Running With Wolves

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Summary

News sometimes comes slowly to the Wall, but come it does.

Notes

Spoilers for everything up to A Feast for Crows, set early in the novel.

The letter was obviously a last-minute consideration from some thoughtful soul with a scrap of kindness for the bastard of Winterfell. The writing was unpracticed, poorly spelled and hurried. The end of it was smudged almost illegibly where the author hadn't waited for the ink to dry fully. Jon stared down at it with eyes gone dull.

Betrayal upon betrayal. First his father, reputation stained and betrayed, and Sansa captured and Arya...dear, brave Arya, who’d always been so bright. Theon a traitor, taking Winterfell and murdering Bran and Rickon... Then the Bolton bastard, their people fled in terror. And now, to find that while he’d been playing Wildling in the woods, Robb had been...

_Gods, Robb...Bran and Rickon..._ He’d moved beyond grief and rage, it seemed. Broken open and hollow, he folded the letter closed once more, locking the broken seal back into place. "Tom. You have first watch tonight?"
When he looked at Tom, probably already aware of some of the issues Jon had just been informed of, the man didn't even try pretending he hadn't been watching. "Aye, my Lord."

Jon stood, pushing the bench back with a dragging sound in the new silence of the dining hall. "I'll take your shift."

Tom Barleycorn stared at him thoughtfully and then shrugged as Jon collected his half-full bowl of porridge and cup.

Sam stood, eyes wide and face paler than usual. "Jon, you can’t just...you’re the – "

Jon patted his shoulder automatically as he returned from the dish bin. "I need some time alone, Sam."

He tightened his cloak and moved through the path between tables, eyes on the door. The men along the aisle leaned away. Jon stepped from the dining hall and looked toward the sun to judge the hour, then made his way to the lift where he was joined by Ghost.

The Wall was a lonely place. It suited Jon even when he hadn't been hollowed of all thought. The ride up in the lift was an age of silence, a world unto Jon filled only with the wind and the indifferent complaints of wooden rigging.

He took his route along the wall quickly, settling into the spot he’d favored automatically. By habit, his hands moved to the small stack of wood against the wall and laid them against each other, then to his belt and the flint there. Ghost settled beside him watchfully and when he sat back on his heels, the wolf leaned in. Jon stared down for a long moment, taking in the distant white landscape so far below.

He felt as though he'd dived deep into a summer pond, then tried to surface only to find it frozen over. The tightness in his chest grew, and then, abruptly, everything went flat and shades of gray as his vision righted. Part of him recognized the sensation from the dreams he’d been having. Ghost.

The discomfort he'd felt at the idea of becoming one with his wolf was gone. Let Stannis have his Lord: Jon knew for a fact the Old Gods were real, and if he belonged to anything in the world now that his family must be lost, it was to them. Perhaps the simplicity of thought was due to the shock of grief: what bonds did he have left to claim him? Perhaps it was just that things were simpler in the mind of a wolf. Abstract concepts like duty and loss of self were distant, and something called to him in the far ground on the other side of the Wall, something that blunted the dagger of grief digging into him.

Jon-who-was-Ghost turned away from Jon-the-man's body, slumped over beside the small fire. They ran the length of the wall to the closest of the abandoned castles. They crossed the distance in a loping gallop all the way over the boundaries of the Nightfort, long abandoned, and moved silently to the narrow stair carved into the Wall, descending into the courtyard.

The Nightfort was in a terrible condition but the foundations stood firm. Ghost seemed to know the way and they moved deeper into the twisting halls of the Watch’s castle until they finally entered a dark room, still air and icy rock until they came to a nexus of life in the dead stones. They approached and the wooden mouth began to move, a rolling mass of dark gray to Ghost’s eyes.

"Who are you?"

Ghost brought them up on their hind legs, forepaws planted on either side of the face and stared into the figure’s eyes. Something like fingers tickled at their thoughts, and then rifled through Jon’s memories like pages in a book until it lit on Jon's memory of taking the oath.
The mouth opened into cold, dark air.

Ghost took them out into the open wilds beyond the Wall with an eagerness that was half desire to run and half some pressing need that grated against Jon’s nerves as well. The smells and sounds were distracting and called for investigation, but even then, he found that they were moving in a certain direction. He wasn’t sure how long they’d traveled, but every step seemed to pull some string in them tighter until Jon felt like a tightly-strung bow, arrow poised to strike.

The wind shifted, and they breathed deep of the new scents automatically, and Jon could feel Ghost's knowledge as half-memories, cold heavy air and faint rot from decomposing leaves trapped deep under it, a doe's trail hours old, and something along the edges Jon barely processed before the tension snapped, a stinging, fierce sense of kinship striking through Ghost and shaking Jon.

Ghost urged them forward, ears straining for a telling sound as they scented the air, and Jon let him lead them along to the warm, safe smell of Home. He hesitated despite Ghost's urgency when they came upon a wolf crouched dark and wary against the white snow, half-hidden amidst the snow-covered roots of a large tree.

*Grey Wind*, Jon realized with a rush of shock as Ghost's joy urged him forward. *But how...?*

Grey Wind lifted his head to watch them, and seemed to stare for a long moment before rising. Ghost trotted closer, ducking their head when they were within range of his larger brother's teeth. Jon was too much in shock to feel much of anything else while Grey Wind investigated them, and Ghost quickly joined in, darting around Grey Wind to take in the various scents overlaying his.

*Gods preserve me, how did you get over the Wall?* Jon wondered silently. *How did you survive?*

But he found he didn't care much for the answer. Ghost's delight in finding his brother was loud in their shared space as he darted around Grey Wind, and Jon was shamefully jealous.

He gently retook control of their shared body and turned back towards the Wall. Ghost's eyes weren't as sharp as his own and the distance was hard to judge, but he assumed they'd been gone a good while, and would need to return Jon to his body soon, or be asked questions to which Jon had no answers.

Jon-who-was-Ghost tracked their scent back to the base of the Wall where they again let themselves be read by the Black Gate. Running through the Nightfort and up the narrow stair was almost quick work compared to the run along the Wall back to his body. He’d been more distracted than he'd realized while answering Grey Wind's call if he’d covered that much distance without realizing. They encountered one patrol, but thankfully the men were more intent on the frozen land to the North than the solid construction at their back. Jon observed them for a long moment, and then led the way past them, pacing the far wall.

Jon relaxed his control of their body with some relief and let Ghost finish the trip back up the stairs to where *his* body waited, Grey Wind following a half step behind them.

Jon’s body was still slumped over beside the fire, which had burned out without attention. Grey Wind froze while Jon and Ghost moved forward, Ghost more than ready to reclaim total control of his body now that his human was feeling less like he was about to fall into a great chasm. Jon ruefully thanked his companion and then forced himself to remember what it was to be a man.

Numbness and pain welcomed him, both at once. His limbs were cold and unresponsive when he tried to move, and forcing himself to crouch only compounded that when he lost his balance. That was bad at any point along the Wall, but especially here, by the one of the gaps, and Jon slid...
forward, panic briefly cutting through the maelstrom of his thoughts.

Then pressure in his cloak drew him back, and another clamp tightened around his wrist and tugged him flat.

Grey Wind released his wrist and sat, and Jon felt his cloak settle over his legs in the protection it offered against the wind as Ghost moved to sit beside his brother. Belly to the ground with his cheek pressed into the ice-packed walkway, what warmth he'd retained, wrapped tightly in his cloak, seeped into the icy ground, but Jon couldn't find it in him to care.

Grey Wind shifted then, the movement drawing Jon's attention. Ghost sat beside his brother, both of them with their eyes on Jon, and the distance that had carried him from the dining hall was gone. Grey Wind lifted his head in surprise as heat rose and spilled from Jon's eyes, quickly freezing on his cheeks, and Jon closed his eyes, ashamed that his brother's wolf had to bear witness to such weakness.

He tried to get his arms under him, but they responded only with reluctant jerks, sluggish, and the sting of ice-covered rock against his knuckles was a distant thing. He forced his eyes open again and met Grey Wind's blue eyes, chest aching at the gaze he could almost imagine was Robb's. "I'm sorry," he whispered, voice taken by the wind. "I'm so sorry..."

Grey Wind ducked his head and Jon tried again to rise, and again failed for the ice in his limbs. Frustration combined with the next wave of grieving tears and he just barely managed to strangle a scream into a sob.

Warmth settled hesitantly at either side, and when he opened eyes he'd clenched shut in his shame, he could only see mottled gray fur. Something soft – two somethings? – thumped against his legs and he could already feel heat returning to his limbs from the windbreak the wolves provided. After a moment, he found the strength and coordination to roll up onto his side and without regard to judgment or shame, he leaned heavily into Grey Wind and buried his still-damp face into the thick fur of the wolf's neck as he shook silently.

Ghost jerked up some time later. Jon was exhausted and still aching, but the sudden draft against his back roused him enough to recognize the sound of the lift. He uncurled from Grey Wind and found he could stand, if he took it slowly. He glanced at the level of light and realized he was late coming down from the watch. He scooped up a handful of snow from the edge of the Wall and scrubbed his face, hopefully removing sign of his tears, then turned and slowly led the way to the lift.

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Bread and cold porridge would have to do, and Jon would have to clean the bowl himself later, because he found he could not bear the dining hall longer than the short time it took to acquire the food. He returned to his quarters, now largely cleared of Donal Noye's things, and felt his tension ease when he was able to close the door behind Grey Wind and Ghost. He set the torch in the holder and hung Longclaw on the wall. The air was warmer off of the Wall and out of the wind, but Jon still felt like an old man as he knelt to build the fire back up.

Sam had told him that he needed a Steward, but Jon had avoided choosing one from the last batch. It was bad enough to have a 16 year old Lord Commander. What would the men do if one of their own, the same age as Jon or even older, was supposed to follow after him? It would seem as though Jon needed minding.

In situations like this, though, he wished he could give into Sam's suggestions so that he might have a fire waiting. Once the tinder caught and he was sure the branches were well on their way to igniting
the thick, slow-burning logs, he sat back on his heels and watched it grow. After watching the fire long enough for the heat to become uncomfortable in proximity, he pushed himself to his feet, finding the movement almost easy once again. He unhooked and hung his heavy cloak and locked the door.

Ghost had taken to the large fur Jon had brought in for him, head resting on his paws. Grey Wind padded away from the bed toward the wall along the back, where Longclaw hung.

Jon moved to the bureau beside the bed and removed his boots, which he set to the side, and then began working off his heavy padded tunic. He was pleased to have largely regained mobility as he hung the tunic for the next day. The wolves rustled behind him, barely audible over the sound of his own breath and the low crackle of the fire on the wall.

Snow.

Jon’s fingers stilled at his belt as the memory of his brother's voice slipped into his mind like a knife in his temple, an unbidden and painful surprise. Robb… He lifted a fist to his head and dug his knuckles in then slumped forward as the grief he'd briefly slipped returned. “Gods damn them. A knife in the dark is too good. You deserved…so much better.”

Again Robb's voice returned, Snow, and Jon bowed his head. Jon let out a sharp bark of laughter, head falling forward to the bureau door. Apparently, not even losing himself in the mind of a wolf before sobbing himself into a gray exhaustion could fully calm his mind from the grief. I become a wolf, and then I hear the voices of the dead. Perhaps they were right about the bad blood after all… “I'll revenge you on any man I can, any man who wielded bow or blade against you…”

Tight pressure – a strong, living hand – gripped his arm just above the elbow. Panic cut through Jon's grief from the surprise in a room that should only have the wolves and Jon jerked, trying to turn, reaching for his belt dagger. The hand was joined with a mirror grip on his other arm, heat and the pressure of another man pressing him into the bureau while his arms were held from his belt dagger.

Jon drew breath to shout, ready to at least ensure his assassin would not escape Castle Black.

“Shut up, you lackwit,” a voice hissed quietly. “It's me.”

Jon choked on the air he'd taken in, struggles ceasing as he coughed deeply, shaking between the old wood of the bureau and the solid body at his back. And now I'm to go mad... he wondered hysterically. “You’re dead. House Frey…”

He was tugged around and clamped his eyes shut. The fingers on his arm were tight. The dead could rise, he’d become well aware of that, but…he’d never heard a Wight speak before. Certainly there had been the chill of death on the ones he had seen, and Robb – if this truly was Robb – was like a brand of heat against his back.

Even so, he didn’t think he was strong enough to bear the sight if it was Robb, but somehow become a Wight.

“Open your eyes, idiot,” the voice said. Warm breath rushing over Jon's face, and that was undeniably Robb’s voice, with the hint of the South in his Northern accent a testament to time spent with his mother. It wasn’t an order Jon could long disobey, not with hope worming treacherous tendrils into his heart. He opened his eyes.

Robb stood before him with no sign of the frost on any part of him. If he was a Wight, he looked
nothing like the others Jon had seen. His eyes were blue, but it was the same stormy blue they'd always been and his flesh was no paler than it had been. The exertion of holding Jon down had even brought color to his cheeks, something Jon hadn't seen in any Wight.

"Gods save me," Jon whispered, eyes wide, and then surged forward, breaking Robb’s loosened hold to wrap his arms about his shoulders in a fierce clasp.

"No more crying, Snow," Robb whispered and Jon could feel his muscles move beneath his thin shirt as his arms came up around Jon in return. "I couldn't bear to watch twice."

"I thought you were dead," Jon said thickly, voice muffled against Robb's shoulder before he pulled back to glare. Robb ducked his head in a faint shrug, red curls gleaming in the light of the fire, and Jon stared again, drinking in the sight.

The first glimpse he'd spent had been the ways in which Robb was still Robb, rather than a Walker. Now he could see some differences from the brother he'd left at Winterfell. He was taller than he'd been, and broader still, obvious with no cloak to disguise the width of his shoulders. His hair was longer than Jon had ever seen it and his beard was thick and in need of a trim.

His face was also thinner than it had been, faint shadows at his cheekbones a testament to poor diet and a faint wrinkle that seemed permanently along his forehead. The fire made the reds of his Tully coloring even more obvious than it normally was. “You’ve grown.”

Robb snorted. “Me? Look at you.” And he did, again, eyes moving over Jon in a quick sweep. “At least you’ve filled in some more. You were nearly thread and bone when you left.”

Jon couldn’t tear his eyes away. “How did you escape?”

Robb’s jaw tightened and he shifted back, hands sliding off of Jon. “I didn’t.”

Jon found that he was beyond shock by the time Robb demonstrated his transformation from man to direwolf and back.

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Jon watched Robb brood for a minute, trying to work his mind around a brother who could turn into a wolf. Does that mean… he started to think, eyes sliding to Ghost, and then immediately turned his thoughts away.

“Are you hungry?” If he’d traveled as Grey Wind from House Frey to Castle Black, he might have hunted, but Jon doubted that he’d had too much in the way of food. His own stomach was growling, but he passed the entire bowl of porridge to Robb. It would be stone cold now, and the bread wasn’t as good as anything they’d had at Winterfell, but it was what Jon could offer.

Robb frowned faintly, hand hovering over the bowl, then lifting out the bread and tearing an end from the loaf. He dropped the small end back in the bowl and took it, holding the larger half out to Jon.

Jon could only imagine how hungry he must have been to take the rest without protest, and took a bite while Robb attempted to find a medium between etiquette and voracious appetite.

“Being a wolf is…” Robb scraped the bottom of the bowl and pushed to small spoonful into his mouth, chewing with a thoughtful expression. Jon made a mental note to bring a large meal into his office that afternoon after sleeping off his borrowed shift.
“Simpler?” he offered.

Robb blinked, eyes darting up to him and then twisting to glance at Ghost, who was now asleep on his side. “You too?”

Jon shrugged. “Not so far as...well, I’ve spent time in Ghost’s mind. It’s how I found you.”

Robb nodded slowly. “Ah. I wasn’t sure. You…ah, you were…overcome.”

Jon snorted. “You can say that I cried like our sister when she burned her mouth on the first winter stew.”

Robb’s mouth curled faintly and he leaned over and set the well-scraped bowl onto the floor. “It was even worse than Sansa.”

“I’d just gotten word you were dead,” Jon pointed out, but his mouth twitched.

Robb shrugged but the playful edge to his expression faded. Jon bit his lip, looking away out of courtesy as his brother’s thoughts obviously turned back to his betrayal.

“We can share the bed, I think,” he said, hitting on that for a purpose. And come to think, he was genuinely exhausted himself, now that the rush of shock from Robb’s intrusion was fading. “I’ll get you a shirt.”

Robb took one of his spares silently, and Jon was doubly glad again that he’d grown. Even one of his looser shirts was obviously barely fit to contain Robb’s well-muscled shoulders. That had the benefit of bringing Robb’s mood back up a bit as he smirked silently.

“Oh, shut up,” Jon muttered.

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Later, the fire was low enough to cast long, deep shadows, and Jon was still awake. “Stark?”

“Snow,” Robb murmured, no sound of sleep in his voice.

Jon opened his eyes and rolled over onto his side, finding Robb mirroring his movements a half-beat behind. His brother’s eyes were almost bright enough in shadows the fire cast on his face from this angle that Jon wanted to check him again to ensure there was no chill on his skin. But he could see too much expression on his face for a Wight. “What will you do?”

Robb’s eyes narrowed. “There are debts owed. I tried to call for payment honorably and was betrayed at every turn. I suppose I must try a more subtle approach.”

Jon swallowed, worry upsetting his nerves at the fervor in his brother’s voice. “By what means? You know I will help you however I may, but I can’t leave. I’d be branded a traitor and killed by...well, almost anyone.”

Robb’s expression softened faintly and he leaned up on his forearm, allowing him to tilt forward and grip Jon’s shoulder. His hand was hot as a brand even through Jon’s second-best nightshirt. “I will not ask you to break your oaths.”

Jon licked his dry lips, caught in the fire reflected in Robb's eyes as he continued.

“Our brothers are dead by that Bolton bastard and our sisters are captured, or worse. Mother is gone, and my bannermen are scattered and turncoat or dead. I’ve no bonds left to defend, and now I’ve
been given this…gift. An accident, of course. They intended it a desecration. To the Young Wolf, they said. The King in the North. But look what magic their gift has wrought. It would be a shame not to share it with them.”

Jon was surprised to see his own hand rising from the edge of the heavy furs and laying on Robb’s chest in the dim space that had become his room. They stared at each other as Jon felt the double-thud of Robb’s heartbeat behind his ribs through his borrowed nightshirt. “Don’t forget who you are.”

Robb was still for a moment, blue eyes heavy lidded and still before he brought his hand down Jon’s arm heavily and locked his fingers around his wrist, holding his hand in place. “Forget?” His voice was a true growl now, more direwolf than noble’s heir he’d been raised as. “Forget that I am heir to a House betrayed? Forget that one who sheltered with us for ten years – a man I trusted, who swore to stand by us – brought steel to our home, killed our brothers and opened the door to that Bolton butcher?”

Jon swallowed, fingers flexing as Robb’s grip tightened painfully. “Robb…”

Robb surged forward, forcing Jon’s arm to bend between them until his face was right beside Jon’s, and he could feel the rumble of his growl in more than just his forearm as he continued to speak. “Forget the pain of three arrows to the chest before the mercy of a blade was given, and waking covered in filth and maggots to find my mother dead and her body gone, and Grey Wolf dead, and the soul of a wolf riding me? What shouldn’t I forget, exactly?”

Jon pushed himself up a little higher onto his elbow and dug his fingers into Robb’s chest. “That I am not your enemy, first of all.”

Robb blinked, startled from his anger by the touch or Jon’s reply, and a little of the wolf draining from his eyes. Enough remained – of anger and the wolf both, perhaps – to give his voice a rasp. “How can I know?”

It was Jon’s turn to blink, nonplussed by the question. His mind couldn’t fully conceive of anyone doubting his loyalty to House Stark, let alone to his siblings. But with the betrayals Robb had faced, Jon supposed it was understandable. But if he didn’t trust Jon, what could really be done to earn it?

He yawned without any warning then, still exhausted even though he’d chased sleep for some indefinable time before speaking up. When he forced his eyes open halfway through the big sigh, head only starting to straighten out from where he’d automatically turned away, Robb’s eyes were obviously on his throat. As Jon relaxed and the tension draining from the corded muscle in his neck, Robb’s grip tightened around his wrist painfully, making Jon gasp.

What…he wondered, unwilling to pull away from his brother or bring violence between them when Robb had already had so much wrath wrought upon his body, but if he let it continue like this, he’d have a broken wrist to explain. “Will you only trust me if I can’t wield a sword?”

Robb blinked and Jon nodded toward where his knuckles were visible lighter than the rest of his hand in his crushing hold. A long moment passed, and then Robb seemed to tear his hand away, as though it were painful for him to do so. They lay quietly, both of them still facing each other and panting into the space between them.

“I can’t…I can’t stay here,” Robb whispered. “I thought I could. If I can trust anyone, it’s you.”

Jon’s chest ached more fiercely than his throbbing wrist. “But why? What’s changed?” he asked. “You seemed well enough earlier.”
Robb dragged his hand through his hair in a sharp jerk. “I don’t know.”

What’s different? Job thought. I’ve less weapons now. I changed my clothes, but I’m wearing less. I couldn’t be concealing anything…

But perhaps he was on to something. Hadn’t he just seen the new tension ease and return, when he’d stretched his head back? He’d been wearing a simple shirt earlier, with no collar, unlike the nightshirt he’d pulled on. Wolves – and their direwolf companions both – always made it a point to wrestle each other onto their backs and force the other’s throat vulnerable. His voice stuck in his throat as he considered that possibility. What could he ask though, to verify? Robb seemed just as confused as he was.

Perhaps he should just test it? He pushed himself up and Robb tensed. Jon quickly tugged his shirt over his head and tossed it over the side of the bed, leaving him naked. The furs pooled between his thighs, protecting his modesty, but his chest was bare to the air and he shivered faintly. Even with a fire, there was a hint of chill.

He tried to ignore it, sliding the furs high enough to slip under them and smoothing them over his chest. He used the movement to scoot a little closer to Robb so that when he lay on his back, he was laying in the middle of the bed and he could feel the heat rising from Robb along his side.

“What are you doing?” Robb asked.

His brow was furrowed when Jon forced himself to look away from the ceiling, but Jon thought his shoulders might have relaxed a bit. His hands were still clenched into fists, but not so tightly that his knuckles discolored. He licked his lips and kept his eyes down when he wanted to meet Robb’s gaze. “Well…how do you feel?”

Robb snorted. “What do you mean? I…” He stopped, mouth open for a moment before he closed it. Jon could see his throat work, eyes sharp enough now in the dim glow of the steady, slow-burning fire. “Better. I do feel better. What…”

Jon chanced a look up and offered a quick smile. “I thought…well, remember how Ghost and Grey used to wrestle?”

Robb nodded, relaxing onto his side and leaning toward Jon.

Jon licked his lips. “They wouldn’t stop on their own until one had gotten the other on his back, if you remember…” There were things Jon couldn’t fully articulate to himself, but he could see a similar knowledge passing behind Robb’s eyes as his expression became more thoughtful.

Jon chewed on his lower lip for a long minute before he reached out and tugged one of Robb’s fists up to his throat and pressed it there and held it until Robb spread his hand to settle in an uncertain grip, palm to Jon’s windpipe.

“What is this, Snow?” Robb whispered.

“I can’t hurt you because I am yours,” Jon said quietly. What of me isn’t covered in black. Whatever of me you wish to claim, he thought, but did not say. He wasn’t entirely certain he wouldn’t leave with Robb if his brother asked, but he could not bear the thought of Robb looking on him with pity when he realized how deeply Jon’s weakness ran.

Robb’s fingers twitched and Jon’s eyes sank shut with a pleasant shiver as the calluses moved over his skin. That last secret between them was finally out. The thing he’d hidden for the last years at Winterfell.
Robb’s voice was barely a whisper. “Oh.”

Jon lay still beneath his brother’s hand, fighting to keep his limbs from twitching. The buzz of concern, fear, and yes, even lust, may the old gods preserve him, had washed away the lethargy of exhaustion, and the longer the silence stretched in the room, the more he wanted to move.

The bed shifted first and then the heat of Robb’s chest was pressing into his arm directly, and Robb’s breath was hot on his lips. “Snow.”

Jon opened his eyes and knew there were no secrets left, not even the pathetic, desperate ones, because they must be written large upon his face.

Robb gasped, hand squeezing automatically, and Jon’s head tipped back automatically.

“Seven hells,” Robb muttered, and took Jon’s mouth like it was Lannister land.

Ygritte had never kissed him like this. Or perhaps he had never kissed her with this kind of urgency. Thoughts of her melted away like snow in the heat of fire as his senses were overwhelmed with the feel and scent and sound of Robb. His hand flexed along Jon’s throat gently, with no constriction but every rub of his fingers a delight of sensation over the thin skin of Jon’s throat as the softer skin along the edges of Robb’s fingers gave way to the rougher calluses and the occasional edge of his fingernails.

He smelled like snow and dirt and Jon’s soap from the shirt, and his mouth tasted of the porridge he’d eaten and faintly of blood as Jon licked into his mouth and chased a moan over his teeth. His blood was rising high and between one moment and the next he had his hands around Robb, sliding under his borrowed shirt to stroke over his back and pull him closer.

Robb resisted the first tug and then surged sideways, slinging one leg over Jon’s and forcing his thighs to spread. The hair along his knees rubbed over the more tender skin of Jon’s in the slide and he moaned, distracted and easy as Robb settled between his legs and bit at his mouth.

The heat built higher between them, and Robb ripped his mouth and hand away both to sink his teeth into Jon’s neck. It wasn’t a sharp bite, but the pressure was firm and Jon’s hands clenched in pain before he was distracted by the sweep of Robb’s fingers through the light hair on his chest and the surprise of his thumb brushing against one of his nipples. Robb’s hips started a hitching rhythm, sharp, short thrusts up that rubbed his hard cock over Jon’s balls and beside his own cock.

Jon dug his fingers into Robb’s back, one hand dragging lower and leaving red scratches from his shoulder down his back as Jon locked his hand around one of the taut globes of his ass, feeling the flex and roll of motion as Robb rutted against him. Robb’s mouth was moving over Jon’s shoulder now in jolts, sucking here and nipping there before sinking his teeth in firmly, and Jon could only pant out his name and urge him faster as his own cock leaked moisture against his belly between them while Robb’s traced damp trails over the crease of his thigh and wherever it happened to slide.

Heat built up in his gut, winding tighter with every rolling thrust, and then Robb pulled. Jon moaned, hands clenching before Robb knocked them away, lips curling in an expression that was almost a snarl, and then he took hold of Jon’s hip to flip him neatly onto his stomach and pulled him up onto his knees.

Robb seemed even warmer than before with the furs shoved back to the end of the bed and the rest of Jon exposed to the air, and the heat of his cock was a brand pressed against the back of Jon’s thigh. Jon panted into the air beneath him, head hanging in the space left open where he’d braced on his forearms.
“Close your legs,” Robb growled, falling to cover his back so that Jon could feel the deeper timber of his voice vibrate through his own chest. It sent a shudder through him and he found himself distracted from the command. Robb reached low under Jon’s chest and grabbed his throat. “Close your legs.”

Jon jerked against him, cock spurting onto his mattress hopefully as he obeyed, so desperate he could nearly taste his end. “Please…”

Robb squeezed his throat in warning and freed enough space between their hips for his free hand to grasp his cock and aim it. He dropped his head to Jon’s shoulder for a moment, the head of his cock pressed to the seam of Jon’s thighs, getting him wet while Robb gathered himself, and then he thrust forward.

The force of the thrust pushed his cock up into Jon’s balls and rocked Jon forward, slapping his own cock against his stomach. Jon opened his eyes and realized he could see it. Robb thrust again and Jon could see the transfer of motion through his own balls, slapping forward into his cock which twitched up into the slope of his stomach, and it was too much, it was all too much.

“Shh,” Robb panted. “Shut up, shut up—“

Jon had no idea what Robb was going on about, and then the hand at his throat tightened once more, with enough pressure to make breathing difficult, and he choked on a moan he hadn’t realized he was making.

“Fuck,” he gasped, leaning more weight on one arm to drag his pillow forward. He let out a startled half-moan on the next thrust, and then stuffed his mouth full of cloth to muffle it.

Robb continued thrusting, one hand on Jon’s throat and the other at his flank, gripping tight, and then that hand darted up tangled in his hair and pulled, lifting Jon up and tearing his mouth from the pillow.

“No,” he snarled. “I want…I want…” His voice cut out and wet heat flooded over Jon’s thighs and coated his balls.

“Robb!” Jon pushed back, his own hips stuttering. He tried to get a hand between them and Robb growled, hand going tight enough in Jon’s hair to pull tears to his eyes as his hips pushed through the mess he’d made, was still making, of Jon’s thighs.

Jon shoved his hand down, caught a string of Robb’s slick dripping from his own balls and let out a long, low whine as he wrapped his hand around his own cock, pulling once, twice, and then spent himself into the sheets with a silent sob.

Robb was a heavy weight on Jon’s back and after a moment, he began to work his arm back under him to take his weight when he felt the weight on his back lighten, and then pull away. He held still, thighs still close as Robb slid away, and they both let out faint moans at the sensation of his softened cock sliding through his own mess. Jon held still a moment, feeling his arms tremble, but his thighs were growing cold in the air, damp as they were and with Robb’s pleasure cooling on them, so he carefully leaned to his side, wincing at the slick slide of one thigh over the other.

Robb didn’t say anything, but when Jon risked a look in his direction he found those blue eyes were wide and locked on him. Shame flooded him, for some reason, and he dropped his eyes to the bed. “May I have my shirt?”

A moment, and then he could see Robb’s knees shuffle as he leaned to grab what Jon had tossed
away earlier. Jon shook it out and then took an end and began wiping up his thighs.

“Gods, I can’t believe…” Robb muttered, tone heavy with disgust, and even though Jon had expected something like this after whatever base urge that had gripped Robb had passed, he still couldn’t bring himself to look and see the distaste on his face.

Robb continued. “I didn’t mean to…Seven hells, you look like you’ve been mauled. Are you…?”

Jon’s hand stilled and a little of his fear eased at the automatic concern. His hip throbbed faintly where Jon had held it before moving to his hair, and his scalp tingled as well. The worst was his throat, which felt bruised and tender already. “I’m fine.”

“You sound as though you’ve been strangled,” Robb said. “You look as though you’ve been strangled. Gods, Jon, I’m so sorry…”

Jon bit his lip and then tugged the soiled shirt over his head to hide some of the marks. “I’m really fine,” he said, straightening the neck. “I’ll just have to wear a high collar when I dress.” He took a breath and then forced himself to look at Robb. He couldn’t let his brother feel any shame in what they’d just done when Jon had both instigated and enjoyed it. “You did nothing that requires apology.”

Robb snorted, brow furrowing faintly in disbelief. “Nothing?” He held up a hand and waved at Jon. “I just attacked you. I just made you…” He shook his head. “I’m no better than a Lannister. I should leave.”

“What? No!” Jon threw himself across the bed and grabbed Robb’s wrist. “You stubborn ass! You aren’t going anywhere!”

“Snow – Jon, you don’t see yourself. You look terrible. I held your throat and forced you to — “

Jon slammed into his chest with one shoulder and knocked the wind from him. While he was gasping, Jon tugged him into the middle of the bed and beneath him. “You didn’t force me to do anything!”

Robb blinked up at him, looking oddly young in that moment, and Jon closed his eyes. There was nothing else to do, really. He had to make sure Robb understood what he’d seen earlier, and hope that he wasn’t too disgusted with Jon that he left and got himself killed.

“I’ve had dreams of you doing…well, not this, exactly, but dreams since we were thirteen,” he said quietly, shoulders hunching. “It was usually you I was thinking of when I…behind the stables. I’m sorry about…well, a lot of things. But I guess I’m not as sorry about this one as I was yesterday, if knowing that I’m…that I’m no better than a Lannister means you don’t feel bad for this. You’ve done me no wrong.”

The back of his eyelids was a comforting black in the momentary peace after his explanation. Jon’s gut coiled in on itself in fear, both of Robb’s wrath and for his life if he decided to leave now.

Then Robb’s hands rose to grasp his shoulders and he whispered, “open your eyes, idiot.”

Jon did, and found himself trapped in his eyes. Robb held him trapped there for a long moment, brow furrowing thoughtfully before it smoothed over and he tugged Jon down. Jon went willingly, and a relieved sigh shuddered from his nose as Robb kissed him.

Robb pushed him back a bit and then smiled tiredly. “I guess I have some time to make up for then.”
Jon let himself slump forward, bone tired and feeling unexpectedly light, and shifted to the side to lay along Robb’s flank rather than crush him beneath his weight. Thank you, he thought to the Old Gods, and made a note to join the next Ranger patrol as far as the weirwood to give proper tribute, as soon as he could determine what else could equal his brother’s life.

They’d figure the rest of it out...later.

End Notes

In case it wasn't clear, yes, the Red Wedding happened as it did in canon. I just wondered what the consequences could have been and was finally able to get enough time somewhere quiet to finish this.

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