herself to say after several moments.

For so long the idea of bringing the Lords whose rebellion had led to the death of her family, reclaiming her rightful place in Westeros…it had been all she had besides a mercurial brother who was more often cruel than kind. Now she has dragon-children and more…a nephew, the rightful Heir of House Targaryen. It was too sudden and more than she knew how to deal with. Desolation, Daenerys understood well.

Hope?

Not so much.

Drogo had been her hope, her sun-and-stars.

Then he was gone, murdered by a witch and godswife.

She had promised her khalasaar that she would make their enemies tremble, as well as her own.

Daenerys had had her vengeance against Mizzi Maz Dur, but never against those who had brought her into Drogo’s sphere to begin with.

Those such as the rebellious Lords of the Seven Kingdoms.
Meanwhile her people starved…and how does one make starvation tremble?

“Eddard Stark led the North against the Mad King who had murdered his father by burning him alive and forced his elder brother Brandon to watch and strangle himself in a futile attempt to save his much-beloved father.” Harry corrected her at once, voice glacial. “He had no idea about the bonding between his younger brother and Rhaegar, nor did he know that Lyanna had run away with help from Benjen and his husband rather than been kidnapped. There are many Lords and Houses at fault for the tragedy that befell your family, Princess, including House Targaryen.” He turned gentle and comforting once more. “But House Stark isn’t one of them, nor is Lord Robb, Eddard’s eldest son and Heir nor any of his other children. If it’s punishment for your father’s death you seek,” he counseled. “Then you should look to those who are guilty: the Lannisters, Lord Tywin and Ser Jaime above all others still walking the land.”

“What does my…nephew…bid of me?” She asked with concealed distaste. Daenerys had escaped from Viserys’ controlling hands into those of her husband, and then only narrowly escaped those of Drogo’s blood-riders by entering the Red Waste. She was a khaleesi, though it seemed being a Queen in truth wasn’t in the fate woven for her, she was at heart a Targaryen Princess. Unless what her…nephew…had planned for her was utterly foul, she would at least entertain his demands.

“Jon doesn’t know I’m here, khaleesi.” Harry gave her a small smile, having a damned good idea of what was going on in her head. “Though I believe he suspected or at least guessed I intended to seek you out when I departed from his company as the army left for conquest in the Westerlands. He’s fighting a tri-fold war with the Lannisters on one side, Renly Baratheon and the Tyrells on another, with himself as the final contender for the Throne.” His smile turned dazzling. “And thus far he’s winning. Jon Targaryen will return the Iron Throne into your family’s hands or he’ll die in the attempt, of that I’ve no doubts at all. Though I imagine he would appreciate your return to Westeros and your support to his claim, at the moment, His Grace requires nothing from you, except your continued existence.” His smile turned into a smirk at her palpable shock. “You are his rightful Heir at the moment after all. Should something happen to him before he sires a son, you will be the last remaining hope of a legitimate return to the Targaryen Dynasty in Westeros.”

Viserion flew over to Daenerys and settled himself firmly in her lap, nearly purring when she set to petting him all along his spine from crest to tail.

“And I suppose my dragons have nothing to do with his “appreciating” my return to Westeros?” Her question was nothing short of haughty.

Harry gave a loud laugh, throwing his head back and slapping one hand against his thigh. Really, he should’ve been able to control himself but that was one of the funniest damn things he’d been asked since waking up in Westeros. After a minute or two, he reined in his laughter, bringing himself back under control and shaking his head, wiping away tears of mirth with the back of one hand.

“Princess.” He said after a short cough to get his voice cleared from his reaction. “Unless you’ve forgotten in the last hours, Jon has a dragon.” He smirked, mischief and humor warring with each other for dominance in his dancing emerald eyes. “Me. And in a competition of which is more useful to his campaign at the moment: a trio of hatchling dragons or a wizard capable of becoming a fully-grown version of the same…the wizard wins. No contest.” He shrugged, not trying to offend her but she was still young for her heartache and needed to hear a few home truths. “Jon told me once that dragons won Westeros for the Targaryens.” He cocked his head thoughtfully as they two watched Rhaegal and Drogon tussle on the floor. “And from what I’ve read that seems to be true. But it wasn’t an easy or peaceful victory, and after a number of years shy of three centuries the dragons were gone and the Targaryens deposed.” His gaze pinned her with his intensity, Harry having come to take Jon’s belief about the conquest of Westeros and how it should be handled as his
own. “Your nephew means to take back the Iron Throne through might of arms and allies, not through magical arts or fire-breathing creatures. He’s a Stark as much as a Targaryen.” Harry gave a fond smile that was much more for the missing King than the Princess before him. “And the Starks held the North for eight thousand years as the Kings of Winter. They know a thing or two about how to win and hold a land. The Targaryens weren’t Kings in Old Valyria, and in the end it showed as they made a handful of key missteps in the early conquest and governance that spawned problems which plagued them and followed them all through their rule of Westeros. The second Targaryen Dynasty, Jon Targaryen’s Dynasty, must be different if it wants to outlast that founded by Aegon the Conqueror.”

“You believe this?” Daenerys posed the question with more curiosity than offense. Viserys would have had Lord Harry’s head for the way he spoke of the Targaryen conquest…and its aftermath. But from her own studies, she had to admit that this Lord, and apparently her nephew as well, had made a valid case for winning back the Iron Throne…and the way in which it should be accomplished. “That dragons and yourself have no place in my nephew’s regime?”

“I wouldn’t go that far.” Harry waved off that suggestion. That wasn’t quite what either he or Jon meant with how the King was waging his war. “Magic and dragons both still have a place in Westeros. In fact, it’s my fervent belief that they never should have been driven out or allowed to die out in the first place. The land is magical, it and its people are both healthier when magic is being pulled from it and then returned to it. I saw it for myself in my old world.”

Lord Harry’s gaze and expression both seemed very far away, looking at something that no other could possibly hope to see to Daenerys’s searching eyes.

“…what happens when magic is suppressed and stamped down. When it begins to stagnate.” He continued. “The land and the people suffer for it. No.” He shook his head once, firmly. “Magic and dragons have a place in Jon’s Westeros. And while both or either could help him win it, it’s respect that Jon wants to engender in the populace. Magic can engender many emotions: awe, fear, infatuation, but especially fear.” He reached over and ran a knuckle down Viserion’s back.

“Dragons are much the same. To win the hearts and minds of Westeros he needs to displace the corrupt Lannister court in power and show strength of arms, alliances, honor, and resolve, all without creating the same bone-deep fear that seems to walk hand-in-hand alongside the Targaryen name.”

Daenerys gave him a searching look then said: “That’s why he’s waging a war rather than having you use your magics, isn’t it?”

“You have a perceptive mind, Princess.” Harry tilted his head in acknowledgement of her on-target thought. “I could kill every Lannister by name or blood, end their line, silence every detractor with a spell and put a crown on His Grace’s head, give him the Iron Throne with a wave of my wand and a flex of my will. But…” His smile was sad. “Even I won’t live forever. Then who, once Jon is gone and so am I, will help Jon’s children, and his children’s children, keep the Iron Throne when it wasn’t taken back in a way that the people of Westeros would respect? Fear? Oh yes, I can create fear. Fear, obedience, any and every emotion or reaction under the sun. But I can’t magic up love or respect in a people nor keep them from hating or resenting a King who used me to gain an easy victory.”

“You’ve said much about his plans.” Daenerys gave him that. “And of other things as well. I…” She searched for the right way to voice her thoughts. “I believe you believe your words. That I and my dragons will be safe from exploitation in this war. But what of after?” She asked. “What kind of man is my nephew; not just what sort of King he wishes to be?”

“He’s the best man I’ve ever met, khaleesi.” Harry answered her simply. “If you trust nothing else
I’ve said, you can trust that. He won’t exploit you, won’t use your body to secure an alliance that is distasteful to you or force your dragons to live in a dragonpit. Jon’s a good man, Princess.” His smile was a shade wistful. “If he makes half-so-good a King as he does a man, Westeros will prosper indeed.”

…

“Jon.” Robb entered their private tent on the road to the Westerlands. Harry had been gone a week, and they were making good time in their march to take the war to the Lannister home territory. No one had so much as batted an eye at Jon and Robb sharing the command tent, after all the Kingsguard did as well, and having both direwolves quartered together with their masters at the center of camp made the men sleep easier after many had seen the havoc and bloodshed the massive and ever-growing northern creatures were capable of. “Raven.”

“Thank you, Robb.” Jon said with a small smile taking the missive from his betrothed cousin and breaking the wax seal, reading the contents quickly. His smile grew as the news penetrated his planning and strategy-hazed fog he tended to slip into while working on battle plans and correspondence with the other generals and admirals among the separate forces fighting under his banner.

“Good news?” Robb asked, taking his seat at Jon’s side, giving each of their direwolves a quick ear scratch, Grey Wind staying at his knees for a few extra pats and nuzzles before joining Ghost at the tent flap and slipping out to hunt.

They preferred to absent themselves during the twilight hours to hunt, oftentimes returning with an extra carcass or two between them after eating their fill for their humans to consume. With their wizard gone the direwolves wanted to make sure their chosen companions were taken care of, not trusting either man not to forget to eat or sleep in the rush of planning and preparations. Silly furless creatures that they were.

“Excellent news.” Jon chuckled before burning the missive in the brazier. That particular informant was best to remain anonymous. “Lord Tywin has ordered his army drawn back to Rosby. In the face of having to choose between chasing us, dealing with a siege in the River Lands, or moving to keep King’s Landing from being sacked by the Tyrell-Baratheon alliance he chose the latter.” Jon quickly wrote out new orders for the forces he’d left behind to hold the Riverlands and retake what they could.

Tywin’s decision left him with a distinct opportunity to force the Lannister forces from the Riverlands completely.

“Having the River Lords and Vale Lords move to push the garrisoned troops out?” Robb asked, his guess proof that they’d had a very similar education in warfare under his father Eddard.

“Yes.” Jon answered as he finished writing out and sealing his orders to Lord Yohn Royce who was his general over the Vale forces, a number which had reached thirty-five thousand men, leaving the remaining ten thousand to defend the Vale from the mountain tribes in their absence. Another was written to the Blackfish as the Regent of the River Lands with Lord Hoster dying shortly before the Targaryen army departed Riverrun as well as to the other River Lords. He’d given the command to retake the riverlands, using the time garrisoned at Riverrun to assist with retaking the Trident itself before leaving for the Westerlands. “I’m having the Vale army push the Lannisters back in the eastern half of the River Lands. The River Lords who still live will be able to regarrison and reclaim their lands in that region easily with Lord Tywin pulling back and leaving only enough men to man each holding. Hopefully by the time we’re done in the Westerlands the River Lands will be ours once more in their entirety instead of only North of Harrenhal.”
“Lord Royce is a great man from what father used to tell me.” Robb said, approving of that Lord’s appointment as head of the Vale forces in the River Lands. “He’ll get it done, no doubt. Will your Vale Heir, the Hardyng squire be riding with them?”

“He is.” Jon sighed, thinking about that tenuous situation. “Lady Alys allowed it at my request. Your aunt tried to have him moved to the Eyrie but was refused, with good cause as it turns out in the wake of her adultery scandal and Sweetrobin being declared a bastard.”

Robb ran one hand down Jon’s arm, knowing the cause of that sigh. For all it came during a discussion of the Vale, he knew it had to do with their own Harry. If there was one thing neither of them enjoyed, it was that Harry’s travels took him far out of correspondence range. There’d been no word of him since he’d left King’s Landing.

Though they both would have paid a fortune in gold to be a fly on the wall of the Great Hall when Harry gave his performance. Jon’s spies in the Red Keep had claimed it was a scene for the ages, The Imp vs. The Wizard. Apparently a bard had even written a tune about it which was quickly becoming popular in the capitol much to Joffery and Cersei’s disgust and wrath.

“Something else is on your mind.” Robb knew Jon well, and he knew that look on his face. It was more than news from the Vale or the Red Keep, more even than missing Harry. “Out with it or it’ll keep you from sleeping as you worry away at it like Ghost on a stag bone. And neither one of us can afford to be slow in case we’re attacked now that we’re closer to the Westerlands than we are Riverrun.”

“More news.” Jon held up another letter, this one from Prince Oberyn who had taken command of the Martell fleet in the Sunset Sea and their forces in the Reach after assisting with the siege of Storm’s End. “Prince Quentyn failed in the Stepstones and has been taken captive though no ransom has been demanded yet. His father Prince Doran is less than pleased and tried to order the Martell fleet to rescue him.”

“I hope someone talked him out of that.” Was all Robb could say.

And for good reason. Such a move would have constituted a break in the terms of the alliance between Jon and the Dornish Crown Prince. A devastating loss in the wake of Lord Tywin’s remove from the Riverlands.

“His other son, Trystane and Oberyn’s paramour Ellaria Sand apparently joined forces to do just that.” Jon tossed the letter aside. “I’ve written Doran that I’ll order the fleet to rescue Quentyn after we’ve taken Oldtown. With the fleet and forces in the Reach taking both Blackcrown and the Three Towers in the last few turns, and the bulk of the Reach army moving to attack King’s Landing, we should have the southern region of the Reach in our hands in several turns.”

“Doran won’t be best pleased about the delay.” Robb mused, shaking his head. “But there’s nothing to be done about it. The Reach is of more value than the Stepstones, and Prince Quentyn is only one hostage. Doran has other heirs, including his eldest Princess Arianne.”

“I know.” Jon shifted his weight a bit before rising and cracking his back.

“But…” Robb drawled, eyeing his lover knowingly. “It’s the first real loss of the campaign. The Green Fork was an intentional sacrifice; you knew they were likely to lose. Prince Quentyn should have been able to clear the pirates from the Stepstones with the five thousand men and fifty ships he’d been given to command.”

“Should have.” Jon cursed. “And still failed. Bloodstone is an Old-Valryian Targaryen stronghold:
it should be in Targaryen hands, even more than the Red Keep and Iron Throne.”

Robb restrained the need to roll his eyes. If he had a silver stag for every time he’d heard *that* complaint about both Bloodstone and Dragonstone when they were growing up he could build a second Winterfell. At least Dragonstone had been gained through their Harry’s parlay and subsequent alliance with Stannis Baratheon.

He didn’t even want to consider how…well…*annoyed* Jon would have been if Quentyn’s mission had failed *and* Stannis was fighting against them, refusing to yield Dragonstone.

Robb might have devolved to smothering Jon with a pillow if he’d been subjected to one of his rants about the two fortresses night after night as they marched to the Riverlands and then the Westerlands. It would have been never-ending right up until they laid siege to Dragonstone and took it for Jon’s own.

Small blessings.

“What of Harry’s Ironborn?” Robb changed the subject before Jon could delve further into the oncoming rant about Bloodstone. “And their assault on the West and the Reach?”

“Hit-and-miss information.” Jon admitted, worrying his bottom lip between his teeth as he spun on his heels to face his betrothed. “Some reports have them as far south as the Shield Islands, but several have stated that the bulk of the fleet under Euron and Asha Greyjoy have taken Faircastle. They’re raiding the Westerland coastline well from all reports, but only the one holding has been confirmed as taken. If Euron follows Harry’s orders, then the Crag should be next and it’s possible they might join us in taking Ashemark if we make good time against the Golden Tooth.”

“And Victarion Greyjoy?”

“Raiding the Reach as far as the reports go, diverting his ship and those with him southron instead of attempting a raid on Lannister holdings for some reason known only to him.” Jon ran a hand through his hair in agitation. “I wish Harry were here to deal with his Ironborn if nothing else.”

“He’ll be back soon, love.” Robb gave his betrothed a smile, rising and wrapping the other in a hug before ushering him over to the table that had been waiting for Robb’s arrival before they sat down to eat before retiring for the night. “A week at most. Then you can rail at him all you want for being gone too long and leaving you to deal with his hard-headed Ironborn.”

…

“There’s twenty or so Dornish ships anchored on the western side of the Stepstones, Aegon.”

Lysono reported as the Golden Company’s leaders gathered in the captain’s quarters of their flagship. “And rubble and ruins from a recent fight, including over a dozen sunken Dornish ships.”

“Not the Red Viper’s men then.” Harry Strickland pointed out, knowing that Oberyn knew better than to sail into a pirate’s trap. “Word has it that Dorne has allied with Jon Targaryen and has from the first. And the Targaryens have always been after the Stepstones because of Bloodstone Keep. As were the Blackfyres, once upon a time.”

“Well, Aegon?” Lord Jon Connington asked with faux-idleness. This was Aegon’s first test as the Golden Company’s employer/commander. He’d fought among them, even given input in meetings like this, but never had it been on his word alone that the Company entered battle. “Do we still sail through to the Reach or do we stop and take the Stepstones first?”

Aegon studied the map of Westeros that showed, as far as their contacts could tell them, the current
troop and army positions of the three warring factions.

“Do we know who might have been in charge of taking Bloodstone?” He asked in turn, thinking hard.

“Not as such.” Lysono replied, the spymaster having the best idea of any of them about such things. “But word has it Quentyn Martell has been gone from Sunspear along with Oberyn and several of his Sand Snakes. The Princess Arianne has been in a rage over her brother’s absence, accusing Doran of favoring Quentyn for the throne of Dorne.”

“So if it wasn’t Oberyn…” Aegon made the logical leap from what Harry said about the Red Viper and Lysono’s report. “Then Quentyn would be the one most likely to have fallen prey to the current pirate lord of Torturer’s Deep.”

“It’s possible, aye.” Strickland agreed. “If they took one of the Dornish Heirs then it would explain why their ships are hovering close but not engaging. Waiting for ransom demands most like.”

“Then…” Aegon gave a slow, wicked smile. “Perhaps we might go and liberate this Dornish princeling from his captivity…and buy ourselves some good-will with both Prince Doran for saving his son and my cousin for taking the Stepstones out of pirate hands while we’re about it.”

...

It was a hard, blood-filled fight that Harry Apparated into.

He’d left Daenerys after supplying her with a Port-Key that would take her to Dragonstone and alert him once used after speaking his piece and doing what he could to keep anymore of her small khalasaar from dying of hunger or thirst, making the trip back west in jumps from city to city over the vast Essos landscape.

Once he hit Tyrosh, however, he got that tingling deep in his veins once more, his magic pulling him south towards Dorne and the Stepstones rather than continuing northwest.

He hadn’t been actively looking for the Golden Company and the last Targaryen that was said to ride with them, but when he felt the call, he cast a tracking spell for close of Jon’s paternal line, getting a response much closer than Daenerys who was still waiting in Vaes Tolorro for some reason.

A pull that he quickly realized had to do with the man known as Aegon…a young man who was supposed to be in Myr with his minder Lord Jon Connington…not running around the Stepstones with the Golden Company and laying siege to the Targaryen fortress of Bloodstone.

But as he was running around causing bloody mayhem in the Stepstones…and Harry happened to be in the area…it made good sense to seek him out while he had the opportunity.

Maester Aemon may have him down as being of Blackfyre lineage but if the young man didn’t know that then he still might make an attempt to claim the Throne…no matter how short-lived Harry would ensure such an attempt would be.

And as Jon was nowhere in sight and this wasn’t – technically – part of his campaign to claim Westeros there was nothing to prevent Harry from having a little…fun…with the pirates and outlaws the Golden Company – who were rather noticeable with their visible wealth and golden adornments – were currently battling for some reason Harry was sure Jon could explain to him when they meet up again.

With a smile that was nothing less than malicious, Harry called up the Sword of Gryffindor with his
left hand and conjured his cat-o-nine fire whip with the Elder Wand in his right hand, cutting a deadly swathe through the slavers, outlaws, rapists, and murderers who called Torturer’s Deep their home.

…

Aegon and the other leaders of the Golden Company’s vanguard fought their way through the belly of Bloodstone – the fortress as opposed to the island that had been named for it – as Lysono led another incursion force to find the prisoner holding cells in the dungeons below their feet.

The pirates fought dirty and well, but in the end were no match for the pure precision and training of the Golden Company, Aegon and the vanguard easily punching through the series of portcullises and murder-gates protecting the current “pirate-lord” of the Stepstones, their armored elephants included in their removal from Essos for just such an occasion. The ability of the Golden Company to take a fortress was one of the reasons they were so feared in Essos…and why only one single client had ever failed to pay them, the sell-sword company using the same techniques on that unfortunate city as they used to break down the protections at Mopatis’s manse and now at Bloodstone. Given a reason and an opportunity, there wasn’t a castle, fortress, or keep that the Golden Company couldn’t take.

It was pitched battles against superior numbers in which their weakness lay.

They could take or hold any fortified position, but against an army such as the three rallied by the contenders to the Iron Throne, even the Golden Company would falter without outside support.

Reaching the black-iron-banded double doors that led into the Lord’s chambers, the most highly-fortified rooms in Bloodstone according to the writings surrounding the ancient fortress, Aegon called for the Breakers, a specialized squad of the tallest and strongest men in the Golden Company who together carried and used a massive battering ram to break down any door once the Company had penetrated a fortress’s outer fortifications.

“Take it down.” He ordered the Breakers, he and the rest of the van moving to flank the squad and move in to the rooms as soon as they accomplished their task.

They rushed in, half standing tall, half crouching low, prepared for whatever waited behind the now-splintered wood-and-iron doors, Aegon taking up the rear at Tristan’s insistence.

“Come on then!” Shouted the current pirate-lord as they were rushed by his guards, likely the most loyal members of his crew. “Kill me if you can, and take Bloodstone for your own if you dare! As I took it before you, and a hundred pirate-lords before me!”

He was a lean and wiry man of about middle-age to Aegon’s eyes, dark in the manner of a Summer Islander, and dressed in boiled leather and silks, heavy golden and silver necklaces swinging wildly as the pirate-lord faced off against the last of the Blackfyres, each of their men occupied with the others.

“A silver-haired and purple-eyed stripling among the Golden Company.” The pirate-lord commented with a snort as their swords met in a resounding clang, the pirate’s curved blade sparking at the contact with Aegon’s newly reclaimed sword Blackfyre. “And wielding Valaryian steel no less. Must be a bastard Targaryen, then.” The pirate gave a grim smile as Blackfyre broke the guard on his sword, the rippling steel blade coming dangerously close to taking his hand.

“My parents were married, thank you.” Aegon shot back as he dodged out of the way of a swipe from the dagger that appeared in the pirate’s off hand from up his sleeve. “But I’m of Targaryen blood nonetheless: Aegon Blackfyre, scion of House Blackfyre at your service!”
The pirate’s eyes shot wide in shock at that proclamation.
House Blackfyre.
Now that was a notorious name, indeed.
Aegon capitalized on the split-second moment of hesitation caused by his name, in the back of his
mind deciding to remember and use again the advantage he gained from only his name in the coming
battles he faced in Westeros. Dodging forward as the pirate swung wide with his sword, he blocked
a slash from the dagger, using his armored forearm to knock the knife loose and sending it flying as
he gave a sharp thrust of Blackfyre, easily piercing into the gap between leather breastplate and
trousers, burying the infamous ancestral sword of the Targaryens in the pirate’s smooth belly.
Grinning savagely, he twisted the blade before yanking it back, ripping a jagged hole in the outlaw’s
guts as he stepped back and out of range.
The pirate-lord, now silent, dropped to his knees as his empty hand tried to cradle the viscera spilling
out from the wound, blood speckling his lips as he coughed, a nasty rattle in his throat before Aegon
stepped forward, swinging wide and taking his head in an act of vicious mercy.
“We’ve done it, Aegon.” Tristan clapped him on the back, drawing his attention to the bodies
sprawling throughout the room and the slowing sounds of fighting that came from both within and
without the fortress. “Bloodstone is ours.”
Aegon gave one more last look at the pooling blood under the now-headless pirate-lord before
nodding once and striding silently from the room.
He had a Prince to find.
…


Act V - Wyrd

Chapter Summary

Edited chapter uploaded 12/20/16

**Tomb of the First Men**

_Author's Note: I've gone through and fixed a couple of issues with assigning who was actually where on the Lannister/Westerland forces. Such as having the Leffords garrisoning their home of Golden Tooth instead of the Lannisters, etc._

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**Act V: Wyrd**

“Aegon!” Lysono Maar called out to the tall, handsome youth as he made his way through Bloodstone’s great hall towards the stairs leading down to the dungeons. The swarthy sell-sword and spymaster was standing near a small rectangular table the length of a man and half as wide that had escaped the destruction the siege had caused throughout most of the massive fortress. Neither the pirates nor the Golden Company had been worried about collateral damage to the place while fighting for their lives.

And for good reason.

From where Aegon stood, every pirate scum present was either dead or dying of their wounds, though he wouldn’t know how the Company had fared until Harry Strickland got a count from his squad leaders and captains.

“Over here, Aegon.” Lysono waved him over strongly. “We already emptied the cells…and found an extra besides.”

Coming to stand beside the Company’s spymaster, Aegon arched a silvery brow at the sight that met him.

There on the intact table was a man spread out, unconscious. Purple-violet eyes took quick stock, not finding any visible reason for the armored man to be knocked out, but there might be a wound on his back or the back of his head he was missing. He was a pretty man, almost as pretty as Aegon himself was often accused of being by his friends, with creamy-golden skin, elegant features including arcing brows and a thick fan of lashes, plump lips and a riot of ebony hair. His attire wasn’t as rich as that the men of the Golden Company favored, but neither was he wearing Dornish armor like the princeling seated at the man’s shoulder who could be none other than Quentyn Martell or the mishmash of boiled leather and either silk or roughspun that the pirates favored.

He was an enigma.

Fortunately, Aegon enjoyed a good puzzle from time to time.
Lysono spoke after a demanding look from his current employer. “We breeched the dungeons easy enough after gaining the fortress interior and found the Martell stripling as we’d thought. On the way back out we walked into one hells of a fight here in the great hall. He,” Lysono gestured to the sleeping man. “Had chased in and cornered a group of rancid pirates, even for this lot, against the dungeon stair. Aegon.” Lysono waited for purple eyes to meet his gaze. “He was fighting with a whip made entirely of fire, taking out the group before we could lend any aid.”

“Was he injured?” Aegon asked, thinking deeply.

“Not that you could tell.” Quentyn said softly. “He fought like the Warrior himself. Then once it was over and the hall was filled with the smell of burned skin, singed hair, and blood, he lost his stomach before staggering a few paces and passing out.”

“First battle?”

“Not with the way he fought.” Lysono shook his head, agreeing with the princeling’s summation. “He’s a fighter, this one. But a stranger nonetheless. We should keep a guard on him until we know who he is – and what the fuck he’s doing here.”

“Agreed.” Aegon nodded once, gaze shifting from the still form of the beautiful man to the Dornish prince. “Prince Quentyn. You are now cordially the guest of myself, Aegon Blackfyre, and the Golden Company until such time as you can be returned to your men who are floating in their ships offshore.”

“Thank you, Blackfyre.” Quentyn nodded his head genially, grateful to be freed of the wretched captivity his own foolishness had led him into. He should have listened to his cousin when she said it was a trap but he thought she was being over-cautious and had never been fond of the Sand Snakes besides. They both will be happy when the two Dornish fleets can meet up and Tyene can once again become her father’s problem.

Aegon gave a slight bow, motioning to Lysono. “Lysono will escort you to our flagship and let you get cleaned up before we rendezvous with the Dornish fleet.”

Both men took that as a dismissal, the Dornish prince following the spymaster like a duckling after its mother, Aegon’s eyes turning once more towards the sleeping man on the table. A man who according to the others’ words, was capable of great magics in addition to being a great fighter. “Who are you?” He breathed, bracing his hands against the table and leaning in close to inspect the still face.

As if sensing his regard, a pair of eyelids snapped open, pinning him in his too-close place with the emerald-green orbs that were revealed, the sharp point of a dagger to his belly freezing him when he would have moved – though forward to take those tempting lips or back out of the man’s personal space, Aegon could not say.

“My name is Harry.” Came the silky answer tinged with an accent as intriguing as the man. “Who the fuck are you?”

…”

Eyes snapping open and staring up into violet-purple eyes, Harry felt an incredible sense of déjà vu.

Blinking rapidly, he took in the silvery eyebrows and silver-gilt hair surrounding those infamous eyes, the spectre of the Tomb melting away as he realized this wasn’t Jon and he wasn’t just waking from his enchanted sleep. No. Whoever this was – and however he ended up laying on a stiff slab
eerily reminiscent of his coffin – they looked more like the lovechild of his lover and a Veela…if such a creature actually existed in his new world which he was pretty certain they didn’t. But that silver-gold hair, pale-gold skin, and bright purple eyes coupled with pretty features that put both Jon’s and Harry’s own to shame didn’t help with the impression of beauty that was both unmistakably familiar and unbearably other-worldly.

Breathing in the scents of death, blood, and burned flesh, Harry flexed the wrist of his off-hand and sent his favorite dagger sliding down into his palm before pressing the tip of it into pretty-boy’s abdomen, searching his mind to try and figure out where he was and what he was doing here.

He remembered fighting his way through the pirates, even stopping to assist their opponents every now and again, before following a group of them inside the wide-open doors of the fortress. The very last thing he recalled were the scents of burning death and blood overwhelming his senses after he’d taken care of his current opponents. He’d hunched over and lost his breakfast, briefly meeting the gazes of a stunned group of men, then he got dizzy and stumbled away.

At that point he must’ve lost consciousness, but that didn’t explain why he was laid out on what he could now see was a table that escaped the siege mostly intact or why pretty-boy was hovering very-much-too-close to his sleeping self.

Leading to his barked question as said man froze at his awakening and the dagger to his stomach: “Who the fuck are you?”

…

Aegon moved his hands up in the time-honored “no-harm” position, watching the poison-green gaze of the beauty, knowing full-well that he’d read the coming thrust of the blade in those deep pools much sooner than he would by keeping his eyes on the razor-sharp edge a fraction away from drawing blood and burying itself in his belly.

“Aegon.” He kept his voice calm and steady. This man, beautiful and deadly or not, had fought for them for some reason before losing consciousness. He didn’t want to startle him into making a mistake both of them wouldn’t live to regret. “Scion of House Blackfyre. And you?”

Harry let out a silent breath in relief. The last thing he remembered before waking was tossing his cookies towards the end of the battle and then everything going dark. Having someone loom over him when he woke wasn’t his favorite method of regaining consciousness…unless the person was one of his lovers with dirty thoughts on their mind. That he’d somehow (**cough**Potter-Luck**cough**) been woken by one of the “missing” Targaryens was nothing less than a relief…so long as Aegon didn’t have burning him at the stake in mind after his blatant use of magic during the siege of Bloodstone.

“Harry.” He offered in turn, sheathing his dagger and allowing Aegon to step back, swinging around to sit up fully and face the other as the too-handsome man sat back in a nearby chair. “Potter-Black. Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands, Lord of Winter and the Fist, Lord Reaper of Pyke – to start.”

His new acquaintance arched a brow at that. Aegon had heard of the coup on Pyke, hells, Lysono was so damned good at being a spymaster that he probably knew within hours of the whole affair let alone weeks later. But that this Lord Harry laid claim to lands beyond the Wall…well…that was an interesting tidbit all on its own.

“My friends and men tell me that you fought hard during the siege.” Aegon said at last, leaving his curiosity over the Lordship claim aside for the moment. “Using both a sword and a whip fashioned
of fire…right up until you lost consciousness.”

“That’s one way to put it.” Harry commented with a laugh and a shake of his head. “Passed the fuck out I did. One moment fine the next losing my stomach and waking up with a silver-haired Targaryen looming. It’s enough to drive a man to drink.”

“Thank you for your help regardless.” Aegon insisted, waving off Harry’s joking self-derision. “Bloodstone is taken, my men are clearing out the rest of the pirate nests in the Stepstones, and a Dornish Princeling has been rescued. Not a bad undertaking to join up with…though one does wonder what the Lord of the Iron Islands and rumored right-hand of King Jon, the first of his Name, is doing in the Narrow Sea instead of marching for the West with the rest of the combined Targaryen Army?”

Harry gave him a crooked half-grin at that, looking up from digging in his cloak for the two sacks he carried when he didn’t want to stick out – or any more than normal – around others in the current epoch. It was strange, how seeing him do normal or commonplace things such as carrying around and using a water-skin or eating dried fruit and meat, seemed to reassure the people he came in contact with. As if before seeing him act like any other soldier or knight or even Lord would act, they all thought him some kind of deity who was above urges everyone else dealt with like hunger or thirst.

It often made him wonder if that was one of the reasons Dumbledore – for all his faults – had always been so intractable over eating with the students in the Great Hall of Hogwarts.

There was something to be said for watching a would-be idol take the time to fashion their cup of tea just to their liking or try and steal the plate of bangers from their neighbor that lifted much of the illusory veil of mystery that cloaked “higher” beings like teachers, headmasters, and even generals and kings.

Knowing that the man in charge of an entire war effort had a taste for lemon-flavored everything had been oddly comforting in some of the darkest days at Hogwarts, and Harry firmly believed that supping with Jon and the rest of the Lords when they were encamped served the same purpose to the Army. Men may fight and die for ideas or ideals, but when push came to shove, they did it easier and with lighter hearts when they knew that those who directed their lives were every bit as human as the next man. That the man who one moment might order them to their deaths knew what it was like to hunger and thirst.

There was a strange comfort in that. One that crossed boundaries of race, class, and even religion to shelter the hearts of weary men.

Though, Harry had to admit, Aegon looked rather more enervated by his victory than weary of war.

He was young yet, Harry decided. And without the wisdom that came from living in a post-civil-war kingdom. Westeros was weary of war before Robert’s faithless wife birthed her first bastard whelp. It was one of the reasons why he was so quick to usher the battles along where he could, Jon doing the same in a different way. Where Harry’s magic didn’t impress or awe, Jon’s political savvy and birthright held great sway, and vice versa.

Together, with their men, Jon and Robb and all the rest would bring, gods willing, a lasting peace to the war-torn continent. And Harry would support them all he could. He cocked his head to the side as he studied the quiet Targaryen who was lost in his own contemplations. As he wasn’t from the main Targaryen line and had chosen to take the Blackfyre banner rather than attempt the Iron Throne, many would say Aegon of House Blackfyre served no purpose but that of more strife in Westeros.
Many would be wrong.

Harry saw a purpose for Aegon with his silver-gold hair and Valyrian eyes, much like he did with Daenerys. The two of them had the looks that had been tempered by Jon’s rich and strong Stark blood. Look that were the trademark of the Targaryen Dynasty.

One way or another...those looks were as important a marker to the Targaryen loyalists as the dragon banner and heat tolerance. They needed to be bred back into the line, a task neither Robb nor Harry could accomplish. But now...

Now there was a possibility Jon might stomach...

Oh yes.

Harry saw a future for Aegon Blackfyre in Westeros, indeed.

"I've been traveling, gathering information." Harry answered the question that was yet hanging in the air between them as they were joined by the other leaders of the Golden Company as well as the arrived Dornish, the newly-freed Prince Quentyn among them. "I was making my way from Essos when I happened along the sounds of battle and...well..." He gave a blood-thirsty smirk, eyes flashing dangerously. "When I saw who between I couldn't help myself but to assist. Happening upon the Blackfyre Scion was simple good fortune."

Lysono Maar rolled his eyes with a quiet scoff at that, giving show to the incredulity that his companions were all likely feeling at that last tidbit. They’d all heard Aegon name this man as the new Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands, a man that Lysono knew was in fact much more than a title. There were rumors upon whispers upon secrets surrounding the pretty Lord of Always Winter, known throughout Westeros and even much of the known world at this point to those who pay attention to such things as the strong-right-arm of the new Targaryen King.

For him to be away from Jon Stark-Targaryen in the middle of a ruddy war and to just happen to stumble upon their Aegon would strain credulity at best.

Even if they were of a mind to give him the benefit of the doubt after watching him slaughter pirates left and right with their own eyes - or having heard of his deeds from the sellswords that made up their Company.

This was not a man to take lightly - no matter how much his explanation invited him to do just that while at the same time warning them of the danger of riling him.

Harry ran his gaze over the newly gathered men, taking in the signs of post-battle clean-up that told him he’d been out for some time. His brow furrowed at that before smoothing. He couldn't remember the last time he passed out without either a Voldemort-vision or having drank copious amounts of alcohol. He would have to spend some time and meditate when he rejoined his lovers and figure out what happened. Until he was with them once again he simply couldn't afford to let down his guard enough to investigate what was wrong with him.

Maybe he'd picked up some strange Essosi flu...or something...on his travels.

His magic protected him from most illness, it had even when he was a child, long before he became the sole focus of a planet's magical reserves, but it didn't prevent everything.

Wizards didn't suffer from diseases like cancer, pneumonia, or heart disease but they did get simple viruses like the common cold or Wizarding Flu in addition to a couple of nastier diseases like Dragon Pox - and who knew what kind of nasty germs were running around a feudal-era society like the
current epoch? If there was one thing he was glad of it was that his magic and teaching his lovers to access their own would protect them from most of the ailments that ran rampant alongside poor hygiene and faulty nutrition.

"You've taken Bloodstone." Harry repeated what Aegon had previously stated. "And are clearing the other islands." He arched a brow, impressed. "Doing what the Dornish, Lysene, Tyroshi, and Myrish have all failed to do for hundreds of years. Impressive. But what," he asked voice mild, as if completely unconcerned with their response, taking no note of the irritated glances the crack about the Dornish garnered him from the handful of nobles, knights, and vessel captains that had been sent by Doran to accomplish what the Golden Company had done in a matter of hours. "Are you planning to do now?"

"That depends on the King." Aegon gave a knowing smile as his eyes glinted in the torchlight. "Now doesn't it?"

"That it does." Harry nodded his head, turning to stare over at the Dornish. "That it does. Prince Quentyn." He snapped out, voice cold and harsh. "What were your orders from your father and the King once the Stepstones were taken?" He asked for the illumination of the Golden Company commanders, knowing full-well what his lover had ordered.

The newly-freed princeling stepped forward, an embarrassed blush riding high on his sharp cheekbones over both losing his first-ever campaign and having to be rescued by sellswords and the King's paramour. His frame had been winnowed down to muscle and bone by the confinement of more than a moon’s turn in the cells of Bloodstone, but his men who had docked at invitation from the Golden Company had brought him new clothes to replace the stained-and-ripped garments of roughspun he'd worn in his captivity...no matter how loose and ill-fitting they were now that he'd lost much of his lingering "baby-fat" during his stay with the pirates. It gave him the lean and hungry look of an ascetic or a fanatic, his looks needing the softening of the weight he’d lost.

"We were to hold the Stepstones under a Regent." Quentyn's voice was rough and strained from disuse. "Until the war was finished and a Lord Paramount was installed by the King."

Harry nodded, turning back to the beautiful leader of the Golden Company.

"Only five thousand men are needed to hold the Stepstones barring an invasion from the Three Sisters." Lys, Myr, and Tyrosh, Harry Strickland meant with his comment, one hand scratching absently at his beard. "With the Dornish men and our own, we've still over twice that here."

"Indeed." Tristan Rivers nodded his head in agreement.

"And who becomes Regent." Connington pointed out, flicking a hand at the Dornish Prince. "He needs feeding up and the bosom of his family before Doran does his nut."

"Agreed." Strickland said at once. "The Golden Company won the Stepstones for the Targaryen cause not to hand it over to the Dornish."

"In that case." Harry smiled with a flash of white teeth as they stepped neatly into the snare he'd laid for them. He agreed of course. The Golden Company had won the Stepstones, it wouldn't do to turn over the Regency to the Martell boy. "I propose that the Dornish troops remain save for one ship which will escort the bulk of the Golden Company to Blackcrown to join the offensive in the Reach. And that Lord Connington stay both as leader of the Golden Company forces who remain in
the Stepstones and as Regent of Bloodstone until the war is won and Jon is on the Iron Throne."

The Dornish and the sellswords traded unease looks at that but eventually after a cursory discussion agreed with the plan set forth by the King's representative - for they made no mistake, that was exactly what Lord Potter-Black was acting as in that moment. It was an order wrapped in a suggestion to make it more palatable. But an order it was nonetheless.

"I'll inform Prince Oberyn to expect you after you've escorted Prince Quentyn's ship to Sunspear."

Harry spoke directly to Aegon and Harry Strickland, having clearly noted the balance of power the two were managing for the moment. "You may encounter the Redwyne fleet but I doubt it - they're mostly tied up in protecting Old Town and the river-ports leading into the Reach and Highgarden, and are doubly hobbled by hostages taken by both sides of the war. The Martell fleet has control of the waters south of the Shield Islands while my own Ironborn fleet as well as the Targaryen Fleet control the Sunset Sea. You should have smooth sailing apart from a storm or two."

"Thank you for the information, Lord Potter-Black." Aegon nodded his head formally. "And for your assistance during the battle."

"It was my pleasure." Harry's eyes dragged over Aegon's stunning form from silver-gilt hair to leather-clad feet, leaving none doubting that they heard a lascivious undertone to his words. "I will bring your cousin news of your stated allegiance - I would expect a raven from him once you make landfall at Blackcrown."

And with that, Harry spun on his heel and Apparated back to Dragonstone, hitting his knees harshly as the dizzying form of travel upset his already delicate stomach. After tossing up naught but bile and water, Harry banished his sick with a weak wave of his hand before climbing to unsteady feet. "Bugger." He cursed as he shook his head, carefully reapplying the glamor that he'd lost along with his breakfast. He'd made it through that brief council on nerves and magic, hiding his weakness with the glamor.

Whatever was fucking with him, it better leave his system soon, he decided as he strode for the Chamber of the Painted Table to reset the board according to current information, giving him a better idea of where things stood. He couldn't be tossing his cookies every time he popped from place to place or fought in a battle - he'd do nothing but vomit for months if that was the case. He'd get to the bottom of it soon enough but first he needed to rest - a real rest - and food before Port-Keying back to his loves.

They'd been apart for nearly a fortnight; the rest of the night would make little difference...he hoped.

...It was into another war council that Harry found himself walking into the next morning. His port-key from Dragonstone had dropped him onto the bed in Jon's tent, exactly as it was meant to, giving him time to shuck his travel clothes and change back into his intimidating basilisk scale and dragonhide armor before setting out in search of his betrotheds. Some of his news would have to wait for privacy between the trio, but other things he'd found and sought and heard would be welcome in the main campaign tent that Ser Mark had directed him to when the Kingsguard woke from his slumber in the antechamber of Jon's tent to investigate Harry's arrival - and the noise he'd made while getting changed.

"The Golden Tooth is a murder-field." A voice was saying when Harry ducked through the open tent flap with a smile and nod for Prince Lewen and Ser Oswell who were standing guard outside of the campaign tent. Ser Barristan and Lord Commander Dayne were standing at ease behind a seated
Jon and Robb, while the speaking man - who looked and sounded like the Greatjon to Harry's eyes and ears even without seeing the front of the man - stood on the opposite side of the long table gesturing at the maps that were spread out on it before the King and his Lord of the North. "There's no two ways about it. We can take it, aye." The Greatjon nodded before thumping a fist down on the table for emphasis, many of the Northern Lords making sounds of agreement with the statement as the other Lords and Sers watched with careful eyes. "But it'll cost much in men and horse to do it. A cost that will leave us weakened when we move to face the Lannister horde being gathered by Ser Stafford to reinforce Tywin's army that've been pushed back to the Crownlands and will have to face Renly."

The Greatjon sat back down, Harry taking that as his cue to step forward and move around the table to take the empty seat on Jon's right - a seat that was always left open for him at both Jon and Robb's insistence no matter how long he might be gone on his walkabouts.

Many of the Lords and Sers called out greetings, knowing full-well that he'd been sent as an envoy to King's Landing as well as to gather what information he could from his "sources."

More than one Lord was still leery of the powerful creature that was the new Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands. Many of them considered it simple wisdom to watch him with cautious eyes and a trace of fear in their hearts - even ones like the Greatjon who prided themselves on being fearless. He was a warrior of legend, a hero of old and great renown, one who didn't shy away from bloodshed and effectively brought an end to the Greyjoy Lordship single-handed if not that Line itself, there being no heirs beyond a trio of squabbling brothers and Balon's daughter. A wise man would fear Lord Harry Potter-Black. That he was the chosen paramour - and more - of their chosen King only made him that much more dangerous and worth watching.

A stupid man, however, would move to be rid of him.

Thankfully, after his easy defeat of Balon and Theon Greyjoy and his facing the Kingslayer head-on and surviving, there seemed to be a dearth of men in Jon's army who were that stupidly suicidal.

No matter how much they all disliked how favored he was by the King.

None of them wanted to die for mere dislike.

It wasn't as if he was a Lannister after all.

"Planning the attack?" Harry asked lightly after greeting his lovers and their Lords and knights.

"Trying to anyway." Lady Maege Mormont observed wryly. "I don't suppose you've collected any news that'll help in the endeavor after your absence, Lord Harry?"

Jon arched a brow, wordlessly echoing Lady Mormont's question.

Harry hummed under his breath as he studied the map before them. "Not as such." He admitted. "Though I do bear news. All of which can wait while we tackle the problem at hand."

"Agreed." Jon nodded, easily interpreting the look his lover gave him, Robb nodding minutely as well. They would hear Harry's tidings in private before sharing what needed shared with their Lords.

Harry ran one finger along the mountain range that currently separated the Targaryen Army from the Westerlands, an idea niggling at the back of his mind as he saw the problem of the Golden Tooth. It was the only way to move an army the size of Jon's from the Riverlands to the Westerlands without marching through the Reach and up the Ocean Road.
"What if we don't move the entire army into the Westerlands." Robb suggested after a long moment of watching Harry play along the map. As he spoke the idea came fuller into picture from murky memories of traversing rocky paths as Grey Wind. "But take a small force to flank the rear of the Golden Tooth."

"Like how Stannis breached Storm's End?" Jon provided for clarity, brow furrowed. "No one thought of the escape route so no one thought to guard it...is that what you're thinking of, Robb?"

The Northern Lord nodded, tracing a route adjacent to the stronghold that blocked their entry into the Westerlands.

"The Leffords control the Golden Tooth as Tywin’s bannermen, and they haven't bothered to guard their flank from what our scouts report." Robb said, voice low but still easily heard by all in the tent. "Even a few thousand horse could take the Golden Tooth from behind with the bulk of the Lannister forces either guarding Lannisport and Casterly Rock or sitting at the forward gates of Golden Tooth awaiting orders."

"Why would they?" Lord Karstark all but grunted as he caught on to what the Young Wolf was suggesting. "There's no way for an army to flank them."

"Perhaps." Jon mused, violet eyes narrow. "Perhaps not...Robb," he turned to face his lover fully. "Have you a way?"

"Grey Wind and Ghost found it and showed me earlier." Robb nodded, eyes serious and calm. "It's narrow, more of a goat's path than a true road, but mounted horse could navigate it. We come in from behind and go for their bellies while they’re busy guarding their heads."

"Harry?" Jon asked for the wizard's opinion.

"I've never been to Golden Tooth so magical means are out." He said, though he knew full-well Jon preferred to do things without magical aid where possible. It was more a statement for the Lords than his lovers anyway. "But I could lend a little...firepower," his grin was vicious. "To the plan."

"We'll leave you two to your planning then." Jon announced with a wry grin at his lovers who both had a look of unholy glee on their handsome faces. "Once you're able open the gates and we'll lead the army through and come to your aid - if aid is needed."

"Will do." Harry agreed with a cheeky smile and salute as he and Robb stood and went to gather the men Robb would take with him under the cover of the coming night.

"How goes the raids of your Ironborn, Lord Harry?" Ser Arthur called out before the two conspiring Lords could exit the tent.

"Well." Harry called back. "The Westerlands are reeling from The Crag to the Shield Islands. Half the fleet is split between Faircastle and blockading Lannisport. All we have to do is make it there and reinforcements will already be waiting on us. To that end..." He bowed out of the room, Robb at his side.

Jon turned the remaining group to discussing various contingencies for once they breach the Westerlands and discussing the repercussions of Bryndyn the Blackfish and Lord Royce’s victory over Tywin at the Fords, preventing the Old Lion from having the option of chasing the Targaryen army. If nothing else, he'd learned very quickly that it was better to occupy his people with anything, including making plans upon plans, rather than let them get restless. Especially if he wanted valuable hostages like the Kingslayer to survive captivity long enough for Harry to secret them away after
they’d been interrogated and mined for all the information Harry – or others – could gain from them.

The three lovers stole away for a reunion - however brief - before Robb and Harry were due to lead the flanking assault on the Golden Tooth and win passage for the Targaryen Army into the Westerlands.

Harry had Jon inside of him and was pleasuring Robb with his mouth when he came apart, his lovers following him quickly. He collapsed, boneless and stress-free onto Robb's heavily muscled chest, Jon tucking himself into the Northern Lord's side one arm throw over Harry's sweat-slicked back as they caught their breath. Harry dozed for a minute or two before returning to his senses, shaking off his post-coital lethargy and preceding to fill in his lovers on the events of his journey: the visit to King's Landing and less-than-successful parlay with the Lannisters, meeting Daenerys, and his unplanned help during the sack of Bloodstone.

"What did you think of them?" Jon asked idly, one hand stroking down Harry's flank as he turned to meet his little lover's emerald gaze. "The other two Targaryens?"

"Daenerys isn't quite sure if she's a Queen or a scared girl just yet." Harry said after thinking on it a moment. "With the disgraced Mormont at her side I have high-hopes for her rejoining the last of her family and taking the port-key I gave her to Dragonstone. A skeleton guard remains there outside of the Northern fleet guarding the Blackwater. Having the remnants of her khalasar join them would only be a help to bolster our numbers in the Crownlands even if they never take the field."

"And Aegon?"

That was a real sticking-point. Aegon Blackfyre could cause problems for Jon in Westeros, especially at the head of the Golden Company. For all that Daenerys was the "Mother of Dragons" it was the mercurial Golden Company that made the larger obstacle for Jon's rule of Westeros. If Aegon made a grab for the throne despite his assurances otherwise, it would be a headache - and a distraction - Jon could ill-afford with the massive Baratheon-Tyrell alliance still to face and the Lannisters still holding strong - if not as strong as before - in King's Landing and Casterly Rock.

"Pissed the fuck off." Harry snorted, vividly remembering his own rebellious phase at Hogwarts after he'd found out all of the machinations and lies that had gone into his own upbringing. In that, they weren't so different even with one being raised a false-prince and the other a false-martyr. "And seething. But he's honorable, I'll give Jon Connington that." He admitted reluctantly. "He may have lied to Aegon all his life but he raised him with a solid code, a quick mind, and a spine of Valyrian steel. As long as we play it straight with the Blackfyre Scion we'll have nothing to worry about from that avenue."

"Good." Robb said with a sigh, repositioning Harry on his chest to that his boney shoulder wasn't digging into his rib cage. "The last thing we need is another Blackfyre rebellion after scouring the Westerlands and kicking the Lions out of their damned Rock."

“And you, love?” Jon ran the fingers of his sword hand through Harry’s loosed ebon locks. Their mage-lover rarely undid his braid save for during their times of intimacy, not even to bathe as his cleaning charms and grooming charms sufficed in the wake of the restricted resources available at times to a marching army. “You seem…” He trailed off, frowning, not sure of how to put the otherness he sensed to words.

Which wasn’t saying much.
Harry was at times *everything* Other and yet somehow still able to conceal that otherness from Jon’s lords and men. They all *knew*, of course they did, that Harry was a mage and a sorcerer. All of Westeros and beyond knew that by now. They even knew of his being Blessed by the Stranger himself, or one of the Old Gods, or the Many-Faced God, or, or, or, depending on who they themselves worshipped and honored. But his little love had a way of acting so much the warrior and strategist that those who weren’t as close to Harry as Jon and Robb and even the Kingsguard simply seemed to *forget*, somehow, everything else Harry was.

It boggled Jon’s mind at times.

But then he remembered how all his life he’d known that his Uncle-Maester Aemon was a Targaryen of the blood…but no one else seemed to see it at Castle Black, even the Lord Commander who knew of his uncle’s House.

People, in Jon’s opinion, had a way of *forgetting* inconvenient facts that didn’t align with their world-view.

He thought perhaps Tyrion said it best when he’d been speaking to Jon of bastards and dwarves at Winterfell before this all truly began. He’d told him that “All dwarves are bastards in their fathers’ eyes.” Despite women – and the rare man – dying in childbirth every day, Tywin Lannister had hated his younger son since the day he was born a dwarf, despite Tyrion having the same eyes and hair as his father when he was a younger man and the sharp mind and cunning Tywin prided himself on.

Tyrion Lannister was every inch the Scion of the House of Lannister – just as Jon was every inch a Stark and a Targaryen.

But still, Tywin dismissed and belittled him because Tyrion being a perfect Lannister in all but height was inconvenient for Lord Lannister’s worldview.

Much like how the men, even after seeing for themselves Harry changing from dragon to man and transporting captives from the Twins to Castle Black, saw merely another warrior and Lord when they looked at him. The most foolish of Jon and Robb’s men seeing even less than that as they’d announced the match between the North, the Iron Islands, and the Crown. As if being willing to wed with Jon and Robb as their consort made Harry less of a man.

Fools.

Thanks to Harry’s spells they knew that while Robb and Jon himself were unable to bear children, Harry was. A fact he’d known and had shared with Jon when the idea of wedding his little lover first came to him. In Harry’s time, long before he’d been trapped, all men and women – or rather wizards and witches – were tested to prove their fertility when they came of age.

According to his little love, it was so that any marriage contracts that had been drawn up were able to be finalized or dissolved, or in some cases so that a child from a family that had declined in number didn’t tie themselves to a spouse unable to propagate the line in the case of taking a “muggleborn” or “half-blood” spouse outside of a contracted marriage.

Harry was apparently fertile both ways: able to both sire and bear children while Jon and Robb were only able to sire offspring.

Jon snorted silently in his head as he considered the picture of masculine, nearly burly, Robb swollen with child. Now *that* would have been a sight to see. He shifted as his spent manhood gave a twitch of interest as the vision of *Harry* similarly swelled with his heir came to him.
Looking down at a soft huff of breath he laughed quietly, meeting Robb’s enquiring gaze. Harry’d fallen asleep while Jon lost himself in thought trying to form his question. No matter, he’d ask again once his lovers returned from their mission of breaching the Westerlands.

“He’ll be beautiful with child.” Jon murmured, violet-purple eyes darkened slightly with the arousal the thought gave him. “Don’t you think, Robb?”

The Stark Lord gave a subvocal growl at the thought, his more primitive instincts roused by the thought, blue eyes turning nearly black at the idea.

Robb leaned over and met Jon in a dominating kiss, all lips and teeth as their tongues battled for dominance but neither giving way to the other. No matter their status outside their tent, in this bed they were equals – and they reveled in it. Revealed as well in Harry’s playful, teasing submission. Both knew that if he desired their love could likely have both of them bound hand and foot to the bed and demand their own submission in turn – but he didn’t. Harry gave to them, submitting with a gracious ease that stunned Robb at times.

And yet neither fooled themselves.

When it came to their bed, it was Harry who had all the power. He allowed them to take control. He gave to them. And they loved and cherished him for it. For being strong enough to kneel when most men of their time would never be able to do so in bedsport.

“Incandescent.” Robb decided, leaning back from the play of lips and tongue and settling down to steal a nap of his own before he had to lead the vanguard through a goat’s path and into enemy territory. He thought for a moment longer before snorting a laugh. “And cranky. So very, very cranky.”

...  

It was an odd sensation, Jon thought to himself, warging and seeing through Ghost's eyes as his dire wolf companion helped lead Robb and the selected vanguard through the mountain pass to flank the Westerland stronghold.

As King, he couldn't afford to venture out on every salvo, no matter how much he might like to do so.

No, that was left up to his most trusted Lords and commanders like his two lovers. Robb had led the distraction at the Whispering Wood, allowing his main force to break the siege at Riverrun, now Robb was once more moving to out-think and out-flank the Lions while Jon waited to lead the rest of the army once the vanguard opened the gates at the Golden Tooth. It grated at him in no small measure, this infernal waiting.

Yes, he knew it was important that he led the bulk of the army. And he'd be damned if he waited with the rear like Tywin was known to do. He was a Stark and a Targaryen and waiting while his loves were in danger did not sit well with him.

But, he mused as he waited in the quiet of the camp, at least he got to watch them through Ghost, splitting his attention between the quiet conversations being carried out around the fire and the craggy pass the dire wolves were leading Robb and Harry through, the wizard would change into his other form of Stormwing once he had a better visual of the Lefford forces.

The dragon was excellent for speed and intimidation but lacked somewhat when it came to stealth in the night.
Or at least that was what Harry told him when they made the plans for his dragonform to take part in the coming offensive.

The bulk of the Targaryen Army was deceptively quiet at the base of the path leading to the Golden Tooth, just out of range of the stronghold's defenses. The Lefford commanders knew they were there but didn't make any move to come out from the safety of the walls to meet them. Wise of him. However, if he'd had the foresight to at least send out scouts, they might have noted and reported that while the army appeared to be settling in for a protracted siege, in reality they were merely waiting for the signal to advance.

Jon had no problems using the expectations of the Lannister bannermen against them.

Now if only this infernal waiting was over...

...

"What are we doing?" Garlan Tyrell hissed in an aside to his older brother Willas, the Heir of Highgarden. "We're Tyrells." He continued, leaning over to that his lips were nearly touching Willas's ear. It wouldn't do to be found publicly disagreeing with their Lord father.

And it didn't get much more public than riding side-by-side up the Roseroad towards the Kingswood and King's Landing to lay siege to the capitol.

"We should be marching towards the Westerlands to meet and join the Targaryen force, not throwing our lot in behind Renly of all things." Ser Garlan, known as Garlan the Gallant, complained for the hundredth time since the two brothers had set out from Highgarden to meet with their father at his command. "Any why?" He scoffed, rolling his eyes. "So Loras's lover can have a throne and marry our sweet sister."

The knight shook his head as he studied the long line of men and horse. They were nearly to the encampment within a score of leagues from the city, where Renly for some gods-forsaken reason had set up camp rather than strike hard and fast at the city while Tywin was still reeling from his substantial losses in the Riverlands – in both men and reputation. The only thing that made sense to either brother was that the Baratheon lordling was waiting for reinforcements before facing Tywin Lannister and a siege due to losing a great deal of the Storm Lands' support with Stannis taking Storm's End and throwing his lot in with Jon Targaryen.

Which the Tyrells should be doing.

"We're obeying our Lord father's commands." Willas said in his calm and mild way, casting a cunning look at his brother. "And once we have done so we will sway him into doing what he does best: vacillating. Renly's hesitation will play against him here: we only need to convince father to allow us to take half of the Reach men and horse back southron to protect Highgarden from the Dornish invasion on the coast." Willas's smile was nothing short of vicious as his eyes gleamed. "And we will march the army to meet Prince Oberyn...it just may not be the confrontation our Lord father would prefer..."

...

Calling it an ambush would be too kind, Harry decided as he laid down another line of fire from high in the sky as Stormwing.

Massacre was more like it. Or bloodbath even. Either was appropriate for the wave of death he and Robb had unleashed against the Lefford flank.
They'd all been right: they hadn't been prepared for an attack from the rear, the back entrance of Golden Tooth had been almost completely defenseless and what defenses there were fell in mere minutes when faced with over a thousand Northern horse led by Lord Robb Stark and a pair of direwolves at his heels. Harry as Stormwing was pure overkill but it was what Jon had ordered. The Targaryen King wanted a decisive victory in the Westerlands to follow the swathe of broken sieges and the freeing of the majority of the Riverlands.

Darry had been taken back and the Lannister army pushed out of the Riverlands entirely with the combined might of the Northern Forces and the loyal Targaryen and Vale men. The Riverlords had rallied with the reinforcements and together led the charge to take back their homes and fortresses. With the bulk of the Vale and Riverlord forces left behind, the Crownland Targaryen loyalists (those not waiting for the attack on King's Landing anyway) and Northern Forces moved into the Westerlands without having to leave men behind to garrison Riverrun or the other Riverland fortresses such as Darry and Harrenhal.

With Tywin's forces being repelled at the Fords and they had to move back to protect King's Landing and meet the Tyrell/Baratheon army, leaving the Riverlands open to being retaken - and Jon had taken full advantage of that while they waited for the full reinforcements to arrive and for their men to rest and recover from the first battles of Jon's campaign.

Jon had wanted a decisive victory in Tywin's home region...looking over the field of bloody and broken bodies and the fortress that was blazing from Stormwing's dragonfire, Harry would have to say he and Robb had delivered as promised.

Harry himself had landed after shifting back into his human form and slipped through the garrisoned men to open the gates for Jon's greater force before taking back to the skies.

Now the only thing waiting between the Golden Tooth and Lannisport was a scattering of garrisons and the rest of the force Ser Stafford Lannister had mustered which were encamped either at Oxcross or near Ashemark. If he listened hard he fancied he could hear Tywin's teeth grinding all the way from the Kingswood. Harry smirked to himself as he heard his name being hailed by his King.

The day was won.

To Ashemark, and Oxcross, then onto Casterly Rock they would go.

...

Harry landed and shifted back to his human form, wobbling a bit on his feet under the worried watchful eyes of his lovers.

Robb rushed to his side, steadying him with a warm, firm hand to his lower back as Harry took several deep breaths, struggling to hold his lunch down as the same ailment as during the siege of Bloodstone threatened to have him on his knees once more.

"What is it, Harry love?" Jon moved to flank his other side, exchanging a concerned look with Robb.

They'd both noticed Harry being a bit more lethargic than normal, not as quick on his feet or with his tongue for that matter. He'd been almost silent during the council after his arrival and not much more talkative when they'd been alone after reaffirming their bonds. It was unlike him to say the least. Even when doing large pieces of magic, he'd never acted such afterwards.

To men who had watched lord and smallfolk alike taken by mysterious ailments and small injuries, it
was enough to scare them to death seeing their lover so changed without known cause.

Leaning into them and allowing them to bear some of his weight, Harry closed his eyes as he breathed, eventually shaking his head slowly as he answered Jon's worried query.

"I'm not sure." He said at last, his teething worrying at his lip for a moment as Jon and Robb led him towards Jon's newly set up tent.

The King's quarters was one of the first things set up after each troop movement or battle, preceded only by the medic tents - and even that was on Jon's own insistence that the wounded came first. Normally they would be barracking in Golden Tooth after routing the occupying force but...dragon fire wasn't easy to put out by any means. Nor was it kind to walls whether made of wood, stone, or dragonglass as Harrenhal and now Golden Tooth could attest. They'd be bunking under a canvas top and the open sky once more.

Jon narrowed his gaze on his little love before realizing: "This isn't the first time this has happened...is it?"

Harry sighed and shook his head, finally telling them the whole of events at Bloodstone as Jon and Robb joined forces to strip him of his armor, wipe him down, and tuck him into bed after making him have a light snack and some water.

"And have you?" Robb demanded to know, meaning Harry's intention to meditate and discover what was causing his dizzy spells.

"Not as of yet." The exhausted mage admitted around a wide yawn. "Haven't had time. Councils, sieges, battles. Maybe in the morning."

"You better." Jon stated firmly, sharing a decisive glance with Robb over the nearly-asleep wizard's ebony head. "I'm not going to lose my first Consort before I even bond with him because he was being a stubborn mare over a strange illness."

"M'kay." Harry mumbled, turning his face into the down pillows and burrowing in. "Love you."

Jon bent down and pressed a kiss to one sleepy cheek, Robb echoing his movement, before the two of them left the tent and their slumbering lover behind. A look from his King had the Kingsguard Prince Lewen entering the tent to stand guard in the bedchamber portion until the King and the rest of the guard returned. The Kingsguard tended to stay in the ante chamber when all three of their current charges were present, but when only one was kipping in the tent, his guard took up position beside the bed while another watched from outside the tent, in this case Lewen inside and Barristan without.

All of the Kingsguard had participated in the battle in one way or another.

Oswell who had taken to his charge of protecting Robb very well, his dark humor getting along famously with Robb's own pragmatism, had fought in the flanking maneuver along with Lewen who had accompanied Harry until the wizard had taken wing - literally. Barristan, Arthur, and Mark had all stayed at Jon's side during the charge of the army and sacking of Golden Tooth. Once the army had breached the citadel Harry had laid off his fiery attacks and had focused on the Westerland men facing Robb, but there were still many men who had ended up burnt from the flames among their men regardless, Ser Mark among them.

Dragon fire was hard to put out. Handy in a battle but less so in the aftermath as Ser Mark had discovered to his own chagrin. Harry would be upset that he had had instances of "friendly fire"
during the battle but it couldn't be helped. Jon wanted the Lannisters to have a fear of dragons and Targaryens ground into their very bones. To that end, he had finally allowed Harry to use his overwhelmingly terrifying magical form. It wasn’t going to be often that Harry’s powers took precedence over his sword, but even Jon could admit there were times when his ability to create shock and awe came before Jon’s own insistence on winning Westeros back through force-of-arms and creating respect among both the highborn and smallfolk alike.

Thankfully Harry’s sword-arm was nothing to scorn, the mage being just as proficient if not more-so than any of the knights in Jon’s army save perhaps Robb, Jon, and the knights of the Kingsguard… though Jon wasn’t sure as there’d not been many chances to test Harry against the knights of renown. He was always away either healing or traveling to gather information. Jon made a mental note to have Harry duel with both himself and Robb as well as the Kingsguard where the Lords and knights of his forces could watch.

If nothing else, seeing the Warrior-Who-Waits go toe-to-toe with the Sword of Morning or Barristan the Bold ought to silence the detractors who liked to kick up a fuss over Harry’s seemingly “submissive” position within their coming marriage or his magical abilities.

For the love of the gods, Jon couldn’t understand how some of the men thought that a Lord with the appellation “Warrior-Who-Waits” and who had taken the Mountain captive, even facing off and surviving against the Kingslayer, could be a milquetoast.

It boggled his mind and brought him back around to his thoughts before the battle of people being willing to discard any and all facts and evidence that ran contrary to their views of the world and how things should work.

Idiots.

He was tempted to allow them to keep their opinions, knowing that one day someone was going to mouth off at the exact wrong time and have to face a pissed-off Harry for themselves, who would likely shove their opinions right up their moronic asses.

But at the end of the day…he really couldn’t afford to lose any men to Harry’s temper when they still had both Tywin Lannister to meet in battle as well as Renly Baratheon and Mace Tyrell.

The duels between Harry and the Kingsguard would have to do until the throne was won…then maybe he’d finally get to see Harry make an idiotic Lord eat their words in single combat.

"What's the count?" Jon asked of Ser Arthur as the Sword of Morning joined the procession towards the medic tents. It was the first thing he asked after every battle or siege after making sure his lovers and close friends were safe.

Thankfully Cris was still tucked away in the North though he wasn't sure how long he could keep the Celtigar Heir there. Now that the Dreadfort and the Twins have been garrisoned with loyal men he got ravens twice or more a week from his old friend asking to bring a small force to meet them. Honestly Jon was close to agreeing just so he wouldn't have to read the damned things anymore. Studying Ser Arthur as the idea of Harry dueling him played in his mind he half-wished Cris wasn’t Lord Celtigar’s eldest son and Heir. Ser Arthur like the rest of the Kingsguard was looking a bit care-worn from the fortnight of marching, guarding his tent at night, and the recent battle. With only five Kingsguard that meant that only one of his guard was able to sleep the night through every night with having to have two on watch. Jon had demanded that they only have four-hour shifts in the night instead of the normal night-long shifts but they were still showing fatigue. He could use Cris or their joint friend Ser Justin, the Massey Heir on the Kingsguard. He had two slots to fill now that he had Ser Barristan sworn into his service.
And not a candidate to be found that wasn’t also a Lord or Lord’s Heir.

At least not that he could trust.

Knights like Ser Arthur’s cousin Ser Gerold “Darkstar” Dayne or the Kingslayer weren’t to be trusted even if they would consent to joining the Kingsguard. And the other few knights of renown that weren’t a Lord, an Heir, or already sworn into the Kingsguard were either serving in the Baratheon army or among the Lannisters. Men of the North rarely took to the Faith of the Seven and official knighthood, the same with the Ironborn.

Damnit all, he needed two more members of the Kingsguard, especially with making Robb and Harry his official betrotheds.

At this rate he might have to talk to Robb about seeing if some of the Northern cavalry such as Dacey Mormont or the Smalljon might be interested in joining the Kingsguard – no matter the blowback it might cause over them not being official Knights. Lewen wasn’t either and had served as faithfully as Ser Arthur and more faithfully than Ser Jaime.

It wasn’t as if Jon himself followed the Faith, being raised by his uncle Ned and bearer Benjen, both who were devout followers of the old gods.

But it was a worry for another day, as Ser Arthur started speaking, voice firm despite his visible – to Jon who knew him better than any but the other Kingsguard members – exhaustion.

"A total loss on the side of the Lannister bannermen." Ser Arthur reported, eyes grim. "Lefford refused to order a retreat even when it was clear they were routed. Ser Rupert Brax ordered the retreat once the Lefford commander was killed by Lord Karstark in single combat. The path they took will have them meeting with the remaining Lannister force outside Ashemark."

“Single combat?” Jon arched a brow. Lord Karstark had been seething ever since Jon refused to put Ser Jaime to the sword. His two younger sons had faced Jaime and fallen – but thanks to Harry weren’t killed and had recovered and rejoined the army before they left Riverrun. Perhaps he’d decided to unleash that rage on the first Lannister knight he saw, this time Lord Tywin’s cousin rather than his son.

Robb nodded, rolling his eyes a bit, knowing as well as Jon did what likely motivated Lord Karstark. “He’s been better since.” Robb’s voice had a weary tinge. He’d heard all he could stand from Lord Karstark over Jon’s keeping Lannister hostages rather than kill them out of hand. “It seems having his sons survive and getting his fill of Westerland blood has dampened his temper.”

And it was about time something did before the man became a liability they couldn’t afford.

"And our men?"

"Some losses." Robb said, knowing the answer. "But less than a thousand all-told between the van and the siege forces."

"Stevron Frey is among the injured." Arthur added. "He needs seeing to by Lord Harry once he's awake and able or Stevron may not make it to Ashemark alive."

Jon thought on that for long moments as they made their way through the medic tents, bolstering morale and helping where they could with the skills Harry had been trying to beat into their skulls for months. Finally, he made a decision after seeing Stevron for himself. The Frey heir had been a staunch ally despite the wickedness and treason of his family and House. He didn’t deserve to die from a festering wound if it could be helped.
Calling for boiled water, Jon rucked up his own sleeves and prepared to do what he could ordering:  
"Give Harry another hour."  He said to Ser Arthur.  "If he's not up by then have Lewen wake him."

"Are you sure, Jon?"  Robb asked as he washed himself and set to helping the King tend the wounded with ease gained by helping their lover after every battle and skirmish.  "He looked done in."

"It's what Harry would want."  Jon sighed, taking in the wound ripping across Stevron's chest before setting to work.  The most he could do was clean the wound and give it a fresh wrapping.  Anything else would have to wait for his tired little lover.  "He wouldn't forgive himself if men died while he slept and you know it as well as I."

"Aye."  Robb shook his head as he wiped away blood and dirt from the wound.  "That's true enough.  He's a stubborn creature our betrothed."

"I wouldn't have him any other way."

...  

After being rushed from his bed to the healing tents, Harry did all he could to help Ser Stevron.  Fortunately for the Frey scion, all he could was more than any other in Westeros could boast, Harry clearing the infection and sealing the wound, though it took him hours and energy he could scarce afford before moving on to doing what he could for the rest of the injured.  Times like this he was thankful for the quick minds and steady hands of both his lovers and the Kingsguard as they all helped pass out his healing concoction – he still couldn’t bring himself to call it a potion with Snape’s snide voice in his head – and cleaned wounds, doing much of the prep work and leaving him with only the most serious of cases.  The healers and woods-witches who came with the army followed his directions as well, having learned under his tutelage at Riverrun and even the most set in their ways men and women weren’t keen to face another tongue lashing under an increasingly cranky Lord Harry.

For now, the healing was done and the dead had been buried according to their traditions or the bodies sent home under guard.  They were breaking camp in the morning to take Ashemark and Oxcross before marching straight to Lannisport and Casterly Rock to meet with the Martell army and the bulk of Harry’s Ironborn marauders.  He found himself mildly shocked that in the weeks since he’d been made Lord of the Iron Islands and set down his decrees about their former behavior while raiding that there’d yet to be a raider who had disobeyed him.

He’d cast a ward over all of the captains present at the Lordsmeet at Pyke, one that replicated and attached to their crews and from there spread to every captain and crew those met (at times like this he loved the excess magic he could pull from the earth.  He’d never would have been able to do that bit of spellwork if there was an active magical community like the one he’d known in Britain.) Which told him two things either: One, his men hadn’t come into contact with the men reaving under Victarion Greyjoy.  Or, Two, Greyjoy’s men were conceding to his rules…until Victarion or Euron naysaid him.  He knew either of the Greyjoy brothers – or both – would test him.  It was only a matter of when.

Honestly…they were showing much more restraint than he initially thought any Greyjoy was capable of.  Though perhaps it was only Balon and his ilk that were so impulsive.  And maybe Aeron who was still trying to cause problems from Pyke.  Not that the priest was having any success.  If Death’s little show had accomplished nothing else, the Ironborn now had a hefty fear of just who their new lord served.
Sinking down into lotus position after soaking away the sweat and stink of healing for hours on end, Harry sighed and let his muscles relax and his magic connect with the earth, letting himself drift for almost an hour as his magic replenished before turning his thoughts inwards and going from inactive communion to active meditation.

Spiralling both his innate magic and the wild magic of Westeros through him, he sought the cause of his current malaise.

He knew Jon and Robb were worried, it showed in their shadowed eyes whenever they looked at him since seeing his wobble after the siege of Golden Tooth. His report of a worse but similar event while helping take Bloodstone had only compounded their worries. And the Kingsguard and the dire wolves weren’t helping matters with their hovering over him.

It was almost as if they knew something he and his lovers didn’t but Harry couldn’t even come to guess how that might be. Ghost and Grey Wind…now that made a sort of sense. He remembered well that animals in modern times before he was imprisoned were purported to be able to sense illness, even serious maladies like cancer and heart disease. Or they could simply be responding to his lovers’ own distress. Either way, the dire wolves behaving oddly wasn’t so odd.

But the Kingsguard…now that threw him.

Especially as they were in turns attentive and, dare he say it, entertained.

He was tempted to corner Lewen or Arthur and demand answers from them but first he wanted to see for himself if his magic could answer what was wrong with him.

It had never failed him before, even if at times he didn’t immediately understand what he was shown in his meditative trances. In time the answer always became clear. He had to trust that even in a new time and new lands with new illnesses and diseases that his magic wouldn’t fail him.

Breathing in and out in a familiar, rhythmic fashion, Harry sank deeper into himself, finding first his pulsing magical core which had changed when he woke in Westeros from the deep vibrant green it was once upon a time to a bright, brilliant gold, likely the result of him soaking up and taking in the ambient magics of the world for ages upon eons. Even if Harry’s plans bore fruit and he managed to help kick-start a repopulation of magicals – both creatures and people – in Westeros, he rather thought that his core would stay the same. It had simply been too deeply entwined with the wild outpouring of magic for far too long for it to disconnect from it completely, even if there were a thousand-thousand magicals born to help lift the burden of magic’s expectations from Harry’s shoulders.

Magic wanted to be used, it needed and yearned to do something, anything except stagnate and die. It was one of the reasons Harry was so careful to use contraceptive charms on himself when he laid with his lovers. All that excess of magic would make him more fertile than a rabbit after a Beltane ritual. Magic wanted to be used, he could feel it in his bones, and that also meant making more magic users.

And any offspring of himself, even with a completely-magicless person which Jon and Robb were most assuredly not, would be highly magical with his connection to the wild magics of the land.

Contraceptive charms were the friends of horny wizards everywhere who were stuck in a war and not yet ready for sprogs running amok.

Even if he was certain any children of himself and his lovers would be ruddy-adorable.
He sent his magic spiraling through his extremities, starting with the most outside points of his body and slowly, slowly, pulling his magic inward, searching for any anomalies or changes that might be the cause of his current lethargy and, well, *delicate* for lack of a better word, stomach. The dizziness wasn’t exactly a walk in the park *either* when he found himself having to rely on Prince Lewen or a handy bed in the healing tents if he stood too fast after working over one of the wounded men. And the git of a Dornishman hadn’t let him live it down since, the teasing getting worse with every time he found himself teetering a bit on his feet.

The arsehole.

It wasn’t until he came to his hips that he met any resistance.

To be precise: when he felt the pulse of his magic coming into contact with another magical core.

And not merely *one* but *two*.

Emerald eyes snapping open in shock, he felt his busy mind grind to a halt.

Two magical cores were sitting pretty as you please in his abdomen, *exactly* where his womb… er… *sac* he supposed it would be if he’d, in a moment of *idiocy*, had forgotten to cast contraceptive charms.

As his mind and memory kicked back in gear he let out a choked laugh at the irony of his discovery considering the topic he’d *just* been musing over while trying to find the cause of his current symptoms. He flashed to his lovers’ decision to double team him before he’d left for King’s Landing, letting out a hiss as his eyes narrowed. *Those ruddy bastards…* He grit his teeth, remembering as a certain *someone* refused to let him stop and cast any spells.

Magic crackled off of him in little snaps and sparks as Prince Lewen eyed him cautiously from his post standing guard against the interior wall of the tent. Caution that turned to surprise, and then glee, as he caught sight of the look on his charge’s face as the little lord climbed to his feet, one hand resting for a bare moment on his lower abdomen as he stormed out of the tent. Lewen hid a laugh in a cough as he rushed out at Lord Harry’s heels, one thought on his mind as he followed the irate mage…

*I should have taken Oswell’s bet over Harry’s reaction when he figured it out…Ser Barristan’s disapproval or not, it would have been worth it to win a week off night-guard and ten gold dragons…*

As it was Jon and Robb were sparring, giving the men a good show, and Harry one hells of an audience, as they broke camp and waited to move out when a very *irritated* Harry came upon them the morning they were to set out from Golden Tooth.

"You two." He hissed as they both stopped mid-swing at the sight of their lover, hair flying and eyes hot almost running through camp over to them, fury ripe with every pump of his legs and arms. "Are so *dead.*"

Eyes wide, Jon and Robb exchanged a quick glance, clearly each asking the other if he knew what had their lover up in arms. An identical shrug from each was their answer, the whole thing taking less than a minute as Harry watched and seethed, the Kingsguard - including his own who had barely kept pace - moving to prevent any bloodshed. They all knew that the Lord wouldn't* likely* carry out his threat against their King but…the look in his eyes told them not to chance it. Even if their King likely deserved it if the signals from Lewen were right and Lord Harry had finally figured out what the Kingsguard – and they were pretty sure the dire wolves – had known since Lord Harry
had returned from his second round of travels.

"What's wrong, love?" Jon asked, voice pitched to sooth.

"What's wrong, what's wrong?" Harry hissed, almost falling into Parseltongue in his rage, emerald eyes shining like the Killing Curse. "I'll tell you what's wrong. You better hurry this fucking campaign up or change your mind about our bonding date, that's what's wrong."

"What?" Robb started to ask in clear confusion only to get cut off by the infuriated vision before him.

"You ruddy bastards who decided to pounce on me before I left fucking knocked me up." His voice was low and quiet but no less deadly for not wanting to have his current state advertised throughout Westeros.

"Huh?" Was the oh-so-articulate response from the King of Westeros and his Lord Paramount of the North.

"I'm fucking pregnant you irritating twats!" He burst out, the Kingsguard - thankfully the only ones also close enough to hear him exchanging knowing glances as Jon and Robb rapidly lost their coloring turning deathly pale at the surprise news. "I normally use spells to prevent conception since the middle of a fucking war isn't the ideal time for me to bear your fucking heirs. But nooo." His tone was mocking as he smacked first Jon and then Robb in the chest sharply. "You two wanted to play. I will not be bearing the Heirs to Winterfell and the Iron Throne out of fucking wedlock, Jon!"

He hissed glaring. "Either speed this campaign the fuck up or change when and where we're bonding. Wankers!"

He spun on his heel and strode back towards their tent, having left it rather precipitously when his meditation session yielded results on just what was ailing him. Granted, he thought he was entitled to a goodly dose of startlement and rage since having twins wasn't on his to-do list until after the Lannisters were defeated and Jon was ensconced on the Iron Throne. Or at all for that matter, having a multiple birth not ever occurring to him despite it being common among magical bearing males of wizarding origin.

 Fucking fertile wankers. He thought petulantly to himself as he settled back down onto the rug beside the brazier with a pout to finish grounding his magic. And their fucking super sperm.

..."Did he just...?" Robb asked faintly, eyes wide as he stared at an equally-shocked Jon.

"Yes." The King of Westeros answered, voice weak as he gave a slow nod. "Yes he did."

"Are you going...?"

"Of course I am." Jon hissed himself, eyes narrowing as he turned and stared off towards the West and Casterly Rock, ideas already floating in his mind.

"Fuck me." Robb ran one shaking hand through his hair. "Twins, mayhap one each, I don't..." He blew out a breath and tried to fashion actual complete thoughts.

First things first.

Harry said twins, and Heirs to both Houses.
Then it came to him. Harry’d told them when they discussed having children that magical male pregnancies depended on two things: the power of the bearer and sire and the number of lovers the bearer laid with during their fertile period. He’d cast spells which confirmed that Robb and his cousin/lover Jon were both fertile sires. And they were both of magical stock else Harry wouldn’t be training them. That combined with Harry’s powers – which while he downplayed them at times everyone and their horse knew were considerable. Therefore twins and likely one from each of them since the event Harry alluded to had both of them taking him and planting their seed within a short time frame.

That led to other thoughts.

The first of which was exactly how long they had before Harry would give birth...which was their new deadline for the bonding or their little love would no doubt take great pleasure in castrating them.

So he asked.

"How long are male pregnancies again?"

"Depends." Jon said, thinking of his own lessons with his bearer. "First pregnancies tend to be shorter because the body hasn't adjusted yet, and multiples shorter yet. He should be about a turn..." Jon did a quick calculation. "We probably have been five or six turns before we're in trouble."

"That's about right, your Grace." Ser Arthur commented lowly, matching the quiet tones the two new fathers-to-be were using as they huddled together ignoring the avid eyes of the gathered men. "Benjen carried yourself to eight turns which is common for a male birth if a little late for a first."

"There's no way we can take King's Landing in that timeframe, Jon." Robb shook his head. "It's just not possible with the way you've planned the campaign."

"He's correct, my king." Barristan nodded a bit worried, it was a good campaign plan. And they were too deep into it now to deviate over much.

"Damn it all." Jon burst out, throwing up his hands in exasperation. "Then the Great Sept is out...which isn't too big a loss, despite the issues with the Faith and the southron lords it’ll create, I follow the Old Ways and Harry isn't exactly devout to anything despite the Stranger's interest in him. What does that leave us with?"

"Dragonstone." Was Robb's suggestion. "Or Riverrun or Winterfell."

"Perhaps." Ser Oswell's voice was thoughtful. "But there's another option, one that even the High Septon would have problems disavowing...my childhood home."

"Harrenhal?" Ser Arthur arched a brow. It was hardly a cursed castle was hardly a customary site for a royal bonding or coronation, which in this case needed to go hand-in-hand.

"Harrenhal." Ser Oswell nodded then explained. "It has the largest godsdwood outside of the North and with the proximity to God's Eye and the Stoney Sept the Faith of the Seven would have a hard time kicking up a fuss. And since it's already been retaken all his Grace will need to do is finish the campaign in the Westerlands and march the army down the Gold Road. Which is possible within the new timeframe."

"Harrenhal." Jon ruminated on that for a moment before nodding. "An excellent compromise, thank
you Ser Oswell." He said before giving the command to hurry up breaking camp. "After all." He joked, "we're under a deadline now. No time to faff about with needing to bond my beautiful betrotheds before the close of the year."

“Stuff it.” Was Robb’s cheery-yet-irritated response to being called beautiful. Jon only did that shit to bother him the twat. Robb could be called many things with his great height and muscle mass: handsome, masculine, even burly. But beautiful was reserved for fine-edged faces and lithe figures like their little lover or even Jon himself. Not for men who were almost as big as the Umbers or the late Robert Baratheon.

"Are you intending to announce it?" Ser Barristan asked tentatively trying to divert the fight brewing before it could take wing. "Rumor has run rampant ever since you had Lords Stark and Potter-Black share your tent."

"We will." Jon waved a hand grandly. "Before we set out from the Riverlands I ordered ravens and criers sent out to every town and castle in Westeros to announce the betrothal of Targaryen, Stark, and Potter-Black. It's only here among our forces where I've not made a clear statement beyond our night arrangements. A situation that I'll change once we make camp once more. For now, we need to rout the remaining Lannister forces at Ashemark and Oxcross before meeting Harry's Ironborn to take Lannisport and Casterly Rock. Until the Westerlands are scoured clean of the Lion's stench I cannot wed with my lovely bearer of my Heir...and if I don't want to lose my bollocks we better be quick about it."

... Thereafter saw a happier - if increasingly nauseas and cranky - Harry with the news that the often stubborn-minded Jon had agreed to change his plans for both their bonding and coronations. As Sirius had told him regarding his own early birth "babes wait for neither magic nor man" and expecting a pair of twins for a first birthing to sit calmly until full-term would be foolhardy. Harry would sooner force Jon and Robb to marriage at wandpoint than have the children of his lovers be scorned as bastards in this era he'd found himself. Though that resolution came after Harry came to terms with being pregnant during a fucking war in the first place. Especially in the current age.

It was strange to him, this new time.

Often, it was as different from his own as to be a new world, with Harry having no firm grasp on just how much time - or even how many epochs - had come and gone whilst he was trapped in his endless nightmare.

Westeros might as well be a different planet or dimension so separate it was from all he'd known.

If it wasn't for the magics of the world being so familiar - if overwhelming from disuse - he would have thought Death had plucked up his tomb and plopped him down elsewhere instead of him waking elsewhere.

Thankfully male pregnancy and birth was known in this time if not overly practiced as his Jon could attest. And for good reason. Without excellent medical care or strong magic, male pregnancy was exceedingly dangerous. It was only through Benjen's uncle the late Jon Arryn, Lord of the Vale, and that man's insistence on his sister's children having a well-rounded education that included basic medicine and herblore that Jon's bearer even survived to convince his elder brother to join his cause in protecting his son and the true Heir to the Iron Throne.

The gods knew Benjen couldn't trust a Maester after what happened with Lyanna's poisoning.
Most males who give birth only do so once, taking precautions afterwards via a sheath made of sheep intestines or the less-useful method of pulling out during sex. If they survived the birthing that is. Then there were the others that either died to bring their children into the world or who were too damaged from birthing to bear another child.

It was no wonder that male-only relationships had fallen out of favor with the decline of magic usage in Westeros that coincided, from what Harry could tell, with the decline of the Children of the Forest and the arrival of the Andals and their Faith.

Having an active and strong magical core does much to alleviate the dangers of being a male bearer - something that Harry's schooling in Wizarding Great Britain said was possible in a third of the male population, though that number was likely different in Westeros. Magic could help heal its user, protect them from side-effects of illness or injury, and speed recovery. A magical practitioner, or a person with an active magical core such as a warg, was less prone to things like fevers and infection.

It made sense that it was only in the Houses where the Faith had less sway and Maester's were considered more of a teacher for children than a mouthpiece of all wisdom that males were better able to survive a pregnancy, with both the Faith and the Citadel decrying magic and magic usage.

Houses such as House Stark and House Targaryen.

Jon and Robb watched him that night as they camped and he took a deep breath, waving his wand in a series of flicks, curves, and swirls while intoning *Indicium infans natal*, which should give him the most information available on his twins. He'd waited for the day's journey to be done and his lovers to join him before casting any kind of diagnostic. His meditation and grounding of his magics had simply relayed the new magical growth and two cores in his...well it wasn't quite a womb...more like a sac? Yes, he decided. It was more a sac formed by his magic then it was a true womb.

He didn't have ovaries for one thing...or menses.

Or a yoni when it came down to it, hence the need for a caesarian birth.

Magic could do a lot but it didn't go that far thankfully. He didn't know if he could deal with magically growing a whole new orifice because his lovers distracted him from casting contraceptive spells while he was also in "season" for lack of a better term. Male bearers didn't have a monthly cycle like females, instead having a time where their hormones, bodies, and magic aligned just right to make them a fertile "planting" ground instead of having fertile "seed."

Harry was glad he'd paid attention to that rant of Hermione's while they were still friends and going through the wizarding version of sex ed. Gods knew he'd been too embarrassed by the subject at twelve and then during the fertility testing at seventeen to pay attention to Madame Pomphrey. That it'd been an aged witch presiding over both in the first place didn't help matters any.

As he finished the spell a blue light surrounded his lower abdomen to Jon and Robb's visible delight, before separating into a pair of lights, one a deeper blue than the other though both were vibrant and beautiful. Two pieces of parchment popped into being, and a soft whooshing sound filled the tent.

"Is that...?" Jon asked shocked at the sound.

Harry did some quick math in his head before shaking his head. "It's too early to be their heartbeats." He explained as he ate up the words on the parchment with his eyes. It was the results of his diagnostic. "I can cast another spell in a week or two and try again. They should be audible by then."
Now that the trance was broken Robb had a question of his own, one he felt was very pertinent.

"What do the colors mean?" And why was one darker than the other, he wondered but didn't ask, hoping that their little love would answer without him having to prod him.

"Boys." Harry gave them a smile as bright as the sun as proud grins broke out on both handsome faces and he found himself sandwiched between them as they cuddled him and tried to smother him with kisses. Laughing despite feeling squashed he continued knowing that trying to bat them away wouldn't accomplish much in the rush of knowing that they were going to be fathers and their Houses and Lines were secured for the moment. “An heir each.” According to the sires listed by the diagnostic. "Both strong, one a little more magically inclined than the other but both will have power.”

That silenced them for a moment.

Both Robb and Jon had understood in an abstract way that with their own slight talents and inclination towards using the natural magics that Harry was teaching them as well as Harry's own massive well of power that any children they might father with him could very well be magical too.

But having it actually happen was something else indeed.

"Magical." Robb breathed, eyes the size of saucers. "Magical Heirs. By the gods..."

"You'll teach them." Jon said with certainty, seeing the almost-wary look in those bright green eyes. "And with magic they'll live longer, be less prone to sickness, just like you."

"That's right." Harry hid the breath of relief he let out...but not very well. They knew much of his story, and understood his worry, but still if they weren't so ecstatic over their unborn sons both of his lovers might have felt slighted that he thought they'd reject magical offspring. Especially as much as they each loved him and he was as magical as anything in their world save the gods themselves. "And with our bonding you two will share my longer lifespan as well. Jon, love, you could very well be King for two hundred years once we're bonded. Robb as well as Lord of Winterfell. Though,” he gave a wry grin thinking of that old bastard Dumbledore who had clung to his titles until they were stripped from him by either a higher power or death. "At some point you might want to turn over your seats to our sons or even grandsons or great-grandsons to rule."

Two hundred years.

The present but pretending-to-be-invisible Kingsguard traded shocked glances over the heads of the still-talking to-be-parents as Harry went over the rest of the information about their unborn heirs.

This was only the two hundred and ninety-eighth year after Aegon's Conquering of the Seven Kingdoms.

And Harry had just said that Jon could rule for a time as long as more than two-thirds of the length of the Targaryen dynasty.

Even the most devout among them couldn't deny that such a thing was a strong argument in favor of supporting magical growth and offspring in Westeros. Imagine the good that could have been done had a King as great as Daeron the Good or the amazing feats Aegon the Conqueror or Jaehaerys the Conciliator could have accomplished had they lived so long... But then...there was also the atrocities that could follow as well were a Maegor the Cruel or an Aerys the Mad allowed to rule for two centuries.

Though as such things go, a King such as those last two names would likely be killed before they
ever approached such a long life, magic be damned.

Grey Wind and Ghost, with knowing canine grins, came over and shoved their way into the three-way cuddle going on at the bed. It was about time their people realized they had pups on the way. The dire wolves chuffed as calloused hands scratched at pointed ears just right. Humans. Such slow creatures. It was good they had the two of them to look after them, otherwise who knew what might come of them, even the one that smelled of storms and growing things tended to be silly when it came to simple things such as pups, that it’d taken him weeks longer than them to figure out he was in-pup was merely proof that Ghost and Grey Wind were needed more than ever now.

...

That night, Jon dreamed:

*He saw a burning Wood, alight with green fire - wildfire.*

*Then a girl - no a woman - surrounded by blooded swords and cradling a trio of dragons, her silver-gilt hair dripping with dark blood that was nearly black.*

*Then a half-man, his friend Tyrion, enraged and holding a crossbow, a look of murder on his face which was marred viciously by a scar.*

*He saw Sansa crying and tearing at her mattress, trying to hide the proof of her flowering.*

*Arya with shorn hair, followed by a boy with pitch-black hair and bright blue eyes of an age with Sansa, a pair of men in armor in front and behind them though he couldn’t see their sigils.*

*There was a burning woman atop a wall and a Wight with a crown of ice upon his head facing each other though a thousand leagues separated them.*

*And still he dreamed...*

...

Jon woke with a gasp, already reaching for the dagger under his pillow, waking Harry and Robb as they slumbered at his side, Harry tucked into Jon who was resting - however badly - in the center of their bed.

The gasp summoned their night guard as if by Harry's magic, Ser Oswell ducking at once into the bedchamber of the tent, sword at the ready.

"My King?" He asked in a low growl, eyes searching the corners of the tent for any danger.

"It's nothing, Ser Oswell." Jon told him with a sigh, tucking his dagger back under his pillow and waving him away as he prepared himself for his lovers' questions.

Neither Harry nor Robb was the sort to be placated with a word and a wave, no matter how tired they were.

"I've slept beside you for turn after turn." Harry said in his sleepy rasp. "And never have I known you to spring up from sleep like that, let alone to go for a weapon. What's wrong, my dragon?"

Robb didn't say anything just scooted closer on the bed and wrapped Jon in his heavily muscled arms, Harry snuggling into the gap left with Robb's move, tucking himself into the two larger men in an offer of comfort and warmth.
"I dreamed." Jon began, searching his mind for how to explain it. "Of many things. Most didn't make sense to me but others..."

"Targaryens are known for having premonitions, Jon." Robb reminded him, drawing all of their minds to the most famous of Targaryen seers Daenys the Dreamer who foresaw the Doom and in doing so saved her family and those sworn to them when her father Aenys moved all of them to Dragonstone twelve years before the volcanoes set fire to the very air above Valyria and set the land to fire and smoke. "Could it be that Harry's lessons have woken this gift in you?"

It was a question posed equally to both king and mage.

"It's possible." Harry said with a shrug after a moment of contemplation. "I've focused mostly on meditation and strengthening Jon's connection to Ghost as I have with you Robb. Though Jon has shown a predisposition towards tapping into and using natural magics we haven't explored that much yet." Harry leaned back a moment and eyed Jon's tired but handsome face. "If the predisposition was already there than the little I've taught you could have woken a latent talent. The same could be said of you, Robb. And with any other talent premonitions or any form of second-sight has benefits and detriments."

Jon grimaced saying: "The detriments are easy enough to see. I feel like Ser Arthur has put me through my paces after waging a battle for days on end."

"It's not just that." Harry cautioned. "Visions are subjective and change as circumstances change. My own prophecies are excellent examples: had a madman not believed the first I never would have had to kill him. Had the Starks not believed the second, I wouldn't be awake and pregnant now. Choices are made every second and any one of them can change a future already Seen. Any premonition needs to be taken with a grain of salt and a healthy dose of reality."

Robb nodded thoughtfully at that. His words made sense, and appealed to all three of them. None of them like the idea that every step they take was preordained. They were men of action, not overly given to the idea of some vague being pulling their strings. Especially Harry who has already been charged more than once with changing the Wyrd or fate of Westeros.

"And another thing." Harry added after several long moments of silence where they relaxed back against the pillows. "If Jon is having premonitions then that means the greenseers might be having them again too. And there's no telling where they all are or who they're allied to, let alone how many they number." He thought for a moment then added: "Though from what I can tell, finding them in places less diluted by Andal intermarriage is most likely: the North, the Winter Lands, and other kinds of Seers in the far eastern reaches of Essos such as Asshai."

"Cheerful, love." Jon rolled his eyes. "Thanks ever so for that."

Robb interrupted before the two of them could start bickering. "What did you see anyway, anything you remember now that you are awake?"

"Sansa's in danger." Jon answered after thinking back to the fuzzy dream images. "She's flowered."

"She has an out, dragon." Harry soothed him. "If she ever comes to the point of being actually married to that vile little bastard she'll use it."

"I think I saw my aunt." Jon frowned. "I can't think of anyone else it might be. She hasn't come to Dragonstone yet, has she?"

"No." Now Harry was frowning, irritated at the chit. "She will, of that I'm sure. I just don't know..."
how long it's going to take her to make up her mind or what will happen before then."

"And Arya, Tyrion, a woman who I think was that Priestess you told me of." Jon counted off. "A Wight, wildfire." He shook his head. "It's all jumbled now. But of it all I think I saw Arya the clearest, who we can't even find as she moves around so much, might yet be the safest."

Robb snorted at that. "I don't doubt it of the little she-wolf." He leaned over and gave Harry and Jon another pair of goodnight kisses. "Don't dwell on it. All we can do is press on. No dreams - good or ill - can change that now. They have their paths to take and we've our own."

"Listen to wolf-boy." Harry teased his lover, before giving Jon a kiss as well, burrowing into the warm covers and soft pillows. "He's making sense...for once."

...It was on the eve of battle that the messenger brought the news to Lord Tywin Lannister as he waited with his men on the opposite side of the Blackwater Rush from where his scouts reported Lord Randyll Tarly would be leading the flanking force of the Tyrell/Baratheon army.

Renly Baratheon, for all that he was styling himself King of Highgarden, had lost much of his Storm Land support along with Storm's End to Stannis, sending him running with the remaining Reach forces for the capital. Tywin had been forced to decide between pursuing the Young Dragon and Wolf into the Westerlands or returning to save his daughter and grandchildren from imminent danger. With the reinforcing armies arriving from both the North and the bulk of the Vale men, as well as having Blackwater Bay blockaded by the Northern Fleet led by Admiral Lord Manderly, it was an easy but difficult choice to make.

No matter how much he offered or who he threatened, no word of where or with whom Jaime was being held captive reached his ears.

Blind to his beloved son's whereabouts, and faced with certain death of his other progeny and grandchildren, the Old Lion turned back from the River Lands taking the bulk of his men with him. He'd expected reinforcements from his brother Stafford, reinforcements that had yet to arrive. It was news of these missing men that his messenger brought him as he awaited the flanking attempt.

Tyrion had a plan and a trick up his sleeve for the vanguard. And as much as he hated the very thought or sight of his youngest spawn, even Tywin had to admit it was every bit as cunning as something he himself could devise. Now if only Jaime...

But no.

Tywin would not betray his golden, gallant son with an unfavorable comparison to the Imp, his very Bane.

"What word of Stafford?" Tywin demanded as soon as the rider, clearly exhausted on his blown horse, rode into the camp.

"Slain, milord." The messenger, a Lannister from one of the cadet branches of Lannisport, panted out as he swung down, almost losing his footing in his worn condition. "Golden Tooth, Ashemark, and Oxcross are all taken by the Wolf and Dragon while the Mormonts drive livestock and raid granaries to feed the armies of the North, Riverlands, and the Vale. The Umber Lord and Targaryen loyalists from the Crownlands who aren't with the Dragon's fleet have won the mines at Castamere, Nun's Deep, and Pendric Hills. I could not find anyone who had word of Lannisport and the coast."

With a roar to do his sigil animal proud, Tywin drew his sword and drove it in his fury through the
weapons stand at his side, hacking and slashing until it was no more than a pile of splinters and his rage was appeased - for the moment.

All through the camp men murmured at the continuing triumphs of the Dragon and the Wolf.

Were they less afraid of Tywin, many of the Lords in his army would have turned tail and ran back to their holdings to swear to the Targaryen King, in hope that he will be as forgiving as Aegon the Conqueror to those who bend the knee as he had proven himself thus far to be that King’s equal in ferocity to those who stood against him.

All feared that the Old Lion was set to become the next Harren the Black, no matter who strong or thick or high the walls of his castle, still was burned to death along with all of his line when he spurned the offer of clemency from Aegon Targaryen.

For unlike Harren the Black, Tywin Lannister’s sworn lords and knights had not been abused to the point that they were eagerly turn their cloaks and save their skins and Houses. They feared Tywin but did not utterly despise and hate him…not to the extent required for such a move. Though should he continue to sit idle while the keeps and castles and lands of the Lords of the Westerlands were plundered and taken, that allegiance based on fear and some respect would crumble.

Of course, if they were less afraid of Tywin Lannister, they likely wouldn't even be there in the first place, especially with the rampant rumors most have taken as truth of Cersei's incestuous affair with her own brother who was a sworn brother of the Kingsguard - a double scandal and betrayal.

Tywin Lannister was very good at inspiring fear in his Lords...but loyalty was a different thing entirely as he would find out to his detriment before his death.

...Lord Renly Baratheon, the King-claimant of Highgarden, felt nervous sweat drip down his neck as he rode at the center of his army approaching King's Landing under the cover of night. His sources claimed that the city has been closed for several turns, with riots setting in over the extravagance of Joffrey’s court while the smallfolk starved. It was even said that only the bravery of Sandor Clegane saved young Lady Sansa Stark from a brutal gang rape and murder in the very streets. Good. The city was ripe for taking, with the smallfolk unlikely to fight back against an invading force, leaving them with only Cersei's Red Cloaks and the City Watch to worry over.

Though, he did wish that Loras's brothers hadn't convinced their father to allow them to take a host of forty thousand, almost half of the remaining army, back to Bitterbridge to guard the supply lines and prevent the Lannisters from flanking Renly's troops.

Especially since his scouts had never returned with word of where *exactly* the Lannister army even was.

His best general, despite Mace Tyrell's boasts, Lord Randyll Tarly had taken the vanguard through the Kingswood and crossed the Blackwater to attack the River Gate so that between their two forces they cut off all chance of Cersei and her spawn escaping the city. While the Northern Fleet has the Bay blockaded, there was no use for anyone to try and leave via the port and docks. The might of the Targaryen boy had surprised Renly. Originally he'd thought it would be little matter to convince Stannis to support him in lieu of another claimant to the throne besides Stannis himself.

Then the Young Dragon appeared, supported by the North and Targaryen loyalists from the Crownlands.
Loyalists who had ships and men and gold to raise an army.

And a dragon of all creatures to round things out.

The only chance Renly had now that he'd spurned the opportunity to bend the knee to Jon Targaryen was to take the city and hold it. It wasn't likely that a man raised by the honorable Ned Stark would raze King's Landing and its half-million population to burn out a contender to the Throne. Taking the city may well be the only thing that saves his neck.

Regardless, it was the only move he had left to play after Stannis snatched Storm's End out from under him while he was rallying the Tyrell army in the Reach.

The stiff-necked bastard could hold a grudge like no other man Renly knew, save their oldest brother who swore to stamp out every trace of Targaryen blood.

Renly laughed darkly to himself. And look how that had turned out for Robert. Had he not stepped over the bloodied corpses of a pair of babes to mount the Iron Throne, Ned Stark might have trusted his old friend with the truth of Jon Targaryen.

But that wasn't the roll of the dice the Fates had made that day, and now all of Westeros was feeling the backlash.

"Your Grace." Brienne of Tarth, one of his Rainbow Guard and a formidable warrior, rode over to his side from the front of the line. "The lights of King's Landing are in sight."

"Lord Randyll?"

"In place."

Renly took one last, long look around at the faces watching him, knowing full-well that many of them may very well be in the Stranger's Arms by the dawn.

"Order the attack."

...

*Green.* Was all Tyrion could think as he stared over the curtain wall surrounding King's Landing at the River Gate. *Green flames.*

He'd never truly considered what it was his elder brother had saved the city from by slaying Aerys and Rossart, though he'd heard the story from Jaime's own lips more than once when they were in their cups together. It was how he'd known to look for the wildfire he'd unleashed on the advancing Baratheon-Tyrell alliance. He'd had Lannister men disguised as peddlers and smallfolk carefully soaking the fields surrounding King's Landing with the wicked substance during the dusk before sneaking them back into the city.

And then they'd waited.

Once the Tarly Lord commanding the vanguard had ordered his men across the Blackwater, Tyrion's father Tywin had fallen on their flank like he'd heard his friend Jon's dire wolf did an enemy horse.

That had been the signal for Tyrion's own surprise: wildfire.

As Renly's force charged the plains leading to the several city gates, Tyrion himself had taken the crossbow with its oil-soaked arrow, his sworn-shield and sell-sword friend Bronn lighting it at his
nod, and unleashed utter hell onto the men who sought to attack the ever-weakening city.

"Gods forgive me." He whispered as the crossbow fell to the stones under his feet with a clatter as the two of them and his squire Podrick Payne watched men scream and burn. "What have I done?"

...

Over a thousand miles to the southwest, Aegon Blackfyre stepped off his ship and into a hell of his own.

Only his hell is apparently scented with flowers and filled with Dornishmen and his own Golden Company.

It was, of course, his arrival and council with Prince Oberyn Martell who Aegon had found himself completely unprepared for and discomfited by. It wasn't that the Red Viper was a dangerous man that rattled Aegon so. No, not at all. It's because he was a lecherous flirt of a snake who apparently enjoyed seeing just how red the Dornish Prince could get Aegon to blush in embarrassment.

It was a minor thing that he just knew Harry and Lysono were never going to let him live down, no matter how many battles he fought in or how old he lived.

A Dornish Prince with too many (sexy) smirks and wandering hands had forever branded Aegon among his friends as "The Blushing Blackfyre."

The fuckers.

Days before, they had arrived at Blackcrown to meet Oberyn and join the coming siege of Oldtown. Quentyn had been dropped off at Sunspear to recover as planned, and Aegon had in his possession a letter from his distant cousin King Jon to Prince Oberyn confirming Aegon's - and through him the Golden Company's - involvement and alliance in the war. They'd arrived with the morning sun at the docks, the Redwyne Fleet having already been dealt with for the most part during the taking of the Arbor, Three Towers, and Blackcrown, leaving the major port-city of Westeros markedly undefended aside from the Hightower garrison and the city walls.

And then, rather than ordering an attack, Oberyn had instead ordered them to wait and make camp outside the walls.

So they waited.

And waited.

And waited.

But it seemed only Oberyn knew what they were waiting for.

And then it happened: The city gates opened.

Within minutes the siege force was pouring into the seat of the Hightowers, the Prince and commander of the force stopping beside the gates to joyously greet a figure cloaked in grey. Aegon later discovered to his shock - and no little awe - that it was Oberon's third oldest daughter Sarella who had been "playing a game" with the Citadel by masquerading as an apprentice to Archmaester Marwyn. Rather than the hard-fought and won battle Aegon had faced in taking Bloodstone, the Golden Company and the Dornish army had swept through the Hightower garrison like a tidal wave, leaving naught but corpses behind and taking the remaining Hightowers, men, women, and children hostage as surety against Lord Leyton's eldest son and heir who was away fighting alongside his
good-brother Mace Tyrell.

After Oberyn and Aegon spoke for a moment as the three remaining sons of Lord Leyton watched warily from their positions standing with their hands bound against the wall, their Lord father with his wheezing breaths and palsied hands sitting before them, a stark contrast between the aged, weak man and his strong sons, Aegon moved to address them.

"Why did you close the gates against us?" Aegon asked, head tilted slightly as he studied the noble family, one of the oldest and greatest Houses of the Reach...though one known more for trade than militant prowess. "House Hightower long supported House Targaryen. Indeed, Ser Gerold Hightower went willingly with my late cousin Queen Rhaella and her living children rather than turn his cloak and support Robert Baratheon. Why are you and your men here to face us rather than joining my cousin The King in his campaign?" Aegon's voice was pleasant and calm, his handsome face open.

It was a simple manipulation, coming across as a perplexed young man rather than the cunning leader of the Golden Company he was, but he thought they would respond to such a thing better than they would an aggressive Blackfyre or the Red Viper.

A thought that was proven true when Garth, the eldest son present known as Garth Greysteel a knight of some renown, spoke to defend himself and his honor in the face of Aegon's implication of cowardliness.

"Mace Tyrell is our sworn Lord." Garth's voice was gruff, matching the large fit knight's form. "And our good-brother through our sister Alerie. He commanded, our brother obeyed. There is no more to it than that."

"Silence!" Lord Leyton hissed, shifting uncomfortably. It was the first time the Hightower Lord had been seen outside of his tower in over a decade. "We do not answer to Dorne nor to whoever this silver-haired cretin claims to be!"

"Oh, beg pardon." Aegon said with a surprised look on his face and a bright tone. "Allow me to introduce myself." He eyes gleamed with devilry as he cut an impressive bow to please the highest of sticklers. "Aegon Blackfyre, Scion of House Blackfyre and trueborn - if distant - cousin of the rightful king, Jon Targaryen the First of his Name. Leader of the Golden Company."

The eyes of his audience had popped wide with shock at his name, while his status among the sell-sword company was welcomed with a hiss of dismay from the Lord.

All knew of the Golden Company - and more importantly what they were capable of.

Pissing off their avowed leader was just asking to be raided by the undefeated sell-swords.

"Blackfyre!" Leyton gasped, short of breath from both shock and infirmity. "The Blackfyres are extinct!"

"They were extinct...in the male line at least." Aegon smirked drawing the sword that gave his house their name. "Until the bastard line of Aerion Brightflame wed with the last of the female line of the Blackfyres...creating me, the legitimate Heir of House Blackfyre and sworn supporter of my cousin the King."

"You have two options, Leyton." Oberyn jumped into the silence left behind Aegon's startling proclamation. Before this none but the Golden Company were privy to exactly how Aegon claimed kinship with Jon other than calling himself Blackfyre. And it wasn't like the sell-swords were
overly-fond of gossiping about the man who led them to riches and glory. "One, you can keep your position of blindly supporting your daughter's husband no matter what level of folly he leads you into. Which is likely to the death of yourself and your House by the time the Young Dragon is finished. Or." He arched a brow. "You can show some of the spine your uncle was famous for and support the true king."

Leyton's sons exchanged glances as Leyton and his wife, daughters, and his two good-daughters all bickered and argued in the wake of Oberyn's words.

They'd found themselves shame-faced and flat-footed at the ease the combined might of the Dornishmen and the Golden Company had broken down their defenses. Many of their best fighting men were away, leaving Garth to train up the stripling boys for reinforcements. Everything else aside, it never sat well with them that they were turning aside from the true heir to the Iron Throne in favor of Renly Baratheon of all people. And all so their niece could be a thrice-damned Queen.

Mace had always been a greedy, blustering fool and well they knew it for all that their lord father pretended otherwise.

"What say you?" Aegon demanded.

Before Leyton could say something which would have likely seen them all sharing cell-space with Jaime Lannister as hostages, Garth cut him off.

"We'll fight for the Dragon." He said with a sharp nod and a steely stare at the duo.

"Aye." His brother echoed.

"Excellent." Oberyn smirked. "You'll march out with us in a week's time, we'll split the garrisoning of Oldtown between your men and ours for safety and surety of good-faith."

"Our destination?"

"Casterly Rock." Aegon's grin was bloodthirsty. "It's time to ram this war right down the Old Lion's grasping maw."

... 

Harry fell into dreams once more, this time seeing a vision straight out of his teenaged day-dreams.

It was himself, rocking in a wooden chair that he'd seen in the wreckage of Godric's Hallow. His stomach was swollen, children playing around his feet with rich heads of hair in ebony, silver, and auburn. A family. His family, as he spied Robb standing and talking to Jon by the window, Ser Arthur Dayne chasing after a runaway crawler who'd made a break for the open door.

Aegon was there too, though Harry was as yet uncertain whether his vague ideas of strengthening the Targaryen blood through him would work, or even how to broach the idea to his lovers.

A tingle pinging at his senses alerted Harry to his visitor.

"No visions of blood and death and horror this time, old friend?" He asked the dark hooded figure of Death with a wry tone to his smooth voice.

"No." Death shook his head, amusement plain in its ageless voice. "Not this time. You've done well in steering the Wyrd towards a better future. We thought we might give you a small taste of what this new world might hold for you once the battles are over and Blood and Fire have reigned."
"A pleasant fiction." Harry waved at the other him. "Though I'm unsure about it. From here it looks like I'm trying to repopulate Westeros all by my lonesome."

Death chuckled at that. "Not quite. With your expanded lifespan you could very well try but in the end even your advanced healing won't be able to maintain your fertility after having your stomach cut open time after time."

"How many?" Harry couldn't help but ask, one hand resting lightly on his stomach where his first pair of children already grew.

The ageless being hummed as it examined the possibilities. "The most I see in any future is fifteen children from your own womb. One of your possible mates is capable of bearing young as well which adds to the number."

"Aegon." Harry said with great certainty. "He's much lither and slender than either Jon or Robb but not so much as myself. And I noticed for myself the strength of his core. It's not as developed as Jon's by any means but it wouldn't take much to get it there."

"Perhaps." Death cocked its head to one side. "Perhaps not. Only time and Wyrd will tell in the end."

"Wyrd." Harry rolled his eyes. "Fate, prophecy. When I finally pass I'm going to have words with those nosy old biddies and their damned loom."

Death studied him then shook its head. "You know." It sighed. "I do believe you'll do just that. Or at least try. Somehow I know you'll keep me just as entertained in your afterlife as you have in your living life."

..."Your Grace, ravens!" Torrhen Karstark, youngest son of Lord Rickard Karstark and one of the finest young warriors the North had to offer called out. The young warriors of the Northern cavalry - not knights as they didn't follow the Faith of the Seven but excellent fighters with a strong code nonetheless - had taken up a rotation riding ahead as scouts and messengers. This day saw Torrhen along with Dacey Mormont and Smalljon Umber returning as they had ridden back accompanied by Ghost to Ashemark for news.

Ghost had taken to the fearless Heiress of Bear Island, which according to his companion had everything to do with Dacey's free hand with ear-rubs and sharing of her provisions.

Jon, Harry, and Robb all drew rein and moved off the path, allowing the men and horse to keep riding and marching onwards to Lannisport and Casterly Rock. They were a mere ten leagues out and should arrive within two more days of marching at their current pace. The Kingsguard echoed their movement, making a U-shape surrounding the betrothed trio.

"From Bitterbridge, Oldtown, Sunspear, and the Wall." Dacey reported, having seen and known the sigils pressed into each missive.

As an Heiress of an island that relies on trade, she'd been more heavily schooled than the Smalljon as Last Hearth didn't boast a Maester or Torrhen who as a third son had focused more on his skills with sword and shield than knowing the sigils of southron lords.

"Holy fuck." Harry slipped into High Valyrian to curse. "I don't know whether to celebrate or mourn."
Jon nodded his head solemnly as he passed the letter over to Robb who unlike Harry hadn't leaned to read over Jon's shoulder.

Many of the lords traveling with the army had come to hear the news as well by this point, as Jon said: "Mourn."

The Targaryen Scion shook his head before answering his lords' and guards' wordless question.

"The Lannisters used a combination of outflanking the vanguard and a wildfire trap to repel the Baratheon-Tyrell army. More than twenty thousand men were slaughtered in a matter of hours while the rest retreated. The Kingswood is still burning in places near the city which was untouched and Lord Tywin only lost a quarter of that number." He set his jaw. "Renly Baratheon and Loras Tyrell are two of dozens of noble knights slain along with Randyll Tarly."

"By the gods." One of the Lords breathed, face the color of milk. "It's Castamere all over again."

"Not quite that extreme." Maege Mormont rolled her eyes, a snide look on her weather-beaten face. The Lady of Bear Island wasn't known for her pleasant disposition, an unfortunate trait that her daughter Alysanne had inherited though thankfully Dacey her eldest and Heiress was much more congenial. "Unless all the Tyrells were slaughtered as well."

"No." Jon said, already moving on to the next missive, passing them first to Robb and then Ser Arthur as he went. "Willas and Garlan Tyrell had taken forty thousand men to guard the Roseroad with many of the younger knights and Heirs."

"See." Maege shrugged. "Not as bad as Castamere. Tywin left not a single Reyne and only a single Tarbeck alive in that bit of evil."

"In better news." Harry interrupted, wanting to get off that bit of conversation as they were in the process of riding to assault Tywin's very home. "Oldtown was taken and the Hightowers have sworn to Jon."

Cheers went up at that, the Hightowers could field three times the amount of men of the other Reach Houses save for Tarly and Tyrell.

"They'll arrive at Lannisport along with Prince Oberyn and the Golden Company." Jon added, arching a brow at Harry, waving a bit of parchment at him. "Which is apparently being led by my distant cousin Aegon Blackfyre."

"Consider it a nameday present. You did tell me to bring you a dragon back from Essos…so I did. Just not the kind with wings." Harry explained blithely ignoring the implied censure. He'd told Jon and Robb that Aegon and the Golden Company were heading for the Reach. He just hadn't added how effective they were at laying siege to...well...anywhere. "Their elephants will make taking that damned Rock a lot easier. Call it a down-payment on any trips I might have to take to the east in the future."

"And the other missives?" Lord Karstark prodded.

Jon frowned, not quite knowing what to make of them. "Quentyn Martell has taken sick from his captivity, and Thoros of Myr arrived at the Wall." He turned to Robb. "He had news of Arya which Uncle-Maester Aemon sent on."

"Well?" Robb all-but held his breath.

The smile Jon gave could have blinded the sun. "She's safe, as of a fortnight ago, and traveling with
a strange assortment of companions: a bastard smith's apprentice, Lord Beric Dondarrion, Lord Edric Dayne, and a wolf pack."
Edited chapter uploaded 12/20/16

Tomb of the First Men

Author’s Note: Managed to scrape together the cash to renew my Office 360 subscription so hopefully this update will have less errors for me to go back and fix than the last one (I should hope anyway…) This installment should tie together hints and bits that’ve been scattered throughout the story as far as magic in Westeros goes and you’re also going to get the results of the Battle of the Blackwater which in the last installment was changed to Renly & the Tyrells vs. the Lannisters instead of the cannon version of Stannis vs. the Lannisters. There’s been some questions about just who survived on the Tyrell/Baratheon side and where all the armies are, that’s covered in the first part of this update. Also you have Tyrion making a choice (for good or ill) and the sacking of Lannisport and Casterly Rock…

Also…I have no idea where the bondage in this came from. It started with Harry being a tad aggressive and then exploded. If you have issues with that you might want to skim over the smut scene after the duel between Barristan and Harry. So…yeah. It’s there, not really BDSM or anything hardcore but definitely dipping into that territory…ish. I’ve been reading a lot of KTT2123 and Lady-Giovanna-Potter-Malfoy’s “Just a Matter of Time” lately so I think maybe it’s that coming out…

Enjoy lovelies!

<3 Sif

Warning: Bloodshed, violence, MPREG, and slashy smut with a side-order of BONDAGE (light-ish, nothing too extreme, Harry flexing his switch muscles).

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Act VI: Monsters, Maesters, and Magic

The elderly, but fierce, Lady Olenna Tyrell nee Redwyne, known throughout Westeros as the Queen of Thorns, moved with a swiftness that belied her years as she clutched the missive from her buffoon of a son in one claw-like hand and made for the study that her eldest grandson had taken for his own in the fortress at Bitterbridge.

Her stupid, stupid, son had done many stupid, stupid things throughout his life. None, however, had enraged her and made her wish she’d taken moon-tea after lying with her late husband quite as much as this latest blunder or indeed, marrying the Targaryen she’d been promised to in the first place.

The board had been set, and very much to her liking, when Mace had taken the army and advanced on King’s Landing at the order of the young Stag.

Loras had been ecstatic, vowing to slay a thousand Lannisters in the name of his lover.
And above all else, Margery had been made a Queen though no swelling of her belly had yet shown likely due to Renly’s preference for her elder brother and distinct disinclination to bed the beauty even with the cunning lass convincing Loras to help her entice his lover into his wife’s bed.

That little taradiddle would have had tongues wagging even faster than they already were over Renly’s less-than-secret preferences and shed a nasty taint of incest over the whole affair – had the Queen of Thorns allowed it to carry any farther than her own ears. No. Olenna would allow many things but to have her family talked of in the same viperous whispers as Cersei and Jaime Lannister was not now and never would be one of them.

But she’d covered it up, just as she’d been glossing over Loras’s preferences to his father, her son, for years.

Men of the Reach – likely because of the strong hold of the Faith and the Citadel – frowned mightily upon male-only unions.

Fiddlesticks and poppycock as far as Olenna was concerned.

Who gave a rat’s ass who climbed into what bed so long as legitimate offspring were produced and the Houses carried on?

She harrumphed to herself, disgusted in general with the idiocy of men and in particular with that of her own son.

Entering the study Willas had claimed when he’d arrived at Bitterbridge from Highgarden, leaving the administration of the Reach to the castellan while the Tyrell men occupied themselves with this damned infernal war that Mace had so precipitously thrown them into, Olenna took in a calming breath at the sight of a man who as always gave her hope for the dumber half of the human species.

Willas may have a limp and a leg that ached in the winter winds even as far south as Highgarden from a jousting accident but he made up in brains what he lacked in a graceful stride. Her eldest grandson could still sit a horse and swing a sword to defend his lands, but most importantly to Olenna he’d switched his focus from knightly pursuits to management of the Tyrell estate and increasing their holdings. Allowing Olenna to focus once more on increasing their influence. They often moved in sync, she and her grandson, and he had enough of her brains to bring the Tyrells into stern competition with the Lannisters for wealthiest House in the Seven Kingdoms – a fact that she knew well stuck in that bastard Tywin’s throat.

It was a perfect partnership and would continue to be so for years yet – so long as they could mitigate the bulk of the damage Mace’s latest blunder would cost them.

They’d been doing so for years already – cleaning up after her oaf of a son and his silly Hightower wife.

Still, Olenna had to admit ruefully, better a silly wife such as Alerie than a dangerous one that led the whole House astray like viperous Cersei Lannister or Hoster Tully’s mad get Lysa.

Yes, silly was better than dangerous…save when it was her son trying to make “amends” with that joyless asshole Tywin and his batshit crazy grandson!

“Have you heard?” She demanded of Willas as she sat in the chair already pulled out for her and snatched up the chalice of Arbor gold he’d already had poured and waiting on her. That alone told her that either yes, Willas knew, or he’d heard of another problem on top of the one that had her in a rage that they needed to deal with and had been anticipating her arrival due to it.
She drank deeply of the wine, allowing the sweet taste to mellow over her rage – for the moment.

“Yes.” Willas grimaced, tapping a letter before him. “A rider arrived this morning.”

“Your father.” She made the title an epithet. “In his wisdom and the wake of the slaughter of our men and your youngest brother has decided to bend the fucking knee to the same cunts who killed Loras.” Her eyes burned in her wrinkle-lined face, hand clenching on the golden cup. “What’s more he’s offered Margery to that crazed imbecile Joffery.” She shook her head, rage spent and leaving behind only exhaustion as she tried to decipher a way to salvage the situation, setting aside the now-empty cup before she hurled it. Control, she told herself sternly. Now was the time for a cool head and control. She could exert her temper on her erstwhile offspring as soon as she saw him.

If Mace Tyrell had any sense he would board the first ship for Essos…but then…Mace Tyrell was utterly without either sense or spine which was the entire problem in the first place.

“He followed Renly rather than Jon Targaryen out of pure greed and a chance to grasp at the throne.” Willas agreed with the underlying sentiment of Olenna’s words without reserve. “When we should have been marching to assist the Dragon and his Wolf cousin. Now he wants to turn cloak after costing the Reach fifteen thousand men and another five from the Storm Lands.” Willas sighed and leaned back heavily against his padded wooden chair. “Moreover he’s ordered the troops here under Garlan’s command to move and join up with the Lannister force with Garlan escorting Margery to the Red Keep to ‘get-to-know’ Joffery and ‘see-if-they-would-suit.’” Willas rolled his eyes at that bit of scheming. “I don’t know which is the worse match: myself to Cersei, Margery to Joffery, or Sansa Stark to Joffery.”

“Sansa.” Lady Olenna said at once with a bitter laugh. “If they dared to go through with the match in spite of the Stark-Targaryen rampage through the Westerlands and being pushed out of the River Lands altogether it would be a matter of weeks if not days before a Faceless man backed with the wealth of the Targaryen dynasty killed the puling little shit and made Sansa a widow before her maiden’s blood was even dry – or drawn at all.”

Willas arched a knowing brow at that, his grandmother waving a hand as she huffed saying: “But then why pay for an assassin when there’s fools aplenty in need or greed of gold with a hate of the Lannister’s – especially Cersei’s get? There’s more than one way to kill a king – especially one who’s a fool, as Cersei Lannister is well aware.”

One thing troubled Willas from his matriarch’s words – aside from the obvious discussion of regicide. “‘Backed with the wealth of the Targaryen dynasty?’” He echoed the salient points. “I was under the impression that the crown is in heavy debt to both Tywin, the Faith, the Trade Cartels, and the Iron Bank due to Cersei’s lavish expectations and Robert’s spend-thrift style of management or rather,” he drawled with derision. “Mismanagement.”

“You forget my dear child.” Olenna smirked with the arch of a sardonic brow. “In my youth I was to wed the youngest son of Aegon V, Daeron. Though he loved his close friend Ser Jeremy more than he would ever care for me and between the two of us we put an end to it. But before I wed your grandfather I had plenty of time to learn of Targaryens – both their high wealth and their rampant madness over dragons and fire.” She snorted, speaking lowly, almost as if to herself. “Your grandfather, oaf that he was, wasn’t mad I’ll give him that and not unskilled in the bedchamber. He was much more to my liking that a quarter-mad boy in love with his best friend, wealth of the dragons aside.”

“Then what of the crown’s debt?”

She waved a gnarled, age-spotted hand dismissively. “The Targaryens often knew when one of their
own was likely to succumb to madness. As it was with Aerys before his father died. The signs were all there, but there was no other to leave the throne save Rhaegar who wasn’t yet weaned at the time of Jaehaerys’s death. And Jaehaerys was canny even if he was weak. If I had to wager on it I would say that he left the management of the Targaryen wealth in the hands of Rhaella.” She gave an honest smile at the thought of one of the only Targaryens she ever truly liked in her lifetime. “And the late Queen was many things: beaten down, abused, half-mad from grief.” She shook her head at the waste of a great woman. “But she wasn’t a fool. Jon Targaryen has the might of their wealth, a wealth that began long before the Doom or I’ll eat my cane.”

She let him chew on that a moment before coming back around to another of her grievances with her son, and one that she would put paid to or there would be the seven hells to pay.

“I’ll not see you wasted on that old, dried up cunt of a Queen.” Olenna said, tongue as sharp as ever, Willas’s relief visible in the set of his shoulders. “We may have to play along with Margery’s wedding to Joffrey,” she held up a long finger. “For the moment. But never will I lose you my boy to one such as that. I have a better – and more profitable – match in mind for the future Lord of Highgarden.”

“Thank you, grandmamma.” Willas inclined his head, worry relieved. He didn’t think that his father would stoop to having him wed to Cersei via proxy but he didn’t want to chance it. Better that the Queen of Thorns work her form of magic than Willas find himself with a bride without ever stepping foot in King’s Landing. He certainly wouldn’t put such a thing past the bastard of an old Lion. And his father was just weak and easily swayed enough to go along with it. “I’ll move the bulk of my troops back to Highgarden under a pretense of being prepared in case of an attack. With the Martells and their sellsword companions sacking Oldtown and laying siege to the Citadel – though no one quite knows why they’d done the last - there’s nothing even Tywin can say against such a move.”

“Good.” Olenna nodded, mulling the plan over. “Send the new Lord Tarly with them. Randyll’s loss is in turns a blessing and a curse. Without him much of Mace’s martial ability is gone. But also without him the Tarly forces answer to a man who is little more than a boy in Dickon Tarly. Better have him safely away from temptation – and out of easy reach of Tywin.”

“That was my thought as well.” Willas nodded. “The Storm Lords and their men have already departed either to join Stannis or backtracking through the Reach to bend the knee to the King directly. I’ve given them letters to keep them from being hindered by our men and those that answer to us. The King and his army are closing in on Casterly Rock after taking Ashemark and are being met by his future-consort’s Ironborn fleet and most of the Martell/sellsword force that took Oldtown. With Tywin and father surrounding the capitol, the Vale and River lords blocking advance to the North and West and Stannis blocking the southeast, the Lion of the Rock has no way to save his own people from the coming destruction. As for us, I’ll also take any of the knights, heirs, or lords who I am unsure of along with Dickon,” he smirked. “Keep them out of trouble as well and those loyal will block the Roseroad, allowing only the most meager of supplies to make it to King’s Landing. It’s hard to hold a city when both your men and the city populace itself are starving, as the Lannisters have already discovered.”

“Very good.” Olenna gave a toothless smile. “I’ll make a Lord of you yet, my boy.”

Jon walked over to Harry who was pacing beside his horse, shaking out his limbs from the long ride that day. They were a mere two days out from Lannisport and Casterly Rock and despite his little love feeling awful from the mother’s sickness in the mornings and early afternoon, a sickness not helped any by the constant rocking motion of horseback, they’d found that he usually felt himself
again and was able to eat once the sun was halfway to the horizon. Which was good, as Jon, Robb, and the Kingsguard had all heard increased rumblings coming from the knights and Lords over Harry’s continued presence with the army.

Many thought that as a future consort and proven bearer Harry didn’t belong with them among the so-called “real men” and should have been left at Riverrun.

Others, who saw the power Harry brought with him, had been if not welcoming then at least content with his presence…until the conception of Jon and Robb’s heirs had been made public ten days before.

Now the majority of the men – highborn and low – desired for the Lord of the Iron Islands and Winter from the newly renamed “Winter Lands” rather than the wordy “Land of Always Winter or Land of Perpetual Winter” to return to the relative safety of Riverrun, Winterfell, or even Harrenhal or the Winter Lands rather than risk an accident during battle that could cost the kingdoms the heir to both the Iron Throne and Winterfell – if that is, Harry carried boys. Which he did…though none who knew as such had spread it about. It was one thing for Harry to fight and heal and use his magic in concrete shows of power. Having him use it to gain information that nominally belongs “only to the gods”…that could create a problem they weren’t ready to face as yet.

Especially among the most devout to the Faith of the Seven, an establishment brought by the Andal invaders of Westeros which had an attitude problem regarding male bearers it seemed.

They didn’t want to exacerbate it any more than was necessary.

No, Jon had decided it was time for Harry to prove his worth in an iron-clad fashion before the ever-growing army.

Few were those who watched him slaughter both Balon and Theon Greyjoy.

Not many more were there or paying attention when he fought toe-to-toe against the Kingslayer.

And none saw him single-handedly best the Mountain and Amory Lorch…though that last was more to do with magic than it did with strength of arms.

Rumor and renown only went so far when it came to pigheaded knights and Lords. All had heard of Harry’s abilities and many had seen him fight in open combat. But few were those who’d been witness to one of the few times he’d fought a knight in single combat. And that was what Jon was going to change.

He had faith in his Kingsguard that they wouldn’t take a dirty blow towards Harry’s stomach. Besides which he knew full-well that Harry would cast protection charms over where his and Robb’s babes slept inside his sac…womb. But the men needed to see to know for themselves what Harry was capable of as a warrior not just as the “Lady” of their relationship or as a sorcerer.

They needed to see why he was named the Warrior-Who-Waits and not the Mage-Who-Waits or the Lover-Who-Waits or, (and this last was what had Jon’s blood up and his eyes deadly when he heard it) the Catamite-Who-Waits.

Jon bared his teeth at the remembrance of what he’d overheard just that day, coming from one of the Northmen.

It was blatant disrespect for his love and future consort and it would end.

Either by them fearing and respecting Harry or, if even that didn’t suffice, by dint of fearing Jon
“Hello, my dragon.” Harry gave him a soft smile and leaned up, bussing a kiss onto one stubble-roughened cheek. “Done handing out orders to your Lords for the moment?”

“Hn.” He rolled his eyes at the reminder of his Lords. He was less than happy with them at the moment. Though, that likely wouldn’t change until the men stopped bitching over Harry’s continued presence fighting alongside the army. And even then he was sure they would find something else to complain over. He shook that disturbing thought off, eyeing his little love steadily as Harry arched a shapely ebony brow at his lack of communication.

“Very descriptive.” Harry’s voice was as dry as the Red Wastes. “Could I buy a vowel, please?”

“I need you to duel the Kingsguard,” Jon blurted out before he could talk himself out of it. He’d already put off the demonstration for over a week. “And more, I need you to win.”

Harry reared back, emerald eyes searching violet-purple. “You’re serious.” He breathed, blinking rapidly before asking sharply: “What’s wrong?”

Never would he have ever thought that the super-protective Jon, who’s possessive and protective qualities had turned nearly smothering in the wake of his pregnancy, would suggest let alone nearly demand that he fight against some of the best knights in the known world while with child.

Something was wrong.

He narrowed his eyes as he looked beyond Jon towards the direction the King had come.

And he would bet all the gold in his vaults under the Fist that he had an inkling of what it was.

Thankfully for the still tongue-tied Jon, someone else who knew the answer to his question came up behind them and spoke while the Targaryen scion was searching for a way to fashion his answer.

“The men are talking.” Robb said bluntly, rolling his eyes at the semi-betrayed glance Jon shot him over the top of Harry’s head. The Stark Lord wrapped his arms around his little lover from behind and cuddled Harry into his much larger – and therefor warmer – body.

“Let me guess.” Harry nearly hissed, eyes still narrowed at the rapidly-rising campaign tents behind Jon. “They’re talking about me, again. Not belonging with the army, again. This time because I’m pregnant though I’m sure there’s a smattering of slurs regarding my status in both of your bedfurs, again.”

“That…” Jon sighed, shoulders slumping a fraction, unable to lie while being watched with those eyes. Harry had learned quickly what worked against his lovers – and what didn’t. And with Jon it was always the eyes. “That’s a rather good summation…of sorts.”

“Fuck that.” Harry growled, ignoring the silent-laughter-induced-shaking coming from the large body at his back. He’d get Robb back later for his entertainment at Harry’s expense. He was tired, hungry, and pregnant. None of which was conducive to putting up with Robb’s sometimes strange sense of humor. “Who’m I fighting?”

…

The news spread through the dinner hour after setting up the camp like wildfire: Lord Harry was to spar Ser Barristan the Bold in single combat.
On parchment it would seem a most uneven match: an aging knight of renown against a Lord in his prime.

But that was before one considered that the knight in question was Barristan Selmy, knight of the Kingsguard who at the most recent tourney had unseated more than one knight who was less than half his age. No. In the case of Barristan the Bold, age had made him more dangerous not less as with age came a wisdom and temperance that youth often lacked, making up for his joints being a bit creakier and his feet a tad slower. Barristan was yet considered one of the greatest knights of the realm, along with Ser Arthur Dayne (now that everyone knew he was alive) and Lord Ser Bryce Caron’s bastard brother Ser Rolland Storm, as well as Ser Addam Marbrand who was Lord Tywin’s most dangerous and effective commander, though had Ser Jaime not voided his vows and murdered a King, he might have been able to take the title of “Greatest Knight of Westeros.” As it was, many were those who feared or respected the name of Barristan the Bold.

Indeed, many of the men were rumbling and gossiping in discontent over the unfairness of the match.

After all, what would a man expect his lady wife to face a knight of renown in single combat? Why then should Lord Harry, who for all his magic was little more than a bedwarmer for the King and the Stark Lord, face a knight as worthy as Barristan the Bold? It wasn’t fair, was the consensus among foot, knight, and noble men. Not to either of them, to waste a match against Barristan on a delicate creature such as the King’s pet mage.

If Jon hadn’t been set on the match or Robb convinced of its necessity, overhearing a mere fraction of the talk around the open circle they were using for a training ground would have done the job, the both of them holding onto their tempers by the tips of their fingers after the first five minutes of their audience beginning to arrive.

Oh, it wasn’t anywhere close to being the whole of the army.

But it would be enough to spread word through the whole of Westeros and that was what mattered in the end.

Harry walked into the circle, the very picture of utter calm, ignoring the mutters surrounding him and the visages of his lovers that were shifting rapidly from blank to concerned to infuriated and back again too quickly for others to notice. But when your entire life has been dictated by one being or another, reading microexpressions was a skill that kept one alive if not happy or all that sane for that matter. Knowing when to duck and when to disappear saved his life more than once with the Dursleys, and it was one of the ingrained skills that made Harry so formidable in combat.

He cocked his head to one side, his stoic demeanor turning amused as he watched the calm face of his opponent for this show before he held out his empty hand and summoned a sword, tossing it to Barristan who had a confused look on his face over his actions.

Having gone with Harry to his vault, and seen his collection as well as the sword Harry kept tucked away, Barristan knew the younger man would be using his sword with the black blade that he wore at his back. Harry also knew full-well he had a worthy blade, having given it to Barristan’s keeping himself. Therefore, why, by the seven hells, the lad had used his power to bring forth another and then make Barristan catch it, he had no idea.

“That blade is too fine to ruin against my own.” Harry answered the unspoken question on Barristan’s face. “Valyrian steel is far too precious to risk marring it against Stygian iron. The sword I just gave you will be better suited. It’s the same in every way as the one at your hip, but not so dear as to be mourned if it breaks against mine own.”
More mutters sprang up around the circle at that, roused over Harry’s assurance that Valyrian steel – the finest blade forged in any era – might falter against his blackened blade.

Barristan tested the sword with a few swings before nodding once. The lad was right. It was a match for the Valyrian steel at his hip, even down to the weight and balance. But then, Barristan thought for a moment, it was nothing less than he’d come to expect from Harry Potter-Black, future consort of the King of Westeros.

While Barristan tested the alternate blade, Harry unsheathed his sword and rolled his shoulders, as calm and implacable as he’d been on entering the circle. He breathed in and out, each breath even and measured, allowing himself to become deaf and dumb to the mutters and murmurs surrounding him. Parting his feet to shoulder-width, he rested the tip of his blade lightly on the ground between them, watching Barristan with avid eyes. In theory the aged warrior would be an easier match for Harry than, say, Ser Arthur who was still widely considered the finest knight and swordsman in Westeros or even Jaime Lannister who Harry had faced and fought before.

But Harry already knew how Ser Arthur fought from watching him spar with Jon or Robb or both at the same time, and having faced Jaime once before facing him again would be even easier.

No, if Harry’d been allowed to pick he would have gone for Ser Arthur.

At least there he had a little familiarity.

With Ser Barristan being relatively new, Harry would have to watch carefully and learn on his feet.

Though, he thought for a moment as Jon explained that the fight would be to first-blood, perhaps he already had a clue or two if he was willing to see it as such.

He’d fought Ser Jaime.

Ser Jaime had been taught in large part and for years by Barristan the Bold.

Indeed, if there was a single soul who was most responsible for Jaime’s fighting style, it was the knight Harry now faced. Jaime had learned as well from Ser Arthur, Ser Oswell, and the other knights of the Kingsguard who were now dead and gone as well as the knight he’d squired for. But above all, he’d learned the longest from Barristan.

There, Harry surmised, might lay Harry’s advantage against the elder knight, if he could find the similarities in the duo’s fighting styles and exploit them against Barristan the way he’d exploited Jaime’s weaknesses in the Whispering Woods.

“Begin!” Jon shouted when both fighters had signaled their readiness, and there began one of the most nerve-wracking spans of time that he’d ever faced in his life – for all that he’d set up the circumstances underway himself.

Barristan and Harry began circling each other, taking their opponent’s measure, while Lewen kicked off the raucous with a cry of: “A gold dragon on Barristan!” Which was immediately met with Robb’s return of: “The fuck you say! Five dragons on Harry!” From all around the Lords and knights wagered heavily, most following Lewen’s lead of taking up Barristan’s cause while a few others, watching the two with shrewd eyes, placed their gold or silver on Harry having seen him fight for themselves in battle.

This, however, wasn’t a battle, a factor that dipped the scale in Barristan’s advantage.

Harry knew how to fight but above all he knew how to kill.
It was, after all, the single thing he’d been raised to do: fight, kill, and die.

That was it, the sum total of what the Wizarding World had wanted from their erstwhile hero.

Though in the end they’d found while he was perfectly able to do the first and second tasks he’d been raised to, unlike the pig-to-slaughter they’d thought him he refused to just lay down and cease to exist. He’d once craved quiet, craved normalcy, but those days were gone along with the epoch of his birth and childhood. Now, while quiet was enjoyable, it was no longer his sole goal and focus.

Seeing Jon on the Throne of Westeros was, followed closely by besting whatever-the-fuck challenge his fate had thrown at him this time.

To that end he’d become a more vicious, bloody-thirsty version of himself, above and beyond the changes worked in him by both Death and the wild magic of his new life.

Which was now the exact problem: he was vicious, capable of great violence, and above all deadly.

And this was only a fight to first-blood.

Having to check himself hindered him more than tying a hand behind his back would have – the effect was much the same. Oh, he could enhance his speed and strength with magic, and gods knew he’d always been agile with quicksilver reflexes. It would be nothing to him to dart around Barristan and make a killing blow before the aged knight of renown ever saw it coming.

But to hold his own in single combat and not take the advantage for a quick kill?

That was a hippogriff of a different color.

It was much the same problem he’d had with Jaime Lannister – a problem that had almost killed him. The Lannister knight was worth too much to kill, so Harry had restrained himself. And the Kingslayer had nearly gutted him as a result.

As Harry circled and paced around Barristan, eyeing up the aged warrior for weaknesses, he caught the first sign of the coming fight before their audience could get restless, Barristan swiping crosswise with a double-handed blow at the shoulder of Harry’s sword arm.

Barristan knew as well as Harry did that the younger man outmatched him for speed and agility, and his lighter armor lent itself well to dodging blows without wearing out. That left the aged knight with a simple but effective plan of attack: strong blows to weaken and tire him before his speed and dodging abilities did the same to Barristan. It was a pure battle of strategy: which would give first, Barristan’s strength or Harry’s speed?

And therein lay the show for the men surrounding them as quick as the snakes he could speak to, Harry’s inky-black sword was up and blocking, the lithe figure darting forward and flicking his wrist to swipe down at Barristan’s hip and thigh turning the block into a strike on the lower end of his swing and then dodging away before Barristan could recover from the recurve of his own swing.

Harry’s strike hit with the flat of his blade and bounced off the heavy white-enameled scale armor, Barristan withholding a telling wince. The lad had put enough force into the block/strike combination to bruise through his armor, even if it didn’t give him the easy early victory the whippet had been aiming for. Rolling his shoulder, Barristan advanced, no sign of the strike having hindered him in the slightest showing on either his face or in his gait, though he knew he’d feel it once the fighting-flush wore off.
“He’s quick.” Ser Arthur commented, watching the duel with narrowed eyes. Jon knew that look. The Lord Commander of his Kingsguard was examining every move from both Barristan and Harry, searching for things that need to be improved or refined. He should recognize that look anyway, Jon laughed to himself. He’d seen it sent his way often enough during his growing years when the Sword of Morning took his martial training in hand. “Agile as well.”

“Always has been from what I understand.” Jon said, barely hiding a wince as Barristan made contact of his own after another couple rounds of strikes and dodges. That was sure to leave a mark on his little love’s shoulder – thankfully Harry had seen it coming and turned into it, making the blow land on his off-shoulder rather than his main arm.

The Sword of Morning arched a brow and Prince Lewen gave a low whistle as the answering blow to the side of Barristan’s helm had the aged knight staggering back at the force of it.

“Stronger than he looks, innit he?” The Greatjon boomed from his place watching a dozen feet down from the King. “That’s the force of Winter there, Ser Barristan! Ice and snow may glisten and look soft as down but it has a wicked bite! Twenty dragons on the Lord of Winter!”

“Fuck.” Robb cursed, spying the look in Harry’s eyes. “They need to end this soon or Harry might do some real damage.”

“Are you certain?” Ser Arthur asked brow creasing as he watched the rain of blows from his sworn brother that followed the Umber Lord’s incendiary remarks. “It looks as if Barristan has him on his heels to my eyes.”

The knights and Lords within earshot of the Lord Commander muttered quiet agreements as Harry danced out of the way of Barristan’s flashing blade or blocking it when he couldn’t move fast enough but never striking back as hard as he had when he almost had Barristan the Bold staggering from his hit.

“Deadly certain, Ser Arthur.” Jon answered for Robb as the two of them exchanged a quick worried glance. He’d only wanted the Lords and knights to shut their mouths over Harry’s place in the army…not lose one of the foremost knight of the realm. What was amazing was the neither man had managed to draw blood, their armor taking one hells of a pounding between the two of them. “The hardest part of this exercise for Harry is not killing Barristan. If he loses sight of that because of his temper…” The King trailed off, shaking his head with a wince as Harry’s next blow gave credence to his words, Harry having shifted his hold on his blade, the sharp cutting edge shearing off part of the scale-shaped mail tunic that hung nearly to Barristan’s knees.

If that blow had hit it would’ve cost him a sworn guard, Barristan would be unfit for duty missing a leg below the knee.

As if knowing the turn their conversation had taken – and mayhap he did hear them or otherwise know at that – the formerly restrained Harry whirled into a rain of punishing blows, though none were as potentially crippling as the one that nearly took Barristan’s leg at the knee.

Ser Arthur’s shocked-open mouth closed with a click of teeth as Ser Oswell arched a brow saying: “Other than the one time he yelled at yourself, Your Grace, and Lord Robb, I was unaware Lord Harry even had a temper.”

Robb and Jon snorted in stereo, determinedly not looking at each other lest they lose their composure. It wouldn’t do to collapse in helpless laughter as they watched their lover set about pounding Ser Barristan into the dust. Though his swings still appeared to be well-enough controlled that neither felt the need to interfere – yet.
“He’s good at presenting a calm face to the world, at playing the game of nobles and kings.” Jon said dryly. “But Harry has a hotter temper than any man I’ve met – though better controlled than others who were infamous for their own hot-blood such as Robert Baratheon.”

“Aye, it’s true.” Robb corroborated when the knights around them still look skeptical. “His control is nearly impeccable – but that doesn’t make his temper any less real or formidable.” Robb snorted once again, clearly remembering being slammed against a wall in Pyke.

The Lord of the North stopped speaking just in time to watch as Harry – more than a head shorter and several stone smaller than Barristan the Bold – made a tricky combination of moves that had Ser Barristan’s sword knocked loose and flying away out of his hold, followed up by a kick out with one leg against the knee he nearly amputated, taking the aged knight down, weaponless, to one knee.

Technically, the fight was to first blood.

But Harry knew well that there was another way to end the showing, and if the looks on the faces surrounding him meant anything, then there was no reason to carry the theatrical duel any further.

“Do you yield, Ser Barristan?” He asked in a quiet but carrying voice as he held his sword steady in the Ochs position, ready to strike down and hard to take first blood if the elder man refused.

Barristan lifted one gloved hand and removed his helm with a little good-natured chuckle. “Aye lad.” He shook his head as Harry lowered and sheathed his sword then offered him a hand up, the Kingsguard being man enough to accept the help back onto his feet. “You’ll have to show me that trick of yours again…another day.”

“Of course, Ser Barristan.” Harry gave a regal nod as shouts rang out around the circle and some of the Lords and knights began collecting on their bets. “Another day.”

…

Blood hot and needing to vent some aggression before it spilled out in a devastating magical blast – or cost Jon some lords and knights – Harry pounced on his lovers as soon as they cleared the tent flap, the Kingsguard having quickly checked it and rushed back out to take up posts around it, having seen the looks the three were sharing on the walk back to their field quarters from the makeshift practice ring.

Hands were everywhere as they stripped off armor and weapons, leather and linen and silk without care for damage or even where things landed. Mouths kissed and nipped and bit, tongues dueling and bodies grinding smoothly with a coat of slick sweat easing the way. With a gasp, Harry pulled away from his loves, giving a fierce push to Jon’s sculpted chest that had the exquisitely built uncrowned king falling back onto their bedfurs, Robb latching himself around Harry’s back, face buried in untamed ebony locks he’d frantically pulled from their demure braid and hands stroking over hot flesh, the Northern lord’s heated cock pulsing against Harry’s lower back.

Harry paid no mind to the aroused lord behind him, the world awash in nothing but reds as he crawled over and pinned Jon to the mattress before the first among his lovers could push himself up and attempt to take back control as was his want with his fiery Targaryen blood.

Robb settled in to watch from the foot of the bedfurs as Harry grabbed Jon’s wrists and pinned them down, his grip white-knuckled and tight enough to leave bruises, the wizard’s mouth slamming down on Jon’s own in a delirium of tongues and teeth.

There was nothing gentle to be had, not this time, not in this.
It was a battle of primal aggression, Jon from needing to reclaim his consort after watching him do battle, Harry from the unspent aggression the battle had wrought in him, and lastly Robb’s own was roused by that of his lovers.

Mind clearing for a split-second, Harry cast a spell over his lovers, cleaning and preparing them for their bedplay. Harry wasn’t sure yet if it was necessary for both of them but not taking any risks with harming his loves. He wanted to dominate them, not hurt them or cause them damaging pain.

A flex of Harry’s magic had Jon’s wrists lashed together and bound to the frame of the bedstead, freeing Harry to...explore his dragon-hearted lover to his satisfaction. Nipping and sucking, Harry tormented and teased the violet-eyed Targaryen, paying special attention to the pert pale-pink nubs on his chest, Jon arching up with a groan, dripping cock grinding furiously but receiving no satisfaction from the air, Harry having quickly shifted to avoid the thrust and elongate his beloved’s torture. Dragging his body down Jon’s in a single long caress Harry bit and sucked another mark into the meat of Jon’s hip, the dragon king moaning low in his throat as his eyes clenched shut, unable to take the sights before him: Harry taunting and teasing masterfully and Robb watching every move they two made with burning blue eyes and a hand stroking his equally burning arousal.

Robb gave a low growl at the sight of Harry, hovering so temptingly just out of reach and playing their lover’s body like a harp, his mind overloaded with the vision before him, his own completion just out of reach as he tugged furiously on his large throbbing cock.

A growl that snagged Harry’s attention even in his focused lust-and-aggression drenched haze, as he knew that sound of imminent climax intimately.

And that simply wouldn’t do, not at all.

A third spell shot from Harry, finally lifting a bit of the pressure that had been riding him, his magic being as roused by combat as his lust and blood had been. Before Robb could even realize what was happening, his wrists were bound together behind his back, restraining him in a delicious tableau for his lovers’ eyes, back arched just a bit as he kneeled on the end of the bed, pulsing cock throbbing an angry red-purple, pre-cum leaking copiously from the plum-shaped tip. Eyes wide with shock, Robb moved to protest, only to be silenced by the fierce growling voice of his little love.

“That’s mine, tonight.” Harry rasped, one hand reaching out and giving Robb’s cock a strong tug that was just shy of painful. “You’re both mine. And tonight I’m going to remind you of just who it is you’ve promised yourselves to.”

With that dark promise that sent shivers down each of their spines, Harry turned back to the dazedly watching Jon, his eyes deepening to almost black the green was so lost in the lust-shot pupil.

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“No…” His grin was all teeth. “Let get started on that, shall we?”

With no more ado, Harry grabbed Jon under his knees, lifting them up and to his chest, tying them there with an absent wave of his fingers, then caressing Jon’s dark star lightly to test the spells he’d used to clean and prepare his dragon. He wanted to claim them, grind his name all the way down into their bones, but not at the cost of their trust. And of the three of them, only Harry bottomed with any regularity though the others did when the mood was upon them.

But as a hot-blooded Targaryen king and a fierce Northern lord, they were rather monsters in the bedfurs. Monsters that loved to pound his perky arse into the ground. Not that minded, on the contrary, he loved that about them, and that they were willing to accommodate him in turn when he was of a mind to take rather than give to his lovers.
It was a rare thing, Harry being open in his love of a nice juicy cock, something his former friends had never understood or supported.

To Harry, it was a testament to his comfort in his masculinity that he could take a cock or fuck an arse as he pleased, not a detraction from it.

And he was thrilled beyond words that he’d found lovers that felt the same, even if they had roles they clearly preferred.

Banishing such thoughts to the back of his mind as he took in the sight before him: Jon’s head tossing on the furs, his arms high over his head with his wrists bound to the bedstead, knees up and spread so prettily putting his firm arse and winking, lubed hole on display from his spellwork, and a throbbing reddened arousal bobbing, plump bollocks swollen with seed. It was enough to give a dead man a cockstand. And Harry was most assuredly not dead.

With a fierce thrust of his not-insignificant cock, Harry drilled home into his hot-blooded dragon lover, Jon’s voice raising in a half-pained, all-pleasured howl, eyes snapping open as his head craned back along with his arching back and neck. Not giving him even a moment of reprieve, Harry thrust rapidly pulling almost all the way out before bottoming back into Jon’s spasming channel with a speed only possible for one of Harry’s agility to maintain. Face going slack a moment, then twisting with the sign of on-coming completion as Harry tortured Jon’s pleasure-button over and over with each thrust, Jon moaned, eager for his peak.

Only to be denied as one lithe, sword-callused hand wrapped tightly around the base of his pulsing arousal, slick with Jon’s own pre-cum. Leaning forward and switching to short jabs of his hips that kept a constant grind on Jon’s prostate, Harry growled jaggedly in one elegant ear: “You’re mine tonight. That includes this.” He reminded him with a harsh twist of the base of the cock in his hand. “You don’t cum until I decide, my king.” He hissed, cutting off Jon’s cum, the cock pulsing fiercely in his hand as his lover was forced into a dry orgasm with a cry.

An echoing cry from Robb drew Harry’s attention back to his Northern lover, Harry speaking his next words lazily with his head turned and glowing green eyes locked on burning blue, continuing to thrust into their shared lover and while he tugged and punished Jon’s cock, hand tightening down harshly with any sign of approaching climax.

“I haven’t forgotten you, my wolf.” Harry’s voice was dark and rasping, as he reveled in his play and mastery over his lovers, even as he knew they were sure to pay him back in spades when next they shared their bedfurs. “Is it killing you, having to look but not touch? Our dragon pants and cries so sweetly for me, will he do the same for you, do you think? If you drive that throbbing hot cock of yours, that monster that likes to tear me open so wonderfully, into our beloved king’s wet, dripping arse? It is you, know.” His words were lavish and husky as he ground down into Jon, Robb’s eyes latching onto the filthy sight of Harry’s cock plummeting over and over again into the stretched hole, hearing the wet squelching of lube and pre-cum mixing with the slapping of Harry’s balls on the taut mounds of Jon’s muscled arse. “Dripping with me. Would you like that? Taking my sloppy seconds after I’ve come again and again into our beloved slutty king’s arsehole? Would you add your hot, burning Northern seed to the mess I’m making of our Targaryen bitch? Would you breed him the way you’ve bred me? Make him give you a litter of little wolf-dragons to nurse at his pretty pink teats?”

That was more than Robb could take, the filthy images racing across his mind from Harry’s gutter-talk making his vision flash white as he came spurt after spurt of his seed without even touching himself, every drop of it landing on his lovers as they fucked just in front of him, coating Harry’s back and pumping arse or falling onto Jon’s spread thighs, a single spray of it even falling onto
where his lovers were joined, a white glob dripping down onto Jon’s stretched hole.

Panting, Robb fell back onto his heels, spent as Harry’s words proved too much for all of them when combined with the sight of Robb coming unassisted from watching and listening alone, the heated splatters of his cum on Harry’s back and arse having him shudder and thrust once, twice, three times before throwing his head back and shooting deep within Jon’s hot channel, commanding his dragon to “Cum, now!” at the same time as he loosened his grip on the king’s cock and let him at last release his dragonseed onto his belly.

Knees buckling under him, Harry fell down onto his arms, mindful even in the aftermath not to put too much pressure on Jon’s restrained form.

Gulping down air, his aggression and temper spent, he sighed, closing his eyes and rolling his neck. He didn’t want to move. Not for weeks at least. But Harry, having been in the same positions as his lovers before, when he’d played around with such things before being frozen in time – both giving and receiving – knew they need aftercare or at least to be released and a gentle hand, particularly Jon, Harry not wanting the dirty talk he’d used to be taken seriously, as they’d never ventured into such things before.

Honestly, Harry wasn’t a true Dom or Sub, but there were times when his very nature needed more than a little slap-and-tickle or gentle lovemaking, even the fierce fucking his lovers often reveled in. There was an edge in Harry, one that sometimes needed sensual pain or a bit of bondage to be satisfied.

This was the first time either Jon or Robb had truly experienced it and he hoped, hoped that it hadn’t been too much for them.

He could live without it, if he needed to.

But when he could very well live forever, if that was Death’s whim, with them at his side, why on earth would he want to?

Though he supposed he could always broach it again in another century or so if they balked now, once they were in need of a bit of spice in their lives…

Pulling out of Jon, a stream of cum and lube following him, Harry sighed, eyeing the fucked-drunk forms of his larger warrior-lovers. A wave of his hand had them all cleaned, while another had Robb released and spread out beside Jon on the bed, Harry quickly using his magic to untie his kingly love and get him eased into a more comfortable position as well. Taking advantage of their post-coital daze, Harry first rubbed down Jon, who’d been more constrained and likely had the tingling limbs to show for it, then Robb.

Once they both were seen to and were starting to come aware, Harry moved to sit between them at their hips, after propping both of them up into an upright seated position against the simple planked headboard of the bedstead and began to talk, his words low and gentle.

“In my time, my first reality I suppose you could say.” Harry began, Robb and Jon watching him quietly as actual thoughts began to seep back into their minds. “We had progressed to the point of being a very...hedonistic society. Lys, only without the slaves, mostly, is the best I can compare the more advanced countries to. Everything one could imagine as far as intimacy was available and for the most part accepted with a few very serious exceptions that were considered immoral.”

“Like what?” Jon asked in a rasp, Harry instantly conjuring a pair of goblets with fresh water at the
sound and handing them over to his lovers, eyes concerned.

“Age and consent were the two big ones. And bestiality.” Harry shrugged, not really wanting to get into the whole subset that existed in the Wizarding World surrounding Animagus forms. “Safe, sane, and consensual was the motto most lived by, though there were always exceptions. In most places you had to be either sixteen or eighteen to be considered an adult and capable of consenting to a sexual act.”

“But…” Robb frowned, that was very different than their known world.

“What about ‘flowering’?” Harry supplied, shaking his head. “That wasn’t a mark we went by in most places. We were more concerned with mental readiness than physical readiness. And it was a different world, a softer world in many ways. We lived longer, people matured slower.” He shrugged again.

He wasn’t going to debate the morality of current laws. That wasn’t for him to decide any more than it was for him as a British Wizarding Citizen to judge the age of consent in France or Japan or any other country in his former reality. This was a different world altogether it was so different than his original time period. And it was for the people of this time and age to set down their laws and follow them, not for him who had an entirely different and foreign perspective on things to dictate to them.

Merlin.

Hermione would have hated having to live that way, she wouldn’t have been able to keep herself from speaking up and trying to challenge and change the laws, the same as she had with Wizarding Britain.

“Anyway,” Harry got back to his point. “One thing I discovered about myself because of the anything goes way of thinking when it came to pleasure, was that, when I get into a certain mood I need certain things.”

“Tying us up.” Jon observed with a wry grin and understanding eyes, Robb nearly echoing the look on his cousin-lover’s face. “Taking control.”

“That’s part of it.” Harry nodded. “There was a whole lifestyle and section of society that revolved around that sort of thing. There were even names and titles and special vocabulary for it. My magic can be volatile, especially when I’m aggressive and my blood is hot. It doesn’t like to be constrained when it’s like that, and when I was young that resulted in some rather explosive shows of power. My last lover before I was frozen in time, he helped me discover other ways to channel my aggression and dominance.” He gave a little chuckle, shaking his head as he thought of the first time he Dom’d Blaise. “I would never say or do things like that in any other time, I don’t think of either of you that way. I’m very happy with the way things are between us normally. And very satisfied.” He rushed to reassure them. “But sometimes…”

“You need to tie us up, take charge, and make us cum until we’re deaf, dumb, and blind?” Robb asked, humor ripe in his voice, brows arched in question.

“Yeah.” Harry breathed, thankfully. Robb understood at least, though whether Jon was okay with what had happened remained to be seen. He’d been rather more forceful with his violet-eyed love, and some of the things he’d said while getting Robb off were probably hard for a Targaryen king to swallow now that he was himself again. “Just…sometimes.”

“I can accept that.” The Northern lord agreed, turning on his side to face the still-contemplative Jon. “Jon?”
“Is that how you think of me?” Jon’s voice was heartbreakingly young, a stark reminder for Harry that both of his lovers were just in their late teens. Men by Westerosi standards but still so very young and at times vulnerable with it. “A slut, your bitch?”

“Death, no!” Harry burst out, appalled. This was exactly why he’d started this conversation in the first place. The wizard snapped to his knees and nearly lunged across the bed to take Jon’s hands in his own, staring earnestly into confused, but starting to clear, eyes. “I think you’re one of the best men I’ve ever met. I chose you to be my lover, my bonded, because I couldn’t imagine my life without you once I came to know you. I yearn for you when I’m away and fear for you every time we enter combat. You’re the father of one of my sons.” Harry’s voice turned fierce. “And I would slaughter anyone who thought to take you away from me, from us.” He corrected, nodding to Robb and resting one hand on his lower belly. “I would even challenge Death himself if he thought to separate us now. What I said in the heat of passion was merely for effect, the same as you two have done in the furs with me before. In bed, nothing should be taken as offense, so long as we all gain pleasure from it.”

“It was…arousing.” Jon admitted, worrying at his lower lip, gaze darting between both of the men, his lovers and future consorts, who were watching him with love and care rich in their very differing stares. “And…intriguing to be…used. To feel like a vessel for your pleasure and to not have to be in control.”

“You trusted me, even not knowing what I was doing or what would happen next.” Harry observed.

“Yes.” Jon sighed, nodding. “Yes, I did. Even when it almost hurt, the pain was a good pain. And you took care of me. I…enjoyed it. But I don’t think it’s something I’ll be comfortable with doing…too often. It…chafed…a bit, at my inner nature. But,” he shrugged. “So long as such talk and actions are restricted to the privacy of our bedfurs and it isn’t every night, I could be amenable to experiencing it again.”

“That’s wonderful, my love.” Harry sighed, feeling very loved as he knew of the two Jon was the most unsure over Harry’s words and actions when the need to dominate was riding him. They rose together to dress and invite the Kingsguard into their tent for a last strategy meeting before sleeping, the work of the King and his right-and-left hands never done. “Thank you…for understanding this part of me. I know it wasn’t exactly what you expected.”

“You’re a wizard and warrior from over eight thousand years ago and a society now long dead and gone.” Jon said, his natural humor rising to the fore. “Nothing about you has been what I expected, from the moment I woke you all those weeks past.”

Harry could tell that despite the silencing charms around their bed, the Kingsguard had picked up on something, from the almost shocked looks he fielded the next day as they marched onward to meet the two flanks of their split armies, especially from Ser Oswell and Ser Barristan, both of whom were considered either rather devout or being older were more likely to be shocked by Harry’s actions in bedplay.

He didn’t think it could be a result of his duel, thus he’d already decided to re-layer the silencing spells in case they had weakened. They weren’t broken at least. If they had been it would’ve been the entire camp likely shocked to their toes by what had passed yestereen in the trio’s bedfurs.

They were to be met by Harry’s Ironborn who had swept down the western coast from the north under the command of Lords Blacktyde and Harlaw, Victarion having not shown hide nor hair of himself in the time since his brother and nephew had been defeated though Harry knew they’d gotten
word from the rest of the Ironborn fleet over what had happened. Also meeting them would be the joined Dornish/Targaryen-loyalist-Crownlands/Golden Company force who had left a force behind to hold Oldtown and muzzle the Citadel while taking the Ocean Road towards Lannisport. A raven had reached them saying that they were bringing an envoy from the Grey Cloaks or Maesters to meet and treat with the new Targaryen claimant. Word had it that the Faith was in an uproar over the dual actions of taking away their stronghold in the Reach at Oldtown as well as their ‘brothers in enlightenment’ the Citadel being under siege and guard.

Good.

The Faith and the Citadel both had too strong a hold on Westeros.

And that was before Harry confided his theories, suspicions, and findings to his lovers.

He had decided to wait for a time, until they had most of the Seven Kingdoms in a noose before revealing what he’d found – and what he’d surmised.

Jon couldn’t afford a war with the Faith, not yet, not while the Crown is deeply indebted to them.

And if Harry doesn’t plan things just right, another war may very well be what they face.

Well…he smirked thinking to himself as they reined in, cresting a hill that overlooked Lannisport and the bay, Casterly Rock looming on a high bluff over it all, it was a war they couldn’t afford yet.

With the birds-eye-view, the joined Northern-Targaryen-Riverland army trailing behind them, the vanguard with Jon, Harry, and Robb at its head with their most loyal and trusted commanders could plainly see the blockaded bay, the flags of House Valeryon and House Blacktyde giving proof of the two fleets: Targaryen and Ironborn, having joined ranks. The Lannister ships were already burning, though the docks had been left alone, as Harry and Jon had ordered. An encamped force was directly to the south of Lannisport.

Prince Oberyn had beaten them there, the banner of Sunspear and the Golden Company flying side-by-side with the inverted red and black three-headed dragon of House Blackfyre.

“Send out ravens to the fleets. And riders to our sister camp.” Jon called back to the squires and foot soldiers who had charge of the messenger birds. “Use the swiftest we have: they are to sweep down upon Lannisport with the dusk. The Lannister hold on the Westerlands ends before the dawn.”

“The men are tired from the march, your grace.” Ser Barristan advised. “They need a rest.”

“And they’ll have one.” Harry observed the elder knight out of sharp eyes. “Half a day if I’m reading the sun right. More than enough to let our enemy think we’re settling in for a protracted siege and for the men to drink and fill their bellies.”

“Surprise is lost to us.” Jon told his commanders. “Casterly Rock and Lannisport have hunkered down for a long campaign. They won’t expect us to attack fresh from the march. And doing the unexpected is what has brought us this far. Besides.” His smile was grim. “We may have a trick or two up our sleeves yet…” Turning he gave Harry a nod, the Lord of Winter and the Iron Islands turning and setting spurs to his horse, Ser Arthur and Prince Lewen taking up position at his sides.

They had a surprise to ready, and a castle to take.

Jon and Robb and their lords could sack Lannisport without his help, though his heart went with them as always.
Stealth was the order of the day, at least as it came to impregnable fortresses like Casterly Rock…or Storm’s End or any of the other strongholds Harry had at least helped plan the sieges of.

And no one in Westeros was better at stealth than a wizard with a company of Dornishmen guarding his backside, as Renly Baratheon had learned to his detriment.

…

“How is it, Harry.” Prince Oberyn griped as he joined up with Harry, Ser Arthur, and his fifty-years-young uncle Prince Lewen standing at a point on the bluffs at the base of Casterly Rock.

“That every time you get a bright idea, I somehow end up crawling through dark spaces…this one much worse than the last.”

“This one” referring to the drain that the other men were studying while Harry set fire to his sword and used it as a rudimentary blow-torch to cut away the grill blocking access to said drain. A drain that was connected to the privies and definitely smelled of it, for all that it was supposedly cleaned weekly with a solution of sea water and lime.

Tyrion had chosen a side.

And with him came the information about how to breech the defenses of Casterly Rock with the least loss of life.

A solution that was markedly similar – but at the same time so very smellier – to that Ser davos and the Dornish used to breech Storm’s End.

The most dismissed Lannister had at one point in an attempt at humiliation from his father, been appointed as “lord” over the jakes, privies, and cisterns in Casterly Rock and Lannisport. The ancient keep that was built long before Lann the Clever swindled it away from the Casterlys, didn’t have a convenient emergency exit known only to the ruling family. No. Casterly Rock was known to be completely impregnable, so why bother with such a thing?

Hubris, perhaps, on the account of the families that have ruled it, but very trying for anyone who sought to take advantage of the vulnerabilities escape routes provided.

Sneaking into a castle via the sewers might not be honorable – in fact it was the exact opposite – but Harry really couldn’t give a fuck. He had a war to win, preferably before his sons were born. “Honor” was a fluid concept anyway.

What one society saw as honorable, another saw as perversion, and vice versa.

To a man and wizard who had survived a war only to be locked away out of his own highly vaunted honor, and woken into yet another war, honor was only as valuable as the lives it saved and as disheartening as those it cost.

History was written by the victors after all, and no one was going to care about how they took two fortresses – only that they did and in doing so helped place Jon on the Iron Throne.

Still, he thought to himself as he fought to keep his stomach from roiling at the ripe scent of the dark tunnel. This was once where he wished he was the type of man to sit on the sidelines and stroke his honor, rather than getting down and dirty with the other pit-fighters and survivors. He was not looking forward to the coming climb, even if he could clean the tunnel as he went with his magic.

There were some smells even an overpowered Scourgify couldn’t deal with, and the overripe shit and piss of hundreds of Lannisters over the course of centuries was definitely on that list.
“Here we go.” He said as the grill gave way, Ser Arthur and Prince Lewen catching it despite the heat of the metal before it could fall and draw the attention of the guards on the top of the walls.

Most of the Lannister forces had already fallen in battle or were camping out in the fields surrounding King’s Landing. No one, certainly not Tywin Lannister or his nearly-as-arrogant brothers, had considered for a moment that they would get this far. Which left a skeleton crew of only a few hundred to guard the Rock, the bulk of the force numbering in the thousands encamped in the port city below.

It would be another rout, one that they were taking swift advantage of as they watched the sun lower towards the horizon, touching the sea. All of the attention of the day was focused on the fleet blockading the bay and the two armies on the doorstep of Lannisport. Not a soul was watching the far bluff where the sewers emptied into the sea.

And that was how they needed it to stay for this to work and not end in a slaughter.

Lions were much harder to kill than foolish Stags after all, as the current count was two Stags killed by the golden beasts, much to Stannis’s fury.

As well as an untold number of staglings slaughtered by the vicious Cersei as she sought to wipe all of Robert’s many bastards from the face of the earth.

“This is a task from the seven hells.” Oberyn swore softly as they waited and waited for the attack to begin, giving them cover to the inevitable noise that would be made by their climb.

“It’s a shit task, literally.” His uncle agreed wryly. “Still…better than banging on the gates for weeks on end until we can starve that fucker Kevan out.”

Ser Arthur just rolled his eyes at the pair of them, keeping watch on the top of the wall while Harry started casting cleaning spells as far up the tunnel as he could see. The climb was almost sheer in places, and tight angles in others according to Tyrion, and would take all their concentration to make without giving their presence away. He could – and would – cast cleaning charms as he went, able to do it through sheer will, but other spells weren’t as easy like keeping up a silencing spell that had to cover the length of four men, with space in-between.

Silencing spells were mostly used on a stationary area or to shut-up a person by applying it directly upon them, which would force him to cast and recast it the entire climb, costing energy that between the twins and the coming fight he couldn’t afford to waste, even with the excess magic constantly pushing at him for use.

Exhaustion would be deadly, a chance he wasn’t willing to take after the issues with dizziness he’d been suffering with and having already lost consciousness during the siege of Bloodstone.

He knew better, now, what was going on, and was much more cautious with his magic usage as a result, not that he’d even been too showy with it in Westeros, acceding to Jon’s wish to conquer the Kingdoms and create a lasting dynasty, not one that would falter in less than three hundred years like the last.

The sound of warhorns reached their ears.

Jon had ordered the attack to commence.

All four men exchanged grim glances before Ser Arthur moved to take point, all their heavy armor and weapons having been left behind in preference for leathers, each having only what daggers or other small arms they could fit in their boots or tuck into their belts under their shirts. Harry even
banished his sword back to its scabbard, which Jon had attached to his horse’s saddle until they were reunited. The Kingsguard felt nearly naked as first Arthur went into the dark tunnel without Dawn, House Dayne’s ancestral sword, Harry at his heels and followed by Oberyn, Lewen bringing up the rear.

A whispered word had a dim ball of red light, the best color for this kind of work, bobbing a foot or so in front of Arthur and relieving the total darkness they soon entered as the glow from the fading day was left behind to the close confines of the tunnel.

“Let me know when the clean stone gives way to fouled.” Harry instructed Arthur. “We should be able to smell it first, but just in case say something so I can cast the spells to clean it.”

Arthur looked over his shoulder and nodded, using the spikes Harry had transfigured the soles of their boots into to help steady him against the walls as the incline steadily increased until they were almost climbing straight up, the sewer system being designed to use gravity to carry away the waste.

It was slow going, Harry’s cleaning spells only working for every twenty feet or so, more than one of them having to empty the contents of their stomachs during the climb, especially the pregnant wizard.

“Are you well, my lord?” Lewen whispered low as Harry upchucked for the third time, Oberyn and Lewen clung to the far wall to avoid getting doused in the watery bile, Harry having little else remaining to expel at this point. “Should we two turn back and leave this to my family?” He asked, referencing that as a Kingsguard, Arthur Dayne was as much Lewen Martell’s kin as his blood-kin Oberyn was.

“We should be close.” Harry told him through gritted teeth as he forced himself up another six inches, arms feeling like rubber. “At this point I’ll be out of this hell-hole faster by continuing on than turning back. I’ll make it.” He said determinedly. “But next time Jon gets to climb through shit to take a castle, I’m done until the heirs are born.”

That was the best news both Kingsguard had heard in ages, at least until Ser Arthur whispered back that the tunnel branched off over their heads.

“Describe it for me.” Harry asked, pushing with his legs and holding himself up with his back against the tunnel wall to rest his arms. “Are all the off-shoots the same or are some smaller, larger, steeper…?”

“Yes,” Arthur reported after advancing and taking a closer look. “And one has a grate over it, like the one at the castle wall.”

“That one leads to the Lord’s chambers.” Harry said, blowing out a breath. “And thankfully it’s not the one we want. Arthur, I need you to look for a tunnel, it should be round and the size to barely fit a man. It’s steeper than all the rest, nearly sheer, do you see it?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Good.” Harry sighed, Tyrion hadn’t led them into a trap after all…thus far at least. “That’s very good. That’s the one we want: it should lead to a hinged hatch at the rear of the stable yard.” He grimaced. “They use it to dispose of the offal from the animal pens. It’ll be sheer for the length of the tunnel.”

It was the trade off the builders had used: most of the tunnels were far too slender for a grown man to traverse. But to be rid of the animal droppings, they needed a much larger space to work with to
prevent blockages. So they made it sheer: a near impossible climb.

Unfortunately for the Lannisters inside the castle, they’d pissed off their own for the last time, and under estimated Harry’s ability to take on impossible tasks.

All of them breathed a sigh of relief as they felt cool air brush over their faces rather than the stale, rancid air of the tunnels.

They were almost through, the sound of horses and distant battle beginning to carry to their ears.

Men and horse swept down on Lannisport like a tidal wave, flooding the streets and turning the grey stone cobbles red, sweeping through the gates and over the walls, there was nothing Kevan Lannister could do but watch in horror as they came by sea and land in a hammer and anvil smash of destruction that made the Greyjoy sack of Lannisport seem like a fond memory.

The only difference, besides the size of the force, being that while Balon Greyjoy had murdered and raped with impunity, setting house and shop and even men aflame without mercy, this new so-called King, this bastard son of a Targaryen, only struck down those who stood in his way, the garrison falling within hours and marching to just out of range of the catapults and trebuchets and archers all arranged on the walls of Casterly Rock.

Ironborn came in from the sea, securing the docks and preventing any chance of running the blockade of the Targaryen fleet.

Dornish and Crownlands and sellsword men alike slammed into the Southern wall, standing as the “anvil” under the command of a Blackfyre Banner to the “hammer” of Jon Targaryen and Robb Stark’s joined army. The elephants the sellswords commanded and rode moving to the head of the line and battering down the first of the series of gates leading to the castle wall even as they spoke. It was only a matter of time, and not much at that, before the massive mounts tore through the Rock’s final line of defense like a knife through silk.

“What shall we do, brother?” Corpulent Genna Lannister, wife of a now-dead Frey, for which she secretly thanked the Targaryen devil, asked as they stood, the only two surviving siblings of Tywin upon the curtain wall, their children and those of the rest of the main Lannister line who were not either with Tywin or already dead flanking them. “The stores won’t hold out forever…and neither will the gates.”

“Pray.” Kevan answered succinctly, knuckles turned white as he watched the invading force still and wait – though for what he couldn’t begin to guess. “To all the gods that Tywin won’t leave us here to rot and die as Robert did to Stannis and Renly for all that they survived in the end.”

As he spoke, a lit arrow shot out over the far wall, arching high above the sea and the main gates swung outward, the waiting army having gotten their signal charging forward with a resounding cry from the Ironborn: “Black, black, BLACK!” As the elephants surged forward and thundered through the second and third outer gates, leaving only the defenses on the high walls to keep them from breeching the castle, their strong gates either floundered – or having been opened somehow from the inside.

Faces white, Kevan and Genna turned tail and darted inside the castle, making for the hidden tunnels in the mines where they could hopefully hide and wait-out the occupation of the Rock, Jon Targaryen having shown himself to be a commander with a dislike of leaving his men to sit idle and his enemies time to regroup.
They’d heard of a Black. Harry Potter-Black. The Warrior-Who-Waits and chosen consort of the Targaryen king.

It was through his plan that Storm’s End fell and now it seemed Casterly Rock would follow it, making it the third stronghold after Storm’s End and Old Town to fall from the inside, Black seeming to find and exploit their vulnerabilities with ease, curse his hide.

Seven be good, the Rock wouldn’t take them with it and give the damned Dragon yet more hostages to curb Tywin with.

…

“We lost five thousand men between the Gold Cloaks and our own forces.” One of the Westerland lords in Tywin’s retinue reported to the newly returned Hand of the King as he sat in state with the small council, his idiotic grandson and daughter nowhere to be seen. “Leaving us with twenty-five thousand of our own men in the Kingswood and the plains surrounding King’s Landing. However,” the lord sighed. “We are still blockaded from Blackwater Bay by the Northern Fleet and cut off from every avenue of aid save from what Mace Tyrell has promised us from the Reach.”

“I’m afraid, my lord Hand.” Varys spoke up in his nearly-feminine whisper. “That the expected aid from the Tyrell faction, may well be much less than we thought.”

“Whether we will ever see said aid is the question.” Tywin said scathingly. “Well. Time will tell and his precious daughter will be here soon enough for surety.”

Varys shook his head, hands folded gently on the wooden table before him. Also present were Tyrion, the Grand Maester Pycelle, the Mockingbird Baelish and some of the remaining Lords of the Realm. Three of them being most capable of gathering information in their own ways, and none of them looking forward to sharing it with Lord Tywin.

“It’s more than that, Father.” Tyrion commented, drinking deeply of his Arbor gold, Bronn at his back as he always was now a days. “Apparently Willas Tyrell never received his father’s instructions, having pulled immediately back from Bitterbridge in the wake of dual news of Mace’s failure and the taking of Old Town. He left a provisionary force of a mere five thousand encamped and took the rest, an Heirs’ Army swelled with the younger Lords and Heirs of the Reach, back to Highgarden.”

“Yes,” Varys seconded the report with a nod. “My little birds tell me Lord Mace was most distraught at only finding his mother and daughter waiting with their guard and not much more than a few thousand men with them when Lord Tyrell arrived. Most distraught indeed. However,” Varys sighed waving a perfumed arm. “None can deny the delicate position Lord Mace is now in after his resounding defeat and the advance of the Dornish accompanied by the Golden Company in Old Town. A Golden Company carrying the banner of House Blackfyre.”

“House Blackfyre?” Baelish whispered, skin milk pale. “How is that possible?”

“We crushed the male line.” Tywin bit out, fingers drumming on the table. “But it was rumored the female line continued. This Jon Targaryen must have allied with the last of his remaining kin. And what of Aerys’ daughter? Where is she in the game?”

“Unknown.” Varys frowned lightly. “Lost in the Red Waste was the last report.”

“Speaking of ladies, what of Lady Sansa?” Grand Maester Pycelle wheezed. “What will be done with her now that you seek to marry Margery to Joffery? Will you wed her to young Tommen
instead?"

“That would be a waste of a beautiful woman.” Baelish observed, eyes glinting.

Tyrion found himself reluctantly agreeing with the Mockingbird…for once.

“I would be wary of trying to wed her to anyone.” Tyrion half-jested. “Wedding the Dragon’s cousin is asking to be burned.”

“Yes.” His father mused, watching him carefully. “Yes it is. I have yet to decide what to do with Lady Sansa. It is a situation that must be handled with the utmost skill… Tyrion.” He turned to his son. “I wish to speak with you privately afterwards. Moving on, has anyone heard from or seen Sandor Clegane?”

Harry fought with his back to the gate, flanked by Prince Lewen and Ser Arthur.

Prince Oberyn had gone off to signal the armies, as well as sow destruction and play saboteur among the trebuchets and catapults, leaving the three of them to hold the gate until the elephants could bust down the three outer gates and the vanguard could arrive.

They had stolen swords from the sleeping guards in the barracks after making it out from the labyrinthine sewer system, Ser Arthur giving Harry and the others a hand up after wriggling free from the small space.

Harry had never been so glad to see a pile of literal horseshit in his life than when he’d clapped eyes on the pile in the back of the stables, they’d spent the entire damn climb worrying about someone using the sewers and piss and/or shit raining down on their collective heads, Arthur more than anyone else since he would’ve borne the brunt of it.

Now they stood, fighting with all their might to keep the gates open as the Lannister men surged forward, battering them back step by step.

“Jon better fucking arrive soon or that entire climb was a waste!” Harry shouted over towards the Kingsguard as he lopped off yet another sword arm before stabbing the Lannister-wearing asshole in the throat. It was like they never learned... “Do you see them?”

“No!” Lewen shouted back, feeling the vibrations from the stampeding elephants under his feet. “But I hear them!”

A breeze and the sound of thundering hooves was his only warning before two sets of hands grabbed him around the shoulders and simultaneously pushed/pulled him onto the back of a horse. Dropping the sword, Harry clamped his arms around Jon’s waist, shooting a smile over at Robb who had helped their lover lift him onto the King’s mount at a gallop. The vanguard of mounted knights and Northern cavalry had arrived, the Ironborn and Golden Company at their heels.

As he reached for his sword, hanging right where it was supposed to be from Jon’s saddle, he spotted Ser Barristan and Ser Mark riding up beside their sworn brothers and handing over their Valyrian steel swords and other weapons that had been left behind.

Spying a budding problem on the wall, Harry turned and called an order to his men: “Ironborn! To the walls! Prince Oberyn is pressed and in need of aid!”

“Aye!” Shouted back his men, the Crow’s Eye among them along with Lord Blacktyde and others.
There was still no word of Victarion, a state of affairs he wasn’t pleased about but had no time to sort…as of yet.

Jon and Harry with Robb at their side and the Kingsguard surrounding them, rode through the Lannister guardsmen like a scythe through wheat, cutting them down before they managed to rouse much of a defense now that they were faced with a true incursion force rather than a quartet of saboteurs to take care of.

Blood spilled, limbs were lost, and men died by the score as they swept through the ancient fortress, leaving no nook or cranny untouched, taking no chances on leaving a would-be assassin alive to slit their throats in the night.

And as a red sun rose, the banner of House Targaryen flew high over the walls of Casterly Rock, the three headed dragon roaring out their victory for all to see.

... The three of them slept, and slept deeply, in the Lord’s Chambers of the castle after having the access point Harry had used welded back shut with a spell, a ward placed over it at the entrance they’d used. Harry wasn’t taking any chances on another repeating his feat now that they had the castle under their control.

It was from this sound sleep that Harry was awakened by an alert from his magic, his eyes shooting over to a shadowed corner as he summoned a knife to his hand and held it threateningly.

“A man greets a Warrior.” Was what awaited him as the sleep cleared from his senses, a hooded figure seeming to melt from the shadows.

“A Warrior greets a man.” Harry replied. “What does the House of Black and White want with me, or with us?”

Oh, yes, he knew who this was. Well not who precisely but what he was. A Faceless man. He’d heard of them, learned more from the memories of Jon he’d accessed on waking. And sought out as much information as he could when he realized just how big of a threat they might very well prove to be.

“A man brings tidings.” The Faceless man stood stock-still as Harry climbed naked from between his lovers before belting a silk robe around his body and walking to stand and face him. “A contract was brought before the Many Faced God. A contract that was refused.”

“I knew someone would try.” Harry ran a weary hand through his mussed hair. “Was it for myself or one of my loves, does a man know?”

“A man knows.” The figure nodded. “As does a Warrior if he cares to ask.”

Harry just tilted his head, the figure continuing at the signal.

“A price was offered for both a King and a Warrior. But the Many Faced God has spoken. The House of Black and White will not give a Warrior or a King the gift.”

“A reprieve at best.” Harry answered, taking a deep breath as he thought, the Faceless man continuing once more.

“A man has been sent to ask: has a Warrior a name for the man to hear?”
“A name?” Harry narrowed his eyes. “Or a name?”

“A name.” The Faceless man replied. “As many or as few as a Warrior would speak, a man would hear. So says the Many Faced God.”

Mulling that over a moment, Harry leaned forward and spoke lowly for only the Faceless man to hear, the shadowed figure melting back as if he’d never been at all when he was finished with only a nod in response.

“Well.” A voice said dryly from the bed. “That was interesting.”

“And terrifying.” Robb added, the two of them sitting up and throwing off their pretense of sleep as Harry turned and arched a brow. “Nothing like being woken by an elite assassin to get the blood pumping first thing.”

“Indeed.” Harry rolled his eyes as his lovers got out of bed, making his way over to the table already laid with his herbal tea he used to try and stave off the worst of his mother’s-sickness. Sniffing once, he cast a spell over all the food and drink to check for poison, as he’d done every meal since starting off on this mad adventure with Jon. He knew the Kingsguard checked for such things, but he couldn’t help it after almost being poisoned more than once in his life. He wouldn’t lose either of his loves or his twins for that matter to a coward’s tactic. “But good that we’re up nonetheless. We have to meet with all the Lords, hear the reports of the campaign…” And he was off and rattling off a long, long list of duties that needed seeing to that day, his lovers grumbling a bit as they stalked around the chambers and dressed before joining him.

“…and I have to find out where the bloody-fuck Greyjoy is hiding.” He finished as Jon and Robb took their seats flanking him, each gifting him with a morning kiss as the Kingsguard entered from the outerchamber.

“You’re fired, Arthur.” Jon joked with a wry grin.

“What do you mean, my King?” Ser Arthur asked with a frown as Ser Oswell remained in the outer chamber, Ser Mark guarding the hall, and Ser Barristan and Prince Lewen accompanying him into the royal – for the moment – chambers.

“We woke up to an assassin this morning.” Harry told the Kingsguard who took the news with shocked gasps and wide eyes. “A Faceless man. But,” he held up a hand before the Kingsguard could lose their collective minds. “He meant us no harm. The House of Black and White apparently refused the bounty on both mine and Jon’s pretty heads.”

“You are so very pretty.” Robb murmured in his ear, nipping lightly at one soft lobe. “Now Jon on the other hand…”

“Stop that.” Harry chided him lightly, pushing him away and shoving the Northern Lord’s plate closer towards him. “Prat.”

“More assassins will come.” Ser Barristan said grimly, a hard look in his eyes. “While the Faceless men have refused for reasons I cannot divine, others will not.”

“They serve the Many Faced God.” Prince Lewen noted shrewdly, watching Harry nibble on toast with canny eyes. “Or rather: Death Himself. A deity that seems rather taken with our Lord Potter-Black, our King’s betrothed.”

“Either word of events on Pyke have reached Braavos.” Jon mused into his morning mead. “Or Himself decided to speak to his acolytes.”
“My gold’s on the second.” Harry said with no little amount of arid humor. “He likes to meddle a tad bit much when it comes to me.”

“Why is that, anyway?” Robb asked. He’d been present for the showy meeting in Pyke and even so he was at sea over the whole thing.

“Reasons.” Was all Harry would say. “He’s a god. They get bored. Anyway. We’ll need to be more careful now than ever. Tywin will be enraged and likely double or triple the bounty on all our heads now. And there’s the issues with the Iron Bank to think of…which I might have a solution for.”

“Oh?” Jon’s interest perked up. He had ideas as well…but none he really liked. Especially since none of the debt was accrued by his family but by that fat bastard and his whore of a wife.

“Look around you, my dragon.” Harry waved to the rich furnishings of Casterly Rock. “Not all the gold of Casterly Rock has run dry. We strip the gaudy place, send anything worth a copper on ships to Braavos. I would wager over half of the debt could be paid by the furnishings of Casterly Rock alone…and that’s before we even plunder the treasury, it might have enough to cover all of the Usurper’s – and his lovely wife’s – debts save that to Tywin himself.”

“There is a certain irony and humor to it.” Robb laughed uproariously at Harry’s suggestion. “And you were going to strip the Rock from the Lannisters anyway.”

Jon laughed alongside the other men as they all fell to stitches at that.

It was a grand – and rather ingenious – solution to a thorny problem.

The Targaryen in him loathed the very idea of using his family’s wealth to clear a debt not their own. It had been his intention to use the gold produced by the mines they’d captured to pay it rather than dip into his own coin. But if there was another way, one that spited that murderous cunt Tywin, well…he knew which he would choose.

“Who would we send?” Harry asked him, head cocked. “Without taking a tally I’d bet we can clear the debt to the Iron Bank in one swoop between the treasure and the furnishings. Maybe even the Trade Cartels as we’re at it.”

“A combined force would be best.” Jon said, wiping a tear of laughter from his eye. “An even mix to keep everyone honest: Crownland, Dornish, and Northern.”

“Perhaps some of my Ironborn as well?” Harry posed, cocking his head to one side as he thought. “Lord Blacktyde seemed our strongest ally among the fleet. I wouldn’t trust either of the present Greyjoys as far as I could throw them.”

Robb made a sound of agreement. The Crow’s Eye bothered him more than he’d like to admit. Especially the way he’d watched Harry on Pyke.

Raping bastard had better keep his hands to himself or he’d feed them to Grey Wind.

“Ser Davos and Prince Quentyn.” Jon decided. “One is probably the most honorable man I’ve ever met, and the other has something to prove. They’ll lead the fleet with Ser Davos ultimately in charge.”

“How many men can we spare for the endeavor?” Robb turned and asked Ser Arthur who had the current count after the most recent battle, a report they’d yet to hear in full, just an estimate before crawling in bed the night before.
Harry hadn’t even been to tend to the injured, he’d been so worn from the climb and following fight.

“We’re spread out through the West and have taken losses along the way.” Ser Arthur reported. “But with the men supplied from the party brought by Prince Oberyn and Lord Blackfyre, as well as the Ironborn, we could easily spare twenty ships and the men to crew them for the trip. As things stand we’ve now a combined army in and around Casterly Rock over fifty thousand strong with another fifteen spread throughout the West in varying conditions, not counting the garrisons in the Riverlands and the Vale as well as the loyalists in the Crownlands. We’ve lost nine thousand total in the taking of the Westerlands.”

“Nine thousand.” Harry closed his eyes and shook his head with a soundless whistle. “I don’t think I’ll ever get used to waging war on this scale – or the sheer cost in human lives.”

“Nor will I.” Jon said grimly. “Which is why I’ve never stopped you from helping us take these fortresses through guile, no matter how much the lords bitch about it. You and Oberyn have saved countless lives, whether anyone else realizes it or not.”

…

“By the seven hells…” Robb gasped at the vision walking towards them after they had left their chambers behind and made their way towards the healing tents to see to the wounded.

They’d already met with most of the commanders – those that were awake and staying in the Rock anyway – and heard reports all through breakfast from Arthur and Barristan on the condition of their forces once the plans for the envoy to the Iron Bank had been finished.

Now it was on to the next thing on Harry’s seemingly endless list and where their little love’s talents shone: the healing tents.

But before they could get to the tents set up between Lannisport and Casterly Rock, another retinue met them, a silver-haired rider at their head.

And it was this man in particular that had Robb shifting uncomfortably in the saddle with a rather inappropriate erection.

“Believe me, I know.” Harry murmured as his lovers stared wide-eyed at the Blackfyre Scion. “He’s just about the epitome of temptation given life and breath…the cocky sod.”

“He’s the Blackfyre.” Jon said, not a trace of doubt in his voice as they watched the leaders of the Golden Company canter towards them, the royal party reining in to wait for them. “There’s no one else he could be…not looking like that.”

“Aegon Blackfyre.” Harry stated, leaning forward in his saddle and resting his arms on the pommel, the Kingsguard watching the approaching horsemen like hawks. “Who was raised as the son of a sell-sword, then as a false-claimant to the Iron Throne. And somehow absurdly honorable and occasionally naïve despite all that. But ruthless and vicious all the same.”

“He’s a dragon in heart and blood.” Ser Arthur drawled. “And everyone with the dragon’s blood could be the same if you riled them enough. Rhaegar, the gods keep him, was as gallant and charming as any man I’ve ever met. But piss him off?” Arthur shook his head, obviously remembering something he didn’t voice. “Better hide as far away and in as deep a hole as you can before he could find you. They didn’t call a Targaryen losing their temper ‘waking the dragon’ for nothing, my lord Harry.”

They all fell silent as the horsemen came within earshot, save Jon who leaned in close to Harry and
hissed: “You’re plotting my love, I can see that look in your eyes.”

Shooting him a mock-innocent look in lieu of a response, Harry kneed his horse to the front, pushing in between the Kingsguard who had encircled the three of them at the others’ approach.

“Hail, Aegon.” Harry said after working his way between a resisting Arthur and Oswell. “Well met.”

“Well met, Harry.” Aegon called back, the others with him: Lysono, Harry Strickland, and Tristan River among them; calling out greetings as well while eyeing the wary and ready Kingsguard.

“Good to see you in better health than last met my eyes.”

Harry hid a wince at that reminder, feeling hot eyes burning into his back. He was glad he’d fessed up about having issues while away, otherwise Jon would probably lock him in a tower somewhere – or try to – until the war was over. As it was, now he could look forward to soothing a pair of mother hens that night instead of getting a good hard fucking in while they had a plush bed to take advantage of.

“Ha bloody ha.” Harry shot back. “And look at you: as pretty as ever. Had a dagger to the throat lately or should I oblige?”

“Oi now, lads.” Harry Strickland chided them. “We’re all friends here, lets play nicely before the King, yes?”

The other Harry pouted a moment, giving Aegon a teasing look from under lowered inky lashes.

“Very well.” He sighed. “Ruin all my fun, why don’t you Strickland?” Waving a hand, he gave the introductions as the Kingsguard finally moved aside and allowed Jon and Robb through. “King Jon Targaryen, first of his name, I give you the commanders of the Golden Company: Aegon of House Blackfyre and Harry Strickland. With them are their lieutenants Lysono Maar and Tristan Rivers, the other having been left in the Stepstones or Oldtown. With King Jon is Robb Stark, Lord of Winterfell and Lord Paramount of the North, Ser Arthur Dayne, Lord Commander of the Kingsguard, Ser Barristan Selmy, Ser Oswell Whent, Ser Mark Ryswell, and last but not least, Prince Lewen Martell, also of the Kingsguard.”

“Cousin.” Jon greeted Aegon with a genial nod, Robb echoing his motion at his side as they flanked their Harry. “Commanders. We welcome you and your men, officially, to Westeros and thank you for your aid and loyalty.”

“Thank you for the welcome, your Grace.” Aegon shot the other men – both of them as handsome as the rumors had whispered, much to his…discomfort – his most charming grin. “Thus far we’ve enjoyed Westerosi hospitality.”

Lysono gave a coughing laugh at that. Yes. Because nothing said “welcome” like flirty Dornishmen and battles full of bloodshed and slaughter.

At least it wasn’t snowing…yet.

Winter, after all, was coming.

“We’re on our way to inspect the healing tents and see to the wounded.” Harry told them, barely keeping a smirk off his face as he saw how Aegon was eyeing his betrotheds – and the not-so-hidden looks his lovers were shooting back. Maybe his little plot would work after all. Still, there was a massive difference between appreciating someone’s looks and wedding or even bedding them. There was still work to be done. Thankfully, he shot a knowing glance at the Blackfyre Scion, it
was of the most *pleasurable* kind. “Care to join us, gentlemen?”

…

“You.”

Harry gasped out a breath as Jon picked him up around the waist, quickly wrapping his lithe legs around his dragon’s lean hips and holding on for dear life as Robb gave a dark chuckle at his back, Jon continuing to talk as he walked them into their chamber after breaking for lunch, Jon falling forward onto the bed, cradling Harry and pinning him lightly, always aware these days of the miracle growing inside his love.

“Are a plotting, conniving, little *minx*.”

Said minx, smiled beguiling up at his royal lover, winding his arms around his neck as he arched temptingly into the hard length in Jon’s trousers.

“You love me anyway.” He pointed out with a husky laugh. “Besides…he really is pretty. And that’s just how the two of you prefer your lovers: pretty and with a hard cock and a tight arse to fuck.”

Jon groaned, burying his head in the bed coverings beside Harry’s neck, his minx turning and pressing kisses along the side of his face as he whispered temptingly in his ear, holding out his hand to Robb and tugging him down to join them in their bed as he split his attention between the two.

“What are Targaryens known for, my love?” Harry said coaxingly. “Dragons and their looks. I can restore one but not the other to your House, my dragon. But Aegon…”

“We don’t *need* a silver-haired rogue to rule.” Robb pointed out, wrapping the two of them in his arms. “Or for anything else for that matter. Is he pleasing to the eye? Of course. That doesn’t mean I want him in our bed or our lives, no matter how hard he gets my prick.”

“I’m with Robb on this one love.” Jon said, lifting his head from the covers and shaking it reluctantly. “It was hard enough for me to get used to the idea of sharing you with Robb, who I already loved and trusted…just a bit differently than it has become now. Adding another, and a stranger at that…?” He groaned, thinking of the sheer logistics of it. “It’s just not feasible. Now.” He said, voice deepening and taking on a silky edge. “I believe we *owe* you for two days ago…and interest has been stacking up every single *second* we have had to wait to have you…”

…

The next day they were in council with the leaders of the army when Ser Oswell knocked on the door of what used to be the study of the Lannister Lords. Jon was due to hold court soon, to confirm some changes to the landscape of the Westerosi nobility as well as meet with envoys sent by the Citadel and others including the Faith, who had finally accepted that short of divine intervention, Jon I Targaryen was a force that will change the face of Westerosi politics, even if he was somehow defeated at this late juncture. And how that must have stuck in the septons’ collective craw that a follower of the old gods was changing things – and that there was nothing they could do to stop him.

“Your Grace.” Ser Oswell said as he cracked open the door, an irate muttering heard coming from behind him. “You have a visitor that insists on being seen before the general audience.”

“Who would dare…?” Several of the lords gasped or growled among themselves, Jon holding up a calming hand.
“Let us see for Ourselves.” He bid them. “For them to make it this far they are either important or inordinately lucky...or foolish. In any case, we will hear them.” Nodding to Ser Oswell, Jon sent the others filing out, leaving him with only Harry and Robb along with the Kingsguard in the office, Harry and Robb flanking him at the head of the meeting table while the Kingsguard were arrayed around the room save for Ser Arthur who sat beside Harry – both as a guard of the heirs he carried and due to his status as Lord Commander of the Kingsguard.

“Finally, boy.” A Maester from his heavy chain but not attired in the grey of the Citadel, strode through the door with a swiftness that belied his hard ale-belly and the white in his hair and beard. “Whents were always sticklers for protocol.” He sniffed. “Archmaester Marwyn, at your service Your Grace.” The man gave a nod.

“Marwyn the Mage.” Jon mused, studying the man from top to toe. “My Uncle Maester Aemon has spoken of you. Says you’re half-mad and all-balls. Nonetheless... You’re a bit high up to be an envoy for the Citadel.”

Marwyn snorted derisively, taking a seat before it was offered to him in a show of flouting protocol – as did his presence. “I’m not here on behalf of the grey sheep, your Grace. I’m here in direct contention with the others of high office among my order. If they knew...well...” He shrugged. “Let’s just say your guard on the Citadel and confiscation of the ravens came at a most opportune moment. Prince Oberyn agreed to my accompanying his men north, and here I am: with news, and a few words of council for the new king.”

“I recognize you.” Harry spoke up, head cocked to the side as his green eyes glinted sharply. “You were in the tents yesterday: but I didn’t put it together then, too busy focusing on the wounded. You were the Maester at the Citadel I saw staring in wonder at an obsidian candle when I was investigating matters there.”

“And you,” Marwyn watched the green-eyed man in turn. “Must be the sorcerer that has the grey sheep and the sparrows all in a tizzy. Magical and powerful, managing things against all their understanding of the gods and of science.” He gave a bright grin that was all teeth. “I’ve rather enjoyed these last few turns thanks to you, and I daresay been more in demand than I’ve ever been.” He clinked his Valyrian steel links in his chain together. “None has a greater understanding of magic than I in the order, and yet even I was flummoxed at the feats they attribute to you, Warrior-Who-Waits.”

“Your news, Archmaester?” Jon asked, watching the byplay between the two men in fascination.

“You’ve brought word of dragons and magic back to Westeros.” Marwyn told them, his tone taking on an ominous tinge. “Of prophecies and ancient warriors and wights. I have seen for myself the return of magic heralded by the lighting of the obsidian candles.” He shook his head. “For this reason alone, you and your future consorts, are in more danger than any other in the known world at this moment, perhaps only equaled by that of your aunt the so-called Mother of Dragons.”

“Why?” Robb asked, quietly dissecting the Archmaesters words. “Why would magic of all things put us in more danger, dragons that I can understand, at least a little. But magic?” Robb shook his head. “So long as Harry doesn’t run around burning villages to ash, what does it matter?”

“Who do you think killed all the dragons last time around? Gallant dragonslayers armed with swords? The world the Citadel is building has no place in it for sorcery or prophecy or glass candles, much less for dragons. Ask yourself why Aemon Targaryen was allowed to waste his life upon the wall, when by rights he should have been raised to Archmaester. His blood was why. He could not be trusted. No more than I can.” Marwyn ranted harshly, face turned to stone. “Magic was close to being stamped out in Westeros, I cannot be trusted by my fellows because I delved too deeply into it,
believed in it and sought to breathe life into the dying arts. Arts that thanks to your lover, are no longer dying but close to flourishing once more with every dragon-glass candle that comes alive without assistance save that of the magic of the land."

“Magic was close to being stamped out.” Harry echoed, slipping into his native High Valyrian. Catching himself his next words were in the Common Tongue. “That reeks of deliberation.”

“Conspiracy would be more accurate.” Marwyn eyed him with approval. “One that stretches back to well before the Conquering, though Aegon’s coming spurred it into high speed, you could say.”

“The Faith.” Jon stated then corrected himself. “No, the Andals. Who brought the Faith and cut down much of the Children of the Forest and the First Men with great success save in the North and beyond the Wall.”

“And the Citadel.” The Archmaester bowed his head in shame. Magic and the great mysteries of it were his passion, his wife and children. Magic was all that mattered to him, and his chosen order had dedicated themselves to stamping it out. “With support from the Hightowers in order to get a Maester in every city and noble house to watch for signs of magical ability…and take action if they were found.”

“How could no one know of this?” Robb asked, sucking in a shocked breath. “You speak of, of treason, of murder!”

“I knew.” Harry offered up to much shock and surprise from the other men, even the Kingsguard who had remained silent while trying to process the breadth and gravity of what was being revealed and discussed like it was just another irritation. “I have for awhile, had suspicions of what was going on since I left Jon on the way to the Twins to,” he chuckled humorlessly. “See what I could see. I knew something was desperately wrong with the native magic of the land but couldn’t pinpoint the problem until I came across some letters between Pycelle and the Archmaester of the Citadel. And I dug deeper when I was in Oldtown.”

“Why did you never say anything?” Robb’s eyes were wounded as he stared at his little love. “Why just let it continue?”

“He hasn’t.” Jon broke in, violet eyes knowing. “Has he? Teaching us to tap into the native magics, strengthening our abilities, using magic throughout the land for everything from cleaning to transport. His very presence has been undoing the work of the Citadel.” He pinned Marwyn with his stare. “Hasn’t it?”

“That is the conclusion I have come to.” Marwyn nodded. “As have others.”

“What was the protocol?” Ser Arthur asked softly, horror ripe in his tone. “When signs of magical ability were discovered?”

“Maesters are in charge of the health and welfare of their stations.” Marwyn supplied, shifting uncomfortably. “From what I discovered in my own digging…a simple poison that caused a fever. So many children die from sickness, it passed undetected. There are,” he added, voice brightening a bit. “Some Maesters who like myself for one reason or another weren’t trusted or didn’t agree with as Lord Stark said, murder and treason. Your Maester Luwin is one of them, otherwise I rather imagine there wouldn’t be a Stark left to reach adulthood.” Marwyn chuckled a bit. “The blood of the First Men is simply too strong in the Starks to stamp it out, no matter how many times the Citadel and the other conspirators have tried to wipe it out with intermarriages with Andal blood or other ways. My advice is thus, Your Grace: If you want you and yours to be safe, you will rip out the rotten core of the Citadel root and stem, and bring the Faith and the Hightowers to heel.”
“Plans are already underway to deal with it.” Harry admitted, staring off into space and refusing to make eye contact with any of the others. “I may not have said anything…but that didn’t mean I wasn’t going to do anything either.”

“You spoke of the dragons as well.” Ser Arthur pressed. “What of that?”

“Runes.” Harry answered for Marwyn. “Powered by an untold number of sacrifices. They’re carved into the very bedrock of King’s Landing along with ones to suppress magical abilities. Am I right?”

“You are.” Marwyn said with no-little surprise. “Though I would give my rod and mask to know how you came by that information.”

“I can feel it.” Harry shrugged, linking a hand gently with Jon’s own under the table and out of sight. Jon knew how much the subject of stamping out magic bothered him from his tales of his life before Westeros. “The very air is tainted by them. But I haven’t yet come up with a way to deal with the problem.”

“Short of razing the city to the ground and building anew.” Marwyn grimaced as he remembered what he’d found about said runes and sacrifices. “I would not even know where to begin.”

“Will you stay, Archmaester Marwyn?” Jon ordered while making it seem like a suggestion. “Rooms will be prepared for you in the castle if you agree.”

“I find myself a traitor to my order.” Marwyn shook his head as he rose, giving a short bow to the uncrowned king. “Your protection is most agreeable, Your Grace. I shall endeavor to make myself useful once more in the Healing tents.” He thought a moment then laughed. “Perhaps you might send my novice to me? I understand the Sand Snake Sarella has returned to the bosom of her family. I would be amenable to continuing her education…as there’s no stick-up-his-arse Archmaester here to stop me.”

…

“You asked me to stay behind, Father.” Tyrion queried, voice ripe with boredom as he stared at Tywin over the rim of his goblet, having sent Bronn to wait for him just outside the doors.

Tyrion really didn’t give a shit what the old bastard wanted at this point. He’d made his choice when he sent the first coded missive to Jon. Other than Genna and Jaime, who only treated him with an absent form of affection or was utterly weak in the face of Cersei, Tyrion really had no reason to remain loyal to his “family”.

The Battle of the Blackwater was the final straw.

He would be hearing men and horse alike scream in utter anguish or burn alive for as long as he lived. Tyrion would never be able to rid himself of that stain on his conscience. And for what? There had been no accolades, not a single word of thanks from anyone. Nothing at all except yet another assassination attempt from his sister and being kicked out of the Hand’s Tower by his Father.

Tyrion of House Lannister had had enough, at last reaching his breaking point.

Were it not for Jaime, and then later sweet Myrcella and Tommen, he might have left long ago, when his beloved father had his wife raped to death.

Now he was simply gathering what information he could while waiting for the opportune moment to
take his leave.

The last place in the known world he wanted to be was within the city walls when Jon finally made his move on King’s Landing.

“The Stark girl.” Tywin said after several long moments of drinking and contemplation. “Were it not for Mace’s utter arrogance, I would wed her yet to Joffery. A child of the two would be a buffer against her cousin and an Heir to Winterfell. But…” Tywin pierced his greatest disappointment with the spring-green eyes they both shared. “Needs must. And now I need a new husband for the Lady Sansa before her cousin catches word of Margery’s betrothal to Joffery and arranges a match of his own.”

“And who do you have in mind for that rather risk-filled position, hmm?” Tyrion asked idly despite the dread filling him. As they’d already discussed with the small council, Jon would have no problems at all making the Lady Sansa a widow. And even less of one if she was wedded and bedded against her will. It would be no less than rape…and everyone knows what happens to those who mar either a Stark or Targaryen woman. Mad Aerys’s habit of burning men alive would seem like a sweet release compared to what Jon would do to the unlucky sod who forced himself on Sansa Stark. And Tyrion had a damned good idea of just who his father had in mind to throw into the dragon’s lair. “Not poor sweet Tommen I imagine with the girl already being flowered as Cersei so gleefully reported?”

“No.” Tywin set his goblet aside and laced his together on the table before him. “Lady Sansa must be wedded and bedded before word reaches the Dragon brat. Preferably with a babe already in her belly. Were Jaime here I would have Joffery release him and make her the next Lady Lannister, as things stand…” He drawled, studying his bane with a gimlet eye. “I have no choice but to charge you with this…duty.”

“You mean to have me wed and bed, the Stark girl?” Tyrion wished he could say he was surprised, forcing shock and no-little-amount of disgust into his voice. “By the gods, Father! Have we not covered that wedding the little chit is a death sentence!”

“Perhaps.” Tywin agreed with an absent nod, a far-away look in his eyes. “Perhaps not. This war may still end in our favor now that we have the Reach. Mace Tyrell may be a fool but he’s able to field an army larger than any other in Westeros.”

Tyrion snorted. Only if the Tyrell Lord managed to bring his remaining sons – and likely his mother-in-law – to heel. An event looking ever more precarious with each passing day of silence from the Reach and Highgarden.

“Even still.” Tyrion tossed away his cub and stood, pacing and waving an arm for emphasis. “At this point our best hope is for a quick onset of winter to drive our opponents back to their homes and that Jon Targaryen dies in the cold. Otherwise I do not see how you can hope for anything more than holding onto the Reach and King’s Landing, father. If you’re able to hold the two together at all.” He shook his head. “I will not wed the child just to have her cousin feed me to his dragon. I will not do this thing.”

“Yet this is a thing that must be done!” Tywin slammed a hand down on the table. “For the good of our family! A marriage to a Stark may very well be the only thing that keeps our heads on our bodies. Either you do this or I’ll wed and bed the chit myself, so I swear before the gods, Tyrion!”

Gritting his jaw, he stared at the furious visage of his oh-so-loving father, giving a grim nod at that threat – for it was nothing less. He couldn’t allow a sweet young thing like Sansa Stark to be crushed under the boot of Tywin Lannister. Not if he could help it.
“Have it your way then father.” He said, his voice and visage resigned. “I will wed the girl, and bed her in my own time.”

“You will bed her and breed her as soon as possible, boy.” Tywin’s voice was silky with threat. “Or I shall do the deed myself: your wife or not.”

…

In her chambers, completely unaware of what had passed between the two Lannister men less than an hour prior, Sansa Stark paced before the gleaming glass windows of the Red Keep, one hand fiddling with the concealed lily necklace around her lovely throat.

She was waiting for word from her brother’s betrothed, having passed on word of the Tyrell/Lannister alliance and all she had gleaned from the castle gossip about the seeming rift between Mace Tyrell and his remaining two sons.

If the rumors were right – and so many in agreement with each other were rarely wrong – her betrothal to Joffery was about to be discarded.

Rumors and whispers had never brought her so much joy and dread all wrapped in each other before.

Joy, for she wouldn’t be trapped with that awful, disgusting creature for a husband.

And dread…for what would the Lannisters, what would Joffery, do with her now?

Little did she know, she was about to get the answer to her question, as her door opened quietly, Sansa whirling to sit in a vision of sweet repose in her window, her fine embroidery frame held gently in her lap as she blindly set a stitch without looking, able from years of practice to do so absently when her mind was leagues away.

“Wait here, Pod.” A gruff voice ordered lowly, “only interrupt if it is Bronn or one of my illustrious family.”

Sansa felt a chill go down her spine, knowing well that voice despite only having been around its owner a few times.

She could never forget it, as the few times she had heard it, it was almost always raised in her defense.

“Yes, Lord Tyrion.” A younger voice answered him, likely his squire.

“Good lad.”

With that, a small misshaped figure strode into her room, completely discarding propriety as he shut and bolted the door at his back, studying her with his too-intelligent eyes.

Lord Tyrion, while never quite handsome, had never struck Sansa as grotesque as he was reputed, even with the addition of a fearsome scar from the recent battle that cut across his fine nose from eyebrow to jaw.

Rather, she’d always thought that his face was far kinder than the harsh and finely drawn features of his siblings and nephew, more along the lines of the softer Lady Myrcella, who was reputed to take her looks from the late Lady Joanna Lannister, who had been a cousin of her lord husband.
“My lady Stark.” Tyrion sketched a short but sincere bow. “I’m afraid we have little time for pleasantries. It won’t be long before my sister’s spies report my presence here and Cersei comes to investigate.”

Sansa gave a graceful curtsy as she rose, inclining her ornately-coiffed auburn head gently. “As you wish Lord Tyrion.” She answered him, setting aside her stitching and folding her hands elegantly in her silk skirts. “What brings you to my private rooms so inappropriately, milord?”

Tyrion quirked a grin, enjoying her hidden fire as always. She would have made a fine queen, now that she’s discovered her northern spark, of that he was certain. And a fine wife as well…were he a lesser man.

But to his chagrin, he’d found that for all his father’s threats and disregard, he wasn’t a lesser man.

Thus his presence here.

“Let us not be coy, milady.” Tyrion crossed the room to the pitcher and goblets arrayed on a side table, pouring himself and her a cup of sweet Lysene rose. “I’m certain by now that any lady worth her salt in court has already heard the news of the Tyrell alliance. And you are many things Lady Sansa but I would not say a fool is one of them.” He took a deep drink eyeing her over the rim. “You must be aware of the precarious position this places you in.”

Sansa saluted him wryly with the goblet before taking a drink of her own, sinking back down into her seat so as not to tower over the smaller man. She wasn’t yet finished growing, but already she was sure to have the height of her family, Robb was nearly one of the tallest lords in the land. It was a concession that she would never had made mere turns before.

But losing her father and meeting Lord Harry had changed all that, forcing her to mature and grow in ways that otherwise she never would have considered.

Being a spy, however well protected, wasn’t for the faint of heart, especially when a mad dog like Joffery considered one his personal pet to abuse at his leisure.

“And what does this shift in circumstances have to do with you, Lord Tyrion?” Sansa asked lightly. “I’m sure your family is…relieved to be shut of the daughter of a traitor?”

“Not exactly.” Tyrion said wryly, arching a brow at her. “You underestimate your value in the game of thrones, my dear Lady Stark.”

“Not underestimate.” Sansa corrected with a flick of her hand. “I am both sword and shield for so long as I remain in King’s Landing to keep my brother and cousin at bay. Both are very valuable in their turn, but not so much as a future queen would be.”

“That may be true, my dear.” He shook his head. “Were you not the beloved sister and cousin of a Lord and a King, respectively. A Lord and a King that are doing a damn fine job of taking control of the Seven Kingdoms. Your value in that case, is limitless, far greater than anyone else in this cesspit, including the so-called “royal family.”” He drawled the last with no little amount of disgust. “And as such, my Lord Father cannot allow you to slip from his grasp, lest he find himself with his head on a spike on Traitor’s Walk.”

Sansa paled, the lovely rose of her cheeks washing away as she bolted to her feet at that, the goblet falling from her lax fingers and dropping to the floor, the bit of wine left marring the hem of her skirts.

“Calm, Lady Stark.” Tyrion moved towards her and gently took her hands in his own, rubbing them
to chase away the sudden chill. “Calm. Fortunately for you, and unfortunately for my father, I have no desire to play the brute and wed a child, no matter how lovely.” He gave a brittle smile. “I’m afraid that for once the Old Lion has rather overestimated the depths of my depravity…which I myself have found rather shocking as I was certain such a thing wasn’t possible.” He frowned playfully at her as she gave a short laugh at that, her momentary glee only marred with a hint of hysteria. “The solution my lord father came to for your lovely self, milady, was to marry you to a Lannister of high standing, albeit short stature.”

“Youself, Lord Tyrion?” Sansa blinked, removing her hands from his and turning to pace, conflict ripe across her face.

“Yes.” Tyrion nodded shortly. “And if I’m a good boy, he’ll allow our son to be Heir of the Rock.” He snorted derisively. “Now I am neither a fool nor a rapist and have no desire to become one either. As such I am certain that you have a means of leaving the city, likely provided by your brother’s soon-to-be-husband, am I right?”

She didn’t answer as such but one hand slowly lifted to rest on the concealed amulet around her neck.

“I see you do.” Tyrion arched a brow. “Then I will say this: the time to use it has come. I am leaving the city before the dawn, should you remain, my Lord father will wed you himself: a fate I wouldn’t wish on my worst enemy let alone a lovely child such as yourself. Do not dawdle, Lady Sansa.” Tyrion picked up a hissed warning from Bronn and repeated by Pod. “Leave. Now.”

…

Later that night, as word was reaching King’s Landing of the sacking of Lannisport and the taking of the Rock, Harry found a most interesting letter from Sansa in their communication book.

Lord Harry,

As I write this I have my satchel packed and am about to use your gift to me.

Lord Tyrion came to me today and warned me of his father’s plan to wed me to either Lord Tyrion or even himself. He seemed to know of your gift to me and warned me to use it.

Not long after, Queen Cersei appeared to give me her condolences on having to trade her wonderful son for her dreadful brother, confirming to me all Lord Tyrion had told me.

Lord Tyrion planned to flee the city rather than – in his words – become both a fool and a rapist.

Once I am finished writing this, I shall use your gift and return to my home. See my previous message regarding the Tyrell-Lannister union, Lord Tyrion confirmed that Joffery is to wed Mace Tyrell’s only daughter Margery who had been wed to Renly Baratheon before his death in battle.

Give my love and best wishes to my brother and cousin.

Yours,

Lady Sansa Stark

…”

Bronn manned the oars of the small smuggler’s vessel Tyrion had purchased with a bag of coin liberated from his father’s quarters, Podrick on the sails and his sworn-lord and employer manning
the rudder.

Once they were out of sight of the capitol, Tyrion stood – wobbling only a moment, and staggered over to the mast, clipping a banner to the flag line and running it up where all could see. Bronn eyed it a moment, having never seen that device before, though he recognized the significance. Dragons and direwolves, with a crown. It was the personal sigil of Jon Targaryen, rather than the three-headed dragon banner of his House.

Only those given permission were allowed to use a Lord’s – or in this case King’s – personal sigil, usually those in their personal service or closest of companions.

Knowing his clever lord, Tyrion was likely both.

“Where to, milord?” Bronn asked idly as they sailed smoothly through the waters of Blackwater Bay with only the light of the harvest moon to guide them.

“Dragonstone, Bronn.” Tyrion’s smile flashed white in the darkness. “We make for Dragonstone.”

…
**The Black Dread**

Chapter Summary

This is the longest chapter to date at over 46,000 words.

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**Tomb of the First Men**

Author’s Note: The “High Sparrow” is never named in canon, having to do with the High Septon setting aside their previous name and only answering to the title of their office. I’ve given the character a name here, though he isn’t High Septon, as he makes an interesting contrast to some of the other more corrupted clergy of the Faith of the Seven.

I mix Game of Thrones canon and ASoIaF canon in this chapter a bit. Talisa Maegyr makes an appearance but the Westerlings and Ser Rolph Spicer who were part of the major conspiracy behind the planning of the Red Wedding in the books (Jeyne Westerling was Robb’s bride instead of Talisa) are mentioned as well. The way I have it in my mind is that because of his visions from Death as he continually changes the Fate of Westeros, Harry is aware of both possibilities hence the reason for the short scene towards the latter part of the Act.

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**Act VII: The Black Dread**

“Hold.” The mounted knight called back, voice low, to the rest of the group, raising one gauntleted fist.

Nymeria curled her lip at the gesture, both herself and her packmates having heard the sound of mounted horses and booted feet marching some time ago, though the humans only now took note of it for themselves. She wasn’t sure she approved of these men her girl had collected before finding her again in the woods of the river country, but they were her girl’s so Nymeria tolerated them, if grudgingly. Still. That didn’t keep her from the occasional snarl and snap at a booted foot that came too close to her snout or flank, nor did she prevent her pack, smaller and weaker than her true kin but wolves nonetheless, from doing the same.

Truly, it was only knowing that with every sunrise they came closer to her original packmates – at least a pair of them – that kept her from herding her girl and her pack away from the nearly useless, as far as she could tell, humans.

Nymeria was certainly capable of looking after and feeding a single girl, and her girl was more than capable of blending into Nymeria’s pack.

But their connection still wasn’t strong enough yet for Nymeria to communicate such a plan to her girl, so she would wait and allow the human males to shepherd them ever closer to her Alpha.

At least these males had a healthy respect for Nymeria’s fangs and claws.

Lord Beric Dondarrion crouched down near the edge of the forest, studying the encampment intently. His time with the Brothers Without Banners had given him a large suspicion of armed troops, having seen for himself the predations both noble and common folk alike were capable of. Granted, none so severe as what the Mountain and his sycophant Lorch were capable of, but still vile
acts against anyone seemingly weaker than themselves.

Thoros had split off from their small group when they’d gotten word of the Targaryen Army’s movement westward, his good friend continuing North to the Wall as ordered by the King, while Sandor Clegane agreed to take command of the Brothers, allowing Thoros, Edric, and Beric himself to all take their leave when some of the others threatened to ransom Lady Stark back to her family.

A decision that chafed at all the noble members of that fellowship, one they couldn’t allow for more reasons than one.

Chief among those reasons was Beric and Edric’s healthy fear of what the Young Dragon might do to the Brothers if they attempted Lady Arya’s ransom.

Beric had been a young man when Rhaegar was killed in Robert’s Rebellion, but he remembered him well as the Crown Prince had been Arthur Dayne’s closest companion, the elder brother of Beric’s betrothed Allyria.

If someone had ever dared ransom one of Rhaegar’s family or close companions, that man would have paid the ransom…and then brought down a rain of blood on them the like of which would stain the memories of all who heard of it, so fearsome was his rage when provoked.

It was a rage that Arya’s tales gave credence to having passed down to Rhaegar’s son, one that Beric would not willingly tempt.

Thus, they had stolen away in the night from the other Brothers, rendezvousing with Sandor and sending him to Lem and the others, that man – surprisingly enough – agreeing that the predations of the Lannisters could not be allowed to continue. A change of heart said to have been wrought on the scarred Lord of Clegane’s Keep (in the wake of the Mountain’s execution) by none other than Lady Sansa Stark herself. Sandor was still a fierce man, and dangerous, but he was no longer blindly obedient to the Lion’s will.

Beric stared at the banners raised by the men who were preparing to strike their camp in the morning mist, spotting a sigil that gave him equal parts hope and pause: the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen. A dragon that was accompanied by banners the Dondarrion Lord did not trust as readily: the red crabs on white of House Celtigar and the triple-spiral of House Massey. Though he notably only spied out the Celtigar Heir, no sign of either Lord Celtigar, Lord Massey, or even one of the Massey Lord’s heirs.

It was a host of at least a thousand men, with Ser Crispan Celtigar calling the orders and leading the men, Beric finding himself perplexed at what they were doing at least a week or more’s march from the bulk of the Targaryen army but also not anywhere near Riverrun or the other strongholds belonging to King Jon.

The Celtigars were too closely allied and far too loyal to the Targaryens for Beric to even consider that Ser Crispan was acting out of anything but orders from the King or one of his generals.

“That’s Jon’s sigil!” Arya whispered in excitement, creeping up next to him with Edric on her heels. Looking over his shoulder, Beric only received a half-amused half-frustrated glance and shrug from Lady Arya’s companion the Waters bastard Gendry who to Beric’s eyes was one of Robert’s get. If so, then the boy had lucked into a protector in Lady Arya, one that might see him granted the right to fight with the Targaryen army instead of being sent off to Storm’s End with Baratheon’s other surviving bastard son, as it was only Robert’s bastards who were well out of reach of Cersei who have thus far survived her purge, including his son Edric Storm at Storm’s End and Mya Stone in the Eyrie.
“Are you certain?” Young Lord Ser Edric Dayne asked as he came up alongside Arya. “I’ve never seen it before.”

“Yes, I’m certain.” Arya rolled her eyes. “Jon is my cousin you know. And that’s his personal sigil: facing rampant dragon and direwolf with a crown centered above them. Only his family and closest friends and retainers have leave to use it. That must be one of his southron friends from when he’d go visit the Crownlands and other places.” She frowned, resisting a pout. “He never told me what he did on those visits, not like when he’d go off with Uncle Benjen to the Far North.”

Edric and Beric exchanged a knowing glance over the twelve-year-old young lady’s head. At sixteen and twenty-six, knight and former-squire turned-knight were both well aware of what Jon Targaryen had likely done in the Crownlands that he didn’t want to reveal to his young female cousin. Well. Other than cement alliances for his eventual play for the throne, that is.

“Ah, milords and lady.” They heard a sharp snarl and Gendry speak anxiously from behind them, turning in unison to find the young former-smith’s-apprentice with a sword at his neck while a score of men – led by Ser Crispan himself – watched them with no-little-amusement, though Crispan was shooting wary glances at a raised-hackled Nymeria where she blocked his view of Arya. “We’ve been spotted.” Gendry finished a bit sheepishly, his hands open and raised.

“Don’t call me a lady.” Arya nearly growled herself as she narrowed her eyes at both Gendry and the southron knight and his men, hand itching for Needle.

“You’re in luck Lady Arya.” Cris said with an amused twitch of his handsome face, intentionally picking at the girl who had proven damn-near impossible to pin down despite the Blackfish’s best efforts to find her before the Lannisters did. “Your cousin the King has recently ordered myself and my men to join him. It seems your escort westward just grew exponentially.”

…

Two weeks later saw Harry standing in the courtyard of Casterly Rock, speaking quietly with Ser Crispan while Arya chattered up at an enraptured Jon and Robb as she told a tale involving murder, a good brother of the Night’s Watch, an ambush, an assassin, and none other than Tywin Lannister and Sandor Clegane.

Lord Beric and Edric were likewise speaking with Lord Commander Dayne, Edric’s uncle and the much-elder brother of Beric’s intended bride.

Ghost and Grey Wind were having a joyous – if raucous – reunion with Nymeria while her pack of wild wolves remained behind – seemingly on Nymeria’s order – in the woods outside Lannisport.

All of which left both Ser Crispan – who was reporting to Harry as Jon was otherwise occupied, giving his half of the story from when they met up with the unconventional group – and the young man Gendry a bit at sea.

“She’s a survivor, that’s for certain, Lord Harry.” Cris said, finishing his report. “I’ve heard most of the tale for myself, and I doubt most of the blooded-knights I’ve fought with would have acquitted themselves half so well.”

“She’s a survivor, that’s true.” Harry agreed easily, holding back a sigh over the complications Arya’s so-very-unconventional return was sure to cause over the “impropriety” of it. As much as she apparently decries the title, Arya Stark is a lady born and bred. And a lady – unflowered or not – spending turn after turn alone in the presence of un-related men was going to be a problem that needed handling. “A true she-wolf of House Stark.”
Honestly, from a political point of view, it would have been better if Arya’s group hadn’t bumped into Cris and his men – men who were certain to speak of her tale.

A tale that might very well ruin her prospects for marriage.

Unless something was done.

Arya, very much a child for all of her maturing over the course of her adventure, still sneered at the idea of being a lady, marriage, and children. At the moment, the idea that she was unmarriageable would likely be seen as a blessing of the situation to her. At the moment. Give it six or seven years, maybe ten or twelve at the outside, and that joy over being unmarriageable was sure as the tides to turn bitter.

Harry didn’t want that for her, and her was certain that his loves would agree.

However, they didn’t have a great deal of time to manage the situation, the groups’ rather loud and raucous return heralded by Arya all-but-crashing into the healing tents to pounce on Robb had set the clock ticking on the time-bomb of Arya’s marriageability.

“Forgive me if I speak out of turn.” Cris said, keeping his voice pitched low to prevent it from carrying to the ears of Jon and the others. “But you seem troubled. Is not Arya’s return an event for celebration, not consternation?”

“Yes, of course it is.” Harry sighed, rubbing one hand over his forehead. “However, there is the question of Arya’s gender. Where she a boy, or related to one of the group in which she was found by yourself, or even simply arrived quietly with Lords Dayne and Dondarrion, there wouldn’t be any…misgivings to be had. But…”

“But she is a female.” Cris agreed with a sigh and a weary nod of his head, immediately seeing the problem that Harry was churning over, a problem that was likely to occur to Jon and Robb once their happiness over Arya’s safe return abated and the reality of the situation set in. “And she’s not related to any member of her small group nor myself or any of my men. It’ll leave a stain, even though from all I’ve heard and seen, there weren’t any improprieties beyond that of the overarching situation.”

“Exactly.” Harry grimaced. “She’ll have to be betrothed, either to someone who’ll be glad to have any link to Jon, or someone who doesn’t care about things like a girl’s misadventures. That she’s unflowered works in my favor to arrange it, but whether Jon will approve of whoever I find, let alone Robb…” He sighed, shoulders slumping a bit. “I apologize, Ser Crispin, these aren’t concerns I should be burdening you with.”

“None needed.” Cris waved it off genially. “Jon is one of my closest friends. Your worries as his future consort are my worries. Though in this case I don’t think you need to look far at all for a worthy match for the young she-wolf.” He said with a pointed, knowing look at the young Lord of House Dayne, Harry’s eyes following his and easily spotting the mixture of interest and befuddlement on the face of sixteen-year-old Edric as he watched Arya tussle with her brother, cousin, and their wolves.

…”

“You’re going back to Winterfell, Arya.” Jon snapped that night.

They’d spent the day – originally planned for meeting with the envoys – with her, Harry looking over the group as well as Cris and his men who were barracking alongside the other Crownland forces in the men-at-arms’ quarters of Casterly Rock. The wizard still had a lot of work to do in the
healing tents, though they had picked up another competent healer in a Voltanese woman who’d been found ministering to the wounded outside Ashemark, as well as Archmaester Marwyn and Sarella Sand, Oberyn’s third-eldest daughter who had previously been studying under the Archmaester in disguise at the Citadel. Although, the delay had given Harry more time to question the Lannister captives and the hostages from the battle before removing the highborn prisoners to his hideaway where he was keeping everyone that the Lannisters might be tempted to free by dint of bribes, treachery, or an all-out-assault, such as Ser Jaime.

Now, they had just finished dinner and the youngest Stark daughter was kicking up a fuss over being returned to her home and the ever-watchful eye of her older sister, though she was glad to know that Sansa was safe and away from King’s Landing.

She was also less-than-pleased that a marriage contract had been settled for her…all without her input.

“I can fight!” Arya protested. “Edric was younger than me when he began to train under Beric, and Gendry was younger than that when he became Tobho Mott’s apprentice…”

“Lord Dayne.” Harry stressed, exchanging an impatient/amused glance with Robb over his sister’s intransience. “And Lord Dondarrion, Arya. Which took place during peace-time, not a war. This isn’t a place for a child of any age, no matter how close to maturity. Let alone a Lady of House Stark who is betrothed to the Lord of House Dayne.”

Arya crossed her arms over her chest, a mulish look that could curdle milk on her young face, less-than-impressed with the man betrothed to her brother and cousin. Much of which had to do with him taking a firm hand to her future and behavior, instead of the laxity Jon and Robb had always treated her with. Harry Potter-Black was not nearly as much of a push-over to her pleas as his loves.

Damn him.

“I don’t want to marry anyone.” Arya gave voice to her oft-repeated refrain. “Not even Lord Dayne.”

“Not even?” Robb arched a brow, surprised at the almost-mild refutation. “I half-expected you to say especially, Lord Dayne. You’re getting soft with age, Arya.”

She scowled at the teasing from her older brother but didn’t bother fighting her betrothal beyond a few jibes that would be taken as token protests. She knew better. Robb’s fiancé had been explicit in the sort of future she could expect for herself if she kicked up too much of a fuss over eventually having to marry Edric.

At least Edric didn’t mock her or condescend like that blow-hard Gendry who tried to treat her like a little pampered princess when he found out who she was.

He actually would spar with her, and help her learn how to use Needle.

Plus, Nymeria liked…or at least tolerated…him more than the other boys the girl and wolf had encountered.

“‘You’re returning to Winterfell, Arya.” Jon reiterated, a stern look – one with definite shades of the late Ned Stark – on his face. “That’s the end of it. Harry will take you in the morning once you and Nymeria have had a good night’s sleep.”

“Can Nymeria’s pack come with us?” Arya asked, only half-seriously.
Which was fortunate as she was met with a resounding No.

“Ghost will take over as their Alpha.” Jon reassured her, softening a bit when she didn’t protest further. “They’ll be fine, and a fine addition to the Northern forces.”

“Perhaps.” Harry suggested, leaning forward to rest his arms on the table, prepared to add a carrot to ensure her behavior to go along with the implied “stick” of Jon’s displeasure. “After our wedding and the coronation, you can return with Lady Allyria to Starfall. It is traditional for a betrothed to spend time at their future House.” Harry reminded Jon and Robb when they each gave him a frown. “And Starfall is leagues away from any fighting in Western Dorne, and nearly as safe as Winterfell. Besides, I think that Dornish-ways would agree with our She-Wolf of House Stark.”

Robb and Jon had to concede to that, both well aware that Arya often had troublegetting along with the strict expectations of behavior from Lady Catelyn, and that she and Sansa’s disparate personalities rarely rubbed along smoothly.

The Dornish were freer, looser in their ways and the restrictions they put on women.

It would be good for Arya to realize that she didn’t have to ape the likes of Brienne of Tarth to be a strong woman and be respected as capable at arms.

“Then it’s agreed.” Robb nodded, arching a brow at the eye-roll his words netted him from his troublesome little sister. “Arya will return to Winterfell and barring any egregious issues with her behavior, will be able to spend time at Starfall after our wedding and coronation.”

…

“Your sister is a spitfire.” Harry told Robb half-groaning as Jon rubbed his back. They were waiting on Ser Arthur to return from escorting Arya to her room – not that they really expect her to manage to stay where she was told, though they were ever-hopeful. Like as not they’d probably wake to her having snuck down to see her friend Gendry or find her shame-faced with an amused Edric marching her back to her quarters after catching her trying to practice her swordwork at dawn. “If I didn’t know better, I’d have a hard time believing she and Sansa were related at all, let alone full-sisters.”

“It is a mystery that has boggled the mind almost from the moment Arya came screaming into the world.” Robb agreed with a chuckle. “Though personally, I’m not sure I have a harder time believing that Sansa played spy for several turns or that Arya actually agreed – or at least failed to throw an utter tantrum – to being betrothed.”

“The world is upside down.” Jon laughed, digging his hands into Harry’s lower back where all of the tension of the day seemed to settle every more fiercely as his pregnancy progressed.

Harry was about eight weeks gone into his pregnancy, and ready to recast his diagnostic that should let them hear the babies’ heartbeats…if Arthur ever made it back to the temporarily-royal chambers.

The trio had decided after some debate to include the Kingsguard fully, as with Casterly Rock being filled to the brim with envoys, soldiers, and lords and knights of the realm, including Harry’s Ironborn, Ser Arthur insisted on each of them having at least one guard at all times.

If they didn’t wait for all the Kingsguard to be present, then there was a possibility for the one or two who were left out to have bruised feelings over being excluded.

That’s not to say that they were going to include the Kingsguard in every milestone and moment of Harry’s pregnancy and their coming marriage, but they were going to include them where it seemed
appropriate. It was important to Jon – and Harry and Robb once they thought on it – that the Kingsguard were shown that they were appreciated and respected as more than human shield or part of the furniture the way some of Jon’s ancestors had treated them. They were more than that to Jon, in many ways they were closer to him than his remaining kin, and he wanted to show them that.

Ser Arthur returned and stood with his back leaning against the door leading from their bedchamber – where the trio was resting after a long day of dealing with Arya and her potential ruination – to the antechamber that the Kingsguard had taken over as their quarters due to the heavily populated castle. The four other guardsmen were arrayed around the same wall as the door, facing the trio on the bed, showing varying degrees of tiredness depending on whether they were missing sleep to share in this moment with their King or not.

Jon nodded at Harry, and the wizard drew his wand and intoned the same spell he originally used to show his lovers their children resting within him:

“Indicium infans natal.”

Once more two blue orbs hovered between his hips and a soft swooshing sound reverberated through the room, only this time the sound of Harry’s blood rushing through his sac was accompanied by a fast thrumming that seemed to have a curious echo.

Robb and Jon listened entranced as they each held onto one of Harry’s hands, the Kingsguard likewise enthralled with the sound of the strong heartbeats.

“The echo, is that?” Robb asked softly so as to not drown out the entrancing song of the proof of their sons’ lives.

“Mhmm.” Harry hummed, eyes closing to better enjoy the moment. “Two hearts, two heartbeats.” Opening his eyes, he plucked the diagnostic results from the air where they were hovering, scanning them quickly. “Just as strong and magical as they were last turn, and happily settled in my sac and growing at a normal rate for a male-bearer multiple pregnancy. All is well with the Heirs of Westeros and the North.”

…

That night, after they’d spent several hours working on exhausting each other physically after the day had wrung them out mentally, Jon and Robb snuggled Harry down in between them, Robb unable to stop himself from wrapping Harry up in his arms and gently stroking Harry’s stomach, Jon watching with soft purple eyes.

“Thank you.” Jon whispered into one shell-pink ear just has Harry started to fade into sleep. “Thank you for waking for me, thank you for loving me, and most of all, thank you for this greatest of gifts you are carrying for me.”

Robb silently echoed his betrothed’s words, leaning far down and pressing a soft kiss to Harry’s abdomen, just over where one of the blue orbs had been centered.

Harry smiled sleepily, tangling his fingers together with Jon’s as Robb returned to his hypnotic caresses, slipping peacefully into sleep.

…

“Which envoys are we to see today, my love?” Jon asked Harry, his Hand in all but name.

“A trio of representatives from the Faith of the Seven; Archmaester Theobald, the upcoming
seneschal of the Citadel; and Prince Oberyn has requested a private audience with you and I.” Harry told him after consulting the list he’d put together with help from the Kingsguard who were serving as an unofficial Small Council until Jon was actually crowned and able to appoint an official Small Council as well as take care of other matters of State, such as officially stripping lands and titles from enemy lords and investing them upon Jon’s loyal men.

The only such investiture Jon would make before their wedding and coronation would be Aegon’s as Prince of Bloodstone, Lord Paramount of the Stepstones since it was through Aegon’s own intervention that the Stepstones had been returned to Westerosi control.

Harry supposed that if Jon wanted to, there really wasn’t anyone that could stop him from handing out some of the won estates and titles to his worthy supporters, but Jon as always was concerned with doing things the right way to prevent more problems down the road.

“Why would the Faith send three septons?” Robb asked, perplexed. “Usually they do everything by sevens.”

“I believe.” Ser Oswell, the most devout of the Kingsguard offered. “That while each man is a septon, that they are not all representatives of the Sept of Baelor. Three more different men travelling together I’ve rarely seen: one in roughspun with bare and knarled feet, one in fine linen and cloth of gold, and one dressed in old leathers with a simple amulet of a seven-point star.”

“A mystery then.” Harry quirked a brow at his loves. “Shall we set ourselves to solving it lovers?”

Flicking his fingers, Harry had the table cleared of their morning repast, having already sent Arya back to Winterfell via portkey, Nymeria with her. Another flex of his power had them each arrayed in more “official” garb than their simple leather pants and wool tunics. Harry in his dragonhide leather trousers and overrobe in inky black with his family crests on the back of the robe, his silk shirt an emerald green to match his eyes with his new sigil embroidered over his heart thanks to Lady Sansa’s fine needlework; Robb in inky black leather pants that matched Harry’s in color with a fine wool tunic in deep blue to match his eyes over it and a white fur cloak pinned at his shoulder with a direwolf silver pin; and Jon in black dragonhide trousers nearly identical to Harry’s with a blood-red silk shirt and a cloak over it in the red-and-black with the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen, like Robb pinned with the silver direwolf of House Stark.

Hanging from each man’s chair was a sword sheath, each made of basilisk hide and fashioned by Harry, dyed black and set with either rubies in their personal sigils (Jon and Harry) or silver and white diamond (Robb), with their swords loose enough to draw and daggers at their belts.

“Who’s first this morning Ser Arthur?” Harry asked, knowing it was a bit early for most to be up and read for the day. Most, however, weren’t a trio of Lords and a King who had a campaign to win and a kingdom to claim.

“Septon Torbert, the official representative of the Faith has yet to arrive.” Ser Arthur said dryly. “However, both Septons Ray and Wymot are ready and waiting in the hall.”

“Very well.” Jon nodded. “If they are amenable to a joint audience show them both in, otherwise I suppose we will see whoever arrived first this morning.”

Ser Oswell nodded, and went out into the hall to relay Jon’s words.

Ser Arthur, Ser Barristan, and Prince Lewen were joining them in council for the envoys while Ser Oswell played messenger and Ser Mark guarded the hall.
Jon and the others weren’t surprised when Oswell ushered in both Septons, introducing them before returning to his post outside the door to keep track of arrivals for the day’s audiences with the King and his chosen consorts.

“Septons.” Jon nodded genially after the introductions were finished. “What business do you have to bring before Us?”

Ray waved Wymot forward, allowing the small septon belonging to the begging brothers, an order of the Faith that roamed the roads of Westeros giving blessings and performing rites in exchange for room, board, or alms, to take precedence.

“The business of any man of the Faith with a warring King, your Grace.” Wymot folded his hands peacefully before him. “To entreat you to stop your war that is costing more lives by the day, and repent your sins before the Father. The poor and smallfolk are suffering your Grace. Not just those you seek to stamp out.”

“Funny you should use those exact words, Septon Wymot.” Harry mused, cocking his head to one side as he studied the small man in his rough brown robes. “As they’re the same in missive that have been recovered between the Faith, the Hightowers, and the Citadel regarding the systematic destruction of magical blood in Westeros. A destruction that every single soul involved will be called before the King to answer for in charges of murder, conspiracy, and other crimes as proof is gathered and presented.”

“I cannot answer to that.” Wymot said, voice troubled. “For never have I taken part in such. If the Great Sept and the Most Devout have perpetrated such crimes then, yes, they should be charged and held accountable for the evil they have done through the shedding of innocent blood. In this we are agreed, Lord Potter-Black.”

Harry nodded, having scanned both septons during Wymot’s stating of his business, and seen for himself that while the sparrow neared zealotry, he wasn’t guilty of either murder or conspiracy.

Indeed, neither septon was, which raised Harry’s estimation thus far of the Andal Faith, though he rather thought that each man might be singular in their beliefs, not necessarily a representative of the Faith as a whole.

“As for your request.” Jon spoke, his tone strong but gentle in its refusal. “We are afraid what you ask is not within Our ability to grant. Rule of Westeros is Ours by right of blood, inheritance, and soon – conquest. The joined forces under Our command have been ordered to leave the smallfolk unharassed so long as they do not take up arms against Us. Predations do happen – and are swiftly and harshly punished. Even the Ironborn under the new command of Lord Harry have obeyed these strictures. If the smallfolk are suffering, that fault lies at the feet of the Lannisters and Renly Baratheon, not Jon Targaryen.”

“It is regrettable, Septon Wymot.” Robb added. “But unavoidable. Please believe that we are doing all in our power to advance the war and bring it to a swift end. But so long as one of Cersei Lannister’s bastard get sits upon the Iron Throne, there will be no peace in Westeros.”

“As you will.” Wymot sighed. “It is true that much of the damage has been by outlaws and the Lannister free-riders and sell-swords. I will pray to the Warrior that your swords are sharp and your victories decisive, if that is what it takes to bring an end to these pointless deaths. I have heard your replies to my request, and accepted them. But what of your repentance? I am sure either myself or Septon Ray would be more than glad to hear your confessions.”

“I’m not sure if word has reached you, Septon.” Harry arched an amused brow. “But I do not
follow the Faith of the Seven. I follow no Faith in fact. Not of the Old Gods nor the New, not the
Drowned God, nor the Lord of Light. I offer no reverence and I send up no prayers. I’m afraid I am
at heart a godless man.”

“Not godless, Harry.” Robb chided him, entertained despite himself at the consternated look on
Septon Wymot’s face. “Merely faithless.”

“That is true.” Jon chuckled. “Faith implies a bit of blind belief. And it’s impossible for belief to be
blind when a deity comes into your dreams and presents Himself to perform miracles on your
behalf.”

“What is this you speak of?” Septon Ray asked, intrigued.

“Blasphemy.” Septon Wymot breathed, eyes wide. “Even beyond that of their union which reeks of
incest and pederasty.”

“Bold words, Septon.” Harry smirked. “For a man of the gods, they reek in turn of judgement.
And what my lovers, the King of Westeros and Warden of the North, speak of is who you would
call the Stranger. I simply call Him either Death or good friend. Either way, they are correct. It’s
almost impossible to believe when you know. And I know Death. I knew him long before I laid in a
waking-nightmare under the Fist for over eight-thousand years and I know him still. I think he finds
me entertaining.”

Shaking his head, Wymot turned towards the others, determined to ignore Lord Harry’s words until
he had time to fast and meditate upon them.

“I follow the Old gods, Septon.” Jon told him softly. “Though I have been tutored in the Faith and
believe that they have a place in Westeros, the same as the followers of the Drowned god or the Lord
of Light, or the Many-Faced-God. All are to be welcomed here under my rule, though none will be
allowed to forcibly convert or press themselves upon the people, either great or small. I no more will
allow depredations to fall upon the septries by vagabonds humble or noble than I will allow the
burning of the godswoods by the Red Woman.”

“A noble endeavor, your Grace.” Septon Ray said with approval. “Though one that will not be met
with much approval by the great houses and the Most Devout.”

“No, no it won’t.” Septon Wymot agreed. “But even I, a devout septon and man of the Faith, can
see where such a policy will allow for the Faith to grow naturally, creating true believers rather than
those who merely give lip-service to the gods but do not follow them in their hearts. Though, I
would hope that you decide to convert, your Grace.”

“Perhaps if you take up a septry near my seat you will have time to try and convince me.” Jon
offered with a crooked smile. “Gods know, the fat High Septon seems more interested in gold and
wine than the work of the Faith.”

“Perhaps I shall at that, as King’s Landing is my next destination.” Wymot nodded, turning towards
Robb, who shook his head.

“I have been knighted and anointed in the Faith.” Robb admitted. “But having seen Death Himself
when he visited Harry upon Pyke and performed a grand show of his power there, I find I have
much the same dilemma as my betrothed when it comes to the Seven. However, you are more than
welcome to take the confessions of the Kingsguard or any man or woman among our forces before
you depart for the Crownlands.”
“I suppose that will have to suffice, for the moment.” Wymot sighed, nodding his head. “If the Seven will it, I pray we have opportunity to revisit this discussion at a later date, your Grace. With your leave, I will go and do the gods’ work before departing.”

Jon nodded, allowing the Septon to take his leave without further ado and with much to think on in the coming weeks all along the Gold Road towards King’s Landing and the other sparrows who awaited him there.

“And you, Septon Ray?” Jon prompted after the door closed behind Wymot.

“Like Septon Wymot I work with the smallfolk, ministering to them and tending their needs as a septon as best I can.” Ray told them, voice gentle and calm. “I wish permission to travel with your army, your Grace, and both minister to the men as well as any smallfolk we come across, serving the common good however your Grace will allow.”

“Have you any experience with tending the wounded or ill, Septon?” Harry asked, interested in the idea of having a Septon travel with them. At the very least it would reassure the more devout of the men.

“I was a sell-sword before I became a septon.” Ray told them. “I know a thing or two about tending the wounded and infirm.”

The trio exchanged glances then Jon said: “Welcome to the Targaryen Army, Septon Ray. If you would start your work among the men in the healing tents, we will have you outfitted with a tent and basic supplies, just let Harry know what you need. He will be most glad of the help, they are always overstretched in the weeks following a battle, and fighting disease seems to take as much of an effort as binding wounds.”

“I have exacting standards, Septon.” Harry warned the grey-haired man of the Seven. “As anyone man or woman has come to know once they enter the domain of the healing tents. And some of my strictures will likely seem strange. But above all they are effective, we have lost loss men to wounds, infection, and disease than any army of this size in all of Westeros’s known history, a fact I am very pleased by but there is yet room for improvement.”

“If it brings a little more goodness into the world, milord.” Ray told the green-eyed man humbly. “Then I look forward to your instruction. I’m a man of peace now, you will never find me to engage in violence of any kind, for violence only spawns more of the same. But I will help the victims of it just the same.”

Bowing low enough for respect but not so low as if to appear groveling or bootlicking, Ray was shown out and directed towards the healing tents by Ser Oswell, the knight giving a brief report that Septon Torbert had arrived along with an Archmaester of the Citadel, giving the trio a respite to stretch and discuss the two humble members of the Faith before meeting with the “official” representative of the Great Sept of Baelor.

As Septon Torbert, one of the Most Devout, the highest rank of septon or septa in the Faith save that of the High Septon himself, was shown into the room, Jon, Harry, and Robb all exchanged glances filled with mirth, so humorous was the dichotomy between the two humble ministers and this puffed-up peacock.

Clad in fine wool and silk, with cloth-of-silver vestments over top and a crystal coronet made of heavy hammered gold with crystals set mounted atop the band, Torbert was exactly what they had expected a representative of a corrupted Faith hierarchy to look like. In fact, his appearance, coupled with his over-large corpulent form, made him nearly a caricature of a fat, overindulgent clergyman.
Honestly, if it wasn’t for his face looking nothing like Harry’s long-dead and unlamented Uncle, he would think it was Vernon Dursley in all his grand bulk waddling his way through a low, obsequious bow to Jon, especially with the sneer “secretly” cast towards Robb and Harry himself by the fat man with his wine-reddened nose.

“The Great Sept feasts on high food and wine while the city starves.” Harry murmured to Jon and Robb – who was picking up High Valyrian more and more as they tutor him on the long rides between battles. “At least to look at their representative.”

“It is interesting that he is here when King’s Landing is still supposed to be closed pending another assault.” Robb observed the now-sweating fat man as the three of them – plus their Kingsguard who were clearly following the byplay despite the change in language – spoke over him.

Of course, it was possible that the Septon spoke High Valyrian, though unlikely.

After Aerys the Second’s murder by Jaime Lannister and Rhaegar’s own by Robert Baratheon, especially as the other Targaryens save for Jon ran to nominal safety in Essos, Valyrian of any origin, including High and Old, were rarely used at all in Westeros and spoken even less than it was written or read.

This septon might have had an education in the language, but likely had little cause to use it in the last sixteen or more years, a situation sure to put rust on any talent, particularly those that tend to fade faster than others, like language.

Jon gestured imperiously to the Septon to speak, arching a brow as the man floundered a moment before beginning.

“Your…graces. I, Septon Torbert of the Most Devout, have come to offer the greetings and courtesies of the Great Sept of Baelor and the High Septon himself, long may you live under the grace and peace of the Seven…”

The Septon rambled on for several more minutes in his high-minded speech, Jon and his loves watching him with patent amusement, the same that they might give a particularly entertaining child, while the Kingsguard waited for what was sure to be a show given the triad’s words to the other – much more genuine – servants of the Seven.

“…and should that day come where your coronation is nigh, the High Septon wishes myself to assure your Grace that the Great Sept will be…most delighted to preside over such a prestigious and historical event.”

Visibly pleased with himself, the septon folded his hands over his large belly, which at times had jiggled obscenely during his passionate recital of his clearly rehearsed speech.

“Rather presumptuous of the High Septon, Septon Torbert.” Jon said after a long moment of silence when it became obvious that the fat man had finished completely and was waiting for a response. Thought he response Jon would give him wasn’t the one the Septon was hoping for or expecting, much like that of Septon Wymot though for differing reasons. “As I have made no motion to be crowned by the Faith, indeed until this very morning, my army did not even have a septon to our name. I am a man of the North, septon.” Jon enlightened him with placid look on his sometimes-stern face. “My bearer was a Stark of House Stark, a brother of the Night’s Watch following my birth and my father Rhaegar’s murder by Robert Baratheon. I was raised in Winterfell by my uncle Eddard, the selfsame Lord and Warden of the North and Hand of the King that the High Septon allowed to be beheaded on the very steps of the very Great Sept you and he have just offered up for my coronation.” Jon leaned forward, tone vicious and fierce, at odds with the still and calm mien he
kept up. “I worship the Old gods, Septon.” He finished, staring down into a now milk-white face at the charges of malfeasance that were clear in his words. “And it is under a godswood that I will be crowned, not in any sept nor by any septon.”

“But, that’s, what…?” Septon Torbert flailed, flustered and overset by the firm set-down Jon handed to him, and via him the Faith.

“So long as the Great Sept of Baelor allows such practices as murder on its very steps and pats the hands of treasonous cretins like Joffery Waters, Houses Targaryen, Stark, and Potter-Black will have no truck with it or with the High Septon and Most Devout.” Jon told him, waving for Ser Oswell to remove the fat septon. “Tell that to your Most High. When they now longer feast while a city starves and take bribes to crown a malignant cancer of a bastard boy King, abuse the trust and bodies of their faithful and entertain whores, on that day I will entertain a representative of the Great Sept. And not one day sooner.”

…

“Send out my words to the septon on black wings to the Great Sept, as well as every sept, septy, and motherhouse in Westeros.” Jon ordered the maester of Casterly Rock later that day, Harry having transcribed Jon’s response to the High Septon and copied it via spell for Jon to Seal with his sigil.

It wouldn’t do to have the message mangled when if it was twisted the wrong way it could start another uprising of the Faith.

As it was, what Jon demanded of the Most Devout and the High Septon was already written into their holy works and included in their vows.

He merely wanted to hold them to them, as it should be.

“It will be done, your Grace.”

…

After the septons were dealt with, Harry ran off to the privy as his loves’ heirs were making him piss constantly as his increased liquid intake to appease them ran right through them, before they sat down to a small repast before entertaining the Archmaester, though whoever the Citadel had sent was surely not going to be either as entertaining or informative as Marwyn the Mage.

The Archmaester and then Prince Oberyn would be the last meetings before they took luncheon with their Lords in the Great Hall, then it would be back to meetings with whichever of the Lords and knights who wanted to speak with them over matters of the campaign or troubles that were occurring while they were away with the army. Then Harry would away to the healing tents, and Robb and Jon would do rounds of the troops or go train with them. Any day where Ser Arthur can set up a fighting ring and put his king and the other Kingsguard through their paces was a good day for the Lord Commander as he drilled and drilled the men, each practice raising the chances of more knights and soldiers surviving the war.

The rule was in the camp of the Targaryen army, that if you weren’t in the healing tents, then you were either hunting or training or seeing to other tasks as assigned by the generals and captains.

No one sat idle as idleness led to anxious, aggressive men-at-arms and abused smallfolk who came across them.

Never let it be said that Jon Targaryen or indeed, Robb Stark or Harry Potter-Black and their most
trusted commanders sat by and allowed their men freedom to prey upon the weakened and vulnerable people of the Westerlands or anywhere else the army marched.

Once the food and water had been cleared, the group sharing a simple repast of clean water conjured by Harry and simple meat and bread, Ser Oswell and Ser Mark once more took up their posts in the hall, Ser Oswell ushering in the representative of the Citadel, come to negotiate the cessation of the siege and blockade that Jon had ordered and the Dornish were continuing to carry out along with their occupation of Old Town.

“Archmaester Theobald, your Grace.” Ser Oswell waved the grey-cloaked man forward, his maester’s chain heavy with lead links for the studies of poison-craft.

Marwyn’s synopsis of the Conclave had Theobald as a gruff but good man, for all that he’d delved deep into the craft of poisons and their antidotes, the current Archmaester responsible for the dissemination of the fever-inducing drought that was used to poison the children of magical blood in Westeros.

So, a good man, but one slavishly bound to the future the Citadel was attempting to create in Westeros.

“Jon Targaryen and his good-company.” Theobald greeted, notably absent the honorific the septons had given the uncrowned King. “Greetings and tidings from the Citadel. I am Archmaester Theobald, the chosen seneschal for the upcoming year. As such, I have been given the duty of treating with you to discover the cause behind your siege of the Citadel and negotiate the withdrawal of your men from Old Town.”

“Our men will not withdraw from Old Town.” Jon told him stonily, hardened immediately against the Archmaester over his discourtesy. Even the Faith recognized his sovereignty over the territories he controlled, if not over all of Westeros. Leave it to the proud grey sheep to try and buck the traces. “Not until the war is over and the Iron Throne is once more in the hands of the rightful rulers of Westeros.”

“By what right does the Targaryen lay claim to these lands?” Theobald demanded. “Or to lay siege to the Citadel? Your line was deposed!”

“By right of blood inheritance.” Harry supplied, tone silky with threat. “And failing that: conquest.”

“As for the Citadel.” Jon took up where his little love left off. “As you have almost all to a man been found in conspiracy to commit murder and regicide, the Citadel is under siege until the war is over and charges can be brought against each and every maester, acolyte, and novice who has taken part in the murder of hundreds of thousands of innocents ever since the Citadel and your Hightower patrons decided that magic was a bane to the land, reinforced by the teachings of the foreign Andal Faith. The ravens will remain under Our control and the Citadel closed until the war is over and the investigation can be resolved.” He reiterated to the aghast Archmaester.

Flummoxed, Theobald searched for a response, finally settling on a question.

“Do you intend to release this information to the people?” Such a thing would result in wide-spread chaos and the rabid mob searching out and hunting down every member of the Order, even those who were either considered untrustworthy or unsuitable for carrying out the task set by the Conclave for the last thousand years.

“No.” Robb answered to the Archmaester’s relief, only to dash his spirits back down with his next words. “Not until the war is over, as the King has already told you. We do not want blood to run in
the streets Archmaester, but a lawful trial and punishment carried out in accordance with the code of law that will be amended and set down as one of the first tasks of the second Targaryen Dynasty.”

“I wouldn’t bother destroying any evidence at the Citadel, Archmaester.” Harry added as Ser Barristan – furious anew over the deaths of babes in arms – grabbed tightly hold of the Archmaester to escort him to one of the cells of Casterly Rock’s dungeons until Harry could interrogate him and return him to the Citadel to join his disgraced brotherhood until said trial begins. “I’ve already copied it all on my journeys wherein I discovered it in the first place. Honestly, Archmaester.” Harry rolled his eyes, still dumbfounded at Grand Maester Pycelle’s arrogance. “If the Citadel wanted to carry out their work in secret, you never should have sent a man like Pycelle to King’s Landing. His records and spying were the beginning of the Citadel’s end.”

Harry waited a moment, trying to get his emotions – and temper – back under control before speaking as the Kingsguard and Jon and Robb discussed the Archmaester quietly, allowing him this time as they all knew that no matter how outraged each of them felt, it was trebled a dozen times or more for the wizard among them.

“I want justice for them, my loves.” Harry whispered brokenly, hormones – or at least that’s what he told himself – causing his eyes to tear at the reminder of the babies and young children sacrificed for the vision of a few arrogant men. “For each and every child who was murdered in the name of progress and science.”

“And you’ll have it, my Harry.” Jon swore, picking up one of his betrothed’s elegant hands and pressing a gentle kiss to the back of it. “So I swear on my House and my Name: this evil will not go unpunished.”

…

They broke bread with their knights and lords, including those who were not yet sworn to Jon’s cause and service, offering the visiting and treating lords and knights guest right so long as they kept their steel sheathed and started no quarrels with those sworn to Jon’s service.

An important distinction, as the marcher Storm Lords and the Reach Lords had historically been at odds with the Dornish, leaving aside any of the more personal squabbles that can either arise or be refreshed when so many highborn are closely billeted together.

That afternoon saw a slew of Lords and knights bending the knee to Jon Targaryen the First of His Name, mainly all from the West, with a few notable names including the Lords of the Westerland Houses of Serrett and Greenfield, while the Storm Lords Selmy and Swann bent the knee and pledged their men to the cause personally rather than leave them at Storm’s End with Stannis, while a few Reach Lords, sickened by Mace Tyrell’s turn-cloak behavior came over to Jon’s service, including Lady Arwyn Oakheart whose son Arys served on first Robert and then Joffrey’s Kingsguard, even stooping so low as to laugh when Ser Barristan was stripped of his white cloak by the pretender king. They were joined by Lord Alestor Florent, who was Lord Stannis’s good-brother and brother of his wife Selyse, who carried a message from Stannis that contained a listing of every knight and Storm Lord who had followed Mace Tyrell and sworn to Joffery. Lord Alestor did not stay more than a few days before boarding a ship to return to his good-brother’s side, Stannis’s newly-discovered baseborn nephew Gendry joining him to squire under Stannis as had been arranged by Jon via raven.

Mainly because while Jon did not blame the sins of the father upon the son, neither did he relish in having Robert’s bastard serving in his main army where others who were wroth with the deceased usurper might not be as high-minded.
Better to send him to his uncle and the protection of the Baratheon forces to join his half-brother Edric Storm who was likewise squiring in the Baratheon army, though under Ser Narbart Grandison a Targaryen loyalist, not Stannis himself.

The reunion between Lord Arstan Selmy and his younger brother Barristan was warming to the company in days that saw brother fighting brother and father against son as shown in Lady Arwyn’s defection and Willas’s removal to Highgarden rather than either noble treat with Tywin Lannister despite the choices others in their families have made.

Their last audience of the day saw them meeting with a selection of lords from the North, Crownlands, and Ironborn, come to discuss the hostages that had thus far been taken during the campaign, among them Euron Crow’s Eye, Lord Baelon Blacktyde, Lord Rickard Karstark, and Ser Fintin Bar Emmon who was the representative of his young lord, who was too young to squire for a knight let alone fight with the armies.

“Your Grace.” Ser Fintin broached the subject at the prompting of the others. “We wish to discuss the taken hostages. When will they be returned to the care of their captors for ransom or prisoner exchange?”

“My lords and ser.” Jon nodded, well aware that this subject had been boiling under the surface of the hightborn in his army for many weeks and turns now. It was one that needed handling carefully, as this particular precaution was the work of Harry, who the hightborn seemed to have a very… mixed reaction to. “Once we reach Harrenhal and the wedding and coronations have been undergone, we will open up communication with the Lannisters once more regarding a possible prisoner exchange while we prepare for the final push of the campaign. However…”

This qualifier lit caution in the men’s hearts, knowing that nothing good ever came of a “however” trailing after good news.

“However, not a single hightborn lord, heir, or knight will be ransomed until after the war is one and our victory is decisive.” Jon told them obdurately. “You will be able to ransom the women and children back to their free lords. But no heirs, no knights, and no lords themselves until the Lannisters are done for and the Iron Throne is in Our hands.”

“But your grace…” Lord Blacktyde protested as thunder cracked across the faces of Lord Karstark and the Crow’s Eye at the ultimatum. “Ransom of hostages has long been the vehicle that allowed the winner of battles to profit from victory. If we cannot ransom the lords and heirs…”

“Then they can’t return to Tywin’s side to reinforce his army.” Robb said, cutting the Ironborn Lord off. “Which is exactly what will happen if we ransom them back. Making the Lions at least give us two of ours or more for one of theirs helps leaven the troops we’d be returning to Tywin and his get. Their gold will do none of us any good if we fail in the campaign because we ransomed back their lords and heirs and knights.”

“You’ll get your gold for the hostages, I promise you.” Jon told them, mollifying Karstark and Bar Emmon at least, though Blacktyde and Greyjoy still look less-than-pleased. “Just not immediately.”

“If’n it pleases the lordships.” Euron drawled sarcastically. “Where exactly are the hostages anyway? I’ve not seen hide nor hair of them once they’d been turned over and questioned.”

“Exactly.” Harry met him tone-for-tone. “The point. If no one knows where they are, no one can give that information to the Old Lion, willingly or otherwise. Tywin would burn Westeros to the ground for his golden son. And being unable to find him has at least curtailed the worst of his backbiting and underhanded schemes. If he needs us,” he waved a hand encompassing the triad and
the Kingsguard. “To reclaim his precious Jaime, then he won’t be sending an assassin’s blade or poison at us from the shadows. For if even one of us falls under suspicious circumstances it’ll be Jaime’s pretty head that pays the price.”

Prince Oberyn was shown into the temporary royal chambers, later that night, relieved to see that only King Jon and Lord Harry were present save for his uncle Prince Lewen and Ser Arthur of the Kingsguard, the rest either sleeping, guarding the hall, or doing whatever it was Lord Robb did when he wasn’t seeing to the business of the realm with his betrotheds.

Likely running with the direwolves or meeting with his stiff-necked Northern lords.

“Your grace, Lord Harry.” Prince Oberyn gave a short, brief bow in greeting before moving to sit in the chair Jon offered him. Oberyn’s uncle moved to stand before the chamber doors while the fierce Sword of Morning – not slowed one bit by being in his fourth decade – took up his place standing at Jon’s left hand, the King’s right taken by his unofficial Hand and chosen consort. “Thank you for seeing me so urgently – and privately.”

“Of course, Oberyn.” Harry told him with a genuine smile. “Dorne has been one of Jon’s staunchest allies and without your personal help, I would have found myself stretched much thinner between having to carry out your tasks in taking the fortresses of Westeros as well as my own at Jon’s side.”

Oberyn grimaced at bit, reaching into his tunic and withdrawing a raven’s message, holding it out to the unhesitating hand of Jon, who refused to show the trepidation Oberyn’s expression and next words built in him.

They were too close for things to start to fall apart now.

“It’s Dorne that I’ve come to speak of.” Oberyn said heavily, feeling all eyes – including that of the other Dornishmen, his uncle and Ser Arthur of House Dayne – lock onto him. “As all here are aware, I have eight daughters out of the bond of marriage. My last four are with my long-time mistress Ellaria and are too young to have the taste for battle, mischief, and intrigue that my older four all have. Obara, Nymeria, and Sarella have all accompanied me here from the sack of Old Town. However, when given the choice, my Tyene preferred to travel with her cousin Quentyn to the siege of Bloodstone, likely to keep an eye on him for her longtime companion and Quentyn’s sister Arianne.”

“Doran’s eldest and the presumptive heiress of Dorne, yes?” Harry supplied, exchanging a worried glance with his love over where exactly Oberyn’s recitation might be headed. In his experience, any tale requiring backstory tended to end up heralding bad news.

“Presumptive heiress.” Oberyn arched a dark brown, nodding slowly, his voice contemplative. “Yes. And there, I believe, begins the trouble. Tyene and Quentyn quarreled before the siege, where Quentyn failed to heed her warnings and led his portion of the Dornish fleet into a pirate’s trap. Tyene stayed free and waited with the rest for the pirate lord to demand ransom, only before that day arrived, Aegon landed in Torturer’s Deep and started the battle that you participated in Lord Harry.”

“I remember.” Harry told him.

“Doran wanted me to leave the campaign in the Reach and sail to Bloodstone to free his son – Doran’s preferred heir to Dorne.”
“An order which you wisely failed to execute as it would have constituted a break in my alliance with your people.” Jon commented, taking a drink of his wine as Oberyn gave him a knowing grin.

“That I did. However, Doran’s demands made it clear to Arianne that he valued Quentyn’s life over the prosperity of Dorne and she confronted him – according to all the tales told by the servants at Sunspear and my Ellaria at least. During that confrontation, Doran made it clear without explicitly stating as such that he sought to marry her to a noble lord in a great house and leave the Princedom of Dorne to Quentyn.”

Harry let out a soft whistle as Prince Lewen let out a blue curse stating: “My eldest nephew always was a fool for his own desires. His wife was proof of that if nothing else.” The Prince referencing Doran’s faithless wife from Norvos, who had left him and their three young children, after which betrayal, coupled with his beloved sister’s death, Doran Nymeros-Martell was never the same man.

“Regardless, uncle.” Oberyn cast a frustrated glance behind him at Lewen, though his frustration was purely for the situation and his brother’s intransience than it was for his uncle’s rather accurate summation. “Doran’s pride has been chafed both by my refusal to obey him and the ongoing battles he faces daily with his daughter. Though it seems they agree upon one thing: playing both ends against the middle.”

“You better not be implying what I think you are, Oberyn.” Harry hissed, green eyes hot and narrowed. “Your brother or not, if he thinks to betray his sworn King, no family no matter how staunch and faithful an ally will save him.”

“Or his House for his folly.” Jon added silkily. “If the Lord and Prince of House Nymeros-Martell has engaged in treason and treachery they will lose a great many of the concessions their treaty with the Iron Throne gained them above the other noble houses. And possibly much more depending on the severity of your brother and niece’s crimes.”

“I am aware of that.” Oberyn took in and let out a deep, bracing breath. “But while I am many things, I have never been craven. I won’t betray a man who has shown Dorne more respect in the last year than all the Kings before him for two hundred. A man who welcomes my bastard daughters among his fighters and at his table just as readily as he does the highest of noble lords. My family is everything to me, above and beyond my House. It wasn’t Doran that avenged Elia, it was you Jon Targaryen, the First of your Name. If my House must Fall for my family to Rise, then we will still emerge just as Unbowed, Unbent, and Unbroken as before – and better for being purged of a rotten core. I have no wish for the coronet of Dorne, nor for the Lordship of House Martell. I just want my family to survive my brother’s scheming, not follow the way my sister didn’t survive my mother’s.”

“Fair enough, Prince Oberyn.” Jon told him, reaching out and clasping hands with the Red Viper. “So long as the evidence of the crimes you’ve yet to confide are limited only to your brother and his children, then only they will bear the burden of the punishment. Though House Martell might find itself as Lords alone and Princes no longer, as well as other curbs on Sunspear in the end.”

“Agreed.” Oberyn nodded once sharply, Lewen echoing the motion when Jon’s purple eyes flicked up to see the elder Prince’s expression.

As a Kingsguard, Prince Lewen no longer involved himself in the intrigues of the Dornish court. But like any other man, he still grew concerned when he saw children who he watched learn to walk and talk make mistakes. And from the sounds of it, this mistake of Doran’s might be the end of him and his daughter, if not all of his line.

Jon, who Lewen had helped raise and teach the ways of court intrigues, was many things; honorable, noble, fierce, sympathetic to the plight of the smallfolk, faithful to the old gods.
But when it came to treason, especially among those who have sworn to him, he was as swift and severely uncompromising as the snow that blankets the North even at times in Summer.

“My brother has secretly contracted with Tywin Lannister to marry his youngest child, my fifteen-year-old nephew Trystane, to the thirteen-year-old daughter of Cersei, Myrcella.” Oberyn told them, bracing himself as if for a blow. “The conspiracy reaches deeper than that however: while Doran secretly seeks to back both the Targaryen and Lannister cause, forsaking my sister’s memory, his daughter Arianne has a more sinister plot in mind to secure her own inheritance: using Myrcella’s weak claim to the Iron Throne to supplant Joffery and young Tommen, a plot which Doran is ignorant of as far as Tyene has discovered and seems to include patricide by Arianne’s order if not her own hand.”

Harry absorbed this potentially devastating news with uncharacteristic stoicism while Jon surged to his feet, whirling and slamming his fist into the carved golden ledge of the fireplace, paying no attention to the skin splitting over his knuckles in his rage, before turning away and moving to pace throughout the room, hands fistng and unfistng as his eyes veritably burned with his fury, blood dripping from his open knuckles. Harry spared a thought that he would need to heal his intended’s wound before it scabbed over and scarred before turning his tricky, Slytherin cunning to the problem at hand. He simply didn’t have time to react to the news Oberyn brought, he had to avoid the problem before it could really begin. And to do that, he needed more information.

“How far have the negotiations gotten between Tywin and Doran?” He asked mildly, eyes seeming far away to the anxious Oberyn, who was waiting for the King’s explosive initial to die down and hoping that Lord Harry had some canny plan brewing behind his jeweled eyes.

Any man that can plan the fall of not one but three supposedly-impregnable fortresses: Storm’s End, Casterly Rock, and Golden Tooth, can surely see a way clear of the subversive tactics favored by the Old Lion.

“Tyene is uncertain which is why she chose to travel with Quentyn rather than continue to meet me at the Arbor.” Oberyn supplied. “Her investigation has led to more questions than answers I’m afraid – though I believe now that Tywin has held off Renly and our King is in the West, he will move events apace as the reinstated Hand of the King. Cersei was sure to have objected to the match, though it won’t make any difference to Tywin. He’d marry off his own mother, let alone Cersei or her tenuously-legitimate-at-best daughter.”

“I see.” Harry tapped one finger on the arm of his chair as Jon came back to sit beside him, temper temporarily abated as he pushed his fury back down until the situation is managed. “How dangerous is Arianne? Would she have truly succeeded in supplanting Doran let alone Cersei’s sons?”

“Hard to say.” Oberyn gave a small shrug. “She’s best-friends and closest companions with Tyene, who is the most treacherous of my Sand Snakes. I believe she might have succeeded in placing Myrcella on the throne… but dealing with my brother is the trickier venture. Doran could teach Varys a thing or two about gathering up whispers and the songs of little birds.”

“Hmm.” Harry hummed under his breath, cocking his head. “Curiouser and curiouser. To recap: we have a treasonous Prince of Dorne and his even-more-treasonous heiress-daughter in collusion with the most dangerous Lord in Westeros, information supplied by your own – by your own admission – most treacherous daughter, does that about sum up the situation, Prince Oberyn?”

“Unfortunately,” Oberyn winced at the succinct summation. “Yes. Yes, it does, Lord Harry.”

“What are you thinking, my love?”
“Nothing – and everything.” Harry said, shaking his head to clear it. “The only thing I am certain of is that everything is uncertain at this juncture. When will Quentyn and Tyene arrive from Sunspear?”

“About two, three weeks, depending on the winds and weather in the Sunset Sea.” Ser Arthur told them, speaking up for the first time. “Less if the winds are favorable, which as we’re in Autumn is hit and miss in the Sunset Sea north of the Shield Islands.”

“Alright.” Harry acknowledged absently, mind churning. “That gives us approximately two to three weeks to come up with more information – either denying or supporting Tyene’s – before she and Quentyn arrive. That also gives us that time to decide a course of action either way. If her report and concerns are valid then we have to deal with both Arianne and Doran quickly before they manage to cement a Lannister alliance. But if they’re not…then that is perhaps even more concerning.”

“Either the Prince and his daughter are being framed and the information was planted for Tyene to find and bring back to me or…what?” Oberyn frowned. “She’s willingly participating in framing them? What possible motivation could she have for such a thing?”

“Love, hate, money, revenge.” Harry rattled off quickly. “All are more common than you know when it comes to treason. But for the moment that isn’t our concern: our concern is finding the truth – and planning for whichever situation arises as reality.”

…

“What are we going to do about Dorne?” Jon asked Harry as the wizard tended his split knuckles several hours later, Robb having agreed to a spar to help take the edge off of the Targaryen’s formidable temper. The two had beaten each other nearly bloody then soaked it all off in the tub, neither much the worse for wear and only needing a spell or two.

They were getting better at using the magics Harry was teaching them, their cores growing to the point that they were unconsciously healing minor wounds, as Harry’s magic used to heal him after one of his uncle’s rounds of “discipline” when he was a child.

Ghost and Grey Wind were proving to be excellent familiars, almost as if they were made to be a warg’s companion.

And thankfully, now that they were aware of what was going on in their heads, the wolf-dreams no longer troubled the two men, easily riding along with their wolven companions in their sleep, though they were often tired afterwards as they didn’t truly rest when in the wolf-dreams.

“You are going to carry on with being King of Westeros and claiming your Kingdom.” Harry told him firmly, flicking one hand impatiently at Robb when the Northern lord rolled his eyes and scoffed at the idea of Jon staying out of the new boiling-pot of trouble. “I mean it. You have more than enough to deal with between battles, keeping this multi-region army together, and your lords from killing each other before they reach King’s Landing. I’ll investigate what’s going on with Dorne. And whichever way the dice fall, I’ll handle it.”

“What?” Jon frowned. “Why you, why not me? I am the one who is possibly been betrayed by one of my closest supporters.”

“Because.” Harry looked up calmly into confused purple eyes. “You are a King in all but crown. There are some things that happen, some choices that have to be made, that you can’t be a part of. We called it plausible deniability in my time: the idea that actions have to be taken that are outside of
the normal code of behavior…and that a King or a leader should be left innocent of them in case they ever come into the public light.”

“So,” Jon’s slight frown turned into a full-on scowl. “You’ll do the dirty work so my hands and conscience remain clean? What about you? Who shields you from the realities of rule?”

“No one.” Harry laughed humorlessly. “That’s rather the point of being the Hand, as I am in all-but-name much like you’re King in all-but-crown. You may not like it – either of you.” He included the lounging-with-the-wolves Robb in his firm glance. “But my hands were dirty long before I awoke. One more scheme or sin won’t burden me unduly. And if my taking on that one more sin keeps that light shining in each or your eyes’ a little longer.” Harry shrugged, completely unrepentant. “Then that’s what I’ll do. Then I’ll return to your side, and you’ll greet me with a smile and a kiss, and never ask me what it was I’ve done that has me cuddling a little closer or leaning a little heavier into you for the time it takes for the stains to fade in my mind and on my heart. Because that’s why I would dare to do the things I would never ask another to do: so I can come home to you, both of you, and know you love me even though at times, the choices I make should make me unlovable.”

“But they also are to keep us safe.” Robb told him, coming over from where he was wrestling with Grey Wind and plastering himself to Harry’s open side, wrapping his arms around his smaller lover, hands reaching all the way to Jon’s own back as they pressed a now-saddened but resolved Harry between them. “And to keep safe our children and the people of Westeros. Of course we’ll love you, and protect you when you let us, and shower you with kisses and jewels you don’t even want. You’ve given us the world – not to mention each other. How can we do any less?”

Harry reached up and sank one hand into Robb rich auburn-red hair, the fingers of his other tangled with Jon’s now-healed own, the uncrowned King resting in the joint embrace exhausted from the endless parade of meetings, confrontations, and problems that had been heaped on his plate that day.

The purple-eyed man was perfectly content to allow his lovers to bear him backyards onto the bed furs and strip him bare once they’d surfaced from their deep, loving kiss, letting them take his mind off of the unpleasant reality of actually being a King instead of merely thinking in terms of someday. Someday was here, he was on a path that only ended in two ways: utter failure or utter victory.

They were too far along it now to turn back, if that choice ever really existed in the first place since his uncle went southron to serve as the Hand of the King.

An office that killed Eddard Stark in the end, as surely as the secrets and intrigues of the Red Keep’s court.

Jon would be damned if he would allow that self-same office to claim his Harry.

He would simply have to make sure that he made an example of House Martell, should their treachery be proven true and not just another plot – though to what possible end he couldn’t divine.

That way, there would be much less instances of such…folly in the future and less times his Harry would have to get that resigned look on his face and nearly-dead tone in this voice. If they were set on this course, Jon could at least ensure that while Harry took care of what he liked to call the “realities” of ruling a kingdom, Jon did his part and did it well to limit them. Perhaps, if he were another man, he would make someone else Hand of the King when the day came.

Only, he wasn’t anyone else.
He could only be the King and the man he was, and both of those needed Harry by his side.

Jon only hoped that in the end, the two needs of him didn’t tear his lover apart.

He would have to be vigilant and Robb as well, to give Harry the comfort he asked for, Jon decided while he was still capable of thought, Harry quickly setting his wicked tongue to other work than twitting septons and maesters, instead driving Jon nearly insensate with pleasure, Robb not far behind him as their northern love took advantage of Harry’s bent-over position to bury himself in their love’s tight channel.

Jon wrapped his hands in Harry’s unbound ebony hair, tossing back his head with a groan as the little devil threatened to have him spilling in moments like a smooth-chinned boy barely off his mother’s leading strings.

Wicked, that was what Harry was.

And Jon didn’t know what he’d ever do without him.

Moreover, he was determined that he’d never have to find out.

No matter the cost to keep him, Harry was his.

Jon might elect to share him, but never would he give him up.

Not even to himself, King or no King, the Iron Throne could melt to scrap before he would lose his little lover.

This he swore to himself before all the gods, old and new, as his eyes fluttered closed and he drifted off to sleep, sated and contented, his lovers joining him, Harry in the middle as they’d taken to laying ever since the revelation of his condition.

…

Tyrion, Bronn and Podrick Payne at his side, marched up to the great doors of Dragonstone, surrounded by part of the small number of guardsmen left to hold the ancient Targaryen stronghold with its Lord and Prince away on the campaign, men split between a skeleton staff left by Stannis of native Dragonstone villagers, who had a strong streak of silver-gilt hair and violet eyes due to three hundred years of bastards being sown by the Princes of Dragonstone among the smallfolk, the rest of the men including almost all of the guard being loyal Crownland supporters from Houses Celtigar and Velaryon, with a few rotating ships supplied by Lord Manderly with the Lord Admiral himself floating on his flagship between Dragonstone and Claw Island as they successfully blockaded the Blackwater and King’s Landing.

He could easily speak to the effectiveness of the Northern blockade, the Northern fleet having little trouble waylaying any daring smugglers or greedy merchants from the Three Sisters of Tyrosh, Pentos, and Myr trying to capitalize on the premium the nobility still located in King’s Landing was willing to pay to feast while the smallfolk starved.

Indeed, if the smallfolk ever knew what Joffery and Cersei supped on at table, they would riot again, and that was before the extravagances that were sure to occur for Joffrey’s wedding to the Tyrell chit.

It was only mid-Autumn according to the maesters of the Citadel, they had several years yet before winter was upon them, plenty of time for a campaign to be waged while the harvests are brought in and late fields are planted, Mace Tyrell certain to supply delicacies of all kinds for his beloved
daughter to feast upon.

A fool, but a doting fool he was nonetheless.

Were he a little less doting or a little less a fool, he would have chosen to back Tyrion’s friend, at least once Renly died if nothing else.

Alas, Mace Tyrell was every inch the fat foolish flower his mother had dubbed him, and he chose instead to ally with Tyrion’s vicious family.

The Imp wished him joy of fucking Cersei, as it was likely the only benefit he would truly see from the alliance, with Olenna’s skill at poisons sure to make her granddaughter a widow before her maidenhead was even breached by Tyrion’s worthless double-nephew.

Mounting the steps to the massive black iron doors of Dragonstone, Tyrion was unsurprised when they swung wide revealing one of the two maesters who were sworn to the castle, the other having chosen to stay in the service of Stannis and ventured with him to the Storm Lands despite his advanced age, Maester Cressen having long seen Stannis as the son he never had due to the elderly maester taking over the rearing of the Baratheon children following the death of their parents. This maester, a young man in his early twenties, was called Maester Pylos if Tyrion’s information was correct. By all accounts, Pylos was solemn and courteous but very diligent, the right sort of person to serve as a temporary steward in the wake of a transition period between lords.

“Tyrion Lannister and company.” Maester Pylos nodded correctly to a younger son of a noble house, giving his men the same courtesy as he gave the noble-born man. “Welcome to Dragonstone. Lord Potter-Black sent me word that you would be arriving soon. You’ve made good time through the Bay from King’s Landing.”

“Did he?” Tyrion ached a brow, impressed at the efficacy of Jon’s soon-to-be Hand. If his friend chose another Tyrion would eat his boots. “Well.” He handed over a sealed missive, one that had been passed to him in utmost secrecy by a Tyrell retainer of all creatures before he left the Red Keep. “Here is my letter of introduction from my friend King Jon Targaryen nonetheless. I am to take over the defense of the castle and command of its men until other orders arrive or the war ends.”

“Very good, milord.” Pylos cracked the doubly-sealed parchment, one the sigil of House Targaryen and the other the personal banner of Jon Targaryen, the First of His Name. Quickly he scanned it, easily picking out the pertinent information around the introductions and greetings and formalities. Handing it back he nodded and waved the small group forward, standing aside and allowing them to precede him into the fortress. “Right this way, Lord Tyrion. I will have a servant show you to the guest chambers so you can rest and be refreshed before being shown around the keep and its current defenses and defenders. I would keep that letter handy at all times.” The young maester advised dryly. “To prevent any accidents arising from a misunderstanding over your place here.”

…

The new day always came earlier in the East, business in the free cities of Braavos and Lys and Myr and six other city-states of Western Essos waking hours ahead of eastern Westeros, let alone the Westerlands where Robb and Jon’s army yet slept while he and Jon rose and made ready to beard a dragon upon its hoard before Jon holding his first true Court of his life.

Jon had presided over war councils and close councils, heard the complaints and needs of the smallfolk, and judged crimes from a young age at the side of his Uncle Ned and his crownland supporters as they taught him to be King or more recently during his campaign to reconquer Westeros for his House and family.
But never had he held Court, and Jon as well as Harry and Robb and the Kingsguard, were all well aware that that was a much different thing.

It’s easy to say, one day when I’m king I will do this and this and this, but another thing to hold true to those promises, both to yourself and your people.

The time had come for some of those promises to be kept and for other business of the realm to take place, no matter that of the eleven current regions of Westeros Jon laid claim to, only eight were truly under his control and flying his banner. The Winter Lands, ceded to Harry, were still wild and likely would remain so until the war in the south was over and the wizard was able to return to take it from the Night King’s hands, as they had come to know the leader of the Others thanks to the books and texts supplied by Archmaester Marwyn. Meanwhile, the Crownlands were divided between Jon and Tywin, and the Reach was divided further still, Houses and Lords loyal to all manner of causes, some following the Tyrells, some allying with the Lannisters directly, and still others swearing to Jon.

It was a muddle, but with eight regions under Jon’s sovereignty, there were certain actions that needed carrying out, and such things were usually best done in open Court for all to hear in addition to proclamations being carried to all corners of the Kingdom.

However, the major issue looming, and one that Jon and Harry alike thought they had a solution to, was the debts of the Iron Throne.

Which was the reason they were both awake before daybreak with Ser Arthur and Ser Barristan joining them, looking every inch the powerful men they were with the two Kingsguard Knights in their finest white scale armor and cloaks, ready to take a portkey Harry had programmed to drop them in the courtyard of the Iron Bank of Braavos, the city-state being one of the Essosi locations that he had set multiple beacons in to facilitate immediate transport if necessary: to the Iron Bank, the Sealord’s Palace, the temple quarter, and even the great Titan in the case of needed to move a ship or ships to the city.

The Knights of the Kingsguard all looked resigned, having traveled by Harry’s methods before, while Jon felt quite a bit of trepidation, having heard the stories of Robb and Lewen and others but never experienced it for himself.

Holding out the portkey for the day, set to take them there and back again, each man grabbed hold of the hammered gold plate Harry had spelled, and the wizard gave the password, whirling them thousands of miles away to the steps of the Iron Bank.

They were ushered inside with all courtesy, shown into a long impressive room with green marble floors and clean white walls, tall windows letting in the morning sun. A long black marble table stood at the opposite end from their entrance, three massive cushioned marble chairs that were more like thrones sitting behind it. The chairs were far too heavy to move, though they stood just far enough back from the table that a man could easily sit, so long as he wasn’t over large or too fond of food.

The three heads of the Iron Bank left them waiting, but not for long.

Braavos was an old city, founded by runaway slaves and freedom was the First Law of Braavos. They were old before Aenys escaped the Doom, and older still then the first Aegon set about conquering Westeros. As the youngest – and some say the bastard – daughter of Old Valyria, the Braavosi do not fear dragonlords – thought they do respect them and the damage they can meet out when roused to temper, combat, or conquest.
A majordomo preceded the heads of the Iron Bank into the room announcing: “Presented before the Iron Bank: Ser Barristan the Bold of the Targaryen Kingsguard, Lord Commander Arthur Dayne of the Targaryen Kingsguard, Lord Harry Potter-Black, Lord of Winter and the Iron Islands, and Jon of Houses Targaryen and Stark, the First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of Westeros and the Narrow Sea, Protector of the Realm.”

“Welcome to the Iron Bank.” The middle keyholder and main representative for the meeting greeted them as the three moved to sit. “Please be seated.”

Jon took the hard-stone bench on the left with Harry taking the right, as Ser Arthur and Ser Barristan remained standing, Arthur flanking Jon and Barristan flanking Harry.

“We have heard from another claiming some of your titles, or at least some similar, Jon Targaryen-Stark, the First of your Name.” The banker continued. “One Joffery of House Baratheon, the First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms, and Protector of the Realm.”

“As Joffery is neither a Baratheon nor a legitimate claimant to the Iron Throne.” Jon replied dryly. “He can call himself whatever he likes. But control – through alliance – of one and a half kingdoms does not equal seven. Nor does claiming kinship to Robert the Usurper make him any less the baseborn son of Cersei and Jaime Lannister.”

“No, that it doesn’t.” The banker smiled. “Westerosi have such wordy stories for things, don’t you agree? We prefer numbers here. They tell simpler stories and they never lie. And already, you have shown you understand this, as you gave us numbers – and they were numbers that matter – rather than platitudes for why we should support your claim.”

“I think you are mistaken as to Our purpose here, keyholder.” Jon told him, with a surprised arch of his brows. “We have not come to beg, hat in hand, for the support of the Iron Bank. As We are sure the Bank is aware, if We so chose to use the gold of Our ancient family, there would be no need of begging or supplication. Rather, We have come to make arrangements to settle half the debts of the Lannister harlot, her Usurper husband, and her bastard son have levied upon the Iron Throne and Westeros.”

“Indeed?” The banker gave a small smile at this. “Then you are a rare creature indeed, to settle debts not your own. What arrangements have you come to make to clear up this thorny issue.”

Jon waved to Harry as planned, the wizard speaking up having taken the measure of the three bankers while they ignored him for Jon.

“The Targaryen army has taken control of eight of the eleven major regions of Westeros and the Narrow Sea either through alliances or strength of arms. Included in that control as of a week ago, is Casterly Rock and the Westerlands. Our proposal is that we shall strip the Rock of its formidable wealth, including the treasury until the sum stripped from the former Lannister holding is equal to the three million gold dragons the Lannisters owe the Iron Bank, the Tyroshi trade cartels, and the Faith of the Seven. We shall send it – plus a small commission for the Iron Bank – to Braavos where you will take your share and disseminate the rest to the cartels and the Faith, clearing the debts of the Iron Throne save those to the noble Houses Lannister and Tyrell which will be negotiated at a later date. In return, the Iron Bank will stop any and all funding for the Lannisters and their allies, including Lord Mace Tyrell.”

“Paying debts.” Jon said softly. “Even if they are not Our own, is simply good business at the current juncture.”
“Yes, yes it is.” The banker nodded, tapping one finger on the marble table as he traded a swift glance with his counterparts, who each gave him a small nod. “Very well, we accept your proposal, so long as terms regarding our small commission can be agreed upon. Though, once the war is over, we retain the right to return to our normal practices of funding who we choose – if, that is, there is a Lannister or Tyrell left to need our services.”

“And agreed.” Jon nodded sharply. “Now about the fee…how does the Valyrian steel sword Brightroar sound to you gentlemen…”

…

As they were taking their leave of the bankers, Jon asked of the lead banker: “Do you know of former First Sword Syrio Forel?”

“Yes, most do.” The banker replied with a curious expression. “Why do you ask?”

“Does he have living family?”

“Yes.” This time the reply was more cautious. “Two sons and a daughter I believe, though they may have had children themselves, I do not know of them, they are of no interest to the Bank until they grow up and choose to become water dancers like their kin.”

“Good.” Jon handed over a scroll, doubly-sealed like his letter of introduction for Tyrion. “This is an authorization for the kin of Syrio Forel, in this case his two sons and sole daughter, to present themselves to the Iron Bank of Braavos and receive a sum totaling three hundred dragons from my personal funds in payment for the service the former First Sword gave to House Stark.”

“If I may be so bold as to ask…” The banker spoke as he took the authorization after sharing a shocked look with his counterparts. “What great service did the former First Sword render the North equal to three hundred dragons?”

“He saved the life of Lady Arya Stark, his student in water dancing, by sacrificing his own. Three hundred gold dragons is equal to the ransom paid for a highborn lord or heir taken in battle.” Jon supplied as he turned to leave from the Bank. “Let it be known that Jon Targaryen rewards those who service them well and punish those who would stand against him and the execution of justice in his lands. Had Arya been ransomed I would have paid her kidnappers in Fire and Blood. As she was rescued instead, I pay in gold for her safe return to my family, in case to the family of the one who engineered it at the highest cost a man can pay.”

“Valar morgulis.” The banker murmured, a thumb idly stroking the red wax seal of a dragon and direwolf rather than that of the Targaryen sigil. “Yes, this Jon Targaryen, the first of his Name, was very different from his forefathers. Different than all, save perhaps, his own sire and the founder of his dynasty, Aegon the Conqueror.

“Valar doheris.” The King’s companion Lord Potter-Black replied with a knowing look upon his face as the followed his King from the marble halls of the Iron Bank of Braavos, their business completed and terms set.

It had been a good day for the Iron Bank.

A day filled with nothing but profit.

…”

“Torrhen Karstark, come forward.” Jon called out into the gathered Court, which included all the
highborn lords and knights of his army, as well as any of the visiting envoys, Septon Ray and any other members of the Faith, and the various Maesters. Among this number was the healer that had joined them at Ashemark, a highborn Voltanese noblewoman named Talisa Maegyr who was causing waves in the noble lords of the army by both her presence as a beautiful, unmarried, noblewoman but also due to her no-nonsense attitude and scathing opinion of noble men in general, and generals and lords in particular.

Needless to say, Talisa got along famously with both Harry and Archmaester Marwyn.

The third son of Lord Rickard Karstark, Torrhen was one of the finest young warriors in the northern cavalry, though not a knight as he didn’t belong to the Faith of the Seven and hadn’t as a result taken any religious oaths to be knighted.

He had fought bravely and well in each and every battle of the campaign, but had truly distinguished himself from among the others of Robb’s men when he stood against the Kingslayer in the Whispering Wood along with his elder brother holding off one of the finest swordsmen in the realm and buying Robb enough time for Harry to arrive and help save both himself and Grey Wind.

Torrhen had continued to distinguish himself from his peers as they moved to clear first the Trident and then moved into conquest of the Westerlands.

Tall and strong, the third-born son of a Northern Lord, Torrhen was handsome and fierce, if more interested in swords than books, with the rich black hair of his father and the dark grey eyes that were a hallmark of House Karstark’s connection to the Lords of Winterfell.

As Torrhen, a young warrior in his early twenties, moved forward whispers arose as moving in pace with him from behind the dais came Lord Commander Ser Arthur Dayne of the Kingsguard, the legendary Sword of Morning, carrying a pure-white cloak.

Whispers which reached a fever pitch before dying out when the King began to speak, silencing any who might protest his appointment due to his lack of formal knightly vows, Jon feeling, and his betrotheds and the Kingsguard agreeing, that the formal oaths of the Kingsguard were oath enough, and as Jon himself wasn’t knighted in the Faith of the Seven, nor would he ever be, that forcing that stricture onto another believer in the old gods would be unjust, as would overlooking an ideal candidate for one of the two open Kingsguard positions due to lack of knightly vows.

It was a serious break in tradition, though not without recent precedent as along with dismissing Ser Barristan, the false-king Joffery had also elevated his sworn-shield Sandor Clegane to the Kingsguard, despite his lack of knightly vows.

“Torrhen Stark of House Karstark.” Jon spoke regally. “My Kingsguard is absent two members. Will you take up the post of Kingsguard and serve Us faithfully from this day until your last day?”

Torrhen glanced at his Lord father, pleased when Rickard gave him an unreserved nod, clearly proud of his son receiving a high honor rarely bestowed upon a man of the North.

Though Torrhen imagined that having one less son to sit at his table and fight for prominence likewise had something to do with Rickard’s pleasure at the appointment.

“I will, your Grace.” Torrhen bowed deeply.

“Then take a knee, Torrhen of House Karstark.” Jon ordered, nodding to Ser Arthur to swear in Torrhen in an echo of the ceremony that received Barristan the Bold into the Targaryen Kingsguard.

Minutes later, Torrhen rose as Torrhen Karstark, Knight of the Kingsguard to rollicking applause and
cheers from the Northern lords, taking up a post behind the dais with Ser Arthur and Ser Barristan, the other three members arrayed around the room, at the Lord Commander’s behest.

At Harry’s nod, Aegon Blackfyre with Ser Trystan Rivers and Harry Strickland at his back came forward and approached the King.

“King Jon of Houses Targaryen and Stark, the First of His Name. The Golden Company led by Harry Strickland, and Aegon Blackfyre the second of His Name, have led a successful incursion against the pirate-lord of Torturer’s Deep and rescued Prince Quentyn of House Nymeros-Martell. We hereby cede all rights to the Stepstones and return Bloodstone Castle to your rightful hands.” The trio bowed, Strickland and Rivers deeper than Aegon, only rising at Jon’s command.

Jon rose to his feet along with the trio, raising his hands and waiting for silence from among the gathered Court.

“As reward for your brave and decisive actions, Aegon Blackfyre, second of his Name, is hereby named Lord Paramount of the Stepstones and awarded the title of Prince of Bloodstone, a title which comes with the castle and island of Bloodstone and all its rents, tithes, and men to be a hereditary seat of House Blackfyre.”

Applause rose up and died down twice, once for Aegon’s new Lordship and once for that of Harry Strickland, who was likewise awarded one of the smaller keeps taken in the West, a wise decision on the part of Jon, dividing the commanders of the Golden Company by geography if nothing else.

Once the no-longer “Homeless” Harry had bowed and returned to his place within the Court, Trystan remained with his heavy silk-wrapped bundle, laying it down on the table before the against seated Jon before retaking his place beside Strickland in the crowd, who were all craning their necks to see what had been presented before the King.

“While in Essos.” Aegon began, gesturing for Jon to loosen and remove the silk wrapping, showing the gift from Aegon for all to see. “We came across some treasures that I claimed as part of my share during the sack of a Pentosi palace. I bring them before you now, returning them to their rightful owner and House, as a gesture of good-will and faithfulness between the Houses of Blackfyre and Targaryen. Long may we two Houses of the blood of the dragon of Old Valyria live in peace and prosperity.”

A gasp went up from both Jon and the Court, including Harry, Robb, and the Kingsguard as they saw just what it was that Aegon had laid before the King and given up so easily.

“Blackfyre.” Jon breathed, eyes wide as he rose and took up the Targaryen ancestral sword, holding it lightly in his hand as he tested perhaps the finest bastard sword Valyrian blade in existence for balance, caressing the dragon hilt and rubies with a reverent hand before setting it aside and doing the same with the smaller longsword. “And Dark Sister.”

Setting the swords aside as the Court roared with gossip over the Blackfyre scion returning the very sword that was the crux of the Blackfyre rebellions, Jon studied the dainty woman’s crown and heavy Targaryen pendant with keen eyes, easily making out the markings.

“As well as the crown and pendant of Daena the Defiant, your ancestress.” Jon finished, sitting back and studying the kingly haul before him with considering eyes before looking up and staring out at the newly-ennobled Blackfyre Lord. “For such gifts, I would have given you a Lordship and a castle. But I’ve already honored you thusly this morn. As such, I offer you a boon. Name it, Prince Aegon of Bloodstone, and if it is within my power and not against the laws of the land, it shall be yours.”
“Perhaps, your Grace.” Aegon said promptly, waving an encompassing hand around the Court. “It may be best if I voice my request for your ears alone. I do not wish you to grant it do to pressure to keep your word before the Court, but from a heart free of burden of duty or expectation.”

Jon exchanged a glance with Harry and Robb, gaining a thoughtful nod from each. “Very well. Ser Arthur will accompany us to the antechamber, and Lords Stark and Potter-Black will remain to handle the business of the Court in my absence.” Rising, Jon recovered the Targaryen treasures, handing them off to Ser Barristan with a command for their safekeeping before leading the way to the antechamber located just behind the Lord’s dais in the Casterly Rock Great Hall, built for just such an occasion.

Walking into the antechamber, it was the first-time Jon had ever been even semi-alone with the Blackfyre Prince, the dark-haired King finding it difficult to keep his eyes from trailing over Aegon’s silver-gold hair or staring into bright purple eyes, a purer and deeper purple than Jon’s own which were tinged with silver flecks inherited from his bearer, much like his dark hair.

The other man was tall, nearly as tall as Jon if smaller than Robb who was one of the largest men in the joint armies, and strong with it with clearly defined muscles straining at points of his silk tunic which had obviously been tailored when the Prince was a smaller man. His face had a purer masculine beauty than Jon’s own, though if asked he would be pressed to decide whether Aegon or Harry was the prettier man, Aegon likely winning out in the end by dint of Harry’s habit of cultivating a thin beard that was cut short and edged along his jaw to roughen his features. He was every inch the blood of Old Valyria and the dragons.

And given that Jon was to be bound in marriage to two other men, temptation made flesh and given breath to the Targaryen King.

Aegon however, was a temptation that would have to be refused, as Jon loved Harry and Robb too deeply to risk hurting them by giving into his instinctual desires to bind a powerful, beautiful man to himself.

It would not be the last test of Jon’s constancy over the years, but it was certain to be the most stunningly seductive.

“Very well.” Jon said as Ser Arthur closed the door behind them, standing guard before it as the last two men with legitimate Targaryen blood running through their veins – as Daemon Blackfyre was legitimised by Aegon the Unworthy – faced off in the small antechamber.

It was a sparsely furnished room, little more than a pair of stiff-backed chairs with a table between them and doors at either end. The walls were the smooth stone of Casterly Rock, undorned now that the process of stripping the Rock was well under way. All that remained of decoration to speak of in the tight chamber was a carved silvery-lime wooden candle stand on the low table and one of the Targaryen banners that a cache of which had been found in the castle treasury along with all manner of other surprising finds.

Many of which, the Lannisters held no claim to at all, unless they gathered them through collecting debts owed them.

“What would you have of me, Aegon Blackfyre.”

“Not just you.” Aegon told him, a devilish smirk tugging at one side of a lush, well-formed mouth. “But of your betrotheds as well. I wish for the right to pay court to yourself and your chosen consorts with the intent of joining your bond and marriage, joining power-to-power as is the way of our family.”
You could have heard a pin drop in the antechamber as Jon and Ser Arthur processed what Aegon requested as his boon – a boon due to Jon’s own actions and promise, that he was honor-bound to fulfill, as Aegon’s request was both within Jon’s power to grant and within the bounds of the law, as none of the Targaryen Kings nor even the Usurper had ever outlawed plural marriage as Jon already well knew with his two future consorts, nor had they limited the number of spouses a single man – or King – could take as his own.

It was also within the powers of the King to arrange marriages for his lords and their vassals, if the King feels it required as part of his duty to his people or needed as part of an alliance. They also have been known to grant marriages as punishment to a House or family or conversely as an honor depending on the situation. Indeed, in order to curb the power of some of the noble houses of the south, Jon planned to give over remaining heirs and heiresses in marriage to his most loyal supporters, extending their own influence by right of marriage rather than stripping the lands and titles from the punished families entirely.

It wasn’t the legality of the request that bothered Jon, nor even the morality of it.

Jon, as he’d previously shared with Harry and Robb, didn’t like to share.

Asking him to share his lovers was nearly more than Jon could bear, especially coming from a virtual stranger, no matter how tempting the idea of having Aegon tied to him – it would end the Targaryen/Blackfyre conflict utterly, as well as give Jon another devastatingly handsome and powerful consort – was to both Jon’s Northern practicality and his passionate Targaryen nature.

“Why would you want this?” Jon asked after several long minutes of silence. “It is no great secret that I am…taken with my chosen consorts. Why would you wish to insert yourself into an already set and by all accounts happy arrangement? Why would you ever wish to be the consort of a King?”

“Have you seen yourself and your consorts?” Aegon asked a bit incredulously. “Who wouldn’t want to be a part of the most powerful and beautiful bonding seen in hundreds of years?”

“Anyone with sense.” Jon retorted dryly, thinking of Harry’s current mood-swings, Robb’s temper, and his own stubborn intractability. “No one if they know what it entails wants to be wed to royalty. Especially not Targaryen royalty. I take you as many things, Aegon Blackfyre, but not a fool. You have to know what it is you’re asking.”

“I do.” Aegon shrugged lightly, unconcerned. “I was raised from a babe – though I did not know it until more recently – to be a Prince and eventually a King. That and a sell-sword. I know nothing else. It may not be the desire of a reasonable man to become the third consort of a Targaryen King, but no one ever accused those with the blood of the dragon of being reasonable men. Our wedding would – as I’ve said – wed power to power and return the blood of Old Valyria to its kin. Moreover, it would bring a permanent resolution between the century-long battle between our two lines. I may have no intention of fighting for a throne, but that doesn’t mean that one of my descendants won’t. I cannot divine the future or read the hearts of men, especially those yet to be born. But I do know how to study history and read the odds. Sooner or later, some embittered lordling or scheming Hand will get the idea to displace the Second Targaryen Dynasty and replace it with the blood of Daemon Blackfyre.”

“His council is sound, Jon.” Ser Arthur told him gravely, speaking up as his long-time mentor and adviser. “While I know this situation does not delight you, it is a solution to a problem you yourself have been struggling with ever since your Uncle Maester Aemon brought young Blackfyre’s existence to your attention.”
Aegon nodded thankfully to the Sword of Morning, having apparently found an ally in the antechamber he wasn’t expecting.

“And if the blood of Daemon Blackfyre is also the blood of Jon Targaryen, First of His Name.” Jon sighed, fingers rubbing at his temples, trying to ward off the headache he could feel building, one sure to explode as soon as he announced his decision and sent the Court – and his lovers – into an uproar. “Then said rebellion would be over before it has even begun, yes, I am aware of that likelihood.” He sighed. “But I cannot demand that my loves welcome another into their hearts and their bed, nor demand that Harry provide you with heirs. That must be a decision each of them makes for himself. And if they refuse, I will not demand that they wed with you as well as I, though the two of us will be enjoined in marriage should we find each other compatible.”

... Jon pegged the reaction of the Court exactly.

It was nothing less than an uproar when he announced what Aegon’s boon was to be, Robb staring up at him as if Jon was possessed by the ghost of the Mad King.

But of them all, including the alternately shocked and proud glances Aegon was gaining from his comrades among the Golden Company, there were two reactions in particular worth taking note of, if one was of the state of mind to take note of anything in the cacophony.

The first, and one of the most negative reactions, belonged to the still-present representative of the Great Sept and Most Devout, Septon Torbert who was calling down curses on Jon Targaryen’s licentious head, gaining him appalled reactions from nearly all of the gathered Court – and those that were not appalled by the Septon’s overreaction to a mere intent of Courtship, the Kingsguard was careful to remember in case of later difficulties.

Second, and for the opposite reason as the Septon, was the King’s chosen Consort and unnamed Hand, Lord Harry, for his utter lack of reaction to Aegon’s request.

He showed no pleasure at having a plot come to fruition – as Jon thought he saw Harry’s deft hand in the handling of Aegon’s boon, allowing Jon to back out of it if he truly found the idea distasteful – nor outrage over having a suitor forced upon him by his lover.

Harry didn’t react at all in any way the gathered Court could divine, many who were looking to him to dictate their own reactions.

He was quiet, calm, and with a thoughtful, considering look in his emerald green gaze as his eyes glanced slowly from the faces of Jon to Aegon to the gathered Court.

Once the initial raucous began to quiet at a held-up hand from Jon, Harry slowly rose to his feet, waiting to speak until Jon had waved him on and the Court was silent.

“Let it be known.” The Lord of Winter and the Iron Islands spoke neutrally. “That the Lord of the Winter Lands and the Iron Islands will comply with the wishes of the King of Westeros, Jon Targaryen the First of His Name, and entertain the alliance by marriage proposed by Aegon Blackfyre, the Second of His Name, Prince of Bloodstone and Lord Paramount of the Stepstones.”

Retaking his seat, Harry observed the Court patiently as his carefully worded message sank in, as well as the key word choices he had made such as comply, alliance, and entertain. It made for a message that Harry wasn’t as a matter of course agreeing with Jon’s decision to wed with Aegon Blackfyre. But that as a Lord in service to a King, he would allow Aegon to present his proposed
alliance and consider it in the time allowed by his own coming marriage to Jon and Robb.

Taking his cue from Harry, Robb rose and gave a similarly-worded but a tad bit harsher agreement, standing in solidarity with his lovers…but by no means particularly happy about the situation they had all been forced into.

If nothing else, Jon had learned a valuable lesson about not putting limits on the boons he offered the lords and knights and men of renown of Westeros, Robb thought as he watched the fox be set among the chickens at Harry and himself going along – for the moment – with the latest wild venture of the Targaryens.

…

“Are you pleased with yourself?” Prince Lewen asked Lord Harry quietly as they walked slowly back towards the private chambers of the triad, Harry and Lewen lagging behind the others which for the moment contained Prince Aegon who was walking and speaking with Ser Arthur near the middle of the group with a furiously-marching Robb almost pulling ahead of Ser Mark who had to fasten his pace to stay in the lead of the group.

They had finally finished the session of Court, Jon rendering judgement over some petty squabbles that had arisen between a few knights and lords, old rivalries and new tending to come to a head when the army was encamped for any length of time. Jon and the generals, including the Lord Commander, all worked to keep the men occupied, but they couldn’t force them into labor or hunting or training every hour of every day.

Aegon had been asked – more like commanded – by Jon to join them, to explain his madcap scheme personally to Harry and Robb.

Jon had absolutely zero intention to face the fire of Robb’s – and possibly Harry’s – ire alone when the architect of the situation was near at hand – and possibly near than even Jon thought likely.

Harry was just exhausted and wanted the long day, begun before dawn in the Westerlands with negotiating with the Iron Bank, over with.

At just over two turns pregnant, his magic was being mostly reserved towards fueling his pregnancy, making him in turns lethargic and irritated as he wasn’t able to heal or travel or anything really with the power and efficacy he was used to managing. He was still more than capable, but everything from rising to resting took more energy and effort than he was used to. It was a drain on him that wouldn’t be lifted for another two or three weeks, then once his children’s cores were firmly established, he would have the opposite problem: a wellspring of energy and magic at his fingertips that demanded to be used lest his system be overloaded from the assistance of his sons’ cores artificially swelling his own.

Thankfully, he already had a plan to exhaust most of the excess power he will he overflowing with during his second trimester up until his last two turns, where his power and that of his unborn children will be kept in reserve until the birth, to heal himself and his sons of the effects of birth, including healing him from his caesarean and preserving his future fertility.

Fertility was very much the issue at hand for Harry.

He knew that Death had implied that Aegon could carry children.

The only questions were how fertile was the other man, and would he be willing to carry or would the expectation of providing heirs rest solely on Harry’s own shoulders?
“Not really.” Harry told the Dornish prince honestly, voice ripe with self-loathing. “Everyone is already acting – from Jon to the lowest member of Court – as if I am the engineer of this turn of events. The same as they did when Robb joined us only with much less tolerance for all they look to me to determine their own public reactions. It’s not as if I want to share him, you know.”

Harry voiced the complaint for the first time outside of his own head, keeping his voice pitched low to avoid being overheard.

“But I’m a practical creature. Or perhaps merely cynical. Jon would have never been happy with me along in the long-term and already held Robb in high affection. There wasn’t much arranging to be done there at all. And I want to share them both with Aegon even less, especially since as a possible bearer, he runs the chance of eclipsing myself in their affections. But for the sake of the realm and my love’s Throne and rule, I do what I must. No matter how potentially hurtful, distasteful, or ruinous it is to me personally. In that, I am not unlike yourself, Prince Lewen.” Green eyes stared up resignedly into dark brown. “Everything I do, I do for him. A King’s Guard of a different sort entirely, no matter the cost to myself. Or my heart.”

“Magic, honor, sacrifice.” Lewen murmured as they approached the door to the private Lord’s chambers. “Never before have I understood your words more, your Grace.” With a short bow, the former Prince of Dorne allowed the future Consort and Hand of the King to enter before him, falling back and exchanging a meaning-filled look with Ser Arthur.

The Kingsguard would have much to discuss that night, as they welcomed their newest member young Karstark, and appraised him of all he needed to know to carry out his duties, much as they had with Ser Barristan.

Only this time, Lewen would be sure to include a warning to watch over Lord Harry most carefully, to prevent – as the Lord himself stated – his duty to the Throne leading to his personal hurt or ruin, which would in turn harm the King himself.

…I believe.” Harry said as he walked into the private chambers shared by himself and his loves, as well as the ever-present Kingsguard. “That any discussion should be shelved for the night and revisited tomorrow when cooler heads might prevail.”

As Aegon and Robb were currently facing off, Robb one step away from a snarl and the beginning of a sneer on Aegon’s face, Jon had to agree that Harry’s suggestion had merit and he said as much as he stepped between the two nearly-battling Lords Paramount.

“Then why am I here?” Aegon asked, knowing full well that – for the moment – he wasn’t welcomed freely into the private chambers of the current triad.

“I’m a wizard, Aegon, as you well know.” Harry told him, half-amused, as Robb stormed away with the direwolves at his heels for the bedchamber attached to the sitting room that – like at Riverrun – they used mostly for private meals and meetings with the Kingsguard. It was also the room where the Kingsguard slept in rotations during the night while those on guard were awake in either the hall or just outside their bedchamber. During the day, if one or two members of the Kingsguard didn’t have duties to tend to, they had another room adjacent to the triad’s where they slept and stored their personal affects. “And you just entered into a formal Courtship with my triad. You’re here to see if you’re both healthy and fertile, as the premise of your inclusion is your ability to give Jon children and thereby unite your two lines of House Targaryen.”

Aegon flinched a bit at Harry’s harsh summation. This wasn’t how he’d thought things would go.
And the blame for that wasn’t necessarily on Aegon, though it was in part. He’d only ever really seen Harry as a fighter or a companion to the King, pleasant, witty, a bit fierce. Even dangerous at times. But never the cold Hand or Lord, as he had been ever since arriving in Court.

Lord Stark’s reaction had been expected, even Jon’s tricky mix of warring emotions.

But not Harry’s coldness when before he’d been all smiles and flirtations.

Perhaps that was Aegon’s fault for backing them into a corner before the entire Court.

Aegon had been the one to present his suit as a formal arrangement to unite two lines, not Harry.

The wizard was simply playing the hand he’d been dealt, especially in light of having a new member of the Kingsguard sworn in only that morning and now privy to the King’s secrets.

“Very well.” Aegon replied after clearing his throat nervously. “What do you require of me for your testing?”

“Nothing at all.” Harry gave a little quirk of his mouth. “Just for you to stand there and be still. That’s all.”

“Are you certain you should do this now?” Jon asked, brow furrowed. “You’ve already used quite a bit of magic today, with our trip and your conjuration of Torrhen’s cloak and armor.”

“I’m fine, love.” Harry reassured his worried lover – both of them as Robb had peeked his head back out of the door to the bedchamber at Jon’s question, only returning to his brooding once Harry gave him a smile and a nod. “The spell I’ll use requires more of his innate magic than mine. I’ll, we’ll, be fine.” He stressed, smoothing one hand over his lower stomach, where he wasn’t quite far enough along to show.

A twist of Harry’s wrist had the Elder Wand falling easily into his grasp, while a complex pattern of swishes and waves, punctuated by a flick or two, and an incantation of: “Corporis sanitate perfectus narro,” had a complete report of the soundness of Aegon’s body listed on a conjured parchment while another – not strictly what Aegon had agreed to but Harry wasn’t feeling particularly fair at the moment, of: “Sanitatem mentis perfectus narro,” did the same only for the soundness of Aegon’s mind.

Which, as Aegon was a man with a double-dose of Targaryen blood, and infamous Targaryen blood at that from Aerion Brightflame…also known as Aerion the Monstrous, and Daemon Blackfyre, it was a sound precaution to take.

“What was that?” Aegon asked fascinated both by the streams of power that had poured off Harry from the now-concealed wand and by the language that had been used. “Old Valyrian? You speak Old Valyrian?”

No one spoke Old Valyrian anymore, except, perhaps, some of the oldest families in Volantis or the ruined cities that were still inhabited on the edges of the ruins of Old Valyria. It was still read, of course, as many interesting texts and tomes had been written and transcribed in the ancient language. But no one spoke it or wrote it anymore.

Except for an ancient sorcerer who was old long before Valyria rose to create one of the widest spread empires in the Known World.

“Frustrating, isn’t it?” Jon drawled, moving to sprawl in his favorite chair beside the fire. “And amazing all at the same time.”
“Yes,” Aegon agreed a bit dazed at having his perceptions of Harry changed once again in the course of an hour. “Yes, it is.”

“What’s the verdict, little love?” Robb called out from the bedchamber, having left the door open to hear their conversation but also wanting to remove himself from sight before he smashed in that pretty Targaryen face. Though which pretty Targaryen face he really couldn’t say at the moment, which was a large part of why he’d taken himself at least partly out of the situation until he could marshal his thoughts and get his temper under control. “Can we be rid of him?”

“Grey Wind, Ghost, sit on him for me until he can be at least polite.” Harry called out idly, and sure enough, the direwolves did as he asked, pouncing on the Northern Lord to had stretched himself out on the bed, Ghost pinning his legs while Grey Wind sprawled over his chest and shoulders, resting his large head over his person’s mouth before he angered his green-eyed mate and the wizard banished his man from the room…which mean Grey Wind would have to follow and be away from his packmate, the warm fire, and the wizard who gave excellent scratches.

“Though to answer the question, however poorly phrased,” he raised his voice for the scold to be easily heard by his stubborn northern Lord. “Prince Aegon is healthy and fertile, able to both bear and sire children.”

“The Courtship is without impediment then.” Jon surmised with a sigh, leaning his head back. “Very well. Prince Aegon, while we do need to spend time together and see if you will suit us and us you, my betrotheds and I need some time to ourselves. Ser Mark will see you out.”

Once Aegon had bid them good day, and Ser Mark had returned, the Lord Commander shuffled his Kingsguard and their newest brother off into the attached chamber, where Torrhen, now Ser Torrhen he supposed as a Knight of the Kingsguard, found the new dragonscale armor in white and silver, with a sword and sheath hanging from the armor’s belt. It was a sword he – as well as any man in the army would – recognized: Longclaw, the ancestral sword of House Mormont, given over to King Jon in payment for the King saving the life of Lord Commander Jeor Mormont at Castle Black from a wight. Harry had switched it out with a spell while they were all gathered in the Lord’s chambers, knowing full-well that Jon would be using Blackfyre from now on, though he wasn’t sure what Jon was going to do with Dark Sister, though Harry believed that he was likely to allow Aegon its use if they do indeed end up wed.

Back in the Lord’s rooms, once the Kingsguard had disappeared to ostensibly have their meeting though all were aware it was equally contrived in order to give the triad time alone, Harry had left Jon to his contemplative state and gone to release Robb from the direwolves’ care, sending Ghost out to keep his person company while Grey Wind tucked himself under Robb’s arm.

Snuggling himself down into Robb’s side, they waited together in peaceful silence as Robb and Jon both brooded over their new situation, Harry simply tired from the day and taking advantage of the peace before his lovers were at each other’s throats over Aegon’s courtship.

“Tell me true.” Jon’s voice came from the doorway, Harry turning his head to spy him leaning against the jamb and one hand tangled in Ghost’s ruff at his hip, the direwolf coming up to his waist and still growing. Based on what the texts could tell them, they thought Ghost would end up with his head equal to Jon’s shoulder with Grey Wind, Summer, and Shaggy Dog each a bit smaller and Nymeria even with the middle of his ribs. “Did you put him up to it?”

“No.” Harry answered immediately, turning his head back to rest against Robb’s chest as the redhead’s hand came up and began to card through his hair, Jon joining him on his other side and Ghost taking the side – and the guard – of the doorway. “I didn’t put him up to that display before the Court. I may have flirted a bit when I met him, perhaps dropped a hint or two of interest, but that
“bombshell was entirely his own.”

“Not entirely.” Robb added quietly. “Strickland, Rivers, and Maar all looked both unsurprised, impressed, and pleased. They knew he was going to ask for something big, but I don’t think they expected just how high Aegon had decided to aim.”

“He promised them a home from what I understand to secure their loyalty over that of his father.” Harry supplied. “Between his Princehood, the Stepstones, and Strickland’s gift in the Reach, I would say he’s delivered. But making him a consort of the King would add a surety to it. They’ll fight even fiercer for him now, or I’ll eat my wand.”

“Possible consort.” Jon corrected, wrapping his arms around Harry as they all settled in for a cuddle and nap before the Kingsguard returned, enjoying just being able to just be together before they have to return to King and Consorts and deal with the business of the campaign.

A correction which netted him a pair of snorts from his loves, inspiring him to level a scowl at their snickers.

“What?”

“My darling.” Harry enlightened him. “We’re many things but not fools. You’re going to marry him come hell or high water, the alliance is too valuable to dismiss and the Golden Company too damn good at laying siege to fortresses for you to do otherwise and risk offending them. They’ll only fight for Aegon so you need Aegon on your side.”

“And if you’re marrying him,” Robb added with a put-upon sigh. “Then we have to as well or we risk upsetting the balance of power that our marriage was intended to create. Power-to-power to make a stronger Westeros, one that our children will never have to wage a full-scale war to keep.”

“Besides.” Harry drawled with a wicked grin. “It isn’t like bedding him is going to be a hardship. Nor is he dumb as a rock or lacking in humor. We simply need to give him a chance and look at the good in the situation. Not just for the kingdom but for us as well.”

“Like what?” Robb snorted at the near-sarcastic tone Jon used to spit out the words.

“Like…” Harry said meaningfully. “None of us will ever have to be alone again.”

That caught their interest.

Neither man had liked it when Harry set off alone on his travels.

Not at all.

Nor were they looking forward to the end of the war when they each would have to make visits to their lands to oversee harvests, sit in judgement at the Lord’s court, and a dozen other things that would require their attention. Even with Harry’s abilities it would make for a tense time. And that was before they added in missing their children, who were due to be born in the first month of the next year if they made it to full term or at least close to such.

“When I have to stay at the capitol to take care of our sons, and Robb has to visit Winterfell or Aegon Bloodstone or Jon the Eyrie, one of the others can go with the departing husband and stay with the remaining one.” Harry gave them each a soft smile. “When my magic calls me to Essos to investigate Old Valyria or the Winter Lands or my duties to Pyke, I won’t have to go alone. Aegon’s addition balances things in that way even if it threatens to upset a few other things. Together, we can make it work.”
“And if we can’t?” Robb asked, his face and tone heartbreakingly insecure.

Harry snorted, not believing that a real possibility at all but willing to answer nonetheless.

“They can go fight pirates in his lands or lead the Golden Company to victory in the disputed lands or Jon can lock him up in that damned drafty Eyrie.” Harry supplied with a hidden smile at the very idea of locking up Aegon Blackfyre like some maiden princess in a tower.

“Or Harry can send him reaving or exploring with his Ironborn.”

“Or I can send him Ranging in the North.” Robb sighed, seeing their point.

There were dozens of ways to deal with a disagreeable spouse, and unlike Cersei’s solution, not one of them included murder.

“Very well.” Robb conceded, gaining a chuff of approval from Grey Wind and a nearly identical one from Ghost, to chuckles from all three men. “I’ll give him a chance. But if he turns out to be a prat I’m sending him ranging with the Umbers until he turns into a decent human being.”

“Fair enough.” Harry said around his rolling laughter. “Fair enough, love.”

Days later things had settled back down – mostly – and Aegon was tentatively spending time singly with each of the triad, sparring at swords with Jon and the Kingsguard, meeting the wolf-pack and participating in their training with Robb or helping Robb train the men, and assisting Harry in the healing tents when there were wounded from training or from the small attacks either Jon or Robb led against the closest keeps who refused to bend the knee.

Jon’s most controversial proclamation to date, shockingly enough, hadn’t been that of his chosen consorts or allowing Aegon the chance to court the triad, but his forgiveness and lifting of exile for several knights and lords who had given good service thus far either to his family or to the campaign as a whole.

He didn’t reinstate them into their Houses if they had been disinherited, as was the case with Ser Jorah Mormont who was the Lord of Bear Island after his father choosing to take the Black. His aunt was Lady of Bear Island now, and to unseat her would cause an ugly civil war among that House. Thankfully, Jorah seemed happy enough in the service of Jon’s aunt Daenerys that it wasn’t likely to become an issue.

Another case of this was much easier to handle.

Robert Baratheon had stripped Jon Connington of his lands and title, giving them over – if much reduced – to one of Connington’s cousins. A cousin that was among the number of Storm Lords and landed knights who had refused to bend the knee to a Targaryen King and join Stannis at Storm’s End, even after Renly was defeated. Red Ronnel Connington had chosen instead to turn his cloak and serve the Lannisters, just like Mace Tyrell.

Jon had sent a raven that very day he received what Harry was jokingly calling his “Black List” of Lords and knights that were going to lose their lands, titles, and freedom for treason, being given only two choices: death or the Black; a raven that went out to Lord Jon Connington at the Stepstones, authorizing Lord Laswell Peake to take a force of five hundred men and accompanying ships, horse, and elephants to Griffin’s Roost. If the Golden Company could take it, Lord Connington could have it. Jon intended to also restore it to its former glory, reinstating the rents, lands, and villages that used to belong to the Connington Seat and had been parceled out to
neighboring lords and landed knights at Robert’s command.

Harry Strickland had a similar list, as did Prince Oberyn and the other generals, Jon’s proclamation spreading through the men as they set out in small forces from the Westerlands, or his Vale and River Lords from Harrenhal or Riverrun: if you could take a castle or keep on Jon’s Black list, it was yours.

A single caveat being that they were not allowed to end the lines of the Houses that held the castles or keeps, nor to make free with the women, the same strictures Harry’s Ironborn now operated under.

Rape and the murder of innocents was not going to be tolerated in Jon’s Westeros, he didn’t give a fuck what rationale his lords and men tried to use.

It was this dictate that led to Harry gaining the most fearsome of reputations in the Known World, a reputation that for once, had absolutely nothing to do with magic or the powers he wielded or the things he could do…but the things he would do to protect the realm and keep the King’s peace.

...

The match that lit the flame that ended in Harry’s demonstration of the seriousness of the King’s new law, began on a bright autumn day just outside the healing tent at Casterly Rock, a mere two weeks before they were due to set out for Harrenhal.

Prince Quentyn was due to arrive any day from Sunspear, and word had reached Jon that he would dock at Lannisport within the next four days, his cousin Tyene with him who Harry was most anxious to converse with.

On this day, Harry was alone save for his constant shadows of Prince Lewen and Ghost, who had started tailing Harry when he became with child, though Harry himself was unaware of the reason for his new companion for weeks afterward, likely in part because he was in Essos or simply away from the army in the early weeks where Ghost prowled and whined and waited for his human’s mate to return with his human’s unborn pups.

Grey Wind as Ghost’s beta would also tag along after Harry somedays where Ghost had to see to the wolf pack outside the gates of the castle, both of them at times disappearing to hunt or track or train with Robb when they felt Harry was being looked after in a satisfactory manner…which apparently to a direwolf meant in his private chambers with the Kingsguard or his mates hovering or the pale one who was interested in joining their humans’ mateship.

The pale one was interesting to direwolf noses, as he smelled in part similar to their human alpha, like smoke and fire.

But the scent was stronger on the pale one, deeper, without the equal scent of wolves and winter winds to balance it out.

Still and all, the pale one had no malicious intent towards their human packmates that either direwolf could see, was intrigued by them in turn, and had a free hand with the scratches and handouts so they supposed he could stay.

For the moment.

Harry had “borrowed”, read: stole, Ser Crispan Celtigar to help him track down his more elusive Ironborn, especially those who had failed thus far to accept Harry as the new Lord of the Seastone chair, foremost among those lords and captains being Victarion Greyjoy and Lord Drumm of Old
Wyk.

Cris was a sailor and captain in his own right besides being a land-based warrior and swordsman, House Celtigar hailing from Claw Island which together with Dragonstone separated Blackwater Bay from the Narrow Sea. Celtigars were the blood of Old Valyria, friends and sworn to House Targaryen, who Aenys had assisted with their relocation at the same time of his own family’s, as he likewise did with House Velaryon, saving both lines and Houses from the Doom. As a result of this act of friendship and brotherhood, the houses of Celtigar and Velaryon were among the most ardent supporters of House Targaryen, out of self-interest if nothing else.

The Celtigar Heir, however, had been a true friend to Jon going back to when they were children and Benjen and Ned were beginning to build the base for what would eventually become Jon’s return to power in Westeros and his allied armies which at this point spread from the Neck – not counting the garrisons in the North that were protecting his Stark home – all through the Vale, Riverlands, Westerlands, Crownlands, Dorne, the Storm Lands, the Stepstones, the Iron Islands, and even a few in the Reach.

Jon’s noose for the Lannisters had been well and truly cast, now all they need do is lowly tighten it and allow the Old Lion’s struggles and the bastard Lion’s flailing to strangle themselves.

And on this day, Cris had news that Harry had been waiting for: he’d finally found the reaving Ironborn.

Harry just wished that he’d waited until they were in private to tell him that.

As when you make an announcement like: “Lord Harry, I found the hiding squid bastards!” in the middle of a courtyard filled to the gills with lords and knights and nobles of all kinds, not to mention the soldiers who came to the healing tent to have their training or fighting wounds patched up and healed, anyone can hear you.

In this case, it was Asha Greyjoy, who had already been pushed nearly to the edge with the death of her father and brother and the seeming “betrayal” of her uncle Euron.

Which, when it was Euron Crow’s Eye you were discussing, trying to call anything a betrayal was a bit of a stretch due to him being perfectly honest and open about only being out for himself and anyone else can go hang. In fact, if they don’t watch him closely, he might tie the rope around their necks and give them a shove himself. Harry rather thought something like this had happened with Asha, little things dropped in conversation with Euron, little pushes, and then she’s making a decision that ended in removing another obstacle in Euron’s path.

Though what his end game might be, Harry had yet to discover without doing a deep Legilimency dive, and considering the subject, Harry really didn’t want to do, certain it would be like trying to read a mishmash of Bellatrix Lestrange and Fenrir Greyback.

His brief scans of the Ironborn captain had supplied that Euron was plotting…just not what as plotting seemed to be Euron’s permanent setting even when he was leering, flirting, fighting, or fucking.

Not that Harry knew that last for himself, but based on what he caught whenever Euron caught his gaze, he could extrapolate.

Whether it was Cris’s choice of phrasing, the implication that her people were hiding, or just the sight of Harry with his Dornish guard, direwolf companion, and Crownland friend, they would never know what the final push was that drove Asha Greyjoy over the edge into reckless, stupid, idiocy.
As with a wordless shriek of rage, the Ironborn captain and daughter of Balon snatched up the dagger at her side, one of the same daggers that her brother had failed to kill Harry Potter-Black with, and lunged straight for his belly, knife swiping viciously.

A swipe that was intended to take either his or his children’s lives, though in the end the intent didn’t matter, as leaping into action the deadly combination of Prince Lewen and Ghost knocked the knife from her hand and had her pinned to the ground as she screamed in wordless, impotent rage, eyes wide and wild and mad in her formerly pretty face.

But it wasn’t only his guards that leapt into action.

Cris did as well, in a single motion thrusting out his arm and shoving his best-friend’s love behind him, which put him directly into the path of Asha’s dagger as he took a deep, jagged swipe of the dirty blade that cut deeply across his unarmored chest, through his fine wool tunic, and into the meat of his chest, ribs, and most worrisome, the inside of his opposite elbow where the brachial artery ran.

With a soundless gasp, blood sprayed as the artery was nicked.

Harry, spotting that Lewen and Ghost as well as the now shouting men-at-arms present in the courtyard had the situation well in hand, dropped to his knees besides Ser Crispan who could’ve very well just saved not only his life but that of his unborn sons, slamming his hands down onto the open arterial bleed and calling for the healers to come assist him.

The first to run over to him and answer his call was none other than Talisa, who had likewise just finished her rounds of the injured and was heading out to collect herbs from the fields and wounds surrounding Casterly Rock, the guards that Jon had ordered for her a mere step behind her. Dropping her basket, Talisa snatched up her herb shears and hacked off the edge of Cris’s tunic, creating a long strip of fabric that would wrap tightly around the wound and free up Harry’s hands. Working in practiced measures, Harry inched his hands down and off the wound bit by bit as Talisa wrapped it and applied a tourniquet to the upper arm to cut down the blood flow to the artery.

“His artery is almost severed.” Talisa noted with a soft Valyrian curse. “You see to it, I’ll begin on the chest and ribs, there might be damage hidden by the blood and ragged edges of the wound.”

“Agreed.” Lifting a hand, he waved the Archmaester over, Marwyn coming down next to him at his wordless command. “Send your student to collect what we need to tend his wounds, Marwyn.” He ordered. “Talisa will need your hands here. He cannot be moved until I have stabilized his arm – unless he wants to lose it.”

“I’ll keep it if it’s all the same to you, Harry.” Cris told him with a gasping laugh filled with pain. Tilting his head back he let out a much more honest chuckle. “You’re in trouble now, my friend.” He told him having spotted Jon and Robb coming from inside the castle at full-tilt, word of what happened flying through the castle like wildfire while Harry and Talisa were focused on staunching his blood flow. Asha had already been removed and Prince Lewen and Ghost were standing guard over Harry’s kneeling form, blade and fangs bared.

Jon and Robb came pelting up, Aegon and the Kingsguard at their heels, Jon instantly demanding a report from Lewen as he buried one hand in Ghost’s ruff, Grey Wind taking up guard near Cris’s head opposite Ghost who had Harry’s back.

“It was the Greyjoy bitch.” One of the Celtigar knights who had accompanied Cris to give Harry the report on the Ironborn ground out before Lewen could answer. “Tried to gut our Lord Harry, she did.”
“He’s right.” Lewen confirmed. “She came out of nowhere slashing wildly with her blade, aiming for Lord Harry’s stomach.”

Breaths were sucked in all around from the ring of lords, knights, and princes and kings who now stood watch over the furiously working forms of Harry, Talisa, and Marwyn, Oberyn’s daughter having returned and kneeling beside the Archmaester, handing over supplies as they were snapped for by Talisa.

Asha Greyjoy had tried to kill the heirs of Westeros and the North before they were even born.

High treason and attempted murder of Lord Harry.

There was only one sentence for such a crime, committed in the open with dozens of witnesses.

At dusk, Asha Greyjoy would hang.

…

They came to the docks of Lannisport by the hundreds, when the docks were filled, they rowed out to the ships floating in the harbor and filled the decks.

All to see as Lord Potter-Black and King Jon Targaryen, the First of His Name, execute a traitor by hanging her from the yardarm of her own ship the Black Wind.

“Asha Greyjoy.” Jon shouted for all to hear from the deck of the longship, Asha and Harry standing on the mast, a noose already slipped and tightened around her neck and bound hand and foot. She had been levitated up into place by Harry, who had himself climbed the mast with Ser Barristan who was still the best climber of the Kingsguard at his heels. “Testimony has been given and witnesses presented to your crimes of high treason and attempted murder, what say you?”

“Guilty of attempted murder.” Asha shouted back unrepentant. “But neither you nor your whelps are kings of mine.”

“So be it.” Jon nodded. “As you sailed under the flag of House Potter-Black, Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands, Lord of the Seastone Chair, Lord Reaper of Pyke and Lord of Winter who is the sworn ally of House Targaryen and King Jon Targaryen the First of His Name, you are hereby found guilty of high treason by your actions and of attempted murder by your actions and your words and sentenced to hang by the neck until dead. May the gods have mercy upon your soul. For We will not.”

With a nod to Harry, the Lord and Commander of the Black Fleet of the Iron Islands pushed her from the mast, carrying out the sentence. Fortunately for Asha, the drop was short and sharp enough, Harry having pity in his heart for her being caught up in her uncle’s manipulations and pressed on all sides, he had made sure her neck would break at the end of the rope, sparing her the indignity and pain of strangulation for all too see. When her body had stilled, Harry nodded to Barristan who cut her loose, her corpse falling to the deck at Jon’s feet. Ser Torrhen knelt at a gesture from his King and checked her pulse, nodding and reporting:

“She is dead, your Grace.”

“Cut off her head and place it on one of the spikes over the gates of Lannisport.” Jon ordered the new captain of the Black Wind. “Apparently, the lesson of the Twins has yet to sink in. Let’s remind the people of the price of treason.” Turning on his heel as Harry and Barristan returned to the deck, they climbed from the ship, Harry snapping out an order to Asha’s former crew. “Burn her body.” Harry’s voice was low but firm. “Then return her bones to Aeron Greyjoy on Pyke.”
“Yes, Lord Reaper.” Her former crew responded including Eerl Harlaw, Asha’s distant relation now captain of her ship.

…

The next morning far away from the troubles of Casterly Rock and the royal court, Sansa Stark opened her paired journal to check if Lord Harry had a message for her or one of her siblings.

There was, but to her surprise, it wasn’t a normal sort of message.

*Need to meet. Write when alone – Harry.*

Making sure that the door was shut and barred, Sansa replied, and Lord Harry popped into the glasshouses of Winterfell with a barely audible crack of sound.

“Lady Sansa.” He bowed, visibly weary despite a good night’s rest in the arms of his loves, and he knew it.

“Lord Harry.” Sansa gave a proper curtsey in return, prepared to deal in pleasantries until Lord Harry worked himself up to whatever topic demanded secrecy greater than that of a raven and more personal than that of their journals.

“You and Arya were allowed to speak with your mother I trust?”

“Yes, milord.” Sansa answered, hiding a grimace. It had been a *trying* experience to say the least. Sansa for the first time empathizing for all the times Arya had undergone one of Septa Mordane’s lectures or her mother’s scolds alone. “Half a candlemark, supervised by Maester Luwin and Ser Cassel.”

“Good, good.” Harry sighed, rubbing at the tension in the back of his neck. “We all felt that an audience with her might do you both some good – or at least curb the worst of her protests for a time. I trust she wasn’t too severe?” Harry asked, even knowing that the cast-iron bitch had been awful to both of them, and had little sympathy for their trials preferring to complain over Robb’s “betrayal.”

Sansa just gave a moue of her lips and an arch of her brow to that.

“The reason I’m here Sansa.” Harry stated finally cutting to the chase. “Is that there is a *situation* or possible situation at least, that I feel you might be able to assist with. Would you be interested in playing a role once more? I promise, this one will be much more palatable than the last, if not out-right pleasurable for your part.”

She cast him a considering look, intrigued by the prospect presented. “Go on, Lord Harry. I’m listening…”

…”

“It’s agreed then?”

“Yes,” Sansa gave a devious little smile before returning to the aspect of perfect, demure, southron rose. “I shall play my part, if needed. And afterwards, I will make my own decision though my brother and cousin are more than welcome to present options at that time.”

“Excellent.” Harry rubbed his hands together, a bit excited for the cloak-and-dagger himself. Really, sometimes one just needed to let their inner Slytherin out to play.
Popping back to Casterly Rock, Harry rejoined his lovers, task accomplished, and Jon handed him a missive, the sort passed from hand-to-hand based on the size and state of it, rather than by raven.

A look at the seal and signature had Harry arching a brow.

It seemed intrigue was to be the byword of the day.

The message was from Willas Tyrell, the Heir of Highgarden.

And in it, it pledged the support of Willas and his Heirs Army to the cause of Jon Targaryen, the First of His Name.

“You know.” Harry commented dryly. “You really should never underestimate the power of a good friend or a good fucking.”

“What do you mean, love?” Robb asked, frowning. He didn’t see the connection, though he thought Jon might based on the expression on his face and the snickering from Prince Lewen who filled in the blanks after Harry showed him the message.

“My nephew Oberyn and Willas have been friends for years.” Lewen supplied. “Rumors have even arisen that Willas has been entertained by Oberyn’s steady lover Ellaria Sand or even one of his daughters. If my nephew had a legitimate female offspring, she would have been promised to Willas on her birth and likely wedded and bedded by now.”

“Well,” Robb muttered, blushing a bit. “When you put it that way…” He thought it over a moment longer before finding the glaring problem. “What about Lord Tyrell and the other Heirs’ fathers or elder brothers or what have you? Haven’t many of them followed the Tyrell Lord into turning cloak and swearing to Tywin and Joffery?”

“Yes they have.” Jon answered, shuffling some papers and handing over the list that had been sent along with the message. “Some – but not all. As a result, the Heirs’ Army won’t take the field against the Lannister Host…but they will guard supply lines, blockade King’s Landing, or any other number of tasks that will keep them from committing kinslaying.”

“We can work with that.” Harry said with a firm nod. “We can definitely work with that.”

“And if a few loyal Heirs turn into loyal Lords as a result of battle.” Robb responded cynically. “All the better.”

The time to deal with the rogue Ironborn had come, and for the reputation of Harry’s fierce, unforgiving of lawbreaking, attitude to be sealed in fire and blood.

“You’re not coming with me.” Harry told Jon in no uncertain terms. “Or you either.” He shot at Robb when the Northern Lord opened his mouth to join the battle.

“You’re not going alone to confront Victarion Greyjoy, Harry.” Jon told him resolutely. “Or did the fact that his niece tried to gut you two days ago somehow slip your notice?”

“Since I was the target of the would-be murderer, not it hasn’t.” Harry snarked back. “And I never said I was going alone, just that neither of you could come with me.”
“Why?” Jon scowled fiercely.

“Because it sends the wrong message.” Robb sighed, letting his head fall onto the wooden table where they were sharing their nightly meal with Aegon joining them for once and looking wide-eyed at the squabbling between them.

In the time the Blackfyre had spent courting and getting to know the triad, never before had he seen them act this way. Disagree, jest, even flat-out-scream with and at each other yes. (The latter coming earlier that day when they found out Harry had jaunted off to Winterfell and back without warning or taking a guard with him.) But never squabble and bicker like children.

It was rather refreshing, seeing the triad that tended to act stoically in public save for the small gestures of affection they share or their fierce natures when it came to battles of any kind, act like any other man when it came to not getting their way.

“Exactly, thank you Robb.” Harry threw out an arm in an exaggerated gesture towards the slumped-over Lord of the North. “See, Robb gets it. I have to do this myself to cement my control over the Ironborn or we’ll be looking at another Balon’s Folly in a decade or less.”

He thought for a moment more before adding: “Likely engineered by Euron Crow’s Eye, like Asha’s suicide-via-stupidity.”

“You think the Crow’s Eye is behind it?” Aegon asked, surprised. The Golden Company knew to be wary around the Ironborn captain, but he hadn’t seen anyone other than them and some of the other Ironborn stepping lightly around the charismatic man.

“I know he is.” Harry answered grimly, Robb looking up with an iced-over mask on his face, nodding in agreement. “I just can’t prove anything. But I find it awfully convenient that one of the only contenders to the Seastone Chair – should anything happen to me that is – just happened to be in that courtyard when Cris returned with his news of Victarion, who I have to make an example of anyway. Which would inevitably have the end it did, leaving only Euron Greyjoy as a strong contender for the Seastone Chair at a Lordsmoot…”

“If something were to happen to you.” Aegon repeated the refrain. “As you said convenient.”

“Or,” Robb added suspiciously, having been watching Euron closely ever since the pirate in all-but-name appeared. “If something happened to myself and Jon, and now you Aegon, leaving Harry a widower and able to remarry.”

“That smacks of Tywin Lannister’s type of play.” Jon sighed, groaning at the thought. “Take out the true King, and an extra couple Lords while he’s at it, marry Harry to someone in his pocket and likely have the boys killed and marry off Sansa and Arya for good measure. All neat and tidy and working in his favor.”

“But like I already said.” Harry sighed. “No proof. So for now, I have to take care of the Ironborn rogues and trim the branches of Euron’s possible supporters. He’s not quite gotten my measure yet, neither has Tywin. Though you’d think after the Twins that they would have learned…” He shook his head. “Anyway. I’ll take Aegon, if he’d like to join me,” he addressed the next directly to the silver-haired Prince. “You should see what I’m capable of anyway before you get in both figurative and literal bed with me. And Ser Torrhen and Prince Lewen if you can spare them, love.”

“You’ll take them alright.” Jon agreed. “And a dozen other knights or you won’t be going anywhere if I have to tie you to our bed myself.”
“Promises, promises…”

... 

It took almost six hours for Harry to slit the throat of every Ironborn reaver, raider, and rogue who had broken the law of King Jon Targaryen, the first of his name, against rape of any kind, the taking of slaves, and the murder of innocent lives which was rapidly becoming known simply as Jon’s Law in the lands controlled by the Targaryen King.

Two thousand Ironborn in total died that day on the Shield Island of Greyshield, the seat of House Grimm, the Lord of which had surrendered to Victarion when one of his men Ser Harras Harlaw, defeated seven men in single combat, after which Victarion used the castle of Grimston as a base to reave from and Lord Gunthor Grimm was kept captive in his own home.

Harry had come in the night, portkeying onto the Celtigar ship that had sighted the missing Ironborn ships, twenty-five in total including the flagship of the Black Fleet, the Black Victory, his dozen knights, Prince Lewen, and Prince Aegon with him.

As they watched and the sailors of House Celtigar’s vessel stood witness, Harry cast a spell of compulsion over every raider, gathering them on the beach of Greyshield through the night. When the morning dawned, it was to the sight of two thousand men, guilty according to Harry’s spell, kneeling on the shore. Behind the men who stretched in rows for a quarter of a mile, were three piles: one of armor, one of weapons, and the last and largest pile of all the wealth they had raided.

Their longships were beached, half-in and half-out of the water, the Black Victory standing proud in the very center, though it flew no flag. Unlike the other ships which had been able to strip off Harry’s colors and replace them with that of House Greyjoy, House Drumm, or others, the power used by Death prevented this. So Victarion Greyjoy had been forced to sail without colors or flag for several turns, something which had no doubt troubled the suspicious Ironborn raiders.

“By the gods.” The Celtigar captain breathed, Aegon smirking and correcting him: “No, by Harry, Lord of Houses Potter and Black, Lord of Winter, Lord Reaper of Pyke, Lord of the Seastone Chair, Lord Paramount of the Iron Islands and the Winter Lands, adviser to King Jon Targaryen, the First of His Name.”

“As you say, my Prince.” Cian Celtigar, Cris’s cousin and captain of the Dragon’s Blood nodded.

“Oh, now.” Harry smirked, looking back from where he stood on the railing of the Dragon’s Blood, one hand on the rigging. “I wouldn’t say that. There was a bit of gods’ doing involved. All I did was have them come to the beach and kneel if they were guilty of breaking Jon’s Law since its institution. Everything else now…” He trailed off, focusing on something else none of his companions could see. “That was all god. Or at least one of them. Isn’t that right, old friend?”

Death materialized from where he was watching and eagerly anticipating what Harry was about to do.

“Perhaps.” The being said, his flames-and-ice voice sending shudders down the backs of all who heard it, all save Harry. “Thought I might save you some time, since what you’re about to do will take you hours as it is. Come, my friend.” Death beckoned, freezing the sea at the side of the ship and under the floating hem of his robe. “There is Death to be dealt this day.”

Rolling his eyes at the pun, Harry jumped easily from the ship, not a doubt in his mind that Death’s power would keep the water solid, and half-turned back to Princes Lewen and Aegon, emerald eyes dancing with hidden fire, belying the concealed rage that waited to be unleashed under his faux-
cheerfulness.

“Well?” He prompted them as he started walking towards shore, Death following with him. “Are you coming?”

…

Six hours.

With a pace of ten seconds per man, that was how long it took to sentence and slit the throats of two thousand raiders – man, woman, and priest of the Drowned God – who knowingly broke Jon’s Law under the urging of Lord Victarion Greyjoy and Lord Dunstan Drumm, who Harry left for last, along with Lord Drumm’s two sons and heirs.

When it was finished, and the shores of Greyshield and Harry himself dripped with blood, he turned to the gathered smallfolk and the those of House Grimm, including the Lord, who the Celtigars had freed while Harry was…otherwise occupied with carrying out the sentence of the murdering, raping, raiders.

“Captain Celtigar.” He spoke, voice raw from speaking the same words over and over again, sentencing his own, claimed people in droves.

“Yes, my lord Harry?” Cian asked, stepping forward without hesitation even in the face of Harry’s bloody visage.

“You were the one who found the reavers and reported to your cousin, Heir Celtigar, yes?”

“Yes, my lord.”

Harry waved a hand at the bounty that glittered in the noonday sun. “Then you may take a chest of gold and other treasures to split between yourself and your crew. A finder’s fee for locating my wayward rogues.”

“Thank you, Lord Harry.” Cian said, flabbergasted, eyes wide. Depending on how densely he packed it, the size, and the weight it could hold, a single chest could fit up to fifty thousand gold dragons. It was quite the king’s ransom, and all for sending word of where the raiders were and keeping watch on them.

Cris and his men made short work of packing their chest and moving it to their ship. Unbeknownst to them, they were also being paid for the thankless job they had done of packing the bodies of the sentenced raiders onto their ships, all save the Black Victory which remained clear of the dead. Death had left within the first hour – or at least left from within the view of the everyman. Harry thought he still might be hovering just out of his sight somewhere.

“I know that no amount of blood or gold can repay what these lawbreakers and murderers have done to you.” Harry told the smallfolk and House Grimm stonily. “But the remainder of the gold it yours, to do with as you please. Keep it, spend it, throw it into the sea. It has been enchanted, mind.” He warned them, mostly for the greedy and highborn in their midst. “Those with the greatest wounds left behind by Victarion Greyjoy and Dunstan Drumm will be able to remove the most from the pile, those with the least the least, no matter if you are low born or high.”

With that, Harry took out a cloth and wiped down the red-Valyrian-steel blade of Red Rain, the ancient ancestral sword of the now-extinct House Reyne which had been ended by Tywin Lannister, having claimed it from the pile of weapons and used it to remove the heads of Lord Victarion and Lord Drumm, the two heads he’d sent pack by spelled portkey of a House Greyjoy banner to Aeron
Greyjoy on Pyke. Sheathing it in the second sword-belt Aegon had selected for him while he was busy slitting throats, Harry turned towards the twenty-four ships bearing the bodies of the dead.

Waving his hand, he pushed them back out to the open sea with not another ship in sight, the Black Victory and the Dragon’s Blood both floating just off-shore. He sped them along with his power, then taking a running head-start, shifted into Stormwing, and flew after them. Spewing dragonfire with a roar, he set the twenty-four ships and two thousand corpses alight, raining down fire until there was nothing left of ship, sail, or raider but ash and then scent of burning wood and charred meat.

Shifting back as he landed in mid-step, already walking towards the Black Victory which had been loaded with the arms and armor, his dozen knightly guards on board, Prince Lewen and Prince Aegon falling into step at his side as he commented wryly to Aegon:

“Still so sure you want to wed me now?”

“More than ever.” Aegon replied with a smirk as they three jumped on board the longship, Harry quickly casting the spell that would turn the flagship of the Black Fleet into a portkey. “Powerful, dangerous, beautiful, and just. How could I not want to marry such a creature?”

Rolling his eyes, Harry cast a spell to clean himself of the blood and gore, then sent the ship whirling through the sky back to Lannisport and Casterly Rock.

…

Andrik the Unsmiling met them, having waited since mid-morning as Lord Harry had commanded.

He was considered the strongest man in the Iron Islands, and was a successful sailor who had obeyed the new Lord of the Seastone chair without hesitation after his demonstration at the Lordsmoot.

At times, Andrik missed the thrill of a no-holds-barred raid, but the sieges he had gone on had had plenty of gold and treasure to his eyes, even if he couldn’t take the pretty Westerling girl as his salt-wife.

A decision he was glad he had made, as Lord Harry appeared at the dock with Lord Victarion’s ship, a massive pile of armor and weapons, many of which he recognized, and no Lord Victarion or Lord Drumm to be seen.

Lord Harry had Red Rain strapped to his hip and a dozen knights following him all watching him in a combination of awe and fear.

Whatever he had done in dealing with Victarion and the rest of the rogue Ironborn, Andrik was said to have missed it and glad that he hadn’t been one of those foolish raiders to try and buck the word of a man with Death himself on his side.

“Good you’re here.” Harry said as he leapt nimbly from the longship, his Princes – guard and suitor – on his heels with the knights following on unsteady feet. “Andrik the Unsmiling, meet your new ship: the Black Victory.”

“My lord?” Andrik asked, blinking. “Shouldn’t the flagship go to Lord Blacktyde as your new admiral?”

“Blacktyde has dozens of ships.” Harry told him firmly with a raise of his brows. “You only have one and now two with the Victory. You will sail my flagship Andrik the Unsmiling, and keep watch over the other Ironborn to ensure that I never have another day like today. Understood?”
“Yes, Lord Harry.” Andrik nodded slowly. “What should I do with the weapons and armor?”

“Nothing for the moment.” Harry said, shrugging as Lewen ushered him up the street to the waiting horses Andrik had had brought down. “One of the quartermasters will come and take them. Until then, just make sure that no one tries to help themselves, yeah?”

Leaning over to Aegon, tired to his bones as they made it to the horses, Harry whispered: “Get me home to my loves.”

Tossing Harry up into the saddle, Aegon jumped up behind him and set spur to the horse, Lewen thundering along at his side while the knights followed more slowly, Andrik grabbing the arm of one he fought with at Ashemark and asking:

“What happened today? To the rogues?”

“Death.” Was his answer. “Lord Victarion and Lord Drumm gave Lord Harry disobedience and defiance. And Lord Harry gave them Death in return.”

…”

“What happened?” Jon asked with quiet concern as Aegon helped Harry into the Lord’s chambers where the King and Robb with the Kingsguard had been going over guard rotations for the two encamped armies and the troops currently garrisoned in the castle.

“Harry had to sentence two thousand or so of his Ironborn who had turned rogue.” Aegon told them grimly, his arm around Harry’s waist the only thing propping the Lord of Winter up as he’d wilted the moment the door to the Lord’s corridor, where the Lord’s private chambers and the attached rooms that the Kingsguard were using were located, was closed behind them by Ser Torrhen who was standing guard at the outer door to the hall. “He was strong and fierce and uncompromising, carrying out the sentence himself and then dividing the spoils the raiders had taken between the Celtigar captain and his men and the people who had been abused by Greyjoy and Drumm and their fellows. He even transported us back with the taken armor and weapons. But then…” Aegon trailed off, looking significantly at the nearly-comatose form leaning against him. “He asked me to take him home to you two after making another of his Ironborn the captain of his flagship. He… wilted when we made the private corridor.”

Jon and Robb were on their feet well before Aegon had gotten the first sentence out, Jon clasping Harry’s face in his hands and studying his blank green eyes, Robb taking hold of his icy hands as Aegon held him steady.

“His hands are like ice.” Robb reported, chewing lightly on his bottom lip as he rubbed them briskly between his own.

“And his eyes are dilated.” Jon said with a short curse, “he’s nearly unresponsive.”

“Shock.” Ser Arthur told them knowingly, familiar with the symptoms. “He needs warmth and the comfort of your arms, my lords, your Grace.”

Ghost padded around to behind the quartet, nudging and jostling Aegon and Harry forward as Grey Wind loped over to the bedchamber, delicately grabbing the covers with his teeth and pulling them over to the bed of furs cushioning the floor before the fire where the two direwolves tended to sleep when they weren’t out roaming at night.

“Aye.” Barristan nodded, a grin tugging at his mouth as he watched the direwolves bully a King, a Prince, a Lord, and a shocky wizard into the nest Grey Wind made before the fire. “The wolves
have the right of it. We’ll finish this up, you lot take care of our Lord Harry.”

After a quick conference, Ser Barristan was posted at the interior door while Ser Mark stood watch in the hall, Ser Arthur, Prince Lewen, and Ser Oswell adjourning to the Kingsguard chamber to finish the work of the afternoon and discuss Lewen’s report of events while he was gone with Harry and Aegon.

“Perhaps I should…” Aegon murmured, only to be cut off as Ghost grabbed hold of his cloak and jerked him down onto the furs next to Robb. He had passed Harry down to Robb who had reclined first, Jon moving to shelter Harry on their left, Harry laying face-down on top of Robb, waking a bit from his stupor to snuggle into Robb’s soft wool tunic. Aegon found himself with a direwolf circling him head and feet, with the room to his back and a reclining Harry and Robb to his front. Looking up, he found Jon watching him with bright purple eyes, silver flecks gleaming with laughter over his being bullied by a direwolf.

“You’ll get used to it.” Jon advised, speaking of their wolven minders. “I’m never quite sure if they belong to us or us to them, but they take watching over us all very seriously and only really listen to Harry religiously, though they know not to push myself or Robb.”

“Familiars.” Harry slurred, sounding a bit punch-drunk as he lifted his dazed head from Robb’s warm, hard, chest. “Always that way. Do wha’s best.”

“Shh, little love.” Robb hushed him, rocking a bit to sooth Harry to sleep. “Sleep a little. When you wake you can tell us all about it and the Ironborn. It’ll keep a bit for you to rest.”

“M’kay.” Harry murmured, sounding more sleepy and less shocky. “Aegon gon’ stay?”

“Yes, Harry.” Aegon reassured the adorable – and deadly – wizard. “I’ll stay so long as you want me here. I promise.”

“Tha’s good.” Harry whispered, finally drifting off into a real sleep and not the shocky waking-sleep he’d been in for the better part of an hour.

“Yes.” Robb agreed, looking down at violet eyes and silver-gilt hair with real warmth in his gaze. “That is good.”

…

Harry woke up about an hour later to the sounds of whispering over his head, his loves and Aegon carrying on a quiet conversation while he soaked in their affection and attention as he slept.

Not to mention drawing in a bit of their ambient powers to replenish his own, having drained himself dangerously with the stunt of portkeying back, ship, men, and all, especially with the stage of pregnancy he was in.

It had been a stupid move he could admit to himself now, but after everything was over all he had wanted was to be done and in the arms of his loved ones.

“….he’s been more tired lately…”

“…said something about the babies relying on his magic right now…”

“…overstretched himself, do you think?”

And a dozen other quiet whispers eventually penetrated his sleeping mind and woke him, his core
having recharged enough to sustain him and his pregnancy, he would just need to be more mindful of his energy levels and commune a bit more often with the magic of the land to keep himself from making another mistake like this noon-times’ on accident.

Turn after turn, Harry had been able to use as much – if not more – magic as he wanted without a care.

A dangerous habit when he wasn’t yet out of the energy-and-magic sapping first trimester.

He would have to watch that for the next two weeks, until he was officially in his fourth turn of his gestation and could utilize magic freely again until he was nearing birth.

There was a lull in the conversation going on over his head, Harry could almost feel Aegon hesitating before he spoke, and when he did, at last, say what was on his mind, it was a question, one filled with hesitance, hope, and trepidation:

“Do you think he really meant it?” Aegon whispered, his youthful insecurity making his voice shake a little. “About me staying, he was very dazed…?”

That, Harry decided, was his cue to stop lolling around and actually open his eyes and confront the dragon in the room: both Aegon’s place with them and the events of yestereen and this morning.

“Dazed or not.” He said firmly, opening bright emerald eyes that had lost the unfocused “checked-out” look as people in his time would have dubbed it. “I still know my own mind. Of course I want you here, Aegon. You supported me even when you didn’t know what was wrong, helped me hide my condition from the knights and lords and highborn who would have tried to take advantage of it. Moreover, you’ve been nothing but patient and understanding as we as a group try to get our minds and hearts around this new situation. I’d say you’ve rather earned your place among us.” Harry sat up a bit, straddling Robb who was still positioned underneath him, to stare at sapphire, silver-flecked-purple, and pure violet eyes. “Wouldn’t you?”

“He’s a dab-hand with the direwolves, and they like him.” Robb supplied, running one hand lightly down Harry’s back in an unconscious gesture of comfort – for Harry and for Robb. Ghost and Grey Wind chuffed in unison in agreement with Grey Wind’s human’s words. “And he’s not the pampered princely brat I thought he might be. I’m willing to take a chance on him if you two are, Jon?”

The uncrowned-King of Westeros looked over his shoulder at the silvery-haired blond who was nibbling lightly in anxiety at one plump pink lip, his violet eyes nearly as dark as Jon’s own as he listened with no-little amount of fear as they discussed his inclusion in front of him.

“He’s helped Harry, more than once.” Jon said slowly. “Both in the healing tents and outside them, being his strong right-arm as Harry is mine own. He has sound council with the Lords and will – as Harry has pointed out multiple times – return the blood of the dragon more strongly in the line of House Targaryen. And he’s not a half-bad swordsman either.” Jon joked the last, a reluctant grin tugging at the corner of his mouth as Aegon scoffed at that and rolled his eyes.

“Like you’re any judge, your Grace.” Aegon shot back. “You’re the best bloody sword in the North for certain and maybe in all the kingdoms. Equal to the Sword of Morning and perhaps the Kingslayer themselves. Half-bad compared to your Highness is still ruddy excellent to anyone else.”

Harry shook in silent laughter that finally bubbled over in reaction at Jon’s put-upon expression, causing a reaction of a different sort entirely in the body he was straddling so firmly.
“I suppose its agreed then.” Harry finally announced long minutes later, shifting a bit in tease to Robb as the Northern Lord held back a groan. “When we wed and are crowned at Harrenhal, Aegon Blackfyre will be among us.”

“What happens now?” Aegon asked a bit tentatively.

“Well…” Jon drawled, arching a brow as he reached out viper-quick and snatched Harry from his seat where he was tormenting Robb gleefully. “As the one to initiate the formal courtship, usually at this point where you suit has been accepted you present your courted intended with a gift of some kind to seal the arrangement.”

“I knew that, I knew that.” Aegon cursed under his breath, turning and rolling onto his side to dig through the low pile of swords and weapons belts that was on the floor next to him, the men having stripped off their arms when it appeared that Harry wasn’t going to wake anytime soon. “Stupid pretty bastards.” He grumbled to much amusement from his audience – both human and canine.

“Making me lose my mind, I swear it to the Seven. Ah-hah!” Holding up the pouch from his sword belt in victory, Aegon turned back around and rose to sit at Jon’s hip facing the triad, digging in the small fine-leather bag for his tokens to seal the courtship that he’d started carrying around after the first week when it appeared that they weren’t merely humoring him – mostly – but were actually giving strong consideration to accepting his suit.

Opening his closed fist, Aegon revealed the gift he’d chosen to present his intendeds if they accepted his hand: a trio of rings, each identical in every way, except for the color of stone used. The bands were finely-wrought and carved Valyrian steel with small flourishes that looked like flames in red-gold. And set in the face of each band was a carved and faceted gem, made to look like burnished dragon eggs in ruby, emerald, and sapphire. There was another, with an amethyst stone, as well, for Aegon to wear once his gifts were accepted.

“Where in the world?” Jon breathed out, eyes wide, taking up the ruby ring at Aegon’s prompting. “I’ve never seen the like of these in my life, not even in the writings of the treasures of House Targaryen, have you Harry?”

Harry cocked his head, picking up the one with the emerald stone when Aegon glanced between him and the ring significantly before holding out the remaining sapphire to Robb, only reaching into the pouch and slipping on his own amethyst ring once the others had done so with their own.

“No.” Harry had to admit after a time. “Granted, I haven’t taken a full accounting of my Vault as of yet, but no, I’ve never heard of or seen the likes of these rings before.” He cocked his head and stared curiously at the Blackfyre Prince. “Where on earth did you get them?”

Aegon shifted a bit, blushing.

“I had them made.” He admitted, then bit the bullet and supplied the rest after a sardonic glance from the green-eyed beauty. “In Qohor, over a year ago.” Qohor was famous for its smiths, who had the rare skills and abilities to reforge Valyrian steel to make swords or armor, or as Aegon’s gift shows, jewelry.

The triad exchanged glances then Jon pinned Aegon with his gaze. “Tell us.” He commanded. “Everything.”

“If I have the timing correct.” Aegon nibbled a bit more on his lip, only to be stopped by Harry reaching out and pressing down on his lower lip with a soft thumb. “It was about the time that you, he waved towards Jon. “And your uncle departed from Winterfell. A shadow visited me in my dreams while I was in the city-state with Lord Connington, discussing a contract for weapons and
armor with the smiths there for the Golden Company. It showed me two visions: one of three pairs of eyes, your eyes, and the second of these four rings. I don’t know who it was who came to me, or even why, but they did and I’ve carried these rings ever since.” He gave a short laugh. “I had better considering what they cost me. Connington was furious when he found out how much I spent on them before muttering that I just might be a Targaryen after all.”

Harry groaned a bit and muttered something ugly under his breath about “bored, meddling bastards” before enlightening them.

“I can probably tell you Who it was that gave you that vision.” Harry said with arid venom. “The moment Jon took up the charge from Eddard Stark to wake me, you were visited by a shadow in a dream who decided to play the odds on my waking leading to this exact moment. Death may be my friend, but at times he’s an interfering fucker when given the opportunity.”

“No…” Aegon shook his head, vividly recalling the aspect of Death that had been present that morning. “I’ve seen the one you call Death and it was not him – not in aspect or in the feelings they arose in me.”

“Death isn’t all flames and ice and fear.” Harry told the younger man gently. “He can be as gentle and warm as a mother’s embrace, as seductive as sliding into silk sheets with your lover, or as joyful as a child’s first smile. Death is many faceted and as varied as those who greet him in the end. But you could be right, Death isn’t the only god capable of doing works when the door is opened to him. Though when he’s chosen a favorite he is one of the more prolific.”

“Like you are?” Robb poked his little love in the side. “Or does he call everyone old friend. I know there’s a story there, one you’ve yet to tell.”

“And this isn’t the time to tell it.” Harry deflected, studying the ring that he’d placed on the first finger of his left hand, the others earlier following his action. “At this rate I’m going to run out of fingers.” He mused to their confusion.

“What do you mean?” Jon asked, perplexed as he grabbed Harry’s hands and held them up to the light. “There is only the one ring on your hands, though I intend to follow the ways of your people and place another one upon them when the time comes.”

And now thanks to Aegon, Jon had an idea for the design, which with some work and a bit of cunning, he felt he could have made without Harry’s knowledge.

After all, Stannis happens to have a new bastard nephew who apprenticed under a Qohor smith for years, one who knew how to reforge Valyrian steel like the artisans of Aegon’s rings.

The Bastard Smith as he’d been dubbed for his abilities and bloodline, would surely be able to craft what Jon was after, so long as he was provided the right metal.

Harry snickered a moment, then with a showy blow of his breath over his knuckles that wasn’t really needed to drop the disillusionment charm, revealed exactly what he’d meant by “running out of fingers.”

Crowding around his hands, Robb and Aegon shared an amused glance as Jon groaned at being so handily shown the error of his ways – again – regarding assumptions when it came to Harry.

“Well.” Jon sighed bemused as he stared down at the now gold-and-silver-and-Valyrian steel bedecked hands. “I know the ring Aegon gave you.” Jon ran a thumb over the emerald. “What are the rest of these?”
“Head of House rings.” Harry told him with a little grin lifting each finger in turn as he mentioned them. “They were a tradition of my people, much like passing down Lord’s seals or ancestral weapons is yours.” Lifting his thumb, he showed off the wide gold band with lion engravings that had doubled as a seal in its day. “House Gryffindor, which was the most ancient of my Houses. I’m a far-distant descendant, it had been eight hundred years since the last Lord Gryffindor and I’ve never styled myself as such since House Potter grew from them and was the more recent House…and much lower profile than being Lord Gryffindor ever would have been, something important to me back then.”

“That looks like the Lannister sigil.” Robb commented, tapping one finger on the gold.

“Lions rampant were an ancient device long before the dawn of days.” Harry told him with a roll of his eyes. “Tywin Lannister hardly has the monopoly on them.” He lifted his fore-finger a bare fraction. “House Potter.” Almost identical to the Gryffindor ring, instead of plain engraved gold, the wide band was set with a ruby that was inlaid in the lion rampant sigil.

“That one looks even more like the Lannister sigil.” Jon groaned sarcastically. “I’m wedding and bedding a lion in disguise.”

Harry flicked him off, showing the third ring in the process and stating: “Prat. House Black, platinum band with a black diamond face, inset with white diamonds in the shape of a constellation from my old world known as the Hunting Dogs. And last but not least,” he wiggled his left thumb. “House Slytherin, by which I became Lord by right of conquest.”

The Slytherin ring was a silver band, thinner than either the Gryffindor or Potter rings, and engraved with Celtic knotwork. Set on the face was – unsurprisingly to Harry when he’d originally been given it by Ragnok the goblin – an emerald that like the Potter ring was inlaid, though with silver rather than gold, in the motif of a basilisk ouroboros. Honestly, of all his rings, this one went the best with Aegon’s gift.

With a flick of his left forefinger, Harry covered his House rings with a disillusionment charm once more, leaving only his gift from Aegon on show, explaining: “I can’t take them off. Not until I designate a new Lord of each House or pass away into Death’s domain. The Black ring was originally granted to my foster-son when I was forced into my imprisonment, but it returned to my finger when the Black line died out. There’s other gems that go along with these, things that I’ve never worn that often other than formal occasions at my home, weapons, and the like.”

“The sword you showed me.” Robb mentioned, playing with Harry’s hands, fascinated with how he couldn’t even feel that Harry was wearing them even though he knew otherwise. “You called it the sword of Gryffindor and the motifs matched that ring, only with rubies like the Potter ring.”

“Gryffindor colors were a ruby field with a golden lion rampant.” Harry shrugged. “Similar to House Lannister but the red is a deep ruby instead of the blood-red chosen by Lann the Clever. And yes, the sword of Gryffindor is one, there’s a sword for each of my Houses, but I prefer either Thanatos, which is the Peverell sword, or the sword of Gryffindor though.” He waved a hand towards the pile of arms and armor at the edge of the furs. “Red Rain is growing on me. I like the red blade, mixes nicely with the black blade of Thanatos.”

“We’ll practice it.” Jon decided on the spot. “I can wield two swords instead of sword and shield, so can Ser Arthur and Prince Lewen.”

“I can as well.” Aegon spoke up. “But I prefer it with a long sword and a short sword instead of twin bastard swords like some insane kings and wizards I know.”
“Crazed, the lot of you.” Robb shook his head with mock ruefulness. “Why can’t you lot just use a greatsword?” He asked, sparking the sword debate for the dozenth time that turn alone.

“Because we’re not all great Northern behemoths like you and your Lords, Young Wolf.” Harry rattled off automatically, giving the same response he had to that question the first time he came upon Robb and Jon having this debate in their cups. “And your damned Ice is taller than I am.”

Robb snickered helplessly at that reminder of Harry’s comparatively diminutive height to the large Warden of the North, only to find Jon and released his hold on the wizard at the first snicker, not about to get in the middle of the two or hold Harry back when Robb really had asked for it.

_It_ in this case being a lapful of growling wizard who furiously set to finding and exploiting all of Robb’s weak spots, making snickers turn alternately into yelps from pinches and guffaws from brushing fingers finding ticklish patches.

“They do this often?” Aegon cocked his head as he watched the two men – large and small – tumble around on the furs.

“Oh, you have no idea.” Jon drawled, arching a brow at the display. “Give them a minute or two and they’ll be tearing off each other’s clothes and doing a tumble of another kind. A good third of the time in our chambers, fighting serves as foreplay.”

“O-oh.” Aegon blushed bright red as Jon’s words proved prophetic and Robb pinned Harry to the ground, taking his lips in a furious kiss as he held his arms over his head.

The direwolves gave a grumble and rose, nosing their way out of the chamber and into the hall with help from Ser Barristan who likewise removed himself from his silent post at the door, joining Ser Mark in the corridor.

It did the old knight’s heart good to see them tumbling around like a pack of playful puppies, reveling in their enjoyment of each other.

Though he hoped that they didn’t allow Harry to avoid the subject of his…episode for too long, it wouldn’t do any of them any good in the long run.

Back in the chambers, Jon wrapped an arm around Aegon’s trim waist, resting his head on Aegon’s shoulder as he moved to sit with his front to Aegon’s back, pulling the lithe Blackfyre into his arms and nestling him ass-to-groin, pulling a gasp from between berry-kissed lips as Aegon’s violet eyes darkened at the duel stimulus of Jon’s aroused embrace and Robb-and-Harry’s unintentional floor show.

“You don’t have to stay.” Jon whispered huskily in one shell-pink ear, his hands lightly resting on Aegon’s hip and thigh. “None of us would desire to rush you, nor would we hold it against you if you weren’t quite ready to join us in our bedfurs…or in this case floor furs. We’re not that sort of men.”

“You wouldn’t,” Aegon breathed out as he rocked back against the Valryian-steel pipe Jon had smuggled in his pants. “But I would if I gave up even a single chance to join the most desirable men I’ve ever seen in their bed, even knowing that I’m to be welcomed there any time.”

Jon hummed under his breath, making a mental note to have one of the Kingsguard help Aegon move his things into their shared chambers now that the formal courtship had been fully accepted and Aegon was going to be included fully in their marriage.

“Watch them, pretty one.” Jon murmured quietly into Aegon’s neck as he reached up and gently
swept Aegon’s silver-gilt hair over onto his opposite shoulder, baring the curves of his neck, jawline, and collarbone to Jon’s own hot gaze and searching mouth. “Look at how beautiful they are together. Imagine how it will be with you together with them and me or in the place of one of them.”

And they were, Aegon admitted with a wordless gasp as Jon’s nipping teeth and soothing lips traveled from his ear to his jaw to neck and collarbone and back again as his words spun the images overlaying the sight before him in Aegon’s head. They were beautiful, especially together, creamy-white skin on creamy-gold, black and red hair melding together as Harry took the superior position straddling Robb once more and leaned over, his ebony hair falling forward and half-shielding their entwined faces from Aegon’s sight. Robb made quick work of Harry’s tunic, stripping him from the waist-up, revealing a swathe of scars in varying shades of pink and silver, and even what looked like a tattoo, something Aegon had only ever seen on sell-sails from the Summer Isles.

Robb leaned up to Harry’s ear, pink lips whispering something too low for Aegon to hear, distracted as he was by Jon’s naughty purring words in his ear. Though Aegon certainly felt the effects of Robb’s words, as Harry – clearly replenished to Aegon’s eyes – flickered his fingers towards Aegon and he felt himself become clean…even in startling ways that he’d never felt before as his passage was suddenly felt empty in a new and disconcerting way. Harry smirked at him as if reading his mind—though in this case it was likely his facial expression that gave his surprise away—before turning back to making Robb moan and groan in pleasure as he swiveled his hips on the Young Wolf’s lap, his dexterous hands easily slipping Robb’s tunic from him and diving into his leather trousers as the pair tangled together once more with searching, darting tongues and roughly caressing hands.

Jon soothed him as Aegon made a quiet, disconcerted squeak at Harry’s blatant use of magic on him, mostly down to Aegon never having taken the submissive position in sex before, even with the few males he’d lain with in Lys or Braavos. Which Harry’s cleansing spell had seemed to Aegon to imply was the directions things were going. Not that he hadn’t expected it per se, that they’d tested his ability to carry, and both Jon and Robb had—assumedly from what the people had been told about Harry’s people and their male bearers—both been dominant to Harry in the bedchamber.

But expectation and reality were often two very different things, and now that the moment was at hand, Aegon found himself more anxious than he’d ever been when first tumbling an inn worker or silk-house courtesan.

“Easy, now.” Jon murmured, hands gentling the quaking form of Aegon, who was lost in a tumble of pleasured fear at his touch and words and the images both playing out before him and in his mind’s eye as Harry and Robb hurried to finish baring each other’s flesh, revealing long lithie or long strong legs and Harry’s tight buttocks to his gaze, getting just a glimpse of plum tips and reddened shafts before they were concealed by Robb planting his feet on the floor that Harry might rest against his thighs as they rocked together, Harry discernably provoking the larger man who choked out a laughing growl at a particularly saucy twist-and-tease. “I know what you’re feeling, Aegon. I’ve been there myself.”

That revelation netted Jon a shocked stare from purple eyes as Aegon tore his gaze away from the playing lovers to the one cradling him in his arms.

“Oh yes.” Jon smirked, eyes glinting. “You think I wasn’t nervous the first time I received Harry, let alone Robb?” Jon snorted, chuckling a little at the idea, Aegon letting out a small laugh at the idea. Robb’s lower weapon was nothing less than formidable from the little Aegon had seen. “That monster put the fear of the gods in me the first time I took it. But I did, take it.”

“But…” Aegon pointed out, breath shallow and gasping as his mind began to melt from sensory
overload, watching with a throbbing pulse and aching cock as Harry, finally finished teasing, lowered himself down onto Robb’s arousal, the pair letting out nearly simultaneous gasps, Harry tossing back his head and sending long ebony locks tumbling and tossing down his muscled back as the muscles in his legs tensed and released with the effort to control his smooth glide. “But, you’re a King.” Aegon panted out once he’d regained himself, squirming in helpless arousal against Jon’s cock and legs as they knelt nestled into one another. “Why would you…?”

“What?” Jon asked, hands cleverly stripping Aegon and himself of their tunics and opening their trousers, driving Aegon’s lust higher and higher with each pass of callused swordsmen’s hands, Aegon’s own chafing restlessly at the leather of his trousers or gripping at Jon’s legs. “*Debase* myself by submitting to my lover?” Jon snorted derisively at the drivel the Faith and the Ironborn fed their people over male-male relations. “There’s no debasement or shame in giving to your lover, nor does being a receiving partner automatically make you submissive. Look at them, really look and not just at the picture of desire they make.” Jon commanded. “Does Harry in *any* way look submissive to you? Or debased or shamed or any other anti-male-partnership to you?”

Aegon had to admit that he didn’t. Lowering himself in smooth glides that clearly demanded well-controlled strength, Harry was in control of his and Robb’s coupling, and had been from the first as he taunted and played and teased the Northern Lord’s body. And Robb himself merely looked the picture of aroused pleasure, clearly agreeable to Harry setting the pace.

Jon was right, there was nothing shameful in what they shared.

“How hard to let go of those ground-in teachings isn’t it?” Harry murmured to Aegon, showing that while he was completely engaged in making love to his warrior, he was also keeping half an ear on Jon and Aegon, paying attention as always to his surroundings, even in the throes of desire.

Yes, yes it was, Aegon agreed with a silent nod.

“Perhaps, because of who my parents were, I have an easier time of it.” Jon conceded, wrapping his arms around his beautiful lapful in a comforting embrace before returning to ramping up Aegon’s lust. “The same with Robb. Granted, it wasn’t *easy* the first time Harry tied me down and fucked me open.” Jon shared a smirk with the emerald-eyed minx. “But the pleasure was more than worth the temporary discomfiture.” Jon eased his hands down to the open waist of Aegon’s trousers in wordless question.

One Aegon answered by silently lifting his hips and allowing Jon to remove his last stitch of clothing, the Targaryen himself already bared, his leaking cock nestling in hotly against his partner’s smooth bared cheeks.

Jon reached down between them and gently smoothed oil Harry had summoned over Aegon’s crease, the silver-gilt blond panting with unfulfilled desire as he watched Harry lift himself ever more frantically, Robb planting his feet more firmly and thrusting up against him in time, the two chasing their release as Jon step-by-delicate-step opened Aegon’s passage, adding first one finger, then two, adding more oil, and then before Aegon could really process it, Jon had him open and was stroking something deep inside him with his scissoring fingers that had him giving a crying keen as his vision shot white for a pleasured-pained moment.

“There it is.” Jon groaned harshly, nipping at a sweat-slicked neck. “And *that*, Aegon, is why no man of sense who has been properly bedded will *ever* say that a good arse-fucking is anything but bliss.”

Removing his fingers with care, Jon lined himself up, teasing Aegon’s slicked hole with the very tip of him, stroking inside just a bit as he flirted with the virgin rim, Aegon panting and moaning and
writhing on his thighs and lap. Wrapping one callused hand around Aegon’s reddened cock, which was of a size with Jon’s own, the Dragon thrust home, Aegon giving another of those cock-hardening keens as he felt Jon’s hot-iron-bar tunnel relentlessly through his channel, opening him firmly, until his ass was once more resting on the silken-rough hairs at the base of Jon’s cock, twin globes filled with dragonseed smacking obscenely against his own. His keen sent shivers through Harry and Robb, Harry clenching in unconscious memory at the first time he himself was taken by the Targaryen weapon. A clench that had Robb crying out in completion, the splash of his seed triggering Harry’s own as he painted Robb’s heavily-muscled chest with seed of his own.

The sight of them crying out in ecstasy was too much for the overloaded Aegon, his own cock spurting out in Jon’s hand, the uncrowned-king taking that as his signal to thrust furiously into the smaller man, following the others into climax mere moments later as Aegon’s pulsing around him shot his control to pieces. Bathing Aegon’s sheath with fiery-hot dragonseed, Jon lowered them to their sides, but remained snugged tight into Aegon’s passage as the two pairs of spent – for the moment – lovers stared at each other from mere feet away, Aegon wrapped in Jon’s embrace from behind while Harry laid slumped over a heavily-breathing Robb.

“Give me fifteen minutes.” Harry said with heavy promise and a salacious grin. “And we’ll show you all the other insanely pleasurable things that the Faith decries as perversion between two men… or in this case four.”

Aegon blushed bright red, hiding his face a bit in the furs, but couldn’t deny that now that the first hurdle – so to speak – had been overcome, he was…excited to explore just what it felt like to lay with a man in all the various incarnations he’d heard of in Myr, and Braavos, and Lys but had never been brave enough to try for himself.

Eventually they adjourned to the actual bedchamber, Harry fixing the bed and the floor furs with a couple of spells, and spent the rest of the day doing exactly that: exploring each other, Aegon adding a new dynamic to a triad that wasn’t that settled to begin with, though they certainly were good at giving that appearance in public.

The Kingsguard after a time returned to their posts, and once they sensed at their humans were officially too tired to continue, Grey Wind and Ghost returned from their jaunt with the wolf pack, Ghost finally revealing something about one of the pack mates that thrilled and elated his two-legged companion.

Come morning, they were taking turned bathing by twos, the plain copper tub they’d kept in preference to send the massive golden extravagance of the late and unlamented Tytos Lannister along with the other treasures of the Rock to Braavos, all of which was loaded and under guard, awaiting the arrival of the two men who would be in charge of the expedition. One that was going to be shorter than expected, if Ser Davos followed orders.

A laughing Harry, fending off the grabbing hands of Jon, and wrapped in a long length of toweling, found Aegon standing and staring into the polished glass mirror, one of the few luxuries the triad had kept when stripping the rooms.

Specifically, Aegon was standing with his hands on his lower abdomen, staring between his reflection and his hands, nibbling all the while on his lower lip.

Harry cast a quick glance to make certain that Robb was sitting at their table, busily making up plates for everyone, while Jon finished his own ablutions now that he wasn’t being distracted by trying to distract Harry; then cast a quick anti-eavesdropping charm over the two of them as Harry moved to
stand next to Aegon, dropping his own towel and cupping his hands around the tiny tell-tale bulge he’d developed seemingly overnight.

He was close – within a week or so – of starting his second trimester and as a result, was losing his tight abs in exchange for the smallest of pregnancy pooches.

“Trying to wrap your head around being pregnant?” Harry asked as violet eyes lifted and focused on Harry’s mimic of Aegon’s stance. “Here.” He reached out and plucked up one long-fingered, elegant hand, placing it square over the beginnings of his baby-belly. “For future reference. I’m at about the midway point between three and four turns. But.” Harry shrugged, unashamed of either his nakedness or his pregnant state. “We’ve different bodies, we’ll carry differently when the time comes, though if the gods are good.” He commented drily. “We’ll never carry at the exact same time if we want our smug lovers out there,” he jerked a thumb towards the sitting room/antechamber, “to make it through them with their sanity intact.”

Aegon’s eyes darted between Harry’s body and his own spotting the obvious differences now that he was looking for them. Harry has surprisingly broad shoulders and developed chest and upper-arms for a man who was the shortest of their newly-formed quartet. And with that came an almost-womanly curve to his hips and buttocks, while Aegon’s were more slender.

“I’ll show more.” Aegon commented quietly as he processed the differences and compared them to women and girls he’d seen with child in Essos. “I’m not built as well as you are for carrying.”

“No, you’re not.” Harry agreed with a nod and a small shrug. “But you’ll still carry fine. Just not for awhile.”

Violet eyes darted back up to emerald green as Aegon started shrugging into his clothes, Harry joining him in dressing.

“One commander in this army whilst pregnant is more than enough for the entire war.” Harry told him, rolling his eyes. “And we wouldn’t even be dealing with that if Jon and Robb hadn’t seriously distracted me from my usual contraceptive spells the night the twins were conceived. I haven’t discussed it with them, nor do I really plan to unless it comes up somehow, but last night I cast a contraceptive on you, and will continue to do so with your consent until this damned war is over…or at least close enough that your child won’t be birthed in a warzone.”

“Thank you.” Aegon breathed, blowing out a relieved sigh as tension slid off of him. “I know it’s one of the reasons Jon went along with my courtship, but after seeing the toll your pregnancy is taking on you…I don’t want to be a liability on the battlefield.”

“No thanks needed.” Harry told him honestly. “Given the choice, I wouldn’t be in this predicament either. As far as your worries over your carrying ability goes…” Harry cast an appraising glance over Aegon’s long and lean form. “You’re healthy, as I said before. And you’re the blood of Old Valyria which makes you magical. I’ll go over some exercises and such you can do to strengthen your core – that’ll improve your chances of carrying safely significantly.” He said bluntly, then got a far away look in his eyes as they wandered over to the breakfast table. “In fact…” Turning he demanded of Jon: “I want the Kingsguard in the antechamber in a half-hour.”

“What all of them, why?” Jon asked, confused. They didn’t have any full meetings planned for today. At the moment, they were just going about day-to-day business until Quentyn Martell arrived along with Tyene Sand, Ser Davos Seaworth and one of his many sons accompanying them to lead the payment ships to Braavos, so they could get to the bottom of the Dorne royalty issue.

“Training in strengthening their cores.” Harry explained. “We’ve been putting it off because we
were busy, but it really shouldn’t be delayed any longer. Death knows they could use the boost they might gain from it.”

“Very well.” Jon conceded having noticed the difference himself, though he was much further along with Harry’s tutelage than Robb was or the Kingsguard or Aegon would be. “Ser Arthur will arrange it.” He said, glancing over at the Lord Commander who gave a short nod in acknowledgement of the command.

…”

“Every person with their ancestral roots in the First Men, the Children of the Forest, the Rhoynar, Old Valyria, and Asshai are of magical blood.” Harry told the gathered Kingsguard and Aegon, the direwolves watching with interest from where they were laying by the fire, Jon and Robb present as Ser Arthur had insisted on it if all of the Kingsguard were going to be occupied and unable to accompany them. The two more advanced of Harry’s students were already dropping into the meditative state Harry had taught them, Robb working on his bond with Grey Wind while Jon focused on expanding his abilities to organize his mind or send his magic spiraling through his body – Harry most recent lesson to him which had interesting results. “The Andals from what I can tell, are magic nulls. Enough generations of intermarriage, combined with the Citadel’s interference and that of the Faith, and the magic of Westeros has been suppressed. What I’m going to teach each of you will be to locate and access your magical cores, as well as exercises that will help grow your innate talents – at least a little.”

“If you don’t mind my asking, Lord Harry.” Ser Torrhen spoke up. “But why bother if it’s suppressed?”

“Not all of you have suppressed cores for one thing.” Harry answered honestly. “Really, only Ser Barristan and Ser Oswell do from Andal intermarriage and the maester’s of their homes following the dictates of the Conclave. You, Ser Torrhen, as well as Ser Arthur, Prince Lewen, Ser Mark, and Prince Aegon all have cores that are merely inactive and of various strengths – not out-and-out suppressed. But the exercises for Ser Barristan and Ser Oswell will help you as well, as they’ve helped Robb and Jon.”

“That wasn’t really what I meant.” Torrhen said with a wry grin.

“Because even loosening the bindings on a suppressed core, like Ser Barristan’s and Ser Oswell’s, will allow their cores to send out tendrils of power. Strengthening bodies and minds, increasing speed and agility, even help you recover faster from wounds and illness.” Harry arched a brow at Ser Arthur. “Surely you’ve noticed the increase in Jon’s abilities.”

“Aye.” Arthur grinned proudly. “He always had the making of the best swordsman in the Seven Kingdoms. And he was close to it before heading off to wake you, Lord Harry. But now he’s nearly unbeatable.”

“Aegon and Torrhen have the largest cores, Barristan and Oswell the smallest.” Harry told them. “With the rest of you falling somewhere in-between. The first step is finding your core and recognizing it for what it is…”

…”

Harry pulled out of Quentyn’s mind with a grimace.

The Martell ship had arrived with Ser Davos’s ship in tow, the leaders of the expedition to the Iron Bank greeted, and then shown to their rooms.
Quentyn had appeared obviously unwell, but all queries to the eighteen-year-old Prince of Dorne had been brushed off as seasickness – despite him from all accounts having no such problems ever before.

Once Quentyn was safely stashed away in a room stuffed between that of his uncle Oberyn and the one shared by the Sand Snakes who welcomed their sister Tyene with open arms and gossiping laughter over her long absence “babysitting our wittle cousin”, and Ser Davos and his son Matthos with him as the second of his ship the Black Betha were quartered with the other Storm Lords, Oberyn had escorted Tyene to Harry in the healing tents in a ruse of wanting her tended after her time with the Martell fleet.

A ruse easily pulled off by the most dangerous of Oberyn’s daughters who looked like the Maiden made flesh was one smitten Crownland knight uttered upon viewing her in her pale blue gown and white lace veil.

Tyene Sand appeared as sweet and pious as any septa sworn to the Maiden, and just as untouchable while a teasing flick of her eyelashes would tempt the most devout of septons or the most stoic of maesters into voiding their vows.

To Harry’s eyes, she looked like the ideal lady despite her low birth: beautiful, icy, and treacherous behind her sweet smile.

An idea proven out after Harry took a walk through her mind before offering her a rarely-given potion from his stores to cure her headache caused by his digging through her mind and memories. Harry being Harry and not anyone’s definition of a trusting soul, he’d gone seeking for much more than her memories of Doran and Arianne’s wrong-doing but also so see what other secrets she might have the keeping of. What he’d found in Tyene’s mind was much more than she’d told her father – though to her credit had she known of Harry’s abilities she would have told it all rather than risk being seen in a negative light.

Most of what Tyene Sand knew had been acquired through gossip, deceit, or pillow-talk, not an ideal source of concrete information, but a valid source nonetheless.

“You were right, Prince Oberyn.” Harry commented when Tyene had been dismissed and gone back to discussing who was bedding whom with her sister Lady Nym. “Tyene is the most treacherous of your daughters. And perhaps the most intelligent, though Nymeria and Sarella could give her a fight for the title.”

“Do you want me to send her away?” Oberyn asked, concerned over the implications of that statement.

Harry snorted. “Hells no. I want her right where I can make the best use of her. She has a gods-given and a well-trained talent for the game of whispers. In a few days I’ll have a position for her, I highly suggest when the time comes that she accepts it. It may lead to an even-more prestigious and lucrative one down the road if she proves herself capable of the task. Now.” He sighed. “To discover what Quentyn knows…”

Quentyn, as it turned out, knew nothing at all about his father’s and sister’s plots and plans.

Which was good for his state of being alive.

However, he’d been keeping another secret, one that had reared its ugly head at the exact wrong time.
Spelling the Prince to sleep, Harry slipped from the room and motioned for Oberyn and Lewen to follow him to his private chambers. Once they were inside and the door sealed, setting the silencing ward in place, he spoke.

“Quentyn’s not guilty of being anything but a stupid, stupid boy who thinks with his cock and not his head.” Harry told them bluntly as he scrubbed his hands over his face. The three of them were alone, Jon agreeing to leave the issue of Dorne in Harry’s hands to settle – one way or another. He thankfully accepted a cup of hot apple cider that he’d taught the Kingsguard to make once he’d fallen pregnant and needed to forego alcohol. “Thank you, Lewen.” He sighed, slumping back into the cushioned chair. “He has a fucking sexual disease of the wasting kind that he’d caught from his love,” Harry sneered, some love if they were fucking anything in sight and giving a gods-damned Prince the Westerosi version of syphilis.

“How could no one know?” Oberyn asked, coughing around the question as he nearly choked on his wine. “Doran would have told me, considering this is his precious son.”

“Doran does know.” Harry enlightened him. “He was the one who arranged for Quentyn to take a tonic provided by one of the maesters of the Citadel to keep the symptoms at bay, though it did nothing to slow the spread of the disease. But…”

“With Quentyn first a prisoner for a turn, then the Citadel under siege.” Lewen connected the dots on the sticky subject. “He’s run out of tonics and the disease is showing.”

“Fucking Doran and his plots.” Oberyn cursed. Though at least Quentyn’s…situation explained why Doran had been willing to risk getting involved with the Lannisters at all. With his heiress plotting against him and his preferred heir wasting away due to his own foolishness, that really only left him with Trystane. And if he was wed to Myrcella, then the Lannisters would support the youngest heir over the eldest to secure the best match possible for the chit.

“Got it in one.” Harry sighed. “Which throws a stick in the spokes of my original plan to deal with this mess. Sansa can’t very well marry a man who’ll kill her as surely as the sun will rise if the marriage is consummated. And Trystane isn’t old enough to be knighted let alone bed a flowered lady.”

“There might be a solution to that problem…” Oberyn told him, a smirk crossing his handsome face.

Lewen groaned, cursing under his breath. Whatever his nephew’s solution to the problem of Quentyn’s questionable health, he was certain he wasn’t going to like it.

That night, Harry posed a rather vital question to his lover: “Jon, when is the delegation to Braavos planning to leave?”

“Three days, love, why?” Jon responded, then frowned when he saw the vexed look on Harry’s face.

“I need you to postpone it.”

“Alright.” Jon said slowly. “By how much and do I want to know why?”

“No.” Harry answered, then added. “It has to do with that Dornish problem I’ve been working on. I need you to push it back to ten days instead of three. And call for a formal Court feast in three days with a ceremony in the godswood to precede it calling for a “blessing” on the delegation.”
“I really don’t want to know what’s going on, do I?” Jon asked with wry amusement.

“No, you really really don’t.”

…

The morning saw Harry once more rising with the dawn – though it wasn’t intentionally. Harry was pulled from a sound sleep by a sudden and exhaustive draw on his magic, one that he traced to the portkey he’d made for Daenerys.

But that made no sense.

He’d made it originally powerful enough to transport a thousand people with baggage and horses.

Why the hells would it need more power than that?

Harry didn’t know, but he knew how to find out, though the thought of wasting a replenishing potion because Daenerys couldn’t think to check with him before doing something that has drained him this much – though he still didn’t have the foggiest idea of what it could be – irritated the ever-loving fuck out of him.

Grumbling harshly under his breath, his mutters liberally spiced with curses for inconsiderate royals, Harry had himself dressed, downed the potion, and rousted Prince Lewen out of his bed and into his armor in a matter of minutes. Clamping one hand down on Lewen’s – and Ser Arthur’s with a barked command from the Lord Commander for Ser Oswell to be in charge until they returned, the Lord Commander not allowing Harry to escape without a second guard even if it meant going himself – arms, he spun on his heel and apparated away, landing lightly in the Chamber of the Painted Table, startling awake a passed-out Tyrion and what looked like a sell-sword who from the empty flagon and twin goblets surrounded by missives and reports, had done an all-nighter of drinking and planning.

“My, my lord.” Tyrion snapped awake, standing only a bit woozily, well able to function with a hangover from years of hard drinking. He blinked focusing. “My lord Potter-Black.” He gave a short bow and a genuine smile for one of the most interesting people he’d ever met. “And a pair of Dornish Kingsguard.” He nodded first to Lord Commander Dayne, then Prince Lewen, recognizing both men from his youth when they would accompany Jon’s grandfather to Casterly Rock, and knowing Ser Arthur’s promotion from the thick silver trim on his white cloak. “Welcome to Dragonstone…might I ask what has brought you here so early.” He eyed Lord Harry’s nearly-breathing-fire countenance. “And…cantankerously?”

Harry just snorted a curse, striding from the room and out onto the nearest balcony, which in this case belonged to one of the flat-topped dragon towers where the flying creatures would land in bygone days, pointing towards the East where a large and fast spinning form was approaching.

“What in the seven hells…” Bronn breathed, eyes wide. If he wasn’t awake before, he was now. Rubbing his eyes, he blinked. Yep, it was still there and still coming right at them. Remembering his manners, he introduced himself. “Ser Bronn of the Blackwater, Lord Potter-Black and guards.”

“Excuse my lapse in manners.” Tyrion waved a hand as he kept his eyes focused on what he could now make out as a trio of whirling – somehow – and flying – also somehow – ships. “Bronn, meet Lord Harry Potter-Black of myriad titles, Lord Commander Ser Arthur Dayne of the Kingsguard, and Prince Ser Lewen Martell of Dorne. Gentlemen, Ser Bronn of the Blackwater, recently knighted by my father in an attempt to buy his loyalty.”
“Your father is a fan of using his gold to solve every little problem.” Harry commented idly as he lifted his hands, having been silently grounding his magic and calling up the latent power of Dragonstone to pull off what he was about to attempt. Daenerys’s portkey was never intended to move fucking ships. If it was that easy, he’d do it all the fucking time instead of just the once to move the *Black Victory* from the Shield Islands to Lannisport. The initial take-off must have been responsible for the drain to his magic. And if he didn’t redirect the damn thing, the ships were going to smash against the walls of Dragonstone as it tried to put them down where it was programmed to: the Great Hall. “Either that or his army.”

Tyrion whistled a few bars of “The Rains of Castamere” Bronn humming along after recognizing the tune.

“That he is.” Tyrion agreed a moment later, watching with avid eyes and a wave of power that was felt much more than seen, *poured* from Lord Harry and grabbed hold of the ships, setting them down none-too-gently just off the docks of Dragonstone in Blackwater Bay. “Now…what the fuck was *that*?”

“That,” Harry answered with an exasperated sigh. “Was a Princess not thinking before doing something almost suicidal in its idiocy.”

“Oh, grand.” Tyrion barked a sarcastic laugh. “Just what I’ve always wanted to wake up to: a suicidal princess.”

“Well, she’ll only be your problem for a few minutes.” Harry promised him. “She’s coming back with us to Casterly Rock to meet with Jon and swear her formal allegiance…before I send her back to be your problem all over again.”

“And just when I was starting to truly like you.” Tyrion heaved a false-sad sigh. “You had to go and saddle me with *another* woman with delusions of royalty.”

“These are no delusions, unfortunately.” Harry cracked back. “The Princess in question is none other than Daenerys Stormborn, Princess of Dragonstone and Jon’s heiress until my sons are born…known to many as the Mother of Dragons.”

“Even better.” Tyrion quipped. “At least if I’m trading one vexatious royal for another this one comes with children that will *literally* try and devour me instead of merely metaphorically.”

…

“Lannister?” Daenerys raised an incredulous brow as her nephew’s intended consort introduced her to the temporary castellan of Dragonstone and the man in charge of organizing the defense of the castle and overseeing the blockade – and a few other things – dealing with King’s Landing.

“Don’t look at me like that, Princess.” Harry rolled his eyes, having none of his usual patience to give her due to her poorly-thought-out actions this morn. “Sometimes I don’t make the decisions, I just see them carried out. Lord Tyrion is a trusted friend of your nephew…the uncrowned King of Westeros.”

“My father trusted a Lannister, two in fact.” Daenerys said with faux-idleness as she stroked one hand down Rhaegal’s back as her middle-sized dragon, the size of a small dog now, cuddled in her arms. Drogon was much too large do so, easily fifty pounds or more and reaching her knees while her sweet Viserion curled around her shoulders, an inch or so smaller than Rhaegal. “That didn’t work out so well for him.”
“Yes, yes.” Tyrion scoffed, watching Drogon fly about exploring the bay excitedly, the black-and-red dragon never going too far from the Princess at a sharp word in High Valyrian. “My father betrayed yours. My brother killed him. And while I would never stoop to defending Tywin Lannister, in the case of my brother I think you’ll find that while, yes, he is an oath-breaker and a king-slayer, he also is responsible for saving half-a-million lives.” Lannister-green eyes pinned lavender-Targaryen with their honest ferocity. “By dint of putting down a mad king who wanted to burn alive every man, woman, and child living in King’s Landing by wildfire with help from his henchman “Wisdom” Rossart.”

“Children.” Harry drawled obnoxiously, smirking when he was leveled equally-harsh gazes from both Daenerys and Tyrion. “While I would love to let you stand here and debate who wins in a contest of shitty fathers, there is a war going on and I would like to get back to winning it. Daenerys, Tyrion is staying and unless you can convince Jon otherwise, that’s the end of it. So, introduce him to your main retainers so I can take you, Jorah, and one of your handmaidens to Casterly Rock and you can take your grievances up with your nephew and King in person.”

Daenerys narrowed her eyes at Lord Harry before waving two of her people forward.

“This is Rakharo, the first among my bloodriders, and this is Doreah, who can translate for you and will help get the women, children, and elderly settled. Irri!” She called one of her Dothraki handmaidens forward. “Is one of my main handmaidens and will come with me along with my sworn shield, Ser Jorah Mormont.”

“Ah yes, Ser Jorah.” Tyrion and Jorah exchanged tense smiles, the Ser knowing full-well that the Imp had likely ferreted out his employment as a former “little bird” of Varys’s. “I was quite astonished to hear of your lifted exile, then when I found out the cause of such forgiveness from my friend the King, I was gladdened that you had just happened to stumble upon his aunt while living among the Dothraki.”


“Hmm, they do at that.” Tyrion said with a knowing look at the Northern knight. “Well then, Doreah, come and let me introduce you to the castle maester and steward Maester Pylos, I believe he will be most useful…”

His voice trailed off as he all-but-scooped up the pretty former slave and swept her away, taking the rest of the watching Dothraki and the Pentosi sailors that had come with the ships towards the castle.

Harry gave a sharp call to Drogon, much to Daenerys’s consternation, the largest of her dragons obeying the command and alighting on his shoulders, wrapping himself around the interesting dragon-man in an echo of Viserion’s position on Daenerys.

“I’m certain you are familiar with the sensation of a portkey now, Princess.” Harry commented drily, holding out a piece of silk for the other three to grab. “And, in the future, if you decide to change the arrangements I’ve made with you regarding anything magical, you would be well-served to contact me first. A portkey like the one I gave you was not meant to move ships from one place to another. And were I a less-powerful wizard, your gambit this morning would have utterly failed. Now come.” Ser Arthur and Prince Lewen held onto Harry, knowing that worked just as well as holding the actual device. “I have much to do today, and that was before your arrival. Make sure you hold those two tight.” He nodded towards the smaller dragons. “It wouldn’t do to lose them in the air over Westeros, now would it?”
Harry set the portkey to land them just outside of the doors to the Great Hall, where he knew from Jon’s plans (and he could clearly hear) that he was holding court to settle disputes and greet the influx of envoys who had started arriving once it was clear they weren’t moving on for a time.

With a flick of his finger, he had the two Kingsguard knights in clean and pressed armor and cloaks, dressing Ser Jorah in an almost-identical set only the scale armor was black chased with red, the underclothes were still white, and the cloak was a black Targaryen cloak with a single dragon on it in red, signifying that Jorah was a knight sworn to Daenerys’s personal service rather than a Targaryen knight. Irri, the Dothraki handmaiden, was switched to a clean and pressed simple woolen dress in plain cream, with the three-headed dragon embroidered over her heart.

By far, the most drastic change was in Daenerys’s adornments.

Her Qartheen dress with a short skirt and pants underneath in blue with a short cloak thrown over one shoulder was exchanged for a fine lavender silk dress that fell in a simple lush, fall from shoulder to feet, open over her collarbone and upper chest with a three-headed dragon in real silver holding the dress’s décolletage with its wings. The detached sleeves were made of real lavender silk lace chased and banded with cloth of silver. Her hair had been neatened and pulled back into the trio of braids on each side with her hair spilling down her back she preferred. And in his hands Harry held a silver and amethyst circlet with a silver dragon with sparkling amethyst eyes shining where the point would dip on her brow.

“A final touch.” He told her after she and her friends had watched him tidy them and make them ready to be presented before a king. “Fit for a Princess and Mother of Dragons.”

Holding the circlet gently, he placed it upon her brow, making sure it was tight to her hair and wouldn’t move.

Clicking his tongue at Drogon, he arranged the dragons upon her, winding Viserion once more around her shoulders and removing Rhaegal from her arms to fly just behind her left shoulder while Drogon kept pace by her right.

“There are two others with Targaryen blood inside that room, Princess.” Harry warned her gently. “You should be prepared that one, two, or all three of your dragons might fly over to inspect them. Perhaps even form a bond with one of them. The best thing for them would be to accept such a turn gracefully, knowing that they will live a fuller and happier life with a companion to call their own rather than having to fight for your attention.”

“I am aware of the possibility.” Daenerys told him regally. “I have been ever since your visit. I have…come to terms with it. They need training, and even I can’t ride three dragons at once. The dragon must have three heads according to prophesy. Let us see if the other two are inside that room or if one of them waits in your womb, Lord Harry.”

“As you wish, Princess.” Harry said with an amused quirk of his mouth, nodding for the two Kingsguard to go around to the side entrances and take up their positions in the Great Hall. “I will go now and take my place beside Jon. In a few moments the doors will open, and Westeros will get its first glimpse of Daenerys Stormborn, Princess of Dragonstone, and the Mother of Dragons.”

…

“And where were you this morning I wonder?” Robb leaned over from the other side of Jon as Harry took his place at the Lord’s table. “Off making mischief?”

“More like fulfilling a bet.” Harry smirked over at Aegon. “I told you I’d get you a dragon if I ever
went to Essos. Aegon was just the down payment. The rest of it just came through.”

“You mean?” Jon asked, breath bated as he stared at his little love with wide purple eyes.

“Mhmm.” He hummed with a smug smile on his face. “She’s waiting right outside the doors with her children.”

“Well,” Jon said, a grin tugging at his serious mouth. “Let’s not keep a lady waiting.”

With a nod to Ser Torrhen who was guarding the doors, the entrance to the Great Hall swung wide, the crowd parting to clear a path for whoever had come this time to see the Targaryen scion. A crowd that let out a gasp of shock, awe, and disbelief as they saw who stepped through the doors. Dressed from head to toe in regal, delicate, finery, with three dragons, a sworn-shield, and a maid to attend her, Daenerys Targaryen stepped forward with one dainty, silver-sandal clad foot and took her place in the great Game of Thrones.

Whispers and stares filled with envy – for Daenerys’s beauty and the wealth of her raiment from the women and Ser Jorah’s place at her side from the men – or awe or even fear when they were pinned by the gazes of one of the three dragons swept through the room, all the while Daenerys moved forward with regal calm and self-possession, coming to a stop before the dais.

Daenerys dipped a perfectly-correct curtesy for a king who was a close relation, but before she could tender her greetings to her nephew, the warning Harry had given came to pass, as both Drogon and Rhaegal shot forward from where they were hovering near her in flight, each landing before one of the violet-eyed men seated before her, each staring eye-to-eye with their chosen dragonlord and companion.

Jon reached up first and brushed a steady hand down the back of Drogon, his ruby-and-Valyrian steel ring matching the largest of the three dragons’ scales perfectly, Drogon letting out a pleased cry that pierced the ears of the now-silenced court as any linger doubts – of which there were very, very few – of his blood instantly squashed as the black-and-red dragon leapt up and perched regally on top of the back of Jon’s chair, Rhaegal, in green-and-bronze doing the same as he’d bonded with Aegon while everyone was transfixed with the sight of Jon and Drogon.

Including a momentarily sad-eyed Dany as she watched the elder two of her dragon children bond with her nephew and cousin, leaving her “nest” as it were for a home with the Targaryen and the Blackfyre scions.

“Their names are Drogon,” Daenerys gestured regally towards Jon after she had regained her voice and her babies had settled down, Viserion letting out a comforting purr from where he wrapped around her neck, resting on her shoulders. “And Rhaegal. This is Viserion.” Dany rested one hand briefly on her dragon’s back before continuing. “And I am Daenerys Stormborn, Princess of Dragonstone and Heiress of House Targaryen, the Mother of Dragons. I greet you, my true-born nephew of my brother Rhaegar Targaryen and his bonded Consort Benjen Stark, Jon of Houses Targaryen and Stark, the First of Your Name, King of Westeros.” She nodded slightly.

“We greet Our Aunt.” Jon said with equal formality. “The Princess of Dragonstone and confirm her to be Our Heir until the birth of Our true-born children and thank her for her support in these troubling times. Come.” He rose, Drogon alighting on his left shoulder while Ghost padded along at his right hand, the two familiars eyeing each other warily to Harry’s visible amusement. “We will speak privately.”

With that, Daenerys and her train, escorted by half of the Kingsguard while the rest walked with Jon and his intendeds, left the Great Hall with as much pomp as they’d entered it – if shy a few dragons.
“Ser Arthur.” Harry spoke directly to the Lord Commander as they walked towards the Lord’s chambers, Daenerys and her two people in tow. “If you would please have one of the Kingsguard show Ser Jorah and Doreah to the Princess’s suite down the hall from the Lord’s Chambers? We need to have a bit of privacy with only the royal and to-be-royal family present.”

“Of course, Lord Harry.” Ser Arthur nodded agreeably. It wasn’t exactly an unexpected request. “It shall be done and we will take up our normal posts for such an occasion.”

“Thank you, Arthur.” Jon told him from his place walking at Harry’s side. The two had linked hands, as had Robb and Aegon, once they were out of the Great Hall and had a modicum of privacy. “We will let you know our schedule for the next few days thereafter, all of the Court has been informed as well as Septon Ray of the blessing in the godswood and the following dinner?”

“Yes, Jon, they have.” Ser Arthur responded to his former ward, as that was how he had addressed him in turn. “I put the servants to the task of informing the lower nobility present as well as the Golden Company commanders in the Rock while your most loyal knight who’ve been serving as guards took care of the rest.”


“It is my honor your Grace.”

While they were speaking, they had come to the corridor leading to the Lord’s chambers and the Lady’s chambers which were further down the hall…and curiously without a connecting door as one would expect to find in a noble house. Though, it could have been that the Lord and Lady of the Rock were expected to share and the secondary suite was for either highborn visitors or the Heir of the House. Either way, they were Daenerys’s while she was present in the Rock.

The Kingsguard cleared the rooms and Jon waved Dany in first, the dragons and direwolves following after her with the quartet bringing up the rear.

Dany watched with cautious eyes as Viserion took off from around her neck, exploring the rooms as were Drogon and Rhaegal before flying over to rest on the chair backs by the fire, starting off a staring contest with the direwolves who had staked their claim on the furs before it.

“Don’t worry.” Harry reassured her as he gently steered her towards the chair now partially occupied by Viserion. “They’re all magical creatures, as such they have a certain understanding of each other. I imagine it’s mostly a negotiation over pack hierarchy of a sort, especially between Drogon and Ghost as they share a human familiar, am I right Jon?”

“You know.” The uncrowned king complained a bit with a wry grin. “It’s a bit scary how you do that. Yes, that’s basically the gist of it from what I’m reading from Ghost.”

“Aye.” Robb agreed as he dropped down to sit beside Grey Wind, the men having been stripping off their cloaks and sword belts and the like, resting the swords beside wherever they chose to sit, which for Aegon and Jon had already been decided for them by their new familiars, Harry perching on the edge of Jon’s chair as the Targaryen wrapped an arm around his hip. “That’s the way of it.”

“You can’t let them hunt, loves.” Harry warned. “That goes for you as well, Daenerys. If you do they’ll develop a deeper predatory instinct that could rage out of control once we’re all gone and they’ve outlived us. Training is the key, and never letting them experience hunger if at all possible, so they never see humans as a food source. Direwolves are different.” Harry cut off the question
burgeoning in Robb’s eyes. “They’re both highly intelligent animals, but direwolves while large, don’t continuously grow like dragons. Humans are less likely to be seen as food, and they won’t outlive you, so letting them hunt isn’t an issue. Teaching the dragons to fish on the other hand.” Harry mentioned after thinking it over. “That’s an excellent way to make sure they’re able to provide for themselves.”

“You know a lot about dragons, Lord Harry.” Daenerys mentioned as Viserion curled up in her lap, apparently pleased with his position in the new hierarchy. “Is that because of your…other form?”

“Partly.” Harry told her honestly. “I’m able to tell you a lot about dragons from my own experiences as one, but also we knew more about them from whence I came. I’ve copied all the works I have on them, you should be able to read them as they’re High Valyrian. There’s a set in the library at Dragonstone that should answer most of your question.” He cracked a smile as he watched Drogon and Ghost bump noses, finished with their debate which he was pretty sure came to a draw. “The only information I lacked was how to hatch petrified dragon eggs…which you’ve so helpfully discovered.”

“Only petrified eggs?” Aegon perked up. “You mean if one of the dragons laid a clutch after maturing, there’s a different method?”

“They’ll hatch on their own and in their own time for a rider or dragonlord.” Jon supplied, knowing this for himself from Aemon’s knowledge of their family legends. “Up until a century. After that,” he shrugged. “If they haven’t found the right companion they have to be forcibly hatched as Aunt Daenerys,” he teased her a bit over the title as she was his junior. “Has discovered for herself.”

“How long until they’re mature?” Daenerys asked the question that had been burning at her mind ever since she stepped from the embers of Drogo’s pyre with three fledglings in her arms.

“Two years, give or take.” Harry said. “And they can change sex any time up until then and we won’t know until one of them lays a clutch.”

“We need you to stay for a few days.” Jon told her, running his knuckled down Drogon’s back as he moved to the opposite arm of the chair from Harry. “Both to let the dragons acclimate to their new companions and for some spectacle Harry is cooking up.”

“This blessing you mentioned?” Dany arched a brow. “I hardly brought clothing for a royal court.”

Her observation was met with chuckles as Harry looked meaningfully at the conjured raiment she was attired in.

“I hardly think that’s going to be a problem.” Robb stated with a bright smile lighting his sapphire eyes as Grey Wind plopped down over his lap, seeming a bit disgruntled. It appeared the beta wasn’t as pleased with the turn of events as Ghost and their humans were. Probably down to the agreement the two direwolves and two permanent scaled additions had made over sharing the choicest spots by the fire.

…

Deep within the high walls of the Red Keep, an assassin’s blade slipped through the ribs of the sleeping form of Ser Rolph Spicer, his sister Sybelle who was married to the captured Lord Gawen Westerling dead earlier that turn from an accidental slip from the walls of the Crag whilst her daughter died of a fever days later.

That same night, a handful of other knights, even ladies and lords died of varying circumstances,
including “Lord” Janos Slynt who suffered an apoplexy at his favorite whorehouse, Sers Raynald Westerling and Garse Goodbrook who were dicing in Flea Bottom and were set upon for their silver and ale skin, a whore named Shae of an unknown sickness, Lady Alerie Tyrell of choking on her wine, and the High Septon who passed painfully in his sleep his servant unable to wake him, creating anarchy in King’s Landing as rumors of assassins and the wrath of the gods sweep through the streets.

A week later, the entire Kettleblack household including the father and all his sons, died in a brothel fire.

Curiously, no one else was injured save Petyr Baelish who suffered severe burns.

…

“You wouldn’t know anything about the unrest in King’s Landing, would you love?” Jon asked Harry drily as he stared down at the missive from one of his men in the Red Keep.

“Who, me?” Harry smirked viciously. “How on earth would I manage that? I haven’t left your – or Robb’s or Aegon’s or the dragon’s or Ghost’s or Grey Wind’s or or or – side ever since Daenerys arrived.”

“How indeed.” Ser Arthur muttered from next to Jon, the pair sharing an eye roll as Harry mockingly protested his innocence.

…

Meanwhile, on Dragonstone, Tyrion supervised the smuggling of crates and crates of fresh produce, bread, and salted meat onto the Pentosi ships so helpfully provided by Princess Daenerys. All of it stamped with the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen or the direwolf of House Stark. Tyrion had to give it to Lord Harry. He really did think three steps ahead, especially after taking the pulse of the city in for himself under the guise of parlay.

This food smuggled into King’s Landing and the hands of the smallfolk, would do more to secure the good-opinion of the mob than any open-handed alms or pretty speeches by Cersei or Margery Tyrell.

…

Three days after the arrival of Quentyn Martell, and two after that of Daenerys and her retinue, the court of Jon Targaryen gathered in the godswood of Casterly Rock in the early evening.

Septon Ray stood before the heart tree with his Grace at his side, prepared to do his part in the ceremony that had been kept secret from the majority of the armies and the court until a moment later, when all would become obvious – especially with the strange turn Jon had taken by ordering a modest feast.

Never before had the Targaryen scion ever held a feast, stating over and over again that he would not feast when his men lived on rations.

To that end, Jon, Harry, Robb, and Aegon with the other leaders of the armies had ridden through the camps outside both Casterly Rock and Lannisport, handing out fresh fruit, meat, and ale to the men for a modest feast of their own, including freshly baked soft white bread. Ravens had gone out to the armies outside of the immediate vicinity, ordering the same to be done all over Westeros and in every keep under his control. Those far away had been given reason for the celebration which would mirror a much larger one to come in two turns when Jon finally wedded his wizard and his
The Court gasped in shock as Prince Quentyn Martell, holding what was obviously a wedding cloak, stepped up to stand before the Septon and uncrowned King, his uncle Oberyn at his side holding a glittering silver circlet set with a large sapphire in his hands.

Quickly, everyone took note of who was present, easily spying all the dragons arrayed around the shoulders of their companion.

It wasn’t to be a wedding of Targaryen and Martell then.

Which to all seemed to be a good thing, considering the way the last Targaryen-Martell marriage ended for Elia and Rhaegar.

They had their answer when Lady Sansa Stark – who none had even seen nor heard of her arrival – stepped forward into view, hand resting gently on the arm of her elder brother Robb, Warden of the North, the pair flanked by a pair of direwolves, Grey Wind beside Robb and Ghost beside Sansa. She was beautiful, though in a different, fierier way than the stunning Daenerys or the lovely Margery Tyrell. Her long red hair was pulled back in the fashion preferred by the Princess of Dragonstone, showing off her flawless alabaster complexion and sapphire eyes. Her gown was of rich sapphire velvet, embroidered across her upper chest between her shoulders with the direwolf of House Stark, glittering diamonds making it a gown fit for a Princess, which she was about to be made. And from her shoulders dripped a gorgeous fur from a white northern fox, under which was attached the cloak of House Stark, trailing behind her lushly curved, tall form.

In many ways, this wedding was to be a practice for Jon’s own on how to combine ceremonies, as he and Robb followed the old gods, Harry had his own traditions from before his long sleep, and Aegon (and Robb somewhat) followed the Faith of the Seven.

To begin, Jon spoke once Sansa and Robb had reached Quentyn’s side, who was standing purely through the spellwork of Harry, who had never been happier that the Imperious worked to make people do things their bodies weren’t normally capable of…like appear whole and healthy when they were anything but. Quentyn was participating in the ceremony of his own free will, as Westerosi custom required. But he’d been well aware that he wasn’t well enough to make it through a ceremony and had asked Harry for help when the wizard approached him.

As far as the Prince of Dorne knew, the wedding had been arranged in secret between his father and Jon, and his trip to Braavos simply gave a convenient cover to get him to Casterly Rock without drawing the attention of Tywin or Cersei who might have sent an assassin to prevent the match.

Which wasn’t a total lie and one of the reasons Harry had kept his plans secret until the last minute from all but Sansa herself as it was her agreement that the entire affair hinged upon.

The wedding began with the old ways of the North, Quentyn calling out when prompted:

“Who comes? Who comes before the gods?”

Knowing his part, Robb continued the simple ceremony. “Sansa of House Stark comes here to be wed. A woman, grown and flowered, trueborn and noble, she comes to beg the blessings of the gods. Who comes to claim her?”

Quentyn continued: “I, Quentyn of House Nymeros-Martell, Prince of Dorne, trueborn and noble. I claim her. Who gives her?”

“Robb of House Stark, her brother. Lady Sansa, will you take this man?”
For the first time in the ceremony Sansa spoke, her voice gentle and clear. “I take this man.”

Joining hands, Sansa and Quentyn kneeled before the heart tree for a long moment, Sansa in prayer as were many of the congregation who followed the old gods, many praying for a fruitful union and alliance between the two great Houses.

Rising, the ceremony departed from tradition as they faced Septon Ray who stepped forward for his part of the service, honoring the Faith.

“Say your words.”

“Father, Smith, Warrior, Maiden, Mother, Crone, Stranger.” They said in unison. “I am his and he is mine/I am hers and she is mine; from this day until my last day.”

“With this kiss, I pledge my love.” Quentyn finished, leaning down and pressing a soft kiss to her cheek as instructed via Harry’s spell.

Harry didn’t know exactly how virulent his disease was, but he was taking no chances.

With great ado, Jon walked behind Sansa and removed her maiden’s cloak before stepping to stand beside Robb, Quentyn moving forward and elegantly draping the cloak of House Martell around her shoulders, finishing the ceremony of the old gods and reversing the order of events for the Faith of the Seven.

It was a very bright cloak, the orange field rather clashing with Sansa’s lovely red hair, as did the central sun, thought the golden spear piercing through it was a nice addition to her attire.

Stepping around the couple, Jon and Oberyn faced them, Oberyn holding the circlet high for all to see as Jon announced them man and wife.

Moving to stand before Sansa with the circlet still held high in his hands Oberyn called out for all to hear:

“Sunspear and House Nymeros-Martell welcomes a new daughter and Princess of Dorne this night. With this circlet of silver and sapphire I name her: Sansa Stark, Princess of Dorne and the Fire Rose!”

Raucous applause and cries sprang up, especially from the Northern Lords that were as pleased by Oberyn’s naming of Sansa as some of the southron lords were displeased by it. With his pronouncing her as Sansa Stark, Princess of Dorne, he was acknowledging House Stark to be an equal of House Nymeros-Martell, the only one of the original Seven Kingdoms of Westeros which had retained the right to call themselves Prince or Princess upon uniting with the Iron Throne. Oberyn just all-but-announced that through Sansa’s marriage, besides those of Rhaegar and Benjen and the coming one between the quartet, that House Stark had regained its royal rights and privileges.

“To the feast!” Jon cried out, and the people began filing out of the godswood and towards the Great Hall which was ready and waiting for them.

Leaning over as they walked behind the newlyweds, Oberyn couldn’t help but ask Harry:

“How long exactly is that spell of yours going to last?”

It wouldn’t do for the groom to keel over before the cake had been cut and the toasts had been made, now would it?
“Long enough.” Harry clasped the Red Viper on the shoulder. “Don’t worry Oberyn. People might think there was something wrong, especially after that display you just put on.”

“She’s a beauty.” Oberyn shrugged. “She deserved every word of it.”

“That she does, Prince Oberyn.” Robb agreed thinking of the hell Joffery Waters put Sansa through in King’s Landing as he came over to their side and to up pace next to Harry. “That she does.”

…

Far across the land in the Tower of the Hand nestled within the Red Keep in the city of King’s Landing, Lord Tywin Lannister let out a scathing curse, regardless of his audience of four, as he read the raven Grand Maester Pycelle had just delivered as he was making plans for the continuance of the war now that they had – supposedly – the support of the Reach, as well as approving Cersei’s plans for Joffrey’s wedding to the Tyrell girl.

With him were Pycelle, Baelish, Varys, and Cersei herself, all gathered in his office having come to him either singly (Pycelle and Cersei) or together to go over business with him.

Tywin particularly needed to speak with Baelish, as the fourth quarter of the year was soon to be upon them and Tywin needed to see the tithes and taxes for the previous quarters to help plan the war.

Especially since if what recent ravens reported were true, the wealth of the Iron Bank has been closed to them.

“What is it, father?”

“Dark wings, dark words.” Pycelle wheezed the old maxim. “There have been several…less than pleasant messages which all seemed to arrive today.”

“I would think that Targaryen bastard did it on purpose.” Tywin nearly growling to shame his sigil. “Save that even he could not command the Iron Bank.”

“What do you mean?” Baelish asked slowly, eyes widening. If his embezzlement had been discovered, he could kiss his head farewell.

“Somehow,” Tywin sneered, not wanting to think too hard on that subject considering Targaryen’s recent conquest of the Rock. “Jon Targaryen as arranged payment of the Iron Throne’s debts to the Iron Back, the trade cartels, and the Faith.” He passed a missive over to Baelish as the Master of Coin. “As a result, they have decided to withhold any further funds dispersed to Lannister-controlled Westeros until the war is settled.”

“Without the treasury of the Rock or the ability to acquire loans from the Iron Bank.” Varys observed silkily. “Our avenues of finance for the war effort – not to mention feeding the people – are rather diminished. Not to mention…”

“The Tyrell alliance just gained that much more prominence and importance to the Throne.” Cersei cursed under her breath. She’d have to put up with that wretched girl after all. At least Willas Tyrell was conveniently absent from King’s Landing else she’d likely end up wed to him…no matter what he or she had to say about it.

At least as a man, the Tyrell heir could escape from his father’s plans through distance if nothing else.
Cersei had no such luxury.

“Problematic at best.” Varys dismissed the concerns of petty gold. “But not, I think, what has our Lord Hand profaning. Is it, Lord Lannister?”

“You know don’t you?” Tywin asked sardonically before answering the question for himself. “Of course, you know. If you didn’t we’d be looking for a new Master of Whispers with how far and wide this news has spread.” Looking over at his daughter where she was seated in the weak evening moonlight, sipping on Dornish red, he enlightened those who weren’t spying maesters or just spies. “Daenerys Targaryen has returned to Westeros, her dragons in tow, two of which have bonded with Jon Targaryen and Aegon Blackfyre. Her arrival seemed precisely timed to coincide with another happy event. An alliance by marriage.”

“Who?” Cersei breathed, goblet dangling loosely in her fingers. His answer could very well change the entire boardset of the Game.

“Lady Sansa Stark,” he growled the name, still chafed at the disappearances of the girl and his Bane. “To Prince Quentyn Martell. The wedding and bedding took place this very evening and is likely being consummated as we speak.”

“Dorne is closed to us then.” Varys sighed, waving his fan languidly. “Pity. Prince Trystane and Princess Myrcella seemed like such a good match.”

The only response his observation received was the sound of shattering glass as Queen Cersei threw her solid gold goblet out of the expensive stained glass window in the office of the Tower of the Hand.

Varys did so love when a good plot came together – even when it wasn’t one of his own.

…

Sansa shivered a little as Lord Harry led her gently by the arm to the suite she would be occupying for the next week.

It had been arranged that the newlyweds would have a short span of time together – officially to “get to know one another” but that really was geared towards creating an heir for Sunspear – before Quentyn left for Braavos with Ser Davos and the delegation to the Iron Bank.

That was the official story.

Due to Prince Quentyn’s…infirmity, the reality was to be quite different, and was the cause for her greater-than-normal trepidation.

Though, when it came down to it, so long as it wasn’t Joffery Waters or Tywin Lannister waiting for her within those rooms, Sansa would bed down with the devil himself.

She had agreed to marry Quentyn and provide an heir for Sunspear – as well as play “little bird” for Lord Harry in Sunspear and the Water Gardens – before Quentyn’s wasting disease was uncovered, throwing a potential stick in the spokes.

Sansa didn’t know all of Lord Harry’s plan to…deal with the treachery the Prince and Heiress of Dorne were undertaking to various degrees, but she knew enough to realize that it went much, much deeper than merely forcing Doran to approve of a bride for his potential heir that wasn’t of his own choosing.
But to Lord Harry’s benefit he’d not only given her the opportunity to remove herself from the situation when Quentyn’s disease was uncovered, but he’d also spared her the indignity of being leered at by the highborn lords and knights of her cousin’s army by arranging a much reduced bedding ceremony which was their destination now.

Mostly because as it wasn’t Quentyn who was going to be playing stud for the House of Nymeros-Martell, it was vital that only those who were aware of Lord Harry’s…arrangement with Sansa were present.

He had also explained something about serving as a secret keeper for the secret surrounding her bedding and the father of her potential child, which involved magical theories that went right over her head. No one could say that Sansa Stark was a stupid woman, however, when talking magic even Archmaester Marwyn was known to get lost when Lord Harry grew impassioned about a subject. What she did know was that Lord Harry had a way to magically conceal the secret of the sire for the next Lord of House Martell…and that was all that really mattered to Sansa as she had no desire to be involved in a trial by Faith for adultery.

As they approached the door to the suite, Sansa took a deep bracing breath, netting her a soft, understanding smile and pat of Lord Harry’s hand on her own that was laced through the bend of his elbow.

“He’s a good man for all his reputation, Princess Sansa.” Harry reassured her, having an inkling of what was likely passing through her mind. “He’ll take care of you and won’t hurt you. On the contrary, I’d say you’ll probably enjoy your bedding more than ninety-nine percent of the brides in Westeros, if not the Known World.”

“Somehow, Lord Harry.” Sansa shot him a dry glance. “That fails to comfort me.”

Harry chuckled and opened the door, allowing Sansa to sweep into the suite before him, his eyes going immediately to the curtained-off corner of the room which concealed a cot – and its occupant.

“Any problems?” He asked his main conspirator, the “other witness” for the bedding, one selected from the groom’s House, and the actual sire of Sansa’s potential offspring.

“Not at all, Harry.” Prince Oberyn Martell answered from his place seated at the small round “lovers” table by the high window where he was already pouring Sansa a goblet of rich Arbor gold wine to wash down the two vials that were sitting on the tray as Harry passed him another that he knocked back with a grimace, handing off the vial of blood the wizard had asked for in turn. “He came as docilely as a lamb, as you promised.”

“Good.” Harry said absently as he watched Sansa choke down her own potions. “I’ll dose him before I leave and then return at the end of the week to bring him out of the sleep. He’ll seem nearly dead, that is perfectly normal and he’ll be none the worse for wear. I promise.”

“What was that?” Sansa asked around a gasp as she thirstily drank down the offered wine from her soon-to-be lover, though Oberyn Martell was not who she would have chosen for herself under other circumstances.

“Fertility potions.” Harry called from behind the curtain where he’d disappeared to dose the Martell idiot with the Drought of Living Death. Gods love the potions stores the goblins had arranged, Harry thought not for the first time. “Both of you have taken what I’ve access to in order to assist in a successful…time together.” He decided to be delicate out of sympathy for Sansa’s virginal state.

Ducking back into the main room he eyed them as they sat by the window with a mental sigh.
He’d done what he could and they’d both agreed. From here it was up to them to work out. Though given Oberyn’s skills and Sansa’s beauty and fire, he rather doubted it would take them long to come to some kind of accord.

“There will be a maid coming through for hot water to bathe and fresh food.” Harry reminded them. “And needless to say, at those times Oberyn will need to be either concealed – rolled up in the bed linens perhaps – or completely out of sight in another room. The curtain is spelled to deflect interest so there is no worry over Quentyn’s sleeping form to be discovered. And naturally,” Harry smirked. “Once you’ve surfaced I’ll give you a list of places “you’ve” been during the week, Oberyn.”

“I still find that disconcerting.” The Dornishman complained. “That your magic can copy me down to the last scar and birthmark.”

“Disconcerting or not.” Harry shrugged off the familiar refrain. “In this case, it’s going to be the main thing keeping people from asking questions if the next heir of Dorne comes out with your eyes the way all eight of your natural daughters have.”

“I know I’m not what any young, gently reared Lady would choose if given the choice.” Oberyn told the lovely Sansa as she gripped her golden goblet of wine with white-knuckled hands. He gave a self-deprecating grin as she slowly raised eyes to shame the sapphire mounted upon the circlet still adorning her brow. “I’m more the flavor of those looking for wildness or danger, the fare preferred by bored wives and rebellious court nobles than sweet maids. But I promise you this Sansa.” Oberyn told her honestly. “I will do everything in my power to ensure you, if not enjoy, at least do not fear laying with a man once our time together is over.”

“I don’t fear…” Sansa began to protest weakly only to be silenced by a knowing arch of a dark brow upon a swarthy face.

“You do.” Oberyn reached out, brushing a finger against her own that still held the goblet as if holding that warmed gold vessel was all that was holding her together. “It’s here, in your hands.” Lifting his own further, just the tips of his fingers brushed against the faint worry-lines marring her alabaster brow. “Here, in these beginning lines. And here,” a thumb dusted lightly under one bright blue eye then over the lower curve of a pink lip. “In the darkness of your eyes and the paleness of your lips. You’re afraid. And why shouldn’t you be?” Oberyn sat back indolently non-threatening in his chair, like a panther pretending to be a house-cat. “You were raised in the North by a woman who – not to be rude, but honestly… Catelyn Tully has never been my idea of an open-minded woman. Then you were sent, all flushed-cheeked and wide-eyed into a viper-pit that made the one Baelor the Blessed pulled Aemon the Dragonknight out of look like a pleasant daydream. Not to mention that pestilent polyp you were betrothed to.” Sansa’s eyes widened as the Dornish prince summed her experience – or lack of positive experience – up so succinctly before his face turned darker than normal, his eyes nearly colorless in his disgust for Joffery.

Oberyn snorted a bit at her surprised expression.

“He’s a vile cretin and many more, worse things that I won’t defile your lovely ears with, Sansa.” Oberyn stated flatly. “Moreover, as he made it clear he saw you as his personal toy – or so the whispers from the Red Keep say…” He nodded as Sansa flushed brightly and ducked her head. “I thought so. He used your eventual bedding as a weapon against you, likely one of the most terrifying, am I right?” He barely paused waiting for her nod before continuing. “Never mind, I know I am.” His grin flashed once more. “As a known defiler of chaste wives and darling
daughters, I know I am. I’ve years of experience dealing with the wounds men like that create. And while I cannot promise that your fears can be overcome enough to allow you genuine pleasure in the bedchamber – or other places, but we’ll get to that – only you can make that decision to truly conquer your apprehension and anxiety, I can promise to honor you and treat you as gently and slowly as you require.”

Oberyn stayed silent for many long, torturous moments as Sansa visibly struggled with herself.

“Thank you, Prince Oberyn.” She said finally, looking up and setting her goblet aside with a decisive click. “You are right. And I do not wish Joffery to maintain any power over me. Not even in this.”

“There it is.” Oberyn commented with genuine pleasure. “There’s the fire that led a sweet maid to turn down an immediate rescue in favor of playing spy, and an actual match to a worthy husband in exchange to save the lives of my family and an adulterous pact. You are the Fire-Rose, Princess Sansa.” Oberyn toasted her before quaffing back the rest of his wine, rising to his feet elegantly and offering her his hand. “Now, let us see if we can defeat that little prick and free your fire in other ways. Though,” this time his smile turned amused. “Perhaps you might want to call me Oberyn, at least when not in public, my dear Sansa.”

…

The Queen of Thorns called out imperiously for the music to be played louder as her granddaughter sat down to join her taking midmorning tea in the gardens of the Maidenvault.

Surrounding the lovely balcony overlooking the Blackwater, it was covered in a fragrant mixture of late Summer and early Autumn flowers and vines, the Harvest season not quite having King’s Landing in as firm of a grip as it did the more northern climes of the North, Vale, and Riverlands.

“I have heard troubling things, my sweet rose,” Olenna said without preamble. “Come, you have inserted yourself quite well into this boy-king’s confidence. Are they true, my dear?”

“Grandmother.” Margery dipped a graceful curtesy, nary disturbing a hair on her head or a fold of her silk-crepe dress with its just-shy-of-scandalous V-neck. “You are looking well rested from our journey here. How was your visit with Lord Varys?”

“Ah.” Olenna laughed lightly and nodded. “You’ve already cultivated the gossips. I’m sure they’ve been rushing to brighten your days in the wake of Alerie’s death. That’s good. You’ll need that skill if you are to marry this boy. But come.” She stood and linked arms with her young pupil. “Walk with me. I know the walls have ears here in the Red Keep but apparently the shrubbery does as well.”

They walked along a moment in silence until they had cleared the gathered “hens” as Olenna always dubbed them, then Olenna reiterated her question.

“Is it true?” She probed. “What the servants and pages and castle gossips were twittering before Lord Tywin’s gold and Queen Cersei’s venom shut them up? About the boy’s reaction to Sansa Stark’s wedding?”

“Yes, grandmother, I believe it is.” Margery told her lightly, with a becoming smile. To anyone watching, her was the very picture of a maid enchanted by having the attentions of a young, handsome King. Little did they know that Lady Margery, like her grandmother, was more thorn than flower. “A distraction gone very much awry from what I’ve discerned. Joffery hasn’t spoken of it, but…”
“But there is little that happens in King’s Landing without at least six spies and a dozen gossips ferreting it out, yes.” Olenna agreed pointing to several loitering servants or even those just doing their jobs – but within eye shot of the pair. “There, the gardener is Little Finger’s, the maid Cersei’s, the boy Varys’, the page the Imp’s and his companion the Old Lion’s.”

“And the washer woman?” Margery asked, her eyes skipping over each in turn as if she was merely admiring the scenery.

“Oh, that one’s mine, my dear.” Olenna smiled grimly. “You will find with age and experience that it is not enough to merely listen to the gossips and spies and loose-tongued servants who loosen more with a bit of copper, silver, or gold, but to plant your own instead of merely relying on the information gathered for another’s ears. Different factions all have different agendas, my sweet rose.” Olenna imparted knowledgably. “Thus their spies are primed to listen for different words, different triggers to draw their attention – and potentially another’s ire and suspicion.”

Margery nodded thoughtfully, understanding what her grandmother was telling her. Varys likely listened to everything, Little Finger with him. But Cersei would have very different interests than her brother or father. And thank the gods, few men or women had the same interests as Joffrey.

Not many enjoyed causing pain just to cause pain, nor took such vile pleasure from it, even to the point of arousal as his…indiscretion with the pair of whores provided by Little Finger showed quite clearly.

“One is dead my dear.” Olenna said softly. “While the other only wishes it were so. As monstrous as any Aerion Brightflame or Aerys the Mad. And you my sweet rose will not be the next victim to his twisted desires. Not so long as there is breath in my body. The wedding will go through, your fatheaded father has made sure of that. But steps must be taken. Though what those entail I have yet to settle upon.”

“Yes, Grandmother.” Margery blew out a slow, controlled breath of relief. “Whatever you think is best.”

“Good girl.” Olenna nodded as they turned and began to pace back towards her balcony. “Now if only that Fat Flower of a son of mine would learn a thing or two from you we’d all be the better for it.”

And not in this nightmare of a situation.

…

Doran Martell froze the moment he wheeled his invalid’s chair into his office hearing the chilling sound of someone whistling a very infamous tune.

He could almost hear the lyrics.

…And so he spoke, and so he spoke, that Lord of Castamere…

“Come Prince Doran.” A voice tinged with an accent he’d never heard before called out. “You have been so…daring up until now. It would be a shame to ruin my perception of you, just before we were going to get acquainted.”

Wheeling farther into the room, the man in his fifties and afflicted with a harsh case of gout, spotted his visitor who had returned to whistling that song.

Much older than his siblings, and even a few years the elder of his uncle Lewen, due to his mother’s
young age at his birth and the miscarriages and deaths of his younger siblings between himself, Elia, and Oberyn, the Prince of Dorne appeared weak and nearly decrepit, hardly the architect of a scheme to unbalance the Baratheon hold on the Iron Throne before deciding to ally with the same cretins who murdered his sister and her babes in what, from what his visitor could tell from his thoughts, was a fit of pique.

Doran blanched as his mind made the connection between hair that dark matched with eyes that green his visitor’s tunic emblazoned with two sigils: a sword-and-knot and the direwolf-dragon-crown of Jon Targaryen’s personal crest.

This then, was Lord Harry Potter-Black, most recently coined as “Harry the Black” as a play on his name, his hair, and his rather ruthless, black heart for his actions in both sentencing and carrying out said sentence personally on two thousand of his own Ironborn men for breaking Jon’s Law.

Though to those who remember, it was also a quite clever pun, as the founder of the first Targaryen Dynasty in Westeros, Aegon the Conqueror, had ridden a dragon known as Balerion the Black Dread – for which Jon Targaryen is also named, and with it the Targaryen conqueror had ended the line of Harren the Black, and melted the very stones of Harrenhal.

As Lord Harry was quickly becoming as much of a deterrent to aberrant behavior as Balerion had been, it was a rather apropos appellation.

Especially when one considers that Lord Harry could by all reports actually turn into a dragon… though one that was blue and grey rather than black.

Still and all, what was a Targaryen conqueror without his dragons?

Westeros had yet to find out, as Doran’s spies reported that not only did Jon Targaryen have a shape-shifting sorcerer-dragon in his train, he also now had a bonded fledgling dragon as well, the size of a medium dog and growing, as did his aunt, Daenerys Stormborn, and his distant cousin and intended Aegon Blackfyre.

“Prince Doran.” Harry smiled. “At last we meet. And we have so very much to discuss. Did you like the song I was whistling? Such an interesting and catchy tune. Especially the tale it depicts, lion against lion.” Emerald eyes pinned deep brown like a predator sighting prey. “But I have another tale to tell you, one of lions and snakes.”
Act VIII - Guest Right

Chapter Summary

I spent six and a half months stalled out after the first 5,000 words, then it took several weeks again to scrape the rest together after hitting 16,000. I hope you all enjoy this long awaited update :D

The Tomb of the First Men

Author’s Note: There is a bit of dialogue here that is straight from canon.

…”The Targaryens are gone.”  Ned reminded Robert.

“No, not all of them.”

Act VIII – Guest Right

…”so you see, now don’t you?”  Harry continued in that all-too-gentle tone, his rings of lordship with their gold and platinum and rubies and diamonds flashing as his fingers thumbed rhythmically against the hilt of the Sword of Gryffindor with its golden lion pommel encrusted with rubies as he held it with as gentle a touch as his tone, point resting on the – he was certain – priceless woven silk carpet as Prince Doran visibly sweat before him as he told him an abridged story of the Boy-Who-Lived and He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named.  A story in which a serpent fared badly indeed against the might of a lion, much like the Raynes had been pared down to nothing for testing the wrath of Tywin Lannister.  “That while I truly despise sniveling cowards and spineless traitors, I hold a special…rage you could say for double-crossers and oath-breakers.  I’m afraid that I’m rather…”  He chuckled coldly, Killing-Curse-Green eyes flashing with a fire to give truth to his banked temper.

Jon had given this…task of handling the Dornish problem into Harry’s care, all unknowing of just how deeply he felt the issue.

Far deeper than anyone who would have looked his way during Sansa’s wedding would have ever guessed, deep enough that he’d given serious thought to simply tearing down House Nymeros-Martell brick-by-brick and father-by-son.

Had he acted right away, he very well might have indeed.

However, time has a way of…tempering his rage into something far colder that while more rational…was also far deadlier for having been forced to bridle and harnessed into righteous fury.

…”sensitive about the subject.”  Harry continued without missing a beat.

“My lord…”  Doran attempted to scramble, mind racing as it had been ever since he’d heard that song, a song that had served as a sort of anthem for the Lannister house and army for years, now it seemed was being claimed by a lion of a different coat indeed.  And this Harry of Houses Potter and Black, Lord of Winter and betrothed consort of King Jon the First Targaryen, was a lion, of that
there was no doubt.

Though, in the end, Doran would come to learn that Harry’s bite was much worse than his roar. Knowledge that would come far too late to save him. Doran’s fate was set in motion the very moment he entertained a messenger from Lord Tywin and sealed with is decision to place his personal ambitions above the good of his family and people.

Harry held up one hand, shaking his head with a rueful smile and flashing eyes.

“Don’t, Prince Doran.” Harry said, lowering his hand. “You’ve been brave – stupid, turning your cloak against Jon, but brave nonetheless – thus far. Let’s not leave me with an even worse impression of you than I already have. After all…your fate was sealed in your own hand.”

Reaching into his armor, Harry pulled out the most damning piece of evidence he’d been able to unearth whilst plotting to undo the potential damage to Jon’s alliance, one of the communiques between Doran and Tywin, liberated by a spy in Sunspear and delivered to Harry’s hand, who had authenticated it with a simple flex of his power.

Swallowing dryly, Doran cursed himself for leaving his guard in the hall. It didn’t even occur to him to try and cry out, tales of Harry the Black had travelled far and wide ever since the Targaryen whelp had come back from the Far North with his pet magician in tow. The creature was known to be carrying, but even so…Doran’s canny eyes saw no sign of weakness or mother’s sickness coming from the man. And…as he’d said. Doran had been brave but stupid thus far, nothing would be accomplished by diminishing himself even further in Potter-Black’s eyes.

“And what will my fate be, Lord Harry?” Doran arched a swarthy brow. “Will you slit my throat like your captains? Or perhaps hang me from the high tower like Bolton and the Freys? What price will I have to pay for daring to throw in my lot to the game of thrones?”

Harry smirked, tossing the missive onto the desk before him then gesturing to the parchment he’d laid out on the desk after clearing it on arriving in Sunspear. Everything that would be needed was there, including a black quill, the Prince’s royal seal, and sealing wax. Everything to ratify what Harry had already set in motion.

Doran eyed the array, noting absently – as Harry once did – the distinct lack of ink.

“You’re in luck, Doran.” He said with faux-cheer, as Doran gave a gasp at what he was seeing. “That only a select few know of your attempt at treason. Your daughter will pay her price – in time. And House Martell will be no more, the heir carried by the newly titled Princess Sansa Stark, the bride of your son Quentyn, who will meet a most unfortunate accident after he carries out his current mission to the Iron Bank on behalf of the King.” Harry made a sad moue. “Braavos is a rather…wild place after all…and unfortunately your elder son inherited your idiocy.” Harry sneered in disgust. “As if a creature with his…weakness would ever be allowed to become a Warden of one of the kingdoms of Westeros, let alone the ruling Prince.”

Shaking, Doran lowered his head to his hands, stifling his sobs as the meaning of the documents before him became clear – Dorne was being reduced in status, folded in with the rest of the kingdoms of Westeros and no longer with the ability to make their own laws, follow their own ways.

Doran’s play had cost his people – and his family – dearly.

“Sign the papers, Doran.” Harry snarled when he tired of Doran’s weeping. “It’s already done – they were wed and Sansa bed with the setting sun. The only thing you do by resisting is testing my patience – and with the fate of your Trystane in the balance and the manner of Arianne’s death yet to
be decided that is not a thing you will want on your conscience as your last act of impact on the
game whilst on this earth.”

…

“He’ll never be able to say anything.” Harry confirmed to Sansa in private later that night after his
return to Casterly Rock, whisking the newlywed away from her tryst with Oberyn while the Dornish
rogue was sleeping to relay the good news. “No one will ever know – not by word or deed or
otherwise – of what’s been done.”

“Oberyn and I each have too much to lose and nothing to gain.” Sansa mused, brow furrowing
daintily. “But Doran…?”

Harry gave her a grim twitch of his lips too sour to be a smile.

“Won’t be a problem.” He reiterated, then held up his hand and clenched it into a fist for her bright
blue eyes to trace the script that she didn’t know the language of but knew well from her
 correspondence with her soon-to-be brother-within-the-law that none other than Harry’s
handwriting. “The quill he signed with…it leaves a mark you see, one that tends to strike quite
depthly into your person. And when used properly is binding. How it was used on myself…” He
sighed, shaking off old injustices for the present subterfuge. “Well. Let’s just say that it worked in
my favor that the one who force me to do this to myself had far less \textit{imagination} than I have always
had.”

“Yes…” Sansa agreed, wincing a bit even though unknowing of just \textit{what} Harry – who had
championed her cause and her independence from the moment they met – had been forced to carve
into his own hand. “Yes, I would say it did at that…”

…

The week following the wedding, while Sansa and Oberyn were locked away with the sleeping-
drugged form of Quentyn to carry out their…\textit{duty}, which as Oberyn had promised had become more
pleasure than chore for his nephew’s bride, the rest of Casterly Rock as well as the royal court and
the greater Targaryen army and the nearby navy made ready to continue onward.

Campaigns in truth waited for no man, not even kings, as they always involved more than a single
side.

Despite the massive strides that had been made, not \textit{all} of the West was under Jon’s control while the
Reach was very much divided, as were the Crownlands, with only a few pockets of resistance still in
the Riverlands, mostly Lannister patrols causing trouble. Not to mention King’s Landing itself,
which was very much still under the golden fist of the Lannisters.

They had work to do, and another wedding to complete before Harry became too far along in his
pregnancy to fight.

The push to Harrenhal in the Riverlands by way of the Golden Road would take care of much of the
remaining issues in the West, as while Tywin had been feared by his sworn lords, \textit{fear}, as Jon’s
grandfather had learned to the ruin of their House, was a less-than-effective tactic when faced with
another choice of lord – or king in this case.

Not to mention…while King’s Landing was under siege measures, that only made getting news from
the last Lannister stronghold a bit more difficult, not impossible.

And Lady Olenna wasn’t the only one to have heard the whispers of Joffery’s growing predilection
It was with great relief that Harry confirmed Sansa’s pregnancy – in secret of course – to both the pair of Sansa and Oberyn and to his own loves, though his loves were unaware of the true sire of Sansa’s children – the fertility potions working very well indeed, then saw an awakened Quentyn off with the ships filled with the Iron Bank’s payment. The Onion Knight and several of his sons going along to make sure the ever-weakening whelp didn’t cock it up, and then return – hopefully to Dragonstone to rendezvous with the Northern and Storm Land fleets. No need to send them all the way to the Sunset Sea if all the action – for the most part – was soon to kick off in the waters surrounding the Red Keep.

Well…soon was a bit of an overstatement given that barring taking recalcitrant keeps and holdfasts between the Rock and Harrenhal, there wasn’t much of a battle planned until after Harry had recovered from birthing the twins.

Enough time – hopefully – for the Heirs’ Army in the Reach to have cut off the remaining Reach/Lannister army in the Crownlands from the bounty of the Reach, with the support of the remaining Dornish/Golden Company forces to lend support while Stannis and the loyal Storm Lords worked on cleaning house in the Storm Lands.

…

Jon and Robb flanked Sansa as they approached Oberyn’s flagship at Lannisport, an awaying of a different sort from the one that took place earlier that day – that had been a quiet affair, to prevent rumors from circling regarding the treasure ships. They may have control of most of the seas around Westeros, but not total control. Besides which, Ser Davos and Quentyn wouldn’t only be sailing through Westerosi waters, but also those of Andalos and Braavos, and waters close to those controlled by Tyrosh and Pentos. Risks that none of the quartet of King and future Consorts, let alone Ser Davos were willing to push into further danger with word of just what it was that the ships carried.

In contrast, the awaying of Sansa to the Water Gardens to meet Prince Doran as her good-father before journeying to Harrenhal for the much-anticipated wedding and coronation of her cousin was a grand and lively affair attended by much of the ever-growing royal court as more and more envoys and persons high born and low flocked to the side of the Targaryen scion and King in all but coronation.

“Here we are.” Robb spoke as they ascended the wide planking leading up to the deck of the ship, named appropriately enough for its captain The Red Viper. “Be careful, Sansa.” Robb said, then leaned down to give her a brief hug and a buss to the cheek. “The Dornish are…different than we are. Take care, sister.”

“I will.” Sansa hugged her brother tight for a moment then stepped over into the waiting hug of her cousin. “You as well – all of you.” She said to all four of her escort, Harry giving her a smile and a kiss to the cheek and Aegon a short bow and kiss to the hand once Jon let loose of her.

It was a hard thing, for both Jon and Robb, letting her go off into the treacherous waters of the Dornish court. Only Harry’s influence and Oberyn’s promises to look after her had swayed them, along with the knowledge that they would be seeing her soon at Harrenhal.

“We’ll take good care of her.” Oberyn promised, with a roguish wink to Sansa that thanks to their time closeted together didn’t raise a telling blush to her milk-and-berries complexion. “Tyene has been missing a companion ever since Arianne started playing envoy for my brother. She’ll do well as a companion. And I’m sure Ellaria will be ecstatic to have another female around.”
Harry covered a snort with a cough.

Oh yes, indeed. He was sure that Ellaria Sand, Oberyn’s long-time lover would be excited to say the least to meet her rogue’s latest paramour…since if he was reading things right, he had an inkling that neither Sansa nor Oberyn were all that interested in ending their liaison just yet. But so long as they were discrete, he would never say a word about it.

Discretion in this case wasn’t just key, it was the only thing that would keep Oberyn’s head in place on his shoulders.

Jon wouldn’t likely take well to the news that the infamous philanderer had put his paws on his cousin, and Robb would be nothing short of furious – likely with Harry as well since he was the architect of the whole affair.

Thankfully, Lewen and Arthur could be trusted to keep their knowledge of the situation to themselves.

As the members of the Kingsguard, it wasn’t the first nor likely the last secret they’d have to keep of Harry’s – though it was the first they’d have to keep away from their King…if only for both his own good and that of the Realm.

“Very well.” Jon nodded formally. “We give Our cousin and the newest Princess of Dorne Sansa of House Stark into your care Prince Oberyn.”

As one, the quartet stepped back and turned to descend back to the wooden stone pier, Kingsguard at their front and back while Oberyn and his crew bowed and Sansa dipped a correct curtsy, the gathered crowd giving a cheer as the ship struck its moorings and the sails unfurling into the wind.

They would travel by ship first to the Water Gardens to meet with Doran and gather Prince Oberyn’s paramour and younger daughters, then onward up the coast to the Storm Lands to meet with Lord Stannis’s army and journey with them to Harrenhal.

Once back at the Rock, Harry finally presented Jon with the signed documents from Doran – and then immediately had to calm his lover’s rage.

“You gave it over to me to handle.” Harry reminded his pacing and cursing lover gently from where he sat in their chambers, Drogon perched and resting on the floor next to his knee, nearly purring under his stroking hands as Ghost kept pace at his human’s heels. Rhaegal and Grey Wind were off with their own humans, Robb in command of getting the main army ready to move out while Aegon did the same with the Golden Company. Jon and Harry were supposed to be overseeing some last-minute affairs of state prior to the push from the Rock to Harrenhal, only to be sidetracked by Jon’s explosive – more so than anticipated – reaction to the backstabbing of Doran and his daughter.

Jon was well-past explosions of rage over Lannister sneaking and back-door deals, but having someone Jon had trusted and known for years turn on him was taking a much heavier toll than Tywin trying to marry Sansa off to Tyrion or even Cersei imprisoning his uncle Ned.

In fact, if one were to ask Ser Arthur, they would find that Jon’s reaction to the full-breadth of Doran’s attempted betrayal was akin to that – minus the accompanying grief – of Ned’s beheading by Joffrey.

“I know!” Jon shouted, voice heavily coated with an underlying growl. “I know.” He tempered himself at Harry’s chiding eyebrow lift and Ser Arthur’s accompanying frown at his leveling – even for a moment – his displeasure towards his little love. “But that he even dared!” Jon fumed,
coherency replaced with a wordless snarl as Jon whirled to brace himself against the fireplace mantle, staring blindly into the banked coals.

It being the first year of what was promising to be a short Autumn only spanning two or perhaps three years, a stone fortress such as the Rock was beginning to need warming most days, so many of the fireplaces, especially in the rooms frequented by Jon, were kept banked or burning during the day.

The late-year solstice was coming soon as well, the days growing shorter though still very similar in length to the nights as the nights would not start truly growing longer until the second half of the Autumn, which would be the signal for how long until the Winter truly set in.

“Of course he dared.” Harry shrugged it off, paying no mind to the incredulous looks his comment garnered from Ser Arthur or his lover. “Doran – and Tywin for that matter – are not the first nor will they be the last men or women, high born or low, to test the mettle of a young power. They saw a chance.” Harry continued, waving one hand as the other scratched at the ever-growing Drogon’s scales along his neck. “Chances are always going to be taken by those whose ambition or greed overstep their sense of loyalty or self-preservation or honor. That is the way of being human, my love.”

“Aye.” Ser Arthur agreed, throwing his two-coppers as he leaned against the door, the rest of the Kingsguard either resting from the night shift or helping plan the army’s exodus from the Rock, save those who would stay behind and use it as a base to keep control – and continue to root out anti-Targaryen forces – in the Westerlands. “It’s the way of the world, your Grace. At least this plot was caught early – they won’t always be.”

Harry cocked his head, words coming out more musing than angry after having been awake enough – and with enough joy in his life despite the war – to no longer overly dwell on his past. Though a part of that he assumed – rightly though he didn’t know it – was due to the magic of Westeros working on him, much like his old friend had done, changing him to better suit the world in which he’d woken.

“Plans and cunning men come hand-in-hand with power my love.” Harry quirked a smile at the eye-roll and sigh that got him from both Jon and Ghost, the direwolf understanding his human’s mood if not the exact word his human’s mate spoke.

“At least I’ve a cunning man of my own on my side.” Jon loosened up enough to tease, coming over and giving Harry a kiss and resting his palm against the gentle curve of belly his betrothed had gained and that continued to grow as he was mid-way through his third turn of pregnancy.

“Better keep me sweet then.” Harry jested, biting lightly at Jon’s plump lower lip. “Who knows what devilment I’ll think up to besiege you otherwise.”

Jon smirked, nudging Drogon away which was met with an irritated snort, and swooped Harry up into his arms and strode off towards the curtained-off bed.

“The things I have to do for my country…” He joked, shaking his head mournfully as Harry snickered and Arthur disappeared out into the hall, giving them what privacy he could.

…

In Harry’s considered opinion, after twice having to help plan the Greater Targaryen Army’s decampment from one fortress to move out towards another, the whole operation had a massive resemblance to trying – and somehow succeeding – in herding feral cats.
Part of the problem when leaving Riverrun for the campaign in the Westerlands – in fact most of it – was trying to meld several disparate forces – who for years had been at odds over this-or-that or simple rivals in the games of playing “my home is better than your home” – into one cohesive army. A challenge that they were facing yet again…well…mainly Robb as the main general, Jon some as the King, and Harry hardly at all given that his Ironborn were a naval power and were due to spend most of their time harrowing the Westerland and Reach lands that hadn’t – yet – sworn for Jon, with the ever-incoming arrivals as more and more Lords swore to Jon and the addition of approximately a third of the Golden Company. Which also made it Aegon’s headache as well, something Harry often snickered over with his main guard and companion Prince Lewen as he hid – er – helped train their contingent of medics along with Archmaester Marwyn and the Sand Snake Sarella, who had remained with the main army while her other half-sisters left with their father on the Red Viper, Tyene to be Sansa’s lady’s companion/protective snake in the grass, Oberyn likely had an inkling.

Harry could’ve made a pretty accurate guess, given what he’d learned of the infamous bastard-born elder daughters of Prince Oberyn, but had other things to occupy his mind and time during the decampment from Casterly Rock, such as entering the second stage of his pregnancy where not only did his magical levels return to normal instead of the exhaustion and weariness that plagued him and caused his lovers such concern, but were amplified by the ever-growing cores of his unborn sons, a situation that rapidly led to him trying to find a way to bleed off the excess…fortunately he knew just the ticket from the magical form of sex-ed in his old time covering the topic, and thanks to his horde under the floor of the Hall of Ancient Heroes a ready supply of flawless gemstones to siphon the power into for use later.

What, exactly, he was going to use said siphoned off power for he was still deciding…but a conversation he had with his loves and the Kingsguard about a week into their march down the Golden Road jogged his inspiration, a boon from a trip that thus far had been mind-numbingly boring as the army had done its work well while at Casterly Rock, rooting out dissenters and Lannister strongholds.

Though, the work in the Westerlands wasn’t yet complete, and Jon’s good friend Ser Crispan Celtigar had been less-than-pleased to be left as both castellan of Casterly Rock until a later date when Jon had the time to figure out what to do with the growing mass of property he was acquiring through his conquest of Westeros, and as the commander of the remaining Targaryen forces to clean house in the Westerlands.

Their march down the Golden Road would do a portion of the work as they dealt with whatever resistance was mustered by Tywin’s bannermen along the way, but Cris was sure to be kept busy enough as he recovered fully from Asha Greyjoy’s attempt on Harry’s – and his babes’ – lives.

But as Harry had come to know well in the many turns – almost a full year – since he’d been awakened, the long marches between destinations often led to long stretches of conversation – and some of his best ideas, if he did say so himself…

…

The Kingsguard – and indeed much of the army that rotated daily riding with and near the uncrowned-King and his soon-to-be-Consorts – had found on the long Gold Road between Casterly Rock and their destination of Harrenhal that other than scattered happenstances of skirmishing against pockets of Lannister-loyalists or anti-Targaryen agitators there was a singular sport that alleviated the mind-numbing three-week march between the two fortresses: Harry-Snarking.
At well into his second stage of pregnancy, his lovers – all three of them despite Aegon’s lack of contribution to his current…state – had taken protectiveness to an extent that was nearly smothering, which when combined with the typical maladies of carrying babes had considerably shortened the Lord of Winter and the Iron Island’s temper…as well as sharpened his tongue.

On this particular day, Harry the Black’s temper was even worse than usual, due to Jon’s ordering him away from the battle the previous morn – an order that had been enforced by Harry’s constant shadows Prince Lewen and Lord Commander Dayne, who had taken to dividing his focus between his main charge of Jon and protecting the carrier of Jon’s heirs…the closest he would ever have to grandchildren of his own, much like Jon was the closest to Arthur’s own son, as Jon’s father Rhaegar had been to Ser Barristan.

A temper that was proven true – and volatile – when as the army came to a halt for the night, Harry was surrounded by his loves, Jon trying to help him from his horse, Robb bombarding him with questions: (“How are you/are you hungry/tired/sore…?) and Aegon hovering with his hands out as if to catch Harry just in case having Jon helping him from his horse wasn’t quite enough for the pregnant wizard to make it firmly onto the ground.

“Damn it.” Harry cursed, slapping at Jon’s hands until he was released and finally glaring Robb into suspicion, silencing Aegon as well – just in case – with a likewise glare that had the Kingsguard and generals and lords unobtrusively trading small purses of gold and silver.

Lord Commander Dayne continued to clean up on the sometimes more-than-once daily spectacle of Harry chiding his loves over their being, in his oft-repeated wording “Over-protective, hovering and smothering prats.”

To no surprise, Prince Lewen was also raking in the gold due to his being the most familiar with Lord Harry out of all the Kingsguard, with a canny Dacey Mormont not far behind him.

Harry knew of the betting – and was either entertained or irritated by it depending on his mood and the state of his ever-fluctuating hormones at any given time – but today didn’t deign to acknowledge it, far too busy taking his loves to task.

Today had been a rather good day – only for the trio’s protective idiocy to rear its annoying head at the last moment of the day’s ride.

“Stop it.” Harry held in his scold until he’d put up a silencing ward with a flick of his wand – much to the disappointment of their audience who could see him giving his lovers a bollocking but not hear it. Which was rather a good thing, as his too-calm and too-cold tone would have had Ser Arthur worried that Harry might just make good on his standing threat of castrating his King and the Lord of the North if they pissed him off too much whilst he was carrying their heirs. A rather interesting threat that had originally been issued on the very first day of the trek to Harrenhal and that was oft-repeated when the wizard got fed up with being treated like he was suddenly a fragile damsel – all because his pregnant state had begun to truly show just before they took their leave from the Rock.

“I mean it –“ he cut off Jon with a raised hand. “Do you have any idea how it looks, let alone how it feels for you three to keep coddling and hovering and argh!” He growled a wordless sound of frustration. “I fought Ser Barristan to shut up the army over my right to be treated as a Lord and the warrior I am and always have been when I agreed to marry you, Jon.” Harry hissed, eyes narrowed as Jon and Robb suddenly averted their eyes, looking anywhere but at Harry as the truth of that had a blush rising in both men’s cheeks. “And as for you,” Harry shot another glare at Aegon who was rubbing the back of his neck in discomfiture. “I expected you to not suddenly catch onto their boneheaded idiocy, Aegon.” Harry snorted in exasperation. “I’m not even carrying your heir the way I am theirs.”
“No.” Aegon admitted easily, lowering his hand and straightening up, squaring off against his lover that had championed his position from the first. “You’re not.”

Before Harry could so much as shoot a gloating look at the silver-haired Prince of Bloodstone, Aegon continued, much to the relief – and a bit of disbelief – of Jon and Robb, who while not afraid of Harry’s mood-swings were…bloody afraid of Harry’s mood-swings.

He was a fucking wizard for the sake of the gods!

They knew what their little love was capable of and most certainly did not want him turning that mind and power on them because they pushed him one time too many while their sons were kicking him in the liver or causing him to get weepy or what have you.

“But.”

“Shit.” Harry muttered, a pout forming on his lips as he crossed his arms. “There had to be a but.”

“But,” Aegon chided, arching a silver brow. “You are my lover. I have a right – as do Jon and Robb – to worry over you when you’re carrying one of our children – let alone two. Granted – “ he rolled his eyes at Robb. “We shouldn’t be bedeviling you with our hovering or peppering you with questions or treating you like an invalid – of which we are all guilty of at one time or another.”

“But.” Harry sighed, nodding his head and holding out his hand for Aegon to take as they turned to walk towards the tent that had been prepared while they had their little spat, Jon and Robb falling in behind them. “I need to be more patient as well…I know.”

With a thought, Harry cancelled the silencing ward, yet more gold and silver changing hands over Aegon diffusing the spat while the pair of ever-growing dragons and direwolves followed their humans into the now-risen royal tent that Sers Oswell, Mark, and Torrhen had been setting up while the others dismounted and squires and pages came to see to their horses.

Dacey Mormont caught up to them not long after the quartet had made their tent, the Heiress of Bear Island once more taking up the position of leading the runners that rode between their last stop on the Gold Road and the main army fetching ravens and other information. It was work that many thought better suited to squires or pages, however the northern cavalry – particularly the younger members and heirs such as Smalljon Umber and the now-Kingsguard Torrhen Karstark – preferred the ride over the march. Moreover, they were trustworthy and better in a fight than any stripling page or squire would be, so Jon and Robb continued to encourage it, to the point of encouraging Dacey to take on some of the Sers and Heirs of the southron lords.

Better they stay busy than fight amongst themselves, after all.

And the better they got to know each other now, the less likely that more feuds would spring up later after Jon parcelled out the taken lands to his greatest allies and most loyal men.

“More news from King’s Landing, your Grace.” Dacey reported, handing over the missive, her plain-but-pretty face no worse for wear from its scattering of dust from the road.

Jon smirked, eyes gleaming at the news smuggled via Tyrion of the success – thus far – of using Daenerys’s ships and crew to smuggle in food to the smallfolk of the capital city.

That it also came with complaints of Dany being far too stubborn for his friend’s taste and insisting on either hiding away in the Dragonstone libraries or training with her khalasaar, simply made him laugh.
His aunt had returned with her handmaiden Irri and her sworn-shield Jorah Mormont to Dragonstone the day after Sansa’s wedding to Quentyn, taking Viserion with her to the dismay of his brothers, though the horses were likely glad of having one less dragon underfoot for all that they’d – mostly – gotten used to both the direwolves and the plain-wolf pack that followed the army and often torn into their opponents during the few scattered fights the Greater Targaryen Army had run into.

Dragons – after all – were a different creature altogether than a direwolf, as Jon had had to learn during the exercises to join himself more fully with Drogon and in different ways than he was joined to Ghost.

Ser Arthur smiled at the scowl Harry always got on his face when the subject of King’s Landing came up, and took it upon himself to try and tease the future-Consort out of his disgruntlement.

“Thoughts of ghosts and hauntings and melted towers bother you not at all, but King’s Landing makes your mood foul?”

Ser Oswell groaned a little.

“Harrenhal is neither cursed nor haunted.” He repeated for what felt like the thousandth time, defending his childhood home.

Harry snorted at the pair.

“I’ll take a curse any day over blood sacrifices carved into the very foundations of that cesspit you Westerosi insist on calling a capital city.” He groused, shifting a bit as he stretched from the day in the saddle, Jon and Robb speaking lowly with Dacey over some other matter that he was keeping half an ear on while Aegon fed their scaled companions, Rhaegal currently showing better manners than Drogon. “I’d sooner burn it down stone by stone and brick by brick, until nothing is left but ash and dragon-bone. It may take years to rebuild as a port-city but that would still be preferable than anyone with magical blood making it their home.”

“And where would we make our capital and home, my love?” Jon asked, sending Dacey away, while keeping her idea fresh in his mind. It didn’t sit right with him, but thankfully, he had a few weeks left before he would have to act on it.

“Why not Harrenhal?” Harry posed, the idea lighting up his emerald eyes with renewed zeal at the idea of not having to live in fucking King’s Landing.

“It’s cursed.” Robb reiterated.

And with good reason for all Ser Oswell’s denials of anything odd happening during his time there.

It was said that indeed the fortress was cursed though by Harren the Black or Aegon the Conqueror none were certain.

But with the number of souls who died when Aegon burned the towers and melted the very stones of the fortress, it was entirely possible from what Robb understood of Harry’s teachings.

The fact remained that of the seven Houses that had held the fortress as their home and gained lordship over its lush and fertile lands, only Ser Oswell of House Whent yet lived, his last relation and Lady of House Whent disappearing when the castle was taken by the Lannister forces.

Not good odds, most would say, and why for all the implied riches that came with the lands, no wise lord or lady ever sought them out as reward for deeds from their sovereign.
“Curse or no curse.” Harry shrugged. “It’s not like I don’t have the stored reserves to make it livable. It’s a port-city with access to the Blackwater Rush through the God’s Eye lake, and much larger and more centrally located than King’s Landing without the pesky issue of fucking blood sacrifices carved into the very stones.”

“He makes a valid point.” Aegon tossed towards his lovers, Jon coming to sit and help feed the dragons while Robb looked after the direwolves, Harry himself too wound up and overflowing with energy to rest.

Prince Lewen, stationed at the tent-flap, knew well the signs of his charge having issues with magical overload and dug into the pouch on his sword-belt where Lord Harry had given him extra gemstones that from what he understood of his own lessons with Lord Harry and from Harry’s explanations he used to siphon and store the excess, much like one would store water in case of a drought.


Harry just snorted and rolled his eyes as he funneled yet more power into the red diamond Lewen had given him this time. Once he was done – or the gem was filled – he would send it to the stockpile he was rapidly building in his vault below the Fist. It wasn’t as if he wouldn’t have the power to do something about that with all the power he currently had at his disposal.

In fact, it would be a much easier solution to the problem of a capital rather than try and break the curses on King’s Landing…which Harry still was certain could even be done.

They would see, and once it was done he was sure that Jon would find it a much more palatable option.

Knowing the conversation was going no where good, Harry changed the subject.

“What did Lady Dacey want?”

“She has an idea of how to deal with the Crow’s Eye.” Jon told him after a long moment. “One that I don’t like, but can see the value of.”

“Ah.” Aegon snickered a bit. “A Harry idea then.”

“Hey!”

...

The Greater Targaryen Army, including a pair of dragons and a pack of mixed direwolves and wolves, arrived at the shores of the God’s Eye lake, just beyond the ruins of aHarrenhal, at the beginning of the last turn of the year two hundred and ninety-eight after Aegon’s Conquest.

It also happened to be the start of the nineteenth week of Harry’s pregnancy, putting him over the halfway mark…depending on how long his twins were content to stay safe in his womb given that it was his first pregnancy.

Either way, he was yet bursting with energy and with his lovers being unmoving in blocking him from the skirmishes the army had fought through the Westerlands and into the Riverlands, there had been little enough for him to bloody do with the magic that was bursting at his seams other than a healing here or there and charging stone after stone after stone with the excess power.

Thankfully, he had a damn good idea of what to do with all that excess power and a good deal of the
stockpile idling away in his vault.

Harrenhal was a ruin after all, he’d seen that for himself in his travels.

But with the lack of runes etched into the very foundations and a lack of blood-magic to leech away his powers like that of the Red Keep and King’s Landing, there was nothing stopping him from *doing* something about the state of the new headquarters of the Targaryen Army…not to mention getting it into shape for the wedding and coronation that was to take place in its godswood and the feasting to come after in the castle proper following.

His vault would come in handy for more than *one* purpose, as it was better to either transfigure furnishings or build or buy them rather than use conjuration.

Still, it was with no-little amount of skepticism – and more than a little bitching – that his lovers watched him mount his Firebolt for the first time and take to the sky to create a simple map of the layout of the fortress and abutting town, a necessity if he was going to do a proper job of fixing what he could.

And with the latent magic of this world all but *begging* to be put into use, what he could do was quite a lot.

From the sky, Harrenhal was breathtaking both in sheer *size*, it wasn’t known as the largest castle in Westeros for nothing after all, and for the pure *ruin* of what had to have been a magnificent fortress before Harren the Black right-pissed-off Aegon the Conqueror.

Harry felt more than a bit of whimsy that it was a Harry the Black who would restore it – as much as possible – to its former glory as a gift to another Targaryen King…one who was named for the self-same dragon that had destroyed it in the first place.

And while he wasn’t getting the sense that Harrenhal was *cursed*…per se, it *was* haunted as he could clearly see the melted-faced ghosts of who must have been Harren the Black and his family peered up at him from the most ruined tower…likely the Tower of Ghosts if the stories Ser Oswell had been telling during the weeks it took to march this far were true.

Only the vanguard – including the Kingsguard and Jon’s most trusted Lords and retainers as well as a good chunk of the northern cavalry – were present, the rest of the army a few hours march behind.

Which was good – Harry didn’t need a large audience for this.

All would *see* the results in the end, they didn’t need to witness the making of it as well.

The godswood of Harrenhal spread over twenty acres alone, and the gatehouse of the massive fortress was of a size of Winterfell’s Great Keep with the kitchens the size of that fortress’s Great Hall.

Harry was gladder than ever that his broom had survived his sleep, otherwise he’d have no good way to get an accurate layout of the massive complex that was a mountain of man’s making in sharp relief against the Mountains of the Moon behind it when viewed from the south.

With the layout taken and the proper stones summoned – more than he’d thought but the sheer *size* hadn’t quite registered before, Harry only seeing the ruin from a distance during his fly-overs while it was occupied by Tywin Lannister and his army – Harry set to work as his lovers and the vanguard watched from the makeshift camp they’d struck, most sharing a midday repast and jugs of ale or skins of wine between them as he zipped to-and-fro, little more than a speck or a hummingbird darting all around the fortress from the air, setting down for a moment to place a stone and then up
and going once more.

Stones in place, Harry flicked his wrist and had the Elder Wand in hand, etching a symbol into the highest point of the central fortress – the highest tower, like a bad pun from a child’s tale.

Taking a deep breath, Harry lowered his broom and stood on the stone, touching his wand to the rune and grounding himself – and the spell – with the natural magic of the land.

Then: “Novo.”

A simple incantation, to be sure, but one stronger than the more-often used *Reparo*, and with a deeper meaning.

*Novo*, which in Latin had many meanings but most significant for Harry’s use “make new” as well as revert, repair, and so on.

And so it did, at his command and with his power.

Though, as the stones shook under him, he was happy that he hadn’t sent his broom back to his vault, as a quick step onto it had him hovering high in the air and watching from above as the ruin of Harrenhal was made anew.

Stone reformed and towered straightened, cracked floors rejoining and the stained ruins whitening to the clean grey of new stone.

Even the trees of the godswood were affected, the heart-tree healing from the damage of battle during the Dance of Dragons.

Thankfully, the fortress was abandoned following the Lannister army’s decampment, the Riverland and Vale armies preferring to camp closer to the King’s Road by the Crossroads Inn, and the few villagers who had stayed – for where else would they go? – had been warned to stay away.

That wasn’t to say that Harry wasn’t going to busy himself going from house to cottage in the village repairing the worn-down town, but for the moment the fortress took precedence.

After all, they had a wedding to plan, and guests to host.

Guests, which thanks to his magic, would be coming from all over Westeros and even beyond.

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As it turned out, Harry’s *Novo* spell when anchored with primed-and-filled gemstones and the *please-fucking-use-me* magic of Westeros worked better than he’d even thought it would, as when he’d rejoined his lovers – and made fun of their jaw-dropped faces, like the rest of the Kingsguard and vanguard who had watched the great spellwork take place, a great work that had taken the equivalent of two dozen magical cores to complete in the stones and who-knew-how-much power from the land – and they entered the open gates of the fortress, they found that any remnants of furniture or goods that had been inside the massive ritual circle Harry had crafted had also been made new.

At least they would have to spend less gold furnishing the place, as Harry’s vault had plenty of gold, jewels, and even fabrics but little in the way of furniture.

Though, granted, given that it had most recently been occupied by an invading army, there wasn’t *much* by way of furnishings that had been left even in scraps.
Still, they would make due and the nearest towns and villages would benefit from the gold they would spend to outfit it, as well as merchants from all over Westeros and even the nearest city-states across the Narrow Sea.

Not that Harry wanted to use his excess magic – though not for a couple of days at the soonest – to go fucking shopping in Lys or where-have-you, but with the port-keys that would be sent out for visiting nobles and royals to come and witness his marriage to Jon and then the coronation to follow, he would wizard-up and do it anyway.

At least he would have others with him to be just as miserable, because if any of his lovers thought he would be doing so alone they had another-thing-coming.

The Kingsguard, Lord Commander Dayne at the helm, had the vanguard jumping to set up camp either in the guard houses and barracks – the main stable of Harrenhal could house a thousand horse alone, not counting the rest of the massive complex and surrounding fields – and before more than a candlemark had passed the highest tower flew the Targaryen sigil and similar banners unfurled down the curtain walls...though they looked rather petite in comparison, Harry making a note on his roll of ever-present parchment to have new ones made more in keeping with the sheer size of the castle.

“What shall we name it, loves?” Harry asked as the quartet toured the castle, Ser Oswell doing his best to guide them given the new-and-improved layout, though at least the grounds hadn’t been much altered. The wolf pack – including Ghost and Grey Wind – were exploring the nearby lord’s wood, and Drogon and Rhaegal were roosting on the highest tower. Ser Oswell and Prince Lewen only remained to guard the foursome, the others having divvied up the duties that settling into a new fortress – especially for a long stay – entailed.

Harrenhal also was short a castellan or a chatelain, leaving the main “group” of Jon’s most trusted companions to figure out what they would need to make the formerly-abandoned castle comfortable.

Harry, at least, had some idea of what needed to be done from his old life, while the others were more than a little at sea, having been more than a little pampered in the past by competent stewards and castellans and chatelains and so on.

This was the first true test of Harry’s skills as both a Hand and a Consort, and as such as was forcing the others to share his pain.

“What do you mean?” Jon asked, baffled, the others giving the wizard equally lost glances.

“This is a new fortress.” Harry explained with a shrug as he made another note regarding what would be the King’s quarters in the High Tower. “For all intents and purposes, the largest ever built in Westeros. Harrenhal was built by a wicked man and had a wicked history. One unbecoming of the base and capital of a new dynasty. It should have a new name to go with its new beginning.”

It was only by sheer force of will that Harry held in the smirk at the lurking ghosts at the rude gesture who he thought was Harren the Black himself made at his words, a scratch of quill on parchment the only sound for a long thinking moment – he would need to perform a cleansing soon.

 Granted, spirits in Westeros were powerless from all he’d seen, but that didn’t mean he wanted them lingering around and giving his children nightmares either.

“Pridefall.” Robb said after many moments had passed, thinking of the history of the castle – and what it had cost any who tried to hold it. “It should be called Pridefall, both as homage to those who came before, and as a warning to ourselves and our descendants of that cost.”
Jon nodded, eyes dark with heavy thoughts, then added: “The town will be known as Weirton, for the weirwood trees that had stood for three thousand years before Harren the Black cut them down to build a monument to his ego and pride.”

“Well then.” Harry noted it. “We have just shy of three weeks to get Pridefall and Weirton ready for the wedding and coronation – and all the pomp and guests that come with them. Best get to work, my loves.”

And work it was.

As the army settled in, flanking Pridefall to the east and cutting off the King’s Road, and also to the south-west, keeping the Lannister forces from flanking the divided armies, the Vale and Riverland armies were able to join them, reinforcing their numbers, to say nothing of the five thousand horse that either garrisoned the castle or camped in the fields and town below it.

In King’s Landing, Tywin Lannister read the reports of the troop movements and garrisoning of Harrenhal and seethed, even as his alliance with the Tyrells carried on…for all the good it did him in reining in the rebellious Reach “Heirs Army” led by Willas Tyrell that was doing on hells of a job cutting off the Lannister-Tyrell forces from resupplying via the Reach.

Daenerys was the first of the “guests” to arrive, mere days after they took up residence in Pridefall, and at a combination of Harry’s request and her own wish to know her remaining family better.

Not to mention how much happier all three growing-dragons were when they were united.

She became a near-constant companion for Harry, helping him however she could with furnishing and plenishing the castle for occupancy – and took to magical travel with ease and far less whining than the Kingsguard to Harry’s unending amusement.

Food was brought in from Highgarden and the Reach by the wagon full, wines from the Arbor and Dorne and Lys, while Jon and Robb and Aegon accompanied by the Kingsguard visited the nearby villages and town for craftsmen capable of providing the wooden furniture needed crafting from the timber sourced from the North and Far North or for servants to staff the castle, all of whom had to be vetted by Harry before taking up their posts.

Dany enjoyed a visit to Harry’s vault, the two of them ransacking it of nearly all his fine fabrics to stock the castle’s new seamstresses and tailors, who were busy at work preparing the raiment for the “big day” for all the royal family – including the Stark children and Lady Catelyn, the latter of whose presence was required but dreaded nonetheless.

Finally, a week before the wedding with the Storm Land army arriving within a day, bringing with them Princess Sansa and Prince Oberyn as well as other nobles from Dorne and the Storm Lands, Harry sent out the port-key invitations via magic and raven alike, wishing all the while that he could be a fly on the wall of a few places when they arrived.

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A golden goblet – the third that week according to Varys’s running count – crashed against the far wall of the Small Council chamber, accompanied by an ear-piercing shriek.

“What!” Cersei – for who else would it be – screamed at the news provided by for-once-not-Varys but rather her father.

For his part, Lord Tywin simply tapped the heavy – and expensive – invitation that had prefaced the tantrum against the table before him.
“I said.” Tywin arched a warning brow at his trying daughter, mentally thanking the gods that he had the foresight to make sure Joffrey was occupied elsewhere during this particular meeting of the Small Council. “That I – and I would assume other Lords and their families – have been invited to attend the wedding and coronation of the Young Dragon at,” he held in an eye-roll at the pretension of renaming a centuries-old fortress, “Pridefall in six days.”

“You can’t possibly be entertaining that farce, can you Father?” She spluttered, more than a little miffed that no such invitation has been provided for herself or her family. Not that she would deign to attend but it was the principal of the thing.

“My understanding,” Varys spoke up. “Is that many lords and nobles from Westeros and beyond have been given similar invitations by either magic or raven, all promising the safety of guest-right.” He smirked a little at the fuming Queen. “It is said to be the event of the century.”

Above even the marriage of her son, was implied but not stated – he liked his head where it was after all.

“Jon Targaryen is building his kingdom on the back of his honor and sword.” Baelish observed. “He won’t violate guest right nor allow anyone else to do so either. It would be an unforeseen opportunity to treat with the Young Dragon and his advisors as well as get a view of his new stronghold.”

“All of which I have taken into account.” Tywin nodded. “And I will be attending.”

She spluttered once more.

“Then I’m going with you.”

Cersei was not being left out of such a gathering.

“As the Young Dragon as written a writ for your arrest.” Tywin did roll his eyes this time. “You and Joffrey will not be attending, though as no mention of either of you were made in my invitation and none has arrived, most would realize that neither of you have been offered guest right.”

Harry and Prince Lewen popped into being in the Lord Commander’s corridor at Castle Black, the Dornish Kingsguard not even giving a wobble at the method of travel after so many experiences with it – especially lately as he’d been the main guard accompanying Lord Harry and Princess Daenerys all over Westeros and beyond in their – rather frantic – dash to furnish Pridefall and get it, as Lord Harry called it, “company ready” for the wedding in three days.

Princess Sansa and the Dornish guests had arrived along with Lord Stannis and his daughter Lady Shireen as well as other important Storm Lords, escorted by Prince Oberyn’s vanguard the day before, spurring Harry to escort another very important personage to Pridefall, one that without the wedding might not take place.

“Lord Harry.” The Old Bear boomed upon seeing who had knocked. “About time you showed up here boy!”

Harry just laughed as Lord Commander Mormont buffeted his shoulder.

Of all those who had dealings with Harry outside his – and Jon’s – inner circle of most trusted friends and advisors, the Old Bear was perhaps his favorite, and Harry could very well be his in turn.
After all, Harry and Jon together had done more to supply and swell the ranks of the Night’s Watch than any King-and-Hand in decades.

Troops and provisions that were sorely needed, as according to the Old Bear’s reports to Jon, the wildlings were restless, though they had only had limited interactions and sightings of wights since the fight almost a year passed at the Fist.

Both were an issue that would have to be handled, but they couldn’t turn towards the North until the South was put to heel.

Jon could not be caught fighting a war on both sides, and after his experience in the Winter Lands with the White Walkers, he knew what was coming – and was doing everything he could to fight and win the war against the Lannisters as quickly as he could while still maintaining his honor and control of his men.

“Lord Commander.” Harry clasped arms with the Old Bear. “I’m afraid I’m here to make off with your Maester.”

“Aye, I thought it would be that.” Mormont heaved a great sigh. “And if I know that young pup of a Dragon at all, I imagine I might as well piss into the wind as expect him back.”

Harry laughed at that, slapping the Old Bear on the back as he walked with Harry and Lewen towards the Maester’s quarters.

“Probably so.” He had to agree. “Though he won’t leave you without a Maester, I’ve an idea or two to fill the position.”

It wouldn’t be an easy sell, that was certain, but there is no law that stated a Maester serving the Night’s Watch had to take the black, it’s just the way it had always been done. And from what Maester Aemon had written Jon these turns, it seemed young Samwell Tarly was coming on as a future Maester. Sam could likely benefit from training and apprenticing under another Maester as well.

Finding one that they could trust was rather the sticking point.

Harry himself had an idea or two about what to do with the Night’s Watch and the Wall that walked hand-in-hand with the issue of the wights.

Whether it would work or not was the question, and one that would yet have to wait until after the South settled under Jon’s rule.

“What of the war, Harry?” Mormont asked, knowing as well as Harry did that until that cock up of a southron mess was over and done that there was little enough Jon could do to fight the coming war between the living and the dead.

“It continues apace.” Harry told him, not wanting to go into detail. The Black Keep had ears the same as any other fortress. “Lannister is a stubborn old lion, and with the help of the fat flower not as backed into a corner as I’d like.” He shrugged. “It will end – one way or another – in Jon’s favor. The only question now is one of time and scale.”

“Aye, that’s true enough.” Mormont nodded. “We hear things, even as far north as we are. A wedding and a coronation, is it? And that boy of mine welcomed back to Westeros?”

Jeor Mormont had taken the Black in shame for his son’s crimes, turning control of Bear Island over to his sister and the continuance of their line to her daughters – of which Dacey was the finest and
thankfully the Heiress.

The rest took too much from his disagreeable sister for Jeor’s taste.

“As a sworn shield loyal to Princess Daenerys.” Harry allowed. “He’ll never be allowed lands or title, but will serve in her household until his death.”

“That’s alright then.” Mormont grunted, pacified. “Word has it that the Princess’s household followed her into the Red Waste – the hells themselves on land. If he’d do that, then I suppose she’s won his loyalty as none other ever has.”

Then Jeor said no more on the subject, turning instead to an update on the behavior of the Red priests and their great Red priestess, all of whom were mostly behaving themselves though Thoros of Myr still tended to get drunk more often than not.

Jeor left them at the door to the Maester’s quarters, Samwell greeting Harry with his genuine good-nature, and then there was elderly Maester Aemon with several satchels at his feet.

“I won’t take the books – they’re not mine after all.” The blind eldest living Targaryen proved out that he knew his great-great-great-nephew’s mind quite well, ready and packed and knowing that he likely wasn’t to return if his Black Dread had his way. “But the rest are things I’ve collected through my travels and my time here.”

“I’ll send them to your new quarters at Pridefall, Maester Aemon.” Harry told him, humor bright and dancing in his voice. “They’ll arrive safe and sound, I promise.”

“Very good, Lord Harry.” Aemon nodded, listening with a half-smile as the Warrior of Old – as he was named in some texts – did as promised, leaving only Aemon himself to travel with him by his magic ways to Pridefall.

Aemon found himself a bit bemused – and encouraged – by the renaming and remaking of the fortress.

It wasn’t ancient by any means like that of Winterfell or Casterly Rock, but it had a grave history, one that with a bit of luck and his newest nephew’s fierce honor could be fashioned anew as the seat of a second dynasty of their house.

A dynasty so great that it would overshadow by far the one that birthed it – at least that was Aemon’s secret wish that he held close to his heart.

“And now, a word I think to my young apprentice.” Aemon turned to Samwell, having already said his goodbyes to the rest of the men. “If you learn nothing else from me, young Sam, learn this: there is a reason why the men of the Night’s Watch and the Citadel both take vows to take no wives and father no sons.”

“Why, Maester Aemon?” Sam asked, knowing that was what was expected of him.

“Love, Samwell.” Aemon told him, Harry giving a slow nod in agreement, a funny smile upon his face to Sam’s eyes. “So they will not love. For love is the bane of honor, the death of duty. What is honor compared to your lover’s arms, what is duty to the feel of your newborn son in your arms…or the memory of your brother’s smile? Wind and words.” Aemon said with a scoff. “Wind and words. We are only human and the gods fashioned us for love. It is both our great glory and our great tragedy. To live in strict service to the realm, one cannot love for it tests us as nothing else will ever do as both I and our Lord Harry here can attest.”
Samwell frowned curiously at Harry who sighed.

“He’s right – after a fashion.” Harry admitted. “Nothing can lift you higher or dash you down faster than love. It is anathema to a life of strict service. But that doesn’t mean that a Maester or a Brother of the Night’s Watch or a member of the Kingsguard must be without joy or compassion or mercy, Sam. You don’t have to be cold, just careful.”

Prince Lewen shrugged, agreeing.

He, like Aemon, had lived a live of service, studying with the Citadel, then becoming a knight of renown and brother of the Kingsguard.

And never had he been more tested than when word came of the Lannisters’ murder of his niece and her children or when Oberyn gave news of Doran’s treachery.

Love tests you, it was true, in a way nothing else ever could.

“I’m not in love with Gilly, Maester Aemon.” Sam spoke up. “But I felt sympathy for her. That’s why I did what I did.”

“What you’re doing I think you mean.” Maester Aemon corrected him with a harrumph. “Don’t think I don’t know that you’ve found her a place in the town, young Sam. You’ve done what any good man would for her. Now it is time to let her make her own way and see to your duty here. You will be all they have until my nephew sends a replacement for me. Which might be some time with the state of the Citadel and what Lord Harry has uncovered there. You must stand strong in your honor and your duty and guard your heart, young Sam.”

“Yes, Maester Aemon.”

“Good lad.” Aemon turned to where Harry was waiting, knowing where everyone was in the room from their breath or their words. “Now. I think I would like to meet my young niece and speak with my nephew again, if you do not mind, young Harry.”

“Not at all, Maester Aemon.” Harry stepped forward, wrapping one arm around the hundred-year-old man’s back, Lewen echoing the motion on Aemon’s other side as they took a firm and steadying hold on him. Harry wrapped them with his magic, to soften the travel for the elderly Targaryen, and then portkeyed away to what was to be Aemon’s quarters at Pridefall Castle.

…

Harry was less than shocked when mere minutes after arriving and seeing Maester Aemon settled, Daenerys unerringly found her way to his quarters, Jon not far behind her, each with either their sworn shields or their Kingsguard behind them, Aegon bringing up the rear and dragons chirping curiously at the aged blood of the dragon.

A beatific smile unlike any Harry had seen in many years crossed that craggy old face, as the man dubbed as “Uncle Maester” to the Targaryen children long ago found himself swarmed by the last of his blood and the renewed line of dragons.

Sharing an amused glance, Harry left the Targaryens to their reunion, Prince Lewen following after him, only to end up waylaid from a nice long soak in the King’s quarters by the arrival of yet more guests.

Though at least he wasn’t suffering through the formalities alone, Sansa had taken pity on him and was resplendent in the Dornish-fashion gown that showed off her still-flat torso.
The newest Princess of Dorne was six-weeks behind him in her pregnancy, so while Harry was showing at nearing five turns, the redheaded Fire Rose had only the slightest of curves to tell the tale, hidden neatly by only allowing the sides of her stomach to be revealed through the cut-away silks wrapping her chest and falling in lovely folds to the floor from a waist-belt of hammered copper links.

“Who are these ones?” Harry whispered to the glowing Princess – a glow that he would lay odds had as much to do with the warm Dornish sun and Prince Oberyn’s and Ellaria Sands’ attentions as it did her pregnancy, the Princess ensuring that the Prince and his paramours Ellaria and Daemon Sand (no relation) were quartered in the same corridor as Sansa and the soon-to-arrive Starks.

“Lady Allyria Dayne.” Sansa whispered. “Lord Dondarrion’s betrothed and Lord Edric’s elder sister. With her are Lady Delonne Allyrion of Godsgrace, her son and heir Ser Ryon, his wife Ynys Yronwood and their two children: Alec and Delys.”

“Godsgrace?” Harry arched a knowing brow at her sudden blush. “As in the bastard of Godsgrace Ser Daemon Sand?”

“Hush, you.” Sansa pinched Harry’s side. “As if you’re one to speak of another’s lovers.”

“Fair enough.” Harry shrugged. As long as she was discrete, it wasn’t his place to say one way or another what she did in her bed with a farce of a marriage. Jon and Robb, however, would not see it the same way. “Lady Delonne.” He stepped forward with a charming smile. “A pleasure to make your acquaintance…”

…

If the arrivals and errand-running and general madness between renewing Pridefall and the wedding wasn’t enough, the morning of the celebration was a whole new level of chaos.

Harry had charmed all of the invitations; double so for any that needed to also act as port-keys such as for the farther-flung guests of the North and the Reach or beyond the Narrow Sea…or their enemies who could not be allowed to march an army right up to their gatehouse in order to attend the events.

Inviting those such as the Lords of the Lannister-Tyrell alliance and their finest warriors to attend was a risk – some would say.

They clearly underestimated Harry’s abilities if so, as each invitation upon acceptance – which was logged in a linked scroll for Harry and the others to make suitable arrangements according to what was chosen, such as method of arrival and length of stay – set a gaes upon the invitee that spread to any others that attended with them.

Jon and Robb took guest-right very seriously, and so Harry wouldn’t allow any…unfortunate circumstances to mar it.

The gaes combined with the wards Harry had laid down when he wasn’t running around trying to provision and furnish a massive castle – and forcing his loves to help him whether they liked it or not – should prevent anything from happening as well as keep them safe from harm in their own home.

He pitied anyone who tried to lay siege to Pridefall as long as he lived, he truly did with as finely-tuned he managed to get the wards, a situation that could last far after his death if any of his children showed an aptitude for warding.

Some areas of magic might die with him, but it was his hope that with his teaching – lacking though
it was compared to the skills that Professors such as Flitwick and McGonagall or Sprout possessed – others might survive or even be discovered by his children and his children’s children and so on, not to mention how bright the future of magic could be without the Citadel suppressing and stamping out the natural magical abilities of the Westerosi.

The morning of the wedding and coronation found the to-be-wed foursome scattered throughout Pridefall, as well as the closest members of their retinue such as the Princesses Daenerys and Sansa and their friends among the heirs and Lords of the North and the Crownlands each located in a different area of the castle to greet and usher away – quickly – guests into the hands of the new serving staff with even Maester Aemon sitting peacefully in one of the glasshouses with the dragons to guard him as he greeted old friends such as Lady Olenna Tyrell with her stupid son Mace and granddaughter Margery who had all been invited – though with Willas also present, Olenna and Margery were kept busy by keeping Mace from causing a scene before the greatest houses of Westeros as well as dignitaries from across the Narrow Sea.

They weren’t the only family members to have to all-but-sit-on another to keep the peace, as more than one Lord of the Reach or the Westerlands or the Storm Lands had found themselves at odds with their Heirs or sons or cousins as the campaign continued – though none was so vicious and blood-chilling to watch as the frozen regard Lord Tywin Lannister, greeted by Princess Sansa and Prince Oberyn of Dorne, gave Tyrion when the former was brought into one of the waiting-areas set up for arrivals to refresh themselves if they were not to stay the night.

“I see you have done well for yourself, Princess Sansa.” Tyrion noted, ignoring the frozen-rage glare of his father as the lord was escorted away, along with his squire Lancel – who Tyrion was certain had helped Cersei poison Robert…though whether they were still fucking he wasn’t certain – by the young northern Kingsguard who had orders to keep an eye on Tywin at all times whilst he was present in the castle.

Draped with cream and gold silk, with a golden stomacher and a gold circlet in dainty flowers and leaves shining with diamonds and pearls, she was a vision of youthful beauty – and made Tyrion curse himself, just a bit, for being a better man than either he or his father had ever thought of him.

Though if he wasn’t mistaken – and when it came to fucking he rarely was – that glow had little to do with her absent husband and everything to do with her husband’s uncle and Oberyn’s lovers.

Well.

Good for her, then.

Better a life of sensual bliss in Dorne than crushing misery in King’s Landing.

“Lord Harry arranged the match with my cousin’s and brother’s blessing, Lord Tyrion.” Sansa told him with a demure smile, lightly – and significantly – running a hand over her belly. “I am a servant of the crown, much like yourself.”

“How quite, I would think.” Tyrion smirked, saluting her with his goblet and wandering away. He could have sworn he saw a dusky Valyrian beauty chatting with the Celtigar heir not too long ago. Now that was an introduction he wouldn’t say no too.

Sansa gave a low laugh at that, dipping her head to the side and allowing Oberyn to escort her back to their arrival point for the next guests due.

Thankfully, from what Harry had told her, after Lord Tywin there would be only one last set for all of them, then they could rest before moving out to the godswood.
It was nearly time.

Lady Olenna ran a canny eye over the renewed fortress on the shores of the God’s Eye, understanding better than most just how much work had to have gone into the refurbishment alone, let alone the great act of magic that legend was already spinning it into.

Lush fabrics and rich banners dripped down the walls of Pridefall, while fine woodworked tables and chairs filled the Hall of a Hundred Hearths where many of the most notable guests had been directed to gather for refreshments before the ceremonies. Pillows in silk and velvet and rich furs lined the table on the dais and those most important below it. Gold and silver and copper and bronze ornaments from the torchieres to the simplest cups filled the room with a twinkling gleam, outdone only by the rich jewels and silks draping the guests filling the place. It was an ostentatious display – the guests not the hall – and if she wasn’t mistaken it included such luminaries as the Sealord of Braavos and Malaquo Maegyr, one of the Triarchs ruling Volantis.

She had to admit, she quite enjoyed it, and had loved nothing more than infuriating her son as she outfitted her finest rose Margery in embroidered silks and dainty gold, wearing a heavier piece herself in hammered gold and emeralds to match her green and gold gown.

Mace was sulking off towards the wine barrels, in good company with the other out-of-pleasure lords that had sworn to Joffrey over Jon, though the Targaryen scion was showing off his breeding by inviting them all, even stiff-necked Tywin to come and celebrate his marriage and coronation.

Olenna had heard tell that Cersei’s tantrum had been unparalleled, even for the haughty and tempestuous dowager Queen.

“Oh ho.” Olenna hummed under her breath, Margery leaning over in interest. The Queen of Thorns directed her attention with a soft flick of her wine goblet towards the courtyard doors as the guests – more or less – had been arranged as they would be seated or standing in the godswood for the ceremony. Which meant that that highest of the high were nearest the doors.

Including the Starks.

“There, your brother.”

Margery arched an elegant brown brow at the sight of her brother chatting and laughing with his old friend Prince Oberyn – and then saw what her grandmother saw.

“He’s taken with her already.” She sighed, speaking of the “Fire Rose” Sansa Stark who she had yet to meet.

Though seeing her dripping in the finest silks and a graceful circlet, Princess Sansa couldn’t look less like the downtrodden toy of Joffrey’s that the Red Keep gossip had pegged her as.

Sansa Stark then, knew well how to play the games of court.

Interesting.

“He could do quite a bit worse than Sansa Stark, if she ends up a widow by the end of this mess.” Lady Olenna warned her granddaughter as she saw a bit of envy spark in Margery’s eyes. “A Princess is a prize not lightly given away, even a widowed one.”

“Mmm.” Margery and Olenna shared a wicked glance, then stood as a septon opened the doors and
announced the removal to the godswood.

...  

A royal wedding wasn’t a moment for dragonhide or leather, but for the finest spun silks and richest velvets.

To make things doubly interesting, they also had to be prepared for the coronation that came directly afterwards, which included entrusting the four crowns that Harry had taken Jon to his vault to choose to the Kingsguard.

Though, unknown to Jon, Harry had set him up – just a lot – with the crowns, sneaking away at one point while they were still at Casterly Rock to refashion a trio of existing pieces into ones more suited to their wearers.

One however, came with such a heavy history that it was left exactly as perfect as it was.

And with Daenerys being given a silk gown in the Dornish style that Sansa was making the fashion for the Targaryen court, this in red silk with a Valyrian steel stomacher with a House Targaryen cloak over her shoulders, Jon had gifted her with a circlet from Harry’s vault in fine silver and set with a dozen tear-drop rubies from the centerpiece the size of her thumb to the smallest equal to the nail of her smallest finger.

All the royal – or nearly so in the case of the Starks – family wore nothing but the finest silks, from sour-faced Lady Catelyn who was accompanied at all times by a trio of guards who prevented her from speaking with anyone not either her brother Brynden or one of her children in a heavy silken velvet gown in rich sapphire blue in the northern style, similar to her daughter’s wedding raiment; to the boys in varying amounts of black-white-and-grey with Rickon wearing a Stark cloak and Bran the Tully cloak as the new Lord of Riverrun following his grandfather’s passing three turns before; to the resigned Arya in a fine black-and-silver gown that thanks to Daenerys included trousers underneath, hidden by the many pleats of the silver dress and the panel of the heavy black silk embroidered over bodice.

Jewels, from Princess Sansa’s golden circlet to the fine silver and amethyst necklace gifted to Arya by a blushing Lord Edric Dayne, to the encrusted hilts of the daggers the boys wore shone from the new royalty of Westeros.

And none shone so bright nor so fine as the bridegrooms themselves.

Breaking with tradition – as many traditions would have to be to accommodate all of their wishes – the foursome nearly lost their breathes as they met at the end of the godswood to be escorted by their honor-guard of the Kingsguard, Maester Aemon Targaryen and Septon Ray who had accepted a fine linen robe for the occasion alone awaiting them at the heart-tree.

Three of them wore variations of red and black (Jon, Aegon, and Harry) while Robb wore the Stark colors of black-white-silver.

All of them had cloaks thrown over their shoulders, though none of them would be removed or replaced, as none of their Houses were being left for another or taking another’s name.

Robb’s leggings, boots and undercloak were all the richest black, with a white-fox skin from the Winter lands over it all, his tunic of finest white silk embroidered in black and all of it chased with silver edging. A direwolf pin fastened his cloak at his shoulder, and a wolf’s head dagger set with onyx eyes was at his hip. Ice, for once, was not on his back but as with all swords remained in his
rooms.

Only the Kingsguard were fully armed this day.

Lord Commander Dayne and Ser Barristan took point, leading the procession, with the other four Kingsguard surrounding them on the sides and flank – Oswell Whent to Robb’s right, with Prince Lewen to Harry’s left, and the two northmen behind and straddling the difference between Robb-Aegon and Harry-Jon with Mark Ryswell on the Harry/Jon side; all of them in snowy cloaks and their finest silver-and-white dragonscale armor, swords of renown at hip or back, with Prince Lewen wearing a sedate plain silver circlet for the occasion.

Harry’s raiment was nearly Dornish in design, long red tunic edged in black and with little embellishment beyond that of the flashing rubies set in his dagger’s hilt and the various jewels that were all shining and visible on his hands, even the black embroidered sword-and-knot on his cloak was sedate, while his hair was loose for once.

Aegon on the other hand wore silks in heavy black and embellished richly with red and rubies, the rich red silk thread shining as it picked out the three-headed dragon of House Blackfyre in the reverse of the House Targaryen sigil. Though he was a Prince by Jon’s decree, he wore no circlet in preparation for the coronation, and his amethyst ring of betrothal flashed on his hand.

Last of all and flanked by his loves, Jon dripped in silks and velvet, all embroidered in real-silver thread, as the three-headed dragon of House Targaryen roared on his cloak over an undercloak of black and silver like Robb’s own, with a tunic of rich Targaryen red under that. Jon wore only one adornment beyond that of his dagger and ring, a richly carved broad jeweled neckpiece that curved over his shoulders in a model of Drogon before the red dragon grew too large for Jon to carry him.

They were Lords and Kings – and they knew it.

Moreover, with a single glance at them, everyone else knew it too – which was very much the point.

Their people bowed and curtsied – as did their other guests if they had any sense – as they walked with slow precision through the aisle way that the two groups of guests had been formed into, some sitting if they were aged, while the others stood.

As his clever ears picked up the sounds of boots on the autumn flowers and grass carpeting the heart-tree vale, Aemon called out:

“Who comes before the gods?”

Prince Lewen Martell answered, as the closest friend Harry had made since waking outside of his beloveds.

“Harry of House Potter-Black, highborn and noble, a bearer proven true comes here to be wed. Who comes to claim him?”

Maester Aemon spoke for Jon, Lord Jon Connington for Aegon, and lastly Robb’s uncle Brynden spoke as his closest male relative of age.

“Jon of House Targaryen, heir of the Iron Throne and Westeros, who gives him?”

“Aegon of House Blackfyre, Prince of Bloodstone and Lord Paramount of the Stepstones, who gives him?”

“Robb of House Stark, Lord Paramount of the North and Lord of Winterfell, who gives him?”
“Prince Lewen of House Nymeros-Martell, who is his friend and companion.”

Maester Aemon asked: “Harry, do you take these men?”

Harry smiled brilliantly, his eyes shining.

“I take these men.”

This repeated four times in various incarnations, until each was bound to the others – rather boring for the guests but interesting to some nonetheless.

At a motion from Maester Aemon, the Kingsguard stepped back and the four stepped forward, closing ranks and holding each other’s hands, Septon Ray prompting: “Speak your words.”

But rather than given the standard words, in keeping with Harry’s traditions, each gave vows of a different sort with Jon leading the way and accepting the rings pressed into his hand by Ser Arthur.

“I bind thy hands.”

Harry gasped a little, as he recognized the words, words that he didn’t think would have survived so long.

“To clasp in mine own.” Jon swore, placing a ring first on Harry’s hand, then Robb’s, and then Aegon’s in the order of which they stole his heart. “I match thy heartbeat, and mark it in time. I cover thy tender skin, to shelter and shield. I place upon thee my unending claim, Harry of House Potter-Black, Robb of House Stark, and Aegon of House Blackfyre. Thou art mine to have, mine to hold, mine to protect,” he looked at each in turn. “And mine to love. My beloved bonded thou art mine own.”

Whispered crashed across the guests, as many of the Essosi dignitaries beamed and the scholars grinned, all recognizing an ancient Valyrian bonding rite.

However, the surprised were not done yet.

“You are blood of my blood.” Aegon spoke, himself using a newer Valyrian wedding vow that had been popular during the age of Aegon’s Conquest. “And bone of my bone. I give you my body that we will be one.”

Harry was next, taking precedence over Robb by dint of being Lord Paramount over two kingdoms rather than one.

And his kicked up just as much of a raucous as Jon’s, being the ritual – and binding – response.

“I bind thy weapon hand.” He stated, voice ringing and clear with power. “That thee will protect me. I bind thy heartbeat, to which my own beats in time. I encircle thy strength, that it will not fail. I protect thy heart, which is my own truest treasure. I accept thy claim on me, and lay my own on thee. As I am yours, so you are mine, Jon of House Targaryen, Robb of House Stark, and Aegon of House Blackfyre. My beloved bonded, thou art mine.”

Robb took a deep breath as the rising power threatened to undo him, many among the guests feeling faint or dizzy from the power being held back only by Harry’s force of will so that Robb may finish his own words before their own magics bound them together, the binding coming afterwards to appease the Faith of the Seven being a mere symbol of a very-real occurrence.

“I promise.” Robb said in his gruff way. “To share with you the warmth of long days, the bounty of
harvest, the trails of long nights, and the joys of spring, from this day until my last day, I am yours
and you are mine.”

With a crack and a flash that shook the heart-tree, it was sealed, though only they four knew it, as a
warmth – nearly a burn – flashed across their chest over their heart.

Later, when they were alone, they would find that each of them was now marked with the sigils of
their married Houses, but for now it was simply a heat that reminded them of the severity of what
they had done, even as Maester Aemon stepped forward to bind their hands in a rich red ribbon
edged in real gold as Septon Ray finished the ceremony with the Faith of the Seven binding words.

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

Coming to stand at Aemon’s side, Septon Ray took the ribbon and tied it proclaiming: “Let it be
known that Jon of House Targaryen, Aegon of House Blackfyre, Harry of House Potter-Black, and
Robb of House Stark are one heart, one flesh, one soul. Cursed be he who would seek to tear them
asunder.” The septon then announced, “In the sight of the Seven, I hereby seal these two souls,
binding them as one for eternity.” Then he unraveled the symbolic ribbon and the foursome took
turns kissing each other and giving the ritual line: “With this kiss I pledge my love.”

Maester Aemon and Lord Commander Dayne led the guests in a raucous round of applause, as even
stiff-necked Tywin unbent long enough to clap politely at the melding of the Northern/Old God-
Ancient Rite-Faith of the Seven ceremony that had come together quite well and with enough
pageantry to appease the gawkers but enough meaning to placate the romantics and so on.

As the applause and cheers died down, Maester Aemon turned to the left and gave a prompting nod,
as Harry, Aegon, and Robb each stepped back, and Lord Commander Dayne stepped forward the
crown of Aegon the Conqueror in his hands, the Valyrian steel circlet that was an inch wide in the
metal working and two inches wide where set with blood-red square rubies causing another round of
gasping whispers from the crowd as it had been lost over a century before by Daeron the First, elder
brother of none other than Daena the Defiant.


Jon swept aside his cloak, going down onto one knee and bowing his head.

“Do you, Jon Balerion of House Targaryen, swear upon your name and blood that you will defend
and preserve, with all of your power, the independence and territory of Westeros; that you will
protect the freedom and the rights of all citizens and all residents of Her Territories; that you will
maintain and preserve the monarchy of the Targaryen Dynasty; discharge the office of the Crown
and Throne with justice and honor; and will employ for the maintenance and promotion of the
welfare of your people with all the means the gods place at your disposal, as a good and true King
should do?” Aemon asked, holding the formative crown of House Targaryen over his ebony head.

“I, Jon Balerion of House Targaryen, do so swear upon my name and my blood that I will defend
and preserve, with all my power, the independence and territory of Westeros; that I will protect the
freedom and the rights of all citizens and all residents of Her Territories; that I will maintain and
preserve the monarchy of the Targaryen Dynasty; discharge the office of the Crown and Throne with
justice and honor; and will employ for the maintenance and promotion of the welfare of my people
with all the means the gods place at my disposal, as a good and true King should do.” Jon swore.
“So mote it be.”

At his oath, more than one fractious lord had a considering look upon their face, as never before had
such a complete and complex oath been given by any King of Westeros in all its history.

“Then, by the power vested in me by my charge as Aemon Targaryen, third son of King Maekar the First, I crown you Jon of House Targaryen, First of Your Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of Westeros and the Narrow Sea, Protector of the Realm, Lord of the Eyrie and Lord Protector of the Vale.” To saying, Aemon lowered Aegon’s crown onto that dark-haired head, setting it firmly.

And then Jon rose, Lord Commander Dayne leading the call.

“All Hail King Jon of House Targaryen, First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of Westeros and the Narrow Sea, Protector of the Realm, Lord of the Eyrie and Lord Protector of the Vale.”

“Hail!” Cried that company, with only those who either were not of Westeros or otherwise did not recognize his dominion staying silent.

The announcement that accompanied orders (and means) for a feast went out via Harry’s port-keys to every city and village and castle in the realm, including King’s Landing, and read thusly:

All Hail King Jon of House Targaryen, First of His Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of Westeros and the Narrow Sea, Protector of the Realm, Lord of the Eyrie and Lord Protector of the Vale.

Crowned this the twenty-first day of the twelfth moon of the year two hundred and ninety-eight after Aegon’s Conquering by the hand of Aemon Targaryen, Grand Maester of the Citadel in service to King Jon I Targaryen, at the castle of Pridefall on the shores of the God’s Eye, the newly restored fortress formerly known as Harrenhal, the new seat of the Targaryen Dynasty.

And then as each of Jon’s consorts stepped forward and were crowned according to the order of Jon’s vows, each with a circlet matching Jon’s crown in design but not in color, the announcement read thus:

All Hail Consort-King Harry of Houses Potter and Black, First of His Name, Lord of Winter and the Seastone Chair, Lord Paramount of the Winter Lands and of the Iron Islands, Lord Reaper of Pyke, the Warrior-Who-Waits, and Hand of King Jon Targaryen, the first of his name.

Crowned this the twenty-first day of the twelfth moon of the year two hundred and ninety-eight after Aegon’s Conquering by the hand of King Jon I Targaryen, at the castle of...

Jon pressed a crown in bright white-gold to Harry’s ebony head, equal in size to Jon’s own crown, and set with emeralds as Ser Arthur called out Harry’s titles and now-official position of Hand of the King, Jon fastening a white-gold pin of a fist inside a circle over Harry’s right pectoral opposite his house crest.

All Hail Consort-King Robb of House Stark, First of his Name, Lord of Winterfell, Lord Paramount of the North, the Young Wolf, and Master of Armies.

Crowned this the twenty-first day of the twelfth moon of the year two hundred and ninety-eight after Aegon’s Conquering by the hand of King Jon I Targaryen, at the castle of...

Those in the crowd both friend and foe took note as Jon both filled his bed and his small council table with the crowning of his consorts, Robb’s crown being fashioned again of white-gold but set with sapphires to match his eyes, and his pin of office being of two crossed sword encircled.
All Hail Consort-King Aegon of House Blackfyre, Second of his Name, Prince of Bloodstone, Lord Paramount of the Stepstones, Commander of the Golden Company…

Aegon’s crown was different than the others, being fashioned of Valryian steel the same as Jon’s but set with amethysts to match his eyes as Harry’s and Robb’s were likewise, and in the process matching their betrothal rings from Aegon.

Then as Aegon rose, the four stood shoulder to shoulder in an echo of their earlier procession through the godswood, and Ser Arthur prompted the crowd for one last resounding cheer before the newlyweds led the way, the Kingsguard and then their family and then the guests following after them in order to the wedding feast awaiting them in the hall of the Hundred Hearthys.

…

Wine and ale poured heavy and free, the servers bringing out platters of the freshest fruits dusted with sugar and honey, vegetables lightly roasted, and tray after tray of fine white bread. Steers and swine roasted whole and stuffed with apples or autumn squash ran along the tables as the candlelight danced, and braces of poultry of all kinds – some adorned with their tail feathers – were brought from the kitchens.

It was a feast of feasts, but it might as well be a common dinner for all the attention the bridegrooms at first paid, as those near them at the high table such as the Princesses Daenerys and Sansa – both toasted by the men and Lords present for their beauty and grace – watched indulgently.

For the most part, as a few high lords and ladies, such as Catelyn Tully who was placed as the furthest end of the high table from King Jon as possible, or Lord Tywin Lannister who had been “honored” with a seat at the closest table not containing foreign dignitaries but his soon-to-be good family the Tyrells, minus Willas who was among his own company, could not find it within themselves to break their stoic faces for the sake of the celebration.

Though it was noted that Tywin at least appreciated the quality of the wine on offer.

But for a feast the contained many souls who had been at war at one point or another, no blood was shed, though whether that was due to Harry’s spellwork or the cautioning presence of a trio of dragons (who were now the size of a pony in the case of Drogon and large dogs for Rhaegal and Viserion) and a pack of direwolves that stood nearly as tall as a man at the shoulder it was hard to say.

Ghost and Grey Wind however, as well as the rest of the living pack Summer, Nymeria, and Shaggy Dog, were nearly full-grown, while the dragons had another year at least before they were fledged and ready for a rider.

The Kingsguard and Daenerys’s sworn shield Ser Jorah stood at the ready behind their charges at the high table, which included all of the Stark children and their betrothed, absent only Sansa’s husband.

Though seeing the beauty of Princess Daenerys, murmurs were already running through the gathered company – Westerosi and foreigners alike – over whether King Jon would be open to receiving offers for her hand.

Lady Catelyn sat to the far-right of the dais, with Stannis on her right between herself and his daughter who was betrothed to Rickon who sat to the right of Shireen, closer to the center – and the royals – as viewed from the rest of the feast. Lord Stannis’s wife was ill and unable to attend, while Stannis himself was a Targaryen at least partly in blood from his mother. Lord Edric Dayne sat between Rickon and Arya, who was on Robb’s left side, with Aegon to his right. Then came Harry
with Jon on his right, then Daenerys beside him as the Princess of Dragonstone. Oberyn was seated (as the next highest-ranking noble and Sansa’s good-uncle) between the two Princesses, with Aemon beside Sansa as he no longer claimed the title of Prince but was still of the Targaryen line. Bran was having his ears filled with tales of knights and kings and raiders, placed as he was between Jon’s uncle Aemon – who was also very interested in hearing of Bran’s recovery – and his uncle Brynden the Blackfish…who though he wouldn’t admit it was quite glad to be seated on the opposite end of the high table from his sullen sister.

Brandon “Bran” Stark it was noted by all those present, was the only Stark child – and the new Lord of Riverrun at that – who as yet was neither betrothed or a widow as the Princess Daenerys was known to be.

And so schemes were born anew over these two seemingly-available options to ally-by-marriage to the Targaryens, though as Bran was only eleven and Daenerys a woman-grown and widow of sixteen, she was the more valid option for a marriage as Bran would not be considered a man-grown and able to marry for five more years like all boys of the known world, barring strange political situations.

The dragon or direwolf (or both in the case of Jon) each arrayed themselves politely (though with a good bit of bargaining on Harry’s part with Shaggy Dog as he was the most unruly of the pack) for the feast, though once the dancing began the dragons gave raucous cries and flew up to watch from the high rafters over the halls while the direwolves ventured into the shadows to either sleep off the handouts from their people (or others like Shireen who were fascinated by them) or make mischief, with only Ghost and Grey Wind remaining to stretch and sit at the feet of the new King and his Consorts while the others, not as used to the court, escaped.

Aemon Costayne, one of the most famous singers of the times, prompted the hired musicians to strike up a note that quieted the crowd as the tables were cleared away and pushed against the walls allowing for dancing.

“My lords, my ladies.” He nodded to the crowd. “And your Graces!”

The crowd – particularly the Northerners and the Dornish who knew how to party unlike the somewhat snobbish southron lords and ladies – roared, the Northmen banging their goblets against the tables and stamping their feet on the floor.

Costayne smiled and waved his hands, the crowd once more quieting for the famous singer.

“A song, your Graces, written for this day!”

Taking up his harp, Costayne walked through the crowd to the high table, pacing back and forth as he sang and winked – innocently enough – at the Princesses.

“He rode through the streets of the city
Down from his hill on high
O'er the winds and the steppes and the cobble
He rode to a mountain side
Inside laid his secret treasure
He was his sword and his bliss
And a name and a keep are nothing
Compared to a lover's kiss.”

Harry and Jon exchanged a lover’s glance, Jon leaning over and giving the kiss that the song demanded of him as Costayne sang on, telling their tale, the crowd singing along with the refrain
which was a jab – however clever – at Tywin Lannister and perhaps even his daughter Cersei.

“For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.

For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.”

A barb that hit home it seemed, as Tywin scowled and drank deep of his wine, holding his goblet out imperiously for Lancel to replenish it of the rich Dornish red he’d been drinking all evening.

“And there he stood with sword in hand
The Last of Harry’s kin.
And red the snow beneath his feet
and red his banner’s bright
And red the glow of the setting sun that bathe him in its light
Come one come on the great lord called my sword is hungry still
And with the cry of savage rage they swarmed across the rill
And with the cry of savage rage they swarmed across the rill.”

Harry laughed a little at being made immortal in this fashion as Costayne sang of that first battle, the one that resolved him to staying with Jon come the hells – or White Walkers.

But Costayne wasn’t finished yet.

“He rode through the streets of the city
Down from his hill on high
O’er the winds and the marsh and the waters
He rode to a riverside.
There fought a lord like no other
He was his sword and his bliss
And a name and a keep are nothing
Compared to a lover’s kiss.”

Leaning over, Harry teased Robb as the next chorus took aim at the Northern lord’s induction to their bond, the auburn-haired man’s face turning bright red as Jon laughed and Aegon buried his head in his hands, already awaiting what would come next as the company sang along without Costayne’s prompting to the refrain.

“For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.

For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.”

With a teasing glance Costayne stopped before the Lord of the North and sang his verse to go with the lead-in of the chorus.

“And there he stood with sword in hand
The Last of the Northern men.
And red the grass beneath his feet
and red Jon’s banner’s bright
And red the glow of the setting sun that bathe him in its light.
Come one come on the Kingslayer called my sword is hungry still
And with the cry of mighty rage the lords swarmed across the field
And with the cry of mighty rage the lords swarmed across the field.”
“For hands of gold are always cold but a lover’s hands are warm.

For hands of gold are always cold but a lover’s hands are warm.”

A low growl rumbled in Tywin’s throat at the reminder of how Robb Stark and Harry Potter-Black defeated his golden son Jaime, while Costayne smirked over at him the little polyp.

Thankfully, if he knew the tale well enough, he only had one more verse and chorus of this humiliation to live through.

“He rode through the streets of the city
Down from his hill on high
O’er the winds and the hills and the rivers
He rode to an oceanside.
There fought a Prince like no other
He was his sword and his bliss
And a name and a keep are nothing
Compared to a lover’s kiss.”

“For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.

For hands of gold are always cold, but a lover’s hands are warm.”

Catcalls sounded from the Golden Company present at they came to the chorus leading into Aegon’s verse of the song, his lovers teasing him with kisses as he hid his flaming face in his hands.

“And there he stood with sword in hand
The Last of the Blackfyre kin.
And red the sands beneath his feet
And red his sigil’s bright
And red the glow of the setting sun that bathe him in its light.
Come one come on the Blackfyre called my sword is hungry still
And with the cry of a lion’s rage they swarmed from the gates
And with the cry of a lion’s rage they swarmed from the gates.”

Costayne had done his research, highlighting some of the most significant battles of the campaign thus far as well as narrating the setting for each of Jon’s lovers to join his company.

It was quite well done, which even Tywin could admit to – not that he would as the song was every inch the embarrassment to his House and standing.

All joined in, save for the fuming Tywin, for the last refrain.

“For hands of gold are always cold but a lover’s hands are warm.

For hands of gold are always cold but a lover’s hands are warm.”

…

Under the cover of song and dance, the real work of a court feast was done as alliances were posed and lovers courted, and enemies fingered their daggers from across the hall, however before Tywin could pull any good men into his pit, he and the others like him who were present merely out of courtesy despite being enemies of the Throne, were escorted away for their port-keys to activate as Harry did en-mass once all of those “guests” were present and accounted for.
Overt enemies dispatched for the evening, Jon and Robb swooped their new husbands out onto the
dancefloor for a lively Northern jig, allowing themselves to turn off their hypervigilance – at least
somewhat – under the laughing eyes of both court and dignitaries while Sansa and Daenerys took
turns keeping a watchful eye on the court while their cousins/brother enjoyed themselves and reveled
in their bonding.

Though that didn’t stop their friends from deciding after a rowdy (and bawdy) song to toss the
foursome up onto their shoulders and haul them away to the King’s bedchamber, a makeshift
“bedding” ceremony, though none dared to try and strip them lest they lose a finger – or more – to
either the lords and king in question or their ever-present familiars.

As the Kingsguard shooed out the louts, and the party continued apace with the Princesses presiding
over it, the foursome caught their breath – for a moment at least.

After all, it was their wedding night.

And no marriage in the known world was legal without consummation.

...

This was not a night filled with giggles and tussling and light-hearts.

No, it was a night of heavy moans, fierce biting kisses, and finger-bruises on lithe hips.

That wasn’t to say that Harry’s loves weren’t hurt him or took him without care for the children he
carried.

But they didn’t treat either him or each other as untried maids either.

That first coupling, after the Kingsguard had retired to their posts – save for Ser Barristan who
remained in the hall to keep a wary eye watching over the Princess Daenerys and the Stark children
– and the direwolves had bedded down, Drogon and Rhaegal remaining with Viserion for the night;
was a tangle of hastily-shucked silks, tossed off jewels and crowns, and impatient hands.

Harry found himself snatched up by Robb and Aegon by Jon, each tossed onto the piled-high
bedding in their chamber and finding a heavy form pressing them down into the mattress with a
heated kiss before being flipped onto hands and knees facing one another.

A synchronized move that had both bearers grinning wickedly at each other, knowing that Jon and
Robb had to have planned it – and likely diced or games for whom took whom.

The horny prats.

Still, thanks to the contraceptive anklet Harry had made Aegon after finding the spellwork plans in
one of the books in his vault, and a pair of prepping spells that he’d cast as their friends had borne
them into their chambers, each was more than ready as their loves clasped their hands around their
waists and thrust, insistently into their waiting heats.

Green eyes closed on a gasp and purple on a moan as their lovers slammed home in a single hard
thrust, then Harry – being Harry – darted forward before Robb could stop him and stole Aegon’s
mouth with a hot, wet kiss as Robb reset himself between his thighs, Jon staring with burning eyes
down at the kissing pair that entangled their hands as they made love to each other as they were
made love to in turn.

Hot blue eyes and burning silver-flecked purple alternated between watching each other and
watching their loves, as hips hammered home with an unabating and punishing pace.

This first one would be fast, and hard, and leave them panting.

And that was just fine.

After all, they had their entire lives to make each other beg and whimper and moan, let alone the rest of the night.

This was just the beginning of the next stage of their bonding.

And by all the gods old and new, they would make it a beginning to remember.

.. The next morning came the wedding breakfast following a modified tradition for Westeros and a sometimes followed one for Harry’s wizarding kind, as the newlyweds opened any presents that were given them and supped with their guests before those who had traveled and were not staying as part of the army or court departed.

More than one face hid a laughing smile at the sight of four weary but sated – if not outright smug – faces at the head table that morning as they thanked all for their gifts, and later bid goodbye to those who were leaving that day.

Others, such as most of the Dornish, were staying longer or had joined court or the Targaryen army officially and were remaining.

A number which included both of Catelyn Tully’s daughters, though the woman herself had been sent back to Winterfell along with her guards at the end of the previous night.

Princess Sansa and Lady Arya however, were to stay for another week before returning to either Starfall or the Water Gardens.

Arya had been quickly introduced during the pre-wedding gathering to her betrothed Edric’s elder sister, Lady Allyria who was in turn betrothed to his good friend and companion Lord Beric Dondarrion. The two had been matched when Allyria was just a young girl, however from all accounts it was very much a love-match nonetheless. Most interesting to Arya, was the Lady Allyria was skilled with both the bow and daggers.

They had much to talk about, not the least of which was putting a flame-red blush to Edric’s face before the lord in questions hared off to find company that wouldn’t embarrass the pants off of him, falling in quickly with his friend Beric and a small group including Crispan Celtigar who they’d gotten to know on the journey to Casterly Rock, as Beric took on all comers at cyvasse, the new game of strategy that had become all the craze in Targaryen-controlled Westeros thanks to King-Consort Aegon who had learned the game in Essos and brought it with him, as well as traders from Volantis bringing it to Dorne at around the same time.

Though, Edric rather thought that Cris would have fared much better against their mutual friend if he had paid more attention to the board and less to the whispering pair of Princesses at the high table, as the Fire Rose and the Mother of Dragons engaged in what seemed to be a lively debate with Lord Tyron who eventually threw his hands into the air, quaffed the last of his wine, and made his way over to the cyvasse table instead, Beric finally getting a fierce challenger as the Princesses laughed at his exasperation.

Sansa and Daenerys had become fast-friends, something neither had ever had before, bonding over
their experiences of women fighting to keep their heads above water in the game of thrones only to
find themselves gaining a power from within them to rival that placed upon their names by a world
ruled by men but run by women.

That each enjoyed twitting Tyrion – or debating him depending on how sober he was at any given
moment – was simply a bonus.

“So, Ser Crispan, heir of House Celtigar.” Tyrion started in within minutes of taking over the
cyvasse board from the bedazzled knight and close friend of the king. “Is it redheads or blondes that
you fancy?”

Cris groaned out a laughing curse, then refilled his glass.

If he was going to be teased over being distracted by a pair of the most beautiful women in the realm,
he certainly wasn’t going to do it sober.

“As if you can talk, Tyrion.” Beric ribbed him good-naturedly, having gone drinking with the dwarf
and his good friend Thorsos on more than one occasion and found him to be good company with a
sharp wit. “I saw you eyeing up our healer Talisa. No making off with the Volantene noblewoman,
Imp. We need her in the healing tents.”

“That was her father, wasn’t it?” Tyrion asked, speaking of the triarch of Volantis who had barely
exchanged two words with his headstrong daughter. “Malaquo Maegyr?”

“Quite the story, that.” Cris said off-hand. Of them all, he knew the exotic noblewoman the best,
having been under her care for several weeks thanks to the injury that nearly cost him his life – but
saved that of King-Consort Harry and the heirs he carried. “And yes.”

Tyrion arched a brow as he used his dragon to knock out one of Beric’s catapults.

“Don’t leave us teased and unsatisfied.” He scolded the descendant of Old Valyria. “Come, share
the tale.”

“Yes, do.” The others encouraged, scenting out – like Tyrion – a good story.

And what better way to while away a morning than with a game, good company, fine wine, and an
interesting tale?

“That was her father, aye.” Cris began. Talisa at least hadn’t told him the story in confidence, and
he knew it was one his Kings had heard in the past, so felt no hesitation in sharing it. “The Maegyrs
are old nobility, reaching back to the blood of Old Valyria. Several of them have married into our
own claim to the blood of the dragons.” Including Houses Targaryen, Velaryon, and Celtigar.

“Volantis is a slave-holding city-state, the oldest – or so they say – of the nine Free Cities with ties to
before the Doom. Raised a noblewoman, she never thought anything of it – it was just the way
things were. Then, one day as she was walking along the water with a friend and her younger
brother, she lost sight of him. Only to rush to the water at his cry and find him face-down.
Drowning. She rushed to his side but before she could do aught, a slave with the fish tattooed onto
his hand – a fisherman slave – pushed her aside. She could have called the guards, and it would
have meant his life for laying hands on a noblechild. But something held her back. The slave pulled
her brother to shore and laid him flat, then started pressing and pushing on his chest.”

“The slave saved his life.” Tyrion noted, eyes deep in thought.

“Yes, he did.” Cris nodded. “And had Talisa complained, the slave would have died for it. So she
decided – as she said – then and there to become more than another noblewoman playing noble
games and that she would never live – once she came of age – in a land whose laws allowed
slavery.”

“So she became a healer.” Edric mused. “And came to Westeros.”

“Yes.” Cris nodded again. “She was working in the healing halls at Faircastle before it was taken
by the Ironborn. Once the war came to the Westerlands she went into the fields after battle and
began healing where King-Consort Harry scooped her up for his healing tents.”

“A noblewoman who disdains the game of thrones.” Tyrion chuckled to himself. “How very
extraordinary.”

Jon called for attention.

“It pleases my heart to announce.” He stood, lifting his glass in preparation for a toast, the court
echoing his actions. “That my dear cousin Princess Sansa has been confirmed to be with child, the
Heir of Sunspear!”

A roar sounded from the Dornish contingent as Sansa blushed becomingly, the roses of her cheeks
ever deepening as toasts were made to her blush and her health, her unborn child and her hair, and so
on for many long minutes.

It was, Tyrion rather thought, a fitting cap to the celebrations, though if he knew anything of his
friend or Jon’s new consorts, that wasn’t likely to be the last of them before the final guests departed
a week hence.

One thing had become certain to Tyrion since the day his friend announced his contention for the
Iron Throne – they lived in interesting times.

Well.

At least he wouldn’t be bored and the wine was most excellent at the royal table.

...

Tyrion was more right than he knew, though Jon – mostly from wanting to spend more time hiding
away with his loves while it was both encouraged and expected – waited to spring the rest of the
celebrations upon his court and most loyal retainers until the next morning at the first Court as the
crowned King of Westeros.

Jon sat flanked in state by his consorts, with the Kingsguard arrayed to his back and the sides of the
dais, while the massive hall that could sit an army upon its smooth slate floors filled with nobles and
knights and ladies of houses both great and small from all corners of the realm – even one or two that
were present despite being nominally still allied with the Lannisters.

It was a wedding after all, there wasn’t much that could be said of their presence beyond their
enjoyment of the spectacle whatever their aims in remaining after Lord Tywin departed.

“A king cannot stand alone.” Jon stated once the last guests had arrived and paid their courtesies to
their graces. “A wise king does not try. Today marks the formation of Our Small Council. As your
name is called, come forward and be recognized.”

Harry, as both Hand of the King and Jon’s first consort, stepped down with Lord Commander
Dayne at his side – another member of Jon’s small council – who held the pins of office in his large
hands, all fashioned similarly to that of Harry and Robb, with the symbol of their seat encircled and
Jon had taken it in his mind to add a few additions to the traditional seven seats – both as a step away from Andal tradition and the Faith of the Seven, and to make room for most if not all of the regions of Westeros to be heard in Council. If Harry knew his love’s decision – as in, it hadn’t changed since last they spoke of it the day before – then the only region not specifically raised to the council would be the Vale of Arryn, however as Jon had inherited the Vale Lordship through his bearer Benjen, that wasn’t likely to cause an issue with his Vale Lords. Harry didn’t think any of the chosen lords would refuse, nor did anyone else consulted such as Ser Arthur and Ser Barristan or the new Grand Maester to the Targaryen Court, Jon’s uncle Aemon.

Still, stranger things had happened.

“To the office of Master of Laws.” Jon began with carrying through on the alliance with the Storm Lord. “We appoint Lord Stannis Baratheon of Storm’s End.”

Pleased with being recognized, though his face didn’t show it, Stannis rose leaving Shireen in the care of the Stark children who they had been arranged near, and strode forward, Harry placing the pin of scales and sword on his plain black tunic.

Stannis bowed to his King, and returned to his daughter’s side, though for all the notice she gave, he might as well not have bothered, Shireen well-taken with the youngest Stark boy’s direwolf – and to a lesser extent the boy himself as her betrothed though they would not wed for at least another six or seven years at the soonest.

“To the office of Master of Ships, We appoint Lord Admiral Monford Velaryon of Driftmark.”

This was no surprise to, well, anyone as the Velaryons were one of the families most closely united to House Targaryen, being of the blood of Old Valyria, and while Jon was friendly with the new Lord, his father Luceron having died during a skirmish with Victarion Greyjoy before his execution, the new Targaryen King was a bit young to be fast-friends with Monford who already had a five-year-old son. Monford’s bastard brother Aurane Waters was one of the Targaryen loyalists who had met Jon at Winterfell following his announced claim, and had given good and steady service there under first Jon’s close companion the Celtigar Heir and then later the Massey Heir before being entrusted with a force of his own to hold Greywater Watch as Lord Howland Reed was needed southron. Rumor whispered that Aurane was certain to be legitimized and knighted for his service, perhaps even given one of the heiresses of the taken lands from those loyal to either the Lannisters or the late Renly Baratheon as both acknowledgement of Aurane’s own service as well as that of House Velaryon in whole.

Lord Monford smiled brightly as Harry pinned the encircled ship to his sea-green tunic, his heir and son Monterys playing with it as they watched the rest of the Small Council be formed.

Rising to the Small Council was both an honor saved for the most trusted advisors of the King, but also a solemn charge – one that had been often forgotten in resent years under Robert Baratheon and Joffrey Waters, though Aerys the Mad had hardly set a good example for them to follow, enraptured with his boot-licking lackeys as he was in his last years.

“‘To the office of Master of Coin,’ Jon braced himself a bit. Showing friendship and trust was one thing. Inviting him into his Council was another. But, other than Lord Stannis, no other member of his Small Council had the experience of serving on one before. Even if it was on the Small Council of a Usurper. “We name Lord Tyrion of House Lannister.”

Tyrion rocked back on his heels as his eyebrows arched high, handing off his goblet to his squire.
Pod.

If only his friend Bronn was there to watch this cock-up of a back-handed compliment.

He wagered that once the news reached Dragonstone where Bronn was holding the fort along with Maester Pylos he would be able to hear the former sell-sword cackle from here.

Harry pivoted so that Tyrion could ascend a few steps, putting them on more even footing and not forcing the five-turns pregnant consort and Hand of the King to kneel at the feet of a dwarf to pin the silver encircled scale to his barrel chest, a boon of Harry’s condition that allowed Tyrion to soothe his own pride over even the slightly built Harry standing far above him.

Not that it truly mattered to him, he was what he was, but he’d rather not listen to any ill-mannered tittering from the more uncouth members of the gaping mob in the Hall.

“To the office of Master of Whispers.” The King continued. “We name Prince Oberyn Nymeros-Martell of Sunspear.”

The Dornish roared at the honor to their home land, in distinct contrast to the nearly-silent applause that Tyrion’s appointment had garnered from the gathered Court, as not only were the Westerlands not overly fond of Tyrion – anymore than his lord father was – but they were also sharply outnumbered in comparison to the other regions of Westeros in Jon Targaryen’s Court.

Battles were yet to be found, and already the kingdom that had prided itself on being the richest and most powerful in all the land was discovering just how fleeting that power can be.

Most of the Court began to shift restlessly when King Jon continued to stand and wait as Harry pinned the simple silver circle with a strike-through onto Prince Oberyn’s chest, startling when the King announced another name – and a new office to go with it.

“To the office of Master of Trade, we name Lord Willas Tyrell of Highgarden.”

The pin of clasped hands encircled was placed on the broad chest of Willas Tyrell, Lord by dint of his position on the Small Council, and the rebellious Heir of Lord Mace Tyrell who had thrown in his lot with Tywin, a mistake that his son had thereafter spent turn after turn trying to rectify, to some success if his newest appointment was any measure.

“And last but not least.” Jon announced, pleased with the turn of phrase taught to him by Harry. “To the office of Master of Harvests, we name Lord Tytos Blackwood of Raventree Hall.”

Lord Blackwood was not only a longtime friend and ally of the Starks, but his seat of Raventree Hall also was located in the Riverlands, rounding out Jon’s Small Council to stand by his side and give their best counsel while he ruled the twelve regions of Westeros.

…

The very first Small Council meeting of King Jon Targaryen took place the next morning after the new advisors had supped and celebrated their fill – though even Jon would admit that Tyrion was unlikely to ever find his fill, hedonist that his new Master of Coin was.

Not that Jon was much better in most minds, with his trio of consorts and a lust for life in all its wonder that he shared with them.

Aegon was present both as an advisor as one of the King-Consorts and a Lord Paramount but also as one of the joint-commanders of the Golden Company.
First upon the list was advising the newest members of his “black-list” as Harry called it, the full listing of every House whether greater or lesser noble or landed knights, who had sworn to the Lannister cause.

Not included on this list were houses of the Westerlands, as Tywin was as yet considered their Lord Paramount and so Jon did not wish to punish them for their loyalty – though if they took up arms against his army and died that was another matter. As it was, many houses in the Westerlands were set to be stripped from their former lords, or if only living in the female line were to be married into houses loyal to the Targaryens, Starks, Harry or Stannis Baratheon. Though of all the names on the “black-list” those that infuriated Jon the most – and would be penalized most heavily – were those of the Crownlands, though few in number in comparison to that of other regions.

Crownland nobility was for all intents and purposes the blood of Old Valyria or the most loyal to the Throne.

For them to serve Tywin and Joffrey was an insult Jon would not let stand.

Harry easily copied the list and handed it out to the new members of the Small Council, each man reading it quickly and at least familiar with what it might say.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lannister Loyalists or Allies by Kingdom:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Crownlands:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>House Blount</td>
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<td>House Byrch</td>
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<td>House Kettleblack</td>
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<td>House Stokeworth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Riverlands:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Walder Frey and some members of his House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dorne:**

Prince Doran Nymeros-Martell

**Storm Lands:**

Lord Ronell Connington

House Cole
Neither the Vale, the Iron Islands, or the North had any houses of note – still in existence anyway – that had sworn to Joffrey, they being the first to be weeded out such as the ilk of Roose Bolton, Balon Greyjoy, and Walder Frey.

“Though most of the Westerland Lords and Heirs serve under Tywin,” Robb explained to the others. “The only two names of note as not serving their Lord Paramount whether from their Westerland seats or within his army are Sandor Clegane who is leading the Brothers Without Banners against the depravities of the Lannister army, and Lord Drust Tarbeck, the last Tarbeck of Tarbeck Hall.”

Aegon chuckled. “I should say so, since Drust has been with the Golden Company nearly all his life after being smuggled away from Tywin’s destruction of his house.”

“It’s not a full accounting.” Harry admitted. “But it’s an important one to be familiar with, especially for you Lord Tytos.”

“And why would that be, your Grace?” Tytos Blackwood, Lord of Raventree Hall asked with an arched brow. A strong ally of the Starks, his appointment to the Small Council had pleased the River Lords and the Northmen alike.

“Because.” Jon picked up the thread of the conversation. “I mean to settle Hayford on my cousin Ser Harrold Hardyng. He has distinguished himself during battles against the Lannister front along with the rest of the Vale Lords, but is without lands of his own in the Vale despite being my nominal heir to the Eyrie.”

Tytos frowned, still not seeing what that had to do with him.

“Harry the Heir is everything a noble-born maiden could want.” Harry the Black explained with a slight smirk. “He’s handsome, charming, and in desperate need of a good wife before he scatters the Vale with children named Stone.”

“You mean to wed him to my Bethany.” Tytos said as understanding broke over him. It would be an honor for House Blackwood for the Lord to wed his only daughter to the cousin of the King. Especially a cousin that came with the prosperous fields of Hayford. But…his daughter was his treasure and Harrold a rakehell. His appointment to the Small Council was a sweetener to the bargain, unless he missed his mark, though not the only intention.

If he knew anything of Jon Stark-Targaryen, it was that the cunning and bold King did little with only one motive behind it.

Still and all, their graces would be having their own heirs – displacing the Hardyng knight.

Settling him in the Crownlands with a keep and a wife was a sound strategy for keep him from kicking up a fuss among the Vale Lords – and moreover it was one Tytos could appreciate.
“It would be an honor for House Blackwood to merge with a relation to the throne, your Grace.” Tytos gave in with a good-natured sigh at the royal quartet. It was implied, but not stated, that they would be discussing the matter in further – much further, if Tytos had his way – depth after the meeting of the Small Council.

Letting that be that – for the moment – Jon moved on.

“House Targaryen will be keeping several important holdings to begin cadet branches.” He explained to his advisors. “Especially in lands that need oversight for fear of another Robert’s Rebellion or Balon’s Folly taking hold. Others still will be given over to warriors and Lords who have distinguished themselves in Our service along with other rewards. Still others will find themselves facing arranged marriages to hopefully leaven any further unrest.”

“I do hope you’re not speaking of myself.” Tyrion drawled, arching a sandy brow. “Since I rather doubt Casterly Rock as being one of the holdings you will readily let loose of, grasping dragon that you are Jon.”

Jon and his loves laughed, Maester Aemon out-right guffawing with a strength that made a mockery of his advanced age, even as Tytos, Willas, and Monford stared at him aghast.

Tyrion simply smirked at them, having known Jon for a pair of years at this point and firm in his knowledge of both the Targaryen’s temper and pointed sense of humor.

This dragon, at least, knew how to laugh at himself, even if most though him a stern and serious man outside of his private moments among his friends or lovers.

“No, my friend.” Jon reassured him after wiping away a tear of mirth. “I’ve no intentions to saddle you with the likes of either a child-bride or a fussy weeping widow. Those “honors” will mostly be visited upon Houses that have shown me good faith deserving of recognition and seeding a cadet branch but not one that will be likewise awarded holdings outright or a connection to the royal family.”

A royal family which now included the Starks.

The Small Council absorbed that, allowing that it was a sound strategy for a sticky subject – few men ever believed that they’d been honored enough after all, especially Lords of great houses – before moving on.

"Stokeworth will be Dany’s for her dower lands once it’s taken.” Harry continued briskly. “As Dragonstone will revert to our son.” He rested one hand on his burgeoning bulk, wincing a bit at a particularly athletic kick from one twin or the other.

Death take him, but pregnancy left much to be desired, even if the result was wonderous and the magic boost during the far-too-short second phase excellent.

He didn’t think his bladder would ever recover at this rate.

Let alone his waist line.

Tyrion took mental note of that, as holdings and lands held by royal connections always ended up being taxed differently – if at all – than other holdings.

He only hoped that Jon didn’t – as Tyrion thought he wouldn’t – turn spiteful as Robert had, over-taxing Targaryen supporters all across the realm upon his ascension to the throne.
And look at how well *that* had turned out.

Robert barely cold in his tomb and the loyalists once more rising up, surprise surprise.

“As far as the war.”

Ears pricked up all around the table, as other than being prepared for battle and fortifying the troops, resuppling, and so on, not much real *action* had taken place beyond small scrimmages since the taking of the Rock.

Everyone was ready for the final *push* now that their King was readily crowned, wedded, bedded, and expecting an heir.

Moreover, with winter coming closer, they needed the armies disbanded – for the most part – so that the harvests and autumn provisioning could continue.

Too many lives would be lost if all of it was left to the young, old, infirm, and their wives and sisters to complete before winter came.

None would say that their families weren’t *capable* of carrying on without them – but no man worthy of the name wanted to chance it either, for their own peace of mind if naught else.

“Maester Aemon has consulted with Archmaester Marwyn.” Robb’s eyes flickered with interest at Harry’s information. “And it seems that either I or the dragons are having a greater impact than first thought.” The green-eyed wizard smiled a bit ruefully. “And in a way that I didn’t even think to expect.”

“Well, don’t leave us in suspense, love.” Aegon snorted. “Out with it, you mystery-loving tease.”

“The seasons have turned.” Aemon said portentously in his voice that was still rich and resounding despite the age that had crept into it. “This Autumn was said to be short and the coming Winter long. Now…the stars and readings have changed. Maester Marwyn expects that another three years at the shortest for the Autumn to last, and a short one or two year winter to follow, not the remaining year and eight or ten previously thought by the Citadel.”

Oberyn whistled under his breath.

Dorne was hit much less expensively in terms of lives lost and damage by long winters than the rest of Westeros, much like the Reach, but they still felt the pinch even as far south as the Water Gardens.

That, was most excellent news indeed as far as the campaign…not to mention dealing with whatever-the-fuck had put the fear of wights into his new King while adventuring into the Winter Lands to wake Harry.

Both king and his consort swore to the existence of the White Walkers, with the Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch and a score of his men backing them up.

Such veracity was hard to doubt.

But still…

*Wights? White walkers?*

It was hard to believe to say the least.

And yet, all accounts supported their truthfulness in this matter.
At least the lengthened Autumn should help – in theory – by giving them time to plan a real offensive against something that isn’t even alive.

“The harvests and plantings of the Reach bear that out.” Willas nodded, speaking up for the first time. “Our Autumn flowers are yet blooming strongly and our best farmers haven’t yet switched to hardening winter seed for planting. There is more than enough time to bring the wars to a halt before settling in for the winter storms and snows.”

“Harry.” Jon asked, not fully knowing the answer himself. “How much longer can you keep the hostages contained?”

This was news to even Aegon, let alone the others of the council.

What had become of the hostages taken on the field of battle by the Targaryen army was a closely-held secret that Aegon wasn’t sure even Robb let alone himself knew the full answer to.

Though after a moment’s reflection, all agreed that they should have at least considered that Harry was involved in their containment before now.

Little else made solid sense given both the Lord Potter-Black’s and Jon’s own stances on prisoner exchange and ransom.

“Indefinitely.” He shrugged. “The key is making sure I don’t perish before they’re either freed or sentenced. Otherwise.” Harry shook his ebony head with a smug little grin and devilment in his eyes.

Tyrion chuckled wryly, remembering the tantrum Cersei had thrown and the stifling-rage his father had lapsed into once word of Harry’s saying so before – only in that instance of Jaime’s life depending on the survival of the then threesome – reached King’s Landing via a “little bird.”

It had been glorious.

Not to say that Tyrion wasn’t worried for the neck of his only brother.

Not at all.

Jaime had been good to him, never shunned him or treated him poorly when they were children.

And Tyrion failed to believe that killing the Mad King was a deed worth his life – indeed rather the opposite that he should be lauded for an act that saved half a million people.

Yet, still, he knew that for his rampage through the Riverlands if nothing else, his brother would have to answer to the King’s justice.

He simply hoped that Jon’s justice didn’t swing too heavily in favor of the lives Jaime had cost versus the many he’d saved when that day came.

“For now,” Jon sighed a bit even as Harry nudged his shoulder, Stannis ignoring all of the byplay as he’d done from the start. “We must face the reality that we have taken control of Westeros save for a fraction controlled by Lord Lannister and his bastard grandson. While a protracted siege of King’s Landing is not preferable, it may have become inevitable.”

“What of taking it from within, as has been done successfully time and again during this campaign?” Stannis posed the question.
“King’s Landing was built with runes suppressing magic of all kinds and blood magic powered by dark magic sacrifices.” Harry grimaced, shifting a bit again, even as Aegon reached down and rubbed his lower back, helping to lessen the tension. Less than two turns to go – more or less depending on how long the twins waited to demand their release into the world – and he was certainly starting to feel the drain and pressure of carrying a pair of rambunctious boys. “I cannot assist with it the way I did Casterly Rock or the Golden Tooth. Moreover, there is more at stake.” He rolled his shoulders as Aegon dug in, continuing with his massage as the lords of the Small Council politely ignored it. “Half a million lives are nothing to chance with. That said…” He turned to Tyrion. “Are there any remaining wildfire caches that your father or Cersei might get their hands on?”

Harry – or anyone else for that matter – wouldn’t put Cersei above holding the city hostage if given the means.

Whether Tywin would allow it was the real question.

“As you know, Harry.” Tyrion stated, eyes darting around the Small Council. “I only knew of the caches because of my brother Jaime. It was his doing that prevented the city from being destroyed by wildfire in the past and by his tales that I knew to search for it. I did everything I could to search them all out and use them during the Battle of the Blackwater.”

Tyrion rigorously avoided Stannis’s hard gaze at the last, though it was tempered somewhat by surprise.

The story of just why Jaime had killed Aerys Targaryen had never been made fully public, indeed Tyrion might be one of the only men in Westeros alive who knew the story.

And not one of the lords of the Small Council failed to put the pieces together of what Tyrion did and did not say before the Mad King’s grandson – his liege lord and King.

“Then unless Cersei makes friends with the Alchemists’ Guild,” Robb noted, fingers rattling on the table before him. “Which is unlikely as Jon stands a better chance of elevating them once more than a Lannister dynasty with strong reasons to maintain the status quo, that is one less contingency we need – actively, at least – worry about.”

…

The days stretched out as they prepared for the turn of the year which heralded both the end of Harry’s pregnancy (he was estimating the twins’ birth sometime in the first turn or two of 299 AC) and with it the beginning of the last surge of the War of Reclaiming as it had begun to be called among both the smallfolk and the nobility of the land, a title which Maester Aemon was responsible for coining in his correspondence with the various Maesters around Westeros who were among the twenty or so percent that had had no part of the Citadel’s vendetta and scourging of magic.

Another event was highly awaited, though only – for the most part – among the Stark clan: the birth of Nymeria’s pups.

Several turns before, Ghost – if Jon’s wolf-dreams were correct – had mated with his sister-wolf when she came into season as Grey Wind likewise mated several of the shewolves in the female Direwolf’s pack.

While concerned about the close bloodlines – especially once Harry enlightened them that while some of the dangers of incest and inbreeding could be moderated by magic, not all of them could be…and especially not with recurring close-breeding – the Stark siblings and their Targaryen cousin
were still eagerly awaiting Nymeria’s whelping.

To that end, while Arya and Sansa were set to travel to Dorne a week after the wedding, they stayed close, Arya not wanting to leave her companion during her travail, and Sansa proving herself very much an asset with her close knowledge of King’s Landing’s court politics, a feat of information passed much quicker with her in residence rather than through her linked journal.

Bran and Rickon on the other hand were returned to the watchful sides of Maester Luwin and the sheltering walls of Winterfell, taking their familiars with them.

After all, a Stark must always remain in Winterfell.

And no, Catelyn Tully did not count, as in disgrace as she was.

A disgrace that was made very clear in the marriage contract for Rickon and the ceding of Riverrun to Bran, for while Rickon’s children will take the name of their Baratheon mother, the Tullys will exist no more in name once Catelyn and her uncle die, with instead a cadet branch of the Stark family being planted in Riverrun in their stead through Bran’s inheritance.

Hoster Tully may have signed the documents making Bran his successor, however he failed in insisting on the name change that Stannis had been far too wise to overlook.

Though with Harry set to provide the next generation of Winterfell Starks, and Bran not quite of age to be thinking of such things as marriages and babes – outside of being contracted for – it was a little matter in the end to Robb though a major concession to Stannis.

A short two weeks after the Targaryen wedding of power to power, another wedding took place in Westeros…though one, indeed, without the same joyous end.

…

Once again meeting in Small Council – though waiting for the arrival of Sansa and Dany who had been summoned upon the receipt of the message Harry was tapping idly upon the table – the King and King-Consorts of Westeros listened, half-bored and half-amused to the constant bickering that had sprung up as had become habit during any lulls between either Oberyn and Tyrion, though at least the former had relented on the death threats given that Tyrion had been far too young to have played even the slightest part in the death of his sister Elia, or – to even more amusement – old rivals Monford and Stannis.

Monford, apparently, had long been one of Stannis’s largest thorns-in-side during his tenure as Lord of Dragonstone, second only to the Celtigars.

Some Targaryen loyalists Stannis had maintained a close watch on, while others he didn’t even bother so long as they didn’t start raising arms against his loutish brother.

The most loyal of those always being of the blood of Old Valyria such as Houses Velaryon, Celtigar, and Massey, Stannis washing his hands of them long before they failed to answer his call to arms at Dragonstone.

So long as they didn’t rise up in open rebellion, Stannis had better uses of his time then bagging his head against that Valyrian steel wall.

Stannis hadn’t found being Lord of Dragonstone overly onerous, as he had more than a share of the blood of Old Valyria in his veins from his Targaryen mother, as shown by the genial relationship he shared with some of the Crownland houses.
Others, however, had never forgotten nor forgiven what his brother had done to their Silver Prince, and took their vendetta out any way they could against the Baratheon name.

Monford Velaryon was one of those last, and never failed to pass up a chance to needle Stannis, albeit with more good-nature now than when they served – if in secret on Monford’s end – different kings.

Stannis’s return to the Targaryen fold had done him more good than he would ever know, as more than one Crownlands lord or knight would have happily slit the throats of every last soul bearing the Baratheon name.

Sansa swept into the chamber, resplendent with her mother’s glow and finery, this day in a rich blue gown in the Dornish fashion embroidered in real silver thread, her first “gift” from Oberyn – her silver and sapphire circlet – upon her brow as Jon and his husbands were scolded – read: forced – into wearing their own crowns as “signs of office” by Lord Commander Dayne the first day after their wedding when they attempted to leave their rooms without the Valyrian steel and gem-encrusted headwear behind.

Save for heading into a battle, it simply wasn’t worth the fight with Ser Arthur over what was “proper” for a crowned king and his king-consorts to avoid the things…though at least Harry had spelled them for comfort and lightness lest they chafe and weigh their wearers down.

On Sansa’s luminous heels came the now-famous beauty of the Princess of Dragonstone, Daenerys accompanied as always by Viserion and wearing a more “casual” Dornish-style gown that had been a gift from Sansa on their meeting in a glowing white that brought out her violet eyes and gold-tinged skin, her own more “casual” amethyst circlet in place upon her brow.

At their entrance, all the men of the Small Council stood, each Princess giving the Kings a correct curtsy and the lords brief nods of their heads as the Oberyn escorted Sansa to a chair at his side and Aegon did the same for Dany, Viserion perching upon the back while his brothers slept in the rafters above them.

Harry nodded at Tyrion to present the issue at hand – and the reason why they were summoned.

Odd, to some, however as the Master of Coin knew both Princesses better collectively – save for the Kings themselves – than any other lord of the small council, it made sound logistical sense as neither Jon or his three husbands wanted the proposition to be an order from their kings.

It was up to them to agree or not, a situation that might not occur to either headstrong Princess if it came from the “crown” as it were.

“Ladies.” Tyrion folded his hands on the table before him, even as he appreciated – as a true connoisseur – the differing beauties of Daenerys Stormborn and the Fire Rose. And to think, he was almost the husband of such a beauty…if his father had gotten his way, though he rather doubted it would have ended well for himself. “Today the official invitation arrived from Lady Olenna Tyrell for a representative of the crown to attend her granddaughter Margery’s marriage to my rather petulant nephew.”

Sansa’s mouth twitched just a bit in amusement, even as Daenerys arched a likewise amused brow at that description of the oncoming alliance-via-desperation between Mace Tyrell and Tywin Lannister.

“This creates a bit of a conundrum for the crown as, without the assurances King-Consort Harry was able to bestow on our enemies, we have no certain assurance of the safety of said representative other than that of Lady Olenna’s word, and both Lord Tywin’s adherence to guest right as well as his
ability to keep a leash on my bitch of a sister and her arse-pimple of a son.”

At the last, both ladies laughed under their breath even as a scandalized Stannis and Tytos Blackwood stared at Tyrion in askance at his loose tongue before the Princesses.

Nevermind that both ladies had used much stronger language in their lives then calling Joffrey a mere arse-pimple.

Sansa herself had a rather storied and well-used collection of epithets specifically tailored for her former fiancé.

“It can’t, as a matter of course, be any of the kings.” Oberyn took over as Tyrion sniped a bit under his breath with stick-up-his-arse Stannis over his language. “But it does provide us a very real – and valuable – chance to see for certain which lords still clung to the Lannister cause despite the defection of over half the Reach army at Willas’s command.”

“Not to mention.” Harry spoke up despite Jon’s frown at his break from the ranks. “Both of you have reason to… revel in watching the Lannister court unravel a bit at a time…and to shove your own prosperity and strength in the Lannisters’ collective faces.” He smirked at Tyrion. “Present company excepted of course.”

Tyrion waved it off with the goblet he’d reclaimed after sniping Stannis to a draw.

“It could be dangerous.” Robb added with a sigh and a shrug at an exasperated Jon. “However, we think that with a combination of hand-picked guards and Harry’s magic, you would be made as safe as possible.”

“Who would be the guards?” Daenerys asked after a short wordless exchange of glances with Sansa who had become one of her friends – and growing ever closer as time passed – and a confidant that understood the pressure of a Princess better than any of her handmaids or Dothraki ever could.

“Given Ser Jorah’s devotion, he would be an obvious selection for yourself, Princess.” Tyrion declared with a wrinkle of his nose for the slavishly adoring knight of the Princess’s personal guard. “And Prince Oberyn another, however, it would be unwise to send so many royal representatives. Both for the message it could send to the noble houses great and small as well as the temptation it could present.” He gave the ladies a roguish wink. “A pair of glorious Princesses will be temptation enough to the Red Keep court I should think.”

“Ser Mark, then.” Sansa decided on the spot, turning towards the knight of the Kingsguard. “You’re a member of the Kingsguard – but not one that has ever served another king besides Jon. Moreover, you’re a man of the North and a man my father trusted implicitly. If you will agree, I will trust you to watch over us in the lion’s den, Ser Mark.”

The burly knight bowed low at the honor her words bestowed upon him.

“It would be my honor, Princess.”

…

“Are we doing the right thing?” Jon asked out into the open chamber.

They – the foursome and the Kingsguard – had retired for the night after another meal in the Hall of Hearths, filled with the political maneuvering that Harry and Tyrion both seemed to thrive on. Aegon enjoyed it himself – but to a lesser extent – while Jon and Robb tolerated it as a necessity. Sansa and Dany were much the same way, the former glowing with life and verve in the midst of
Court, Oberyn hovering over his pregnant good-niece as she charmed all that came into her path while Daenerys watched from above it all at the high table, Viserion either perched on her chair or flying over their heads with his brother the Mother of Dragons observing all with a cool mien of borderline amusement mixed with her characteristic aloofness.

The two Princesses made an interesting and intriguing contrast – to those who weren’t aware of the nature of the women they watched, and the very real danger they could pose to their enemies – and an even more effective team.

Friends, yes, but comrades more than that, both having survived pestilent young men who sought to prey upon them, only to rise higher than seemed possible while being ground and shaped and refined by their trials and hardships.

Loss, Harry thought, could be as binding in its way as love.

A rose and a diamond, going off to spy and bait the lions in their dens.

Forfend the lions try and take a nibble from them, even less a bite, lest they discover that the rose had thorns of solid steel and the diamond had edges that didn’t just cut but killed.

“What?” Robb frowned from the floor where he was wrestling – distracting – Grey Wind. It wasn’t only the humans who were anxious with all the upcoming offspring after all. If Harry’s spells were accurate – read: if nothing went wrong or the pups didn’t end up being impatient – Grey Wind and Ghost were both due to be proud papas soon, Ghost to a handful of direwolf pups by Nymeria and Grey Wind to over a dozen from the shewolves of their new mixed pack.

Ghost was seen less and less often in the royal chambers as he spent more time hunting and protecting Nymeria as her time came closer, the fierce Direwolf bitch preferring her den in the dark comfortable closet in Arya’s rooms than the more open plains and fields closest to Pridefall and the Gods’ Eye.

Harry could empathize.

As he himself was on the cusp of truly transitioning from his second to third trimester, his anticipated labor marching ever closer and his unborn sons letting him know – often by playing football with his bladder and other organs – that they were close to ready to greet the world, with all the lethargy, inconsistent magic, and hot flashes that came with it.

Thankfully, Westeros was yet brimming with untapped – if still rather suppressed – magical potential that Harry wasn’t nearly as run-down from carrying twins, on his first pregnancy no less, as he would have been had such a thing occurred in Wizarding Great Britain during what he was now thinking of as his first life.

“You mean sending Daenerys and Sansa to the arse-pimple’s wedding?” Robb continued with a smirk, loving that description of Tyrion just as much as his husbands, Sansa, and Daenerys – and likely the other lords of the Small Council as well if a few (Stannis, cough, cough) would admit it.

It had certainly made Maester Aemon give more than one chuckle when he’d heard of it later, the eldest Targaryen being otherwise occupied at the time with trying to sort out Harry’s pilfered records and documents from the Citadel and King’s Landing.

Jon gave a slow nod as he scratched at the scales just behind Drogon’s emerging foremost spiked horns, Rhaegal lying between his larger brother and the fire, waiting for his human to finish playing with his mate and come give him scratches. They were the first sign that any of the three dragons
were transitioning from fledglings to grown dragons, a period not unlike the mid-teenage years for a human. They weren’t adults – not yet – but soon enough will have grown to the point that keeping them inside their bed chambers wasn’t an option. A solution – that had been quickly shot-down by all the Targaryens as well as Harry – posed by Stannis of building a new dragonhold such as King’s Landing once possessed wasn’t a real solution.

They would be trapped there, all it would take was a few idiots – or zealots – with wildfire and the dragons would once more be no more.

No, Jon wouldn’t even consider such a thing, as he – much like his uncle-Maester Aemon and his father before him – believed that being shut up, trapped, kept from the skies had been as much a cause of the decline of the dragons as the Maester’s plot had been, if the two things were indeed unconnected…which Harry wasn’t so sure of.

Pridefall, however, was of such massive size that a dragonhold wasn’t needed in the least, much like Dragonstone for all its comparatively small size.

After Harry had renewed the fortress, and it had been renamed as well, Jon and his loves had set about (with help from Ser Oswell who knew the former layout as well as any living man) designating and allotting rooms and buildings and towers to their new purposes.

Most of all, they had renamed the largest and tallest tower, which when Harren the Black built the fortress was made the lord’s chambers and that of his closest relatives and then renamed Kingspyre after Aegon the Conqueror and Balerion the Black Dread roasted said lord and family alive within it, as the Dragon Spire. Magic had been bent to the purpose by Harry – with support from the ever coming-on magic users in his lovers and the Kingsguard – and instead of a grand and much oversized king’s chambers the highest point of Pridefall was turned into the new roosts and nests and home of the dragons for when they grew too large to wander most of the halls of Pridefall.

The Hall of Hearths and the courtyards would all likely be able to hold the dragons for some time, but eventually, barring death of the winged creatures, they would need other accommodations reinforced by magic and runes to withstand their sheer weight.

Balerion the Black Dread, after all, was said to have weighed at least several tons if not more before his death, his skeleton still so heavy that it had nearly been impossible to remove his skull from the throne room of the Red Keep when Robert Baratheon usurped the throne from the main Targaryen line.

“They’re strong, Jon.” Robb told him, Harry and Aegon very noticeably staying out of the discussion…mostly because they were spending some, as Harry put it, quality bonding time in the bathing chamber. Bonding time that due to the distinct lack of any sounds mere minutes after the gauze curtain swished closed behind them had turned amorous once both were stripped and wet. Pregnancy made Harry tired and prickly, but it had yet to kill his libido simply forcing them into a bit of exploration. “Lived through things that none of us – save maybe Harry - could imagine. Your aunt lost her childhood to a usurper, her brother to his own madness and avarice, and her husband and first child to a vindictive godswife.” He listed off tragedy after tragedy. “And it only made her fiercer in her protection of her khalasaar and her dragon-children. As for Sansa…” He arched a brow at his love. “We both know the sharp side of both her temper and her tongue after growing up alongside her. My mother might have had her convinced to play the pretty southron lady, but she’s just as much a shewolf as Arya. She, above all, deserves the chance to prove to that pretty would-be princeling that he didn’t break her. That he could never have broken her no matter what his twisted little mind conjured up to torment her with.”

Jon, for all that he agreed with every point Robb made, couldn’t help but worry and brood.
Strength aside, they were still sending two very important – and loved – members of both their family and the Royal Family into almost certain danger.

Harry and Aegon, both wrapped in thick toweling clothes, returned to the “main” portion of their shared chambers, Harry snorting and rolling his eyes at the angst-ridden look on his beloved’s face.

Aegon for his part didn’t have much of a reaction at all, still flushed from both the bath and playing with his mate, as he settled down beside Rhaegal to give his familiar the attention he both deserved and demanded as his due, Harry moving to Robb and joining him as he now laid on the floor nestled into Grey Wind, both direwolf and man curving around him in a soft-hard circle of protection. With the fire high, Harry needed no more than a simple cloth to stay warm with his current constant-heated state. Aegon was simply being a true Targaryen, heat never bothering him in the slightest any more than it did Daenerys or Jon, though in his advanced years Aemon had less resistance than he once did.

“Are you still brooding over this Waters bastard?” Harry griped. It wasn’t as if the issue was a new one, it had only shifted focus with the Princesses taking on a more visible role than either had played before.

And no, Sansa being a spy/hostage did not count to Harry’s mind, as by its very nature that was covert operations, the same with her farce of a marriage to Quentyn Martell to secure the Dornish alliance through a blood bond.

This was different, a show before all of Westeros – indeed all the Known World – that House Targaryen did not fear the wrath of the Lannisters, to the point of sending their two highest valued women, as most of the male-driven societies of the world would see them, into the veritable lion’s den.

Harry would sooner call it a spider’s web, given that he actually liked lions and had never gotten over “meeting” Aragog and his children at twelve.

A species that he was ecstatic as thus far he’d heard no tales of existing in this era of the world.

“Jon. Love.” Harry said with the tone of a tested-lover at the end of his patience. “Sansa and Daenerys are not typical women. Neither would be content with a life filled with managing a manor or needlework anymore than they would we with letting the “menfolk” fight this war alone. They can’t join us on the battle field against swords and armor-plate, “at least not until Viserion is large enough for Dany to ride… “But they can fight a war just as important on your behalf: one of status. Let them. Now.” Harry changed the subject to one certain to distract the king-of-brooding. “I’ve had only one of my husbands today. A situation at must needs be corrected before I begin to feel neglected and waste away…”

Robb laughed at that as Harry arranged himself – as much as possible given the twins – in a come-hither manner.

Somehow, however, was just as seductive with him gravid as it had been with his lither frame and cobblestone stomach.

And if Jon’s eyes that flashed dark purple as Harry idly flung away his somewhat concealing toweling cloth and the choked-off groan from Aegon were any sign, they found their little love just as tempting swollen with child as Robb did.

…
Queen – soon to be Dowager Queen thanks to her father’s scheming heart – Cersei Lannister stared out with a distinct mixture of smugness and fury at the gathered company, come this first day of the first turn of 299 AC to celebrate her son, King Joffrey’s wedding to the Tyrell chit.

As was the Reach custom that had infected much of southron Westeros, they were gathered first – and at this ungodly hour of the morning – for the wedding breakfast where guests presented the bride and groom with gifts in celebration of their nuptials.

Which accounted for the smugness, watching those that called her golden son a bastard and worse in whispers bowing and scraping and opening their purse strings for a gift worthy of a King.

The fury was also a direct result of this tradition, as it gave her, sitting as she was at her father’s left as he sat on the left hand of the King, a most excellent view of the rather sparse gathering of nobles and the wealthiest – or best connected – merchants and social climbers who had been invited to pump up the numbers a bit.

Even their most noble house, House Lannister, was in short attendance, given that bastard Snow boy’s rampage through the south of Westeros.

Indeed, other than herself, her children and her father, only her cousin Lancel and her father’s uncle and his wife were present, the former due to being attached to her father’s army rather than her Jaime’s, and the latter pair having been present in Kings Landing as a Lannister presence among her unlamented late-husband’s reign.

Another thing that caught Cersei’s eye and took a bit of shine off the moment was the keen light in Olenna Tyrell’s eye.

What did that dried up old Queen of Thorns have to be happy about, other than her grasping granddaughter landing Cersei’s Joffrey?

Her grandsons, after all, were all traitors, rounding up that ridiculous “Heirs Army” and stealing away with half of her son Mace’s banners and men, all save the joke of a knight Ser Horas Redwynne who was being held as surety against her nephew Lord Paxter…for all the good it did with the Dornish fleet taking the Arbor with nary a fight.

One would think that Olenna would be a bit more concerned as she stood to lose most of her family when this infernal war was over, Joffrey would never – nor would Cersei allow – Willas and Garlan to go free after standing in open rebellion against both their father and lord and the Iron Throne.

Then, as the trickle of gift-givers drew to a close, the majordomo announced two last arrivals – the most important of the lot as tradition required the best to come last – and Cersei called for her best wine.

“Presenting Princess Sansa Stark Nymeros-Martell of Sunspear, the Fire Rose! Presenting Princess Daenerys Targaryen, Princess of Dragonstone, the Stormborn, the Unburnt, khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, and Mother of Dragons! With their escorts: Ser Jorah Mormont of the Dragonstone Guard and Ser Mark Ryswell of the Targaryen Kingsguard.”

Her good-aunt Ella summed it up nicely Cersei thought as she watched her elder son’s face turn an – even she had to admit – unattractive shade of enraged puce, with a good “Well, fuck me twice and thrice on the Smith’s day, that Jon Targaryen has balls.”

…

The two Princesses walked in equal step, resplendent in their gowns and jewels, though each with
Sansa’s style – if complementary to her companion – is her own unique. She owned the appellation of the “Fire Rose” in her new want, owning a figure-hugging Lysene gauze gown with cascading layers in a gold-woven cream with the orange and sunburst yellow of House Nymeros-Martell alternating layers with the golden-cream. Edged in real cloth-of-gold and thread-of-gold with sunfire diamonds to match her golden tiara, and set with the same in the sunburst sigil of House Nymeros-Martell, she didn’t just walk across the marble floors of the reception room hosting the wedding breakfast, but glided with an unchained sensuality that her turn-plus of being lover to both Oberyn and his paramours Ellaria and Damon had unlocked within her. Her blue eyes shone like jewels themselves in her stunning face, and the necklace – replacing for the moment one gifted to her many turns ago by Harry – with interchanging suns and direwolves in gold, citrine, and sunfire diamonds in their starburst coloring of mixed yellow, gold, and red, did as much justice to her beauty as she did to it. For this occasion – and perhaps going forward – her protective spells and “port-key” had been set into the garter on her thigh…a garter which held one of two Valryian steel daggers, both tipped in poison most lethal according to Harry who had given her the weapons and spelled them to stay on her body unless she chose to unsheathe them.

And watching as her former-fiancé turned near-purple and Cersei a jealous green, she had never been happier to have stepped in to assist her cousin’s crown.

Daenerys was equally gorgeous, only her raiment was less overtly sexual – though more revealing – than Sansa’s. Rich Volantene brocade barely covered her shoulders and breasts, cut away from her sides and dipping low over her décolletage and belly before falling in an elegant line to her sandaled feet. The colors of her house were in full effect as the gown began in blood-red at her dainty toes and melted into darkest black at the thin shoulder straps, her beauty and station demanding no more adornment than a simple silver torc in the shape of her Viserion around her neck with blood-red diamonds for eyes, a torc that matched her own tiara wrought in the three-headed dragon sigil of House Targaryen in purest silver set with the same rich-red diamonds as her torc and the dragon-fashioned arm cuff around her biceps, while also hidden on her thighs beneath her gown were a pair of daggers to match her kinswoman by marriage. She was cool elegance and radiant confidence to Sansa’s sensual grace.

Exactly as planned.

Where in another instance Viserion might be flying at her side, King’s Landing was no place for the bewinged type of dragon and had had to remain – despite his very vocal protests – with his brothers at Pridefall.

Pacing at their backs, with one hand at all times on their swords and the crests of House Targaryen adorning their armor were Ser Jorah in his red-and-black dragonscale armor and Ser Mark in the gleaming white of the Kingsguard, each a wordless threat against violence towards their charges.

Though to some courtiers’ surprise, Ser Mark paced behind the Princess Sansa rather than the Dragonstone Princess, a deviation from expectation easily waved off at a glimpse of the crest of the Princess Daenerys’s personal guard upon his cloak.

A page clipped along with them, carrying the gift from the Targaryen royals upon the occasion of Lady Margery’s wedding…a fact that neither princess could wait to make clear.

They were, after all, more there due to Jon’s alliance with Willas than out of any sense of doing the “done” thing by repaying Tywin’s appearance at Jon’s wedding with theirs to Joffrey’s.

Seeing that her soon-to-be husband was insensate with rage – and canny enough to know that no
good would come of him finding his tongue anywhen soon – Margery welcomed their most illustrious guests, even as she took in their combined beauty and attire with the eye of a woman who had long been considered one of – if not the – greatest beauties in the land. She wasn’t outshone, her grandmother Olenna had made certain her cream-and-berries complexion shone to advantage against her white silk gown with its green and gold embroidery of House Tyrell, and her father’s conceit had seen her adorned with gold and emerald bracelets and necklace to match the coloring of her new good-family. But still, they were women of such beauty that few could compare.

Thankfully for Margery’s ego, she was one of the few who could, helped by that her own beauty was of yet a different sort than that of the infamous Fire Rose and the Stormborn Princess of Dragonstone.

“You honor us with your presence,” Margery said with a dip of her lush brown-haired head.

“Lady Margery.” Daenerys dipped her head in turn, Sansa echoing the movement at her side. Sansa didn’t need to say a word during this scene, her mere presence was more than statement enough. Daenerys waved to the page to present the gift, specifying to the bride not the groom or the couple. “A gift from Houses Targaryen, Stark, and Nymeros-Martell on the occasion of the marriage of the only daughter of House Tyrell.”

The casket containing the gift was enough to outshine all others presented, no matter how grand, with its rich gold engravings, let alone what it contained.

Opening the chest, Lady Margery let out a little gasp, her grandmother – Mace being displaced by a single tap of his lady-mother’s cane – and groom both leaning forward to see what had stunned her so.

And it was stunning.

Moreover, it was decidedly both appropriate and vastly inappropriate all at the same time.

Laying cushioned by lush Braavosi velvet, was a finely wrought Valyrian steel lady’s dagger – the sort that might, perchance, be strapped to a thigh beneath a gown – the traditional gift to a Dornish noblewoman upon her flowering for protection against overly ardent suitors or vagabonds.

It was both a complement to Lady Margery – both that they thought her worthy of Valyrian steel rather than castle-forged steel and that they thought she would know how to use it (though it wasn’t much of a guess with Willas telling them that he’d taught her himself – and an insult to Joffrey.

An implication that not only might Lady Margery need protection in the future…but that she might need it from him.

Engraved with the roses of Highgarden and set with a single rich emerald in the pommel, the dagger was a work of art, just like the lady that was its new owner.

Before Joffrey could leap to his feet in a tantrum, as he was clearly on the cusp of doing, Cersei came to an elegant – if fast – stand, calling for the High Septon to be readied and for the gathering to move to the Sept of Baelor.

It was time for the wedding to begin, even as her new good-daughter discretely strapped the gift from royalty to her left thigh with the help of her grandmother and the shielding of the some of the remaining Tyrell men-at-arms.

…
The marriage itself went without a hitch after the near-disaster of the wedding breakfast, a trend that was sure to falter with the infusion of rich wines and richer food at the wedding feast to follow.

Daenerys found that she could hardly wait, having enjoyed the wedding of her nephew and his lovers much more than the stiff and droning ceremony performed by the Faith’s fat High Septon.

Though the music could be better, the minstrel singing was no match for the Costayne man at Jon’s wedding.

And the song could have been in better taste as well, though it had from her understanding become something of an anthem for House Lannister.

Taking a dainty sip of her Arbor gold – smuggled in no doubt or from the rich storehouses of the Red Keep, like the rest of the vulgarly excessive feast in the wake of the starving smallfolk that her ships were helping supply daily – Daenerys noted that at least she wasn’t the only one taken aback by the choice of music, as more than one lord and lady sworn to House Tyrell shifted uncomfortably in their seats.

Remembering, no doubt, that many of their sons and much of their men were in open rebellion against Joffrey and therefore against Tywin Lannister.

“One night, I hold on you
Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, you
Castamere, Castamere, Castamere, Castamere

A coat of gold, a coat of red
A lion still has claws
And mine are long and sharp, my Lord
As long and sharp as yours

And so he spoke, and so he spoke
That Lord of Castamere
And now the rains weep o'er his halls
With no one there to hear

Yes, now the rains weep o'er his halls
And not a soul to hear
Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh.”

...

Hissing an aside despite the becoming smile upon her face, Cersei leaned over to her father.

“Did you really feel the need to warn the Tyrells, or at least Lord Mace, father?” Cersei asked, more than a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

“I didn’t order it.” Tywin admitted with an inscrutable look on his craggy face as the minstrel – poor and gloomy he had to say for a wedding – came to a close.

Joffrey scoffed at the minstrel, jeering him and tossing at coin purse at him in dismissal at the butchering of one of his favorite songs, not seeing – or simply not caring – as his mother and grandfather winced in unison at the boorish behavior.

...
That wasn’t the end of the groom’s boorish behavior, as after several goblets of wine, the buffoon could no longer hold his tongue as he watched his former playtoy laughing and charming all the guests around her as the Targaryen bitch sat in icy elegance, the guests – male and female alike – drinking in her regal air and classic Valyrian beauty.

So, as a few of the Lannister loyalists called for a toast before the bedding, Joffrey rose to his feet – a bit unsteadily, having to catch himself with a hand on the table – and obliged as a page refilled his Dornish red – sour to suit his mood.

“My lords, my ladies.” He lifted his goblet in salute. “Tonight we drink to the unification of two great houses, a union made possible by the blushing beauty of the fairest rose of Highgarden!”

The men pounded their goblets on the tables with a cheer for the compliment paid to the Queen Margery Tyrell, Joffrey waiting for a long moment with a vile glint in his eye before continuing.

“But, the Throne would be remiss if We did not acknowledge Our likewise noble guests. Especially those of royal blood.” Turning he drank and waited for impatiently for another refill, paying no attention to which flagon it was poured from. “Though, for the life of me,” he laughed derisively. “We have no earthly idea how a Beggar Queen and her Fire Slut handmaiden came to call themselves Princesses of the Realm.”

A heavy hush fell across the crowd as the two sworn swords in Ser Jorah and the Kingsguard knight Ser Mark stepped forward and Daenerys and Sansa rose in unison, sidestepping to avoid their chairs and giving their escorts a clear path to them – and more importantly their port-keys if this farce turned ugly as quickly as many thought it might with Joffrey both mean and in his cups.

“By right of Conquest.” Daenerys answered coolly, arching a silver brow. “And by birth. And by marriage. A fact of life that a Princess could not expect a bastard boy to know much – if anything – about.”

“A bastard boy, am I?” Joffrey sneered, fist clenching around the golden handle of his cup. “As if that bastard Snow you call nephew is much more than that, horse-lord’s whore!”

Sansa gave a tinkling laugh as she lifted her own goblet in mockery of his shaking hand and stuttering coarseness.

“A Beggar Queen and a Fire Slut, now a horse-lord’s whore, my my.” She tsked, shaking her fiery head. “Your language has fallen into quite a state, your Grace…though I see no deterioration in your manners, Joffrey Waters.”

“I am the King!” Joffrey shouted. “I sit the Iron Throne.”

“To paraphrase my horse-lord husband.” Daenerys smirked, linking arms with Sansa and lifting her glass as well. “A king has no need of an ugly chair to sit upon. Merely a sword and a horse…though Jon at least has our ancestor Aegon the Conqueror’s crown to round things out. Long live the King!” She mocked and the two Princesses drank deep as their port-keys whisked them away from harm at the password, their guards with them as each had rested a hand on his Princess’s shoulder the moment Daenerys began the trigger phrase.

Enraged, Joffrey bolted the rest of his cup, then slammed it to the ground in a wordless shout at the wedding guests whispered amongst themselves at the display – both of them.

A mistake, it seemed, as within moments he first began to choke, then turn purple, then blood poured from eyes and nose and mouth.
Less than five minutes after exchanging barbs with the Princesses, Joffrey Waters was dead and the Red Keep in total uproar...though many, if one were to take note, were less than grief stricken.

In fact, in a single case, one could even say that their aged eyes were filled with nothing less than total satisfaction.

... 

A single note had struck Tywin as odd, more than any other – and it wasn’t either the presence nor the disappearance of the dragon Princess and her Fire Rose companion, despite Cersei’s shrieks for their heads.

No, not at all.

It was the minstrel that none of his household could remember hiring.

“Have you found the minstrel?” Tywin demanded furiously of his nephew Lancel who he’d set to the task.

“No, milord Uncle.” Lancel answered nervously, then held out a finely carved silverlime harp, the same that both men remembered the singer playing despite his horrid performance. “Only this.”

Tywin took up the harp and snarled deep in his throat, hurling it into the roaring fireplace in the Hand’s Tower when he saw the reason for Lancel’s greater-than-normal trepidation.

For, engraved on the handhold where it was hidden from easy sight, was the seven-pointed star of House Tarbeck.

A house he’d crushed, along with House Rayne, and gave rise to the song “The Rains of Castamere” decades before.

Leaving behind, or so the rumors told, a single possible survivor dubbed “the last Lord of House Tarbeck.”

...

Author’s Note: “Hands of Gold” does not, in fact, belong to me though this is a very altered version that takes after Peter Hollens’ cover.

Also, if you’re interested in seeing some of the clothes that inspired many of the descriptions in this chapter, I have pics uploaded to my facebook under the “Tomb of the First Men” album.
Act IX - Heir of Fire, Heir of Ice

Tomb of the First Men

AN: It took all of an hour for me to realize that Tomb was going to sweep the vote on the update for the Fourth of July, my country’s Independence Day. Naturally, that meant I spent the next hours furiously re-reading Acts I-VIII and reminding myself of where I left the story months ago before diving in head-first to Act IX. It was a tough grind, and I’ve made myself sick of listening to certain songs while I blocked out the world and cranked this out but I hope you all enjoy what amounts to some squick plus a ridiculous amount of baby-fluff.

’Til next time darlings!

~ Sif

Warning for this update: Descriptions of medical procedure, medical discussion of possible miscarriage and infant mortality.

Act IX: Heir of Fire, Heir of Ice

King’s Chambers, Pridefall, Westeros;

Third Day of the First Week of the First Moon of 299 AC

“It wasn’t me.” Was Harry’s immediate self-defense against accusations that had yet to be levied against him…at least by anyone not the batshit crazy mother of the now unlamented late Joffrey Waters.

Jon merely arched a brow in his direction, as Lord Tywin’s raven notably hadn’t made any mention of Harry or the pair of Princesses who had actually attended the now-dubbed “Purple Wedding” but was merely informative of the death and coming funeral…though also notably made no mention of a coming coronation of Joffrey’s younger brother as the newest pretender to the Iron Throne in the missive either.

“No, I really didn’t do it this time.” Harry explained with an uncaring shrug to his husbands and the ever-watchful Kingsguard. Not that any of them would censure him even if he was guilty as sin of the deed. But it was the principle of the thing. He gave a light frown as he rubbed one hand over the boisterous kicking of one of his unborn sons.

At about twenty-two weeks, they were moving more and more filling him with joy.

As well as heartburn, sore kidneys, and an ever-present need to piss.

Ah the joyful occupation of pregnancy in all its glory.

Aegon was next or so help him Death he was going to neuter his husbands.

Then he asked: “Do you want me to find out who did?”

“No.” Jon refused that offer at once, shaking his head and tossing the missive aside. “Tywin isn’t fool enough to make the accusation or even entertain it from Cersei from the information that’s
reached us from the capital,” which was quite a bit when you consider it was still “closed” or supposedly, awaiting siege by Jon’s army.

An army that had swollen to over a hundred thousand men and horses and even elephants after the force march from the Westerlands and his allies rallying via his wedding and coronation at a centralized point – Pridefall – all save those needed to garrison and hold the borders to prevent any movement from the combined Lannister/partial Tyrell army encamped around King’s Landing and the Crownlands.

Moreover, that number didn’t include another twelve thousand men and horses hidden in and among the Crownlands holdings that hadn’t overtly sworn to his cause but were awaiting orders to begin besieging the Lannister patrols of their home region bordering Blackwater Bay and the river the Blackwater Rush.

“And I’d rather you not get up to anymore mischief than can be accomplished from right here.” He finished his thought with a knowing look at his littlest love out of silver-shot purple eyes.

“As if that limits him any.” Robb snorted as Aegon laughed at the scowl their husband shot both the Lord of the North and their King. “He is trouble in a tempting package, didn’t you know husband?”

Tower of the Hand, Red Keep, King’s Landing

Cersei burst through the doors to her father’s study, all but breathing fire as she took in his seated form.

A father who, for his part, didn’t even bother to glance up from reviewing the reports he’d been given by the Gold Cloaks as well as the Lannister troops in and around the city.

Tossing the crumpled note in her hand onto the desk before him, she plopped into one of the chairs in a huff, anger in no way abated by her father’s calm demeanor.

“Daughter.” Tywin’s voice was as dry as the Red Waste.

“Father.” She sneered at his balding head. “You summoned me?”

“Yes.” Tywin agreed, not dignifying her snit with attention. “You are to stop any and all plans for Tommen’s coronation.”

“What!?” She shrieked, jumping back to her feet and slamming her hands onto the desk before him. “And what, then, was all that over my son’s cold body?” She rasped. “Questioning Tommen and maneuvering him into seeking and abiding by your council? What was the point of dishonoring Joffrey if Tommen isn’t to be crowned?”

“We do not know who killed Joffrey.” Tywin reminded her. “Regrettable, but there it is. Tommen, while a weak child, could be a better king than all three before him with the proper guidance. However, because we don’t know who killed Joffrey, crowning Tommen could be premature and end with a second dead king and no one to replace him on the Throne.”

“Myrcella…”

“Is a flighty little girl.” Tywin arched a brow. “A Regency was only advisable when Robert died because, at that time, war had already broken out and his claim had yet to be challenged.” Tywin sat back, eyeing his daughter as she sat back down. “Jaime is still missing with the Targaryen boy’s
other captives. Tyrion,” he sneered the name. “Has abandoned us. Our House has never been in more danger than it is in these moments following Joffrey’s death and your inability to control your elder son has put us in no position to crown your younger until at least some of the unrest in Westeros has been controlled.”

“Jaime, Tyrion.” Cersei gave a bitter twist of her mouth. “Has it ever once occurred to you that I might be the one that deserves your confidence and your trust?” She asked. “Not your sons. Me. Years and years of lectures on family and legacy.” She gave a little huff of a laugh. “The same lecture, really, just with tiny, tedious variations. Did it ever occur to you that your daughter might be the only one listening to them, living by them? That she might be the one to have the most to contribute to your legacy?”

Tywin sat back, watching her out of coldly amused eyes, folding his hands on the desk before him.

“Alright.” He acknowledged her words. “You want to contribute?” He thumped his hands against the piles of paperwork before him then appraised her of the most concerning aspects of their current situation as his former words seemed to have flown right over her golden head. “Contribute. Sansa Stark is pregnant.”

“What?” Cersei sat back, shocked, though she couldn’t quite say why.

Perhaps, it was that before her appearance at her son’s wedding Cersei had always seen her as quite the cold Tully fish despite her now renowned beauty.

“You heard me.” Tywin continued to eye her in amusement. “Sansa Stark is pregnant, it seems young Jon announced it himself a week after his wedding though word took time to trickle into King’s Landing. She carries the heir to Dorne inside her. Lord Harry is due in a few months with the heirs of a King and the Warden of the North. Together, their alliance controls all but the Crownlands and perhaps half of the Reach. Moreover,” he held in a sigh. “Mace Tyrell has been stripped of his lordship of Highgarden and as Warden of the Reach by Jon Targaryen and many of the remaining Reach heirs and lords have turned to the dragon banner. We’re losing, Cersei. Putting a crown on your remaining son’s head would be the same as putting his neck on the headsman’s block.”

And if Tywin had it his way at least something of his family and great heritage would survive this gods-damned war that his daughter and Catelyn Tully began.

Tywin Lannister was many things: proud, shrewd, cunning…but he wasn’t stupid.

Save for an act of the gods, there wasn’t much chance that Jon Targaryen wouldn’t win this war.

He continued.

“They have taken Harrenhal as their base and capital.” He might scoff at renaming it but it was a shrewd decision nonetheless. “Harrenhal was built to be unassailable by land. I could march a million men to those walls and be repelled.”

“Harrenhal fell before.”

“Yes, it did.” He agreed. “To dragonfire. Something that is in quite short supply in King’s Landing and in great supply in the army of Jon Targaryen.”

“An assassin?”

“The House of Black and White has refused the contract and no other guild has the skills necessary
to infiltrate the Targaryen court with Harry Potter-Black alive and well.” He rebutted.

“What of Myrcella’s betrothal that Tyrion brokered?” Cersei heard herself grasping at straws and couldn’t stand it but there was little else to do. “Is she even still alive?”

“The Dornish don’t kill little girls as Prince Oberyn was sure to remind me at the Targaryen wedding.” Tywin rolled his eyes. The Dornish and their grudges. As if they would have done anything else in his position. “However, it seems that not only is Sansa Stark pregnant, she is now the Regent of Dorne alongside Prince Oberyn.”

“How is that possible?” Cersei frowned. “Doran Martell might be a cripple but his health otherwise hasn’t been in question.”

“How indeed?” Tywin snorted lightly. “Varys reported privately that the pact between Lannister and Martell was uncovered turns ago by Jon Targaryen’s Hand of the King, his Lord Harry.”

“Sansa’s wedding.” Cersei closed her eyes as the plot became clear to her. “Once she was with child they had no more need of Doran.”

“Nor of Quentin or Arianne.” Tywin nodded. “The first apparently did himself in like the foolish boy he was known to be. A duel in Braavos.”

“We knew someone had to have represented the dragon’s cause with the Iron Bank.” Cersei mused, shaking her head at how handily they’d been outmaneuvered. “Two birds with one arrow. And the girl?”

“Committed suicide by all reports.” Tywin twitched a mocking eyebrow. “Threw herself off of the highest tower in Sunspear and then healthy Prince Doran had an apoplexy in grief. All neat, all tidy, and with Princess Sansa away at Harrenhal with her family and Prince Oberyn to remain completely blameless in the matter.”

“What of the alliance with the Tyrells?”

“Floundering.” Tywin reported, nodding in agreement as Cersei rose to pour herself and him a goblet of wine.

“Well,” Cersei toasted her father. “What is it they say in Essos? All men must die?”

“Valar morghoulis.”

... Pridefall

“Doran, now that was you.” Aegon murmured in Harry’s ear that night as they laid in the bed furs, Jon and Robb already nodding off. “The son and daughter too if I know anything about you, little love.”

“Come to know me that well already, have you love?” One corner of Harry’s lips kicked up in a little rueful smile.

Jon knew, of course he did, as did Robb but the rule that they’d established when Harry took on the issue of Dorne had remained: plausible deniability.

Neither of his other loves, his other husbands, could afford that knowledge.
They held their honor too dear.

Aegon however…Aegon was a different breed than the other pair.

Harry had been right all those turns ago when he contemplated what the silver-haired scion of House Blackfyre’s _use_ might be to both him and his Targaryen lover. He brought a balance to their triad. A bit of ruthless _enjoyment_ of his own – and Harry’s – viciousness that their Stark-blooded wolves couldn’t revel in for all that they might _like_ to do.

Aegon could openly _see_ Harry’s hand in seemingly random acts of chaotic reprisal – more he could appreciate and enjoy them.

That two of the only others in the realm that did the same were likely Tywin Lannister and Olenna Tyrell well…both of _them_ had lived to an advanced age, more than could be said for the last two generations of Starks.

Honor had its place, that was true.

But at its heart, it was also an _ideal_ which was why it shown its best in songs and not in real life.

Harry sacrificed his own every day for the good of both the realm and their shared husbands.

It was the least Aegon could do to acknowledge that and not leave him in the cold with his duty as Hand of the King.

Gods forbid either of _them_ ever turn as cynical as Tywin or Olenna, _then_ Aegon might have a problem with Harry’s scheming.

“I like to think so.” Aegon answered. “But you’re not the sort of being that’s easily _known_, not like our simple Northern Lord or bold Targaryen dragon.”

Harry huffed a little laugh at that and shifted, finding a more comfortable spot wrapped around Aegon, nudging one of his legs between the Prince of Bloodstone’s own.

“Quentin’s stupidity killed him.” Harry finally said, long enough after Aegon’s words that he thought the ebon-haired wizard had fallen asleep. “The others played their hands and lost.”

And in the game of thrones you won or you died.

Harry took heart in that at least it wasn’t his loves that kicked off the newest round, for all that they’d been quick enough to jump from the frying pan into the fire once Cersei and Catelyn overplayed their hands.

“True enough.” Aegon gave him a comforting squeeze, knowing as they all did that while Harry had the _ability_ to do things the rest of them didn’t, that did not mean in turn that he was cold to them either. “When does Sansa return to Dorne?”

“In a few days.” Harry shrugged. “Nymeria’s due to whelp soon, Oberyn has a handle on Regency in Sunspear but a visibly pregnant Sansa will calm some of the rumbles regarding House Martell’s line of succession.”

“Mmm.” Aegon hummed an agreement, the two finally drifting off to sleep with the quartet’s pairs of dragons and wolves already ensconced in front of the fire, filling the King’s bedchamber of Pridefall with soft huffs and low rumbles.
And life carried on, even as a massive army shifted and churned and stayed encamped in the plains and fields waiting and seething with the restless energy of thousands of men and horses and camp followers all for the same thing: the birth of the Heirs and the final press of the southron war.

…

The last weeks of Harry’s pregnancy were filled with enough tension to choke a horse let alone drive Harry’s nerves right up the wall.

Twins on a first pregnancy, especially one male-carried, was less than ideal.

His body wasn’t accustomed to carrying children, wasn’t used to the pains and fluctuations, let alone the unique stressors of being in the middle of a ruddy war.

Looking back on it, it was surprising he made it as long as he did, even if his impatient boys had him stopping mid-planning-session with the main generals and lords and knights of the Kingsguard all discussing the strange lack of Prince Tommen’s coronation in King’s Landing as well as the siege that was to begin once Jon and Robb were freed from their infernal hovering over their pregnant husband.

A male bearer knew in a different manner than a female when it was time for him to birth.

Females could naturally birth, experienced labor and all the difficulties of it.

Males had to have their children surgically removed, a caesarian as his old world called it, and thus had evolved a different mechanism to know when it was time lest their unborn children be distressed and die in their sac.

It was as simple – and painful – was a sudden burning pain tearing through their lower abdomen in a band from one hip to the other, heralding the beginning of the sac beginning to tear itself from its mooring inside the bearer’s body as unlike a female, a male’s sac is both womb and placenta and is removed at the time of birth, the body re-growing another surrounding a babe if the male falls pregnant again. A process begun and completed entirely by magic – at least on the part of the bearing male – and requiring magic to sustain itself as the child, or in the case of multiples, children grow. Male pregnancy isn’t a biological function at all in the beginning, though it serves a biological purpose, and indeed if a magical male truly desired to do so they could use it to produce a child without the donation of a second sample as it were.

All it took, after all, was magic, the right hormonal balance, and the genetic predisposition towards carrying.

So, when Harry felt a sharp burning from hip to hip five weeks after the debacle of the Purple Wedding, he knew it was time for his children to come into the world – the impatient little monsters – at a week shy of seven turns.

Early.

Almost too early, only twenty-seven weeks, five weeks early for a male-carried pregnancy, and with twins at that they were sure to be small even as Harry’s stomach had long ago distended to the point that he couldn’t remember the last time he’d seen his own feet let alone his cock.

Still, better early than not at all, even if he had to deliver them himself, being the only active-magic-user with the skills necessary to do the deed…something which he would never let his husband, any of them, live down.
He was in council with his husbands when it happened: the sharp pain he’d read of but never before felt for himself.

Though, it had to be said, once he felt it there was no doubt at all over what it could be as if some primal part of his brain kicked on even as he near-to bent in double from the strength of the pain worse than any wound he’d taken before in battle but nowhere nearing that of the Cruciatus curse.

Harry would be the first to admit – his perception of pain was more than a little fucked when the single intense burst of pain that came over a male bearer wasn’t the worst pain he’d ever felt in his life like the Healing books from his old world claimed it to be, including more than one written by a male bearer themselves instead of merely an academic’s perspective on what they endured.

Childbed, it was said in his new world, was the battle that women and male bearers were chosen to face and they were just as likely to die of it as a warrior was a battle-wound, one of many reasons that his first husband’s lords and men had been less-than-thrilled over his running instance on standing his ground on the battlefields between the Golden Tooth and Pridefall.

Another point for the dragons and direwolves: Drogon, Rhaegal, Ghost, and Grey Wind all knew before their humans of what ailed their human’s mate when he bent double and hissed out a long breath between his teeth with his eyes clenched shut behind golden-ivory lids.

Ghost moved first even as the lords and men stopped mid-discussion to stare first in puzzlement then in dawning realization at the hunched-over form of Lord Harry, the massive white direwolf that came to most men’s chest on his four paws and taller than even the Greatjon or Lord Robb on his hind legs coming to stand between Harry’s legs and nudge at his face with his nose, prompting him to wrap his arms around the white-furred neck and shoulders as he breathed through the pain with puffing hisses of breath, hands digging in and grabbing hold of that same white-fur over strong shoulders as a tense face was buried in the same, red eyes staring with placid knowing at his person who for his part, snapped out of his stunned daze quickly, calling for the healers to be found and sent to the King’s chambers along with his aunt Daenerys.

Cacophony spread like wildfire through the council chambers as the men scattered, all the lords and knights disappearing like smoke in the wind at the sight of an obviously-travailing Lord Harry as the Kingsguard closed ranks: nevermore would Lord Harry require their protection than in this moment for as he worked to bring the Heirs into the world he wasn’t the dangerous and powerful Lord and wizard and Warrior of Old that men feared and songs were being sung of but a vulnerable target for an opportunistic assassin.

That King-Consort Lord Harry had entered his travail would be all over Westeros before dusk and likely to reach Essos and beyond by the new-day’s dawn with as quickly as the high lords and generals disappeared…but that was a thing to laugh over another day.

For the moment all that mattered to the royal four was the slim-but-fecund form whose breaths were slowly losing their panting-hissing cadence as he breathed through the pain with the support of his husbands who to a one had formed a circle behind him – his front taken up by an implacable direwolf – each rubbing his shoulders as he stood guard at his back (Robb), enfolding a clenched fist his in soothing hand where it held tight to white fur as he knelt at his side with a soothing-singing hum (Aegon), or ran his hands in small, tension-relieving circles over his pain-tight stomach from behind (Jon), each falling into place as if they’d planned and practiced for it – though with the birth being many weeks early they’d done no such thing at all.

Like many things in their ever-evolving marriage and the courtships before it, it simply was as they
let instinct and magic guide them, each of the men having found as they practiced more and more
with Harry that while magic could nudge and prod them, it rarely steered them wrong if at times not
necessarily right as it ever sought to serve its user’s best-good and not that of, say, the realm as a
whole.

Thankfully, in moments such as this, those two things were one in the same and none of the three
less-learned magic users had any cause to doubt the course their magic-fueled instincts nudged them
onto.

The tearing pain was both signal and warning: the sac had detached from Harry physically and
magically, now sustaining itself – and the child or children within – on their magics alone.

If a male bearer wasn’t cut open and the sac removed, the children born, in time they would suffocate
and die.

A terrible thing, horrific in that it was well-known enough what happened if a male bearer didn’t
receive intervention in a timely manner after the pain for it to be written about as magical/medical
fact.

“Pick him up, your Grace.” Ser Arthur Dayne commanded any of the Kings really. Lord Harry was
the only one who could easily birth his children, yes. But that didn’t mean that they needed to waste
time as he dealt with the severing as it was known to the maesters. He couldn’t bring forth his babes
until the pain abated, that was true. That didn’t mean they needed to sit and wait when they could be
bringing him to the King’s Chambers where his potions and salves and preparations were laid in and
waiting for the birth.

They may not be as ready as they could be for a birth so early but Lord Harry wasn’t one to play the
long odds…at least when it came to his children.

He’d set out what would be needed and drilled the healers, the Kingsguard, and his husbands alike
on what was needed when, what could be used for different contingencies, and so on.

Twins plus a first birthing, oh yes, they’d expected him to travail early…just not this early hence why
Maester Aemon was in the Maester’s tower of Pridefall and not at Lord Harry’s side, Lady Talisa
was ministering to the sick and wounded in Weirton, Princess Daenerys was practicing and training
with Viserion, and Sarella Sand was off somewhere with her sisters.

Archmaester Marwyn, it should be noted, had gone to Castle Black as a temporary replacement for
the new Grand Maester until the Kings could finish their weeding out of the grey sheep for a true
replacement for the eldest Targaryen alive, leaving his former novice “Alleras” behind to train for a
time under Aemon instead, the two: Sarella Sand and Aemon Targaryen, taking to each other as
Aemon was a font of differing but still interesting knowledge to one of the middle daughters of
Prince Oberyn Martell.

Robb jumped into action at the prompt from Ser Arthur, leaning forward and snapping the smaller
man – save for his stomach that looked like he’d swallowed a shield or two – right out from the care
of his other husbands and Ghost, following without needing any further nudging as the Kingsguard
surrounded the group of Kings, direwolves, and dragons to the King’s Chambers of Pridefall, each
and every Kingsguard present with one hand on their sword hilts as they rushed through the massive
halls of the ancient renewed fortress, dragons flying ahead and direwolves guarding their flank, all on
guard and ready to take a hand – or a head – from any idiot suicidal enough to get in their way.

…
They were coming to the corridor of the King’s Chambers when the *severing* eased, finally allowing Harry to think beyond the pain and snap into action, orders flying even as Dany, Sarella, and Talisa met them in the hall, Aemon waiting in a chair at the side of the cot that had been conjured by Harry in a steel that was easily rubbed down and cleaned with the alcohol he’d pilfered from his vault below the Hall of Ancient Heroes.

Preservation charms cast by goblins were a thing of beauty and while he was certain the Northerners would enjoy a dram or five of the vodka that had been stashed there for medicinal purposes, it did a lot more as an antiseptic in this age than as a way to get completely sloshed.

Westeros had enough alcohol, they didn’t need a dash of Russian insanity added to the mix.

Talis and Sarella had made the cot with several layers of thick wool for padding, topped with crisp clean sheets he’d stored himself in the cupboard that held all of the birthing supplies in case of an emergency: potions, salves, even clean needles and silk thread...just in case.

He thought he should be able to get through what needed to be done...but as always in an era of interesting medical practices better to be safe than sorry.

“Set me down on the cot.” Harry ordered Robb, then gave a soft look to each of his visibly worried and/or frantic lovers. “Then please, for the love of magic, shoo.”

“He’s right, your graces.” Aemon told them in his soft age-riddled voice. “I’m afraid you will only be a distraction.”

“I’ll stay.” Ser Arthur assured them, Prince Lewyn nodding his agreement as well.

“We’ll be here and won’t bother the little lord too much with fainting.” Lewyn smirked at the pale-faced Sers Oswell and Torrhen. “The birthing chamber is no place for weak stomachs.” *Especially for a male-birthed babe.*

Jon nodded, then leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss to Harry’s brow, followed by Robb and then Aegon, their dragons following after them even as Ghost and Grey Wind refused to be budged, one taking up vigil at the door to the King’s Solar and the other to the bathing chamber, ensuring that no one could come unhindered into the bedchamber as Ser Arthur and Prince Lewyn echoed their movement, getting out of the way but still guarding their charge at his most vulnerable moments.

Harry smoothed one hand over his burgeoning belly one last time, blowing out a breath as he laid propped against the semi-reclined cot that would allow him enough line-of-sight to do what needed to be done without him having to be fully laid out as he would have had to be if a maester or midwife was delivering his babes but not up and walking or squatting or in any other position as a travailing female might be. It was time, he nodded to himself as his magic coursed through his stomach and confirmed the matter with a questing tendril as he anchored himself to the earth, allowing the ancient powers of Westeros to sustain him. They were ready – and for the moment – quiet.

“Dany, prepare the baths and swaddlings.” He handed out orders with a quiet calm of command, not letting any of his inner trembling – trembling and fears that he’d shoved firmly into the back of his mind to be quashed later – show in either his voice or face. “We’ll need hot water – boil it first to remove impurities then allow it to cool, it should be just warm on your elbow.” He reminded her, the silver-haired princess nodding, the lines of worried stress – Daenerys had lost her own child, a pain and sorrow she would never wish on another – easing with something to do. “Talisa, the basin.”

Harry nodded to the shining steel receptacle that the healer moved and wiped down with another rag soaked in the nose-biting concoction Harry had ordered them to use on the cot. “You will need to free my sons from their sac and cut their life-cords with help from Dany – remember to let the blood
stop flowing beforehand.” He cautioned. “It might take a few minutes but will be better for them than
doing so at once. Sarella.” He looked over at the calm beauty with her black Summer Islander skin and black eyes from her father Oberyn. “Once I close the incision you know what to do.”

Sarella nodded, tilting her head towards the salves and potions and bandages already laying out on another clean steel tray awaiting use that she had gathered as Harry had given them their orders.

“Maester Aemon?” Harry asked, voice cracking just a bit even as Sarella passed him a deadening potion that would block all sensation below his ribs then passed back the empty glass phial.

“Yes, young one.”

“Pray.”

Nodding, knowing that as a blind maester there wasn’t much more he could do other than direct the others if need-be, Aemon Targaryen did just that, exhorting all the gods he knew the names of – and some he didn’t – to watch over and guide the hands of the Warrior of Old, who had grown to love and cherish his great-great-grandnephew to a degree Aemon hadn’t seen since his fool of a brother Dunk had forsaken the crown for the love of Jenny of Oldstones.

Taking a deep, steadying breath, Harry sent up a prayer of his own as he took up his wand, casting a medical-grade cleaning spell over his stomach as he’d been handily stripped and set into a pair of clean plain linen drawstring pants that barely covered his modesty and left his chest and stomach bared to his wand, then rested the tip at the apex of one hip bone.

Drawing it clean, using no incantation but will, the skin and muscle and fat open as easily as unfastening a zipper, showing his insides in all their gleaming red glory – a sight not for the faint of heart or stomach, even for Harry.

Another breath as he blinked at the sight as his wand came to a stop at his opposite hip, raising it he gave a flick and the folds of skin, fat, muscle, and tissue parted showing the sac that held his children in its entirety. A third spell ensured that the sac had been severed clean, leaving nothing behind to infect him, even as he felt no pain from the deadening potion he’d taken. Singing and swirling his wand over the gaping incision, he blocked the reality of staring down into his own viscera as Talisa followed his instructions to the letter, a clean scalpel he’d transfigured from a Valyrian steel ingot steady in her hands as she sliced through the tissue and tough muscle of the magical womb.

“Vulnera Sanentur,” he spell-sang, half-hypnotizing the handful of people in the chambers even as they watched Talisa with bated breaths as she worked to free the newborns from their sac. “Vulnera sanentur, vulnera sanentur.” Eventually his body gave way to the spell, his stomach closing as if it had never been opened in the first place, Harry casting another cleaning spell for good measure before slumping back against the bolsters of the cot, keeping one tired eye on Talisa and another on Sarella as she slathered the faint pink line left behind with the healing salve he’d parted with from his potions stores and forced a blood-replenisher on him, the pain-relieving potion able to wait until the blocking potion had worn off. Sarella handed over a goblet of sweet Arbor gold to wash down the aftertaste of the potions, though she had to help him clasp it as the post-birth fatigue crashed over him.

Never let it be said that cutting yourself open then using one of the most powerful healing spells created were for the magically weak or the faint of heart.

Truly…it was only his ability to compartmentalize and the reality of having to complete his task to save his children that had kept him from screaming in instinctive horror at the sight of his own insides.
Even strong-stomached Arthur and Lewyn were looking a little green, let alone Daenerys who had never seen of such a thing before.

Talisia worked with quick but sure hands that had been trained and practiced in both healing tents and battlefields alike, parting the tough muscle of the sac Harry had fully severed and lifted free of his body with his magic, one of the cleanest birthings she’d ever seen even if it was only half the job. Setting the razor-sharp little knife Lord Harry had fashioned for this exact purpose onto a clean cloth until it was needed again to cut the birthing cords of the babes, she removed the muscle from around the babes finding that they were separated by a thin membrane in between them: twins but not identical as she could already see even covered in the sac-fluids that they had different colored hair.

As the cooler air of the room brushed against them, no longer held safe and secure in their bearer’s body, the twins began to flail, Talia lifting first one free of the sac remnant and then the other, nimble fingers clearing tiny rosebud mouths as they coughed and took their first breaths – and gave their first rollicking cries of anger at being taken from the soft-warm-home of their bearer’s self.

All in the room let out a little breath of relief at the dueling cries, tears coming to more than one eye as Dany and Talisa worked to clean them as the sac continued to pump blood into the two small forms.

“Well done, your grace.” Maester Aemon comforted the young wizard, one creaky hand coming to entwine with one callused from sword and quill alike – and if that callused hand shook that was for no one but them to know. “Well done.”

Just shy of two hours had passed since Harry had hunched over in the war room, but to the emerald eyed wizarding crying slow and steady tears of joy as his children cried their disapproval over their birthing, it might as well have been a lifetime.

…

“Cheer up, your graces.” Ser Oswell chivvied the pacing and panicking trio that waiting in the King’s solar for word – any word – from the deathly-silent bedchamber. Most of the time they all appreciated the silencing charms Harry had laced into the very walls of their personal rooms, but it would have done them good to hear anything – even their little love cursing them from one end of Westeros to the seven hells as they’d heard-tell of mothers doing in the birthing chambers – at all besides this wretched silence.

“At least you’ve chosen a male bearer.” The Whent knight continued. “Their births are fast – none of the day or more tales you hear of women travailing.”

“Just with a lower survival rate.” Ser Mark muttered, earning himself a head-slap from Ser Barristan and a killing-glare from the anxious fathers plus Aegon.

Not that his words weren’t truth but still…tact.

Nymeria’s – and the she-wolves of the pack – whelping the week before had been another night of pacing, almost a prelude to Harry’s travail, though at least then the kings were allowed to be in the kennels and not shunted off into a side-chamber to worry and pace with their close friends and knights of the Kingsguard with Sansa returning to Dorne, leaving only Arya as a relative in the castle, she who was far too occupied with the pups to likely even notice that her good-brother was giving birth unless some enterprising servant went down to fetch her…though even then she’d have to bathe before joining them in the wait.

Not even Harry, as understanding as he could be about her preferences in dress and occupation,
would let a girl who’d been rolling around in the kennels into his bed chamber, much less hold his children just after giving birth.

The girl in question had barely arrived – panting and freshly scrubbed with a hastily-donned set of clean breeches and tunic but clean nonetheless – an hour or so after Harry’s been taken into the bed chamber when Arthur ducked his head out of the room and gave his pacing King and his husbands a blinding-white grin and nodded his head towards the door, wordlessly summoning them even as a few maids bustled in and out of the chamber with bundles of rags, bed-clothes, and other accoutrements that needed seeing to before worrying husbands caught sight of blood or other things that would scar them for life or scare them out of their wits for the health of their husband and sons.

As the trio entered, Arya held back with a shake of Arthur’s head, this first time for the parents before others are brought it, Sarella and Talisa bobbed correct curtseys and took their leave, Daenerys and Aemon staying to bear witness to the traditional presentation as well as assist the new parents – as much as they’d let them – with only Prince Lewyn trading off with one of his sworn brothers, Ser Barristan, intent on giving the orders for the bells to ring in rejoicing for the birth of the heirs…right before getting falling-down drunk after having seen all he had in the birthing chamber.

Though at least he’d kept his feet.

That was more than most of the other Kingsguard would have been able to claim had they been there in his stead.

…

Bells rang out and ravens flocked into the sky all proclaiming the news: an heir to Jon Targaryen, the first of his Name had been born alive and healthy at Pridefall.

…

“My loves.” Harry looked up, a bit pale from blood loss and strain but still awake and still healthy with small little bundles, each no bigger than the orange-fleshed musk melons that Harry had taken to eating by the pound in his last trimester, tucked in each of his arms with Maester Aemon seated at his side and smiling with his eyes closed as his lips seemed to move in prayer, Dany standing off his shoulder where he was tucked up in their bed and not in the now-tucked-away cot tears in her eyes as she beamed at her nephew and King.

Looking down with a soft smile at the slightly smaller baby – he’d have to do some spells for diagnostics but he guessed he was about half a pound or so smaller than his brother – with ink-black hair and skin the same Northern-snow-white of his Targaryen husband, Harry gave the traditional words:

“My King.” He spoke, tears and love and joy fighting with each other for prominence around his bone-deep exhaustion. He just had to get through this and then he could sleep, with the potions in this system having to wait for a feeding from his sore-and-growing breast tissue. They wouldn’t be large, male breast tissue rarely grew much unless the man was obese or there was a medical factor, less than a handful even for Aegon but more than enough – he hoped – to feed his children as least for some weeks without intervention. Nonetheless, for the moment they’d have to make due with goat’s milk and glass bottles, the wet-nurse he’d interviewed and vetted not yet in residence with her month-old babe, though he was sure she was soon to be sent for if it hadn’t been done so already. “I have borne a son and I name him as yours. Do you claim him?” Lifting up the black-haired babe in his left arm for prompting, though after taking a close look at the two babes – now that they’re washed and their hair is no longer matted to their head – it was clear to see which was which…if one didn’t know that Harry’s own mother had blood-red hair.
“I claim him.” Jon whispered, barely able to get the words out around his own tears of joy and relief over the seemingly-healthy trio that laid in the bed, going to his knees beside his love and taking up his son in his arms, knowing well how to hold a babe from memories of Bran and Rickon. “He will be Aerion, son of House Targaryen, heir of Pridefall and future King of Westeros.” He gave the name that he and Harry had settled on between them, all four of the married men having made an agreement as the time of Harry’s travail grew nearer that names would be something settled in private between the birth-parents.

“A good name.” Aemon noted, smiling. “That of the father of Aegon the Conqueror.”

“My lord.” Harry looked up at Robb, holding out the larger twin with his red curls and golden skin. “I have borne a son and I name him as yours. Do you claim him?”

With a smile fit to take over his face and beaming blue eyes, Robb lifted his newborn son with the same skill as his elder husband, settling the little red-wolf into the curve of his arm, wondering over how something so small could make him feel so much.

“I claim him.” Robb said, unable to stop grinning to save his life. “He will be Dain, son of House Stark, heir of Winterfell and future Warden of the North.”

“They’re beautiful, Harry.” Aegon settled into the bed atop the covers after Jon and Robb had finished gushing and thanking him for their sons, Harry giving in easily to the hoping-eyes of his husbands as they called for the rest of the Kingsguard and Arya to come and meet the boys, the two young Heirs of Westeros and the North giving them no mind as Talisa returned and set the new-fathers to helping them with their first feed as Harry could barely keep his head up.

“I know.” Harry gave a soft smile and rested his head against Aegon’s shoulder as he watched his boys – his boys – be fussed and gushed over, even Arya deigning to crack a beaming grin and give a little cheek a kiss as Robb finished Dain’s feed and set up his sister to holding her new – and first – nephew as the twins nodded off to sleep before Aemon took charge of things and shuffled everyone out but the husbands and children so that Harry and the babes could sleep. “They’re everything I always knew I wanted.”

…

To All the Lords and Citizens of Westeros

King Jon of House Targaryen, the first of his Name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, King of Westeros and Lord Protector of the Realm, Announces this the Third Day of the Third Moon of the year Two Hundred and Ninety-Nine after Aegon’s Conquering the birth of Our son and Heir.

Born to Our husband and First Consort, Lord Harry Potter-Black, Hand of the King, Lord of Winter and the Iron Islands, Lord of the Seastone Chair, Lord Reaper of Pyke, known as the Warrior-Who-Waits and the Warrior of Old.

Named before All the Gods Old and New as Prince Aerion of House Targaryen, third of His Name, Prince of Pridefall and Heir of Westeros.

Black of hair and purple of eye, the Heir of Westeros is healthy and strong, long may he live.

To All the Lords and Citizens of Westeros
King-Consort Robb of House Stark, the first of his Name, Lord of Winterfell, Warden of the North, Master of the Targaryen Armies, the Young Wolf, Announces this the Third Day of the Third Moon of the year Two Hundred and Ninety-Nine after Aegon’s Conquering the birth of his son and Heir.

Born to his husband, Lord Harry Potter-Black, Hand of the King, Lord of Winter and the Iron Islands, Lord of the Seastone Chair, Lord Reaper of Pyke, known as the Warrior-Who-Waits and the Warrior of Old.

Named before All the Gods Old and New as Lord Dain of House Stark, the first of His Name, Heir of Winterfell and future Warden of the North.

Red of hair and green of eye, the Heir of the North is healthy and strong, long may he live.

In a castle not too far from Prıdefall as the crow flies, a shriek was heard along with the shattering of many and various vases and glass windows from Maegor’s Holdfast even as in the Tower of the Hand an old lion sat and stared out over the Blackwater Rush, the announcement of the royal birth crushed in one tough old hand.

“Your diagnostic can do that?”  Jon blinked a bit as the results came back from Harry’s health-check of their sons, telling not only of their health – though according to his love they’d all have to take extra care to keep them warm and away from masses of people for the next turn or so due to their early birth – but of their future eye color once the milky-blue common to babes fades.

“You’d be surprised the things that can show up on a truly in-depth diagnostic.”  Harry told his loves honestly as he sat in bed and presided in state over their children, though it would be another day before his sore breast tissue could have any relief, relying on a spell to drain the built-up milk into a vessel for collection rather than any other form of intervention that might have it drying up.  “But in this case: yes.  Our sons are going to have Targaryen-purple and Evans-green eyes.”

“Your mother?”  Robb asked, as he watched enraptured as little Dain gave a great yawn, showing no signs of the breathing problems that Harry tasked everyone who would be around the babes to watch for along with troubles keeping warm or unnatural yellowing of their skin or the white of their eyes.

Harry rarely spoke of his life before, believing it easier to simply delve into the now rather than reveling in the was.

Still, they had spoken a time or two of his life, and once his pregnancy was confirmed what his parents had looked like and the little he knew of them and their families.

“Redder hair than you claim my love.”  Harry quirked a grin at his Northern lord.  “And my eyes. Though I carry the line for blond hair plus various shades of brown and black, and eyes of hazel, brown, grey, silver, or blue.”  He smirked at bit at his husbands even as he pressed kisses to the brows of his babies Robb and Jon respectively settling them in their cradles on Harry’s side of their massive bed.  “Lots of diversity not like you Westerosi boast.”

“Still, it’s good politics to send out the notices as soon as possible.”  Aegon sighed as he untangled his finger from the strong grasp of little Aeron.  Who, it had to be noted, was named after not just the father of Aegon the Conqueror but one of Aegon’s own direct ancestors: Aerion Brightflame also known as Aerion the Monstrous.  They would simply have to ensure that the little one took after Jon’s Aerion and not Aegon’s, though with Harry’s influence he didn’t doubt it would prove much
Gods knew, Harry didn’t put up with any shit from his husbands, one of whom was his king, he wasn’t likely to allow his children to turn out to be cautionary tales towards the Targaryen Dynasty.

Though doing away with marrying brother to sister would likely help a great deal with that issue, since there was only so much, as Harry had explained it, that even magic could do in alleviating issues of infirmity and madness when lines are bred too closely for too long.

Jon’s father had started the work of adding depth to the Targaryen family tree with marrying first Elia Martell and then Benjen Stark, much like his own great-grandfather and Uncle Aemon’s brother Aegon had done with marrying Betha Blackwood.

Now it was up to them to keep an eye on the spouses their children chose and pass down the knowledge that Harry had regarding the matter to try and ensure that even if another mad king or monstrous prince was born to the line of Jon Targaryen, the first of His Name, that it was for reasons other than simple breeding to blame.

“We’ll have to have their Blessing as soon as I’m up to it and the boys are healthy enough to withstand the chill in the godswood.” Harry told them as he shifted a bit, stomach sore and achy now that the blocker potion had worn off and not wanting to take a pain potion and have to wait another day for it to cycle out of his bloodstream to feed his own babies.

“Blessing?” Jon asked as they all pulled off their clothes and settled into the bedfurs, the guards having taken themselves off after they made it clear none of them would be leaving the bed chamber until morning.

“Like a Naming in the Seven or before the Old Gods?” Robb asked. They’d skirted both of those by Naming them upon their claiming by Harry, none of them being particularly devout. That they were named and there were witnesses to the fact was all that was really needed to satisfy tradition, everything else was just pomp and trappings to appease egos.

“Of a sort.” Harry explained, snuggling down into the cuddle pile even as he forced himself to tear his eyes away from their babes.

They were here.

He could hardly contain himself even as he felt a bit…empty.

Though he was about to mention the latter, knowing the lusty answer he’d get from the prats he’d married.

He reiterated: it was Aegon’s fucking turn.

Wonderful result or not, he was more than happy to wait out the next year or more until having another for himself.

“It’s a ceremony to consecrate the boys in their powers.” He told them. “In my old world it was also used to name godparents but that’s a tradition that you don’t have here so we can skip it. It calls on the matriarchs, any mother or bearer, of my family lines to bless them and help guide them as their powers grow.”

Which considering that he was their bearer and both Jon and Robb had magic of their own…the little ones were going to need that blessing and guidance to help them be grounded and in control of their power, especially with the use-me-please magics of Westeros at play.
Add in that according to Sirius Harry had been doing accidental magic from the cradle and it was set to be an interesting dozen or so years until the boys get a handle on things as they started to mature.

Not that he was going to tell his husbands or the Kingsguard that, he snickered to himself as he let the strain of the day and the heat of his husbands lull him off to sleep.

After all…why spoil the surprise?

Two hours after laying down to sleep, Harry’s wand buzzed in its invisible holster on his arm, waking him to feed his babies who were still sleeping soundly.

Advice differed – both in his old time and this new – about waking a newborn to feed, however he went with the wisdom that said it might take a few weeks for the newborns to settle into a routine or even to wake for a feed, and with both his precious little ones being premature he wasn’t about to take the risk on being wrong. Better often than allowed to go hungry, especially as tiny as they were. With being a male bearer, it wasn’t as if anyone was expecting him to be up and bounding around right after birth anyway, even with his magic.

Rubbing sleep from his eyes and giving a yawn, Harry at least found himself not as drained as he’d been on falling asleep, though it would take at least a few weeks for his magic and body to totally recover from having his sons’ cores severed from his own as well as his stomach cut open, under going major surgery magic to help heal him or not.

Though once they were mature enough to wake themselves for feeds, he’d be glad to have a nursemid to help, since while he was able to get up with them every few hours his husbands still had the duties as King and Consorts to see to and the ongoing war to deal with.

Fetching the goat’s milk from the storage cupboard he’d charmed to keep food fresh – a benefit to finally having a true home again – in their solar, ignoring the direwolves and dragons as they lifted their heads at his entrance – the familiars banned for the moment from being allowed free rein, simply being too great a risk for anyone to want to take with delicate newborn babes until they were certain of them and their reactions to each other – Harry sterilized a pair of glass bottles that he’d had ready, wrapping the small end in the thick soft cotton to protect his boys’ mouths, and after filling them with a small amount of goat’s milk, about a half-cup, capping the other end. They would seem odd to anyone from his previous life, but they were the closest thing Westeros offered to an actual bottle, and thanks to his ability to transfigure, clean, and sterilize them safer than the little clay pots with little pour-spouts that Maester Marwyn had described for him. Hopefully, the boys would take to him and they wouldn’t have to worry about bottle-feeds thereafter or even the wet-nurse.

It wasn’t like he had rubber nipples or disposable nappies in Westeros, nor would he be able to use them without causing major problems in terms of social evolution if he did.

At least cloth nappies were something he’d known of, he’d felt like a fucking idiot when Lady Catelyn had – rather rudely – questioned him about when he would secure a wet-nurse, assuming as many did that he’d automatically choose that option rather than breastfeed his own children as many highborn did, not to mention the rare male bearer who survived a birthing only to be too ill to feed their own babe, as had happened with Jon’s bearer Benjen, forcing Rhaegar to secure a trustworthy wet-nurse with the help of his friends in House Dayne.

Spotting sleepy-baby-blue eyes starting to peep open, Harry scooped up Dain as Aerion slept on, carefully working his way through a nappy change (he may have gotten in some practice with the wet-nurse, Bessa’s, daughter Alys) and managing, he thought, to not completely cock it up as Talisa
had managed most of the baby-care while hovering over them to make sure all of three of them were recovering from the birth. Wrapping his son back up, Harry sat in the wide window-seat of the King’s solar, gathering an audience of a pair of direwolves as the dragons slept on completely unconcerned with the doings of their humans’ mate, Dain’s huffy little whimpers melting his heart as if his tiny little fingers weren’t already firmly wrapped around it along with his brother’s. Gently, Harry worked the makeshift nipple into his mouth, Dain somewhat familiar with the routine from his previous two feedings earlier in the evening working to suck the goat’s milk through the soft cotton as Harry was careful not to send it flooding into his infant son’s mouth despite the cloth covering somewhat preventing such a happening.

Enchanted green eyes watched as teeny hands attempted to knead at the bottle before settling, rosebud mouth and downy cheeks moving with each strong suck, Dain working his way through the small amount of milk in what seemed no time at all, though it must have been at least twenty or so minutes as Dain nodded back off to sleep.

Setting the empty bottle aside, cleaning all of it with an absent flick of power and sending it back for next time, Harry moved Dain into position to help him pass his wind, the newborn eventually coughing up a bit of soured milk for his efforts, Harry just giving a bit of a sigh as Ghost and Grey Wind watched out of sleepy eyes, both direwolves tired themselves after spending the last few weeks down in the kennels or hunting for their pregnant females, though by now all but one of the regular she-wolves had whelped and were able to at least do a bit of hunting on their own. Another spell took care of the refluxed milk, Harry using a soft, damp cloth to smooth away the little bit around that soft pink mouth. Magic could easily be used around the babies without worry, but only sparingly on them until their cores were more settled usually around nine to ten years of age. Healing spells, diagnostics, and such were all fine along with child-strength potions, but other than their own natural magics for the most part it was best avoided if possible.

Though with only Harry around to worry over it, it wasn’t nearly the issue it would have been in his former life.

Tucking Dain back in he swapped him for Aerion, the smaller twin not having so much as twitched despite it being at least a half-hour later than Dain’s feed, helping sooth any lingering anxiety he had over whether he was doing the right thing as he knew sleep was vital for preemies.

Repeating the process with Aerion, complete with staring enraptured as he fed, which though it took at least twice as long as Dain and a bit of persistence on Harry’s part his precious one got all the milk down and without the reflux Dain had had, merely passing a bit of wind when the time came, Harry found himself yawning wide and tumbling back into bed with a bit of an evil-eye for his husbands, setting his wand for an hour and a half to repeat the routine all over again.

…

“You look exhausted.” Ser Arthur told him as he came into the solar as he did every morning, Prince Lewyn and the other day guards on his heels, Torrhen and Mark still the most “junior” of the Kingsguard getting the duty of the night-watch, to bring in the meal for the Kings to break their fast and get ready for the day only to find a droopy-eyed Harry sitting with a pair of sleeping direwolves at his feet in the window-seat of the solar, the tiny form of whom he thought was little Prince Aerion in his arms.

“They have to be fed every two hours.” Harry reminded them around a yawn. “And the wet-nurse only arrived late in the evening yesterday…besides which by noon I’ll be safe to try feeding them myself.”

“Well, until then.” Ser Arthur announced, coming over to scoop up the babe. “It’s not as if several
of us don’t know how to care for a babe until what’s her name, Betha, Bess? Arrives to start her service to the crown.”

“Bessa.” Harry said absently, thanking a kind-eyed Ser Barristan as the elder knight pressed a hot mug of the non-alcoholic cider he preferred into his hands.

Another truly excellent thing about settling into a place to make home besides being able to set up preservation enchantments and cooling and heating charms – at least in their personal quarters – was the ability of trade to take place, keeping Ser Arthur and the rest from continuing to raid his personal stash of herb and spice stores.

“And I’ll be fine once I have some food.” Harry told them firmly. “Bessa can watch the little ones, including her own, in the bed chamber under the canny eye of Prince Lewyn whilst I catch up on the sleep I missed during the night.”

Just then an awake-but-bleary Aegon came stumbling into the solar, tiny Dain already tucked into his arms despite Harry having only put him back down to sleep less than an hour before, though it didn’t seem being swooped up and cuddled by one of his fathers had managed to wake him anymore than the hand off to Ser Arthur had done for Aerion.

The Kingsguard exchanged the amused glances of men who’d never been fathers themselves but had helped raise more than one child over the years at the sight of both Jon and Robb stumbling in after Aegon, looking more than a little perturbed at having their babes snatched up before they could get a cuddle in themselves.

Harry just rolled his eyes and snorted, reminding the lot that the boys needed to be fed every two and kept in the King’s Chambers that had climate control charms, then wandered off to start getting some of that sleep he’d missed during the night.

“Remember, I want to be woken to try the noon feed.” Was his parting shot as he all-but-fell into the bedfurs, Ser Oswell and Prince Lewyn both noticeably looking away from the sight lest they laugh and earn themselves the ire of an angry and sleep-deprived new parent.

…

Bessa Cassel was a good woman of the North, married two years now to a distant cousin of Ser Rodrick Cassel, the Winterfell Master-at-Arms, and a find of the Princess Sansa to serve as wet-nurse if needed and simple nurse-maid if not to the children of the royal family.

Her husband being a distant cousin of the Winterfell Master-at-Arms served in the Winterfell guard and had been one of the first to pledge his sword to Robb Stark’s service and cause when the good Lord Eddard had been taken prisoner in King’s Landing.

Like many wives, she’d followed the drum of the army until Moat Cailin where the good women of the North had bid their men goodbye, her Harlan leaving her with a parting gift of a babe in the belly – again like many other young wives of the Northern host.

Their Alys was a good little mite, and being born on-time made the pair an excellent match, more a trustworthy one, to serve at Pridefall.

Her Harlan had been asked by Lord Robb himself if he would be pleased to serve as one of the Pridefall household guards instead of at Winterfell so that Bessa could serve the little heirs.

He’d been proud as a man could be, she’d have to say, at both the offer and the implied trust it meant their liege lords had in both them and the Cassel family (though Bessa was the daughter of the
Wintertown miller, not born a Cassel herself, her good-family had all been good to her and Lord Eddard fair with her father.

Still and all, it was with more than a bit of nervous hesitation that Bessa knocked on the door of the King’s Solar, having been lodged with her Alys in a spacious servant’s room several floors below that her Harlan was free to join her in when he wasn’t required to be with the other soldiers, or so Lord Harry had told her when settling on her position within the royal household.

Hesitation that both trebled and washed away as she entered the room as she was bid after a nod from the Kingsguard that had told her to knock in the first place, though anyone even a simple miller’s daughter from Wintertown would recognize Barristan the Bold, as she saw young Lady Arya seated on a chaise in the King’s solar, one of Bessa’s newborn charges in her arms.

The relief came from the easy welcome she saw on the human faces: Lady Arya, Princess Daenerys, and one of the healers she thought was foreign.

The lack thereof came from the non-human faces that turned her way as she walked into the King’s solar with Alys in her sling cradled against her chest: the direwolves that she remembered as mere pups a year or so ago, three of whom were all arrayed around the room, obviously guarding the little ones as she’d heard-tell Lord Bran’s direwolf had done and ended up saving his life.

There was another Kingsguard in the solar, splitting his attention between herself as a newcomer and the babes held in the arms of Lady Arya and the silver-haired Princess of Dragonstone, one she didn’t yet know the name of.

Though Lord Harry was nowhere to be seen, that was nothing but expected given that she was certain he would have woken through the night with the babes.

“Bessa.” Lady Arya smiled at her, the wilder of the Stark sisters familiar with most of the Winterfell guard and their families. “You made it.”

“Yes, milady.” Bessa dipped a proper curtsy to the lady and then again, deeper, to the Princess. “Little Alys and I were spending the day in the camp with my Harlan when the word came.”

“Bessa, this is Princess Daenerys Stormborn of Dragonstone, beside her Lady Talisa Maegyr of Volantis.” Arya made the introductions quickly, wanting to get the awkwardness done with and over as now that Harry’s given birth as well as Nymeria, she was set to go to Starfall and didn’t want to miss one minute with either baby for all that she’d never been much interested before. “And that is Ser Oswell Whent of the Kingsguard. Dany, Ser Oswell, this is Bessa Cassel, formerly of Wintertown, now the royal wet-nurse.”

Pleasantries were exchanged and then Bessa was at last introduced to her new charges.

“This little warrior.” Arya announced, propping the red-haired babe up in her arms, holding in an inner coo – she wasn’t Sansa for the gods sake – “is Lord Dain Stark, Heir of Winterfell.”

“And this,” Dany followed her lead. “Is Prince Aerion Targaryen of Pridefall, your future king.”

“They’re beautiful children, my ladies.” Bessa told them honestly. And they were, quite well-formed little ones for all that they came early and took near-everyone by surprise in the process. “This is my Alys.” She moved the sling a bit so they could see her little golden-haired babe, then frowned. “Is there a cradle for her to rest when I need to care for the babes…?”

She’d been told there would be, that she could bring Alys with her when she was to care for the little lords.
“There.” Arya nodded towards an alcove with a simple but well-fashioned cradle, complete with a thick woolen mattress and soft knitted blankets. Harry’s doing she supposed, given that the girl would be milk-sister, perhaps, with his own children. “Though my good-brother wants to at least try and feed his children himself.”

“Well, at the least I can help with changes and be a watchful eye.” Bessa nodded, then settled onto a nicely carved chair, edging just a bit out of the fastest path to keep from coming too close to the direwolves.

Knowing of them and seeing them at a distance was one thing.

Having them at her feet was something else entirely, though when the nearest to her did little more than give a wolfish snort and go back to keeping an eye on their own pups that were sleeping near the fire she did see the ladies exchange a pleased glance.

Bessa, it seemed, had passed a test she didn’t even know was being posed.

…

It was a tired – and more than a bit drunk – trio that returned to their chambers that night.

They’d been in and out of the solar all day, but come the evening meal their men and lords had held them in the hall for long hours, toasting the health of both the twins and their bearer. A few had attempted to call for the boys to be presented, an idea which was quickly shut down with a firm reminder that they’d come more than a moon-turn early and needed quiet and rest for several weeks. It had stopped the demands to see the little ones but not the toasts, much to the amusement of more than one older lord who clearly saw that they wanted nothing more than to return to their rooms and be with said children and their dangerous, beautiful bearer.

Ser Barristan in particular could hardly keep from laughing every now and again at the scowl that occasionally flickered over his King’s face before Jon schooled his features once more and played along with good grace.

Though heads a bit muzzy with drink or not, they all walked quietly on soft socked-feet, having stopped to shed their heavy boots in the solar before venturing into the bed chamber to keep from waking their beloved and their children.

All to come to a quick stop at the sight that met their eyes as they entered their bed chamber: that of their beloved, shirt shucked to the side, with an ebon-haired babe in one arm suckling at his slightly swollen breast, their kissed-by-fire son already sleeping in his cradle at Harry’s side as their little love stared down captivated as Aerion sucked at his nipple, a particularly strong draw every now and again showing in the slight wince on Harry’s loving, enchanted face.

Aegon, Jon, and Robb all slowly shucked their own clothes and climbed gently into the bed, surrounding their beloved with their arms and bodies, joining him in watching over their little ones, just as enraptured with each soft whimper and huff from rosebud lips.

“Look at what we did.” Harry said eventually, after returning Aerion to his cradle and cleaning up, shrugging back into his shirt. “What we made.”

“They’re beautiful, love.” Jon pressed a fierce kiss onto lips that he saw in miniature on his redheaded son.

“More than beautiful.” Robb corrected, pressing a kiss of his own onto a brow that the line of he thought he spied under ebon curls on the future King of Westeros’s precious head.
“They’re both a perfect blend.” Aegon decreed, looking between his lovers and the children they’d brought into their marriage. “Gods be good, all of our children shall be so blessed.”

Two weeks passed in a blur of feedings, changings, and naps for Harry before he sorted himself out enough – let alone his children – to venture further than the Hall of Hearths, his feet carrying him out to the godswood with Ser Oswell shadowing his steps, Prince Lewyn left with the children as they napped under the watchful eyes of Bessa and Ghost while Harry sought fresh air and to see if the godswood would be appropriate for Aerion and Dain’s blessing.

He thought they would – more knew – but at this point any reason to get a bit of stretch to his legs was appreciated as he’d been chained, mostly by his own wishes, to the King’s Chambers for the last fortnight.

That being the case – and given how large the godswood was – it was understandable that it took him several minutes to realize what was, not wrong, but drastically different from the last time he’d entered the twenty-plus acres of the godswood.

Sucking in a breath, Harry came to a stop about halfway to the heart-tree, blinking at a distinctly odd tree that he’d almost just walked around without noticing it.

Honestly, if it weren’t as out of place as it was, he might have made it all the way to the heart-tree without really seeing what he was seeing if it wasn’t for that tree and the others like it.

“Ser Oswell?” He asked, voice calm and showing none of his surprise.

His rapidly blinking eyes did enough of that for all of him.

“Aye.”

“Are you seeing this too?”

“Aye.” Ser Oswell answered, more than a little shocked at the sight of a new tree he’d never seen the like of in the godswood of his childhood home, let alone that it looked full-grown but he knew it wasn’t there a few weeks before the last time he accompanied his King as Jon prayed before the heart-tree. And that was before you took in the other plants that seemed to have made themselves at home in a place he’d never seen them before either. “Though it makes no sense to my eyes.”

“What the fuck?” Harry cursed softly, turning a full circle in wondering confusion.

“Do you know…?”

“How they all got here?” Harry finished. “No. Though I do recognize them and with that comes an idea.”

“Better than me.” Oswell noted as Lord Harry started walking again towards the heart-tree, though both of them were taking better note of all the plant life surrounding them in the process. “I only know the red and orange of the Dragon’s Breath Lilies, and those I’ve never seen grow anywhere outside of Dragonstone.”

“They’re all magical plants and trees.” Harry answered the unvoiced question. “That tree that startled me is a cocoa tree, a species that has absolutely to business being in a godswood in Westeros at all let alone this far north. I see several forms of dittany and athelas, asphodel and fluxweed, valerian and snapdragons, and that’s just to start.”
“What caused it?”

“Magic.” Harry burst out a joyful laugh, turning in a circle as they entered the grove of the heart-tree and saw it completely blanketed in Dragon’s Breath Lilies rather than the hard-packed earth that there’d been before. “Magic’s been reborn into the world, Ser Oswell. Dany’s dragons, direwolves, Jon waking me.”

“The babes.” Oswell nodded, following. “This is a great blessing from the gods if so, Lord Harry.”

“Yes, I rather suppose it is.”

…

In light of the changes to the godswood, Harry put out a proclamation to all of Pridefall, Weirton, and the surrounding camps that no one was to harvest any sort of plant life from the acreage surrounding the grove of the heart-tree, then put up wards to ensure it.

If nothing else two things had been accomplished by the trip: first, he’d confirmed that it would be a good place for the twins’ blessing.

And second, with the dittany alone that had sprouted and grown from nothing at all, he was all at once less concerned over the future health and well-being of his family and the state of his potions stores.

…

Word crept in from King’s Landing of the seething of the Old Lion and the screeching of his daughter, but Harry paid it no mind.

He had a blessing to oversee.

…

They all gathered in the heart-tree grove, the pair of three-week-old twins held by their sires, each and every person in some way or form family to the boys.

There was blood-family: Maester Aemon, Princess Daenerys, and King-Consort Aegon.

Family of choice: all the members of the Kingsguard.

And standing before them all was Harry, getting ready to do something that he wasn’t certain would ever work but that wasn’t going to stop him from trying all the same.

Once everyone present in Pridefall was there and standing spread out before him, all save Maester Aemon who sat, including all three dragons and the three direwolves along with Nymeria and Ghost’s pups, he began with a summoning.

“I call forth from space and time

Matriarchs of the Potter-Black Line

Bearers, Children, Siblings, Friends

Our family spirit without end.

To gather now, in this sacred place
Harry held his breath for a long moment even as he felt his heart sink then just when he thought too much time has passed, too much had changed, there came a shimmer in the air.

And suddenly his small handful of family wasn’t so small at all.

Though he couldn’t blame some of them for shifting anxiously, particularly the living.

It wasn’t everyday after all that one found themselves surrounded by dozens of visible spirits, men and women both, who had borne children for Harry’s family line.

Including one face that he thought he would never see again.

She stepped forward, crossing that invisible barrier, and came to stand at her son’s side in all her young beauty: eyes as green as emerald and hair the red of blood, with skin a gleaming ivory and a smile to lift the darkest of spirits from the doldrums.

“Mum.”

…

“Hello baby.” Lily Potter neé Evans gave a soft but joyful smile at her strong, beautiful son, ignoring the gasps from the living souls that made up the middle arc of those summoned to bless her grandsons. “I’m so proud of you.”

Tears filled twin pairs of emerald eyes, only to be blinked back almost in unison, then Lily lifted one hand, cupping a finely-chiseled cheek and smoothing one thumb over a sharp cheekbone, an eternity passing in that silent moment between them where they said everything at yet nothing at all.

Turning, Lily stepped towards her, well in the time period her son had woken she supposed they were her good-sons.

She’d seen much of them, always watching over her baby as he slept his endless sleep beneath what was once Hogwarts.

“I may be a spirit.” She warned them with an arch of an elegant brow. “But hurt my baby and I’ll make you pay in ways you could never imagine.”

“I would expect nothing else, my lady.” Jon answered once he’d gotten around the stone that had settled in his throat. He’d known – Harry had told all of them – that part of the blessing was summoning the spirits of his family matriarchs of the past. That hadn’t quite transferred over to suddenly being surrounded by visible apparitions, one that seemed to become flesh and blood.

More, that one was his good-mother.

And by the gods, he could see now where Harry gained his beauty, though it being of a more masculine sort than that the late Lady Potter had to her name.

If anything it made him fear for himself should Harry bless him with any daughters for the swarms of suitors that would be sure to follow.

“Good.” Lily nodded sharply then continued. Her son’s magic couldn’t hold them here forever after all, even with the rather unique being he’d befriended ages ago. “Now, may I hold my grandsons?” She held out her arms, Jon passing over Aerion and Robb Dain, taking care to ensure that she was,
actually, something akin to flesh and blood and able to hold him safely before completely letting go. She glanced at her son, who wordlessly stepped back and beside his husbands, wordlessly ceding his place as the High Priest to his mother to serve as High Priestess of the rite.

“The next generation has been born into our family, our legacy. We pledge to be with these children. These beautiful boys always. Apart but never separate. Free but never alone. They are each one of us and because of that, we will bless them both with all of the goodness that we are. Welcome to the family Aerion Targaryen. Welcome to the family Dain Stark Blessed be.”

“Blessed be.” Those gathered intoned, even as Harry’s eyes tracked over the spirits, gaze hungry for those who had answered his call.

*There*, his grandmother Dorea.

*There*, his cousins Narcissa, Andromeda, and Nymphadora.

Then one he recognized only for who they resembled and what Teddy had told him: Teddy’s husband, Scorpius Malfoy, and those who had a mixture of Black and Malfoy features, along with a long line of Potter-wives or husbands that were less recognizable.

And before them all, his mum, holding his sons and bestowing on them the blessing of the family.

…

*A/N 2: *Yep, *did some borrowing from Charmed here at the end, but I thought it fitting…*

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