

I of the Storm

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I of the Storm

by [Kit_Kat21](#)

Summary

"Promise me," Sansa whispers, tears pooling in her eyes, and she doesn't care how vulnerable - and scared - she sounds right then. "Promise me you won't... I hear she is beautiful."

Jon steps to her and with his hands on her cheeks, he holds her face and stares into her eyes. "I promise you. You are my only Queen and you always will be."

Chapter 1

...

“Tell me of the King in the North,” Daenerys orders when she calls for him without any other greeting; not that Tyrion is expecting one.

Tyrion takes a moment to get all of his knowledge straight on the man who now sits in the North before he speaks and tells his Queen what she wants to know; remembers the somewhat broody boy he met from all that time ago.

“Jon Stark was the bastard son of Brandon Stark, legitimized by his father before Brandon and Lord Rickard Stark were...” Tyrion trails off and chooses not to finish that. His Queen is well aware of how Brandon and Rickard Stark died and does not need – nor would appreciate – the reminder. “He was raised by his Uncle and Aunt – the Lord Ned and Lady Catelyn Stark – alongside his cousins. I met him before he set off, to join the Night’s Watch.”

Daenerys raises an eyebrow at that. “He was the rightful heir and chose to join the Night’s Watch instead?”

Tyrion goes to pour himself a cup of wine. “From what I could gather of the boy, he felt his cousin was better suited for that role.” Daenerys seems curious about that, but she doesn’t stop her Hand from continuing. “I am not sure of everything that has happened to him, but I know that he and his cousin, Sansa, raised a campaign to take Winterfell back from House Bolton and won in the battle. The Northerners have since declared him their King and he and his cousin have married, making her his Queen.”

“And she is your former wife, yes?”

Tyrion had paused to take a swig of wine and he swallows now. “She was. For only a short time and it was unconsummated. It was annulled upon her marriage to Ramsay Bolton.”

“Hmmm.” Daenerys is quiet as she thinks through all of this information. “Do the King and Queen in the North love one another?” She then asks, this time, the question directed to Varys.

The man steps forward to answer. "I do not know, Your Grace. I doubt they do. They married for purely political reasons and to keep the Stark hold in the North as strong as possible."

"So, the King would not necessarily be loyal to her?"

Varys and Tyrion exchange a quick glance before Varys's eyes return to the woman.

"I did not say that, Your Grace." Daenerys lifts an eyebrow, but Varys continues. "Northerners are extremely loyal people and the Starks have the blood of the North in their veins more than anyone. Even if there is no romantic love between the King and Queen, there would be a familial love and loyalty."

"I certainly am not asking a husband or wife to betray the other, Varys," Daenerys responds to that though both her advisors know the woman well enough to know her tone. "Why wouldn't I be able to have the support of both? Send word to King Jon in the North. Tell him I would like to meet and speak with him. Tell him of what we are going to do to help Westeros in getting rid of their illegitimate Queen and bringing the rightful one to the throne."

"You do not wish to invite both of them?" Varys asks.

"There is only one and only going to be one Queen in Westeros," Daenerys says to that. "I think it would be best if I brought our cause to the husband before I inform the wife. Perhaps if the King can see things my way, it would be best if he be the one to inform his wife."

"The North sees themselves as independent from the lower Kingdoms, Your Grace," Varys reminds her.

"And I will speak with this King in the North and get him to see that we're much stronger as one rather than in seven broken pieces." Her words are firm and final and there is a smile on her face, but those in her circle know that it is not a smile meant to be interpreted as a friendly one.

Tyrion clears his throat. "Your Grace, both King Jon and Queen Sansa have bled for the North. The Queen's brother, the King's cousin, Robb Stark, was named King by their people before his death.

The North will never accept another Queen from the South and certainly not..." he pauses, trying to choose his words carefully.

"A Targaryen Queen," Daenerys finishes for him with a flash in her eyes.

"King Jon might be especially hard to convince of your right to the throne after what your father did to his," Varys speaks once more.

"I would hope that this King in the North, as well as anyone in Westeros, would not hold a daughter responsible for the actions of her father," Daenerys says. "I would hope that this King would be willing to listen to me and come to accept me once he learns who I am as my own person."

"Of course, Your Grace," Varys agrees and bows his head to her.

"Perhaps, Your Grace," Tyrion takes his turn again. "It would be best if I went to go speak to the King and Queen in the North personally instead of just sending them a summons."

Again, Daenerys lifts her eyebrow as she studies him. "You would leave me?" It is an innocent-sounding question that is anything but.

"Of course not," Tyrion is quick to assure her. "But you need allies and I still like to think I know Sansa. She will not take well to being ordered by anyone and Jon will ignore anything that a Targaryen tells him; especially an order."

"It is not an order. It's simply an invitation that he comes and meets his Queen," she reminds him.

"And I do not think either of them will look at it as such."

The Queen is quiet, thinking that over for a few moments, looking out the window as she does. Tyrion and Varys remain silent, exchanging a look between them as they so often do while awaiting Daenerys to speak, never quite sure what their Queen will say or decide next.

“Very well,” Daenerys speaks suddenly, spinning back towards both of her advisors, her eyes landing to Tyrion. “You will go to the North. To Winterfell. And you will speak with the King and your former wife. You will bring this King Jon back here with you where I may speak with him and show him that bending the knee to me and promising me his loyalty and support as well as those of the North to me is the best for everyone.”

Before Tyrion can even bow to show his obedience to the order, she continues.

“Your former wife. Sansa. Will she listen to you?”

Tyrion pauses, thinking of the last time they saw one another; at Joffrey’s wedding with Joffrey lying on the ground, choking and dying. There had been such chaos and Sansa fled and Tyrion was accused of murder. But much time had passed since then. She had been married again since then and Ramsay Bolton’s reputation far proceeded him.

He likes to think he still knows Sansa, but the truth is, there is quite a possibility that he won’t know her at all. He also thinks odds are that Jon Stark is far from the boy he was before going to the Wall as he was when Tyrion first met him.

Going to Winterfell to personally speak with Jon and Sansa, Tyrion knows, is the best course of action to take. Already though, he is wondering how he is going to get them to agree to a Targaryen Queen. The Starks have suffered and lost too much to both House Targaryen and House Lannister already. Jon and Sansa might hear Tyrion out only to tell him to go sod off and let everyone else fight for the throne for this is not a Northern fight.

Tyrion certainly won’t tell his Queen that though. He will go to Winterfell and he will get Jon Stark to come back with him no matter what.

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Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Every day, there is so much to do. Winter is here and Sansa spends her days, keeping track of their food supplies, welcoming those who have come to Winterfell from further North, seeking shelter, sewing and knitting and seeing to everyone's comforts as best as she can. Jon spends his days in the training yards. Only the elderly, sick and children under ten are not being trained and some of the women exempt as well. All day long, the clash of wooden swords echoes in the air.

For the evening meal, everyone is tired and talking is quiet, minimal, but Jon sometimes tells stories of his time at the Wall and beyond and Sam joins in, to tell his own stories of the dead, and soon, others start telling their own battle stories. Sansa has no stories of her own – none she want to share and relive – but she sits in her chair, smiling and listening to the others. No matter how tired they all are, they keep pushing forward for winter is here and the dead are coming and the time for rest will come, but it's not now.

Even when it's a quiet meal though, and everyone is nearly falling asleep in their food, the Hall at Winterfell still feels as warm and comfortable to Sansa as it did years earlier. It makes her smile to herself sometimes as she eats. And sometimes, if Jon looks to her and sees that smile across her lips, he seems to always know why she's smiling because he'll reach his hand over and cover hers, giving it the gentlest of squeezes.

Almost always after the meals, as Sansa oversees the cleaning and the clearing away the tables so everyone now in Winterfell has space on the floor to sleep and they all have blankets, Jon kisses her cheek – the most affection that is appropriate between a King and Queen while in public view.

"I will see you later," he promises her as he always does and then he returns to the training yards where he works on his own training for at least two more hours by torchlight.

In her chamber, Sansa's maid, Cora, helps her change from her dress into her nightgown and then brushes her hair out for her. Ghost has already jumped onto the bed, waiting for her, and as Sansa climbs, slipping between the furs, she gives the Direwolf one more kiss and a hug for the night

before she lays down for bed, her exhaustion hitting her immediately and as soon as her head hits the pillow, she feels herself being carried off into sleep.

Years earlier, her father and mother had thought to make a wedding match between Sansa and Jon. Jon had already made the decision that while he was Brandon Stark's son, he was not meant to be the Heir of Winterfell and he would pass that title onto his cousin, Robb, but Jon would still be a Lord and it would be a good match between Brandon Stark's only son and Ned and Catelyn Stark's daughter. They would have a Keep somewhere – far enough away for them to be able to start their own life together, but close enough where visits would be possible.

Neither Jon and Sansa had much reaction when Ned and Catelyn told them of their engagement. Jon and Sansa were too young to have deep feelings one way or another about it. They loved one another, but as cousins who know they are related love one another; almost obligatory. Ned and Catelyn only hoped that as they grew older, both would view the match more favorably.

But then, King Robert, with his wife and their children, visited Winterfell.

Ned had been hesitant when his old friend suggested a marriage between his oldest, Joffrey, and Ned's oldest daughter and yet, Ned had taken a moment to consider it since Sansa and Jon's own match didn't seem to be a cause of excitement for either. If Sansa was betrothed to Joffrey in Kings Landing, Ned knew that he and Catelyn would easily be able to find another match for Jon.

And when Ned told this to Sansa, "You will be Queen one day", Sansa's eyes had immediately gleamed and dreams of her future danced in her mind for what young girl wouldn't want to be a Queen?

Sansa still hates herself for how stupid of a girl she had been – always wanting what she didn't have and never taking a moment to be happy about what she *did* have.

Because after Joffrey and Cersei and her marriage to Tyrion, she had finally fled King's Landing and thought she would be safe, but then there had been Littlefinger. And then Ramsay.

Ramsay.

Sansa feels herself shiver in her sleep from those nightmares that even after being married to Jon for almost three months now, she can't shake. She doesn't know if she will ever be able to move past it. Is anyone ever able to move on from such abuse rained down upon them?

Finding Jon at Castle Black at the Wall was the best thing to happen to her in her life at that point.

But then, marrying him has since become *the* best thing to happen to her.

Jon understands; at least, he understands as much as he possibly can without Sansa telling him every detail. Still, he has seen her scars (when he comes into their chamber while she's bathing) and has held her as she wakes up, screaming or crying or both. Perhaps, he doesn't need to know every detail. Perhaps, his own imagination is more than able to conclude what happened to his cousin before they met again.

Jon, her husband, understands and that is why he still has not pushed her towards consummating their union yet. They need to, Sansa knows that. It is their duty as both husband and wife, but also as King and Queen in the North. They need to consummate their marriage so it can never be challenged by anyone; if there is anyone who would dare challenge it.

But they also need to consummate their marriage so the Stark line may continue. They are the only two left and there needs to always been a Stark in Winterfell. Jon hasn't pushed her. She knows her husband and he *never* will. He will wait the rest of their lives together for Sansa to make the first move.

And sometimes, when they aren't completely exhausted from their endless work and have actual energy left over, they will be kissing and Jon's hands will be lightly caressing her body over her nightgown, Sansa thinks she's ready to make the move that will take them a step or two further. But something always stops her. Her heart seizes and her body tenses and Jon pulls himself away from her, whispering to her that it's alright.

But it's not alright. Sansa knows it's not no matter what Jon says. She is his wife and his Queen and it is her job to lay with him and have babies with him. Jon is Jon and he's the best man she knows, but Jon needs to have a child. He is King and he needs an heir and if Sansa doesn't give him one, he will find another woman who will.

It doesn't matter to her how much Jon cares for her or how often he tells her that they have time.

Jon is a man and eventually, he will get tired of waiting. There are some things Sansa doesn't understand in this world and some things she does and one of the things she does understand is the way of men.

Arms reach around her in her sleep and Sansa's body jumps from fear, her brain freezing.

"Shhhhh, it's me," Jon whispers in her ear then as if he's calming a startled horse. "It's only me. You're safe."

Still more asleep than awake, Sansa relaxes within an instant, her body melting back into the bed, her back feeling itself molded to Jon's chest and his arms tighten their hold around her.

Surrounded by Jon's warmth as he holds her and feeling his breath steadily exhaling to the back of her neck as he falls asleep, Sansa drifts back into her own, feeling safe; always safe as long as she's with Jon.

There is so much work to do; preparing as much as they can for the long winter and readying themselves and all of their people for the approaching dead.

But perhaps...

Perhaps, she and Jon will be able to find time alone together; just the two of them.

...

Chapter End Notes

What can I possibly say? The response to the first chapter was unbelievable. As I said in one review reply, either this story will be a cluster fuck of a mess or it will turn out the way I hope. THANK YOU so much for reading and reviewing and giving this story a chance!

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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As Jon does every other morning before going to the Hall to break his fast, he goes down into the Stark Family crypt to relight the candle in front of his father. He doesn't speak out loud; the conversations he has with his father are always silent, kept in his head so he is the only one to hear. Winterfell is his home and he is safe here, but what he discusses with his father is his business alone.

He had hated the man with every fiber in his being, but something Littlefinger had said before Jon executed him – for crimes against his wife, the Queen, and the Stark family as a whole, finishing what Jon's father had started so many years earlier – still remains in Jon's head.

There are little birds everywhere and you must be careful who you give your trust to. These people in Winterfell, in the North, are *his* people, Jon knows, but the men in the Watch had been his people as well and they had stabbed him through the heart.

No, his conversations with his father are only for him and his father.

And as it is every other morning as he stands in front of Brandon Stark's statue, looking at it, Jon misses him. He had never had the chance to know him – the mad Targaryen King murdering him and his grandfather before Jon got the chance – but his Uncle Ned and Aunt Catelyn would tell him stories so Jon, in a sense, *could* know his father. He was brave with a hot-blooded temper and no one could match him on the battlefield.

And according to his aunt, Brandon Stark was very handsome as well.

Jon has always liked to think that he inherited nearly everything from his father.

More than once, while at the Wall together, Uncle Benjen would look at him and with a slight shake of his head, as if he could hardly believe it, he would say, "You are so much like your father."

Jon needs his father and everything he has inherited from him for this next battle. This next battle is the only one that matters. Training his people consumes every waking moment of his days; and possible outcomes consume his dreams at night. In some of those dreams – nightmares, really – Sansa falls right in front of him only for her eyes to snap open again moments later, blue staring back at him. In others, they all fall and rise again as part of the Night King's army and soon, all of Westeros is taken.

Jon wakes up, those nightmares still on the precipice of his mind, his heart pounding, threatening to break through his chest, and he tries not to think of how close either of those are to becoming possibilities.

There's not much he can do though, he knows. All he can do is train his people, go over plans as often as he can with Davos and his other commanders and wait.

The waiting is the worst, but the Night King and his army is coming. Every day is spent, awaiting a raven from Edd and the Night's Watch. Jon will then march his own army North to help his former brothers-in-black protect the Wall and to fight and defeat the Night King once and for all. He would do everything he could possibly do before he allowed another Hardhome and with the Wall and his people and the Night's Watch, all trained and ready to go, they might have a fighting chance this time.

Still, Jon closes his eyes and asks his father to help him and be with him for this fight. Losing this fight is not an option for in losing it, Jon will lose everything.

And if he still wins, but loses Sansa – to *anything* – he still loses.

He can't let anything happen to her. He would do anything – literally anything – to make sure nothing ever happened to her again. She has already been through too much and Jon knows there are still those who would wish her harm; if Jon wasn't in the way and Jon will always be in the way. He asks his father to help him with that as well.

It's a useless exercise, Jon knows, and yet, it doesn't stop him from sometimes trying to imagine how things could have been so different; if he hadn't passed on the title to his cousin, Robb. If he and Sansa had gotten married. If King Robert hadn't come and arranged a later marriage between his son and Sansa. If Jon hadn't gone to join Uncle Benjen in the Night's Watch. If Uncle Ned hadn't gone South.

He could go even further back and think what if his Aunt Lyanna hadn't been kidnapped and his father hadn't ridden to King's Landing in a rage only to be murdered by that Targaryen tyrant posing as a King?

None of it matters though; the what ifs. Because all of those things happened and he and Sansa are here again, in Winterfell, together and that's what Jon focuses on. He is King and Sansa is his Queen and there are much more important things right now to occupy his mind than what ifs that hadn't happened and never will.

With one more look to his father's statue, Jon turns and leaves the Stark crypt, taking the stairs outside. Sansa is standing at the top, waiting for him, Ghost at her side and Jon smiles as soon as he sees his wife.

"You could have joined me," he tells her what she already knows. "It's your family as well."

Sansa just gives him a soft smile and shakes her head. "These mornings are for you and your father," she replies. "Will you stand with me while I visit with my mother?" She wonders.

Jon chuckles and leans in, giving her a chaste kiss on her cheek. "Fair enough," he smiles and Sansa smiles, too. But it's only on her face for a moment before it begins to fade and it doesn't go unnoticed by Jon. "What is it?" He asks in a lower voice, taking a step closer to his wife.

"You've received a raven this morning," Sansa tells him, her eyes steady on his as she does.

Jon feels his body instantly tense. "From Edd?"

Is this it? Is the Night King and his army getting closer to the Wall? Is it time for Jon to march himself and his people North? He thinks of the men, women and children he has been spending so many hours a day, training. Are they truly ready for what is waiting for them?

Is *he* ready?

Sansa shakes her head though, stopping his thoughts in his tracks.

“Who is it from?” He asks.

He has no idea who could send him a raven that would have Sansa looking at him as if... as if she’s worried and scared and perhaps a little angry herself.

Reaching into her cloak, Sansa pulls out a folded piece of parchment and holds it out for him to take. Jon reaches out, about to do just that, but he stops when his eye catches the wax seal. He knows that seal. He’s never seen it in person, but he’s *very* familiar with that seal.

A dragon in red wax.

The Targaryen crest.

Red hot anger rushes up his chest within seconds, consuming him, and he nearly rips the parchment from her hand, Sansa leaping in surprise – and fright. Crumpling the parchment in one fist, Jon lifts his other hand to cup her cheek gently, managing a complete contrast to the rest of him and bringing his forehead to rest to hers.

“I’m sorry,” he whispers.

Sansa swallows and nods. “I understand.”

And Jon knows she does. He presses his lips to her forehead for a moment before bringing his head back and looking down to the piece of parchment once again. The Targaryen’s are dead. Robert Baratheon made sure of that. Who would dare send him, Brandon’s Stark very son, a letter with the Targaryen seal?

...

Thank you very much for the response you've given this story already. It completely blows me away. (Also, since the Night King doesn't have a dragon, the Wall is obviously still in tact) I am going to be attempting Tyrion's POV in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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There is only Sansa waiting for him in the courtyard at Winterfell when Tyrion arrives; not that he's expecting the entire Household to be outside, waiting to greet him, as it had been when he and his family had first visited Winterfell those years earlier.

With Sansa, there stands a very tall woman with short light hair; almost white. She is dressed like a man and the large sword at her side is hard to miss. Her eyes are sharp as she stares at Tyrion and he knows she won't miss anything if he even attempts something; which he isn't planning to. There is also a young man that Tyrion recognizes to be his former squire, Podrick Payne. Seeing him now, Tyrion smiles. Then the tall woman must be Brienne of Tarth. Tyrion hasn't met her, but he has heard of her.

Seeing such protection on either side of his former wife, Tyrion does his best to not be nervous. He has faced dragons and their mother. He is not going to be intimidated by Brienne of Tarth and Pod.

"My Lady," Tyrion tilts his head down to her once he stands in front of her.

He wonders how she feels about him not calling her "Your Grace", the proper term for a Queen. And though it is good to see her again, and she looks as beautiful as she always has, Sansa is not his Queen and he thinks Sansa would prefer if he didn't lie to her face and call her something he doesn't believe. Westeros is only going to have one Queen. He will wait to tell Sansa that though.

"My Lord," Sansa tilts her own head towards him.

"Your husband did not want to meet me?"

Her face is frozen in politeness and Tyrion feels a chill down his spine. He wonders if it's the Northern winds blowing or Sansa's eyes on him.

“He is in the training yards,” Sansa answers. “My husband also does not answer summons from Targaryen’s.”

Tyrion nearly winces at that. He had told Daenerys that she should not close the letter with her House seal, but she hadn’t listened. She already knew what her family had done to the Starks, particularly Jon’s father, but sometimes, his Queen can be a stubborn woman.

“I am of House Targaryen and I will not hide that,” she had informed Tyrion simply as if explaining it to a child.

“I apologize if he was offended,” Tyrion tells Sansa.

She does not respond to that; simply stares at him and Tyrion feels that chill again. Perhaps he will share with her that she and his Queen have something in common; they can stop people in their tracks with just a look.

“Come,” Sansa speaks. “You must be tired and in need of refreshment.”

With that, she turns and heads to the doors, Brienne following. Pod stays back so he may walk – escort – Tyrion.

“It is good to see you, My Lord,” Pod smiles at his former Lord with that smile that always comes so easy to him.

Tyrion is able to smile in truth to his former squire. “And you,” he agrees. “I’m glad to see that you have seemed to land on your feet.”

Pod smiles a bit wider at that. “It is an honor to serve Lady Brienne. And the King and Queen of Winterfell have been nothing, but kind to me.”

Tyrion wonders if Pod says it was an honor to serve him if he is asked by someone.

“Your letter caused quite a reaction after the King read it,” Pod then tells him.

“I did not mean for it to.”

Pod glances at him for that, but does not comment. It is clear his old squire may not necessarily believe him for that. Tyrion is tempted to ask how Jon reacted when he read the letter, but Tyrion supposes he could just imagine. Brandon Stark’s son receiving a letter from the daughter of the man who had his father killed? When he and Daenerys wrote the letter, Tyrion knew it would be a risk, but Daenerys had insisted.

“I need allies. You have said so yourself,” the woman reminded him.

“Of course, Your Grace, but I’m not sure demanding his loyalty is perhaps the way to go,” Tyrion had said while making sure his tone to her did not even hint at an argument.

Daenerys sighed. “Which is why I am sending you. So that you may speak of me to this King in the North and tell him that I mean him no harm.”

Tyrion hadn’t argued with the plan, but honestly, now that he’s here, he admits that he’s not sure how to go about this. He thought he used to know Sansa, but within a mere minute standing outside, Tyrion can easily tell that this woman in front of him is not his child bride from King’s Landing. She has changed and he knows he needs to take times to acquaint himself with these changes. He also needs to see Jon.

The letter had angered him; so much so that he hadn’t even come to meet Tyrion on his arrival. How can he convince the King in the North that there is a woman who is the rightful Queen of Westeros and yes, her father had done horrible things, but Jon should not hold anyone guilty for their father’s crimes?

The Great Hall of Winterfell is just as Tyrion remembers it to be and Sansa is helped from her cloak by a maid and she then sits at the head table, gesturing for Tyrion to sit across from her. Brienne stands behind Sansa – not crowding her, but close enough for her presence to be noted. As soon as Tyrion sits in the offered chair, there is a cup of wine placed in front of him. He smiles.

“You remember that about me,” he comments, picking up the cup and then taking a greedy gulp.

The journey was too long and he thinks he might need this to help him think of his next move while here.

“It would be impossible to forget, My Lord,” Sansa’s reply is simple and short.

“My Lord? Not even using my name? I would think former spouses could still use one another’s names.”

“I also would think former spouses who think themselves to be the cleverest in all of Westeros wouldn’t be stupid enough to write such a letter.”

“I did not write it.” Tyrion pauses to take another gulp. “I offered some suggestions.”

“To a woman who claims something she has no right to?” Sansa raises an eyebrow at that.

“She is a Targaryen and House Targaryen ruled Westeros-”

“Before Robert Baratheon led a successful rebellion and won his right to the throne. As much as I loathe to say it, Robert’s wife is sitting on the throne now as they have no more children and for most, they see it as her right.”

Tyrion studies her for a moment. “You would rather support *Cersei* than the rightful Queen?”

Sansa looks at him, holding his stare, but then breaks away with a sigh. “We are talking in circles already. She is not a rightful Queen, My Lord. She is nothing except a woman who is making demands when she is no one to be demanding anything from anyone.”

“And your husband agrees with you?”

“I will not repeat what my husband said in reference to *your* Queen.”

“How was that? Marrying your cousin who you haven’t seen in years?”

Sansa’s face reveals nothing and Tyrion is watching her closely just in case it does.

He knows what Daenerys hopes. If this marriage is purely a political one, Jon Stark must be experiencing some kind of frustration; and desire when he sees the Queen for the first time. Daenerys has every intention of using that to her advantage; to get the North as an ally and what easier way to do that then by getting their King on her side?

Tyrion agrees with her. He and Varys have even told her that they can’t see the two cousins having any love for one another past familial love. How can they? Sansa wanted to be Queen and Jon had joined the Night’s Watch. Both had gone down very different paths and now, they are married simply for convivence and for their House name.

The marriage does make sense to Tyrion, but a marriage between the North and the Queen on the Throne in King’s Landing makes even more sense.

The doors behind him answers and finally, Sansa’s face changes; not by too much. A slip, really, but it’s a second’s slip that is long enough for Tyrion to catch it. She looks happy. It had been such a rare sight in King’s Landing while she had been held there, Tyrion almost doesn’t recognize it. The faintest smile sweeps across her lips before she wipes it away again and her eyes spark.

Tyrion sits up in his chair to look at who has entered and a man in training garb with his hair pulled back from his face, enters the Hall, sweat and dirt on his skin. The boy has grown into a man now, has filled out, has lost all traces of boyhood and is now lean and hardened. He thinks his Queen will like this man very much.

He had only seen the man years and years ago and always from a distance, but if he had far more than just one cup of wine, Tyrion would think that Brandon Stark was striding into the room right now.

Tyrion looks to Jon Stark as the man crosses the room towards the head table and he then looks back to Sansa, the woman looking at her husband and seeing nothing else.

With a frown, Tyrion picks up his cup for another gulp of wine.

If Sansa loves Jon, his job has just gotten that much harder. He will have to see if Jon loves his wife in return.

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Chapter End Notes

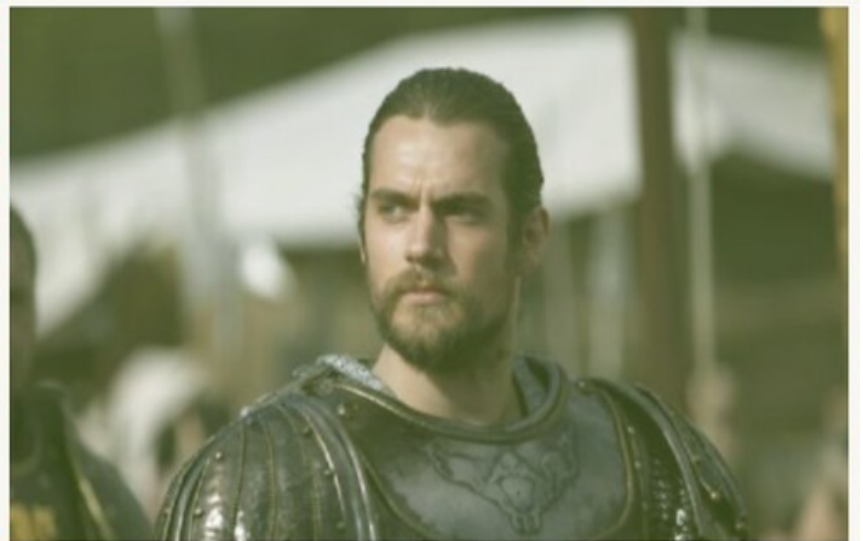
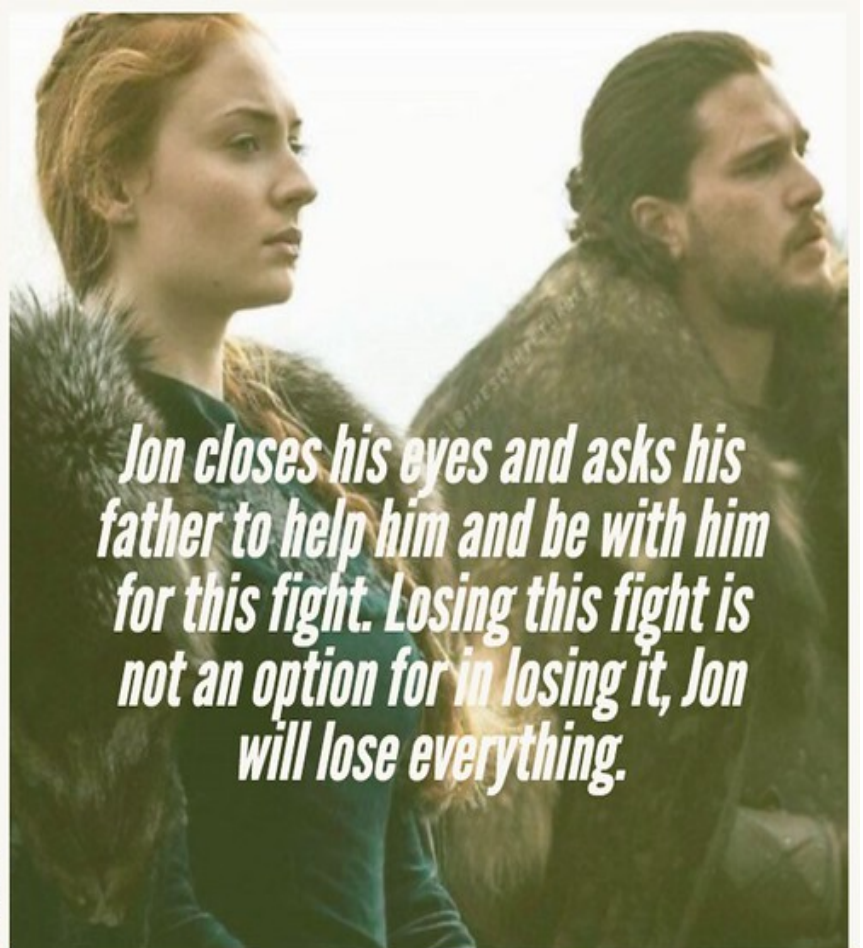
I have no idea how I did with Tyrion's POV. And I keep meaning to say that Arya will be returning home soon - not knowing that her sister and cousin have married. I'm not going to write unnecessary conflict between Sansa and Arya like S7 insisted on focusing on.

Thank you so, so much for all of the reads, comments and kudos. This story randomly popped into my head and I knew I had to get it out and I'm just happy - and relieved - that others want to read it. Thank you!

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



Jon knows Tyrion is there. He was informed the moment the man had arrived, but Jon doesn't even look to him. Right now, the only thing his eyes focus on are Sansa.

She rises from her chair as he strides across the Hall towards her and without a word, he takes hold of her hand, pulling her away from the table and Tyrion. Through the door that leads into the kitchens, Jon waits until the door is closed behind them before he lifts both hands to her cheeks and kisses her swiftly – hard – on the lips. It is a quick kiss and done without thought. With Tyrion Lannister in their home, Jon had just felt the need to kiss her right then. It isn't the kiss he wishes he could give her, but it would do.

For now.

“Are you alright?” Jon asks, his voice low – almost a growl – and his heart is beating in his ears.

Ever since that letter with the Targaryen seal arrived, Jon feels as if his heart hasn't slowed down.

He didn't want Sansa to have to meet Tyrion on her own and yet, he admits, he didn't know if he would be able to meet him himself. Just thinking of the man now, and who he is representing, Jon very much envisions colliding his fist into the man's face over and over again. But he can't leave his wife alone.

A Targaryen. There's one left and now she wants Jon to join her side; as if she has any right in this world to write to him in the first place. For someone who claims she is the rightful heir to the Iron Throne, she doesn't seem to know her history of the very land she wants to govern over. Only someone completely unaware of history would think he, Brandon Stark's legitimate son and heir, would welcome her anywhere other than the end of his sword.

And now, this *Targaryen* – even just thinking the name leaves bitterness on his tongue – has sent his wife's former husband to Winterfell so that he might speak on her behalf. Jon doesn't care what Tyrion has to say. Nothing the man has to say will ever have Jon side with this so-called Queen.

“Has he said anything? Do I need to skewer him?” Jon wonders.

Sansa's lips begin to twitch in a smile at that, but he knows his wife is too polite to smile at that. Jon's not though and he smiles for the both of them.

“Tyrion has been perfectly polite,” Sansa tells him.

“Damn. I really wanted to skewer him.”

Sansa lifts a hand to her mouth, almost letting a slip of laughter escape, and Jon leans in, kissing her forehead, allowing his lips to linger on her skin for a moment longer. Sansa lifts her eyes to look at him and gently, she lifts a hand to his cheek, brushing away flecks of dirt from the training yards.

“He is trying to convince me that his Queen has any sort of place in Westeros,” Sansa then tells him.

The temporary moment of lightness between them vanishes at her words and Jon is stiff once again.

“And what did you say to him about that?”

“Certainly not what he was expecting. I basically told him I would prefer Cersei.”

Sansa tilts her chin up a bit at that and Jon can tell that she’s proud of herself for that. Jon’s proud of her, too. There’s no more Ramsay or Littlefinger. Cersei is the only enemy left of his wife’s who truly frightens her; the only enemy left who wishes all of the harm in this world on Sansa. But she’s right and Jon agrees. The North has declared their independence – Robb died for it – but if the other six Kingdoms needs a Queen, Jon would much rather have a lion than a dragon. He knows how to slay a lion.

“Tyrion has always thought himself to be smart,” Sansa continues. “And yet, he comes here, to our family home and talks to us of actually working with a Targaryen – after all that her father and brother did to us. To *you*.”

Her hand is still on his cheek and he lifts his hand to cover it; grasp it. He closes his eyes at her touch.

He loves his wife's touch. He *craves* it. And he wishes there is more time for it, but every moment of their days are occupied with preparations to both get their people through the long winter and get them through the approaching army of the dead. There is little time for anything else; anything *more*.

So often Jon wants to ask Sansa if she wants something more between them, but he never does. He doesn't want to scare her by letting her know how much he wants her. Sansa has already been scared by enough men. Jon would rather the Night King get him before he could be added to that list.

"I will come sit with you," Jon then says.

Sansa's surprise is evident. "You don't have to. I know how angry you are and I would like Tyrion to not be privy to your emotions yet."

"He's far from the smartest man in the room if he *isn't* aware of my emotions."

"Please, Jon." Sansa rests a light hand on his chest and even through his leather training jerkin, he is very aware of her touch. "Be on your best behavior. I need to know *his* thoughts." She looks into his eyes and Jon wonders if she has any idea the kind of power she has over him; how he would do absolutely anything if she was the one to ask.

Probably not. And if he was to ever tell her, she wouldn't believe him.

Jon gives her a kiss on her forehead before opening the door to the Hall again. Pod has taken his place at the entrance to prevent others from entering while they are inside and he steps aside when he looks to see that it's them coming out. Jon gives him a nod of thanks and Pod nods in return.

Tyrion is sitting in his chair, drinking his now-second cup of wine, but when they step out, he slides to his feet and gives Jon a nod of his head.

"Your Grace," he greets and Jon can feel Sansa stiffen ever so slightly at his side, but when Jon looks at her to see what it is, her face exposes nothing.

“My Lord,” Jon says, his voice curt.

“It is good to see you again,” Tyrion says this with a smile.

“I would say the same thing if your visit was under different circumstances,” Jon replies.

From the corner of his eye, he can see Sansa give him the quickest look, but he couldn’t help himself and she can’t blame him for it.

He holds out her chair and after Sansa sits down once again, Jon sits down in his chair at her side. Once they are seated, Tyrion takes his seat again and a serving girl hurries over to refill his cup with more wine. She turns towards Jon with the pitcher, but he shakes his head.

“Just water for me, Aggie,” Jon gives the girl a small smile and she smiles happily in return before looking to Sansa, who just shakes her head with a smile to the girl, and Aggie turns, hurrying to the kitchens to get her King a cup of water.

“I’m sorry for the letter,” Tyrion begins.

“Are you?” Jon cannot be expected to believe him.

“Not for the contents, but for the seal. I’m sure it was quite a shock to see that seal.”

“That’s one word for it.” Jon can’t help, but frown at the man.

There’s so many reasons to dislike this man. He’s a Lannister and hasn’t his family brought the Starks enough pain and misery? He’s now serving a Targaryen and if it wasn’t for manners, Jon would have killed him before he could even get off his horse in the courtyard. And lastly, he was married to Sansa. A child forced to marry this man and this man is still glancing over to Sansa now more times than Jon likes.

“I apologize on behalf of the Queen,” Tyrion says and Jon notes that the man *does* sound apologetic, but only a fool would actually believe him to be.

“*The* Queen? I only know one Queen, Lannister, and that’s my wife,” Jon informs him, his tone clipped.

Tyrion looks to Sansa, but she is silent, simply staring at him and not saying anything. Tyrion isn’t sure who makes him more nervous. Brandon Stark’s son, sitting across from him, growling, or Sansa Stark, sitting across from him and not saying a word.

“Forgive me, Your Grace, but the North is still a part of Westeros, is it not?” Tyrion dares to ask.

Like a wolf, Tyrion can so easily imagine the man across from him growling and gnashing his teeth.

“My cousin died for Northern Independence. Every time he won a battle, *your* nephew would have my wife beat for it. The North *is* independent,” Jon says, his words low, but no less sharp.

“Of course,” Tyrion nods. The time for that particular conversation will come later. He already knows Daenerys won’t like the North breaking away. He looks to Sansa. “I am so sorry for what you have been through, Sansa.”

The use of her name is too casual, too intimate, in front of her husband – who already looks as if he’s barely controlling himself from reaching across the table and throttling him – but Daenerys has sent him here to keep things as smooth and peaceful as possible.

They need allies and the North, led by Jon Stark, will be one of the greatest they could get.

Tyrion must be careful though. Jon’s father’s death by his Queen’s father will hang in the air above their heads until Tyrion has found a way for Jon to move past that.

“We have all been through things, My Lord,” is all Sansa says to that.

“Quite true,” Tyrion agrees, seeing a slight opening. He looks back to Jon. “Queen Daenerys has been through things as well, Your Grace. She has suffered greatly. She wishes this suffering to stop for everyone. She wishes to usher in a reign of peace and I believe in her that she can do just that.”

“How?” Jon’s question is simple, but there’s nothing simple to the answer.

“Allies. She will need help,” Tyrion does his best to answer as simply as he can.

Jon stares at him and says nothing. He then looks to Sansa and she looks to him, both staying silent.

Jon then looks back to Tyrion. “You sit in my home, speaking to me of being an ally to the woman of the father who murdered mine? You think I will ever side with *anyone* with Targaryen blood?”

“She has dragons, Your Grace,” Tyrion tells him in a quick announcement.

There is a silence that falls over the Hall then. Jon and Sansa both stare at him. Aggie has returned with the cup of water and the girl has stopped in her tracks at those words, her eyes wide.

“There are no more dragons,” Sansa is the one to speak, her voice soft and disbelieving.

“There are. My Queen has three of them. She has brought them into this world and she is their mother.”

Jon looks to Aggie and he gives the girl a small smile. It propels her forward to bring him his water. “Thank you, Aggie,” he tells her and Aggie manages a clumsy curtsy before scurrying from the room once more, obviously shaken. She will probably tell everyone she sees of what she has just heard.

Jon and Sansa are both kind to their people, Tyrion notes. And their people seem to love them in return. Tyrion isn’t sure how, but that could very well be important. He will be sure to remember that and tell his Queen once he leaves Winterfell and returns to her.

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Chapter End Notes

Thank you so, so much. I am blown away that this random idea of mine is liked by so many. Arya was going to be in the next chapter, but that has been pushed back. Jon and Sansa need some alone one-on-one time first.

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Sansa enters the bedchamber and isn't at all surprised with what she finds.

The wolf has come out and her husband is stalking the room in circles, breathing heavily, nearly growling. He lifts his head when he hears her come in and he stops himself in his tracks, watching as Sansa closes and bolts the door behind her.

He is furious. She can feel it radiating off of him in waves, but she's not afraid. Even with his anger, Sansa's never afraid of Jon because she knows, without a doubt, and trusts that he will never take that anger out on her. Even now, with his jaw and fists clenched and his nostrils flared, Sansa gives him a small smile as she moves to sit down in one of the two chairs placed in front of the roaring fire; a smile given in an attempt to pull him back from his black mood.

"Lord Tyrion is snoring away in one of the guest chambers," she informs him.

"And do I now have my Queen's permission to smother him with a pillow?" Jon asks as he drops himself heavily into the other chair next to hers.

Sansa picks up her sewing from the basket on the floor. "Not yet," she says with a hint of a smile. "I want to learn more of the game he's playing."

Jon is quiet for a passing beat, watching the steady up and down movement her hand takes as it guides the threaded needle, stitching in and out of the dress she's creating. Sansa knows he finds it soothing. After endless hours in the training yards and even more hours after that, pouring over maps and discussing battle plans, sometimes, there's nothing more he would rather do than watch her sew. It's comforting to him – the near repetition of her hands.

"And what is his game?" Jon asks, his voice quiet as his eyes watch her hand.

“He wishes for his Queen and you to develop a relationship,” Sansa says as simply as she can, doing her best to ignore the sharp stabbing beneath her ribs from just speaking those words out loud.

She doesn’t doubt it though. It’s a lesson she has learned over too many years spent away from home; and then here, during her marriage to Ramsay. Listen for the words that *aren’t* said by someone. And in the Hall, Tyrion had slipped; or had he done it on purpose? Sansa still can’t decide. Perhaps he still thinks she’s the girl from King’s Landing. Had he forgotten that nearly everything she knows, she learned from his sister? Cersei Lannister is a terrible woman, but she’s a masterful teacher.

When he had met with Sansa, he hadn’t called her by the title one calls a Queen. She was simply “My Lady” to him. But Jon...

Jon is “Your Grace”, the title befit a King. Tyrion’s words had made it loud and clear to all who was listening and able to pick up on it.

Daenerys Targaryen is Tyrion’s Queen and Jon is a King.

If Daenerys Targaryen is convinced she is the rightful Queen to Westeros, Tyrion is right. She will need allies to support her claim. And the King in the North is a strong ally to have and if that King was her husband, surely *no one* could protest her rule. The other Kingdoms would – eventually – fall in line and if not (Sansa imagines Dorne would give issue with a Targaryen on the throne), who wouldn’t want a strong soldier for a husband who could lead her military campaigns to conquering victory?

It makes absolute perfect sense to Sansa therefore, she knows that that’s what Tyrion is thinking, too. Never mind that Jon is already married. Marriages are easily abolished.

Especially unconsummated ones.

From the corner of her eye, she can see Jon’s face harden at that and the muscles twitch in his face from the force in which he’s clenching his jaw.

“You don’t mean that,” Jon says and his voice is so low, it nearly makes Sansa shiver despite the heat in his words, but still, she knows he’s not angry at her. “You can’t believe that.”

“It makes perfect political sense, Jon,” Sansa tells him in a gentle voice she sometimes uses with him; not because she thinks he’s stupid when it comes to politics, but because even after everything they have all been through, he still has such a hard time grasping how this world can truly be.

It’s one of the things she loves most about him. He thinks people are terrible and he has fought his fair share of them, but he still can’t quite believe that people are *that* terrible. He will be the first to admit that he doesn’t have the mind for politics and politics is where someone’s mind must be terrible.

“I am already married, if you remember.”

Sansa uses her teeth to bite off the end of the strand she’s sewing. “They won’t care. The way Tyrion talks about his Queen, Westeros already belongs to her. The rest of us just don’t know it yet.”

“Your former husband’s mind must have drowned in his many cups of wine if he thinks his plan is something I will agree to,” Jon says, leaning forward in his chair, resting his arms on his knees.

Sansa doesn’t say anything to that.

Littlefinger had whispered in her ear before Jon executed him; of rumors of the Dragon Queen coming to Westeros and how beautiful a woman she was.

She knows it won’t matter to Jon. Anyone with Targaryen blood is someone her husband would hate without any other reason than their name. In Jon’s opinion, no other reason would be needed. Her father, his uncle, and her mother, his aunt, did not raise him to hate. They did not raise any of them to hate. But they *did* learn history – both of their family and of the North and of Westeros.

No one could blame Jon for hating the family who took his father away from him.

Still, Littlefinger's words whisper in her ear as a venomous breeze.

"They say she's one of the most beautiful women in the world."

Sansa mustn't think of that. She trusts Jon. She loves Jon. And he cares for her. He would never...

It doesn't matter how beautiful the woman is. She's still a Targaryen and Jon would never...

Sansa turns her head and looks at him, finding that Jon is already watching her. The fire flames dance across his face and his lips twitch in the smallest smile. Sansa matches it with one of her own.

"May I see?" He then asks and she knows that though his mind is racing, he doesn't want to talk about this anymore; not until tomorrow anyway.

It takes her longer than it should to realize he's talking about her dress.

She finds herself blushing for some reason and she stands up, carefully holding the dress out in front of her so he may see the full of it. Jon slowly stands up, looking at it.

"The Lords will begin arriving within the next few days. I wanted to finish it before then."

She knows it's rather simple. She may be Queen, but they have a war coming up and their fabrics have far better uses than making her a pretty dress. The fabric is dark gray and heavy, but she has stitched the red leaves like those of a weirwood tree along the bodice, each looking as it is falling and blowing in the breeze. With her red hair, Sansa thinks will be perfect in its simplicity.

Jon reaches out and rubs one of the sleeve cuffs between his index finger and thumb. "It's beautiful."

Sansa doesn't know why, but she finds herself relieved at his opinion.

She knows she is a good Queen. She sees to all of hers and Jon's people and they love her as she loves them. That's all she had wanted. For her people to love her.

But she wants to be a good wife to Jon and she doesn't know if she is. She cares for him deeply; loves him completely, but does he know that? Does he look to her as his wife or just his cousin who he's married to? They sleep beside one another in the same bed every night and yet, he makes no moves to touch her past gentle touches of holding her hand or brushing hair from her face or innocently holding her during sleep.

She sometimes wonders if he does that for her – because of Ramsay – or if he does that for himself, feeling no urge to do something more with her.

Sansa so wants Jon to love her; love her past being his cousin and be in love with her as she is with him.

What happens if Tyrion finds out? What if the Dragon Queen finds out? Though she is a Targaryen, stealing Jon away from Sansa might be easier than any of them expect.

Jon had kissed her that afternoon, but it had been such a swift kiss to her lips, Sansa had hardly had time to register it in her mind and she wonders if Jon even realized that he had done it at all.

She wonders what a kiss – a *real* kiss – would feel like; a kiss she wants and initiates.

Gathering all of the courage inside of her, she clutches the finished dress in her hands and leaning in, she presses her lips to Jon's; his plump and warm lips. She feels him go completely still – obviously having never expected her to do such a thing – but he's not pulling his head away. Sansa presses her lips against his just a bit harder and so gently, and for just a second, Jon pushes his lips back to hers.

But then his hands are on her arms and ever so gently, he pulls her back so their lips separate and they look at one another. Sansa's heart is racing and she wonders if Jon is feeling the same in his own chest.

“Did you really want that?” He asks her and his voice is so gentle, it nearly makes Sansa want to close her eyes before she cries.

She feels too warm and she’s not sure if it’s from their kiss or the fire roaring just a few steps away. Her heart is still racing and it’s almost aching; showing no signs of slowing down.

The answer to Jon’s question is such an obvious one and yet, the *yes* clumps in her throat, refusing to rise and give it a voice. And soon, her inability to answer stretches on and on and the time to speak has passed. She closes her eyes and swallows the word down, a knot of regret pooling in her stomach.

Not regret for kissing Jon, but regret that she isn’t able to tell him that she doesn’t regret it.

Was all of the damage Ramsay – and Joffrey and Littlefinger and Cersei – did to her so irreversible?

She imagines that the Dragon Queen knows exactly what she wants at all times and has no difficulty saying it. Does Jon wish Sansa was more bold? She has no issues with speaking with the Lords during council meetings and speaking her thoughts, but she can’t even speak to her own husband about things a husband and wife *need* to speak with one another about.

Jon lifts his hands then and rests them so gently on her cheeks; so gently, she feels like weeping. His lips rest against her forehead and he leaves them there when he speaks. “Not until you’re ready, Sansa,” he whispers and she wants to think he’s making her a promise.

...

Chapter End Notes

As always, THANK YOU! Arya arrives in the next chapter and I have no intention of writing hers and Sansa’s BS conflict from S7. There was no need for that and we’re all better than that.

Also, if you read my other WIP story *The Strings That Tie to You*, I plan to work on/post the next chapter sometime tomorrow.

Thank you again!!

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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To be safe, Arya wears a different face as she nears the Keep. She has heard the stories, but she can't be too careful and even when she sees the Stark banners flying, she still hesitates.

It's been so long since she's been home. Ever since she left, she's been trying to get back here to Winterfell and to her family; especially her cousin, Jon. She's missed him more than anyone. No one ever understood her like Jon did. She missed her family – she *misses* her family – but Jon has always been different. Sometimes, when she was so much younger, Arya had felt like she didn't belong. She wasn't a Lady like Sansa and she never would be, but she wasn't able to train and be like the boys. Most times, it felt like Jon was the only one in this whole world she had on her side.

But now that she's here, right outside the gates, she finds herself hesitating. She's been through too much; done too much. Will Jon even recognize her anymore? Will he even want to know her?

When she reaches the guards on duty, she is wearing her own face again, but they still look at her, not knowing who she is. She doesn't who they are either.

"If you go to the Hall, you'll find the Queen. She likes to meet everyone who arrives. She'll get you some soup and a blanket," one of the guards tells her.

Arya feels the breath pause in her chest. "Who is the Queen?" She manages to ask, her heart beginning to beat again; wildly.

The guards glance at one another, probably thinking this is some delirious girl for not already knowing.

"Queen Sansa," one of the guards tells her, still looking at her as if she doesn't quite have her whole mind.

“And is there a King?” Again, she holds her breath.

Is Jon the King? She knows that the stories are that Jon Stark won the Battle of the Bastards, but is he still here or did he go somewhere else? Is it just Sansa here – Queen with no husband? If she is, that is more than fine, in Arya’s opinion. A Queen doesn’t need a husband no matter what others think on that matter, but Arya hopes. She can’t stop herself from hoping.

Please let Jon be here, too.

She has thought – when she allows herself to think on it – of how everything would have been different if father had told King Robert that no, Sansa couldn’t marry Joffrey because she was already going to be marrying Jon; if her father had been brave enough to defy his King. Arya likes to think that she and Sansa would have stayed in Winterfell and maybe father would have stayed, too, and everything that had happened to their family wouldn’t had happened at all.

“You don’t love Joffrey,” Arya would frown at her bratty sister in King’s Landing.

“Yes, I do,” Sansa answered her sullen sister primly.

“What about Jon?” Mother and father had arranged a marriage between Sansa and Jon when they were all much younger than they were now.

“I love Jon, but we don’t *love* each other. And besides, he’s joined the Night’s Watch, Arya,” Sansa reminded her and Arya hated her when she reminded her of that.

“And there’s a difference between love and love?” Arya didn’t stop herself from asking even though she hated when she had to ask Sansa questions like that; questions that she didn’t know and Sansa did and her older sister would answer them with all of the authority in the world.

“Of course there is, Arya,” Sansa had sighed with no patience for such an inquiry.

Now, the guards are studying her far more closely than before, blocking her way from entering the courtyard of Winterfell. She will have to remember their faces so she can tell her sister, and hopefully her cousin, too, that these guards are good at their posts. They have every right to be suspicious of this strange girl, asking strange questions, and they won't let her inside.

"Aye, there's a King," one of the guards answers her slowly.

"Jon?" Arya breathes.

Please, please, please let it be Jon. Please let Sansa be married to no one other than Jon.

"Who are you?" The other guard demands.

Arya stands straight and her eyes are steady on them. "Tell the King and Queen that Arya Stark has returned home."

Home. She's home. Finally. Though she might not believe that until she actually sees Jon and Sansa with her own eyes. And even then, she still might not allow herself to believe it.

...

Jon nearly tears from the training yards with his sword in his hand before Davos calls out to him and even then, Jon barely stops to pass it off to one of the nearby men before he's racing for the courtyard.

Each of his steps on the ground seem to say Arya. Arya. Arya.

He doesn't believe it. He won't believe it until he sees her. She's alive. All of this time, he thought she was dead. So did Sansa. She hasn't seen her since King's Landing and Sansa had no reason to think her younger sister *wasn't* dead. And Jon had agreed with her. Arya was just a child in King's Landing. They were *all* children and how did his cousin who he's always looked to as a sister get out of there and survive?

Jon doesn't care how she did it. All he does care about is that she did and she's here now.

Is she really here?

He nearly skids to a stop in the courtyard and his eyes immediately land on her. She's older. She's different. Gone is the girl who left Winterfell to go South. This is a woman in front of him and yet, there is steel in her spine he only sees in the most hardened of people.

She looks at him – obviously taking in the ways in which he has changed from the last time they saw one another – and then, both seem to come to a silent agreement. Even now, both are so aware of one another's thoughts.

Simultaneously, they rush towards the other, the space disappearing between them and it doesn't matter that Arya is no longer a girl. She jumps and throws her arms around his shoulders and Jon's arms tighten around her waist like iron as he holds her off the ground, hugging her, and even with her in his arms, he can't actually believe that she's here.

Arya clenches her eyes shut, pressing her face into his shoulder. This is really happening. She's really here and she's really in Jon's arms. She has dreamed of this so many times – too many times – and does she trust that this is real? Is this true?

“Arya!”

Jon sets her down on her feet again and both turn to see Sansa hurrying as fast as she can without actually running – which would be un-Queen like – and it makes Arya smile because she knows it.

“Arya!” Sansa calls out her sister's name and Arya breaks away from Jon to go rushing to Sansa.

The two sisters throw their arms around one another and both burst into tears. Arya hadn't been expecting to have such a reaction – especially when she sees Sansa – but she's crying and it's as if she has not cried in so long and now all of those tears she's held in over these past few years are being released all at once. The last time she saw her sister, Arya had watched from the crowd as their father had lost his head and Sansa fainted.

And then she feels Jon's arms around them both, the three hugging one another, crying, and no one dares interrupt them.

"Oh, you need a bath," Sansa says once they all take a moment to catch their breaths.

"Telling me I stink, *Your Grace*?" Arya tests Sansa's new title on her tongue. Arya isn't exactly surprised to find that it sounds right. Sansa has always been a Lady and has always carried herself as a Queen.

Arya doesn't know if she fully believes in them anymore – it's near impossible for her to believe in the Gods after everything they've put her and their family through – but they must still have influence over things if they did not have Sansa be Joffrey's Queen and instead, be Jon's.

"Yes," Sansa laughs as she wipes at her tear-streaked cheeks.

Arya gives her sister a grin and then looks to Jon. Her cousin has always had hard eyes. She knows it was because of what happened to his father, Uncle Brandon, and though he was raised by his uncle and aunt, Jon was always a bit hard due to circumstances. Now, he looks even harder and Arya knows he has been through as much as they all have been. He has new scars and she'll ask him about them; but only when she's ready to tell him about hers because it will only be fair.

"You two are married," Arya then states.

"We are," Jon smiles and he then looks to Sansa, who is smiling at him as well.

They both then look to Arya, clearly wanting to know her reaction to that bit of news. It's weird. Arya won't lie. It's always been weird to her – ever since mother and father since told everyone of Jon and Sansa's engagement. But Arya knows that's only because Jon has always been so much more than a cousin to her. Jon is another brother.

It has never been anything like that for Sansa though and Jon certainly never looked to Sansa like a sister.

They were always supposed to be married and now, even after everything, they are. Finally.

“And King and Queen,” Arya says. “How does Cersei feel about that?” She directs this question to Sansa. She may not know everything, but word of King’s Landing travels – even to Braavos – and she knows that Sansa has been under Cersei’s command for far longer than anyone should be.

“We have bigger problems than Cersei Lannister, Arya,” Jon is the one to answer.

Arya looks to him and her fingers are already tingling to wrap around Needle’s hilt. “Who?”

It’s not a question of what. *Who* is always the problem.

She is about to tell them of her list. If she can tell anyone about it, it’s her sister and Jon. But certainly not in the courtyard with dozens of people. She also has to ask why there are so many people here, in Winterfell, and what had the guards meant about getting her soup and a blanket and the Queen wanting to meet everyone who comes in?

“Do you remember Tyrion Lannister?” Sansa asks her.

Arya’s instincts were correct. Without answering, her fingers take a hold of Needle hanging at her side. Jon notices and he steps in close to her; as if to block her actions from prying eyes. That also immediately puts Arya at attention and she wonders who is here that Jon and Sansa are nervous about. What has Tyrion Lannister done now? What have the fucking Lannisters done to her family this time?

“He’s here,” Jon tells her in a lower voice.

“In Winterfell?” Arya already feels anger rising from her stomach.

This will be the man’s last night in Winterfell if she has anything to say about it. No Lannister should live for long in this world as far as she is concerned. Why have Jon and Sansa allowed him

to stay?

“He comes with news,” Sansa says. “But we’ll talk about it in private. There are too many people around.”

“Tell me,” Arya demands of them as Jon and Sansa try to usher her inside, her feet planted on the ground, not moving another inch forward.

Jon and Sansa look to one another and Arya tries to keep from being jealous that they seem to be able to silently communicate with one another. That used to be only something she and Jon shared together.

Jon is then the one to answer, only doing so after he takes a deep sigh.

“There is another Targaryen in the world.”

...

Chapter End Notes

I want Bran to be in this story as well, but I'm not sure yet. Obviously, he's important, but I want him to be more of a person than just a shell. I'm still figuring that out. Sansa in the next chapter - having sister talk with Arya and being able to confide in her sister about her feelings for her husband and her worries as well. THANK YOU very much for reading. Writing Arya scares the hell out of me, to be honest.

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Arya is scrubbed until her skin is pink. The water is still warm and she hugs her knees to her chest as the maid washes her hair thoroughly, clucking her tongue quietly to herself. Arya swallows the retort on her tongue towards the woman. She can't remember the last time she actually bathed so she can't exactly say anything in her defense.

The door opens and Sansa steps in, seeing Arya still in the wash tub in front of the fire. She smiles.

"Thank you, Sarra," Sansa smiles to the maid behind Arya. "I will finish up here. Make sure you get to the kitchen and get yourself something to eat."

Sarra shakes off her hands and stands up, giving Sansa a curtesy. "Thank you, Your Grace."

Sansa waits until Saara leaves the chamber, the door closing behind her, before Sansa approaches the tub. She kneels behind Arya once again and takes over washing her hair with the soap. Arya stays quiet, hugging her knees to her chest, her chin on her knee and her eyes on the door; as if waiting for someone unwanted to burst in at any moment.

"Tilt back," Sansa quietly commands and Arya does so, closing her eyes as Sansa dumps the water over her head, washing the soap from her hair.

Then, kneeling once more, Sansa takes a comb and begins working it through the tangles left behind. She begins to hum quietly and Arya has to close her eyes; has to try and keep her breathing steady, but right now, thoughts of her mother flood her mind.

"I miss her, too," Sansa says in a soft voice as if she's able to read her sister's mind.

Arya snuffles and shakes her head despite the comb working through her hair. “I haven’t thought of her in so long. Not *really* thought of her. It’s... after the Freys...”

Sansa’s hands still. “What about the Freys?”

Arya hesitates, not sure if she should tell Sansa what she did. But Sansa has a right to know. They were her family, too, and what Arya did was for family.

“Arya,” Sansa prompts.

“I killed them all,” she answers in a quiet voice, yet still cold.

Sansa’s hands still and Arya finds herself holding her breath, wondering how Sansa is going to react.

A moment passes and then Sansa resumes moving the comb gently through Arya’s hair. “Good.”

That’s all she says and it takes another moment for Arya to realize that that’s all she’s going to say. Slowly, she allows herself to relax and concentrate on the gentle ministrations of the comb.

“Short hair suits you much better,” Sansa comments.

Arya allows herself a small smile. “I had it cut when I fled from King’s Landing. It was safer to travel as a boy.” Her voice is quiet by the end and Sansa’s hands slow, nearly stopping, before she continues combing.

“That was very smart.”

“I’m sorry I couldn’t get to you,” Arya then blurts out.

“You couldn’t have,” Sansa shakes her head. “No one could have.”

Sansa is quiet then so Arya chooses to be quiet, too. Sansa begins to hum again and she moves the comb away. Arya wants to ask her all sorts of things – of King’s Landing, Joffrey and Cersei; of Ramsay Bolton.

But the question that forms instead isn’t actually a question at all. “You and Jon are married now.”

Sansa laughs at that. “We are. Don’t worry though. Now that you’re home again, I’m sure he still likes you more.” Her voice is light, but Arya hears much more past that.

“You are his wife. Surely, he likes you if he married you.” It sounds naïve to Arya’s own ears, but even now, after everything, she knows there are still things she is naïve in regards to.

“We only married because that was what the Lords wanted. And mother and father wanted it as well, before King Robert, if you remember. Jon only married me because of duty.”

Arya turns her head to look over her shoulder. “There’s more,” she states, staring at – studying – her older sister. “Do you love him?”

So long ago now, Jon and Sansa were meant to be married; betrothed to spend the rest of their life together as husband and wife; Lord and Lady of their own Keep over their own land. Arya had been jealous once she was old enough to know what a betrothal was; not because she wanted Jon as her husband – disgusting – but because Sansa would be leaving with Jon and she would have him all to herself and Arya wouldn’t be able to see him every day.

Sansa looks at her, but can’t seem to do so for long. She stands up, turning away, going to collect the cloth so that Arya might finally rise from the tub. “It doesn’t matter,” Sansa finally speaks. “There are far more important things to think about. Tyrion Lannister is in our home and there’s a Targaryen...” her voice trails off and Arya knows she’s the only person who could probably detect the slight tremble in her tone.

Sansa holds out the cloth and turns her head so that Arya can rise. Arya does so, taking the cloth and wrapping it around her body, watching her sister closely.

“Would you like me to braid your hair tonight or would you like it to dry by the fire?” Sansa asks.

“You love him,” Arya states.

Sansa’s eyes snap back towards her. “Of course I love him. He’s Jon.”

“No. You *love* him.” Arya still doesn’t know the difference – exactly – but she knows there is one.

She expects Sansa to immediately deny that; to be so adamant in her refusal of loving Jon.

But instead, Sansa stays silent and Arya actually doesn’t know if she prefers that over Sansa making quick denials or not.

Arya watches her closely as Sansa goes to the wardrobe and pulls out a long white sleep gown.

“I don’t know what you prefer to sleep in-”

Arya lets out a laugh, cutting into Sansa’s words, and Sansa looks at her, confused.

“Sorry,” Arya says, trying to get her to stop laughing. “I just... I still don’t believe I’m here.”

Sansa smiles then, too. “I’m so glad you are. We’re a little short on materials at the moment, but I will find you some fresh breeches and tunics to wear tomorrow until your own clothes are washed.” She sets the sleep gown on the bed and heads towards the door. “I’ll also have the tub removed tomorrow. Don’t worry about making it down to the Hall for breakfast. You sleep. I’ll have food sent up for you. You need rest.”

“You’re good at this,” Arya comments before Sansa can leave.

“What?”

“This whole...” Arya gestures around the room, meaning the whole of Winterfell, and Sansa understands for she smiles.

“That might be the nicest thing you’ve ever said to me,” Sansa says, still smiling. “Good night.”

And then, before Arya can even think of something to say in response to that, Sansa leaves, closing the door behind her.

...

Jon lifts his head when he hears the door to the chamber open and at the sight of his wife, he stands up.

“I think she’ll be sleeping for quite a bit,” Sansa says before he can even open his mouth to ask. “She seems exhausted.”

“She will sleep for as long as she needs to and no one will disturb her,” Jon vows.

Sansa smiles and then she goes behind the changing screen in the corner.

Jon swallows. “Do you need help?”

He has never been in here before when she has been changed for bed. He is still either in the training yards or going over plans and maps with Davos and the others. Sansa has a maid, Cora, but it is late and Jon knows that Sansa wouldn’t disturb her maid – whether that’s Cora’s job or not.

Sansa is quiet on the other side of the screen and Jon can imagine she trying to unlace her dress without answering his offer. He knows she doesn’t wish for him to touch her.

He has a dark thought then. Is there another man's touch Sansa wishes for?

No, his is quick to remind himself. Not after Ramsay. What that man did to her – to his *wife* – Sansa still deals with the pain of it every day, Jon knows, no matter how badly she tries to hide it from him. No. Sansa doesn't want any man's touch; not even her husband's.

"Cora knotted it a bit tightly this morning and I can't..." Sansa sounds frustrated. "If you wouldn't mind..."

"Of course not."

Jon does his best to keep breathing and to not swallow his tongue as he takes slow steps to join her behind the screen. She stands with her back to him and he nearly gasps at the sight of her; the candlelight dancing off her body, her braid pulled over her shoulder.

She looks back to him and Jon manages to give her the smallest smile. He is sure to approach her slowly – so not to startle her – and he lifts his hands just as slowly, not knowing what he'll do if she flinches from him. But she doesn't flinch or shy herself away.

Jon looks at the laces of his wife's dress, his heart pounding in his chest. He sleeps close to her every night. He wonders if his body is just drawn to hers; if it's always been drawn to hers and he was just too young to realize it. But somehow, being this close to her in the candlelight, it is so very different.

"You're right," he says after a moment of doing his best to unknot the laces. "I must have Cora train some of our people in tying knots." He smiles when that gets the softest laugh from her. "May I..." he begins to ask and Sansa looks back over her shoulder to him to see what he is suggesting. "If I use my teeth..."

"Oh!" Sansa's eyes widen a bit at that and he sees a blush darken her cheeks. "I... if you think it will help..."

"I don't want to bring my blade near you," Jon tells her.

Sansa stares at him and he can feel her body stiffen at just the idea of that. “Thank you,” she whispers.

She then faces forward again and Jon thinks that might be her giving him permission. Jon steps in just a little closer and bending his head down, he closes his eyes as he catches the whiff of her scent. His wife’s scent is roses and snow and Jon wishes to inhale it until it clouds his brain and it’s all he can smell.

With the aid of his teeth, he is able to loosen the knot and then he is able to unlace the rest of it with his fingers, slowly exposing more and more of her pale back. He sees the scars, too, leftover from both Joffrey and Ramsay, but honestly, his eyes skim right over them because his wife’s back is pale and beautiful.

Sansa is completely still and he doesn’t even think she’s breathing. She’s probably trying to figure out what he’s thinking. Her scars are probably the only thing she thinks he sees.

Jon can’t help himself. He can’t tell her what he’s thinking. He can’t be sure of the words that will tell her exactly how beautiful he thinks she is; how strong for getting all of these scars and still surviving it all he knows her to be.

Instead, he leans forward again, catching her scent, and before he can stop himself, Jon presses his lips to the first one of her scars he can reach.

...

Chapter End Notes

Thank you very much for reading! Tyrion appears again in the next chapter and he is still trying to plead Dany's case to Jon and Sansa - while studying the couple for information to take back to his Queen. (Also, tomorrow, the 21st, is my birthday!)

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

For a few passing minutes after Jon Stark finishes speaking, Tyrion is quiet, needing those minutes to collect his thoughts and think of what to possibly say to all of that.

“You speak the truth?” Tyrion finally is able to ask.

Jon’s snort is his answer and he doesn’t stop at sparring with the young man across from him as he speaks. “No, Lannister. I’m training all of these men, women and children to keep me from my own boredom since there’s clearly not enough to do around here. I needed to make up a Night King to keep things interesting for myself.”

Tyrion falls quiet again. He’s heard the stories, of course, but from thousands of years ago, that’s all they are now. *Stories*. The dead can’t possibly be walking North of the Wall again. And well, if they are... how can he tell his Queen about it without her scoffing in complete disbelief? It *is* a fantastical story and even he, who is from Westeros, has difficulty believing in it right at this moment.

But Jon is correct. If it’s just a story to tell to distract Tyrion from his true reason for his visit, why would the King in the North be spending his time in the training yards each day with all of these common people instead of helping his wife with further preparing for winter? Surely, the King has far more important things to worry about than things that don’t exist.

“Could you prove it?” Tyrion wonders.

Jon stops sparring to turn towards him, his eyes flashing in a fierce glare.

He has become such an angry young man. Tyrion doesn’t remember him being so angry when he was younger, when Tyrion first met him those years ago at Winterfell. Or perhaps he was and

Tyrion just hadn't noticed it. That doesn't seem possible though. It isn't like him to miss something that big about another person.

"I don't need to prove anything to you, Lannister," Jon tells him, his voice as cold as the Northern wind. "You're in my home. You best not forget that. If it wasn't for Westeros decorum, I would have killed you the instant you rode onto my lands. It'd do you well to remember that as well."

"Forgive me, Your Grace," Tyrion is quick to say. "I meant no disrespect. I was only thinking... if there is a dead army marching this way, perhaps the Queen Daenerys can aid you." *If* there is a dead army marching their way, it would be a good opportunity for Daenerys to show to Jon that she is on his side.

"No."

Jon's refusal is swift and final.

His eyes glance upwards then and Tyrion follows his path to see what he's looking to.

Sansa is on the balcony that overlooks the training yards, wearing a heavy gray cloak with thick black fur around the collar. Her hair is worn down, two braids pulled back from her face. As always, Podrick is with her – Brienne in the training yard that morning – and Yohn Royce is at her side, papers in his hands, a board to write on, nodding in agreement to whatever Sansa is saying. Tyrion knows of Yohn Royce, but he doesn't know the man personally. He only knows that he is loyal to House Stark – especially to Lady Sansa. He seems to have her council more than anyone else from what Tyrion has seen.

Perhaps it's time he speak with Yohn Royce and get to know the man.

When Tyrion looks away – back to Jon – Jon is already staring at him, his jaw visibly clenched, obviously having noted Tyrion looking at her. Tyrion smiles, doing his best to be at ease around the man.

"I had almost forgotten how beautiful the Lady Sansa is," Tyrion tries to speak as friendly as he can; just two men discussing the beauty of a woman.

Jon's hard eyes remain though. "I am aware of my wife's looks."

"Of course," Tyrion gives him a smile. He thinks of the question he posed to Sansa when he first arrived and how she had not given an answer. Perhaps, Jon will. "Was it strange to marry your cousin after going years without seeing one another and when your betrothal was no longer between you?"

Jon looks at the man – his eyes hard and unwavering. If Tyrion thought him capable, he would think Jon Stark was looking *inside* of him right now. Tyrion wonders what is inside of Jon right now.

Starks are a loyal sort. He did not come here to Winterfell without already knowing that. Even if there is absolutely no affection between Jon and Sansa, breaking up their marriage will still prove to be difficult. They truly do see themselves as their sigil – wolves – and wolf packs stick together.

But perhaps, if Jon shows even the *slightest* bit of discomfort in his marriage, that is discomfort Tyrion can use. Does he ever expect the son of Brandon Stark to actually marry a Targaryen? No, he'll be honest with himself in regards to that no matter how his Queen might be in looks and power. But perhaps, being her lover will be enough. Perhaps Jon can stay married to Sansa and just warm Daenerys's bed from time to time. A relationship of that nature would still keep the North and South tied together.

A marriage would be ideal, of course, but being around Jon Stark more and more and seeing the anger Jon still has, bubbling inside of him over a father he never met – a father who died at the hand of a Targaryen – Tyrion knows that an actual marriage between Jon and Daenerys might just not be possible.

This very well might be a situation of taking what they can get.

"I was always meant to marry Sansa," Jon answers.

Hmmmm, Tyrion thinks to himself. Not exactly a vow of undying love for his wife, he notes.

...

After going over the grain stores one more time – always one more time – with Yohn Royce, Sansa returns to her solar to go over some more paperwork in her own company. Podrick stations himself outside the door, which Sansa decides to leave open so the people know that she will accept audiences if need be. She always wants to make sure that she is available to hers and Jon's people – especially with the dead and winter both approaching.

As she scribbles away, she sees movement at the door and when she lifts her head to see, she instantly bursts into a smile. "There you are!" She declares as Ghost trots into the room, coming right for her. She sees the tints of pink in the white of his fur around his mouth. "And returning home successful, I see. We might need you to lead a hunting party so men might return with more meat for our stores."

Ghost responds to that by resting his head in Sansa's lap and she smiles, kissing the direwolf on top of his head while murmuring to him that he's a good boy. Ghost's tail sweeps back and forth to that.

Sansa does her best to return to her work – there is always so much work no matter how much she tries to finish from one day to the next – but she admits that her mind just isn't here with her this early afternoon.

Her mind has been distracted all day – no matter what task she has been seeing to. Thankfully, it seems her body nor her mouth need her mind to actually be present, taking care of all business without aid as Sansa's mind is still in the night before; her back still feeling the ghost of Jon's lips across her skin.

At first, she hadn't been even sure that he had been doing what he had actually been doing and then, as soon as she allowed herself to realize that yes, Jon was most certainly kissing her scars, she had almost choked on her quick inhale of breath.

"I'm sorry," Jon murmured as he straightened behind her, feeling her body stiffen so tightly, it rivaled that of a wooden board.

Sansa had shaken her head rapidly, turning towards him, tears clinging in her eyes. "No, it's not... they're so hideous," she finished in a whisper.

“No, love. They’re not. They’re not,” Jon had said, stepping back towards her and then with his hands framing her face, he had kissed her forehead.

Sansa can still feel his lips and hear his words; most of all, *love*. He had called her ‘love’. She wonders if he even remembers doing so and if he does remember, does he cringe at the slip of calling her such a word? Does he regret it? It was just a slip. Sansa knows that. Jon’s never called her that before and he surely wouldn’t once seeing her scars. They’re so ugly and how could he possibly love her once seeing them?

Her mind then wonders how many scars the Targaryen Queen has, but Sansa is quick to physically shake her head, knocking that thought from her mind.

It doesn’t matter. Whether she’s Jon’s love or not, the Targaryen Queen doesn’t matter because the facts remain. Jon is Jon; Brandon Stark’s son and he would never fall to his knees in front of a Targaryen Queen – sworn to a scarred cousin-wife or not.

Sansa must always remember that; must always *believe* that.

A knock on the open door has her lifting her head and she smiles when she sees that it’s her sister, awake and dressed despite the sun being almost directly over their heads now. It doesn’t matter. As promised, Jon and Sansa ensured that their cousin and sister slept, undisturbed, until she was ready to rise.

“Settling in well?” Sansa asks as Arya comes into the room, plopping herself down in one of the chairs situated around Sansa’s desk for when she has meetings.

“It’s strange to sleep in such a comfortable bed again,” Arya comments and Sansa wants to ask her so much; about what’s happened to her and where she’s slept, but there are too many questions and Sansa already knows that Arya won’t answer them. “I’ve already spoken with Jon,” she then continues. “He told me about the battle we have coming.”

Sansa knows it’s pointless, but each morning, she wakes and promises herself she won’t think of the Night King and his army for at least a few hours. She never makes it that long though. *Everything* she and Jon are doing every day is preparing themselves and their people for what is to come.

“He told me that you have council meetings every afternoon, discussing possible plans of attack.”

“We do and you will join us this afternoon. I’m not much help during them, but I like to be present. I don’t know how to win a battle-”

“You won the Battle against Ramsay Bolton, from what I hear,” Arya interrupts.

Sansa sits back in her chair. Ghost’s head is still in her lap and she resumes scratching through his fur.

“Only because I was able to get Littlefinger and the number of men in our favor,” Sansa replied.

“Jon told me that he executed the man,” Arya watches Sansa closely.

Sansa has to wonder how long ago Arya actually woke up. It seems like she and Jon have discussed so much already.

“Yes,” Sansa nods. “For crimes against our family.”

“And you. Jon said that Littlefinger expected you to marry him after he brought the Knights of the Vale to the aid of you and Jon.”

Sansa nearly shudders at that; at Littlefinger all, but demanding her hand; demanding *she* accept his; at the memory of the blackness of Jon’s eyes as absolute fury took over him once she had told him.

“If it had been you Littlefinger wanted to marry, Jon would have executed him as well,” Sansa says.

That’s the truth. Jon is fiercely loyal to all of their family – and he had hated Littlefinger. It was only a matter of time once Jon found out all the other man had done against their family before Jon swung his sword through the man’s neck. He wanting to marry Sansa was just another reason in a long list of them.

“You don’t seem to have that much faith in Jon,” Arya then comments as casually as can be.

Sansa snaps her head up from looking down to Ghost with wide eyes. For a moment, she has no idea what to say to that, because she never thought Arya would even *think* such a thing. But then, she reminds herself that Arya hasn’t been here to see everything she and Jon have already been through together. Perhaps, to Arya, Sansa is still that spoiled girl in King’s Landing who wanted to marry a sniveling Prince.

“I have faith in no one more than Jon,” Sansa swears.

“But you don’t believe that he would do anything for you?” Arya questions.

“I’m his cousin and I’m his family. I know what he would do. He’s already showed me.” Sansa’s throat feels thick and she wishes the pitcher of water wasn’t so far away. She had forgotten to bring a cup of it to her desk when she had first come in, but now, she doesn’t even trust herself to stand to go collect some.

Arya is looking at her, not saying anything to that, and Sansa suddenly fears that her sister can look straight into her head and read all of her feelings and thoughts in regards to her love for her husband. And knowing so little of what her sister has been through and what she has become, perhaps Arya *can* read Sansa’s thoughts.

“I wish you were still asleep in bed,” Sansa speaks before she can get herself to stop.

Arya just cracks into a grin and continues to not say anything more.

...

Chapter End Notes

Posted a little earlier in the day than usual, but I wanted to get this one up just because of my schedule. The council meeting will be in the next chapter - with Tyrion present. (PS - in my

head, Sansa and Yohn Royce are BFFs so good luck to Tyrion getting that man as an ally).
THANK YOU for all of the reads, comments and kudos! I'm still blown away by it, to be honest.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

The meeting has just begun when the door opens once more and Sansa steps inside, Ghost at her side and Brienne following behind. As soon as she enters, Jon stands to his feet and the others are quick to follow. Sansa gives them all a warm smile, her eyes landing on Jon.

“Apologies for my tardiness,” Sansa says to them all.

“We have only just begun,” Jon assures her.

He wants to ask her if she’s alright; if there’s a reason for her being late to the meeting – Sansa is rarely late to anything – but he knows that those aren’t questions to ask in front of everyone; especially Lannister, who is sitting in this meeting as well.

He thinks of what Sansa has told him about Tyrion possibly wanting Jon for his Dragon Queen despite him being already married to Sansa (and despite him wanting to vomit at just the idea of even touching a Targaryen with a single finger of his). He is grateful his wife is so smart in the ways of the people in politics and how they think. He isn’t the best at it. Jon will be the first to admit it, and if he *does* find himself getting even marginally better at it, it’s because he is married to Sansa and he follows her lead.

He doesn’t doubt her when she told him what she thinks Tyrion’s plan might be. It’s a disgusting and infuriating plan and yet, at the same time, it makes sense, doesn’t it? If some woman comes, claiming to be Queen, she will need allies; *strong* allies. Jon hasn’t even met the woman – nor does he care to – but he already finds her incredibly stupid if she thinks she can get him to be anything to her. She also seems to be surrounding herself with incredibly stupid advisors.

Stupid advisors with eyes currently following his wife as she comes around the table to take her seat in the empty chair next to Jon.

Once Sansa sits down, everyone does as well, Jon the last to do so; slowly and feeling his fingers curl into a fist as Lannister keeps looking at Sansa, trying to hide the fact that he is, but Jon able to see it all the same. The man then moves his eyes, locking with Jon's from across the table, and lifting his wine glass, he gives Jon the barest of smiles and Jon's fist is entirely formed now.

Jon then feels a warm hand over his fist and he turns his head to look to Sansa. She is looking at him and without a word, she leaves her hand resting over his; not needing to say anything. And slowly, from her touch and her touch alone, Jon's fist begins to unfurl until his hand is relaxed beneath hers.

"Please, Lady Mormont," Jon nods to the young girl. "Continue."

He expects Sansa to pull her hand away from his, but she doesn't. All through the meeting, as everyone around the table studies the map of the North unfolded before them, with all of the pieces in the same places as they always are, discussing the plan over and over again that hasn't changed in a week's time, studying it from every possible angle with every possible scenario being worked out, Sansa's hand stays over his and Jon doesn't dare move – even to shift in his chair. He's almost afraid of breathing too loud in case it causes Sansa to realize that she's still touching him.

"Perhaps," Tyrion speaks up and the room falls silent, everyone looking to him. Jon feels his body begin to tense and Sansa's fingers gently close around his hand. "The Queen Daenerys may offer some assistance."

"I already told you no," Jon cuts in, his voice stern.

"And a Targaryen is not a Queen," Lyanna Mormont frowns at Tyrion with that fierce stare of hers.

"Not in Westeros," Lord Manderly adds with his own frown.

Tyrion is surrounded with frowns and cold eyes, but he doesn't seem to notice; or perhaps even care if he does notice. He just smiles and takes another sip of wine.

"I know. Lady Sansa is your Queen. But does my sister recognize the North's independence?" He wonders.

Jon doesn't mean to, but he grasps Sansa's hand, feeling his anger growing hotter and hotter in his chest. From the way he grasps her hand, Sansa is only able to move her thumb and she does so, brushing it back and forth along the patch of skin on his hand that she can touch. In the back of his mind, Jon can feel it and he forces himself to keep his head clear.

"And you're saying that *your* Queen will recognize it?" Jon asks.

"Perhaps," Tyrion pauses to look to Sansa and then to Jon. "If you come and meet the Queen, explain to her the threat that is North of the Wall and coming, she will offer her help in exchange for your help."

"And what help does she need?" Arya is the one to ask. She is not sitting, but rather, she's standing behind Jon's chair, off to the side. She had been silent for the entire meeting, listening to the plan of marching north to the Wall once the Lord Commander, Edd, sends the raven, but she can't stay silent any longer.

A Lannister in her home, trying to push any Targaryen on them, Tyrion has no idea how lucky he is that he's able to get through *any* of this meeting without Arya's blade finding his throat.

"To take the throne from Cersei," Tyrion answers.

"Listen to me, Lannister," Yohn Royce suddenly speaks and as he does, he stands up from his chair, towering over the man, frowning down at him. "The last time a Targaryen was on the throne, do you remember how that ended? Especially for the family of the home you are sitting in right now?"

Jon's grip tightens even further on Sansa's hand and he knows it's probably too tight, but he can't bring himself to loosen it. It's either grip Sansa's hand or punch Tyrion Lannister in the face.

"I am very sorry for that, Your Grace," he says to Jon before looking back up to Royce. "But Queen Daenerys should not be held responsible for that. When she takes the throne, she will do the things for Westeros as its ruler that always should have been. There will be peace."

“And we should believe you, a Lannister, vouching for a Targaryen?” Lord Glover nearly snarls as Royce sits once more, giving Sansa a small smile of apology for allowing himself to show lack of a propriety during a meeting and being rude in her home. Sansa merely smiles softly at the man, not thinking anything of it.

Tyrion merely smiles and his eyes return to Jon. “Her dragons might be of use at the Wall when the dead come. Is there any way we can prove to her what’s coming?”

“I already told you,” Jon speaks and his voice is nothing, but a snarl. Sansa continues rubbing her thumb on the bit of skin on his hand that she can reach. “I don’t need to prove anything to you or *your* Queen,” he says the last word with so much disdain, he can feel the tension rolling off of everyone else, all feeling – and sharing – his same hostility towards the clear outsider. “I don’t need her help and I especially don’t need help from a woman who would offer it only so that I would be in her debt.”

“If she thinks she’s the rightful Queen of Westeros, why wouldn’t she help us seeing as how if the North falls to the dead, all of Westeros would shortly follow?” Royce questions.

Lannister smiles. Even with the tension, he still looks as relaxed as a man possibly can; as if he doesn’t find the anger from everyone to be true; or perhaps justified.

“I was only thinking out loud,” Tyrion tells them all, his eyes looking only to Jon though. “I know you were Lord Commander of the Night’s Watch and I’m sure there are still those who are loyal to you. Perhaps, if you and some of those from the Night’s Watch were to go out beyond the wall, there would be a way for you to capture one of these dead and bring them before both Queen Daenerys and Cersei. If Cersei sees, maybe she would even join your cause.”

“*Our* cause,” Lyanna snaps, not able to keep it in, not like Royce and worried about propriety in these meetings.

“You want me to risk lives so I can bring back a dead wight with me and what? Haul it all over Westeros, showing it off and proving its existence, hoping it will convince others to help?” Jon nearly smiles. “My wife told me that she once thought you were the cleverest man she ever knew. I hardly think my wife is the sort to make mistakes, but I have to wonder about her opinion of you.”

Sansa suddenly stands up, having been silent for the entire meeting and now, she speaks. “That is all today. I must speak with my husband,” her voice is firm in her command and no one dares to

argue.

Jon stands up as well, looking at her. "Is everything alright?" He asks her in a lowered voice. He can see the ramrod straightness of her back and the way she clasps her hands in front of her.

Everyone stands, bowing to them both before leaving the room. Sansa looks to Tyrion and sees as he comes to walk out with Yohn Royce. If possible, her back grows even straighter at that.

"Sansa," Jon says her name gently, his hand coming to rest on the small of her back.

He nearly expects her to flinch, her mind elsewhere and his touch would be of a surprise to her. But she doesn't flinch. Instead, when Brienne is the last to leave, closing the door behind her, Sansa spins to Jon.

She licks her dry lips and takes a shaky breath. "Tyrion Lannister is trying to kill you."

...

"I have heard much about you, Lord Royce," Tyrion says once they leave the meeting room and head towards the Hall side-by-side.

"Have you now?" Royce replies. "I've certainly heard a bit about you, too, My Lord."

"All of it true, I'm sure," Tyrion gives a grin at that. "May I ask a question that might seem a bit forward?"

Royce's steps slow and then, the large man turns fully to look down to Tyrion, who has stopped walking as well. He does not show nervousness. He is a guest in Winterfell and as Jon said, there is decorum and manners when a guest is invited into one of the Houses. No harm shall come to him as long as he remains a guest of the King Jon and Lady Sansa.

Besides, he doesn't think Yohn Royce is the sort to just kill a man in a hallway in cold blood.

“You seem the sort to ask whether the other person wishes to hear it or not, so ask,” Royce says, now frowning, his lips heavily weighed downwards.

Tyrion makes sure he keeps smiling to show the man that he certainly means no harm. “I know everyone here is most loyal to Your Grace, Jon, as you should well be. He seems to be a fine King who cares deeply for his people and their safety. I also follow a Queen with the same traits.”

“A woman who declares herself a Queen in Essos does not make her one in Westeros,” Royce swiftly says.

“But as a Targaryen, whose father last sat on the throne, it is Queen Daenerys’ right to sit there next.”

Royce stares at him for a hard moment and then, a flash of a hint of a smile brushes across his lips. “It seems to me that you have been away from Westeros far too long and have forgotten our history, Lord Lannister. Before you begin a campaign for a Queen, it’s important to remember who fought on which side when a certain rebellion knocked her family from the throne.”

With that, he turns to resume walking, but he stops once more, turning back to Tyrion.

“You never asked your question, but I can assume what it is. I only know and recognize one Queen and it would do you well to keep from openly staring at her while her husband is in the same room.”

...

Chapter End Notes

Before the whole mess of S8, I honestly thought the Wight hunt episode in S7 was perhaps the worst episode of the show. I refuse to write it *like that* in this story. As always, THANK YOU! (Jon/Sansa alone time together in the next chapter)

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

A note before the chapter: I am writing this story because I dedicated nearly 10 years of my life, loving and watching a show. After most of S7 and then what S8 turned out to be, I was left, feeling like I had just wasted all of that time. I was angry, disappointed and upset. I am still all of those things. This story is me channeling all of that (plus my frustrations), so yes, Tyrion is going to be dumber than usual, Dany is going to be terrible, Jon will NOT be an idiot and so forth. This story, for me, is the very reason why I write fanfiction - to fix everything the writers slapped and insulted the viewers with - and to also let that anger and frustration out.

I was planning on doing an entire rewatch of the show once the final season aired, but THEN the final season did air and honestly, I no longer see the point of doing that. Nothing for the past eight seasons mattered whatsoever - none of the clues or foreshadowing - so I know I'm probably going to forget some things that happened exactly the way they did on the show. (I just wanted to warn everyone ahead of time)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

...

They don't speak until they reach their chambers and by then, Sansa is breathing so heavily, Jon fears she's about to lose her breath completely and pass out. He closes and bolts the door behind them both.

"Sansa," Jon begins to say, his own heart racing because he can feel the distress rolling off of her.

Tyrion Lannister is trying to kill you.

He was sitting in the same meeting. What had she heard that he hadn't?

Sansa spins back towards him and he freezes when she lifts her hands to his cheeks, holding his face so his eyes lock with hers. It takes him a moment for his stunned mind to realize that Sansa is actually touching him. Yes, she has touched him before, but it's not often and whenever she does, Jon wants to see if it can always last as long as humanely possible.

Slowly – he always moves so slowly with his wife – Jon lifts his hands and rests them on the curves of her waist. He can feel the heat of her body through her dress and he has to fight the urge to grip the fabric in his fingers and tug their bodies together as close as they can be.

“What he suggested in the meeting, you going North to capture a Wight to bring back for proof, you will not do that, Jon,” Sansa says and her voice is strong, but Jon can hear past that; can hear her fear.

Jon shuffles forward a step. “Of course I’m not going to do that. How would I capture *one* without the White Walkers becoming aware and not sending the whole of their army after me? And even if I did manage it, the Wight wouldn’t last away from the Wall without the King.”

“Tyrion knows it would be a suicide mission. That’s why he suggested it.”

Jon looks at her, letting his mind think that over for a moment; wanting to get it himself. But he can’t. Sansa is the brains in this marriage. He knows she is and it won’t help in the least if he doesn’t admit that.

“I thought he wanted a relationship between myself and his Dragon Queen,” Jon says and he can hardly get the words out without tasting the bile on his tongue.

“I think...” Sansa pauses and Jon watches the tip of her tongue dart out to wet her lips.

He would very much do that for her if she would allow him to.

“I think *they* had a plan before Tyrion arrived, but now that he’s here and he’s able to look at things... I think he has a few possible plans tossed into the air to see which one lands successful,” Sansa tells him.

Jon is listening. He is. But he is also staring at her lips. With their faces so close, he can see the pale pink of them; the slight fullness to her bottom lip and how it would be so easy for him to lean in and meet her lips with his; how easy it would be to suck on that bottom lip and taste the sweetness of his wife.

He can still remember every single second of that kiss she had initiated in this very chamber a few nights earlier. He had felt like he hadn't been breathing and though it had hardly lasted a handful of moments, to Jon, time had completely stopped with Sansa's lips on his.

He knows she's not ready. What Ramsay did to her – and Littlefinger and Joffrey before that – she hasn't confided every detail to him, but her silences – and what she *has* told him – provides Jon with more than enough information to guess as to what his wife has gone through since leaving Winterfell as a girl.

He has no intention of rushing her – whether that be to kiss him or to consummate their marriage in full. He will wait forever for Sansa. He only hopes she knows that.

That doesn't mean that silently to himself, he doesn't dream on a nightly basis of how it would be kissing her. He holds her at night as they sleep. They do share a bed together though he knows that probably all of the North knows that their marriage has not been consummated yet. Still, they share a room and a bed for appearance's sake. And when they are both asleep, Jon holds her and Sansa is able to sleep in his arms.

The nights are his favorite time.

“Jon?”

Jon shakes his head. “I'm sorry,” he then says when he realizes that he has allowed his mind to drift off.

“Are you alright?” She asks, her brow furrowing with worry as she looks to his face closely.

“Yes,” he nods. “As alright as I can be.”

Sansa pauses a moment and then the barest smile passes over her lips. “I don't like having him in our home either, but I don't want to be so rude as to ask when he's returning to his Queen.”

“I can be rude, if you’d permit me,” Jon tells her with his own smile; it only growing when Sansa laughs.

Her hands slip from his face and Jon wishes she wouldn’t stop touching him, but her smile is still lighting her face so Jon supposes that’s just as well. His wife is so beautiful and kind and everyone – himself included – loves her. Not that she has to smile to be beautiful. He just wishes that she would do so more.

“I don’t think I have the energy to eat in the Hall this evening and watch him drink our wine and act as if him being here isn’t a great insult to us,” Sansa confesses.

“Then we won’t eat our supper in the Hall,” Jon readily agrees and then a thought occurs to him. “You don’t mean that *I* still have to eat in the Hall with him, do you?”

Sansa laughs again and Jon’s hands tighten on her waist. Gods, is there a better sound than Sansa’s laughter? Perhaps her moans- He swiftly ends that thought in its tracks.

“I think it would be rather bad of us to leave him to the mercies of the Lords and Lady Mormont, but I just can’t find it in myself to care that much.”

Jon grins and he leans in, pressing his lips to her forehead.

Sansa looks at him for a moment and Jon can see her swallow. “Can you help me with my laces?” She asks him quietly then, already turning around to give him her back, pulling her braid over her shoulder.

It’s far too early in the evening to be changing for bed, but Jon won’t dare say something as stupid as pointing that out to her. Besides, if there’s anyone who deserves going to be early for once, it’s Sansa. She works too hard. They all do, but Jon can see the faintest circles under her eyes in the morning and she’s always thinking and worrying and even if the sun isn’t completely dipped down and gone from the sky, if his wife wants to ready herself for bed, that is exactly what is going to happen if Jon has anything to do with it; and apparently, he does.

Slowly, he moves his fingers towards the laces on the back of her dress. After a moment, he smirks.

“Cora again?” Sansa wonders, looking over her shoulder, back to him.

Jon smiles and shakes his head. “She truly has a talent for knots.”

Sansa smiles as well and glances down before lifting her eyes to him again. “Perhaps... would it help if you used your teeth as you did before?”

Jon’s heart subsequently stops beating at the question. Sansa has asked it in a perfectly innocent tone and yet, looking at her, Jon has to wonder if there’s absolutely *anything* actually innocent about what she’s asking and if she’s even aware of how it might not sound innocent at all.

Jon knows she probably doesn’t. Even for everything she has been through, his wife is still so innocent when it comes to certain things; genuine love and affection. Seduction.

“It might,” Jon finally answers and his voice sounds a bit rough to his ears. He clears his throat before leaning into her back, smelling her, almost closing his eyes at the scent of her. Sansa bites down on her lower lip and she keeps her head turned so she can watch him.

He has a thought and he wonders if it would be possible to *casually* ask Cora to lace his wife’s dress so tightly each morning, that the only way it can be undone each night is with his teeth.

As it had worked the first time, it works this time as well; his teeth able to loosen the knot enough for his fingers to finish the rest of the work. As the laces loosen, her dress opening up, more and more of the pale expanse of her back is exposed; along with her scars. Jon’s hand seems to be moving before he can stop it and with the lightest fingers, he touches a spot on her back. Nowhere in particular; just any spot of skin his fingers touch first. It’s all perfect to him because it’s all part of his wife’s back.

Sansa shivers, but Jon can’t bring himself to lift his hand away.

“I have scars, too,” Jon tells her quietly.

“You have fought for many years. Only men who stay back and let others fight for them don’t have scars,” Sansa says and Jon finds himself smiling.

He knows who she’s speaking of. His wife has known the most cowardice of men. What a change that must have been for her; to be a Stark and see the ways of the men in their House and then seeing the way others act. Not for the first time, he wishes they had never left Winterfell and Uncle Ned had – as kindly and obediently as he could – tell Robert Baratheon to sod off because his daughter was already betrothed.

Far from the first time, Jon wishes that he is the only man his wife has ever known.

“Would it help if I showed them to you?” Jon wonders out loud. “It would help you to see how beautiful yours are compared to mine.”

Sansa is silent at the offer and Jon remains still, waiting, not rushing her for an answer.

Slowly, she turns back around to face him. She doesn’t speak, but she nods, her eyes locked with his. Jon gives her the smallest of smiles before he takes a step back and begins working on his own shirt. When he pulls it off over his head, he stands before her with his chest bare and his scars on display. Sansa gasps sharply as her eyes land upon them; especially the deep one over his heart.

“Jon,” she whispers his name and tears begin to brim in her eyes.

“No,” he shakes his head. “No tears. I’m alive. We both are.” He is the one to lift his hands to either side of her head, framing her face. She looks at him and she looks so sad in that moment, it makes his heart ache.

He wishes he could kiss her.

It is Jon’s turn to shiver when Sansa lifts one of her hands and with the touch of a feather, her fingertips rest on the deep scar over his chest; leftover from the wound that had finished him off before being brought back. At the time, he hadn’t known why he had gotten that chance when countless others lost their lives and stayed lost. Uncle Ned, Aunt Catelyn, Robb, Rickon... His own father...

But then, Sansa had come to Castle Black and suddenly, seeing her again, his purpose in this world had never been more clear to him.

It is now as it was before they all scattered in different directions in the wind.

Sansa is his purpose for everything.

“We’re both alive,” Sansa whispers, the tears still brimming, but none falling.

Jon stands as close to her as he can, her hand still on his bare chest, his hands still on her head as their eyes burn into the other. It is as their wedding at the Weirwood tree in the Godswood, staring at one another and only one another as they promised themselves to the other.

Jon feels as hot now as he had then as he finally married Sansa.

“We’re both alive and here, together, and no dragon or lion is going to tear us apart,” he vows to her.

Sansa closes her eyes at his word and leans forward, Jon leaning in as well so their foreheads rest together and he closes his eyes, too, his breathing matching hers; his heartbeat matching hers.

...

Chapter End Notes

We're going to be checking in with Dany again in the next chapter. THANK YOU a million times for reading this story!

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Varys lingers in the doorway, awaiting for permission to enter as Missandei braids the Queen's hair as she does each morning. Grey Worm stands nearby, keeping guard, stoic as always. Daenerys finally looks to Varys and bids him forward.

"Well?" The Queen asks, already holding out her hand.

"It just arrived, Your Grace," Varys assures as he steps forward to hand her the scroll.

Daenerys breaks the seal and unfurls the paper, her eyes scanning over the words. Varys watches her and can just imagine what it says as his Queen's frown grows deeper and her eyes flash a time or two. Without a word, she then hands Varys back the scroll so he can read it for himself.

Tyrion's words are of no surprise to him.

Proving more difficult than I initially anticipated and I take full responsibility.

Of course he does. Even with their Queen knowing enough of Jon Stark's history to know why he *might* not wish for any Targaryen ruler, it's best if she isn't reminded of it. Varys had thought ever getting Brandon Stark's son to agree to *anything* that involved a Targaryen would be near to an impossibility, but Varys had kept quiet because he knew that his opinion would have been overruled. Tyrion had assured their Queen that he could get the North on their side and the Queen had believed him.

"You are quiet."

Varys lifts his eyes from the scroll to see Daenerys studying him closely.

“You did not think he would succeed,” she then states.

Varys pauses, wondering if he should be truthful. He sighs. “I am not surprised by his report,” he admits.

Daenerys lifts her chin slightly, keeping her eyes steady on him. “How would you rectify this? Tyrion seems to have some other ideas, but I would like to hear your thoughts.”

Varys does not answer her right away. He takes a few moments to think over everything and decide which would be the best for his Queen to hear. There are certain things Daenerys does not like to hear and it’s truly never in anyone’s best interests to anger her. There had been a time when Varys had thought that the Dragon Queen would be the right ruler for Westeros; someone who truly would help, as she so often says she wishes to do.

But he has begun to have his doubts. The people of Westeros deserve a good leader – someone true, good and kind – and each day, Varys is left with more and more wonder if that leader is this woman before him.

He is not going to do anything though – not yet. He might be wrong and this Queen might surprise him and be truthfully everything he had thought her to be initially. It is an uphill fight to get her on that throne and he understands her being frustrated and angry. Maybe, once they dethrone Cersei and Daenerys is sitting where she belongs, things will be better.

“I had my doubts that Jon Stark would be willing to align himself and the North with us,” Varys admits.

He keeps his eyes steady on his Queen as he speaks those words and Daenerys does not make a comment to that. She simply looks at him – studying him – and waits for him to continue.

“The North is made up of extremely loyal people.”

“That is an admirable quality,” Daenerys speaks.

“It is. But it also is something that perhaps might be difficult to break through. Their loyalty is unwavering towards the Starks, who have ruled the North for thousands of years.”

Daenerys stands then, Missandei in the middle of braiding and her hands fall away. Varys braces himself, but the anger he expects does not come. Instead, Daenerys seems thoughtful, holding her hands in front of her as she turns towards the window. She looks out, quiet, and everyone is quiet in return, waiting.

“Tyrion is always so confident in his abilities. I have always admired that and it is why I awarded him the honor of being my Hand. I truly believe in him.” Daenerys turns back to Varys. “But I think perhaps you are correct. Perhaps he has aimed too high this time. Jon Stark sounds like a stubborn man who will not allow himself to turn away from what happened in the past and look towards the future of what Westeros *can* be once I am on the throne.”

Varys keeps quiet at that. His opinion on such a statement is not needed.

“Do you have any of your little birds in the North, Varys?” Daenerys asks.

“A few, Your Grace.”

“Send one to Winterfell. Have them report back with their observations of Sansa Stark. She might be able to see the picture her husband is missing.”

“Of course, Your Grace,” Varys bows to her. “Shall I tell Tyrion to end his efforts with King Jon?”

Daenerys pauses at the question and then shakes her head. “No, I would like Tyrion to stay. I still am wanting the King to come here and speak with me. And perhaps, the more we learn of his wife, we will have more to use to get the King on our side.”

Varys bows again and once Daenerys waves her hand towards the door, dismissing him, he turns and leaves as she returns to her chair to continue getting her hair braided.

...

Sansa stands on the balcony overlooking the training yard with Yohn Royce at her side as they watch below as Jon, Arya, Brienne, Pod and the dozens of the others spar and train. Sansa watches her sister and Brienne fighting one another and Sansa feels pride warm in her chest as her sister masterfully spins around the taller woman, holding her own, both equally matched despite their sizes and ages.

Her sister is a wonder and Sansa thinks of how proud both mother and father would feel in this moment, if they were here as well, watching Arya at what she clearly does best. It honestly takes Sansa's breath away.

Her eyes then wander to her husband and where he spars with Pod. Their own fight does not seem to be as intense as the one between Arya and Brienne; Jon sometimes pausing to give Pod instruction or correction and the young man nods, heeding Jon's advice before they begin again.

She looks at Jon from her spot above and can see the dirt on his body and clothes; the sweat mixed in. She suddenly very much wishes to call some of the maids to prepare a bath for their King before the evening meal so that Jon may bathe and have the chance to relax his body. Perhaps, he would allow Sansa to rub some oils into the muscles in his shoulders to help with the aches of his constant training.

She wonders if Jon would like if she was to do that.

The thought causes a flush to rush up her neck and she is grateful she wears her cloak and the fur collar may hide it from Lord Royce and anyone else who might notice.

Her husband is most talented with a sword. Everyone has always known him to be. Father had trained his sons and nephew since the time they were old enough to stand and take steps without falling on their bottom. At first, Jon was being trained to be the next Lord of Winterfell, as was his rightful place after his father being the oldest Stark son. But by his tenth year, Jon had decided that he did not want it and it should go to Robb. He would sign or make any decree that had to be made so it would be so. Jon did not have the head for it, he admitted, even with his Uncle Ned and Aunt Catelyn disagreeing.

Being a Lord was too much time behind a desk, working on endless papers, and Jon did not have a taste for it. He wished to spend all of his time in the training yards. "I will protect Winterfell as

Robb runs it.”

And though Ned and Catelyn had tried to make Jon see that one day, he would have his own Keep and lands – his right as a Lord – and would need to know how to run them, Jon was spectacularly stubborn.

“He gets that thick head of his from his father,” Ned would grumble.

And then his time at the Wall and beyond, training even more and fighting in wars and battles, it has only honed Jon’s skill to near perfection. As Sansa watches the training, no one is his equal – though she thinks Arya and Brienne might come close. But even Jon gives them corrections occasionally and they listen.

“He is still a boy, but he will grow to be brave and gentle and strong. He will be everything I want in a husband for you,” Sansa can still hear her father’s vow to her when her parents told her of her betrothal to Jon when they were still such young children.

“Of course, father,” Sansa had responded dutifully because that was what she was to do. She was the dutiful daughter of Ned and Catelyn Stark and she knew she would marry whoever her parents saw fit.

She wishes her parents were here to see both her and their nephew and the people they have become; and for Sansa to apologize to them for being such an idiot. If she had shown more of a happy reaction to someday becoming Jon’s wife, would her father been more inclined to turn down King Robert when he suggested a betrothal between Sansa and Joffrey?

She had had such fanciful daydreams of being Queen of Westeros as soon as her father told her about Joffrey. She had been such an idiot that now that she *is* a Queen, she just wants to be happy. And she thinks she is. She *is*. She is home, in the North, and in Winterfell. Arya is home and she is married to Jon and he is everything Ned had known he would be. Brave, gentle, strong... and Sansa loves him so much, sometimes, she isn’t sure how to feel all of it without actually combusting over it.

“Your Grace,” Lord Royce speaks and Sansa instantly turns her head towards the man. He gives her a smile and Sansa smiles, too. “I do not know if we’ll need dragons.”

“No, I don’t think we will,” Sansa agrees. “Jon has said that the dead were defeated thousands of years ago without dragons and we’ll do it again.” She pauses, watching the training – Jon in particular – for another moment before looking back to Lord Royce. “Do you think the dragons are real?”

Royce is quiet for a moment, taking his time to think of his answer. “I do not know Tyrion Lannister well enough, but I don’t know if that would be something he would lie about. After all, it would be a very easy lie to disprove if he was just talking out of his...” he trails off then, his cheeks reddening, and clears his throat. “Excuse me, Your Grace.”

Sansa just purses her lips together, smiling at the man’s almost-slip.

She watches the training for a few more minutes, knowing that there are other things she must see to, and yet, this is important, too. The war coming to the wall is the most important battle that will ever happen and Jon is determined that all of their people be prepared. Sansa will be staying in Winterfell with those who can’t fight and everyone who will be fighting will be marching North once Edd sends Jon the raven that the Night King approaches.

As their Queen, Sansa likes to stand and watch their progress and to show solidarity with her husband. She knows it’s such a hard tale to believe – an army of the dead – and yet, Jon has seen them; has fought them already. And if Jon believes in them, Sansa has no reason to not believe in them, too. Her unwavering belief in Jon helps the others believe.

“I do not trust him, Your Grace,” Lord Royce then says and Sansa turns her head to look to the older man who has always been loyal to her family and who she considers now to be one of hers and her husband’s closest advisors; especially hers.

“Nor do I, Lord Royce,” Sansa agrees. “But he has plans and I would rather have him be close so I may be privy to them. He does not know how I am able to read him and what he hopes to achieve.”

“Murdering the King and having you take him as your husband?” Royce guesses and Sansa can’t help, but look to the man with complete surprise. He chuckles. “Lord Lannister does not seem to be nearly as smart in the North as he liked to present himself in the South. Perhaps it’s the cold air.”

Sansa looks to the man with open admiration. “We should perhaps keep that between us.”

“Agreed, Your Grace,” the man says with the slightest head bow and smile.

“Lord Royce, would you like to join me in my solar for some tea?”

“It would be my honor, Your Grace.”

Sansa smiles. “Let me just stop and let a maid know to prepare a bath for the King in our chambers.”

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Chapter End Notes

Bath time in the next chapter! THANK YOU so, so much for the insane love and support you are showing this story.

(PS - After S8, I'm not a fan of Grey Worm. I probably won't be kind to him in this story.)

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Your Grace.”

Jon stops in his tracks, and closing his eyes – almost wincing – he swallows down his groan. Stupid Westeros and their etiquette on guest’s rights. He can’t think of someone he’d like to run his sword through more than their current *guest*, Tyrion Lannister. Perhaps that Targaryen Queen of his.

Once he is sure the mixture of frustration and anger with a dash of disgust is clear from his face, Jon turns to look at the man. “Lord Tyrion,” he says with the barest of head nods.

“I was hoping I would be able to meet with you after supper this evening and talk. Just the two of us,” Tyrion seems to add that last part rather quickly.

It makes Jon pause and study the man in front of him. Since his arrival, Jon realizes that they haven’t actually spoken completely alone. Sansa has always been at Jon’s side and if she’s not, they’re in the training yard with dozens of others around them. Tyrion wanting to talk to him – alone without anyone else near, including Sansa – makes the back of his neck prick.

He is glad his wife is so smart and has made Jon privy to Tyrion’s possible plans. Either be with the Targaryen and disavow his wife or send him on a mission that would surely end in his death and leave Sansa alone in this world. He agrees with Sansa. It seems like Tyrion has several different plans churning in his mind and he’s trying to see which one will be the best to try and implement.

There are so many things Jon would like to tell this man, but he refrains. For the moment. He knows Sansa isn’t finished with him yet and there are still things she both wants and needs to find out from him. Jon won’t be able to tell him to fuck off until Sansa gives him permission.

Jon looks to the man and gives a single nod. Perhaps, if he and Tyrion speak and Tyrion says what he wants, it will actually get the man out of Winterfell and the North that much sooner.

“We will talk in my chancery after supper. Just us.”

“Thank you, Your Grace,” Tyrion bows to him.

Jon ignores that – and him – and turns, continuing down the hall towards his and Sansa’s chamber. He needs to wash up before supper. Having skipped eating in the Hall the night before, he knows that Sansa will insist they eat there this evening and Jon knows the pigs smell better than he does right now. And although knowing others won’t care about that, he doesn’t want Sansa to have to sit next to him with him reeking like this.

He pushes the door open to step inside, but stops right at the threshold as if an invisible barrier is preventing him from entering further.

There is the wooden tub placed in front of the fire, filled with water, and Sansa is on her knees, one of the sleeves of her dress pushed up past her elbow so her hand can be in the water, testing the temperature. She lifts her head when she hears him enter and she smiles as soon as she sees him.

Jon blinks at the tub and then at his wife. As always, Sansa looks so beautiful that even if she hadn’t clearly surprised him with a bath after training, he would still be staring at her.

She pulls her hand from the water and stands up, wiping it on a nearby cloth. “I was thinking the warm water would help with your muscles. You’ve been pushing yourself too hard.”

Jon finally snaps out of it enough to step into the room and close the door behind him. He bolts it just to be safe though he knows no one will enter without knocking first. He then turns back to her.

“I will gladly take all of the sore muscles in this world in exchange for your safety,” he tells her.

Her cheeks darken at that and Jon knows she doesn’t know what to say in response. He admits that he very much likes it when he is able to make his wife speechless for a moment. It doesn’t happen often so when it does, Jon can feel like he truly accomplished something.

This time, he gives her a smile and Sansa is able to return it after a moment more.

She steps to him and Jon stands still as she begins unbuckling his leather training jerkin.

“Thank you for arranging this for me,” Jon says, his eyes steady on her face as Sansa pulls the jerkin away.

Her face is so close to his, it would be so easy for Jon to lean in and kiss right now, but now isn't the time. Of course, if it's not the time, *when* is the time? He keeps telling himself to wait until Sansa kisses him, but what if she's actually waiting for him the way he is waiting for her? They'll be turning in circles around one another for the rest of their life together without their lips ever meeting.

“I wanted to do something special for you,” Sansa tells him.

Jon wants to ask her why – surely there's a why – but he is able to keep himself from giving voice to it. Sansa has her reasons, he knows. Sansa always has a reason for everything she does – whether he realizes it right away or not. She's the smartest person he's ever met and even when it comes to drawing a bath for her husband, Jon knows there's a very good reason for it.

Maybe – he dares to hope – she wants to be alone with him.

Sansa turns away so he may undress the rest of the way and his body tightens and feels warm when he realizes that she isn't leaving. Maybe he wasn't so far off in thinking that Sansa wanted some time to be alone with him and now, he is about to be completely naked in the same room as his wife. He doesn't want to make it too obvious he's practically tearing at his clothes even though that's exactly what he's doing. He can't help it. It's exciting – to be alone with her, in their chamber, with a tub and though she won't be joining him, she *will* be staying, apparently, and Jon will take any time with Sansa that he can get; especially naked time.

Gods, he's a randy bastard. He's no better than any of the other men who have panted after her for all of these years and she's married to him now and he's supposed to be keeping her safe and helping her feel protected after years of abuse from such men.

He forces himself to take a deep breath and slow himself down. When he steps into the tub and feels the warm water against his skin, he can't help, but let out a groan at how good it instantly feels. Sansa peeks over her shoulder just as he sinks down, sitting in the tub, the water drawing up to his chest. She turns back towards him and comes to kneel down behind him.

"Fresh soap and a cloth," she says as she hands him the items from over his shoulder. "I also have some oils that might help soothe your soreness. Is it alright if I rub it in your shoulders?"

Jon nods his head so quickly, he swears he hears his neck crack. "That would be wonderful," he says and from behind him, he hears Sansa's smile.

As he washes his front with the soap and cloth, Sansa drops a small dollop of oil into her palms – Jon thinks it smells like some kind of flower, but he doesn't know enough flowers to be able to place it – and then, her hands are on his shoulders. Almost immediately, he groans, his head falling forward.

"Does that feel good?" Sansa asks with a smile still in her tone.

Jon can only groan again and this time, Sansa giggles. It makes Jon smile. Sansa *definitely* needs to giggle more. What else can he do to get her to do such a thing? He's never been a particularly light and funny man – to put it in the easiest terms – but he's more than willing to be for Sansa and Sansa's giggle.

Uncle Ned and Aunt Catelyn – mostly Uncle Ned – would tell him stories of his father and how so many women were in love with him; how they flocked to him as if they were ocean waves and Brandon Stark was the moon, their comings and goings relying entirely on his presence. Jon would think he would have inherited such a talent with women, but the truth is, Sansa had been the only one he had ever noticed in his youth – whether that was because of their betrothal or not, Jon isn't sure. And then there was Ygritte who was so different from any woman he had ever met before, his attraction and love for her sprung from that. But then, it was Sansa, again, who entered his life once more and all other women disappeared after that.

For the countless time in Jon's life, he wishes for his father. He could give him some advice and though Brandon had never been married, himself, he surely could give some advice to his helpless son.

"You're heavy with thoughts," Sansa notices. "What are you thinking about?"

“My father,” Jon answers without even considering perhaps telling her something else.

Sansa is quiet at that, but her fingers squeeze his shoulders a little tighter. “I’m always so sorry that none of us were ever able to meet him, but I remember what father used to say. You *are* your father so I suppose, in a way, we all know him.”

Jon sighs and tilts his head back, resting it against the rim of the tub. Sansa moves her hands, no longer able to move them on his shoulders, but she doesn’t move them entirely away from his body. Instead, after hesitating, Sansa guides them around and she rests them on his bare chest, her fingertips touching one of his scars. Jon very much likes her hands there as well.

“I’m sorry,” Sansa then says softly, her cheek resting to his temple and having her there with him, touching him and comforting him, Jon closes his eyes, unable to bring himself to do much of anything else.

“I miss him,” Jon admits. “I never even met the man and I miss him and lately... it’s been so much, it’s actually made my stomach ache if I dwell on it for too long.”

“Of course you miss him, Jon. You are his son and he was your father. Whether you remember him is irrelevant. He held you in his arms and knew, without a doubt, that you were his son. Remember what father used to say?”

Jon nods, but doesn’t speak, so Sansa speaks for him.

“The way Uncle Brandon’s face lit up when he held you for the first time with so much love for you and father said he would never forget how his older brother looked in that moment. Uncle Brandon looked at you with complete amazement, as if he couldn’t believe that he had created something so *perfect*.”

Jon keeps his eyes closed; feeling the sting of tears behind the lids and not wanting to cry right now.

“Things would have been so different if he hadn’t...” Jon trails off, still hardly able to even speak of it. He is able to open his eyes again and keep them open at least.

“Yes,” Sansa agrees.

“Fucking Targaryen’s,” he then growls, unable to help himself. It always comes back to that.

The Targaryen’s are the reason that *everything* happened as it did.

Yes, Jon was able to grow up in their family home with his uncle and aunt and his cousins and he was able to grow up, knowing of his father, but he never *knew* his father and suddenly, he has the urge to tell Westeros guest’s rights to fuck right off so he can strangle Tyrion Lannister to death with his bare hands. And then he will find that Targaryen woman who claims to be a Queen and kill her as well.

“Jon,” Sansa whispers his name, but she doesn’t say anything further.

Jon turns his head, still resting it back on the tub’s rim, and once again, he realizes how close Sansa’s face is to his. Their noses are almost touching. Sansa stares into his eyes and Jon wonders if she’s aware of the close proximity; if she’s feeling his breath on her face the way Jon is feeling hers?

He doesn’t move. There’s something about the way Sansa is staring at him; as if she’s studying him and contemplating what she’s seeing. Jon would love to know what she’s seeing, but he doesn’t move and he certainly doesn’t break the silence between them. Speaking or moving might frighten her away.

And then, slowly – as if time has slowed and things are moving to match the pace – Sansa leans in and Jon knows what she’s going to do. His heart sputters and his eyes flutter shut just as his wife presses her lips lightly to his.

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Chapter End Notes

Yes, Dany. Obviously, Jon is willing to just turn away and forget the past so you two can embrace. *eye roll* A brief Tyrion POV and the arrival of Varys's little bird in Winterfell in the next chapter. Thank you very much as always! Your enthusiasm for this story only pushes me to write more and more and I love reading every single comment this story gets!

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Tyrion notes almost immediately that the King in the North seems quite happy this evening.

He laughs and chatters and smiles with the people around him and with him being in such a good mood, the entire Hall that evening for supper feels it; revels in it. One of the other Starks is home now as well – Arya, Tyrion believes her name to be (they haven't spoken to one another and Tyrion would almost believe that she is purposely ignoring his existence) – and she has a constant dour face, but Jon even manages to get her to crack a few smiles during the meal.

The small smiles exchanged between the King and his Lady wife are also noticed; shy, but nonetheless happy. Sometimes, Jon will lean in and say something, close to her ear, meant for only her to hear, and Tyrion wonders what his words are for the smile Sansa gives her husband and the look in her eyes makes it seem as if perhaps, the man has just said the stars hanging in the sky that night were put there by him, specifically for her.

It makes Tyrion shift a bit uncomfortably.

He knew that perhaps, getting his Queen and Brandon Stark's son together would be no easy feat; might even be impossible. But Tyrion doesn't like to think that anything is impossible with a little bit of work and maneuvering the pieces in just the right way. It would be easier if he could get the two in the same room. Jon Stark might look at Daenerys and see that they aren't that different. Both are leaders who want what's best for the people and surely, there would be a mutual respect between them because of it.

But Jon looking at his wife and Sansa looking at her husband, Tyrion is beginning to think that they are in love with each other and not like how cousins love one another; but how a husband and wife do. That's a slight bump in the road. Perhaps – hopefully – it's just the good mood Jon appears to be in tonight and it's simply rubbing off on everyone.

The good mood is most welcome though. Perhaps it will make Jon a bit more willing to listen to Tyrion. It might help that he agreed to meet with him completely on his own. He can't figure Sansa

out. She has hardly spoken a word to him – and what she has said, Tyrion hasn't necessarily liked it or agreed with it – but for the most part, she seems to just sit there and look at him; perhaps as if she's studying him. Tyrion admits that he can't figure his former wife out. Her face, it is guarded; always an expression of coolness and detachment.

He admits. Sansa makes him nervous in a way he wouldn't expect from the young girl he knew in King's Landing. She makes him nervous because she is unreadable to him and to those he can't read, Tyrion knows he's unable to figure out a way in with them; figuring out what they desire and how to get it for them.

As the kitchen maids begin clearing dishes once the meal is finished, Jon and Tyrion meet eyes and Jon gives him a single head nod. Tyrion nods as well as leaving his chair, he goes towards the entrance of the Hall to wait for the man. And as it is every night, the men begin pushing the tables against the walls so the floor is open for sleeping and others gather blankets.

Tyrion watches as Sansa oversees the activity as she does every other night and at her side, her sister stands and behind them both Brienne and Pod. Either one or both are never far behind from Sansa, Tyrion noted by his second day in Winterfell. Jon keeps his wife always well-guarded. Tyrion doesn't doubt that it's because of Cersei.

Jon comes to Sansa and with a hand cupping her elbow, he leans in and whispers something in her ear. She nods to whatever he says and Jon kisses her on the cheek, his lips lingering and when he pulls back, Sansa is blushing. They share a smile; a smile that when Jon turns back to Tyrion is gone from his face.

"This way," Jon says as he walks past Tyrion without pausing and Tyrion follows him.

As promised, they go into Jon's chancery, dozens of scrolls of paper on shelves against the wall and a fire roaring in the hearth, and they are alone. Tyrion knows that the man, Davos, is his hand, but he does not join them. The King has honored Tyrion's request of being alone. Tyrion spots a jug of wine on a table by the fire and he goes to help himself as Jon closes the door behind them both and then sits down at the large table where meetings are held when Jon calls for it.

Tyrion joins him a moment later, settling himself in a chair.

"I hope that the sooner you speak, the sooner you will leave here," Jon cuts right to it.

Tyrion can't help, but smile at the man's bluntness. Another thing he has in common with Daenerys. They certainly have no issue with saying what is on their minds. But his smile fades as he looks to the man.

"I never had the pleasure of knowing your father," Tyrion speaks. "I heard of him. It seemed like *everyone* in the Seven Kingdoms heard of and knew your father. No one was his equal at tournaments, I was told. I saw him once, jousting. It seemed like no one ever wanted to compete against him."

Jon's body is visibly stiff. "If this is how you choose to begin, go another way, Lannister." His voice is low, almost in a growl like the wolf he is, and Tyrion bows his head politely.

"Forgive me, Your Grace. I was just thinking of what an honor it is to have the opportunity in speaking with you," he says and Jon stays silent at that, staring at him with a clenched jaw. "I know how you feel about House Targaryen and you have every right in the world to feel that."

"Thank you, My Lord, for giving me permission to hold disdain towards the people who murdered my father and grandfather."

Tyrion shakes his head to show he didn't mean it that way. "Is there anything I can say that will convince you that my Queen is *not* like her father or her brother? She has lived away from Westeros her entire life. She did not grow up with their influences. My Queen is entirely her own person."

"She has lived away from Westeros her entire life and yet, she wishes to rule Westeros," Jon comments and Tyrion suddenly feels as if, despite being completely alone, Sansa is speaking.

"Robert Baratheon was not a bad King, but he was not a rightful one and now, Cersei sits on the throne and she has absolutely no right to do so. My Queen wishes to come back to take her rightful place and rule the way she knows how to. Fair and just."

Jon is silent; simply staring at him.

“Meet with her, Your Grace. That is all I ask. Meet her and see for yourself how different she is.”

“I do not have time to go to Dragonstone,” Jon immediately shakes his head. “The dead are coming and my *only* priority is fighting them, defeating them and keeping my people safe. If I don’t do any of that, it won’t matter who the fuck sits on that throne in King’s Landing.”

“And after? Once you defeat them, would you be able to go to Dragonstone then?”

“I noticed that you’ve stopped offering your Queen’s aid. If we fail here, there won’t be a Westeros for her to rule over.”

“You have made your feelings quite clear on Queen Daenerys helping you. You don’t want her or her dragons,” Tyrion reminds him.

“I don’t. The dead were defeated once thousands of years ago without dragons. I’ll do it again without.”

“I wish you would meet my Queen, Your Grace. You have far more in common than you would ever think.”

“Insulting me by holding me to a Targaryen is *not* the way to go here, Lannister.”

“Your Grace... perhaps your wife would like to meet her in your place. She will be in Dragonstone, safe and far from danger if anything goes wrong at the Wall, and my Queen would offer her protection. And I know you value Sansa’s opinion greatly and perhaps she is not as clouded by a Targaryen as you are.”

Jon stares at him with hard eyes and doesn’t say anything to that suggestion straight away.

Tyrion knows what it was. *She will be in Dragonstone, safe and far from danger.* It’s obvious to him that the King loves his wife and maybe Tyrion *can* work with that.

“I will speak with my wife,” he says to that.

Tyion feels as if he can breathe. It’s not exactly what he wants, but if Jon and Sansa agree, it’s *something*.

...

Aggie smooths her hands down the front of her dress and then looks to the girl her age standing with her.

“The Queen likes to meet everyone who comes to Winterfell to stay,” Aggie reminds the girl.
“There’s no reason to look so scared. She’s the nicest woman in the world!”

The girl next to her swallows and nods just as Aggie lifts her fist to knock on the chamber door. Brienne is standing guard tonight and Aggie gives her a wide smile; Brienne giving her a small, amused one in return. Brienne doesn’t wish the children of Winterfell to be afraid of her. She just sometimes wonders *why* they’re not. According to what she has heard from others – grown men – she is quite formidable.

“Come in!” Sansa answers from the other side.

Aggie pushes open the door and curtsies at the sight of Sansa, sitting in a chair and Cora, her maid, unbraiding and brushing her hair.

“Aggie!” Sansa exclaims, surprised. “Why on earth aren’t you sleeping yet? It’s far too late for you to still be up still.”

“Beg your pardon, Your Grace. This is Meg. She’s just arrived.” Aggie looks to the girl and beckons her to come forward with a wave of her hand.

Meg is a girl Aggie’s age – around seven or so – with terribly dirty and greasy black hair, tangled as if she’s been sleeping in a bush. She is skinny and dirty, her dress torn; no more useful than a rag. But at the sight of her, Sansa smiles.

“Hello, Meg,” she greets the girl warmly.

Aggie elbows her and Meg fumbles, doing her best to give a curtsy though clearly having never done one before, she almost falls forward. Sansa just keeps smiling.

“It’s nice to meet you, Your Grace,” Meg says quietly, keeping her eyes to the floor.

“It’s very nice to meet you, too, Meg,” Sansa smiles. “Where were you before arriving here?”

Meg stays quiet for a moment. “Wherever I could find a spot to lay my head, Your Grace.”

“Well,” Sansa leans forward in her chair. “I’m very glad you’ve found your way to us.”

Meg lifts her eyes at that and gives Sansa the most hesitant smile, small and still unsure. Sansa smiles and then looks over her shoulder to Cora, the woman pulling the brush back so Sansa may stand.

“With the help of Aggie, we will find you something to wear and we’ll get you some bread as well before we get you a warm spot to sleep. How does that sound?” Sansa asks.

Meg doesn’t say anything and looks down to the scrap of dress she’s wearing.

“It’s a very pretty dress, but I don’t think it will keep you very warm with winter here,” Sansa tells her.

Meg shakes her head. “It’s a rag, Your Grace. It’s giving me fleas.”

Sansa does her best to not wince at that. Though she and Jon do everything they possibly can for their people in the North, there is still poorness no matter what they try to do to combat it. Sansa is

far from naïve, but she has no idea what it means to live in such a way. Even as a prisoner in one place or another, she always had dresses to wear and a belly full of food.

“Well, then we will burn it and you’ll never get fleas again,” Sansa promises her. “And we’ll talk to one of the women in the kitchen about getting you washed.”

Meg stares at her as if she’s never heard such words. Sansa’s heart aches even as she keeps smiling. It’s actually very probable that Meg hasn’t seen an actual bath in *years*. Having fleas isn’t hard to believe. Sansa just has to make sure they scrub her hard and thorough so everyone in Winterfell doesn’t get them as well. That’s just a problem none of them need right now.

Still with her ever-present smile, Sansa holds a hand out to the girl in offering. “Shall we?” She asks.

Meg stares at the hand and then up at the woman who owns the hand. Slowly, Meg reaches out and takes the hand, Sansa giving it a gentle squeeze. They leave the room, Aggie walking ahead to lead the way and Cora and Brienne walking behind them. Meg tries to remember everything she sees and everyone they pass, but right now, all she can focus on is the Queen’s soft hand and the way she smells like a flower.

She wonders if Varys will want to hear how she’s the prettiest, nicest woman Meg has ever met.

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Chapter End Notes

THANK YOU!!!

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Arya waits in the dark shadows of the hall outside of Jon's chancery. She had followed Jon and Tyrion there after supper – silently behind and without either of them having any idea she was there – and now, she waits. She knows Jon is capable of handling himself, but Tyrion is also a Lannister who now apparently has aligned himself with a Targaryen. Who knows what he will try to do? Arya is going to stand out here and wait until she sees Jon again.

Ghost comes a few minutes later and stops when he sees her. Arya gives him a slight shake of her head. No one else has seen her – she and the dark shadows are one – and she doesn't want the direwolf to draw attention to her position. Ghost understands and goes to sit in front of the door, not looking in her direction again.

They both wait, neither moving, but both pairs of ears perked to any sound and both sets of eyes sharp. The Keep around them is settling in for the night, steadily getting quieter and quieter as more fall asleep. Still, Jon and Tyrion remain behind the closed door of the chancery. Arya wonders if she would even know it until it was too late if Tyrion did do something to Jon. But Ghost would feel it and the direwolf remains at attention, but isn't alarmed.

Finally, the door opens and Tyrion is the first to step out. He seems pleased and that makes Arya stiffen. That man looking pleased over *anything* is far from being a good thing. Arya narrows her eyes at him, but the man is completely unaware that she is there, watching him. His smile fades a bit when he sees Ghost, now standing on all four paws, staring at the man with his red eyes. Tyrion hurries away and Arya nearly smiles. She doesn't though because Jon steps out of the room next and he's not smiling.

In fact, he looks like he's about to kill someone.

Arya steps forward, still silent, from the shadows, letting him know that she's there.

Jon gives her the barest twitch of his lips into a smile that doesn't even last a second before it's gone again. He watches Tyrion walk down the hallway, towards his chamber that Sansa arranged

for him upon his arrival, and Arya comes to stand at his side, watching Tyrion as well.

“Do you want me to kill him?” Arya asks, still watching after the man until he turns a corner and is gone.

She hasn’t told Jon everything, but she’s told him enough to know that she’s serious and that she absolutely will do it whether he tells her to or tries to stop her.

Jon is still staring down the hall as if Tyrion is still there. “Yes.” His answer is simple yet strong. He then looks to Arya and she looks at him. “But not yet.”

Arya pauses to take a moment to look at him. Something has happened and Jon is waiting for something else to happen. She doesn’t know what, but this is Jon. She trusts him in a way she’s never trusted anyone and if Jon is saying not yet, he has a reason and Arya knows that she won’t argue with him on that.

“Not yet,” she agrees.

As long as she *will* be able to kill Tyrion, she’ll wait until Jon gives her the word.

...

Jon’s exhausted. Both from the strain of having to control himself from not reaching over no less than a dozen times and punch Tyrion until his face was unrecognizable, but also from listening to Tyrion and pretend that he was actually considering the words said to him.

His body is sore and he wants to do nothing more than lay down in his bed – finally – next to his wife.

He’s not surprised that, upon entering their chamber, he sees that Sansa is already in bed, asleep. If she wasn’t, he would have told her firmly to go to sleep. It’s too late and she works too hard and she needs sleep as much as any of them.

Ghost has followed Jon inside and as Jon bolts the door and begins to undress, Ghost jumps up onto the bed, settling himself down at the foot of it as is his spot every other night. Sansa doesn't stir as Jon climbs into the bed once he's in his nightshirt, and he can't help, but let out a quiet groan as he finally lays down. It had just been earlier this evening where Sansa had surprised him with a bath, oil rubbed into his shoulders and a kiss. It already feels like it happened the week before.

He rolls onto his side towards her, finding himself smiling the faintest amount as he looks to her. His wife; her eyelashes fluttering as she sleeps and dreams – only good dreams, Jon hopes – and her red hair glows amber in the fire burning in their hearth. He doesn't want to disturb her, but Jon can't stop himself from reaching out to touch her; touch some part of her.

His hand finds a resting spot on the dip of her waist. It reaches her in her dreams and she murmurs something Jon can't understand – he doesn't think it's even a known word – and she shifts ever so slightly closer to him, knowing that he's there with her.

He had let Tyrion talk. And talk. And talk some more. Gods, the man loves listening to the sound of his own voice. And Jon had listened as Tyrion spoke of why Sansa going to Dragonstone would benefit so much and how so much good could possibly come from it. Jon had listened so carefully and closely, Sansa would have been proud.

Sansa had once said that Tyrion Lannister was a clever man; the cleverest she knew, but just now, between the two of them, Jon doesn't see it. He doesn't think Sansa is wrong. Sansa's rarely wrong, but when it comes to Tyrion Lannister, it's obvious that that Dragon Queen of his has done something to him; has made him stupider somehow.

For him – for *anyone* – to think that Jon would send his wife away from him. Send her South where so many bad things happened to her and not just South, but trust anyone with *Targaryen* as their name to keep her safe. It's one of the dumbest thoughts a person can have.

Sansa would be a prisoner. Jon knows it. Tyrion clearly doesn't think that Jon knows it. Does *Tyrion* know that or has he become so stupid that he truly believes his Queen would keep Jon's wife safe with no ulterior motive? That woman wants to rule Westeros. What better way to get the North on her side then hold the King's Queen hostage and force him to surrender to her in order to get his Queen back?

Sansa is much smarter than him and better at playing this game than him – Jon can't stand this fucking game and hates that everything is a part of it – but he thinks he's getting better at playing it as well whether he wants to or not.

Jon is tired and his eyes are becoming heavy and yet, he still watches Sansa as she sleeps, not wanting to close his eyes just yet.

He knows that Tyrion underestimates the feelings Jon has for Sansa. He has absolutely no idea how deep Jon's affection for Sansa goes; how in love with his wife he is. He doesn't even think that Sansa knows. No, he knows Sansa doesn't know.

He's never told her – Jon thinking that, perhaps, Sansa doesn't want to hear it. She has had so many men, lusting and panting after her. Jon doesn't want to add himself to that list. Sansa as a girl had had such fanciful dreams of love and being loved. Jon knows that Sansa loves him – but he knows it is as a cousin loves another; not as a wife loves a husband.

Not as a woman loves a man.

Jon keeps his hand on her waist and he moves himself closer to her, his head nearly sharing her pillow.

"I love you," he whispers to her now, only because he knows Sansa is asleep and can't hear him.

...

Jon's brain wakes up before he thinks he's actually ready to. It takes him another few seconds to realize *why* he had woken up.

Sansa is kissing him.

He lays there, wondering if it's actually happening, but he decides that yes. His wife is definitely kissing him. Her lips are soft – hesitant – as she lightly presses them to his. He can tell that she's experimenting; trying to figure it out. And Jon is sure he lays there as still as possible so he doesn't

startle her off. And he swears, he will kill *anyone* who dares to knock on their chamber door right now.

It's morning. He can tell. He can see the lightness of their chamber from behind his lids and he can hear the song of the morning birds outside. He knows someone will come soon – whether it be a maid with breakfast or Cora or Davos. Someone will intrude and Jon means it. He will kill them. Well, fine. Not kill, but they will get such a fierce glare and growl from him, they will know how badly they made a mistake.

Sansa lifts her head and sighs softly then as if she is impatient with something.

Then, she rests a light hand on Jon's chest and leans down, kissing him again.

This time, Jon can't help it. With the barest amount of pressure, he pushes his lips back against hers. Sansa gasps and tears her head back.

"If I'm dreaming, don't wake me up," Jon murmurs as his eyes flutter open, instantly look to her.

Her cheeks are blushed with embarrassment, but she doesn't scurry away. Instead, a small smile slowly appears as she looks at him. "Do you dream of this?" She then wonders.

Jon doesn't answer right away. "Yes," he answers simply; truthfully.

Sansa is visibly surprised at that. "Really?"

"I very much like being awake for it, too," he then tell hers and he smiles as Sansa's smile grows. "Can you kiss me again?" He then asks her, staring – bravely – into her eyes; not wanting to push her, but Gods, he wants her lips on his again.

Sansa hesitates. "You would like me to?"

"More than anything."

“I... I don’t have much experience with it.”

“Practice makes perfect.”

When Sansa laughs lightly at that, Jon’s face splits into a grin.

She tucks a strand of hair behind her ear and Jon lifts a hand to her cheek, his fingers brushing lightly across her skin. And he lays still as Sansa begins moving in, her body over his. And then, her lips touch his and Jon nearly sighs with relief at the contact; as if this is all he’s been waiting for in his life.

In some way, he supposes it is. When he was younger, Sansa’s was the only kiss he ever wanted and yes, so much has happened to both of them, but being back here – married and together with Sansa kissing him – this is how it was always supposed to be; how Jon always wanted it to be.

Sansa moves hesitantly, still getting used to it, but with Jon’s silent encouragement, pressing his lips back to hers, Sansa begins to slowly grow more comfortable.

“A natural,” he whispers once their lips part so they may breathe and Sansa promptly blushes at that. He feels the warmth of her skin under his fingers, still on her cheek. “Do you remember our first kiss?” He asks then – not speaking of the kiss from last night in the tub or the kiss in their chamber a few nights before that or even their brief peck in the Godswood after being married.

He wonders if Sansa knows what he is speaking of.

“Of course,” she answers with a faint smile. “In the stables. You wanted to show me the horse Father had just gifted you with for your name day and you kissed me and when we came out again, Theon was teasing us and you had pushed him and snapped that you hadn’t even liked it.”

Jon winces a bit. “I was hoping you didn’t remember *that*.”

Sansa just smiles though. “It’s very hard, Your Grace, for a woman to forget the words that hurt her.”

Jon puts both of his hands on her cheeks now, gently holding her face over his. “At night, on the Wall, I would fall asleep, dreaming about that kiss.”

She looks at him, into his eyes, and he knows she doesn’t know what to say to that. Jon doesn’t know what he wants her to say. He was an idiot in his youth, but he supposes he can say the same thing about Sansa, finding herself with stars in her eyes when she saw the Prince Joffrey for the first time, thinking her life would be so much better in the South than with him as her husband in the North. He will never tell her that though. He doesn’t blame her. They were all young and they were all idiots.

“Jon,” Sansa whispers and then she places her lips to his again.

Jon keeps his hands on her cheeks for a moment before he slides them further back, his fingers weaving in through her hair. Sansa seems to like that and kisses him a bit harder in response to show him she does.

When their lips part once more, Sansa sounds breathless and Jon finds that he is as well. He closes his eyes and keeps her close. Sansa adjusts herself and rests her head on his chest and Jon bounds both of his arms around her, holding her.

“I have to tell you something,” he tells her; not wanting to break this perfect morning between them, but he isn’t going to let her leave this room and let her be completely blindsided. “Tyrion and I spoke last night after supper.”

Sansa nods, knowing that. She lifts her head to look to his face once more. “What did you speak of?”

“You.”

...

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so, so much as always!! I have a flashback planned between a young Jon and his Uncle Ned in the next chapter. Thank you again!

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

I've played around with the ages of the Stark children a little.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

...

Ned Stark spoke with his brother often. He didn't doubt that Brandon checked in from time to time, but still, Ned spoke with him silently in his head and kept him updated on Jon. It would always be amazing to Ned how much Jon could be like the father he never met – his love of horses, his skill in the training yard, his often brash temper. It was also amazing – almost startling – how with each passing day, Jon grew to look more and more like his father.

He still missed his brother, but he thought it was more bearable since he had Jon.

“Jon,” Ned said after a minute or so of watching Jon train with his sword against the wooden dummy.

The ten-year-old spun around at the sound of his uncle's voice and Ned gave him a smile.

“I need to speak with you,” Ned said and Jon nodded without argument, jogging to return his wooden training sword with the pile of others before jogging back to him.

Like it sometimes did when he looked to his nephew, Ned felt his heart squeeze in his chest. He knew how much his brother loved his son from the very instant he held a babe Jon in his arms for the first time and Ned knew, without a doubt, how proud Brandon would be of the boy he was today; growing into a man.

“Will you walk with me?” Ned asked.

“Yes, Uncle,” Jon nodded again and together, side-by-side, they left the training yards. Ned had no specific direction for them to walk to, but he found them heading in the direction of the Godswood. “Is Aunt Catelyn alright?” Jon asked.

Ned nodded with a slight smile. “She is.” They had just told the children the night before that Catelyn was expecting again and already, this pregnancy seemed to have his wife sick every morning so far. He looked to Jon. “Your training is coming along very well,” he then said.

An understatement if there ever was one. All of those who helped train the Stark sons would come to Ned and tell that Jon’s skill was prodigious; none having no doubt that he would grow to be a greater swordsman and fighter than his father had even dreamed to be.

Ned knew that even at his age, Jon was already expressing his disinterest in claiming his rightful place as the son of Brandon Stark, the oldest Stark, gave him – Ned and Catelyn though kept continuing his lessons in hopes that he would someday change his mind. If he didn’t though... Ned wasn’t sure what he could do for him, but of course, Ned would do anything Jon wanted.

Jon smiled at his uncle’s compliment and that made Ned smile as well.

“Sit with me,” Ned said once they reached the Weirwood and Ned settled himself down on one of the protruding roots, Jon sitting next to him. “Jon, you’re getting to be older now. Ten-years old. Almost a man.” He noticed Jon sit a little straighter at that. “And your Aunt and I have thought of what your father would do if he was still here.”

“What do you mean?” He asked with a furrowed brow.

“There are certain responsibilities that come with being born into your station with your name.”

That made Jon sigh; almost deflate in a way. “And Robb would be much better at that-”

“I speak of marriage,” Ned cut in.

“Oh.” Jon’s brow remained furrowed. “I’m too young to get married, aren’t I?”

“Just a little,” Ned couldn’t keep from smiling at that. “But never too young for a betrothal.”

Jon sighed again at that, but said nothing. He knew that this was one duty he couldn’t get out of. With their House and family name, all of the Stark children knew how important marriages and alliances could be.

“Your Aunt Catelyn and I have thought that a marriage between you and Sansa would be best,” Ned told him and then watched Jon’s face for any kind of reaction to that.

Jon just blinked at him though. “Sansa?” He then said; as if to just be sure. Ned nodded. “She’s six.”

“She won’t be six forever and neither will you be ten.”

Jon was quiet, thinking this all through.

“Do you know what your role would be as her husband?” Ned asked.

Jon nodded. “I would have to love her and keep her safe.”

Ned nodded. “And do you think you can grow to do that?” He asked the question, but he already knew the answer. Jon was a Stark and he was his brother’s son. There was no other man he and Catelyn would ever trust more with their daughter than this boy sitting next to him right now.

Jon sat straighter again and his answer had all of the confidence which his father used to speak. “Of course.”

Ned smiled and clapped a hand on the boy’s shoulder before squeezing it. “I don’t doubt it.”

“Enter!” The voice booms out and Meg struggles for a moment, trying to balance the tray while pushing open the heavy door, but then another hand appears from behind her, making her jump with fright.

“Here we are,” the young man smiles down at her and Meg is learning everyone’s names in Winterfell and she knows that this is Pod, one of the Queen’s guards.

“Thank you,” Meg remembers herself, managing a small smile of her own before entering the chancery.

Her eyes are quick to take in everyone present in the room.

There is the Queen and King, of course. Meg has yet to actually be present in the room with him yet but she has seen him from a distance, always in the training yards with the men, women and some of the older children who will go off to the Wall to fight the dead. Meg has noted how handsome he is though. Not that she thinks Varys will care about that, but it’s a detail that’s true nonetheless.

There is the tall woman – Brienne, another of the Queen’s guards – and the Queen’s sister and King’s cousin, Arya. She doesn’t speak much and moves as silently as a ghost. She frightens Meg a little though Meg knows that the young woman hasn’t actually done anything to warrant that fear. There is also the man with the white beard – Davos – and the man with the gut and frown – Lord Yohn Royce, who seems to have the Queen’s confidence since they have tea in the Queen’s solar every afternoon. She recognizes some of the other Lords in the North and Lady Lyanna Mormont. She probably frightens Meg more than Arya only because the girl has one facial expression – displeasure. Meg avoids her eyes at all costs.

And then, to round out the group this afternoon, is Lord Tyrion Lannister. Meg doesn’t know if the man knows she’s there because of Varys or not. She doesn’t think so. Even though she has been helping Aggie with her chores, bringing water or wine when asked for, or sweeping, the man doesn’t even look at her.

Meg is used to that from people who see themselves far above her. They look as if she’s not there at all.

The Queen though, is sitting at the head of the table, the King standing from his chair next to her, and she smiles as soon as she sees Meg. Meg directs her feet towards her, holding the tray tightly in her hands.

“I have brought wine, Your Grace,” Meg tells her quietly.

“Thank you so much, Meg,” the Queen smiles warmly at her. The Queen always smiles warmly at almost everyone. Meg has noticed that the Queen’s smile does lose some of that warmth towards Lord Lannister.

The Queen sits forward in her seat and she helps Meg slide the heavy tray onto the table. Meg then begins pouring cups, walking around the table and offering to those in the chairs before returning to pour the next one. She also keeps her ears open and her eyes glance towards the large map on the table.

“No, Jon,” the Queen speaks up. “You need to take Ghost with you. He’ll be more of a help to you.”

The King shakes his head, looking down to her. “He’s staying here with you. You need to be kept safe, too. Now, Sansa will be here, in Winterfell, with those too old and too young to fight.” He points to Winterfell on the map of the North. “Brienne or Pod will need to stay here as well.”

“This is ridiculous,” the Queen frowns. “Jon, you can’t keep everyone here with me to keep me safe! You will need every single person capable of fighting and Brienne and Pod are two of the best!”

“I can-” Arya begins.

“Don’t you dare,” the Queen is swift to cut her off.

“I will stay, Your Grace,” Yohn Royce speaks up just as the King opens his mouth to reply. “If the Queen doesn’t mind being guarded by someone past his prime.”

The Queen frowns at that. “Don’t say such a thing. I would be honored if you chose to stay with me. As long as you don’t think that *I* think you would be of no use at the Wall.”

Royce smiles at that. “That never crossed my mind until you just said it, Your Grace.”

“Thank you, Lord Royce,” the King nods to the other man and his words sound relieved and genuine.

Meg brings Lord Lannister a cup of wine and the man doesn’t even look at her as he swipes it from her hand, pointing towards the map with it and some of the wine spilling over the edges. A few drops land on the sleeve of Meg’s dress and she looks down to it with a frown. Her dress is simple – wool and gray – but it’s clean and warm and it’s the nicest thing she has ever worn on her body. And now, there is a stain.

“Let me send the Queen a raven,” Lannister implores.

“Our Queen is sitting right here, Lannister,” Lady Mormont sneers at the man.

Lannister glances to the Queen, but her face remains completely blank as she looks to the man.

“I don’t need her, Lannister,” Jon says. “I’m not sure how many times I need to tell you that.”

“Why is he even here, Your Grace?” Lord Glover frowns.

“I am here because Your King and Lady Sansa asked me to be,” Tyrion answers.

Arya suddenly stands from her chair, leans across the table towards Tyrion and stabs her blade in the wood right in front of him – her movements so quick, they all jump. Brienne steps forward, her hand on the hilt of her sword at her side and the King holds his arm out across the Queen as if it will keep her safe.

“Show such disrespect to my sister again, I’ll find a new home for this blade in your belly,” Arya warns.

Tyrion has gone silent and still, his eyes wide.

For a long moment, no one dares move or speak. No one even seems to be breathing.

“Yes,” the King clears his throat. “That’s all for this morning, I think. Thank you.”

As the others stand up to leave, Tyrion gulps his wine down in just a few swallows and then, still without even glancing in Meg’s direction, but knowing that she is still there, he thrusts the cup out for her to take, not even waiting or looking to see if she has it before he is hurrying – nearly scurrying – from the room. Meg fumbles to catch the cup in time.

“Stay,” the King says to Arya as everyone else files out until it’s only the King and Queen, Arya, and Brienne and the door is shut once more. Meg is still there as well, but she is silent as she walks around the table, gathering the cups left behind, to take back to the kitchen and no one seems to be paying attention to her. “I told you to wait,” the King then says and Meg looks up to glance to him and then to Arya, to whom he is speaking to.

Arya shrugs, pulling her dagger from the wood of the table. “I didn’t do anything. I agreed to wait and I will, but why are *you* letting him disrespect Sansa like he does?”

The King sinks down into his chair next to the Queen and begins to rub his forehead. Meg notes the way the Queen looks at him and the way she reaches her hand out, bringing it over his and pulling it from his forehead, she twines their fingers together. The King then squeezes her hand.

They look at one another and the Queen gives him the smallest smile before he turns to look to Arya. “If anything happens to him while he’s under our roof, we’re going to have a pissed off Targaryen with three dragons coming here to avenge him. I don’t know about you, but I don’t want to give that bitch any excuse to cross into our lands.”

“Glover was right thought. *Why* is he here and allowed to sit in on these meetings?” Arya wonders.

“We’re testing him,” the Queen speaks now. “If he’s privy to our plans, let’s see what he does with them. Either he does nothing and shows to us that he can be trusted. Or he runs back to tell his Queen that I will be left alone here, in Winterfell, with just a few guards while everyone is off at the Wall.”

“Your Grace,” Brienne gasps.

“*If* this woman is so determined to be the Queen of the lower six kingdoms, let’s see what she does,” the King says, his eyes moving from Brienne back to Arya.

“You’re crazy,” Arya speaks and Meg is in absolute agreement.

Meg has never seen the Dragon Queen, but she knows of House Targaryen. Everyone in Westeros does. And though Meg serves Varys and Varys obviously is on the Dragon Queen’s side, Meg doesn’t know if she would ever be able to serve a Queen with dragons. Just thinking it is absolutely terrifying to her.

“Jon,” Arya frowns heavily at him. “This woman is a Targaryen. I do NOT have to remind you what those with that name have done to our family.”

The King frowns. “No, I do not need a reminder. But letting Tyrion think that Sansa as well as the old men and women and young children will be alone in Winterfell is just what we have told him. It’s up to him what he does with that information.”

“Meg,” the Queen suddenly speaks and Meg jumps in surprise. She smiles. “Come here.”

Meg knows there’s no reason to be scared – no one knows of her connection to Varys and his connection to the Dragon Queen – but she still feels her stomach twist as she slowly approaches the woman.

“So if Sansa will not be here, where is she going to be?” Arya asks. “And what are we going to do if that Targaryen comes to Winterfell while you’re gone, expecting to find only her? Declare war on her? She has dragons, apparently. Fighting and winning against the dead army is one thing, but winning against dragons? We won’t be able to do it, Jon.”

“We’ll figure that out if it comes to it,” the King responds. “What’s to say that Tyrion will tell her of our supposed plan? What’s to say that he’s not a man who can be trusted?”

Arya snorts at that and says nothing.

Meg stands at the Queen’s side and watches as she gently takes Meg’s arm so she can look at her sleeve.

“There is this wonderful trick we will try. Boiling water, salt and a dash of vinegar. We’ll have this dress looking as good as new,” the Queen smiles then at her and Meg finds herself smiling in return.

“Thank you, Your Grace,” Meg says quietly and the Queen rubs her hand affectionately on Meg’s arm.

Meg looks to the Queen and then the King, who is watching with a small smile. She then looks to Arya with her dagger and the large woman, Brienne, with her sword. She looks back to the Queen. She’s only been here, in Winterfell, for a few short days and already, Meg knows that this is where she wants to be.

Will they kill her though once they find out what has brought her here?

...

Chapter End Notes

As always, THANK YOU! We'll check in with Varys and Dany in the next chapter and Jon gets that raven he's been waiting for from Edd. (PS - I absolutely adore Edd so if I write him to be absolutely awesome, I'm just giving him what he deserves lol) We also haven't heard from Sansa's POV in a bit so that will be next as well.

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Varys reads the small piece of parchment that has arrived for him.

When he picks a child to be a little bird, first, he sees how good they are at hearing and not being seen; how well they can see things around them and remember it all. Then, he teaches them their letters. It's important they know how to read and write so they can communicate without ever being seen together.

Meg is a fast learner and he admits to no one except himself that Meg is one of his favorites. Sending her to Winterfell had been simple enough since she had already been in the Vale, watching things for and reporting back to him of how it was going once news of Littlefinger being tried and executed by the King in the North reached him.

The Vale remains loyal to House Stark and the North.

Meg's handwriting is shaky – the handwriting of a child who still isn't completely comfortable with it – but Varys understands what she means to tell him. He reads it by the candle on his desk and keeps his face impassive; as if someone else is in the room with him, waiting for his reaction even though he is alone at this late hour and even if he wasn't, no one knows about Meg being in Winterfell for him.

The King and Queen are very kind. The Queen made sure I had a bath, a new dress and she personally combed my hair. The King seems to only smile when he's around the Queen.

Varys reads the short report again. It's not much – at first, but Varys can see far more in Meg's simple words and it *is* helpful. To him, at least.

The King and Queen are kind. Meg has only been there for a week and she has already seen the King and Queen enough to note that. And a King and Queen who is visibly kind to those around

them – even the servants – that is important for Varys to know. And this part – she personally combed my hair – that is something Varys has never heard a Queen doing before. Not the one he previously served and certainly not this one. No, his Queen now likes her own hair being combed. He can't imagine her doing it to anyone else; especially a servant.

But his Queen frees slaves. No other Queen does that. Varys reminds himself of that.

(He doesn't stop to think why he must remind himself of that.)

This part however – The King seems to only smile when he's around the Queen – is the part Varys reads more than just a few times. That's not what he has been expecting. He had simply thought Jon Stark and Sansa Stark were cousins who were made to wed by others in the North. He hadn't thought there would be anything more to them, but now, it seems as if he has been mistaken. Not his favorite thing to be, but he can admit to himself when he is. And it seems as if he was wrong about the pair who rule the North.

Daenerys won't like to hear that the King quite possibly loves his wife. And Tyrion's own report had arrived earlier that day, which Varys had read first unbeknownst to the Queen before giving it to her. After reading it, the Queen most certainly wasn't be in a good mood. Tyrion has written to her that he requests to leave Winterfell. King Jon is unwilling to listen to anything until the army of the dead is defeated and all hopes of talking alliances are on hold.

He knows, so far, her campaign for Westeros is not going the way she had hoped, but Varys has tried to tell her that this all takes time and one must be patient.

"I have been patient enough," Daenerys had snapped in response. "I am tired of waiting and I'm tired that you and Tyrion seem to only ever be able to tell me to be patient."

Varys bowed his head to her. "It is a tumultuous time, Your Grace. The Long Night is nearly upon us."

Daenerys had sighed so heavily through her nose, her nostrils flaring, she had reminded Varys of one of her dragons before they breathed fire. "And yet, the King in the North does not ask for my assistance."

Varys had nearly reminded her that he and Tyrion had said that perhaps getting Brandon Stark's son on their side might be difficult, but their Queen had insisted. She didn't need to be reminded of it and she certainly wouldn't appreciate it. She didn't like to be reminded of things already told to her.

"Perhaps, Your Grace..." Varys began only to pause. Daenerys stood, staring at him and waiting. "Perhaps if you didn't wait for him. Perhaps if *you* were to go to him and show him who you are and what you could do... well, how could he *not* be intrigued by you, Your Grace?"

Daenerys didn't say anything, but he saw her lips begin to curl slowly upwards into a smile.

Varys now sits, reading Meg's message and thinking of what to do next. Maybe going North *is* the way to go about this. If the North won't come to them, why shouldn't they go to the North? He has doubts that will help her cause in any way though just because of the way the people in the North are, but at least for now, the Queen seems placated. For now.

Taking a fresh piece of parchment, he begins to write a reply to Meg. First, he makes sure to compliment her. He always is sure to commend his little birds for a job well done. Nothing encourages continued good work than positive reinforcement.

If you are able, Varys writes, I would like you to get closer to the King. I would like to know more about him. Only do so if you are able. I will not have you put yourself in danger.

...

Sansa exhales a heavy sigh from behind the changing screen, her hands falling to her sides. If she didn't know any better, she swears that Cora is doing this on purpose.

"Jon?"

She sticks her head out around the screen and all other words die right there on her tongue. Her husband is standing there with his curls down and wearing just a pair of breeches with no shirt. Oh my... Gods. Her husband... her husband is so handsome, he makes her belly swirl as if she's just gulped some warm wine. Her lips tingle as she looks at him and he turns his head at the sound of her calling his name.

“Cora?” He asks.

Sansa remembers why she called for him. “Yes,” she sighs with a smile. “I love Cora, but she clearly is wanting to bind me into my dresses for whatever reason so I can never get out of them.”

“Well, we can’t have that.”

Sansa blushes at his words and Jon smiles as he joins her behind the screen.

“Perhaps I can get Meg a stool and teach her to lace my dress,” Sansa thinks out loud.

“You have been keeping that one close to you.”

“Yes... Lord Royce and I had a thought... I will tell you about it once I have found out more,” she promises.

She stands still as Jon doesn’t even attempt the knot with his fingers first. He leans down and she feels his warm breath on the skin of her back and the brush of his nose through her dress as he begins working at it with his teeth. She feels herself holding her breath and nearly closing their eyes. They have shared more than a few kisses now, but this is intimacy that leaves her nearly trembling.

Sansa gasps then, unable to help herself, when she feels Jon’s lips on her back that her loosened dress has opened him to. His kiss is soft; delicate.

“Is this alright?” He asks her in a hush.

Sansa can’t nod her head fast enough.

Her heart hammers in her chest as Jon places another kiss to a spot a little higher. He steps in closer and with one hand now able to easily undo the rest of the laces, his other hand slides around her waist and comes to a rest on her stomach.

“Is this alright?” He asks again and again, Sansa nods, gulping, unable to remember a single word.

Jon’s lips move to the side of her neck and Sansa tilts her head to the side to encourage this. She shivers as his lips brush along behind her ear and she finds herself leaning against his chest, grateful he’s standing behind her with his hand on her front, practically holding her up.

“Jon,” she whispers.

Jon kisses the corner of her jaw now and she shivers, Jon feeling it and his hand slides from her stomach so his arm can wrap around her front. “Yes?” He whispers.

“Would you...” Sansa pauses to swallow, trying to get some type of moisture in her overly dry throat. “I know it’s what’s expected of us, but if it wasn’t, would you...” Again, she has to pause.

Jon lifts his lips from her neck. “Would I...?” He tries to prompt her.

Sansa knows she must be brave. She must always be nothing, but brave.

She begins to turn and Jon loosens his arm so that she is able to, turning until she faces him. Her dress is loose and begins to slip from her shoulders. At first, she can’t look him in the face and looks to his chest instead – to the muscles and the scars. She lifts her hand to touch one now; it’s Jon’s turn to shiver.

Sansa lifts her eyes to look to his. “Would you like to have a baby with me?” She manages to get the question out in a rush of breath.

“Of course,” Jon’s answer is immediate; so immediate and Sansa has to wonder why she thought it wouldn’t be or that he would possibly answer in a different way. “Would you like one right now?”

He's trying to make light of the heaviness that he knows is pressing down on her and Sansa is grateful. She is able to smile to show him that.

"I made sure... I drank teas with Ramsay so it wouldn't happen with him," Sansa tells him.

Jon doesn't say anything to that; just watches her. Whenever she mentions her time with Ramsay, she notes that his jaw clenches tightly and the muscles in his face twitch, but other than that, he only listens. And Sansa has found that that's exactly what she needs him to do.

So much with Ramsay, her brain hadn't even fully processed it, burying it so deep inside of her to be ignored; but it can't be ignored. And by being silent and just listening, letting her talk, Jon gives Sansa the chance to finally begin to try and work through everything that had been done to her; and by talking about it and processing it, she can start to move past it.

"I love when you wear your hair down when it's just the two of us," Sansa confesses then and Jon smiles a little at that.

"Do you?" He asks, she never having mentioned that before.

Sansa nods and smiles a little herself. "When it's just us, you wear your hair down and it's not King and Queen. Only Jon and Sansa. But I think... when we... it will help me if you wear your hair pulled back. Just for our first few times," she is quick to add. "I need to see that you're not him." She whispers the last part, as if she is ashamed to say such a thing to her husband.

Jon doesn't say anything to that at first. He puts his hands on her cheeks and kisses her forehead. "Anything you need... I love you," he then says and Sansa feels the breath catch in her chest, her heart stopping for a beat.

"Jon," she whispers, her eyes flying to his.

He's never said those words to her. As cousins, yes, but never as husband and wife. It's been so long since anyone has said those words to her and hearing them now – and hearing them from *Jon* – tears begin to form and flood her eyes.

“Jon,” she whispers again and he drops his lips to kiss her cheek and then he kisses her on the mouth before she can say anything further.

Sansa wraps her arms around his shoulders, holding him close, as he circles her waist and they kiss one another again and again. She is feeling too warm and she wants to step from her dress because her skin is on fire, but before she can do anything more than kiss Jon, a heavy pounding on their chamber door interrupts them. Sansa jumps with the suddenness of it and Jon lets out a harsh curse through his quickened breathing.

He gives Sansa an apologetic look before he steps out from the changing screen to go and answer it and Sansa quickly pulls her dress down her body, stepping from it and draping it over the top of the screen to be put away later. Her heart is still pounding. She steps out in just her white shift just as Jon is closing the door again, breaking the seal of a rolled parchment in his hands.

His body is tense; so much so that Sansa can see it from across the room and it makes her own body tense.

“What is it?” She asks, but can barely do so above a whisper, and she takes a step forward.

Jon reads silently for another moment before lifting his head. “It’s from Edd.” Sansa immediately feels the floor beneath her bare feet shift. She reaches out to hold onto the back of one of the chairs in front of the fire. “They’re almost to the wall.”

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Chapter End Notes

Thank you! To the Wall we go!

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

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Normally, as Queen, Sansa would help him with his armor, but it's a long ride to the Wall and Jon's not going to wear it for the next two weeks. Instead, she helps buckle his leather jerkin on, her fingers noticeably shaking.

"When are you leaving?" He asks.

Sansa swallows and sighs when she finally gets it buckled. She then looks to Jon; into his eyes. "When you leave, we are staying in Winterfell for one more day before leaving as well."

"And where are you going?"

"Southeast," Sansa recites the plan they have worked on together. "It should take us a week to get there."

Jon nods, his hands sliding over his wife's hips. He imagines them wider with pregnancy and he already can't wait to see her in such a state. "And what will you do once you get there?"

Sansa swallows and her fingers begin to pick at the leather over his chest. "We will stay in Ramsgate. Either you send or one of our people send a raven that you have won or a raven will be sent that you..." She can't finish that particular thought and Jon gently pulls her in until their body's fronts graze.

"And if we are defeated, what do you do?" Jon presses.

He has no doubt that Sansa knows the plan, but he supposes he needs to hear it for himself; to assure himself that it is a *good* plan and Sansa will stay alive because of this plan.

“Lord Manderly has assured us his ships are prepared,” Sansa whispers now. “If we are defeated and you fall... I’m to take our people to Essos.”

Jon leans in and presses his lips to her forehead in a kiss, closing his eyes, wanting to remember the feel of her skin under his lips and the scent of her body; though he can’t imagine ever forgetting either of those. He hears her shuddering breaths and he knows she is about to cry, but is doing so hard to keep it controlled. Jon’s arms tighten around her and he pulls his head back so that he can look into her face.

“I love you,” he says and it’s the second time he has said those words to her and they are the easiest words he has ever said to anyone.

He had said them before – to Ygritte – and Jon supposes a part of him will always love Ygritte, but that had been the boy, Jon, in love with another girl. This is the man, Jon, in love with his wife.

“I love you, too,” Sansa tells him then and Jon exhales a breath as if he’s been holding it, only to be released when he heard her say such a thing. And then, at his reaction, Sansa begins to smile and Jon swoops in, kissing her hard on the mouth.

“When we see one another again-” He is certain he says *when*. “-I will put a babe in you.”

Sansa’s cheeks flush at that and she smiles just as Jon swoops in for another kiss.

The image of having Sansa beneath him as they finally consummate their marriage will keep him warm at night, he doesn’t doubt it.

Outside in the courtyard, there are hundreds of men, women and children, all rushing in all directions, either preparing themselves to leave – to march North – or to say goodbye to their loved ones who are either leaving or staying behind.

But when Jon and Sansa step out, it seems to be known and it takes a minute, but a hush passes over everyone, all heads turned towards the King and Queen in the North. Jon clutches Sansa’s

hand and she stands next to him, hiding her own emotions. The King and Queen must be stronger than everyone.

“We all know the plan!” Jon speaks loudly, his voice shouting out into the night so that all might be able to hear him. “We have all been training for the plan! By the time you arrive at the Wall, I will already be beyond it and hopefully, our war will be done before it can begin! We defeated them thousands of years ago and we will victoriously defeat them again!”

Cheers and battle cries rise up and Jon looks to Sansa. Her eyes are wet, shining in the torches lit, but no tears fall. His Queen and wife is too strong to cry in front of anyone else. He squeezes her hand and Sansa gives him the smallest smile back, squeezing his hand as well.

Jon looks back to their people; everyone from all of the Houses of the North who have joined this fight.

“I know you’re all scared! I am scared as well! But I will fight to my death to keep you all safe!”

“We’ll die for you, too, Your Grace!” Someone shouts in reply to that and cries in agreement rise up.

Jon exhales a shaky breath, overcome with the love and loyalty from all of those gathered around him. Sansa reads his mind and squeezes his hand again.

“May the Gods keep us safe!” Jon finishes and cheers and battle cries reply to him.

He sees Lord Royce and he beckons the man to come to him. He steps forward, his hand falling from Sansa’s and he can see that she is saying goodbye to Brienne and Pod. Both have knelt in front of her and she orders them to rise, kissing their cheeks and hugging them both tightly.

“Your Grace,” Royce bows his head to him.

“I am trusting you with the most important thing in the North and the most precious person in the world to me,” Jon tells him what he doesn’t need to for the man already knows.

“I will lay my life down for hers if need be, Your Grace,” Royce readily promises.

“I know,” Jon nods and the two men firmly shake hands. “I will send a raven once I reach Castle Black.”

Royce takes a step in towards him. “With Lannister having left this morning, as far as anyone knows, we are staying right here in Winterfell.”

Jon nods, pleased with that. The secret is too important and there are far too many people, increasing the risk of letting the true plan slip. Only those in the tightest circle around the King and Queen know what those left behind will truly be doing.

Ghost approaches and Jon drops to his haunches in front of the great Direwolf. “Look after her for me,” he tells his faithful companion and like Lord Royce, Ghost already knows this. “Keep her safe.”

Ghost licks the side of his face and Jon chuckles, scratching him behind his ears.

Standing up and turning back to Sansa, she is now hugging Arya, the two sisters clinging to each other. Both sniffle as they break away from the other.

“I know I don’t have to worry about you, but please look after Jon for me,” Sansa says as Jon approaches.

“Yes, I’ve heard the idiot’s already died once,” Arya tosses Jon a grin.

Jon does his best to frown at them both.

Arya leaves them alone to make sure their horses are ready and Jon knows that everyone is watching – and pretending not to – and they expect the King and Queen to show affection – for once, in this particular situation – in front of them.

But even if they weren't being watched and even if it wasn't what was expected of them, Jon would still do what he does now.

He wraps his arms back around his wife and pulls her into a kiss – fierce and hard, wanting both of them to remember this kiss when it's far in the past. When he pulls his head back so both can breathe again, Sansa blinks at him – clearly surprised, but certainly not complaining.

“Come back to me,” she then whispers to him so only he can hear. “You’ve promised me a babe and I don’t wish to have one with anyone else.”

Jon kisses her fiercely again. “I will be back,” he promises her.

He knows promises like that can't be made when riding into battle and he knows his odds of surviving this battle with the Night King are minute, but he can't help himself. It's not only what Sansa needs to hear, but it's what he needs to hear, too. He needs to come back to her because now that she's his wife, Jon won't leave this world after just a few months of being able to call Sansa his.

“I haven't the time to go see my father...” he begins to say.

“I'll go down and make sure his candle is lit,” Sansa promises to him now.

Arya brings the horses and with one more kiss to Sansa's lips, Jon goes to mount his. He doesn't look back to her. If he looks back, Jon knows he'll slide right down from his horse and not leave her.

...

The plan is almost too simple. Jon worries about that. All of these men having fought in battles and what they have come up with is so straightforward, it worries Jon that there isn't more twists and surprises to it. Surely, the more complicated, the better. But this is what Jon and the others have come up with and have spent the past few weeks going over every single possibility of how it could all go wrong.

It takes about eighteen days from Winterfell to the Wall. That was how long it took Jon and Uncle Benjen when they first made the journey together. Jon, Arya and Davos are riding ahead. Brienne, Pod, Lady Mormont and all of the other Lords will be leading the rest of the men, women and children fighting at the Wall behind them. The three sleep little and change for fresh horses along the way as soon as their current animals are near collapsing.

They reach the wall in fifteen days and in that time, if Jon isn't thinking of what he must do, he is thinking of Sansa. She had sent a raven that had found Jon on the Kingsroad and had told him when they had left Winterfell for Ramsgate in White Harbor. He takes comfort in knowing that if anything happens to him and the Dead win, coming for the rest of Westeros, Sansa will be on a ship for Essos. That thought keeps him warm as it gets colder and colder with seemingly each passing hour.

As Castle Black is finally in their reach, and Jon can hear the call from the Brothers on watch to open the gate, Jon feels like he breathes for the first time in fifteen days. And when he sees Edd, standing and waiting for him in the black Lord Commander cloak, Jon finds himself actually smiling. He stops his horse and is the first to dismount, instantly sweeping Edd into a tight hug. Edd pounds his back and they squeeze one another for a brief second. And just as they step apart and Jon opens his mouth to speak, from the corner of his eye, he sees a great form coming his way – that knocks him flat over.

Jon groans as he hits the ground – hard – and the weight of the body is heavy on top of him.

“Little crow!”

“Gods, Tormund,” Jon groans, shoving the man off of him. “You’re killing me.”

“Bah. If a knife to the heart won’t get you, you’re not getting taken out by me.”

Jon smiles as Tormund helps him to his feet and is then tugged into a hug from the wildling that Jon swears breaks one or two of his bones. Jon then makes the introductions of Arya to everyone and Tormund sweeps “Little crow’s little sister” into a hug. Arya doesn’t look amused, but she allows it.

“I must send Sansa a raven,” Jon tells Edd and Edd nods, the two men walking away as Davos and Arya are shown where they can rest and get something to eat and drink.

“How is she?” Edd asks and Jon smiles a little.

Jon knows from having just met Sansa and having her been around Castle Black for a bit of time before she and Jon left, he knows that Edd became somewhat enamored with her. Not in a “love” kind of way, but a man looking upon a Queen for the first time because even then, Sansa already carried herself as one.

“Scared,” Jon answers.

“Aren’t we all?”

They climb the stairs to the Lord Commander’s chancery and Jon sees the Wall looming past them. “Thank you for not knocking it down. That would have made this upcoming battle a bit more difficult if it wasn’t standing anymore.”

“I told you I would do my best. The Brothers and I have been making as many arrows and swords as we can per your orders. We’ve also gotten the fire pits in position up on the Wall.”

Jon nods. “Good. Thank you.” He then claps a hand on his friend’s shoulder. “I’ve missed you. I’ve nearly sent for you a few times.”

“Bah,” Edd brushes that off. “Why would I ever want to leave all of this?”

Jon cracks into a grin. Edd pushes the door to the chancery open and steps inside, glancing over his shoulder at Jon, nearly smiling. And when Jon steps in, he stops still in his tracks.

“Sam!” He exclaims at the sight of his friend he hasn’t seen in so long and Sam grins that Sam-grin of his as the two embrace one another. “What are you doing here? Where’s Gilly?”

“Gilly’s safe. I sent her to Winterfell. And I’m here to help, of course.” He puffs his chest out. “I’ve killed a Wight, you know.”

“He’s been reminding me of that since he’s gotten here,” Edd grumbles, but Jon just keeps smiling and slaps his hand on Sam’s chest.

“I’m glad you’re here. How did you know to come here?”

“Edd sent me a raven, asking if I happened to have any valyrian steel and he told me why he needed it.”

Jon feels the breath stop in his chest. “Do you have any valyrian steel?” He asks.

Sam just grins and goes to the table, picking up a long sword. “Heartsbane of House Tarly,” he states proudly. Jon comes to take the sword himself, holding it in one hand, testing the weight, before tossing it to the other.

“Your father gave you this?”

“Well, not exactly,” Sam begins to answer, looking embarrassed. “Fine, I stole it. But I’m the oldest son. It should be passed down to me anyway and besides, it’s not like he’s using it.”

Edd snorts and Jon smiles, clapping a hand on Sam’s shoulder once more.

Sam just smiles. “So, who else is going beyond the Wall with us and when are we going?”

Jon sets Heartsbane down, keeping his eyes on Sam. “You want to come with us?”

Sam straightens his back and tilts his chin up in defiance. “Of course I’m coming. I’ve killed-”

“A Wight, you know,” Jon and Edd finish for him.

“Well, I have,” Sam frowns at them both. “And other than that, I *have* stolen my family sword to come and help you. You’re mad if you think you’re going off without me.”

“Jon,” Edd speaks. “There’s someone else here who’s been waiting for you.”

“Who?” Jon’s brow furrows at that. “I still have to send a raven to Sansa.”

“I think you’ll want to hold off on that until you see who else is here. She’ll want to know, too.”

He then hears something outside. It almost sounds a shriek – a womanly shriek – and though it isn’t exactly a common sound, Jon recognizes it all the same. The door is still open and Jon rushes outside to see what has made Arya make such a sound. He then stops as suddenly as he had when he saw Sam. Down below, in a wheeled chair, is a young man and Arya has thrown herself against him. The young man doesn’t hug her back, but Jon can see him close his eyes and smile, tilting his head down to her shoulder.

“Bran,” Jon breathes.

...

Chapter End Notes

I'm worried that perhaps Jon's plan is going to be too simple and it won't be liked and yet, I don't want the hot mess that was the Battle of Winterfell so I guess I'm just going to write what I want and hope some like it! Thank you so, so much - as always - for reading!

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

As planned, the journey from Winterfell to the Keep in Ramsgate took about a week with Lady Manderly there to greet them. And now, being there for another week, Sansa has spent most of her days, looking out the window, waiting for the raven that would tell her that Jon arrived at Castle Black, safe. Upon arrival, Lady Manderly had told her Queen that the finest rooms faced the water, but Sansa had asked for a chamber that faced North.

“If it’s not too inconvenient,” Sansa had been quick to add.

“Of course it wouldn’t be, Your Grace,” Lady Manderly had said, understanding Sansa’s request immediately. “I should have already thought of it.”

Even after everything, Sansa still allows herself some fanciful ideas.

She wants to face North because Jon and Arya and so many others of their people are North and perhaps, the raven – once sent – will be able to find her easier if her chamber faces North.

But besides those reasons, Sansa can’t help, but imagine that maybe, Jon will look to the Southeast and Sansa will be looking North at the same exact time and even with thousands of leagues between them, they’ll be looking at one another.

Her heart aches and she can’t find anything to keep herself from thinking on it. There are sewing circles and helping Lady Manderly running the Keep with the influx of hundreds of added people. She has invited Gilly and her son to her room for tea so she could get to know the woman. Sansa has yet to meet him, but Jon has spoken of both Gilly and her husband, Sam, often and any friend of Jon’s is a friend of hers. She also meets with Lord Royce daily as they are still seeing that they have seen to all preparations for Winter – both in silent agreement that they will continue to prepare unless there is a reason not to.

But Sansa knows she's poor company and she can't concentrate on anything other than Jon and waiting for his promised raven. He had told her that it takes about eighteen days' ride from Winterfell to the Wall and Sansa knows enough days hasn't passed yet, but that doesn't stop her mind from waiting; doing nothing, but waiting and looking out the window and praying and crying to herself at night before sleep.

How cruel of the Old Gods and New. After all of the pain and torment and abuse, Sansa has finally married a man who she loves completely; and who loves her; who is kind and gentle and brave. And what if he's taken away from her?

Sansa already knows and she doesn't care what the Lords would say about it. She will never marry again; spending the rest of her days as Jon's widow and reliving the moment in her life when someone loved her.

No, Jon won't die. Not Jon. He's already come back once and it was to do this very thing; fight the Night King and defeat him once and for all. It's dangerous and if it was anyone else, they probably wouldn't be able to survive, but Jon – her husband – isn't just anyone.

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Sansa lifts her head from the embroidery she is attempting to work on and gasps when she looks to the window. Within seconds, she has flown from her chair at the fire to the doors, pulling them both open. The raven flaps back from the door and hops onto the ledge of the balcony.

Sansa breathes at the sight of the bird and the small parchment tied to his leg. She almost cries at the sight. Finally. She approaches the bird slowly – so not to frighten it – but the bird just stays where it is, watching her with his black eyes. She unties the parchment and immediately unrolls it, her eyes scanning over the words in Jon's handwriting.

Arya, Davos and I have arrived at Castle Black, safe. Sam is here as well and I hope that by the time this reaches you, Gilly and Little Sam have been able to get to Winterfell before you leave.

We will be going beyond the Wall in two days' time. It will give us time to rest and to prepare ourselves. Arya and I had the best surprise when we arrived here.

Bran is alive and is here with us.

Sansa gasps, her hand flying to her mouth as tears instantly flood her eyes from those words. Bran. Bran! Theon had told her that the two boys who had been killed and burned weren't Bran and Rickon and while Jon and Sansa saw Rickon murdered right in front of them, there had been no word on Bran. They had just thought... well, it doesn't matter what they thought because Bran is alive!

And Jon and Arya are at Castle Black, alive.

Sansa knows it's the most dangerous place to be, but she wishes she was there right now, with them all. Once again, she finds herself separated from her family with no idea what is going to happen to her; to *any* of them.

I think of you with each passing minute and at night, I dream of nothing, but you. My arms ache to hold you. My lips long to taste you. And my cock can't wait to find its home in you. I love you, Sansa, and I can only hope that you love and miss me as much. With love, Jon

His words make the tears gathered in her eyes slip down her cheeks and she closes them, bringing the letter to her heart as she feels the slight tremble through her body from his last sentiment. If this was any other man saying such a thing to her, she would be trembling with fear, but this is Jon and his words are her thoughts as well.

She wants to experience *all* love with her husband. She is actually *excited* at experiencing that kind of love with no one, but Jon. Nervous, yes, but also excited and it's amazing to her that she would be. Her mind has a passing thought of Ramsay, but she allows herself to dwell on it. It will be absolutely nothing like that with Jon.

She wishes she could write him back. She had written to Castle Black as soon as they arrived at Ramsgate so Jon would have news of her safety, but if she writes him now, the letter won't reach him in time and he will be beyond the Wall.

Opening her eyes again, sniffing and wiping at one of her wet cheeks, Sansa stills when she sees that the raven is still there, perched on the ledge, watching her. She looks at the bird, curiously. Normally, once the birds have made their delivery, they have flown off again. Sansa has never seen one, just sitting there, as if waiting for something more.

Sansa knows it's absolutely ridiculous and yet, she does it anyway. "Thank you for bringing me the letter," she says to the bird.

The raven flaps its wings at her and hops on the ledge, closer to her.

"You're an interesting one, aren't you?" Sansa smiles as the bird cocks its head to her. "I'm afraid you showed up before tea and I have nothing to give you."

Caw! The raven calls out.

Sansa hesitates. This truly is mad, she knows, but with the slowest of movements, she reaches her hand out. With her fingertips, she strokes them down the back of the raven's neck. It almost seems, to her, that the raven seems to shiver at her touch, craning his neck as if asking for more, and Sansa smiles a bit. She's never seen a raven behave in such a way before. It is almost as if this wild bird has been tamed.

"Safe travels," Sansa then bids to the bird.

Caw! The raven calls out one more time, flapping his wings, before he turns on the ledge and flies off. Sansa tilts her head up, watching the bird in the sky, fly further and further until it's nothing more than a black spot against the clear blue before it disappears entirely.

Sansa reads through Jon's letter one more time – especially the last part – as she moves back inside, closing the doors to the balcony. When she hears a knock on the door, Sansa already knows who it is and she finds herself smiling as she sets Jon's letter down before going to answer it, wiping her wet cheeks.

The smile is still across her face when she opens the door to Lord Royce and Meg. Meg is carrying the tea tray and it's obvious Lord Royce has tried to take it and carry it for her, but Meg is a stubborn little girl and holds onto it tightly in case the man tries to swoop it right from her hands.

"It's arrived," Sansa tells Royce as she steps back, allowing both into the chamber. These daily afternoon tea sessions with Lord Royce has become something she looks forward to. "Just now."

“And the three have arrived safely?”

“Yes,” Sansa nods. “Jon says they are waiting and resting for two days before they go beyond the Wall.”

Lord Royce looks at her before glancing to Meg before back to Sansa. Meg has carried the tray to the small table between the two chairs at the fireplace and Sansa gives a single nod.

“Thank you, Meg,” Sansa smiles to the girl as she goes to her.

Meg smiles. “And look, Your Grace!” The girl is so excited, she hardly waits to finish her sentence before she is lifting the linen napkin that has been placed over the plate. “Fresh from the kitchen!”

Sansa can’t help, but gasp a little. On the plate are two perfect lemon cakes.

“Lady Manderly said they were a surprise!” Meg exclaims. “And she says she knows Your Grace loves lemon cakes and aren’t they the most perfect things you’ve ever seen?”

Sansa nearly laughs at how excited the girl is. “Oh, they are so beautiful.” Sansa sits down in one of the chairs. “You must share mine with me.”

Meg’s eyes widen at the offer, but then she shakes her head quickly. “I can’t, Your Grace. These lemon cakes are for you and Lord Royce.”

“And I would like to share mine with you,” Sansa says, picking up the knife next to the plate.

Royce lowers himself into the second chair to begin pouring their tea.

“You can’t,” Meg’s fingers twist in the skirt of her dress. “You are Queen and I am nobody. Nobodies don’t get to have lemon cakes, Your Grace.”

Sansa frowns at that and setting the knife down again, she takes both of Meg's hands in hers. "Who told you that you're nobody?"

"I am, Your Grace," Meg whispers.

"You are not nobody. You are Meg and you're a good, kind and loyal girl. Just because I was born to a certain set of parents and you were born to another, that doesn't make us that very different."

Meg looks like she's about to cry now and Sansa gently squeezes her hands.

"You think I'm loyal?" Meg whispers, not able to look at Sansa; her eyes instead down to their joined hands.

"Aren't you?" Royce speaks up, leaning back in his seat with his cup of tea.

Meg is able to look at him, but still unable to look at Sansa. "I try to be."

"It must be hard," Sansa offers. "To be so young and feel like you don't have a home. Always going from one place to another."

"You were in the Vale before coming to Winterfell, weren't you?" Royce asks, keeping his eyes on her before taking a sip of his tea. "Some of those there who have now come to Winterfell told me that you looked familiar to them."

Meg nearly gasps at that, staring at Lord Royce, before she seems to remember where Lord Royce is from.

She swallows and nods. "I was, My Lord," she whispers.

“It’s alright, Meg,” Sansa assures her, rubbing her thumbs over her hands. “I know what it’s like to do what we think will please others.”

Meg sniffles. “Varys has been kind to me,” she tells them both, whispering still. “He’s taught me my letters and if I do a really good job, he’s promised that he’ll get me a right and proper job when I get older.” She finally lifts her eyes to look to Sansa and they’re wet and looking at the little girl’s face, crumbling, Sansa feels like she can cry herself.

“We don’t want you to be torn, Meg,” Royce assures her. “You can stay loyal to Varys. We just ask that you do us a favor and not tell him what you might hear myself and Your Grace say between us.”

“I won’t,” Meg shakes her head. “I promise I won’t. I...” she looks to Sansa. “I would *never* betray you, Your Grace. And I’m sorry for what I’ve already told him.”

“What have you told him?” Sansa asks. “I only ask because I know he serves the Targaryen and myself and the King and those in the North aren’t too fond of any Targaryen. I would like to know so that I may be prepared if something happens.”

“I haven’t told him anything helpful, I promise, Your Grace,” Meg insists. “I swear it. I’ve only told him how kind you both are to me and how the King only seems to smile when he’s around you, Your Grace.”

That makes Sansa smile faintly though that actually might be a problem if Tyrion’s plan is true of having Jon and the Targaryen Queen come together.

“And he told me...” Meg swallows and stops herself.

“Go on. It’s alright,” Royce says.

“He told me that he would like me to stay close to the King. To learn more about him.”

Sansa gives Meg's hands one more squeeze and then pulls her hand back, cutting one of the lemon cakes into two pieces, holding out one of the pieces for the girl to take. Meg looks at the dessert, nearly licking her lips, but she looks to Sansa before taking it.

"I won't tell anyone anything, Your Grace," Meg then promises.

Sansa keeps holding the lemon cake out and Meg finally takes it. "You can tell him anything you want. All I ask is that you tell Varys that the King has gone North, but don't tell him where, and that the rest have stayed behind in Winterfell and that when the King returns, you will begin."

Because Jon *is* returning, Sansa adds silently to herself.

Meg nods. "I will write it as soon as I leave you, Your Grace."

Sansa smiles and picks up the other half of the lemon cake. "Ready?" She then asks.

Meg smiles, too, almost giggles and at the same time, Sansa and Meg take bites of their lemon cakes.

...

Chapter End Notes

Back to Jon and the others in the next chapter, going beyond the Wall! Thank you very much for reading!

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“I can stay with you,” Meera Reed offers and not for the first time.

Bran just gives her that small smile that seems to be now his. “My sister and cousin need you more than I do and I’ll have others here to keep watch over me.”

Meera opens her mouth, prepared to clearly argue, but she stops herself. With a resigned sigh, she nods.

“Are you sure you can handle this?” Jon asks Bran and again, Bran just gives that small smile.

Jon and Arya had witnessed it for the first time two days earlier; Bran’s eyes rolling back and going completely white and a raven suddenly appearing, hopping right onto Arya’s shoulder and giving her ear a peck that made her squirm and laugh at the same time. They couldn’t believe it even as they witnessed it and even witnessing it, it had taken some convincing that this raven actually was Bran.

“You need me, Jon,” Bran informs him.

“I’m not arguing that. I just... I want to make sure that you’ll be alright doing... this for so long.”

Bran just smiles. “I’ll be fine. It’s a raven. It won’t take that much out of me. If you asked me to do it with a dragon...” he trails off then and Jon swallows.

“So the dragons are real?”

This is the absolute last thing he should be thinking about. He doesn't have time for dragons or some Targaryen bitch, demanding things that aren't hers to demand. He has an army of the dead coming to the Wall. He is hours away from facing down the Night King again and this time, one of them won't be coming away from it. That is the *only* thing Jon can think about right now. He can't even – won't even – allow himself to think of Sansa. He needs his mind focused on one thing and one thing only.

“We'll talk about it after,” Bran promises Jon; perhaps able to read Jon's thoughts right now and considering how *different* Bran is now, Jon wouldn't doubt if his cousin could very much do just that.

Jon nods at that. “After,” he echoes.

Bran exhales a deep breath and shifts in his chair, as if getting himself comfortable. “Go on.”

Meera leans down and hugs him, Arya then doing the same. Jon leans in and kisses him on the head and with a moment later, Bran's eyes have gone white. Jon, Arya and Meera leave Bran in the warming shed on top of the Wall and step into the cage, waiting a second before it begins to lower.

Caw!

They all look and breathe a sigh of relief, Meera smiling as the raven comes and lands right on her shoulder. Jon is able to smile at his cousin-turned-raven, but then takes a deep breath, his stomach in a painful knot and his heart is beating so quickly, it is giving him chest pains.

He's scared and he closes his eyes to try and keep his breathing steady.

That is the only time a man can be brave, his Uncle Ned's words speak in his mind.

Opening his eyes, he looks to Arya and Meera Reed. Neither talk and both look equally nervous.

Jon does his best to give them a smile. “After this, we'll come back to Castle Black and have the tallest mugs of ale we can manage.”

Arya snorts at that. Her valyrian steel weapon is a dagger from her mother; used to almost kill Bran when he had been unconscious and bedridden and stopped by Catelyn. Bran has kept it this whole time and has given it to Arya for beyond the Wall. She flips and turns it between her fingers now.

“Sansa told me all about the ale at Castle Black,” Arya comments. “Like goat’s piss.”

Jon smiles a bit easier now. “Sansa would never describe something as goat’s piss.” His wife is a proper little thing and it’s one of the things he loves most about her.

He wishes he had been at her side when Bran had delivered his letter and she had read what Jon had written so that he may have seen her face. Jon has imagined it and he can see the pink of his wife’s cheeks even with thousands of leagues between them. Even in the cage, going down, Jon turns his head towards the southeast – as if he can see Sansa this very moment.

He had been nervous writing that letter to her, but in the end, he had plunged in and told her what was truly on his mind and what he wished to do with her once they were reunited again. He could very well die within the next few hours and Sansa now knows that he loves her, but she needed to know the rest. He wanted his wife to know how very much he desires her.

“She didn’t say it,” Arya agrees. “But I know that’s what she meant.”

“If we get back after this, I’ll drink anything if it will get me good and pissed,” Meera speaks up, stroking the beak of the Bran-raven.

Arya grins at her for that and Jon lets out a chuckle. The cage reaches the ground and Jon lets them step out first, stepping off after them. Tormund, Edd, Sam and Davos are waiting. All of them are bundled in thick furs and all are brandishing their own valyrian steel weapons.

“Are we ready?” Jon asks them all.

“Ready!” Tormund answers with a grin.

“Brienne’s raven arrived. Our army is about a day from here,” Davos tells him.

Jon nods. “Let’s hope that by the time they get here, there will be nothing for them to do.”

The party of seven, plus one raven, walk through the twisting tunnels towards the thick oaken door and heavy grates that will open for them and they’ll walk out on the other side. The others walk in front of him as Jon brings up the rear. There is chatter amongst them – nervous and to fill in the silence – but Jon isn’t listening to what they are saying. He is silent, speaking with his father, pleading with Brandon Stark to be with him now as he always is.

He turns when he feels someone come beside him and it is Edd.

“I want you to know that when we get through this, I’m going to end your watch and ask you to come back to Winterfell with me,” Jon tells him – straightforward as Edd would appreciate that.

“You don’t need me down there,” Edd shakes his head. “I don’t know anything about helping a King.”

“And that’s exactly why I need you with me. I’m not a King to you. I’m Jon.”

Edd just looks at him like that as if perhaps he’s lost a part of his mind.

Jon gives him a small smile. “Sansa’s brilliant and she’s much better at the politics than I am. And I have Davos and the other Northern Lords, but sometimes, all they do is argue and do my head in and I can imagine that eventually, Davos will want to return to his own home.”

Edd snorts. “Really making it sound like paradise. Let me rush myself right into that.”

Jon’s small smile breaks into a grin. “That’s why I need you. You’ll never kiss my ass and you’ll always tell me what you’re thinking. That’s exactly what I need.”

“We all might die today,” Edd points out in true Edd fashion.

“Well, then, you won’t have to worry about it,” Jon says with a clap on his friend’s shoulder.

They open the heavy door and then wait for the heavy gates to rise. When they do, no one steps forward. Instead, Jon turns to Meera and the raven on her shoulder.

“We’ll wait for you here,” Jon tells his cousin.

Caw!

Bran takes off then, the group of seven standing at the opening, watching the raven fly off. Jon exhales a breath and leans back against the wall. In all of the weeks they had been drawing up their plan – and then going over it again and again and thinking of anything that could possibly go wrong – Jon had never anticipated that he would see his cousin again, who can now just so happen to warg into animals. It’s helpful, to say the least, and it fits in with their plan, but what if...

Bran says that the Night King is after him. What if the Night King can sense Bran as a raven and strike him down? What if the Night King already knows exactly what they are up to?

Jon allows Sansa to take over his mind instead. These are the last minutes he will have to do so before he must focus completely on the task at hand. He closes his eyes and she stands right in front of him; as she was their last night together – in her white shift and her hair down and glowing in the fire. All he wants to do is wrap her in his arms, kiss her and feel her body beneath his.

He loves her completely and all he wants in this world is to be able to tell her that to her face. He wants to tell her as many times as a man can possibly tell a woman that in a single day so Sansa may never doubt and never wonder his feelings for her.

But most of all, no matter what happens to him, he wants her safe. Gods, please keep her safe.

Father, please keep Sansa safe.

Caw!

Bran has returned and Jon's eyes snap open and he pushes himself from the wall. This time, he comes to land and perch himself right on top of Tormund's head.

"You shite on me, little raven, we're going to have a problem," Tormund grumbles up to him.

Jon ignores him and they all gather around to look to Bran. He holds up his leathered glove hand.

"Did you find them?" Jon asks.

As agreed, Bran leans down and pecks Jon's hand. Once – for yes.

"The Wight army?"

One peck.

"Is the Night King and his generals with them?"

Two pecks – no.

"Did you see the Night King as well?"

One peck.

"Is he behind them?"

One peck.

Jon exhales a breath and nods, stroking a finger down the raven's neck. He looks to the others.

"It's what I thought he would do," Jon tells them. "He is sending the Wights in first." He looks back to Bran. "To the Wall?"

This time, Bran pecks Tormund once on the head.

"Hey!" Tormund waves his hand at the raven to jostle him off, but Bran is unmoving and blinks at Jon.

Jon is quiet for a moment. He then looks to Davos and then to Edd and Sam before to Meera and Arya.

"The plan is still the same. He's doing what I thought so the plan stays the same. The Wights will be heading to the Wall where our army is waiting for them. We have instructed the Brothers and those in charge what to do." He crouches down and with his finger, he begins drawing in the snow on the ground. Everyone gathers in a circle around him to look. He draws a line for the Wall and then shorter liners to represent the trees of the forest. "We'll make a wide circle through the trees, avoiding the Wights. Bran will lead us. We meet the Night King and his Generals and..." Jon exhales a breath and stands up, looking at them all. "We will fight and we will finish it today. One way or another."

That's his simple plan and all he can do now is execute it and hope that its simplicity won't get him and those with him now killed.

"If we kill the Night King before the Wights can reach the Wall, will they all fall?" Arya asks.

Jon looks to Sam.

"Yes, I believe that that's what will happen," Sam nods. "The Night King has made them all. I feel like if he falls, the creations cannot survive without their creator."

“Well, then,” Meera takes a deep breath. “What are we waiting for?”

“Yes, let’s stop standing around,” Arya adds.

Jon almost wants to smile at these two forces-of-nature women. Instead though, he takes a deep breath, trying to keep from getting sick all over everyone. His fear is returning to him in a rush of a sudden wave.

“I’m tired of always being the one to wait for him,” Edd speaks up. “It’s our turn to take this fucker by surprise.”

“Well, then, if you’re all so eager, let’s go,” Jon smiles at them all.

“Get your brother off my head or I’ll force him off,” Tormund says, shaking his head back and forth as he does.

Caw! The raven cries out and then seems to dig his talons even deeper into Tormund’s hair.

“Ah!” Tormund shouts and then shoots forward, running from the opening into the open as fast as he can, as if trying to knock Bran off with the wind.

“That idiot’s going to get us killed before we can even come close to the Night King,” Edd frowns.

“I’ll never forgive him for that,” Jon says.

“We should go. It looks like Bran is using Tormund to lead us,” Sam notes.

“Time to finish this, Your Grace,” Davos says.

Jon feels surprised for a split second by the title. It honestly has completely slipped his mind that he's King in the North because even if he wasn't, he would still be here – doing exactly what he's about to do. No matter what title he has, the North is his home. The people here are his people and he took an oath once to protect the entire realm against those who wish it harm.

King or no King, it's what anyone would do.

King or no King, they all die with or without a title before their name.

But if he is to die today, Jon is going to make sure he gives the Night King one hell of a fight before he falls. And he only hopes that if he does die, someone with him survives to send a raven to Sansa so that she knows to get to Essos.

If he dies today only to learn from the after that Sansa wasn't safe, he's going to be extremely pissed.

...

Chapter End Notes

Nervous as always for this simple plan and seeing it executed in the next chapter, but - as always - THANK YOU for reading and commenting and responding so positively to this story. (PS - I think we can all agree that Meera Reed deserved better and I would like to give her that!)

Chapter 21

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“FIRE!!” Lord Glover shouts as loud as he can, dropping his arm with the signal.

The Brothers manning the catapults on the Wall release on his word and great balls of fire fly through the air towards the army of the Dead coming towards them. They make impacts in the further ranks, Wights flying in the air from the impact, their already dead bodies on fire and once they are down, they stay that way. The fires keeps the attention of the army – which is exactly what Jon and the others had planned.

The three in-service tunnels have been closed off and blockaded so the dead cannot get through and with the Wall being as long as it is, Jon had wanted the Wights to attack in one concentrated area so their forces could meet them rather than being too stretched out.

Brienne stands on top of the battlements and watches as the Wights not taken out by the fire balls keeps coming. Thousands are coming. Her sword is already drawn and held in her grip and she is unblinking; not wanting to miss anything from their enemy. The Wall is protected with ancient magic against Wights so they can’t cross it, but Brienne wants to see that for herself. She wonders what they are going to do. The Wall is so tall; are they just going to stack themselves up until they reach the top of it?

All around her are men, women and the older children, all clutching their weapons that the blacksmiths at Winterfell had been working around the clock to see that everyone is armed. They are all terrified – Brienne can see it clear on their faces – and she’s scared, too, but she mustn’t show them that she is. These people are all looking to her and the others in charge to lead the way. Fear will not get them anywhere or help them in any way.

“FIRE!!” Brienne commands this time and more fireballs fly through the sky.

It’s getting colder and the sky is getting darker. Brienne thinks that must mean the Night King is close. Brienne can only hope that that means King Jon and their people are getting close to

him as well. She is fully prepared to fight – and die if need be for the North and for the Starks – just like she knows everyone here is prepared to do; no matter how petrified they all are.

But Brienne, like everyone else here with her, hopes it won't come to that.

...

"I fucking can't see anything!" Tormund shouts over the howling wind and blowing snow.

"None of us can!" Arya snaps back at him.

Jon doesn't say anything and keeps pushing them forward. He knows they're getting closer. The weather is getting worse; the Night King bringing the storm with him and Jon knows it will only get worse the nearer they get. Bran has left Tormund's head to come rest on Jon's, gently guiding him. Bran can see things none of them can – especially in snow so thick, Jon can feel himself sink down with each step he takes.

He doesn't stop though. He keeps pushing himself forward and just assumes the others are following him. Even if they aren't, Jon won't stop going. He's not going to stop until this is done.

He halts suddenly when Bran's talons grip his hair.

"What is it?" He asks his cousin/raven, expecting to get a response other than the *Caw!* that Bran gives. Jon reaches back and pulls Longclaw from the sheath on his back. "Is he near?"

One peck on Jon's head.

It hardly hurts and Jon vaguely wonders if Bran had purposely given Tormund harder pecks on his head or if Tormund had just been overdramatic about the whole thing.

"Where? Ahead?"

One peck.

Jon exhales a deep breath and his thickly-gloved hands curl around the sword's handle. This is it and the knots of fear have returned to his stomach. He must keep going. He must end this one way or another, but he's so scared. What if he doesn't make it? What if he's just a short time from dying? Again?

If he is to fall, he will be seeing his father, yes, and for having no memory of the man, Jon has always missed him and has taken comfort in the fact that one day, Jon would be seeing Brandon Stark again. But that can't be today. Jon's not ready. He needs to see Sansa again. He *needs* to. He can't leave her yet.

"Get me there, Bran," Jon tells his cousin in a voice that's too soft for the howling wind, but Bran hears him and his talons tighten just enough to let Jon know that he has. He looks over his shoulder to those following him. "They're ahead! We're close!" He shouts to them over the wind.

Caw! Bran suddenly screeches and this time, his talons dig too deep and Jon winces.

But he barely focuses on the pain and instead, his eyes desperately search ahead, trying to see *something* in all of the white. He holds Longclaw tighter and wishes they had some of that fire that the Wall has.

"Jon!" Meera suddenly shouts. "I see them!"

All of the breath leaves Jon's lungs in a great whoosh and he hurries through the snow as fast as he can to get to Meera's side – who has gotten a little ahead of Jon. She's standing on a mound of snow and Jon climbs up to join her. He looks where her eyes are directed and he is unable to inhale more breath to fill his lungs. They're coming. It takes a moment for his eyes to adjust, but the Night King and his Generals... they're walking – striding – through the snow as if it isn't past their ankles and it's no difficulty to them.

The Night King looks straight ahead then and his eyes lock with Jon's. The snow picks up in response and Jon can't move; as if the Night King has frozen him to this very spot. Maybe he has.

But Jon can still move his fingers and he tightens them around the sword's handle.

One of the Generals steps forward, a long spear in his hand, and Meera is the one to move; the others still behind them, catching up as quickly as they can.

"Meera," Jon says her name as they watch the General expertly spin his spear between his hands.

The young woman looks back to him. Jon suddenly doesn't know what to say. Telling her to "be careful" sounds stupid even in his mind, but then Meera gives him the barest smile – as if she knows exactly the stupid thought he's thinking.

She has her own sword and just as she goes to meet the General halfway, Edd is at Jon's side.

"See you on the other side, Snow," Edd says.

"Don't say that," Jon frowns, but Edd is already gone, following after Meera and then the others are rushing past him. The North King has stopped the wind and snow just as Meera's sword and the General's spear clash together, the sound of metal against metal echoing for miles around them.

The others join in the fight against the other Generals, but Jon is hardly looking at them, he admits. He and the Night King stare at one another and nothing else. Bran takes off from Jon's head to fly low around the fighting. The Night King looks away from Jon for only a moment to look at the raven and Jon holds his breath, wondering if he *knows* that this is Bran. But then he looks to Jon again and it almost seems as if he's smiling as he pulls out his own spear.

Jon thinks the Night King has been waiting for this fight as long as he has.

He clenches his jaw and brings his sword up.

The time is here. Either he will be seeing his father or Sansa after tonight.

...

Sansa stands on the balcony of her room, the fur thick and heavy around her and yet, she still shivers.

The sky to the North is such a dark grey, it's almost black. The Wall is thousands of leagues away from Ramsgate and yet, she can see the sky and the clouds from here. Her stomach is knotted so tightly, she feels sick and she's so scared, tears are stinging her eyes.

She's Queen and she can't be scared. She must be strong for all of her people and yet... she's a wife whose husband is fighting under those clouds; a sister whose brother and sister are under those clouds; Brienne and Pod and her friends are under those clouds, all fighting the dead to keep the rest of them safe; willing to *die* to keep the rest of Westeros safe.

And Sansa hates the thought she has next, but she can't help it. Most of the people in Westeros don't even deserve the brave men and women of the North fighting for them. None of them have any idea how close they all are to death and even if they do know, would any of them care?

It's a horrible thought, Sansa knows, but she can't shake it from her mind. She saw the common people of King's Landing first hand. They're not that much different from the common people of the North; just people working through each day, doing what they can do to take care of themselves and their families. They deserve saving, too. They have no say in who sits on that Iron Throne or who kills who over it. They are just mere pawns, always caught in the crossfire. They are innocents.

Sansa *knows* all of this. Sansa reminds herself of this because clearly, she has forgotten it.

Yet... she can't help, but think... even if the people South of the Neck know of the dead and the North fighting against them... how many of them would still think that it isn't their problem? *The North will take care of it. It's no worry of ours.*

Just thinking of it now and looking at those dark clouds, bringing a snowstorm with it, Sansa clenches her jaw to keep it from trembling. It should be everyone's worry. All of Westeros can be lost if the North falls and then what will anyone do? Will that Dragon Queen fly in to save Westeros if it is being marched over by the dead? What is the point of an Iron Throne to the Kingdoms if everyone in those Kingdoms are dead?

If everyone survives, they will all return to Winterfell, safe, and they will all stay there...

And have Cersei and a Targaryen to deal with.

No. The time to think of that will come later and *with Jon*, they will think of what to do together. Sansa has promised him that if he falls, she will go to Essos and she means to fulfill that promise. She never thought she would ever leave the North again, but if her husband – her husband who she *loves* – is to die, she already knows she won't be able to bear to live here any longer. Let Cersei and the Targaryen rip each other apart for the throne. If Jon dies, Sansa won't care about anything anymore.

She hears a knock on the chamber door behind her, back in the room, and she knows it's Lord Royce and either Meg or Aggie with the tea. Perhaps it's both girls today. Meg had clearly let Aggie know about the shared lemon cake and now, the girls seem to take turns to serve the tea and see what sweet it is that day.

Sansa certainly doesn't mind. She has told Lady Manderly to stop using the sugar just to make her sweets to have with her tea, but Lady Manderly likes to remind her that "You're the Queen, Your Grace" – as if that's the only explanation needed. Sansa is more than happy to share sweets with both girls.

But, honestly, she is not ready for tea or company. She wants to remain on this balcony, shivering, and watching the black clouds thicken so far in the distance to the North.

What if Jon can sense her, even with all of the distance between them, watching? She won't leave him.

She closes her eyes. "Jon," she whispers and lets the wind carry her voice away.

...

He's losing. They're all losing. All around him, he can hear them still fighting, but they're losing. The Night King and his Generals are just too strong and whereas Jon and his group can't, the Night King and his can fight forever without getting tired. Jon knows he is strong and is a good swordsman, but he's losing. He's going to die.

Caw!

Bran's still circling them; sometimes getting so close to the Night King, it looks like he will claw him out, but he always pulls back before the Night King can reach a hand out and touch him. Bran is circling, circling and waiting for something, but Jon can't get distracted enough to wonder what.

It would be so easy, Jon knows. His arms are on fire, holding Longclaw, and since he and the Night King began, he's been on the defensive. He can't get himself on the offensive and fight back. All he can do is ward off every blow of the spear. It would be so easy to fall to his knees right now, give up and die.

... *"Jon"* ...

The wind dances around him and with it, Jon swears he hears a voice. His wife's voice. Sansa... and she's saying his name. Just his name.

Caw!

"Jon!" Arya screams suddenly and Jon looks to his cousin in time to see her shoving her valyrian steel into her General, the dead man dissolving into nothing in front of her; Arya the first to kill hers as everyone is still fighting theirs off as best as they can.

And then Arya is pulling the dagger out and tossing it into the air towards him; all within seconds.

She's too far away though and Jon knows there's no way he can catch it.

Caw!

But then Bran dives in, catching the heavy dagger in his beak in mid-air. He flaps his wings madly, getting used to the weight of the dagger and desperately gaining air, and the Night King has already figured out what is happening. He begins attacking Jon with fury, his spear coming down to Jon at all angles, pushing him back and back and all Jon can do is fight off each attack with Longclaw, knowing he can't get the upper hand.

"Jon!" Arya shouts again and then she's running and sliding through the snow, her body stopping on the ground between Jon and the Night King.

It's a second-long distraction to get the Night King to look at her rather than Jon, but a second is all Jon needs. He shoves Longclaw as hard as he can against the spear and then holds up his hand. Bran flies in and drops the dagger right into his open palm.

"Arya! Now!" Jon shouts and Arya spins around on her butt, kicking her leg against the Night King's stomach, startling him. And when he begins to fall backwards, Jon rushes over him.

Bringing the dagger down, he sinks it right into the Night King's shoulder before thrusting Longclaw forward, shoving it clean right through the Night King's stomach.

The Night King begins to fall back and Jon is still holding onto his sword's handle, falling forward with him. And when the Night King hits the ground, he breaks apart – like glass – and dissolves into nothing so when Jon lands, he lands right into the snow.

...

Thank you for reading and hopefully not hating it! We will get back to Dany/Tyrion and we will see Meg again penning her newest report to Varys and Jon will be making his way back to Sansa! PS - Jon was obsessed with the Night King and I wanted him to be able to be the one to kill him.

Chapter 22

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Do you know what that means, my love?” Catelyn asked as she brushed her daughter’s hair before bed.

“Yes, mother,” Sansa replied politely as always. “It means that when I have my first blood, Jon and I will marry one another.”

“Well, maybe when you’re a *little* older than that,” Catelyn said and made a mental note to herself to speak with Ned. Yes, she wanted Sansa and Jon to marry, but Sansa was still her daughter and thirteen was still far too young in Catelyn’s opinion. There wouldn’t be any harm in waiting until Sansa was sixteen at least.

Catelyn set the brush down and kneeling in front of her daughter, Sansa turning in her chair so they faced one another. Catelyn smiled, covering Sansa’s hands with her own and it made Sansa smile as well.

“I know you love Jon as a cousin, but perhaps, as you grow older, you will love him in a different way.”

“Of course, mother,” Sansa obediently agreed.

Catelyn knew that despite her young age, Sansa knew that she would be betrothed for marriage – whether it be to Jon or another boy. Ned and Catelyn had never kept that a secret from her and Sansa understood. For people of their station, this was the way of things. Even at six, Sansa understood and wouldn’t dream of arguing about it; knowing it wouldn’t change anything even if that was what she hoped for.

“Jon will be a good husband to you,” Catelyn then promised. Of that, she had absolutely no doubt.

Even if – when they were older – there still wasn't love past familial love between them, Jon would still care for her and keep her safe and maybe, hopefully, a deep love would grow to blossom between them as it had been Ned and herself.

"I know, mother," Sansa smiled and Catelyn couldn't tell if her daughter was just saying that because it was what Sansa thought she had to say or if it was what she truly believed, but Catelyn smiled as well and standing once more, she bent down and kissed her daughter on the head.

...

When the raven arrived with the long-awaited letter, though it had only been less than two weeks since they parted, Sansa burst into tears as soon as she read the words.

The dead are defeated once and for all. The Night King has been shattered, never to return. We have lost some, but not many. Return to Winterfell. I will meet you there. With love, Jon

It is a short letter, but it certainly says all that Sansa needs it to. Jon is alive and the dead are truly well and dead. She thinks of Arya and Bran and if they are among the ones lost, but if they were, surely Jon would have put that in the letter as well; so not to completely shock her when they don't come back home.

But instead of letting that thought cloud the rest of the news, Sansa turns and throws her arms around Yohn Royce, who, even though he hasn't read the letter, can obviously deduce what it had said based on his Queen's reaction. Sansa stands in the courtyard in front of all of their people who have come to Ramsgate with her and she reads Jon's letter to them in a clear, loud voice.

The responding cheers are deafening and Sansa laughs and cries, able to feel the noise vibrating her chest.

"Meg," Sansa calls to the girl who is holding onto Aggie's hands, the girls spinning in circles together in celebration – both at the victory and being able to return to Winterfell.

Meg comes running over in an instant. "Your Grace," she curtsies.

Sansa smiles down to her. “Would you mind writing a letter to Varys?”

“Not at all. What shall I tell him?”

“Could you just tell him that the North have defeated the dead? I’m sure his Queen has been most worried about it and I would like them to know that King Jon and our people have taken care of it.”

Sansa knows that the young girl isn’t going to catch the sarcastic bite in her tone, but she hopes Meg innocently slips that into the letter. “*I know the Queen Daenerys has been worried about it...*” Sansa almost lets out the most unladylike snort at the thought. She has obviously never met the woman, but Sansa can just imagine how absolutely *agonized* the Targaryen Queen has been over such a threat.

“Of course, Your Grace,” Meg is eager to agree. “Should I tell him that King Jon is alive or that he didn’t make it?”

The question makes Sansa pause for a moment as she looks down to the girl. She hadn’t even thought of the fact of Jon being alive might either be more useful if kept secret or if it is made known. She looks to Meg. Meg has clearly thought of it though. Varys has trained her to be a little bird and she is a very good one. And for a moment, that gives Sansa a heavy sadness in the bottom of her stomach.

She suddenly finds herself no better than those who surrounded her in King’s Landing.

She thinks of Aggie and the other Keep girls and boys who – though servants with work and responsibilities – still very much act like children when given the opportunity. Meg, though, is Aggie’s age at around seven and already, she’s able to see the various possible angles in a situation and how it might hurt or help.

Has Meg ever had the opportunity to be just a girl? And is Sansa just as guilty as Varys for using her? Sansa doesn’t want to think she’s using her though. Sansa cares for everyone in her lands – from every old man and woman to every babe. And Meg might consider no place to be her home, but she’s in Winterfell now and whether she knows it or not, she should consider that to be her home now.

“It will be something everyone will find out soon enough,” Sansa answers and Meg grins at that. “Meg...” she begins to say and Meg looks to her, waiting. “I... I want to thank you. For everything you do for me.”

“Of course, Your Grace!” Meg exclaims this time. “I’d do anything for you and King Jon!”

Sansa is able to give a small smile at that despite the heaviness still in her stomach. “And we both thank you. But after this letter you send to Varys, I won’t expect you to write any more on my behalf. You may still send your reports to him, but I won’t guide your hand any longer.”

Meg slowly begins to frown at that, clearly not understanding.

“When you’re older, and you are able to make the decision because it’s what *you* want to do, I would be honored to have you in my service,” Sansa continues. Meg’s frown melts into sadness and Sansa bends down in front of her so their eyes are even. “You have done nothing wrong, Meg,” Sansa wants to quickly assure her. “But I know what it’s like being young and being used. I won’t do the same thing to you.”

Meg shakes her head rapidly. “But I want to help you.”

“And you do,” Sansa gives her a soft, warm smile. “But right now, to help me, I want you to play with Aggie and the other girls and boys as much as you possibly can.”

“Did I do something wrong?” Meg asks, nearly in a whisper now, near tears.

“Not at all. I promise you. You have done nothing wrong. And now you must promise me. After you send this last message for me to Varys, you will play.”

Meg looks down to the ground and sounds miserable. “I promise,” she nods.

...

From Ramsgate, they return to Winterfell in another week and after two days, everyone is back in their roles around the lands. Jon and the others haven't returned yet, but their people and the other Lords and Lady Mormont who had gone to the Wall begin coming back in random spurts. Sansa is always out to meet them, ordering food for everyone who rides inside the gates.

"Finally, some good food. The food at Castle Black is abhorrent," Lady Lyanna Mormont grouchyly complains and though Sansa well knows that the little Lady will hate it, Sansa hugs her anyway.

"The King has asked us to stay for a few more days before going back to our homes," Lord Manderly told her. "We've now got a Targaryen to deal with."

"It would seem that way," Sansa says with a nod and a thick lump in her throat.

She begins to cry when she sees both Brienne and Pod and she hugs them both tightly.

"Your Grace," both bow to her.

"Stop," Sansa is firm to tell them and she slips her arm through Brienne's, the tall woman blushing. Sansa smiles to Pod. "You were very missed and I know a few of the girls are going to be happy to see you again."

Pod blushes as well, but he's grinning, too, and Sansa laughs. She looks past the others returning towards the gates, searching for one person in particular.

"He is not far behind, Your Grace," Brienne promises her, able to easily read her mind. "He wanted to stay back at Castle Black a bit longer and make sure the Brothers there were on their feet."

"Of course. And Arya and Bran..."

"Are with him, Your Grace," Brienne says with the smallest smile and Sansa exhales a held breath, about to start crying all over again.

Each day, Sansa goes about her daily routines as Queen, happy to be back in Winterfell and caring for all who are there with her. She is relieved that one threat to the North of them is vanquished, but she knows she's not as happy as she could be; not when there's still more enemies to the South that must be seen to.

She's so tired. She just wants it all to be done and she wants her and Jon to live a quiet life in the North with no one ever coming to bother them or force their politics on them again. Is that too much to ask for?

Apparently.

A week has passed since nearly everyone has returned to Winterfell except for Jon and the small group with him. Sansa does her best to not just stand in the courtyard all day and night and wait for him. She has so many things to see it as always and yet, she doesn't know how much longer she can wait before she mounts her own horse and rides for Castle Black herself.

"Thank you, Cora," Sansa says to the young woman as Cora adds the last of the rose perfume to the water.

"Of course, Your Grace," Cora smiles at her and stands once more. "Do you need anything more?"

Sansa smiles and shakes her head. "I might stay in here for some time. It feels wonderful."

"No one deserves a hot bath more," is Cora's response, gathering the perfume bottles and making sure the Queen has fresh linens to dry herself with when she does rise from the tub. "I will leave you to your thoughts, Your Grace. You will call for me if you need me?"

"I will," Sansa promises and with a curtsy, Cora leaves the chamber, closing the door behind her.

Sansa lets out a deep breath and brings her knees down from her chest, stretching her legs out in the tub. She leans her head back and closes her eyes. Feeling a tongue on her cheek, she smiles and turning her head, she looks to see Ghost there.

“I miss him, too,” she tells the direwolf. “But is he close? Can you feel him?”

Ghost does nothing, but wag his tail. With another lick to her cheek, he then circles to the other side of the tub so he can drop himself down into a heavy heap on the fur rug in front of the roaring fire. Sansa closes her eyes once more and does her best to get her mind to be completely blank. She’s tired of thinking and she just wants to spend this evening with absolutely no thoughts.

She’s so tired of thinking all of the time and it never stops.

She wishes Jon was here. Even with Cersei and a Targaryen still to deal with, having Jon here would make her feel so much stronger than she feels right now.

Sansa feels herself drift off; a combination of the crackling fire, the warm water and the rose perfume lulling her away.

At first, she thinks she’s dreaming. She feels a warmth at her side that has nothing to do with the fire or Ghost returning for more affection. It’s a warmth that she feels to the very tips of her toes. And then, there is the lightest brush of lips across her cheeks.

With a gasp, her eyes snap open and she flies into a sitting position, water splashing around her. Her heart hammers in her chest and for the fastest of seconds, she thinks Ramsay is kneeling next to her bath, startling her awake so he can play another game.

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry,” Jon is quick to say. “I didn’t mean to scare you.”

But Sansa shakes her head rapidly. “You didn’t,” she insists though they both know he did exactly that.

Her heart is still beating, but she looks at her husband – dirty and in need of a good wash and shave – but all she sees is him, being actually here. Tears flood her eyes and she turns in the tub, sitting up on her knees, not even thinking of her own nakedness – and her husband seeing her naked for the first time – as she throws her arms around his neck, clinging to him.

“You’re home,” she weeps against the fur he stills wears on his shoulders. This will have to be washed as well, but all of that will come later. Right now, she’s not letting him go for anything in the world.

Jon’s arms firmly wind around her naked waist and it only makes Sansa want to cry harder because he’s real and his touch is real and *he’s home*. “I’m home,” Jon then confirms, his voice soft against her skin.

Sansa pulls her head back so that she may look to his face again. He has a cut on his cheek that wasn’t there the last time she saw him, but it is stitched neatly – she wonders who did it for him – and healing, the bruise around it all, but faded away. Sansa lifts a thumb and lightly brushes it along the small length of it, Jon shivering in response to her touch.

“Handsome,” she whispers with a smile and Jon snorts in amusement at that, making her smile grow.

Jon then exhales a heavy breath and she notices the way his eyes slip downwards to her naked breasts. Sansa feels goosebumps sweep across her skin at his eyes that suddenly seem black to her. He lifts them to look at her and for a passing minute, neither speak. Sansa feels an ache between her thighs she has only ever experienced a few times in her life – every time being with Jon, but it’s an ache that she has never before explored.

She can’t help, but wonder if it will be explored very soon. Is that selfish of her? Jon must be exhausted.

He lifts his own hand then, brushing a wet lock of hair behind her ear. “I am never leaving you again,” Jon then vows to her in a quiet voice – but no less strong in his conviction – and Sansa leans in and presses her lips firmly to his at his words.

She pulls away and laughs softly when Jon tries to chase after her lips. “You need a bath, Your Grace.”

Jon laughs and it just makes her smile widen. “I don’t doubt it, Your Grace.”

“Would you...” Sansa glances down to her naked body’s front pressed to his clothed one before looking back into his still-black eyes. Her heart is beating rapidly and it has nothing to do with the fright from just a few moments ago. “Would you like to join me in mine?” She is quite proud for getting that out in one go.

She swears that not even a moment’s breath passes before Jon leans in this time and kisses her fiercely at her words.

...



Meg inspiration



Aggie

inspiration

Chapter End Notes

A couple of changes - we will see Dany, Tyrion and Varys in the next chapter. Good luck, Dany! THANK YOU as always!

Chapter 23

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Jon,” Sansa moans right into his ear and Jon knows his name has never sounded better. He works his fingers between her thighs and Sansa’s arms are tight around his shoulders, holding onto him.

She’s soaked – absolutely – and the way she is moaning and panting, her hips rocking against his hand beneath the water, he knows that her body is prepared, but he still has to make sure that her mind is. He’s as hard as iron and she can feel it, but if she tells him right now that she’s not ready for anything more than this naked bath together with kisses and his fingers, then that is all they will do.

“Jon,” she moans again and she begins pressing kisses to the side of his face; his jaw; his throat. “I’m ready,” she then tells him, her hips rocking harder against his hand.

“Are you certain?” He has to ask. He has to be certain himself.

“Jon,” Sansa says his name almost in a whine. “I’m certain.” She pulls her head back so she could look to his face. Her face is flushed, her pupils are blown and she is breathless. She is the most beautiful thing Jon has ever seen. “Unless... you must be exhausted.”

Reading the way her thoughts are turning, Jon lifts a hand to her cheek and pulls her face to his so he can capture her lips and kiss her until that thought is gone from her mind. “I will never be too exhausted for you,” he tells her and watches her pretty blush spread.

He is leaning back against the tub and Sansa is sitting astride him. He has not told her, but he thinks this will be the best way for their first time together. This will put her in absolute control. She will decide when they start, the speed and how she wants to continue. He does not know all of what his wife has been through – her silence tells him more than enough – but he knows that she needs to be in control of this.

“If you are certain, I just need to tie my hair back,” Jon says, remembering what she had told him.

And Sansa smiles because he has remembered.

They had taken his hair down so they could wash it and now, Sansa leans over the tub to pick up the leather strip from the floor. As she does, Jon splays a hand across her back, pressing kisses to her neck and chest. He closes his lips around one of her nipples and sucks gently, Sansa immediately moaning out at that. She presses her hips down and Jon moans without moving his mouth from her breasts with the pressure she puts against his cock.

“Jon. Jon,” she pants. She pulls herself back so he has to abandon her nipples for the moment and with shaky fingers, Sansa is able to tie his hair back from his face. As soon as she’s done, her mouth practically falls back against his, her hands on his face.

“If you are ready for me, you take me,” Jon tells her once their mouths part, both panting harshly.

“Take you?” Sansa echoes, not fully understanding.

Despite everything, Sansa thinks herself to be ignorant of what happens between a husband and wife; though her mother and septa had educated her when she was younger (before Joffrey and when it was thought she and Jon would marry). But there is plenty they never told her about and Jon knows that she certainly had never learned anything in her time with Ramsay and if she actually did, those are things Jon wants to erase from her mind.

Jon wants to teach her everything. He wants to show her how wonderful this can be – and *will* be – when the couple love one another as deeply as Jon loves her.

“Do you feel me?” He asks, his eyes looking into hers.

Slowly, Sansa nods her head. It would be impossible for her to not feel his hard cock right now. Jon can’t remember ever being this hard before (not even with Ygritte, but he is not going to be thinking of anything except Sansa. Sansa is the only thing he wants to be thinking of right now and forever).

“Take me in your hand and guide me inside.”

Sansa instantly shakes her head. “I can’t do that, Jon. I don’t...” she looks down between their bodies, beneath the water. She then takes a deep breath and slowly, she lowers her hand.

Jon hisses through his teeth when Sansa’s fingers slowly wrap around his length. He’s not surprised when Sansa completely misunderstands his reaction and her hand is away within an instant. Jon shakes his head and taking her hand, he guides it back to his cock. Sansa stares at him as her fingers, again, wrap around his length. He groans this time, but Sansa has quickly learned that this is a desired reaction.

She shifts up onto her knees, hovering above him and with her other hand on his shoulder, Sansa keeps her eyes on his as she begins to lower herself. She lets out a sharp gasp as he begins to enter her, parting her open as she sinks down – so slowly – and Jon grasps her waist, his fingers digging into her skin.

He had felt her with his fingers and he wasn’t surprised to find her so tight and wet. It had been heaven around his fingers and now, around his cock, Jon’s head drops back with a loud groan. Sansa sinks completely down until her bottom touches his thighs and she exhales a shaky breath. Her hand slips from his shoulder and both hands rest on his chest.

Finally able to open his eyes, able to reign in the urge to just cum deep inside of her in that second, Jon brings his head forward and he looks to Sansa. Her eyes are closed and she is taking deep breaths. He moves his hands under the water to rest on her thighs, rubbing them.

“Are you alright?” He asks. It feels incredible to him, but that doesn’t matter. He wants it to feel absolutely unbelievable for her.

Sansa nods her head, her eyes still closed and it seems like she is focusing on keeping her breathing steady. “You’re big,” she whispers.

Jon tells himself not to, but his lips crack into the smallest smile at her comment. He wipes it away though before Sansa opens her eyes to look to him.

“Take your time,” he tells her though silently, he’s dying and he needs her to move. He’ll never say that out loud to her of course. This is all about Sansa tonight.

“Help me,” she tells him then, almost embarrassed, and Jon squeezes her thighs. He then moves her hands to her hips and Sansa takes a deep breath.

He groans the instant she begins to move on top of him and Sansa giggles. He grins when she does and he can see her eyes dancing in the firelight as she keeps them set on him. It takes her a minute to get the hang of being on top; being in charge, but she soon knows exactly what she wants. She moves against Jon as if she has had dreams of doing this; and maybe she has. One day, Jon might be brave enough to ask her, but now is not the time.

Now, his wife is riding him, moaning out as her hands rub up and down his chest with her movements.

“Jon,” she moans, her head falling back and her back arching.

Jon leans forward to capture one of her nipples again. He has quickly found that he is in love with his wife’s breasts. Show him a better pair in all of Westeros and he already knows there isn’t.

Sansa seems to love the attention he gives them with the way she tightens around him and moans out. Jon admits he wants her to moan louder. He wants everyone to know, without a doubt, that their King and Queen have finally consummated their marriage.

(A part of him wishes that Lannister was here, still, so he could hear and report back to the Targaryen.)

Jon drops his hand down back beneath the water and his thumb finds her clit. With his lips still around her nipple, he smiles when Sansa cries out his name, it echoing around them.

“I love you,” Sansa pants, speeding up.

Jon pulls his head back so he can look to her face. "I love you," he tells her though she possibly is not able to hear him over her moans from his thumb still running circles around her clit. "I promised you that when I came back, I would put a babe in you."

"Yes, Jon," she moans. "Please, please. Give me a babe. I want *your* babe."

Jon keeps working her clit while his other hand goes to grip her hip, helping her speed up.

This is why he fought the Night King and this is why he won; so he could come home and love Sansa and make love to Sansa and have a baby with Sansa. The Night King is dead as is his army and right now, there's nothing else. There's no Targaryen in the world and Cersei isn't in the South, plotting and scheming and hating Sansa. Right now, there's only this.

A bathing tub and Sansa.

As far as Jon is concerned, there will only ever be this.

...

Daenerys frowns at her two advisors and lets them stand there without saying a word. Varys knows that she wants them to squirm and from the corner of his eye, it seems like Tyrion is doing just that. Their Queen sits on her throne with Grey Worm standing on one side and Missandei on the other.

"And your bird is to be trusted?" Daenerys finally speaks, her eyes cutting to Varys.

Varys nods. "Yes, Your Grace. She is one of my best."

Daenerys then cuts her eyes to Tyrion. "You told me of their plan. You told me that there was no way they would be able to succeed."

"Forgive me, Your Grace," Tyrion takes a step forward. "I could not imagine them winning. They had a small group of them, *on foot*, beyond the Wall. How could that have possibly worked?"

“I believe your thoughts, My Lord, were they would not be able to defeat this massive army of the dead without my dragons and their fire,” Daenerys reminds him, standing up. “And not only have they defeated them without seeking my aid, but now, my two advisors have pressed me into a corner that I cannot see a way out of. So, please, enlighten me. How do you expect me to now get the North on my side when I have nothing I can possibly offer them?”

Tyrion and Varys are silent for a moment that deafens in the cavernous room.

Daenerys does not get her answer immediately and she sighs impatiently.

“Grey Worm,” she suddenly turns towards her soldier. “What do you suggest?”

“Your Grace,” Tyrion takes another step forward, but stops when Daenerys cuts a look to him.

“Grey Worm, how should I go about getting King Jon of the North as our ally?” Daenerys asks him.

Grey Worm is silent, staring ahead. It looks like he isn’t going to say anything, but Varys finds himself already bracing himself. Grey Worm is a soldier and the life of a soldier and fighting is all he knows. It would seem that the Queen is finished with handling things with a delicate hand. Patience has never been her strength despite both he and Tyrion trying to get her to work on it and it would seem that whatever fine string of patience the Queen had had is now gone.

“If I were you, Your Grace, I would fly Drogon to the North and meet this King face to face,” Grey Worm speaks and Varys nearly closes his eyes.

Somehow, he has known that that would be what the soldier would suggest.

“Your Grace, you cannot-” Tyrion begins to argue, but is cut silent with another look from her.

“Continue,” she urges Grey Worm, not even hiding her smile at how this idea pleases her.

Grey Worm remains standing straight and staring ahead.

“This King Jon sounds like a formidable fighter. He defeated the dead. It also sounds like he is the kind of man who would appreciate bravery. From what your advisors have already said, your father had a hand in his father’s death and this King might not like you because of it.”

That’s an interesting way to put it, Varys thinks silently to himself.

“But if you go to the North to meet him and let him know that you are brave enough to face him, perhaps he will finally see what kind of Queen you are,” Grey Worm finishes.

The room falls silent again and Varys and Tyrion look to Daenerys, both nearly holding their breath.

No, no, no, Varys wants to say, but he stays silent and keeps his face impassive.

As soon as he leaves here, he must write a letter to Meg. He needs her next to King Jon immediately. He needs to learn everything he can about this man that he possibly can and as quickly as possible.

Daenerys spins back to them both and they know her answer already.

“Perfect,” she smiles. “I will do that.”

Tyrion and Varys glance to one another and then back to their Queen. They bow to her and say nothing. If they did, she wouldn’t listen to them anyway. Their Queen has made her decision and nothing they could say to her would change her mind. They just have to go along with it; and think of how they can avoid King Jon Stark murdering her the instant he sees her landing in the North with her dragon.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much as always! We will see life in Winterfell for several people post the Long Night in the next chapter.

Chapter 24

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“I miss you,” Jon whispers to his father once he has replaced Brandon Stark’s candle for a fresh one.

Some days, he has no idea what he’s doing; feeling like he’s still a child pretending at being a grownup. There are so many people looking at him to make the right decision and do the right thing and if he doesn’t, he’s condemning them all to suffer.

Defeating the Night King and his dead army had been the biggest priority; the *only* priority. But now, back home in Winterfell with his family and friends and most importantly, his wife, Jon knows that the time for peace has not yet arrived. And as much as he would just like to ignore everything happening outside of the North, he knows that that’s not possible. There are two women who are prepared to kill millions for that damn Iron Throne and unfortunately, neither would be willing to leave the North out of it.

“I wish you were here,” Jon continues speaking to his father. *And Aunt Catelyn and Uncle Ned. Robb and Rickon, Uncle Benjen...* the list goes on and on, but he, above all, wishes his father was here to help him. Somehow, Jon knows that everything would be better if he still had his father. “And I know you’re always with me, but please, don’t leave me right now because I don’t know what I’m doing.”

His father’s statue is silent – of course- and the candlelight flickers shadows across the stone face.

Caw!

Jon turns his head as a familiar raven flies into the Stark crypts and comes to land on Jon’s shoulder. Jon nearly tells his cousin that he doesn’t have to be a bird to come down here, but he stops himself before he can, feeling instantly stupid. If Bran couldn’t fly down here, he would have to be carried down the stairs.

“I miss him,” Jon says to Bran in a whisper as if it’s some grand secret.

Caw! Bran responds quietly and Jon’s lips move upwards in the slightest smile. They stand there for another moment, looking to Brandon’s statue, before Jon looks to the raven on his shoulder.

“Shall we go see your father?” He asks.

Caw!

He smiles as Bran flies from his shoulder and takes off towards where Ned Stark’s statue is; and his smile only grows when he comes to see Bran perched on Uncle Ned’s head.

Jon lights his uncle’s candle and Bran leans down, pecking at the stone in what, Jon assumes, is a loving way. Jon looks to his uncle’s face. Sansa had been the one to commission the statues of him, Aunt Catelyn, Robb and Rickon and he thinks she had done an amazing job considering it had all been from memory. Looking to his uncle’s statue, his face is as Jon remembers him.

“I miss him, too,” Jon tells Bran. Bran pecks his father’s head again. “He’d be real proud of you, Bran.”

Caw!

Jon is going to think that that is Bran’s way of telling him that Uncle Ned would be proud of him as well.

They stay down in the crypts for a bit longer before Jon suggests they leave. He knows Bran can stay waged in the raven for quite some time, but he knows his cousin feels a bit weak afterwards and Jon doesn’t want him to stay in the raven for longer than necessary.

Bran on his shoulder, Jon climbs up the stairs and smiles slightly when he sees Meg waiting for him.

“If you know she’s working for Varys, why are we keeping her close?” Jon wondered when Sansa had told him about what she and Yohn Royce had found out.

“Because I look at her and I see me,” Sansa confessed. “She was facing few options and Varys presented the best one. She’s just trying to make it in this world.”

Jon didn’t know what to say to that so he simply put his hands on her cheeks and kissed her. “I will keep her close. Should I hide anything from her?”

Sansa paused at the question before shaking her head. “That is up to you, but I think Meg is beginning to feel torn between us and Varys. I don’t want her to be conflicted, but I think she wants to show loyalty to us.”

Jon looks to the young girl now and she curtsies when she meets his eyes.

“Your Grace,” she greets him and then watches as Bran caws once more before flying off from Jon’s shoulder. “Queen Sansa said I can begin to be in your service, Your Grace.”

Jon nods. “My wife has told me the same. I have to go to a meeting with my small council and you are going to be coming with me.”

“Yes, Your Grace,” Meg nods and when Jon begins walking, he notes that Meg follows, but she stays a few steps behind him.

“Meg,” he says her name and she comes hurrying at his side.

“Yes, Your Grace?”

“You’re not a dog. You walk at my side,” Jon tells her. “And my direwolf walks ahead of me.”

He looks down to her from the corner of his eye and he can see her looking down to the ground, smiling to herself, her fingers twisting in the skirt of her dress.

“Yes, Your Grace.”

Inside, Jon leads them to his chancery where Davos, Edd, Arya and Sam are waiting for him, all four getting to their feet when Jon, with Meg, enters, the girl closing the door behind them.

“Sit,” Jon tells them, barely containing an eye roll as he moves to his chair. “How do you like Winterfell?” He asks Edd once they are all sitting again.

“Well, it’s no Castle Black.”

Jon pauses for a moment. “I’m taking that as a compliment,” he then decides and Edd smirks. He then looks to Sam. “You, Gilly and Little Sam settling in?”

“Yes, Your Grace,” Sam nods eagerly with a smile. “It’s already feeling like home.”

“Good,” Jon smiles, too.

Meg is standing at his side, just right behind his chair, and he’s fine with her there – even with what they are about to discuss. He trusts his wife. He trusts no one more than he trusts his wife. And if she wants Meg to be near him because Varys wants to “know” him, then Jon is going to listen and trust Sansa on this. He doesn’t know Meg well – at all – but she seems like a nice little girl; older in a way than her actual age, but he can’t imagine what kind of life this child has already had. If she’s tangled up with Varys, who is serving the Targaryen, Jon knows that Sansa’s right and Meg is simply trying to survive.

“I was going to have Sansa join us, but she thought I should talk with you on my own,” Jon says, looking to the other four at the table. “You are my closest advisors and I look to you for help and advice. As you already know, or are about to know, Tyrion Lannister came to Winterfell, the subject of one Daenerys Targaryen,” he says and then is quiet for a moment.

Davos and Arya, obviously, already know this, but Sam and Edd are hearing this for the first time and they have been friends long enough with Jon – and know their Westeros history – to know all

about House Targaryen and how Jon, in particular, would feel about this. They exchange glances before looking to Jon, all staying quiet and waiting for him to continue.

Jon takes a deep breath. “She is wanting me to come to Dragonstone where she is so I can bend the knee to her.”

“And we’ll kill her before that happens,” Arya interjects.

Jon glances from the corner of his eye towards Meg, but she’s behind him, and he can’t see her. He then looks back towards the four others.

“I am not sure what to do. I know what I *want* to do and that is to tell this bitch to go to Hell with the rest of her House...” he pauses another moment. “But Lannister has informed me that this Targaryen has three dragons at her disposal.”

“Bullshit,” Edd grunts.

“It would be a very easy lie to disprove,” Jon shakes his head. “I don’t think the man is lying about this.”

“So what are we going to do?” Davos asks. “Are you thinking she will use the dragons against us if you don’t go and meet her?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what I’m thinking,” Jon answers. “She wants that Iron Throne and she wants to get rid of Cersei. She is going to need allies to do that and unfortunately for us, she wants us on our side.”

“What about Cersei?” Sam speaks up. Jon looks to him, waiting for him to continue. “Are we not considering an alliance with Cersei? I’m sure she is aware of a Targaryen with dragons and I’m sure she is looking for allies as well.”

Jon knows that that is right, but he’s already shaking his head. “I can’t work with that House either. The Lannisters have given this family as much pain as the Targaryens.”

“So...” Davos sighs. “We’re fucked.”

“That’s usually my line,” Edd frowns.

Jon actually smiles for a moment, but it fades as he thinks it through. It seems like they really are. Either aligning with House Targaryen or House Lannister is the last thing he ever wants to do. How could he possibly choose a side when he hates both optional sides with the same amount of loathing in his veins?

“Arya?” He looks to his cousin. “What do you think? Other than killing them both,” he quickly adds.

Arya smiles wryly at that for that had been her exact thought. “Cersei doesn’t have dragons. I feel like we can worry about Cersei after we deal with the Targaryen.”

“I agree,” Jon nods. “I need to speak with Sansa, but... a woman with three dragons – a *Targaryen* with three dragons – is not a woman I’m going to trust. She will make me bend the knee and give her the North and I’d rather fall on my own sword before I do anything like that. But... I feel like I need to meet her and see what kind of woman she is for myself.”

“What do they say about Targaryens?” Sam asks. “When a Targaryen is born, the Gods flip a coin.”

“She’s mad. I don’t have to meet her to know that. She is her father’s daughter,” Jon decides. “But I need to see her for myself to see if she’s crazy enough to use her dragons as the weapons they are or if she just threatens to use them.”

“You’re going to Dragonstone?” Arya asks with a frown. “Sansa won’t like that. *None* of us will.”

“I know,” Jon sighs. “But Davos and Edd are coming with me.”

“I am?” Edd gives Jon a look as if he’s crazy.

“I’m not?” Arya’s frown deepens.

“Sansa has Brienne and Pod, but if I leave Winterfell and Cersei hears that I’m not with Sansa, I worry that she will do her best to get to her. I need you to stay at your sister’s side and keep her safe.”

Arya thinks that over for a moment, but then nods. “Of course,” she agrees. “Don’t you dare kill Lannister. You promised that he was mine.”

“I will do my best to keep my promise to you.” Jon’s lips twitch at her and she smiles before he looks to Edd. “And I need you with me. You’ve been with me through so much already. I need you with me when I meet the daughter of my father’s killer. And I know you and Davos will keep me from killing her on sight.”

...

Jon watches Sansa as she sews, working on a new dress for herself; now that the dead are defeated and preparations for the cold are all seen to, she has the time again. He sits in the chair next to hers, a cup of wine resting against his temple as his eyes follow her needle and thread and he feels the sense of calm washing over him he always feels when watching his wife sew.

“Brienne seemed in a foul mood this evening,” Jon notes.

Sansa laughs at that and despite the other thoughts on his mind, the sound makes him smile.

“That’s one way to put it,” Sansa agrees. She looks to her husband with a smile. “It would seem that Tormund has taken to follow her around everywhere she goes.”

Jon’s smile cracks into a grin.

He was surprised when Tormund came back to Winterfell with the rest of them instead of staying North, but he was certainly more than welcome.

“We’re not finished yet with things from what I gather,” Tormund had told him.

Sansa is still smiling as she looks down to her sewing and Jon resumes just watching her. He needs to speak with her about his decision to meet Daenerys Targaryen and to go to Dragonstone with Edd and Davos. He had just promised her that he wouldn’t be leaving her again and yet, he finds that he has to do just that. It’s the very last thing he wants to do, but he can’t see another way. If he doesn’t go to Dragonstone and meet this woman, who’s to say that this woman wouldn’t come here, to Winterfell, with her dragons to meet him?

Of course, if she did that, Jon and every other Northman would view it as a direct attack and would treat it as such, not stopping until she and the dragon she rode in on were both dead.

Now that he’s thinking of it, maybe he should have Meg write to Varys and casually encourage this Daenerys Targaryen to come to the North. Maybe if she got it in her head that coming to the North was the best thing to do, who could blame Jon for murdering her in response to thinking he and his people were being attacked?

There is so much to tell Sansa and get her thoughts on it all, but right now, he just wants to be with her and leave the rest of the world outside their door for a few hours. He will talk with her, of course, just not now.

“I love you,” he says.

Sansa smiles and lifts her head again to meet his eyes. “I love you, too. And once I finish this embroidery I’m working on, will you put a babe in me tonight?”

Jon certainly loves that Sansa has gotten comfortable enough with him to say such things to him. And Gods, Jon wants that, too. He wants to get her with child. He wants to see her body change and grow with their babe. He wants a son with Sansa they can name after his father and he wants a daughter with Sansa they can name after her mother. He wants *everything* with Sansa.

He’ll kill anyone and everyone if they get in the way of that.

“As my Queen commands,” he says with a smile as Sansa smiles, too, at him and blushes in reply.

...

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so, so much! I have gotten a little behind with comments and I'm so sorry for that, but please know that I read and love every comment that you take the time to leave me.

(We still have an Aunt Catelyn/Jon flashback and a Jon/Sansa reunion at Castle Black flashback coming up in later chapters.)

Chapter 25

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Jon!” Sansa cries out, her voice carrying loudly out around them.

It’s embarrassing and Jon is grateful that Sansa doesn’t know that it is, but he can’t believe he can’t last longer with her. He feels Sansa grip him and soak him as she cums, tightening and fluttering around him, and he tells himself to last longer. He wants to make this so good for Sansa and lasting longer would be preferable. She doesn’t know what a truly good coupling is supposed to feel like – he’s still teaching her – and him lasting longer than his wife is preferred in terms of it being good for both of them.

But when Sansa finds her end, Jon can only manage half a dozen more strokes before he’s gripping her hips tightly, holding their bodies tight together and emptying his release deep inside of her, groaning out.

“Fuck,” he breathes, his eyes closed as he feels himself pulse inside of her.

He doesn’t pull out right away; wanting to make sure that every drop he has is in Sansa now. He opens his eyes and looks down to his wife laying before him. Her red hair is spread out and the candlelight flickers across her naked, sweat-dotted body. Jon is kneeling up between her thighs and he rubs his hands back and over her knees, not able to take his eyes from her.

When Uncle Ned told him of his and Sansa’s betrothal, he hadn’t had much of a reaction. He was ten and Sansa had been six and to a ten-year-old, a girl of six was still a baby. How could he feel anything about being told he was going to be marrying a baby someday? It was only when he was around thirteen or fourteen that the idea didn’t sound *completely* horrible to him. And as Sansa began blossoming from a child, she was growing into a true beauty and he always found his cousin to be sweet and kind and if his aunt and uncle thought they would be a good match, why wouldn’t they be?

Sansa didn’t seem completely repulsed by the idea of marrying him either and when he kissed her in the stables when he was fourteen and she was ten – just to see what it would be like – he could

still remember how she had smiled shyly and blushed prettily and Jon had been left thinking that being married to her wouldn't be the worst thing in the world. It might actually be nice.

But then, things had happened and different choices took their whole family on different paths.

None of that mattered now though. Now, he and Sansa are married and they are in Winterfell and they are trying to make a baby. Neither what was supposed to happen and what didn't happen matter anymore.

Finally, slowly, Jon begins pulling himself back, looking down, making sure that most of his release stays inside of her. He bends down and kisses one of her raised knees and Sansa smiles at that. He then leans down and kisses her stomach.

"I have to do something, but you can't laugh at me," Sansa says.

"I would never laugh at you," Jon lifts his head to look at her. "What do you have to do?"

"I spoke with Cora's mother. She has nine children and she said doing this could help."

She begins to sit up and Jon moves aside for whatever she needs to do. Sansa turns herself around so her feet are towards the headboard of the bed and taking one of the pillows, she slips it beneath her bottom. Jon can't help, but smile as he watches her. She lays down, her hips elevated by the pillow, and she rests her feet on the headboard. Turning her head, seeing him smile, she smiles, too.

"It might help," she tells him, her eyes sparkling.

Jon leans down and kisses her damp forehead. "I'd listen to a mother of nine, too."

Sansa smiles and Jon sits next to her with his back against the headboard. She has her hand on the furs at her side and Jon covers it with his own. He lifts it and they press their palms together, Jon sliding his fingers in between hers.

“I must speak with you about something,” Jon says and the quiet is so calm and relaxed around them, both still recovering from their coupling, he doesn’t want to ruin that, but perhaps now is the best time to bring this matter up.

Sansa turns her head to look at him, silently waiting for him to continue.

“With Edd and Davos, I’ve decided to travel to Dragonstone to meet this Daenerys Targaryen.”

He says the words and then the room is absolutely silent. He watches Sansa as her mind registers his words and slowly, her hand falls from his and her eyes move back to the ceiling. Jon doesn’t say anything further and waits for Sansa to speak of the thoughts on her mind.

“Why?” Sansa asks in a whisper after an incredibly long minute.

“I need to see her face-to-face. I know she is mad. She is a Targaryen. But I need to know that, even with her dragons, how big of a threat she is.”

Sansa is quiet again, taking the time to think that over. Jon sits and watches her as she continues looking up to the ceiling.

This makes sense... doesn’t it? When Tyrion had suggested Sansa go to Dragonstone to be safe from the dead, Jon had seen through that plan within seconds. Sansa would be a prisoner and Jon would have to bend the knee to this foreign Queen to get his wife back. If he goes to Dragonstone, wouldn’t the Targaryen try to do the same thing? Force him to bend the knee or else threaten to harm Sansa or burn Winterfell with her dragons? She’s mad. She’ll threaten to do anything and probably will.

“You promised you wouldn’t leave me again,” Sansa finally speaks; her voice barely above a whisper.

Jon shifts himself around and lays down on his side, his arm wrapping around her middle and holding her close to his front. Sansa turns her head to look at him and he sees moisture building in her eyes. He begins to shake his head at the sight.

“I don’t know what else to do,” he admits. “This woman is desperate for allies and it doesn’t seem like she’ll be going anywhere until she gets that Iron Throne. Maybe if I meet her, I’ll be able to see a way to get rid of her.”

Sansa looks into his eyes and slowly, her hand lifts to his cheek, her thumb running through his beard.

“What if you don’t go?” She asks.

“What if I don’t go?”

She nods. “What if you stay and ignore every invitation she or Tyrion send? What if you just don’t go?”

Jon keeps looking at her, trying to figure out what is going through his wife’s head. And his confusion on his face must be clear, because Sansa smiles faintly. She brings her feet down from the headboard and turns so she’s lying on her side as well, facing him.

“What if you ignore her?”

Jon blinks at her. It sounds too easy. It can’t be that easy.

“What if I ignore her?”

“Stop echoing me. What can she do? Hopefully, Tyrion and Varys tell her that if she comes to the North, without a formal invitation, we will see it as an act of aggression and we will have every right to treat it as such. We will have every right to protect ourselves if we feel we are being attacked. If you stay in Winterfell and don’t go, what can she do? She is a foreign invader and can’t make you do anything.”

Jon stares at her, unable to find words.

“It can’t be that simple,” he finally says.

“Why can’t it be?”

“Because nothing is ever *that* simple.”

“You killed the Night King. You don’t need her. *None* of us need her. She can say she’s the rightful heir until she’s blue in the face. That doesn’t make it so. And without the allies on her side, she’s nothing more than an invader who has no power.”

“Tyrion tells me she has the Dothraki and the Unsullied. The greatest Army the world has ever seen apparently,” Jon informs her.

“So she wishes to go from a foreign invader to a foreign conqueror?”

Jon is quiet again.

“If you ignore her, Cersei and Daenerys can deal with one another and leave us out of it.”

“Do you really think those two will just leave the entire North alone without dragging us into their war?”

Sansa doesn’t answer that right away. Instead, she moves a little closer to him and with her hand still on his cheek, her thumb now runs along the line of his jaw.

“We can try,” Sansa replies with a shrug of a shoulder. “Why can’t we try? I’m tired, Jon. I want to stay home with you, Arya, Bran and all of our people. I want *you* to stay home and I want us to have a baby. We’ve been through enough and we’ve earned this. We have fought and we’ve won this, Jon.”

He nods his head before she even finishes because everything she’s saying is what he thinks, too.

He's tired. He's been fighting ever since he left Winterfell those years ago for the Night's Watch and it's never stopped and he's still too young to be this tired. He forgets how young he still technically is after going through everything he has. He wants to stay home with his family and friends and especially his wife. He doesn't want to fight in another war – especially a war he doesn't want any part of the North involved in. They are independent and what happens to that Iron Throne has nothing to do with them.

“Alright,” Jon then says. “We'll ignore the Dragon Queen.”

Sansa smiles and leans in, pressing her lips to his, Jon more than happy to return the kiss.

“And Cersei? Are we ignoring her, too? What if she comes to ask us to help her against Daenerys?”

“We'll ignore her, too,” Sansa replies as if that's the easiest, most obvious answer to give.

Jon finds himself smiling before he pulls her in for another kiss and then slowly, so not to startle her, he begins to roll himself onto his back, pulling her with him so she is on top. Their lips never part.

In the back of his mind, he knows it can't be that easy. He may not know them well, but he knows enough and neither Cersei or Daenerys are women to just let the North be. The North is too important. He and Sansa and all of their people can ignore everything and everyone all they want, but Jon knows it won't work for long. He wishes it would, but it won't.

And Sansa probably knows that, too. Jon doesn't doubt that Sansa knows it. Sansa is the smartest person he knows so he knows that Sansa knows that the plan of just ignoring everything South of them won't work, but right now, if this is what Sansa wants to do, he'll do it, too.

Maybe going to Dragonstone isn't the best idea after all.

...

I have begun in King Jon's service and I have never served a King before, but I find him to be very kind. I'm not sure if all Kings are like him. I don't think so. He has me walk at his side rather than behind him.

He has sent all of the other Lords and Ladies back to their respective lands with their people now that the dead have been defeated. He has said he will call them back if he is in need of them again.

He has a small council. Davos Seaworth. His cousin, Arya. Samwell Tarly, who is also Winterfell's new Maester, and Edd Tollet, the former Commander of the Night's Watch. King Jon ended his watch so the man could come back to Winterfell with him. They have a council meeting every day and King Jon lets me come to each one.

They speak of your Queen Daenerys, trying to decide what to do. The idea of going to Dragonstone has been decided against. She will force him to bend the knee and they all know that. Jon is King in the North and your Queen Daenerys is a foreign Queen, a Queen only because she says she is. That is what they all say about her and it seems like their opinions of her will never change.

Being in King Jon's service is very educational. He is a kind King who has a deep love for his people. He allows me to go anywhere he goes, never telling me to leave when he has discussions with someone, though his meetings with Maester Tarly can sometimes be very boring as Maester Tarly only talks about things he's read about in his dusty books. Sometimes though, the King will go into his and the Queen's chamber and bolt the door and I go occupy myself until they both come out again.

I do not know what they do in there, but whatever it is, it seems to make the other servants happy.

I will continue to keep you informed, but at this moment, it seems like the King and Queen have no desire to meet your Queen.

Varys reads Meg's newest report and a frown begins to form on his face and by the time he has read it through the third time, his entire face is weighed down.

Your Queen, the girl writes more than once. Meg is young, but Meg is not stupid and she may not even realize it, but her words speak a thousand volumes.

Your Queen.

Meg knows exactly what she has written. And though she has never met Queen Daenerys, she has never been the sort of consider Cersei her Queen either. She has never had a family or a home or loyalty to anyone except him. Varys just assumed that with him at Queen Danerys' side, that is the side Meg would be on as well. She, after all, is *his* little bird.

But reading this report now, Varys has a realization that slams into his chest and makes him ache.

He has lost Meg to the King and Queen in the North. She is no longer his little bird. He never thought that Meg would be one who he would lose. She is too good at what she does; too valuable to him. But this report says so much without coming right out and saying it.

Meg has gone to Winterfell and it seems like she has new loyalties to those who live there.

Varys reads through the report. He wonders if either King Jon or Queen Sansa had their hand in helping Meg write this to him.

...

Chapter End Notes

I found myself struggling with this chapter just because I've been doubting my writing lately - as all writers do. It means so much to me that you love this story as much as some of you do. Thank you very much for reading.

Chapter 26

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Daenerys looks out the window with a deep frown creasing her face. That raven is *still* there; even after Missandei had gone out on the balcony to shoo it away. It had flown away momentarily, but now it has returned, perching itself on the stone ledge and just looking through the window at her.

What is it doing? Daenerys almost demands it to tell her before she has to remind her that it's a bird and can't very well answer her. But *what* is it doing? It's not doing anything. It's just sitting there, staring at her, and it's a bird, but his beady black eyes, focused on her, still make Daenerys feel cold all over and she *never* feels cold. She's a dragon and dragons don't feel cold – especially because of annoying little black birds who won't stop staring at her.

Varys has finished giving her his report and she doesn't say anything, still staring at the raven. She has heard every word the man has said and now, she is allowing her mind a moment to decide her words.

So, it would seem that the King in the North *does* love his wife.

Varys' little bird might not know what the King and his wife are doing behind locked doors, but it's glaringly obvious to everyone else.

She's never met or seen the man, but that's slightly disappointing. A marriage between her and the King would have been a solid alliance and ever since they came to Dragonstone – and before then – both Tyrion and Varys have been discussing marriages for her. Jon Stark was one of the first names brought up and Daenerys hadn't been against the idea. As much as she hates it, she knows her marrying will be necessary. It's too important for her to not have as strong a reign as possible.

And though the North might not be as densely a populated area as other Kingdoms of Westeros, it is still as powerful ally as any of them. And what better way to show the other Houses and all of the people that she is *not* her father than from a Targaryen and Stark marrying? Marrying Jon Stark would have been too perfect, but as Varys reads his letter from his little bird, Daenerys frowns.

She turns her head away from the window – and that damned raven still there – to look to Varys. “Well, that’s disappointing,” she voices her thoughts.

Caw!

The raven caws and Daenerys cuts her eyes back to the bird. Why does she feel like the bird is *listening* to this conversation and not only listening, but understanding it?

“Or perhaps...” she looks back to Varys. “It is only the duty of marriage and providing heirs that have them sharing a bed,” she suggests.

Varys and Tyrion say nothing to that. She supposes she doesn’t need them to. Either way, it doesn’t matter. Soon, she will go to the North and King Jon will see and meet her and perhaps things will change.

“Both of you have told me that going to the North myself with or without a formal invitation would be a grave mistake,” she switches topics.

“It would be, Your Grace,” Tyrion nods. “During my visit, I was reminded of what I had forgotten in regards to the North. They do not care for outsiders whatsoever and if they feel threatened, they will attack.”

“They would attack dragons they have no way of destroying?”

“It would not matter to a Northerner, Your Grace,” Tyrion answers. “They are proud, strong, *stubborn* people. They have fought and defeated the dead. They won’t think twice of going against dragons.”

Caw!

The raven crows. Daenerys ignores it this time as she keeps looking to her advisors.

“Your Grace, may I make a suggestion?” Varys speaks.

“If you tell me to be patient one more time, I’ll burn you both,” is her blunt reply and only a small part of her really meant that.

“It is not, Your Grace,” Varys assures her. “I have begun to think that, *for the moment*, we leave the North be. I have received other reports from King’s Landing and Cersei knows that you’re here. She has begun to mobilize her forces and her allies. We need to focus on the South at the moment.”

A slow smile begins to form and creep against Daenerys’ face. Finally. One of her advisors has told her something that she actually wants to hear.

“That little bird of yours in Winterfell? She’s one of your best, correct?” Daenerys asks.

Varys pauses and then gives a single nod. “She is, Your Grace.”

“Send a note to her. I want her to get to King’s Landing and in the Red Keep. I want eyes on Cersei.”

Varys pauses again. “Your Grace, I have many other birds already in the Red Keep. It will take her too long to get from Winterfell to the Red Keep and she has already made great headway in Winterfell with King Jon and Lady Sansa. To pull her from there now...”

Daenerys is quiet, thinking that over. “We’ll come back to that. Let’s go discuss Cersei and her forces in the South.” She turns to Missandei. “Go get Ser Mormont.”

Missandei bows and leaves the room. Daenerys looks to the raven still sitting on the ledge outside, tilting its head one way and then the other, never taking its eyes from her. She frowns at the bird, narrowing her eyes at it. Are *all* birds in Westeros this strange? She should order her dragons to take care of them if they are. Or is she just imagining things?

She turns back to Varys and Tyrion. “Take that map,” she looks to the large map of Westeros spread out on the table. “We’ll go into another room for our discussion.”

Caw!

She spins back towards the window to see the raven flap its wings and finally take off, flying away until the speck of black seems to completely disappear from the sky.

...

Sansa walks at Jon’s side as they make their way up to the battlements. Meg is behind them and behind her is both Brienne and Pod. Jon will, every few seconds, brush his knuckles along hers and each time he does, Sansa feels a tug in her stomach. Such a reaction makes her feel silly – she’s a grown woman and a wife who has laid with her husband several times now – but it still tugs at her stomach and makes her smile shyly.

And looking to him from the corner of her eye, she sees that Jon’s own lips are twitching in a smile.

At the door, Jon steps forward so that he may open it for both Sansa and Meg and Brienne and Pod wait for him to step through so they can follow him through. Up on the battlement, the Northern wind blows against their faces and Sansa turns, making sure that Meg’s cloak is tight around her throat. Meg smiles up at her and Sansa smiles back.

“You’re not too used to a Northern wind yet,” Sansa tells her.

“I’m getting used to it, Your Grace,” Meg informs her eagerly.

They are not alone on the battlements. Sam, Edd, Davos and a few other men are all there and Jon goes to them now to look over their work. Sansa approaches the Scorpion with slightly wide eyes. She’s never seen one before and it’s almost majestic and beautiful in a way in its sheer size.

Jon claps a hand on Sam’s shoulder, both of them smiling.

“I told you it could be done,” Sam tells him.

“I did not mean to doubt you,” Jon shakes his head. “It’s amazing. It truly is.” He walks around the massive piece of weaponry that his men have been working on building and not only does he feel pride at their work, he also feels excitement; excitement at the idea of actually being able to use it.

He doesn’t want a Targaryen and dragons in the North. That’s the last thing he wants. But if this woman is stupid enough to come here, where she is neither wanted nor invited, they will be ready for her and the idea of possibly killing a dragon and its rider from the sky? Jon is almost looking forward to it.

Jon looks to Meg. “In your letter to Varys, you did not mention it?” He asks her.

“I promised you I would not, Your Grace,” Meg shakes her head.

“Good girl,” he commends her with a warm hand on her head and she seems to practically beam at that.

Sansa’s eyes are still set onto the Scorpion. “And this will work?” She asks, not meaning to cast doubt, but she can’t help, but speak her fear. The Northerners have defeated the dead, yes, but there’s something about dragons; they just seem to be a more impossible enemy in a way.

Sansa can’t stop herself from imagining the whole of the North engulfed in flames.

“It will, Your Grace,” Sam speaks with the utmost confidence. “In the First Dornish War, Rhaenys Targaryen and her dragon were both killed when a Scorpion bolt was fired and pierced the dragon right through its eye, killing it instantly. A bolt fired from one of these carries enough speed and strength to pierce the skull of a dragon.”

Sansa nods and manages to give the man a small smile before looking back to the Scorpion. She feels Jon’s hand ghost across the small of her back from over her cloak and she wishes they were alone so he could hold her and assure her that they are going to be alright; even if no one can possibly know such a thing, it’s still what Sansa needs to hear right now.

But they are not alone and the King and Queen must keep their affection for one another at a minimum when in front of other's eyes.

"And how is the other Scorpion coming?" Jon asks both Edd and Sam and they walk away, further along the battlements to where the second weapon has not yet begun construction, but where it will be built.

Sansa remains by the finished Scorpion, taking her time to walk slowly around it, looking it over closely. Her eye catches Davos and he gives her a small smile.

"It will work, Your Grace," he tells her. "This will be the only thing that will work."

"I know," Sansa nods though she doesn't know that at all and she hates that she doesn't know.

She doesn't even know if that Targaryen will be foolish enough to come North and what if she does and the Scorpions don't work? What will they do? They will not bend. Are they prepared to burn instead?

She looks to Davos, Meg, Brienne and Pod. "I need to return to my chambers. Alone," she is quick to add. "I just need a moment to myself."

All four bow to her as she is quick to make her leave, leaving the battlements as quick as she can without actually running away. She wishes she was Bran and could just fly away. And as if reading her mind, she hears a bird's flapping wings and looking, she sees a black bird flying towards her. The raven sets on her shoulder and she is able to give a small, genuine smile at it before she begins going down the steps.

"We saw you were in your chamber, but that you had already gone," Sansa tells her brother. "Where have you been all day?"

Caw!

“You can tell me later.” She reaches up and gives his beak a quick, gentle stroke. She then sighs heavily. Stepping down into the hallway, she begins making her way to her chamber, managing smiles at all those she passes. Bran remains on her shoulder. “I’m so scared and I don’t know what to do,” she confides in him softly so only he may hear. “I wish we didn’t have to do anything. Let the South burn. I don’t care.”

And she doesn’t. She truly doesn’t. She has lost so much to the South and there is nothing left down there. No one or nothing that would compel her the tiniest ounce of sympathy and she finds herself *hating* that she doesn’t care. She’s not like that. She’s never been like that. She has always cared too much; it has always been a part of who she is.

Is that just something else Ramsay and everyone in her life over these past few years have stripped from her, never for it to recover?

Caw!

In the chamber, she closes the door behind her and then crosses the room to the window to open it a crack so Bran may fly away whenever he’s ready to. Ghost is napping on the rug in front of the fire and he lifts his head when he sees her. Sansa gives the beast a smile and hanging her cloak up, she goes to join him.

“I wish I could take naps after breakfast,” she teases him and Ghost licks her chin.

Bran has flown from her shoulder and has settled himself on top of the chair at her desk. Bran has told them that he’s practicing his stamina and how long he can stay warged without losing all of his strength. He’s also practicing in warging himself into other animals, but the raven is certainly his preferred form.

She wants to write to Lord Royce, who has returned to the Vale per Jon’s orders of all of the Lords and Ladies returning to their homes, but he has made it known that he will return to Winterfell the instant the Queen requests his presence. Sansa doesn’t want to drag the man from his home just because she misses his company as well as his advice. She has Jon and others here who can listen as well as Lord Royce, but she trusts the man completely and besides missing him, she also wishes for his confidence.

So much of the time, she must be the Queen in the North and the Queen never falters or shows emotions. She has Jon and her sister and Bran – either in human or bird form – but even around

them, Sansa feels like she must always be so strong at all times. They have come to expect that from her and she can't break. With Lord Royce, they had tea every afternoon and they would talk and laugh and he would tell her various stories of her father that she hadn't known. Around him, she could just be Sansa, a girl not yet nineteen, and sometimes, that's all she wants to be.

(She misses Shae so much still and before that, Jeyne Pool and Beth Cassel, but Sansa really can't let herself go that far back or her chest will split open from the pain of everyone she misses who isn't here anymore.)

Does Jon ever feel like that? He must. He has become King when it was something he *never* anticipated becoming and he is young, just like her. He has fought so hard and for so long, Sansa wonders if he ever wishes to be just a young man. They have never spoken of it before. Should they?

There almost doesn't seem a point to it. They both know that these are their roles and responsibilities and neither shy away from it.

She wonders who Jon's Lord Royce is who he can just laugh and talk with? Tormund, Edd and Sam?

Despite what she and Jon have discussed and what they have decided for the time being, she knows they can't just ignore everything outside of the North no matter how badly she wants to. And imagining her and Jon just riding away from Winterfell, leaving everything behind, is just as impossible – maybe even more so – but it doesn't stop the ache in her chest from wanting just that with her husband.

Sansa closes her eyes, feeling exhaustion, fear and worry all rolling together in a tangle, and she lays down, resting her head upon Ghost's body, his fur soft against her face. And then, before she can stop herself, before she tells herself that this is no time for it, she begins to cry.

...

So, I watched this show and couldn't help, but think that they would all feel absolutely exhausted with everything they did and went through. I wanted to show Sansa feeling the weight of that exhaustion. I hope you like this update. THANK YOU very much for reading. Far more Jon/Sansa in the next chapter.

Chapter 27

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“I’m out of breath,” Jon pants, leaning against his training sword, and Arya gives him a grin.

“Need a break, do you, old man?” Arya teases. “Ah!” She shrieks when Jon suddenly brings his sword back up to strike her, but she brings her own training sword up, stopping his above her head.

Jon laughs then, the sound echoing across the training yards. Arya laughs, too, because Jon laughing has always been such a rare sound and whenever he does laugh, she doesn’t know. The air just feels lighter.

“Go easy on him, Arya! I need a turn still!” Meera calls out from where she’s sparring with another man.

Jon groans dramatically. “You two are going to kill me.”

Arya rolls her eyes, but grins at him and tossing an arm around her shoulders, Jon tugs her towards the barrel of water that is kept in the training yards for all there. They both help themselves to cups and gulp it down greedily, both still working on catching their breath.

“Jon?”

Jon moves his eyes from watching those working in the training yards that afternoon back to his cousin. He is smiling, but seeing the look on Arya’s face, it begins to fade. Not only does she look serious, but she also looks... one of the few times since she’s returned home, she looks very much like the young woman she actually is; who Jon easily forgets that she is.

He doesn’t say anything. He waits for her to continue.

Arya waits, obviously picking out her words before speaking them. She then seems to come to a decision and just come right out with it.

“Why did you let father break yours and Sansa’s betrothal?” She asks in true-Arya blunt fashion.

Jon hasn’t taken a drink of anything, but he swallows as if he has. The question makes his heart feel as heavy as an axe though he knows the answer; he’s always known the answer.

“Because Sansa and I didn’t love one another and your father couldn’t bring himself to deny his King.”

“You did love each other,” Arya argues.

“We did, but we didn’t *love* one another and you know that there’s a difference.”

Arya frowns, but stays silent.

“And I wanted her to be happy,” Jon adds in a quieter tone; almost as if he is saying it to himself rather than to Arya. “We didn’t know who Joffrey was or the kind of people the Lannister’s were. I remember the way Sansa’s eyes lit up when they arrived. Don’t do that,” he then warns Arya when it looks like she’s about to roll her eyes.

“I’m sorry,” she breathes and sounds completely truthful. “It’s just such a natural reaction when I hear that. I remember when I was old enough to understand what a betrothal meant and I was so jealous of Sansa. Not because I wanted to marry you – disgusting-” Jon cracks a grin at that and Arya smiles, too. “But because you two would be married and go off and Sansa would be the one to see you every day. And then I remember being so angry with her when father broke your betrothal so Sansa could marry Joffrey because she didn’t think you were good enough.”

“That’s not what she thought, Arya,” Jon shakes his head.

“It’s not?”

“Sansa and I cared for one another as much as two kids our age could, but I didn’t think I had any idea how to make her happy. I was convinced we would spend the rest of our lives as two cousins who had to marry one another. We would love one another and have children together, because we had to, but I didn’t think we would ever be like Aunt Cat and Uncle Ned and I told Sansa as much.

“And I knew that that’s what she wanted. She wanted a husband who she loved and who could love her as deeply as Sansa deserved. And I was stupid enough to think she could possibly have that with Joffrey and that’s what I told Uncle Ned.”

Arya is silent again; staring at him with her mouth slightly parted as if her brain is having the hardest time understanding what Jon has just told her.

“All this time...” she begins to shake her head. “I thought Sansa was the one who wanted it to be broken.”

Jon shrugs. “She didn’t argue. I think we were both on the same page, but Sansa never would have spoken it; not until I did.”

“So you went to the Wall and Sansa went South.”

“And now we’re all home again.”

“It would have been so different if you and Sansa had married,” Arya says, more like an afterthought. She takes a step back and begins spinning her training sword from hand to hand.

“Maybe,” Jon agrees. “Or maybe Robert Baratheon still would have wanted Uncle Ned as his Hand in King’s Landing and he still would have been killed and it would have been me and Robb declaring war. There’s no use in thinking of how it could have gone,” he then tells his cousin.

“I can think what I want, Jon,” Arya retorts and sticks out her tongue for good measure and Jon lets out a bark of laughter, suddenly transported years back in time when they were all children in these

very training yards, teasing one another and trying to drive each other mad.

He nearly looks up to the second floor balcony as if he expects to see Uncle Ned and Aunt Cat watching.

Instead, he turns his head and his smile begins to fade when he sees his wife's maid standing on the edge of the yard, looking in his direction, obviously waiting for him to spot her.

"I'll be back," Jon says to Arya and looking past him, she sees Cora and with her own concerned frown, he nods to Jon.

His heart is already gaining in speed as he hands her his training sword before quickly heading towards Cora without right out running to her.

"What is it?" He asks because he has *no* idea what it could possibly be.

"Forgive me for interrupting your training, Your Grace," Cora dips into a quick curtsy. "I did not mean to alarm you. The Queen... she is in your chamber and won't come out."

Jon's brow furrow. "What do you mean?" He asks though he knows that Cora's words are pretty self-explanatory. Still, though, he doesn't understand because this doesn't sound like Sansa at all. "Is she ill?" He then asks because that's honestly the only thing that makes any sense.

"I don't think so, Your Grace. She has told me she's not, but she also has ordered Pod and Brienne to not let anyone into the room."

Jon doesn't wait for Cora to say anything more. He walks past her and heads back inside, not caring how rude that might seem. Those he passes all greets him with bows or curtsies, but Jon admits that he doesn't even see any of them. His heart is pounding painfully in his chest and he feels out of breath.

They were on the battlements, looking over the construction of the Scorpions and she was fine. She had *seemed* fine. Jon admits that she hadn't been his focus. He and his people were working on a

weapon that could kill a dragon and that was what he had his attention on. Was something wrong with his wife and he hadn't seen it? Already, is his desire for the Targaryen and her dragons and their blood consuming him that he can't focus on anything else?

Jon doesn't think that's right. He's taking Sansa's advice and he's having the whole of the North follow it. He's ignoring everything South. It's too simple and there is no possible way that it can work for that long, but right now, that's exactly what they're doing. They're building weapons in preparation, yes, and that's a priority, also yes, but other than that, Jon is in Winterfell, his home, with his wife and his family and people. There's no Night King or dead anymore to worry about with every breath he takes.

For the first time, in a very long time, Jon feels as if he's finally breathing after going so long without.

Sure enough, outside his and his wife's chamber door, Brienne and Pod stand on either side, standing tall and straight when they see him approach.

"How long has she been inside?" He asks his Queen's Guards.

"Since this morning on the battlements, Your Grace," Brienne is the one to answer.

"And she has not been out since then?" Jon stares at the wood of the door in front of them.

"No, Your Grace." Brienne again.

Jon nods and then steps forward, his fist rising to knock. He changes his mind at the last moment and his hand goes to the handle instead. It's unbolted and he's surprised. Sansa must just be trusting Brienne and Pod to not allow anyone inside. But he's just not anyone. Even if he wasn't the King, he's her husband.

Inside their chamber, Jon's not entirely sure what he's going to find. If she's ill, is she doubled over the chamber pot, emptying her stomach? Is she sleeping? Is she simply in a chair, sewing something?

She's in none of those positions though. Instead, she is lying on the rug in front of crackling fire with Ghost. She's not asleep. Instead, she's staring into the flames and he has to wonder if she even is aware that he has come into the room.

"Sansa?" He takes an-almost hesitant step forward.

She sniffles and then turns her head so that her face is turned towards him; letting him see the red of her eyes and the tear stains on her cheeks. Instead of calming down, the sight only sends his heart into further overdrive. It begins beating so fast, he thinks he might actually throw it up.

He hurriedly takes off his cloak and tosses it away, not even looking or caring where it lands, and he goes to join her on the floor, kneeling at her side.

"What is it? What's happened?" He asks her, panicked.

His hands go to her flushed cheeks and he brushes hair away that have been matted to her skin with the wet of her tears.

Sansa closes her eyes at his touch and she shakes her head.

Jon won't allow that though when something is so obviously wrong. "Sansa, tell me." His voice is soft, but his words are firm. He won't allow her to not tell him.

"I just needed some time to be by myself," she says and slowly, her eyes open again.

He waits for her to tell him that he is stepping in on that, but she doesn't and Jon slowly maneuvers his body so he lays down in front of her, facing her.

"What happened on the battlements?" He asks.

Sansa sighs softly and shakes her head. "I'm tired. I'm so tired," she whispers.

Jon knows that she isn't just talking of sleep – or lack thereof. He also knows exactly what she means. So much has happened over the past few years, all of them should be completely exhausting – physically, mentally, emotionally. Any other way a person could be exhausted, that's how they are as well.

“Then you will not do anything until you are rested,” Jon suggests.

“I can't do that,” she disagrees.

“Why not? We have nowhere to go. The dead are defeated. We have more than enough food. Whatever is happening with those two bitches in the South are staying there for the moment. Why can't you rest?”

Sansa's eyes close again and Jon sees a tear slip out, rolling down her temple since she's on her side. He moves in and kisses her forehead, leaving his lips there to rest.

“You can rest. We can *all* rest and that's what we're going to do until there's a reason why we can't.”

Sansa snuffles. “We are King and Queen and a King and Queen can never rest.”

“Huh.”

Sansa's eyes open at his response. He smiles.

“I thought as King and Queen, we can do whatever we want. Doesn't Cersei drink wine all day? And the Targaryen, I'm sure she does something as useless. Probably thinks of the fastest way she can destroy everything because she's a Targaryen and that's what they do.”

One corner of Sansa's mouth twitches, but she tries to stop herself before she can completely smile.

“We’re better than that and you know it, Jon.”

“I do know and I’m glad you know it, too.” Jon shifts closer to her so he can move an arm over her waist and gently pull on her body until their fronts are pressed together. “I love you and you are the best Queen the North could ever ask for. And they all love you. They also know that you are only human and you are going to get tired like everyone else.”

Sansa closes her eyes again and dips her head down, tucking it underneath his chin and pressing it to his chest. Jon holds her, which he thinks she might need just as much as anything else.

“Go to sleep, Sansa,” he tells her quietly. “I promise that Winterfell will still be standing when you wake.”

He can’t see her face, but he knows that she’s not trying to smile again.

“We can’t rest forever.”

“And that’s why I am having the Scorpions built. We rest and then bring dragons and their bitch Mother from the sky and then we rest again,” Jon says. “So until anything from the South dares to pass into our lands, we are going to rest.”

“When did you turn so optimistic?” Sansa wonders, pulling her head back to look at him; still no smile, but her eyes are twinkling.

Jon smiles and he lifts a hand, again, to her cheek. “Since I was brought back from the dead and you came through the gates of Castle Black.”

...

A flashback of Castle Black in the next chapter. Thank you for reading and I'm sorry for another "filler" chapter. I really wanted to give a bit more insight into Jon and Sansa's betrothal though. I also am planning an appearance from Brandon Stark, Jon's father, that makes me so excited, I can't wait for it.

Chapter 28

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Open the gates!”

Jon stood on the landing with Edd, watching three riders slowly enter Castle Black. The first rider was a large woman – tall and intimidating in her armor – with short blonde hair slicked back from her face and a fierce frown in place on her face as she looked at those now in her surroundings. The second rider was a young man who looked like he’s about to fall asleep in his saddle, but managing to look alert as well.

And the third horse held a young woman. She was too far away still and Jon couldn’t see her clearly, but his heart paused when he saw that she had red hair. It was dirty, but it was obviously red.

Slowly, the horses were drawn to a stop and the woman dismounted, swaying on her feet that showed Jon that she was exhausted and had been riding for a very long time. She leaned into the horse for a moment for support until her legs were steady beneath her once more.

Jon didn’t take his eyes off for her as he remained standing on the landing, looking to her from above. There was something so familiar about her; so familiar, it made his body grow tense as he waited to see her face. He hadn’t seen her in so long. She would be grown now and her hair would still be red. It couldn’t be though. There was no way...

The woman slowly turned in a full circle, looking at all those who had curiously come to look at the three new arrivals, and when she turned to face in Jon’s direction, their eyes seemed to meet within a split second’s time. She froze at the sight of him and Jon felt himself take a step backwards as if his eyes were playing tricks on him. Her mouth parted, as if she was going to speak, but she made no sound and their eyes never left the other; even as Jon began descending the stairs.

His feet didn’t need his brain as he could walk without looking or tripping.

It couldn't be and yet...

It was her. It was definitely her.

Sansa.

He was staring right at her as he came down the last step and yet, he still couldn't quite believe it. Sansa was here. He had last seen her when she was thirteen and leaving Winterfell to head South as he was leaving Winterfell to go North. He hadn't known then if he would ever see her again. He had doubted it and he had told himself over and over again that it would be alright. Like Uncle Benjen, Jon would visit Winterfell occasionally, but someone from the Wall never had a reason to go to King's Landing and even if they did, Jon knew he particularly wouldn't want to go and see Sansa with her husband.

But that was all so long ago and now Sansa stood, in front of him; not a ghost or a dream.

He finally stopped a few feet away from her, not sure what to do next. He knew what he *wanted* to do, but it had been so long. He couldn't just sweep her into his arms and hold onto her and never let her go again. It'd been too long. He didn't know this young woman before him as he once had when she was still a girl.

Sansa was staring at him as if she couldn't believe that he was standing in front of her. He had grown, too.

All sound had dropped out around him – not that he thought anyone was making noise anyway, all curiously watching the scene in front of them – and he couldn't even hear the beating of his own heart. Was it still beating or had someone stabbed him again?

Sansa then moved, flying forward, straight for him. Jon opened his arms just as she launched herself against him, and Jon held her strongly in his arms, her feet above the ground as she hugged him. Jon closed his eyes, feeling her body against his and hearing her breathing in his ear.

"You're here. You're here," Sansa began to whisper, nearly sobbing, and Jon just held her tighter, his eyes closed, and he began to feel himself sway with her in his arms.

“We’re both here,” Jon whispered back to her and he could still hardly believe it.

How was Sansa here? And he still couldn’t quite believe that he had died, but he was still here, too. What if he had died completely and Sansa had come, searching for him? Was her coming here the reason he was still alive and hadn’t left the Wall yet?

But it was the truth. He and Sansa were both here, now, together. Somehow, they had been able to find one another after all of this time.

Jon already knew that he wasn’t going to let her go again.

...

“NO!”

The shout echoes through the halls of Winterfell and in her chamber, sewing with Cora, Sansa hears it and it makes her jump in her seat. Both women stop and listen for more, but it seems that after that exclamation, it is quiet again.

Sansa sets her sewing aside and stands up. “I’m going to see what that was. I’ll be back.”

Cora stands as well and curtsies as Sansa leaves the chamber, Ghost with her. Pod is on guard at the door this afternoon and as Sansa, with Ghost, walks past him, Pod falls into step behind her. She thinks she heads in the direction of where the shout had come from and when she approaches the open door to Sam and Gilly’s chambers, she knows she is right. There is a great sobbing come from inside.

She pauses, not wanting to intrude, but then she hears Jon’s voice from inside the room.

“We can bring your mother and sister here to Winterfell, if you want that,” Jon offers.

Sansa pauses for another moment before appearing in the doorway, looking inside. Jon and Sam are sitting on the bed, Sam holding his head in his hands and Jon's hand clasped on his friend's shoulder. Gilly is standing with a piece of parchment in her hands as she reads it over.

As if sensing her, Jon lifts his head to see her. She takes a small step into the room. Ghost pushes himself right in and goes straight to Sam, sitting down in front of him.

"What is it?" Sansa asks everyone and anyone, her stomach already knotted.

"She burned them," Sam whispers, his voice choking and thick with tears.

Jon stands up as Gilly turns to hand Sansa the parchment so that she may read it as well.

It's in a feminine handwriting, but that does nothing to ease the words that are written. She knows of Randyll Tarly, Sam's father, of Horn Hill, though she had never met the man. As she reads on, she begins to feel sick. There was a battle with House Lannister and House Tarly forces against the Dragon Queen and her Dothraki army. Both House's armies were decimated – including valuable trains of grain supply – under dragon fire.

"From his mother," Gilly explains when Sansa gets to the end of the letter. "That Dragon bitch burned his father and his brother, Dickon, because they didn't bend the knee and swear themselves to her."

And though Sansa has just read that for herself, she still nearly gasps just at the mere *idea* of something like that happening, here, in Westeros. For all of the wars and the battles, there have never been the threat of a dragon flying overhead to kill everyone its path. And then to not even take prisoners of war, to demand loyalty or death, that is not the way things are done here.

It seems like the arrival of the Targaryen woman with her dragons has apparently changed that.

"My father hated me and I didn't care for him either, but... neither of them deserved that," Sam whispers, shaking his head as he concentrates on his hand rubbing down Ghost's side.

“Melessa Tarly and her daughter, Sam’s sister, Talla,” Jon says to Sansa. He is trying to keep his voice calm and steady, but Sansa can very well see the fury burning in her husband’s eyes. “We should have them come to Winterfell.”

“Absolutely,” Sansa readily agrees and then passes the parchment back to Gilly, squeezing the woman’s hand as she does. Gilly doesn’t smile, but she squeezes her hand as well. “Would your mother and sister want to make the journey here or would they prefer to stay at Horn Hill, do you think?” She asks Sam. “They are more than welcome to come and stay here for as long as they need.”

Sam lifts his head to look at Jon, Sansa and Gilly all look at him. Gilly sits down in Jon’s vacated spot next to him on the bed and she takes one of his hands, holding it between both of hers.

“I think...” he stops himself and looks to Gilly for a moment before back to Jon and Sansa. “I’m the last Tarly male. I need to go to Horn Hill to be with my mother and sister and... and take care of things there.”

Jon nods and he doesn’t seem surprised; as if he knows that that’s what Sam would decide to do.

“I’ll talk with Davos. He will go with you to help.”

Sam instantly begins to shake his head at that. “You need Davos, here, with you.”

“I have Edd to help me. You need help, too,” Jon argues gently.

“Or,” Sansa speaks up, being quiet for a moment for this news to settle in her mind and to think things through. She turns to Jon and takes both of his hands. “What if the Targaryen has already decided to take Horn Hill as her own? She is clearly a conqueror. She might feel that with murdering the Tarly men, Horn Hill now belongs to her.” She turns back to Sam, who looks stricken at the idea. “Write a letter to your mother and sister. Tell them to get out of Horn Hill immediately. I will write to Lord Royce and my cousin, Robin. The Vale is closer than Winterfell and they will offer them sanctuary.”

Jon nods immediately at the plan. “Write to them right now, Sam.”

Sam snuffles and nods, standing up. “Thank you,” he says to them both.

Sansa steps forward and hugs her husband’s dear friend. She can feel that Sam isn’t sure what to do in return and winds up patting her on the back. Sansa then turns to Gilly and hugs her as well; Gilly having no hesitancy in hugging her back.

“We will set this right,” Sansa promises them both.

“We will,” Jon confirms without pause.

She can feel the thick coils of tension coming from her husband’s body and she wonders if anyone else can feel it. Jon is practically seething and Sansa needs to make sure she keeps his anger as controlled as she can before Jon leaves Winterfell, blind with fury and vengeance, and gets burned himself.

They have ignored the South as long as they could. They have all rested, but the time has come.

She more than likely does not even realize it, but by murdering the Tarly father and son of one of King Jon’s closest friends, the Dragon Queen has brought her war right to their very home.

And every person in the North, with sworn loyalty to House Stark, will make certain she regrets it.

...

Leaving Sam and Gilly so he can write his letter, Sansa leads her husband down to the family crypts, Ghost trotting ahead of them as if he knows exactly where they are going. And he does since he stops at Brandon Stark’s statue. Sansa lights the candle in front of her uncle and she then turns to see her husband, breathing heavily through his nostrils – practically panting – as he stalks back and forth, his hands clenching and unclenching.

Sansa doesn’t say anything. She stands and watches him.

She remembers the stories her father would tell Jon about Uncle Brandon's temper. Sometimes, when Brandon became so angry, the best thing to be done was stay out of his way until it was extinguished. She thinks of her uncle's temper now and how, upon hearing news of Aunt Lyanna's kidnapping, he immediately rode South to King's Landing in a fury.

She won't let Jon do anything like that no matter how angry he is.

But for now, she lets him stew with his temper. Down here, with just the two of them, surrounded by family, it hopefully soothes him. Soon.

She doesn't know how long it is until Jon exhales through his nose one final time and turns towards her. Sansa takes that as a cue that it's safe enough to approach him and she does, closing the space between them. She lifts a hand to his cheek, rubbing it over his jaw where he has it clenched.

"You're going to grind your teeth down to nubs," she warns him with the smallest of smiles.

Jon sighs heavily and closes his eyes, Sansa still caressing his jaw. It seems to be helping. Soon, his jaw, along with the rest of his body, relaxes.

"I'm going to kill her," Jon then says, his eyes still closed and he slowly pulls them open to look at Sansa; as if to see her reaction to hearing him say such a thing.

"I know you are," Sansa nods. She is quiet for another moment and Jon shuffles in to her as close as he can get. She smiles faintly as he brings his head down and brushes his lips down the column of her throat.

"And I'm going to put a babe in you."

Sansa smiles again. "I know you are."

“And after I kill the Targaryen and Cersei Lannister is dealt with as well, we’ll have our family and there will never be a reason to leave our home again.”

Sansa closes her eyes at his words – at the thought – and she turns her head, nuzzling her nose against his jaw as if they, themselves, are wolves.

“Cersei Lannister cannot be trusted,” Sansa voices what both know. “Yet, I choose her over a dragon.”

“As do I,” Jon nods in confirmation, his lips brushing along her shoulder over her heavy fur cloak.

“From Sam’s mother’s letter, it sounds like troops loyal to the Lannister crown, whichever survived, are highly outnumbered now,” Sansa continues, her hands creeping up the length of her husband’s arms. “And even if they weren’t, they are no match for dragons.”

Jon’s hands glide over her hips at that, squeezing them, pressing their bodies together.

Sansa continues, voicing her thoughts out loud. “I can write a letter to Cersei. We can meet on neutral ground,” she suggests.

“She’ll kill you the second you’re breathing the same air as her,” Jon says as he moves his lips back up, pressing a kiss to the corner of her jaw.

“You won’t let her.”

Jon squeezes her hips again. “I won’t let her come near you,” he vows; as if he has to.

“We will meet and we will offer to fight on her side against the Targaryen and in return, we get her to sign off and agree to the North’s independence from the rest of the lower Kingdoms.”

Jon pulls his head back so that they can look at one another again. “She will never agree to that.”

“Then she can burn with the rest of them.”

Jon stares at her, silent to that, and even Sansa is a little taken aback at her cold words. She doesn't regret them though. Cersei absolutely despises her and wishes her dead. Why should Sansa feel guilty for her own less than kind feelings towards the woman who had shredded her life apart in so many ways?

“We could just let the whole of the South burn without getting involved,” Jon says then. “We can keep ourselves up here and keep resting.”

Sansa pauses, as if thinking that over, but then shakes her head. “There *are* innocent people down there. They don't deserve to burn to death and it seems as if this Targaryen has no problem in doing just that to anyone who doesn't agree with her.”

A woman who burns men alive, who burns food which would have fed millions, and who burns men alive who won't swear themselves to her instead of just taking them prisoner has no place living in Westeros among any of them. Tyrion can take his Queen back across the Narrow Sea and if she won't go peacefully, Tyrion can die alongside her. Sansa knows that her husband will see to and take pleasure in that.

“Write to Lord Royce first. See if he has suggestions for a meeting spot. And then write to Cersei,” Jon says and Sansa nods. “We will see just how desperate she is to keep her crown.”

...

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much! I don't want to give too much away, but in the next chapter, we'll have a little Meg, a little Aggie, a little Varys and a little more Raven!Bran. And I can't believe how excited I am to get Yohn Royce and Sansa together again!

(And who else, besides every single person watching the show, thought that the Tarlys being burned would have been a hell of a lot bigger deal on the show than it turned out to be? Which was nothing.)

Chapter 29

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Aggie doesn't mean to be jealous. Honest. She reminds herself that she still has her papa – working in the horse stables – and her mama – working in the Winterfell kitchens. She has a little brother, too, and he helps in the kitchens as well. Aggie tells herself not to be jealous because she has her *whole* family with her. Meg doesn't have anyone. Meg was sleeping outside, getting fleas and going hungry. Meg doesn't have anyone in this whole world while Aggie's never had to sleep anywhere, but in the warmth of Winterfell. And besides all of that, Meg is her friend.

Still, that morning, after everyone breaks their fast, Aggie is helping clean off the tables and she does her best to hide her frown as she watches Meg walking after the King. She's always with the King, now, or the Queen and it's talk among the other servants that because the King and Queen don't have any children of their own yet, they have taken Meg in as if she's theirs.

Aggie definitely tries to not be jealous about that. She already has parents and she loves her mama and papa very much. She doesn't need more parents. Meg doesn't have any parents at all and she should be happy that the King and Queen have taken her friend under their wing.

She doesn't know much, but Meg has told her some. Meg spies. For who, she's never said, but she can be silent, like a shadow, and see things and hears things that others don't pay attention to. Maybe that's why the King and Queen are keeping her close. She is spying for them.

Aggie knows she doesn't know anything about being a spy. She plays hide-and-seek with the other children of Winterfell when they're not working and Aggie is almost always found first because she gets nervous and starts to giggle. She'd be awful at trying to hide without being seen.

But... she's been in Winterfell for much longer than Meg. She's from the North. And she and Meg are the same age. If anyone should be treated special from the King and Queen, it should be her; not Meg who just showed up a few months earlier and who isn't even one of them.

Aggie now wipes the table and frowns at herself for thinking such horrible things about her friend.

“Aggie.”

Aggie instantly spins towards the Queen, who stands with her maid, Cora. Leaving the rag on the table, she hurries to stand in front of the Queen and dips in a curtsy.

“Your Grace.”

“Would you mind coming with me? I have something I wish to discuss with you.”

Aggie almost gasps. The Queen wishes to speak with her. Yes, Aggie knows that she’s no stranger to talks with the Queen. Before Meg, Aggie didn’t doubt she was one of the Queen’s favorites. And then Meg came... No. Aggie is not going to think about that any longer because the Queen needs to speak with her and girls who speak with the Queen are not jealous, silly girls.

“Of course, Your Grace,” Aggie says with another curtsy, and the Queen smiles.

Aggie follows the Queen and Cora from the Hall, Ghost at the Queen’s side as he almost always is. Today, Brienne is on her guard duty first and brings up the rear. Aggie feels nervous though she tells herself that she had no reason to be. But still, she has to wonder. Has she done something wrong? Has someone said that she’s done something wrong? Is the Queen able to sense the jealous thoughts she’s had towards Meg?

“Here we are,” the Queen smiles, stepping into her solar.

At least she’s smiling, Aggie notes. Their Queen isn’t the sort to smile before bestowing punishment.

“Shall we?” She then looks to both Cora and Aggie, gesturing towards the chairs in a semi-circle in front of the fire. Brienne remains standing by the door and Ghost drops himself into a heap on the rug in front of the chair the Queen eases herself down into. “Aggie,” the Queen begins with a smile, turning more towards her. Aggie reminds herself to sit as straight as she can. “I’ve been speaking with your mother.”

Aggie feels her heart seize and start racing all at the same time.

“Have I done something wrong?”

Maybe the cook told the Queen about the burnt gingerbread that she and some of the other children have snatched from the kitchens. It had been the burnt scraps though that cook hadn’t served. Surely, no one would care about burnt gingerbread. And Aggie wasn’t the only one who snatched at it!

“No, Aggie,” the Queen shakes her head with her present smile. The Queen has such a soft smile. It somehow makes her even prettier, which Aggie doesn’t know how that’s possible because everyone knows that the Queen in the North is the prettiest Queen of them of all. “You haven’t done anything wrong at all. I was speaking with your mother to make certain that it would be alright with her and your father. Both felt that this is a very big honor, but I will only want you to have it if *you* want it.”

Aggie’s breath pauses in her lungs. “What is it, Your Grace?”

“Well, you’re almost eight now and Cora is everything I could ever ask for in a maid and she has sworn to me that she will never leave me.” She pauses to smile at Cora now, who smiles in return.

“And that stays true, Your Grace,” Cora replies.

“But I know, whether she would *ever* admit such a thing to me or not, that sometimes, the duties Cora see to can be a bit too much for just one person. So I was thinking that, perhaps, if you’d like, we could begin your training and you could be a personal maid of mine, as well.”

Aggie stares at the Queen; almost as if she doesn’t completely understand.

Her parents are right. This *is* a very big honor. Imagine. Her, one of the Queen’s maids! No one knows the Queen better than the King and her Hand than her maids. And Queen Sansa wants *her* to be one!

A smile begins to stretch across her face, taking over, and seeing, the Queen and Cora smile as well.

“Oh, Your Grace, I would *love* that.”

She can’t wait to tell her parents.

She can’t wait to tell Meg!

“I’m so relieved,” the Queen sighs softly as if she’s been holding her breath. “So, our first task we must see to today...” she stands up and Cora stands as well. Aggie hurries to her feet. “Cora and I have been working on a new dress and I would like to finish it before an important meeting the King and I hope to have. Aggie, I know you know how to thread a needle and now, I’m going to teach you how to embroider.”

Aggie wonders if she’ll ever stop smiling again. “I can’t wait, Your Grace.”

...

Arya grunts as she fights against the wooden dummy, her training sword cutting at it again and again. They have defeated the dead, but peace is still out of their reach. The South won’t let them have it. Not only is there Cersei, but now, there are dragons, and even if the North is near impossible to invade by an army on foot, there is nothing stopping dragons flying to their lands and incinerating them.

First, the Targaryen must be dealt with and then, they can see to Cersei for once and for all.

So Arya practices.

Jon and Sansa are planning something. They have not confided in her yet, but Arya knows that they will; once they have every piece in its proper place. And whatever they are planning and whatever they need Arya to do, she’ll do it without argument; not too much argument.

Arya knows what her strengths are and they certainly aren't what Sansa's strengths are. Or even Jon's. He insisted – when they were all younger – that he didn't have the head like Robb did to run Winterfell. Mother and father had tried to tell him otherwise, but Jon was convinced. And though Arya liked to think that she had far more in common with her favorite cousin – who was practically another brother – than with anyone else in their family, she didn't think Jon was right with that. He *was* smart and he *did* have a head for what it took to be a good leader and run things.

He's proving that right now. Arya has witnessed it for herself. Everyone in the North loves their King and their Queen and would do anything for them. They would follow her cousins and her sister anywhere; including into a war with either or both Queens South of them.

Arya is curious as to what Jon and Sansa will do first. Cersei or Daenerys. The Targaryen makes sense. It's one thing to go against an army of men. It's entirely another to go against dragons flying overhead. When she was little and would hear about dragons during her lesson with the Maester, Arya always dreamed about seeing an actual dragon someday; even though years earlier, everyone thought dragons were no longer around in their world. But now that she's older and is no longer a girl with fanciful ideas in her head, she only hopes that she can shoot one of the scorpions that knocks one of the monsters from the sky. Her family will not lose even an inch of their home to fire.

Caw!

Arya instantly stops swinging at the dummy and turns when she sees her brother, perched on the shoulder of Meera Reed. She keeps meaning to ask Bran – when he's not a raven – what is happening between himself and Meera, but Arya supposes that she doesn't need to ask. Meera has been with him and has kept him safe. Perhaps that's all Arya needs to know; that and Meera is strong, brave and a good fighter.

"I told you not to do that so close to my ear," Meera frowns at him.

"What's wrong?" Arya asks, setting aside her practice sword and then picking up her real one, looping Needle into her belt at her side once again.

"He won't tell me," Meera shakes her head. She then looks to the raven before back to Arya. "Not that I expected him to truly *tell* me. You know what I meant," she says, nearly rolling her eyes.

Arya breaks into a smile and then looks to her brother turned raven.

“What’s wrong?”

She’ll ask a bird even if Meera won’t. After all, this bird is her brother – raven or not; still her brother.

Caw!

Bran cries out again and then standing tall, he begins flapping his wings, whacking Meera in the process.

“Bran,” Meera frowns at him and knocks the bird from her shoulder. “I told you not to do that either.”

Bran hangs in the air, his wings flapping madly.

Arya doesn’t know how, but she seems to know that Bran is trying to tell her something.

“What do you want to show me?” She asks.

Caw!

With that, he comes to land on Arya’s head and he begins leading her from the training yards, Meera hurrying so she is coming with them. Arya allows herself to be led, her eyes sharp; not sure what she was on the lookout for, but on the lookout for *everything*.

Bran leads Arya and Meera right up to the battlements and Arya pauses, staring at the scorpions that are nearing the end of their construction. She sees that Jon has put Edd in charge of their construction.

Caw!

Bran cries out again, leading Arya to the side that overlooks the lands facing South. Together, Arya and Meera look out, waiting to see what Bran has led them up here to see. Bran hops down from Arya's head and lands on the stone wall in front of them both, also looking out. There doesn't seem to be anything, but perhaps Bran has led them here too early; maybe something *is* coming and that something just hasn't arrived yet.

Arya finds herself holding her breath.

There. In the distance. Merely a spot now, but Arya can see that it's a spot that is definitely moving; moving across the land to reach Winterfell.

...

"She will kill you."

Varys pauses in the packing of his various scrolls taken from his desk. "And yet, those words leaving your lips aren't enough to have you thinking to leave as well."

"I would never leave her," Tyrion shakes his head. "She's *our* Queen."

"A Queen who burns whatever she sees as a threat. A Queen who burns *food* during winter."

Tyrion shakes his head again. "That was an accident. She did not mean to burn the food. Drogon got a little... overexcited," he decides and Varys simply blinks at the man; for once at a complete loss for words.

Tyrion is excusing Daenerys for burning the food – not much of an excuse and the people starving because of that burnt food will never care to hear any kind of excuse as to why there is no food – but he notes that he doesn't even try to excuse Daenerys for the senseless burning of so many men.

It shouldn't have come to that. The *threat* of being burned would have been enough for a surrender, but Varys can still see the way Daenerys had tilted her chin up and the slightest smile curling at the corners of her mouth as they all watched Drogon's flames engulf Lord Tarley and his son.

Varys can still see the Queen's expression in his mind and it nearly makes him shiver.

She had been *enjoying* herself.

For a woman who had been so insistent and set on showing everyone that she was not her father, that seems to be exactly what she is doing.

And Varys can't stay here to burn anything or anyone else. She no longer listens to him. She hardly listens to Tyrion. She wishes to defeat everyone in her way to that Iron Throne with the fire and blood and Varys can almost hate himself for getting everything so, so wrong about her. He had truly thought that this Queen was going to be different; the Queen Westeros not only needed, but the Queen Westeros deserved. She had freed slaves. Reminding himself of that no longer helps.

He hates being wrong, but he can admit when he is wrong and right now, he is *so* wrong.

He looks to Tyrion again. "I am leaving. I will not stay with a tyrant who burns anyone she disagrees with. This world deserves someone better than that."

"She is our Queen, Varys. She is our Queen because people have already chosen her when they didn't have to. *We* chose to follow her."

"And you follow her still after what she has done?"

"It is war," Tyrion shrugs and for the man, it seems to be as simple as that.

"You're right. It is war," Varys nods and closes his bag. "And I am tired of being on the wrong side." He walks past him to the door without another look, but he stops before leaving the room. "Tell her, if you must, but I ask that you give me a head start to give me a chance."

Tyrion is quiet, not agreeing to that, but not disagreeing either.

“Where are you going to go?” Tyrion asks instead.

The North.

Varys doesn't say anything.

...

“Jon,” Sansa laughs lightly before Cora and Aggie can fully close the door behind them when they leave the room. Jon has swept Sansa into his arms and is pressing kisses to her face and either side of her neck.

“Bed, my Queen,” Jon grunts against her skin and Sansa can already feel her husband hardening against her. She does not argue; holding onto him as he begins to guide her backwards. “I have been wanting you since breakfast this morning. It has been impossible to look at anyone and not imagine you instead, naked and spread out before me. Do you know how hard it is to listen to Davos when I'm imagining your breasts?”

Sansa blushes at that and her hands lift from his arms to his face, holding his hair back that has been worn down today. “I always want you, too, Jon,” she says to him, making sure that he doesn't doubt that. “But I don't know if this is the best time for us... with everything that has happened... and still waiting to hear back from Cersei...”

Jon looks at her, his eyes staring deeply into hers. He stops them at the side of their bed and he lifts his hands as well, framing her face. “We will do nothing you don't want to do. And I agree with you. So much has happened and we don't know what is going to happen. That's why I want to lay with my wife and hold her in my arms all night and never let her go.”

Sansa isn't sure why, but she begins to feel tears build in her eyes. She leans forward and kisses him softly. She leaves her lips resting to his for a moment longer before slowly pulling her head

back. “You’re right,” she whispers. “We don’t know what is going to happen. And I shouldn’t waste a moment I have with you.”

Jon leans in to rest his forehead to hers. “We will never be apart again, Sansa. I promise you.”

Sansa doesn’t say anything to that, but nods her head against his. “Anything can happen.” They look into one another’s eyes, her words saying so much without actually saying any of it. Anything *can* happen. They are far from naïve in regards to that truth. “Make love to me, Jon,” she whispers.

“Is that what you truly want tonight? I will not manipulate you, Sansa, if you think that’s what I’m do-”

Sansa cuts him off with a hard, swift kiss. “Dragons nor lions will take this away from me. Or us. Make love to me and put a babe in me. No matter what happens, we will have a babe for us and the North.”

...

Chapter End Notes

I consider this chapter "the calm before the true storm". THANK YOU so much for reading!
And who's ready for a Brandon Stark/baby Jon flashback in the next chapter?

Chapter 30

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Isn’t he the most handsome babe you’ve ever seen?” Brandon beamed down at his son as Jon laid on the bed, wrapped in a fur, giving his papa a gummy, slightly drooling, smile. And he knew he said this at least once a day, but no one dared to point that out to him.

“I always thought you were a handsome babe, My Lord,” Nan replied with a smile.

“But *nowhere* near as handsome as Jon,” Brandon said, reaching his finger out and smiling as Jon clasped his fingers around it, holding on. “And such a grip! We will fashion you the finest sword,” he then promised him, Jon just smiling up at him.

He had wanted to give his son a good, strong name; a good, strong Stark name.

“He’s perfect,” Brandon had said in a gentle hush as he knelt at Marian’s bedside as the nurses in the room looked after the babe that had been born just minutes earlier. Marian’s skin was ashen and cloaked in sweat. The heavy stench of blood hung in the room as the Maester worked between Marian’s legs, trying to get it to stop though everyone in the room knew there would be no stopping it.

“I’m so glad,” Marian whispered as Brandon clutched her hand, holding it to his cheek. “What will you name him? After your father?”

Brandon paused and then shook his head. “He will be named whatever you wish. *You* name our son.”

His heart ached for the woman in this bed; the woman who had just given him a son and who was now dying because of it.

Marian was one of the prettiest women in all of Winterfell; a maid who worked, serving meals in the Hall. Brandon pursued her. There was no reason he would deny that. He was known to always have a way with the women and women were more than happy to have Brandon Stark pay his attentions on them. He was usually so careful though that those attentions wouldn't have life-lasting effects on either of them. Marian had been no different, but she *was* different in a way.

When she told Brandon that she was with child, he didn't doubt her – knowing there was no reason to doubt her as she was a maid when they coupled the first time – and he had actually gone to his father, telling Rickard not only about the babe, but that he would like to marry Marian.

“You can't,” Rickard had shook his head at that. “I'm sorry, but you can't.”

And Brandon had known that that would be the answer. He was the eldest Stark son. He was already betrothed to Catelyn Tully and even if he wasn't, his marriage would be far too important for alliances. He couldn't be with just anyone.

Rickard then looked to Brandon. “Do you love her? Do you only love her because she carries your child?”

Brandon shook his head. “No. I don't think... I think I *could* grow to truly love her.”

Rickard had spoken with Hoster Tully about the betrothal and explained certain things and it was agreed that the betrothal between Brandon and Catelyn would be moved to Catelyn and his second son, Eddard. Still quite a good match, Rickard had assured everyone. Though he would not allow his eldest to marry a maid, he would not expect Catelyn Tully to marry a man with a bastard child.

Brandon now held Marian's hand tightly and never moved his eyes away from her. “What shall we name him, Marian?” He asked.

“I've always liked the name Jon,” she said, her voice growing even quieter.

“Jon,” Brandon confirmed with a smile and kissed her knuckles.

Jon was then brought over to her, the babe now cleaned and wrapped in clean linen, and Brandon took him in his arms before leaning him carefully over Marian so that her last act in her life could be to give her son the softest kiss on his forehead.

“I always wish I had known her better to tell you stories of her,” Uncle Ned would later tell Jon when the boy was older and asked for stories of both his mother and father.

Brandon looked down to his baby son and smiled because he could never *not* smile when he looked down at Jon, he still gripping onto his father’s finger.

“So perfect,” he now said.

“I don’t know,” Benjen said with a grin, leaning over the foot of the bed to look at his nephew. “He has a bit of a stench coming off of him right now.”

“He does *not* have a stench,” Brandon said, but no sooner had the words left his mouth that he began to smell it as well.

“Excuse me, My Lord,” Nan came to the bed with fresh linens. “I will clean him.”

“You will not, Nan,” Brandon frowned, taking those from her. “He’s my son. *I’ll* clean him.”

“Yes, Nan,” Benjen still grinned. “I would like to see this.”

Brandon responded to that by tossing one of the linens in his youngest brother’s face.

“Alright, now, Jon. Let’s get you cleaned,” Brandon said as he began to pull at the soiled linen around his son’s body. He did his best to not gag at the stench. It wasn’t his first time around shite, but it was a *little* alarming that something so small and innocent could produce *such* a load.

“Be careful, My Lord. I know from more than my fair share of experience. During a changing, you male babes sometimes tend to-” Nan began to warn, but it was too late.

“Ahhh!” Brandon exclaimed in complete surprise, springing to his feet.

“... pee.”

Benjen began to laugh so hard, he nearly fell over and Brandon looked down to Jon with a frown, but Jon just gurgled with a giggle as if he knew exactly what he had just done to his father.

“Let me finish cleaning him, My Lord,” Nan said, almost pleading now.

Brandon wiped at the pee his son had decided to spray at him from his tunic with one of the linens. “No, Nan. I’m going to finish this.”

“Still think he’s perfect?” Benjen asked his brother, having stopped laughing long enough to ask.

Brandon just smiled down to Jon, kneeling at the bedside again, and wiped at a trail of drool on his son’s chin. “Of course I do.”

...

Sansa has learned quickly that Jon loves to talk during their lovemaking; and not just talk, but *dirty* talk that would leave Sansa flushing with embarrassment because Kings and Queens are not supposed to say such things (she doesn’t think). But she has also learned quickly that she loves it. Absolutely loves it. Somehow, and she has no idea how or why, it makes their lovemaking that much more intense.

Tonight, he has already caused her to break apart once with just using his mouth and fingers.

“What are you doing?” She asked him, already breathless, as he began pressing kisses down her body. They were both already naked on top of the furs on their bed and Sansa thought that he would begin to push inside of her. Jon had other ideas though; ideas that Sansa had absolutely no knowledge of.

“I’ve been wanting to show you something,” he said, lifting his head from her naval. “If it’s alright.”

Sansa stared at him, having *no* idea what he was talking about, but... this was Jon. She trusted and loved Jon. Why wouldn’t she want him to show her something?

She hadn’t answered. She had simply given him a small smile and nod and Jon had broken into a wide smile at that before he continued pressing kisses down her front, going down further. And then further.

She had exploded after just a few minutes of his head between her thighs, grabbing his curls and screaming out. She hoped no one who could hear would think that Jon was murdering her. What he was doing to her... she felt she was about to shake right off from their bed.

But he wasn’t done with her – as she quickly found out.

She is now on her side with Jon behind her, her leg lifted up and back over his thighs as he thrusts into her from behind. This is an entirely new position for her. Yes, Ramsay had taken her from behind, but it had been brutal and demeaning and she had barely been able to walk afterwards from the pain he inflicted; pain that sometimes actually left her bleeding.

(She hopes she can have babies. She’s too terrified to even think of what will happen if she can’t and she can’t bring herself to talk with it about Jon because what if she *can’t* give him heirs?)

This position with Jon is completely different. He’s kissing her neck and her shoulder as he thrusts into her and sometimes, she turns her head back so their lips can meet in an open mouth kiss, she moaning as she feels his tongue against hers. Their bodies move together, both sweaty and panting heavily, Sansa moaning out as his hand occasionally brushes along one of her nipples or down to touch her clit.

Another thing Sansa has learned is that no matter what position they are in, Jon is making love to her.

“You’re so wet, Sansa,” Jon breathes in her ear. “Always so soaked around my cock.”

Sansa moans at his words, squeezing herself around him and not even realizing she is – still not knowing how to control such a thing – but she knows she does when it’s Jon’s turn to groan out loudly. His thrusts begin to speed up in response.

“Right there!” She suddenly cries out as she begins to feel that pull in her stomach and the tingles beginning where their bodies are connected, beginning to spread out. “Jon, don’t stop!”

“Never,” he rasps in her ear. “I’m never going to stop, Sansa. For the rest of our lives, I’ll never stop making you feel as good as you feel right now.”

She begins to cry out louder, bending her arm back so she can grab his hair at the back of his head. His words are making the tingles spread that much faster, each exploding every single nerve in her body. And once the inferno engulfs her and her entire body shakes, she vaguely can feel Jon still thrusting. He’s also still saying things to her, but everything has dropped off around her except for a roar in her ears.

Sansa doesn’t know what is happening, but just as she feels like maybe her body is going to come down to a stop, another bout of tingles is right behind. “JON!” She screams out, her entire body arching off of his and this time, she feels him gripping her hip and he slams into her one final time.

They both lay there, panting harshly, Sansa gulping in air to fill her otherwise empty lungs.

Jon slowly pulls himself out of her and she moans softly at the sensation. He kisses the back of her head before he turns, flopping onto his back, his chest heaving up and down.

“Was that alright?” He manages to ask her.

Slowly, Sansa rolls onto her back and then onto her other side to face him. She swears the slightest tremors are still quaking throughout her body.

“Which part?”

Jon smiles a little and turns his head so his eyes look into hers. "All of it."

She smiles a little, too. "All of it was certainly alright." Jon picks up her hand at that and kisses her fingers. "What was that?" She asks, lowering her voice to a whisper as if she's embarrassed that she has to ask.

Jon is still smiling as he rolls onto his side to face her as well. "I wanted to show you how good it can be."

"Jon," she moves in closer to him and rests a hand on the side of his neck, leaning in for her nose to brush affectionately against his. "It's always so amazing with you."

Jon responds to that by giving her the softest kiss on her lips.

"There's something I need to discuss with you and I haven't wanted to before because talking about it would be finally making it real," Sansa manages to get out before she can get herself to stop.

Jon looks at her, instantly at attention. "What is it?" He asks, his hand lifting to her face.

"It's," she swallows. "It's about my time with Ramsay."

Jon moves in as close to her as he can. "Sansa, you can tell me anything."

Sansa swallows again and nods. "I know. I feel... I feel safe here, with you, like this."

"I will always keep you safe. No matter what."

And it's not the first time he's made any sort of vow like that to her, but Sansa feels her heart squeeze nonetheless as if it is.

“Sansa!!”

There is a heavy pounding on their chamber door that makes them both jump at the suddenness of it.

“Sansa, a rider has come! He asks to see you!” It’s Arya and she hasn’t stopped pounding.

Jon is the first to leap from the bed, but Sansa is right behind him, throwing on her shift and grabbing her robe, hurrying to open the door without even looking to see if Jon is finished throwing on his own clothes.

Arya stands there, breathless from having run.

“Who is it?” Sansa asks, her chest tightening at the possibilities.

Who could it possibly be? Who has ridden to Winterfell to see her?

“Is it Lord Royce?” Sansa wonders, allowing herself a moment to get excited at the possibility.

They have written letter back and forth, but Sansa has not asked the man to return to Winterfell. She misses him and wishes him back, but Sansa is determined to be Queen and not have the man travel such distances just because she misses him. But maybe he has read something in her letters she hasn’t actually written and has guessed her true feelings.

Arya just shakes her head though and without a word, she grabs her sister’s hand and begins pulling her quickly down the hall. Jon jogs to catch up with them.

“Who is it, Arya?” Jon asks and Sansa notes that he has only thrown on a pair of breeches and his robe, leaving it open and billowing so his bare chest is exposed.

“It’s for Sansa,” is all Arya says.

Once they reach the Hall, Sansa’s eyes land on their guest immediately and she stops dead in her tracks.

He is facing the fire in one of the hearths, but hearing their arrival, he turns towards her. Her breath catches in her throat and just seeing him, her vision becomes blurry within an instant with tears.

“Your Grace,” Theon bows to her.

Sansa doesn’t say anything. She rushes to him and throws her arms around his shoulders, hugging him tightly; telling herself to not hug him too tightly, but she can’t seem to listen to herself.

She feels Theon hesitate – not surprising her in the least – but then slowly, she feels his hands on her back. Sansa closes her eyes and she doesn’t know how long they stand there, hugging, but she doesn’t care. Finally though, she manages to pull back, leaving her hands on his shoulders.

“It is so good to see you,” she smiles, tears in her tone, and Theon manages the barest of smiles for her.

He stands up straighter when Jon comes to stand at Sansa’s side and Sansa feels him stiff beneath her fingers. Sansa shakes her head though.

“I’ve told them everything. How you helped me escape Ramsay,” Sansa tells him.

“Why did you think I didn’t shove a blade in your stomach before you even dismounted?” Arya asks.

Theon looks to Sansa for another moment and she nods, assuring him. He then looks to Jon and taking a step back from Sansa, he bows to Jon next.

“Your Grace.”

“Theon,” Jon says and Sansa can see the light clench in his jaw, but he’s not doing anything else and Sansa knows that he won’t; because of her.

Theon looks from Jon to Sansa and then back to Jon. “If you won’t, I understand, but I don’t know where else to go. Daenerys Targaryen has already ignored my plea for help.”

Jon stiffens at the words. “Why would you go to her for anything?”

Sansa’s hand comes to his shoulder again when she feels Theon start to slip away, possibly turning in towards himself to Reek again, and she won’t let that happen. She then reaches down and takes his hand. She can’t scold Jon for his tone – it understandable – but she can help ease it.

“What happened, Theon?” She asks him in a far gentler tone.

Theon looks from Jon to Sansa and he swallows. “I need your help. My Uncle is working with Cersei and he’s taken my sister to King’s Landing. I have to get her back.”

...

Chapter End Notes

I love, love, LOVE this chapter and wanted to work on it right away. Things have just gotten a *little* but more complicated. THANK YOU very much for reading!

Chapter 31

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Well, fuck,” Edd mutters quietly to himself once Jon – with Sansa’s additions – had laid out everything for their small council of Edd, Sam, Davos, Arya, Tormund as well as Brienne and Pod both being present.

“That about covers it,” Jon nods in agreement.

“The North won’t fight for a Greyjoy,” Arya speaks bluntly; truthfully. “Not after everything he did.”

“But they’ll fight for the Queen if she asks them to,” Davos says.

Sansa shakes her head at that. “I won’t ask though. Yes, Theon saved me from Ramsay Bolton when no other Northerner could say the same, but I won’t ask them to fight Cersei when we’re already asking them to fight against dragons.”

There is a passing moment of silence at that and Arya is visibly clenching her jaw at her sister’s words. She is sitting at Sansa’s right and Sansa looks to her, almost as if she’s able to read her thoughts. Without a word, Sansa reaches her hand out and covers her sister’s with her own. She can feel the anger building and radiating off of Arya, but thankfully, with her hand on hers, Arya stays quiet. *No other Northerner could say the same.* Sansa tells herself she knows that it was complicated with the Bolton’s occupying Winterfell and there not being a strong enough force to take them on – and save her in the process – and honestly, Sansa doesn’t wish to think about it.

It doesn’t matter anymore. It’s in the past. House Bolton is dead and Sansa is still here, Queen in the North. Dwelling on the past and letting herself be angry over it won’t help her. And letting her sister stew in anger won’t help either.

Arya looks to her and slowly, Sansa sees her shoulders ease (slightly) and her jaw unclenches.

“And we’re still waiting to hear from Cersei?” Sam asks now.

“Yes. Sansa set the raven nearly four days ago. She’s probably trying to figure out how to ignore us and if she wants to do that, fine,” Jon answers. “She’s going to have a lot more burned forces and food on her hands if she does and she can’t very well want to be the Queen to starved people and ash.”

“Don’t be so certain,” Sansa says to her husband. “You have two women who will very much do anything to have that Iron Throne for themselves.”

“This fucking throne,” Tormund frowns. “I’ll never understand any of you kneelers. It’s a chair you plant your ass on. No chair is that important.”

“At least we don’t fuck bears,” Edd frowns back.

“That you know of,” Tormund throws him a grin.

“Alright,” Jon interrupts. “Not in front of Sansa.”

Without Jon seeing, Sansa rolls her eyes, but both Arya and Brienne see and while Brienne tries to hide her smile, Arya bursts into a grin.

“So, just to make sure I have all of this. We have a Targaryen with dragons who burned Maester Tarly’s family as well as most of the winter’s harvest that will feed most of the Southern lands. And then we have Cersei on the Iron Throne, who wishes Queen Sansa dead and is currently holding captive your Uncle’s old ward’s sister. We have contacted Cersei in hopes of aligning with her. She grants the North independence and we in turn, fight the Targaryen. Why are we wanting to align with Cersei?”

“We’re not siding with the Targaryen,” Sam frowns at the older man.

“Nor am I suggesting we do,” Davos holds up his hands to show that he means no offense. “I just happen to think that Cersei and this Daenerys are equally awful. Why involve ourselves at all?”

Jon sighs softly. He has asked himself the same thing, but then he’ll look at Sam, who has been as close to him a brother as Robb was, and he’ll think of his father and brother being burning by a dragon and then he’ll think of his own father and grandfather, facing down the same family and being murdered as a result.

He can’t *not* do anything.

And then there’s Theon. He is furious at the man – bordering on hate – and he feels like he has every justification in the world to feel that, but... he saved Sansa. He went through as much torture as Sansa did at the hands of Ramsay. It’s obvious to Jon that this is not the Theon with who he shared his youth. And after all of that, he risked his life to save Sansa’s.

“I’m going to go down to King’s Landing,” Arya suddenly declares.

“The Hell you are,” Jon frowns at her before he can stop himself.

“I’m not asking for your permission. I’m going.”

Sansa slowly pulls her hand away from where it is still resting on Arya’s. She thinks of what Arya had said about the Freys; what she had done to them. Suddenly, looking at Arya, Sansa knows exactly what she wants to go down to King’s Landing.

Could it truly be that simple? Could Arya, using whatever training she has received over these past few years away from home, actually go to King’s Landing and kill Cersei? It can’t be that easy. If it was, someone could have done it long ago. And Sansa can’t ask or expect her *younger* sister to go down to the Southern capital and murder someone else. Arya has already murdered too many and she should stay here, in Winterfell, where she won’t be put in such a position ever again.

“Arya,” Sansa begins to say quietly, shaking her head.

Arya just looks at her though and Sansa can tell that her sister will not be talked out of this.

“You can’t go alone, Arya,” Sansa says. What she really wants to say is *You can’t go at all*.

“I’m better on my own,” Arya says to that.

“No.” Sansa’s answer is hard and firm and now, it’s Arya’s turn to know that there will be no argument. “The pack, Arya,” she then says and after a moment of looking at her, Arya then gives a single nod.

“I will bring Meera with me. And Bran.”

Jon doesn’t agree to that. He moves on after giving one more glance towards Arya. “We’re going to keep Theon here, in Winterfell. If anything flies in our skies in that time, Theon has always been a good shot. He can help with the Scorpions.”

“Maybe you should finally just invite her,” Tormund suggests.

Every head in the room turns to look at him.

Tormund shrugs. “You invite her to come here, her dragons will be in the sky.”

Davos is the one to shake his head. “We can’t kill her if we invite her. Guest’s rights.”

“Kneelers,” Tormund grumbles.

“Guest’s rights even for a conqueror?” Edd wonders.

“Right now, I think going with Cersei is the right plan,” Jon tells them all. “Do I like it? No. But right now, there are very few options and unfortunately, ignoring everything south of the Neck just

isn't possible. Not after hearing what this Targaryen is more than willing to do."

No one voices an argument.

"And," he takes a deep breath. "When she agrees to the North's independence, she will maybe be inclined to release Theon's sister as well."

"Cersei may say to your face that she will do these things for you and then turn around and refuse once Daenerys is taken care of," Arya frowns. "That's what Cersei does."

"I'm aware of what kind of person Cersei is," Jon says to that, his voice a bit harsher than he intended and he takes another deep breath. This time, Jon's hand is one Sansa slides her hand over and Jon grasps it.

He looks at her and she gives him the smallest smile. Dealing with Cersei gives Sansa knots in her stomach, but as she and Jon have said so many times now. Better a lion than a dragon. A lion seems far more possible to kill. Just ask Arya.

The council meeting ends shortly thereafter and Jon signals for Arya to stay behind.

"You may wait outside, Brienne," Sansa tells her guard.

"Yes, Your Grace," Brienne bows her head and leaving the room, she closes the door behind her.

"You can't kill her yet," Jon tells Arya bluntly.

Arya sighs and stands up. "I told you I would wait for your word on Tyrion, but with Cersei, this is not an order I'm going to follow, Jon."

Jon stands up as well. "So you go down to King's Landing and kill her. Then what?" He is aggravated and impatient and isn't able to hide it.

“Then what, what? Who cares? Cersei will be dead and Westeros will be far better for it.”

“I think what Jon means is, when Cersei dies, there is going to be a vacuum. If you kill Cersei and we successfully dispose of Daenerys, there will be no one to rule the Southern kingdoms and there will be even more wars for the throne,” Sansa tells Arya in a far calmer tone. “*No one* wants that.”

“Why can’t you two just do it?” Arya asks.

Sansa blinks at her sister at that question and doesn’t even know what to say.

Jon, however, bursts out into laughter. “Sansa and I in King’s Landing, ruling all of Westeros? *That* is why I’m not letting you kill Cersei yet. You come up with an answer of what you’ll do after. Until then, you are staying right here.”

Arya scoffs. “Is that an order, *Your Grace*?”

Jon’s frown grows deeper and though Arya doesn’t look nervous, Sansa, herself, feels nervous though she knows, while Jon and Arya both have tempers, neither will use them on the other.

Jon does take one step closer to her though. “As your King, it is an order and you *will* obey it.”

...

Sansa takes a deep breath as Cora tightens the laces along the back of her dress. For some reason, it feels tighter than it should. She knows Cora loves tying her knots and Sansa has been wearing corseted dresses for years, and yet, this morning, Sansa winces as she feels like her body is squeezing into something it certainly won’t fit into.

“Wait, wait,” Sansa finally has to say.

Cora's hands are instantly gone from the laces.

"I can't breathe," Sansa pants. "I don't know what's wrong. I've worn this dress dozens of times. I *sewed* it myself. But this morning..." she trails off and shakes her head.

Cora remains silent as she looks over her Queen and Sansa turns her head to look over her shoulder at her maid. Aggie is there as well so that she may learn how to lace Sansa into her dresses for when she's a bit taller and stronger and won't need to stand on a stool to do so.

Sansa instantly notes Cora's smile. "What?" She wonders.

"May I, Your Grace?"

Sansa has no idea what Cora wants to do or say and she nods her head. Cora is still smiling as she leads Sansa over to the mirror, Aggie hurrying after them. Without a word, Cora turns Sansa sideways.

"How could you not have noticed?" Cora wonders.

Sansa stares at her reflection, sideways, and when she sees the smallest bump, she gasps so sharply, she nearly begins to choke. Is that...

"How..." she begins to ask, but words are failing her. She keeps staring at herself and the bump. *Her* bump. Her hands slowly come to a rest on it. It's so small, she knows the dress drawn tight against it is the only reason it seems so predominant right now. "We've been eating so much bread lately..."

Cora bursts out with laughter at that and seconds later, Sansa joins in, realizing how ridiculous it sounds; even more ridiculous because it's the truth.

"Oh, Your Grace," Cora then breathes and she has tears in her eyes and Sansa feels tears in her own.

The two women hug one another tightly and then they both feel arms around their waists and they look down to see that Aggie is hugging them now as well. She tilts her head up and smiles at them both and Sansa and Cora laugh, putting an arm around her each so the three are all hugging.

“Jon and I are having a baby,” Sansa whispers, feeling so light and shocked and hardly able to believe it; a hodgepodge of emotions and she is having difficulty separating one from the next.

“The North is having a baby!” Aggie exclaims excitedly and Sansa lets out a laugh and a sob all at once.

Cora and Aggie hug her tightly.

The tears begin rolling down Sansa’s cheeks and there’s no stopping them; not that she thinks to stop them. She’s having a baby. She and Jon are having a baby; an heir for their House and the North. She’s having the second thing she’s always wanted after a kind husband who loves her. A baby.

For some reason, she thinks of Daenerys then; of Tyrion’s plan to either murder Jon or have Jon begin a relationship with the dragon Queen. If Jon being with a Targaryen before wasn’t so hard to believe, now that they are having a baby, Sansa imagines that it would be impossible.

Why she’s thinking of that – *right now* – Sansa has no idea. She and Jon are having a baby. Nothing matters more than that and worrying about a woman taking her husband from her should be nowhere on her mind. She knows they have to help Sam and Theon both with their families and they *have* to get rid of those two Queens, but now that she is pregnant, maybe they can go back to their original plan of just ignoring everything.

...

Meg holds her dress so she doesn’t trip as she runs as quickly as she can through the halls of Winterfell. Her heart is pounding in her chest, beating in her ears, and her lungs burn. Still though, she pushes herself to keep running as fast as she can. And as she runs, her mind races, trying to think of what to say; trying to think of this new twist. How can she get out of this one? She needs to see all of the pieces and she must make up her mind quickly.

She practically falls into the Hall and those in the room turn their heads to look at her.

“Meg.”

King Jon is sitting in his chair behind the head table and she hurries across the room to join him. Queen Sansa is sitting in her chair next to him and she gives her a soft smile, but Meg admits that she hardly sees it. Her heart is still racing and she still is panting.

And standing in the center of the room is Varys.

“Meg,” Jon says. “Would you please stand in front of me?”

Meg does as he says, standing next to Varys and wondering if she should. If she stands next to him, does that show to the King and Queen that she’s on Varys’ side? Which side is Varys on?

Her mind is already racing.

But this is Varys and he helped her when no one else would; when everyone didn’t even know she existed. She can’t leave him standing by himself.

“Meg,” Jon says, leaning forward a bit more. “I never want to put this much pressure on you, but unfortunately, this situation calls for it. You know this man?”

“Yes, Your Grace.”

“And I know your relationship with him.”

“Yes, Your Grace.” Meg dares a glance at Varys, but he is looking ahead at the King and the Queen.

“I need you to give me reason why I shouldn’t run my sword through his belly right now.”

...

Chapter End Notes

Thank you very much for reading!

I know when a story starts to get too long, interest begins to become lost. In all honesty, the next few chapters are going to move quickly because I just want to deal with Dany and Cersei as quickly as possible so this story might be around 40 chapters in all. Thank you again!

Chapter 32

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Meg feels every pair of eyes in the Hall set on her, waiting her answer, but Meg only looks to the King and Queen. *Her* King and Queen and they are a good and just King and Queen. She takes a deep breath. She will not be afraid.

“Varys found me on the streets of King’s Landing, Your Grace, while I was eating trash I found on the streets. He took me into the Red Keep and gave me food and a bit of floor I could call my own.”

She can see the King clench his jaw at that, but he says nothing, so Meg continues.

“He taught me my letters and how to read. He didn’t have to do any of that, Your Grace. He could have left me out there like the hundreds of other children on the streets. I know some people don’t like the spying, but he never made me do it. He encouraged me, yes, but I don’t think he would have forced me to keep doing if I didn’t want to. Working for Varys, it made me feel like there was a purpose to me, Your Grace.”

The King and Queen don’t say anything as they look at Meg and Varys.

“You are an advisor to Daenerys Targaryen,” Jon then states, not looking for him to confirm or deny; already knowing that he is from Meg.

“I was, Your Grace,” Varys finally speaks.

“Was?” Sansa speaks up now. “Are you no longer?”

“I am not, Your Grace. I have removed myself from her services.”

“For what reason?” Jon asks and it is apparent to those present in the Hall, their King is barely containing his anger. From the corner of her eye, Sansa can see how tense her husband’s body is and how that tenseness is actually making him almost shake. She doesn’t reach for him though. She knows that sometimes, Jon has to be angry for a little bit. “Did you finally realize that the crazy doesn’t roll that far from the crazy tree?” He questions Varys.

“I thought she would be best for the realm, Your Grace, despite her name,” Varys answers. “She had me believe that she was nothing like those with her name who came before her and some of what she has done *has* been good, but other things she has done, it is enough to open my eyes to what kind of Queen she would be for Westeros.”

“And she just let you go?” Sansa has to ask.

“She did not know I left, Your Grace. Tyrion Lannister knew I was leaving, but I asked him to give me a bit of time before alerting her. I do not know if she could just not find me or if she did not care enough to look. I knew coming here would be a risk, but it was one I wanted to take.”

“Why?” Jon needs to know.

“I’m sure, by now, you’re aware that Meg has been sending me reports. I’m sure you’ve even helped her write a few.”

“We did not, but continue,” Sansa frowns at his words.

Varys pauses and looks to Meg who is still standing next to him. She gives him a small smile and Varys looks at her for another moment longer before looking back to the King and Queen in the North.

“Meg spoke so highly of you and how you care for your people and how the people in the North love you. And I knew Meg had fallen in love with you both, too. I wanted to see for myself.”

Jon and Sansa say nothing to that, but Varys shows no hint of nervousness; his face a mask of nothing.

It's unsettling to Sansa and brings back too many horrid memories she wishes to never recall again; memories of people saying one thing to her face and doing the complete opposite; memories of being thrown into a game she never wanted to play and in the North, she thought she wouldn't have to again.

But then Tyrion Lannister had come and now, Varys is here, Tyrion with his smiles and Varys with his blank face that reveals nothing and Sansa hates that this game is in her home. She had – perhaps naïvely – thought that once Jon had killed Littlefinger, all would be well.

“How do I know that Daenerys has not sent you here to spy on us?” Jon wonders.

“That would be a little too obvious, wouldn't it, Your Grace?” Varys asks back.

This time, Sansa does reach a hand out and place it on Jon's arm before he can shoot to his feet.

“Forgive me, Your Grace,” Varys says, having noticed Sansa's action. “I do not mean to insult you. I simply meant that with how quick you were to think that-”

“He would *never* do something so obvious, Your Grace,” Meg suddenly speaks up. “And if Daenerys suggested it, Varys would have told her that you would see right through it, as you have right now, Your Grace. He's not here to spy. I vow it.”

Sansa and Jon glance to one another before back to the young girl and the man who stands next to her.

Jon leans forward in his chair. “You vow it?”

Meg stands tall and juts her chin out. Sansa isn't sure why, but she feels quite proud of her right then. A seven-year-old girl staring straight into a King's eyes.

She does not hesitate in her answer. “I vow it, Your Grace. You may not trust Varys, but I ask that you trust me. He has not come as a spy.”

No one makes a sound. No one seems to even be breathing. Sansa, herself, is holding her breath as she looks to her husband; he and Meg staring at one another. Varys stands as still as stone, also looking to Jon, the man well aware that if the King ordered it, every person in this room would step forward to carry out his order and kill him right where he stands.

Slowly, Jon rises to his feet. “This girl is vowing for you,” he tells Varys. “If you make a fool of her, I’ll kill you myself.”

Varys bows to him. “Thank you, Your Grace.”

“My small council will meet me in my chancery. Meg, bring Varys,” Jon orders so all in the Hall hear. “We have much to discuss with him.”

“Yes, Your Grace,” Meg dips into a curtsy, not even trying to hide her smile. “Thank you, Your Grace.”

Those in the Hall begin to leave and Meg turns to Varys with a wide smile, the man giving her a small one in return. He still has a meeting with the King and his small council to get through, but at least the man hasn’t stabbed him on sight.

Sansa stands and turns towards her husband, her heart beating rapidly as Jon turns to her, frowning; she knowing he’s wondering if he had just done the right thing.

“Do you have a moment for me?” She asks with a small smile to let him know it’s nothing serious.

Actually, it’s *quite* serious, but it’s good kind of serious – a *very* good kind – and it is important he know that.

“Always,” he takes a deep breath and takes her hands. “Somewhere private?”

“Yes, please.”

...

Sansa isn't sure how to do this. She's obviously never had to do this before and when she and Jon are in a room off the Hall, the door closed behind them, all words seem to have fled her mind as he stands there, looking at her and waiting for her to tell him whatever it is she needs to tell him.

She wishes she had thought to ask her mother how Catelyn had told Ned about being with child. She, after all, had been in this exact position five different times.

Finally, Sansa decides that there are *no* words. She and Jon both want this. A bad reaction is not what she's worried about. In fact, she's not worried about anything in telling Jon that they're having a baby.

She takes a deep breath, gives him a faint smile and then takes both of his hands. Cora had helped her into a looser dress that doesn't hug her body as much and the bump is small enough to be easily hidden. But it can easily be felt if a person's hands are put right onto it. So that's what Sansa does now. She takes her husband's hands and places them directly on either side of the bump.

For a moment, Jon has no reaction at all. He stands there with his hands on her body and he is obviously trying to figure it out. But then, Sansa can see the moment he does. His face softens and his eyes widen and brighten and his mouth slightly parts. Sansa's smile begins to grow as she watches his expression run the gambit; shock, surprise and then absolute happiness.

She begins to laugh, tears rushing into her eyes – much as they had in her chamber when she had first discovered it herself – and Jon looks down to the bump and then back into her face.

“Truly?” He whispers and his eyes are wet now, too.

Sansa smiles and nods quickly. “Truly,” she whispers back.

Jon sweeps her into his arms so suddenly, Sansa gasps with surprise, but then she melts into his embrace. He holds her tight – as if he wishes to never let her go again – and she feels a dampness against her neck as he presses his face there. And knowing that her husband is crying over the news of their baby, Sansa begins crying as well, her arms tight around his shoulders.

This is all she's wanted and she know that it's the same for Jon. Both want a family. They are home, in Winterfell, and Arya and Bran are with them, but to have children, to be parents, that's what they've both wanted. Even when Jon went to the wall, it was a dream he held, deep inside and never revealed to anyone. Even when Sansa was forced to marry Tyrion and then Ramsay, she still held onto the dream that seemed more and more impossible with each passing day.

But now, together, they are having a baby and this is the way it was always supposed to be. And both now cry because they both know it.

...

“Your cousin is going to kill you,” Meera states without mincing words as she watches Arya pack the sack she is taking with her.

Arya shakes her head in disagreement. “After what I do, he and everyone will be thanking me. And Jon has no idea what I can do. I can sneak into the Red Keep without anyone seeing *my* face.”

Meera frowns at that, not understanding. “It's too dangerous. How will you even find Theon's sister? Why do you even *care* about finding Theon's sister?”

Arya pauses in her packing, but keeps her head down. “He helped my sister when no one else would. It's now my chance to return the favor to him.”

Meera is quiet at that and Arya resumes packing the rest of her sack. When she's finished, she makes sure she has Needle and her other daggers before swinging the sack onto her shoulder. She turns to Bran, who is sitting in his chair by the fire in her chamber.

“Are you sure you can't come?” Arya asks him what she already has. She doesn't want to tell him straight out, but she's gotten used to her brother when he wargs into a raven and she likes having him either on her shoulder or head; close by.

Bran gives her a small smile, but then shakes his head. "Jon and Sansa will need me here with them."

Arya sighs, but nods. She goes to him and bending down, she gives him a tight hug, Bran patting her back.

"Be safe," he tells her.

"You, too." Arya squeezes her arms once more before straightening and giving him a small smile. She is grateful that he does not try to talk her out of doing this. She then turns to Meera, who has become a good friend in their time since fighting the dead together. "Will you come with me?" She asks.

It might be better if Arya goes alone. It will certainly be easier for her to get Yara Greyjoy out of the Red Keep by herself, but being honest with herself, she doesn't want to go to King's Landing alone. Deep down, there's still a part of the young girl who is afraid of that city.

Meera pauses for a moment and then gives a single nod. "Yes, I'll come with you."

...

"Your Grace," Pod nods his head as he holds out the newly arrived parchment for Sansa as she sits at her desk in her solar with Ghost lying on the floor, keeping her feet warm.

"Thank you," Sansa smiles and glances down to the wax seal, instantly smiling wider when she sees the familiar seal of House Royce. Eagerly, and not trying to hide her happiness, she instantly rips it open to see what Lord Royce has written her since she sent her last letter to him a week before.

She still has not asked him to come back to Winterfell and she finds herself having to forcibly stop herself from writing the words in each letter. She misses her dear friend, but he belongs in the Vale.

Sansa begins to read his letter, but within the first two sentences, she stops and goes very still. This is not a letter exchanged between friends. This is Lord Royce, getting right to his point and telling her what he has to tell her. Sansa reads his words once more before she shoots to her feet, startling Ghost and the direwolf hurrying to his feet as well, shaking himself off at being disturbed.

Sansa doesn't have time to apologize to him though. Her heart is already racing.

"We must go to Jon immediately," she tells Pod, who has stayed in the room with her, keeping guard. She then looks to him and she knows he will find out soon enough since he will be coming with them and Pod has been so loyal and good to her, she would like him to hear the news straight from her. "We will have to go see my cousin, Robin Arryn, in the Vale. Daenerys Targaryen has requested he offer his land as a neutral spot to meet the King in the North."

...

Chapter End Notes

Lord Royce is back (in the next chapter)! Yay! I've missed him just as much as Sansa has and we will also have Robin Arryn (seeing him in the final council in the last episode was delightful, I will admit, because I'm shallow and he grew up very nicely). And the Vale might not be as neutral as Dany thinks, BUT the meeting between her and Jon is getting closer.
THANK YOU!

Chapter 33

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Even as their party nears their destination after a week of traveling, Jon still feels anger. And he feels it's anger he has every right in the world to feel.

Arya barely wasted any time in *blatantly* disobeying his orders before she was leaving with Meera Reed to go down to King's Landing after he explicitly told her not to. Honestly, he can't even begin to *think* of what she's going to do down there without giving himself a headache and the result of whatever she does do will, as well, give him another headache.

He has a pregnant wife – a *stubborn*, pregnant wife – who has insisted on making this journey to the Vale with him despite him telling her that he would lock her in her chamber to keep her in Winterfell if he had to. She has herself and their baby to look after, but when he had told her that, Sansa had stared at him without saying a single word.

And if that isn't enough, the Targaryen has come to the Vale, basically making demands that Jon come to meet her on neutral land. He's not going to tell her how wrong she is in thinking that the Vale is neutral, but he is going to – reluctantly – admit that there's not a lot of neutral land to choose from. Still though, choosing the Vale? Who the hell is advising her because it's obvious that Tyrion has drunk too much and his brain is obviously sloshing around in wine.

Riding his horse at the front of their convoy, Jon turns in his saddle to look at those behind him. Bran has stayed behind in Winterfell though just his body. The raven has perched himself on the backside of Jon's horse and Jon gives him the smallest smile now. To look after Bran's body while he is warging, Jon has asked Tormund to stay behind.

"Like you'd get me to go even further South than Winterfell anyway," Tormund had grinned in response to the request, clapping a hand on Jon's back so hard, he sent him forward a step. "I'll look after the little raven for you. What does he eat?"

Theon had come to him to ask if he could watch over Bran as well. Jon knew the man had penance to do and Bran had told Jon that he wanted Theon watching over him. If Bran was alright with it,

Jon didn't have a reason to refuse the man's request.

Sam had also stayed behind in Winterfell to oversee the day-to-day operations and though he wants to see his mother and sister, he knows what his responsibilities as Winterfell's newest Maester are. Gilly and Little Sam have come with Jon and Sansa to the Vale, Melessa and Talla Tarly having already met them at Horn Hill and perhaps, a visit from Sam's wife and son will ease their pain a little.

Coming with Jon as well are Edd, Davos, Brienne and Pod as well as some of the Winterfell guards, the remaining of their men staying in Winterfell. Sansa is riding a horse – taking it slow and steady – near the back of their people, Edd at her side with Brienne in front of her and Pod behind. Sam had assured them all that the baby is well protected inside of Sansa and unless she went galloping at top speeds or was planning on making leaps while on her horse's back, no harm should come to the baby. Sansa hadn't wanted to bring the carriage.

"Riding in a carriage is just as bumpy as riding on a horse," Sansa had told him. "Maybe even more so." She then put a hand on Jon's cheek and gave him a soft kiss. "We'll be fine. The babe is quite padded." Jon had just stared at her. He had made his feelings quite known. "I'm not letting you face a Targaryen alone. She has already burned people and food. What if she burns you?"

Jon didn't have an answer to that.

Meg and Varys have come as well. Jon had been unsure of bringing Varys, but it would be no secret to Daenerys and the others with her that Varys had left, but do they know that he had come to the North? In the end, Jon realized that he was angry and petty enough to rub Varys being now with him in Daenerys' face though Jon still has no trust for the man no matter how much Meg vouches for him.

Edd has said something and Sansa lets out a laugh, it echoing against the mountains around them and Edd looks so pleased with himself for having made the Queen laugh. Jon's own lips twitch upwards at the sound. He loves hearing Sansa laugh and he loves that even now, riding towards such an unknown, the fact that she can laugh, it does Jon's heart good.

Jon looks to Bran one more time, the raven still perched on his horse's back, before facing forward, Davos riding at his side. He clamps his jaw down as they keep riding on. In front of them, the Eyrie begins to rise from the mountains. They'll be there within the hour and if Daenerys Targaryen is already there, Jon knows he must do his best to not run his sword through her as soon as they meet.

...

Though they are not truly cousins, Jon and Robin Arryn greet one another as the family they are; blood and who married into what family not mattering.

Outside of the Eyrie, Robin stands with Lord Royce at this side and some other men of the Vale and when Jon brings his horse to a stop and dismounts, he looks to the young man – now seventeen, tall and not at all the sheltered, spoiled boy of their youth – and is able to smile despite the reason for his visit.

Everyone bows at the sight of Jon, but Jon ignores that and begins making strides towards Robin, who is now grinning at him. He steps forward and the two embrace in a back-slapping hug.

“Let’s look at you,” Jon says, putting his hands on Robin’s shoulders and holding him an arms-length away. “You’ve grown,” he then states simply; to put it mildly.

Robin laughs at that. “I hear children tend to do that.”

Jon smiles at that and then looks to Lord Royce. The two men clasp hands in a shake. “My wife has been missing you terribly,” Jon then lets him know.

“And I her,” Royce replies and that makes Jon smile a little; as if he was worried that the man isn’t as attached to Sansa as she is to him.

He knows that over these past few years, it has been hard for his wife to consider anyone a friend; not like Jeyne Poole and Beth Cassel, in their youth, had been to her. It had been impossible for her to trust anyone. She had mentioned that there had been someone in King’s Landing – Shae – but Sansa hasn’t spoken of her more than that first, and last, time.

But she trusts Lord Yohn Royce and enjoys the man’s company and cherishes his council and the man, in turn, has proven, time and time again, his love and loyalty to not only Sansa, but towards Jon and the North as well.

“I have told him that he may return to Winterfell whenever he wishes, but it seems like Lord Royce still does not trust me enough to manage things on my own,” Robin grins, slapping a hand on the much-bigger man’s back.

“It seems it’s good I did not leave for it looks like I would be returning just as soon,” Royce says.

Jon’s smile fades as he looks back to Robin. “Has she arrived?” He asks in a quieter voice. He doesn’t see dragons in the sky though. When she comes, he fully expects to see these dragons.

“Not yet,” Robin shakes his head, his own smile gone. “I wanted to make sure I gave you enough time to arrive before I told her that she would come. I...” Robin takes a step closer to Jon and drops his voice even further so there is no risk for it to be overheard. “I didn’t know what to do. Obviously, I am loyal to you and Sansa as is all the Vale, but with her dragons, she’s already burned armies and men who wouldn’t bend. I didn’t want to burn and I wouldn’t betray the North.”

Gods, Jon hates this woman and he has yet to meet her.

Jon squeezes Robin’s shoulder. “I understand,” he assures him.

“Robin!”

They turn to see that the others have arrived and Sansa is beaming brightly. Jon goes to help his wife dismount from her horse and Sansa smiles at him, holding his arms for a moment as she gets her legs steady beneath her once again. The wind has blown strands of hair free from her braid and her cheeks are pink and she looks positively beautiful.

Jon remembers Uncle Ned talking about Aunt Catelyn when she was with child and how pregnancy made women seem even more beautiful. “Gives them a glow,” his uncle would say with a smile.

Sansa is always beautiful, but Jon recalls his uncle’s words and wonders if her being pregnant with their child now has anything to do with it.

“Alright?” He asks her quietly, lifting a leather-gloved hand to her cheek.

She smiles softly at him and nods, tilting her cheek slightly into his palm. He smiles, too.

“Alright,” she confirms quietly to match him.

“Your Grace,” Robin bows to her, having approached them, and Sansa’s smile splits her face. Jon releases her so that she may go hug her cousin, the two embracing tightly.

And then she sees Lord Royce and she begins to cry openly at the sight of him. She picks up the hem of her dress so she won’t trip as she goes running to him, the man just able to lift himself from his bow before Sansa has practically thrown herself against him. The man is startled for half a second before he is beaming and hugging her, practically lifting her from her feet.

“Well, now that those two are reunited, let’s get you and your people settled and fed,” Robin smiles at Jon and Jon smiles, too, the two walking towards the front doors of the Keep. “Are you actually going to listen to her or just kill her outright?” Robin then asks, his voice soft again.

Jon nearly snorts at the question – not because it’s a stupid question to be asking, but because it *isn’t*.

“I kill the Targaryen and then we’re stuck with three dragons who will, more than likely, avenge her and we all burn. So, no. I don’t think I’ll kill her outright. I’ll be tempted, I know.”

“Her letter reminded me of Baelish,” Robin then says, surprising Jon, and it must be obvious that it has because Robin looks to his face and smiles. “It had that tone of politeness, but even just with her words, I knew there was a threat beneath it. I know now, away from his influence, that he was only manipulating me into what he wanted to do, but he taught me a few valuable things.”

“Sansa has said the same about the man,” Jon muses quietly.

Robin nods. “Things I have made sure to not forget and one was always listen to what people don’t say.”

Jon is quiet, not surprised, but thinking that over nonetheless.

Honestly, he doesn't know how to approach this woman. He knows how he would like to, but as he just told Robin, he can't very well just come right out and kill her. She has dragons. She has armies. He had told Arya that killing Cersei – well Sansa told her – would cause a vacuum of power and all of these wars wouldn't be ending anytime soon and Jon feels like Westeros has seen enough bloodshed for centuries.

If he just killed Daenerys Targaryen on pure emotion and anger – which is the very thing Arya wants to do in regards to Cersei – there would be another vacuum then and her armies would be more than prepared to fight and avenge her. And the dragons. He can't forget the dragons. Gods, could anyone forget them? Having them certainly gives her an unfair advantage and isn't that how her family came to power the first time? All of that shite Tyrion was spouting about this woman being different than her family is exactly that. Nothing, but shite.

Caw!

Jon smiles, having nearly forgotten about him – but not daring to say that out loud. Both he and Robin look to see the raven swoop in through the doors after them and flying down the hall, catching up to them. He lands gracefully on Jon's shoulder.

“This is Bran,” Jon tells Robin. “As in, our cousin, Bran.” He is smiling as he adds that last part and Robin looks at him as if perhaps the King in the North has lost his mind.

He looks to the black raven on Jon's shoulder then to Jon again. “Of course,” Robin responds to that and Jon lets out a laugh.

...

She knows there is no reason to hum and yet, Sansa can't stop herself. The Targaryen will be coming soon with her dragons and who knows how many men and she is, but one threat they have to address – Arya down in King's Landing, possibly assassinating Cersei this very moment is another – and yet, Sansa smiles to herself and hums.

Cora and Aggie have made the journey with them and Sansa has excused them for the night. She now sits in the chair in front of the fire in the chamber that Robin has given her and Jon, brushing out her braids. Jon is still behind closed doors, discussing things with those of their council who have come with them as well as with Robin and Lord Royce. Sansa had every intention of being with them, but after the evening meal, she began yawning and couldn't stop and this time, when Jon told her to go to their chamber, she didn't stubbornly refuse to listen.

The journey to the Vale from Winterfell has been long and hard on her bottom, riding all that time, and Gilly has told her that her body will feel very tired these next coming months. A woman is always tired during these early days of pregnancy and they have to get their rest while they still can.

Sansa has changed from her dress into her white shift and tries to stay up for Jon to return.

After her hair is brushed out, she sets her brush down and rests both hands onto her bump, a little larger now than it had been just the week before, but it is still small. Still, her pregnancy is now known; it obvious in the dresses she wears – and the manner in which she loses her stomach contents each morning. Brienne had tried to hide curious eyes from those in their travel party, but it wasn't hard to figure out why their Queen would be vomiting every morning. Every woman with child does it.

“This is the best news,” Royce had beamed once he had figured it out for himself as the two had had private tea in one of the solar rooms earlier. “An heir for the North.”

Sansa had smiled, just from hearing those words spoken. Yes, an heir for the North and an heir for the Stark family, but more important than that to Sansa, is it's a baby for her and Jon. It's *their* baby.

“Boy or girl, the whole of the North will ring the bells all day at their birth just as your father had when you were born,” Royce continued.

“I hope there won't be disappointment if we have a girl first,” Sansa said, already knowing that she and Jon wouldn't mind in the least if this baby was born a daughter rather than a son, but she was not naïve and knew that first-born sons were very much preferred.

“Son or daughter, they will be *your* son or daughter and a Stark. That is all of us could ever ask for.”

Sansa smiled at him. “I have missed you so, so much,” she told the man what she hadn’t yet.

“I have missed you very much as well, Sansa,” he smiled.

Sansa’s smile only grew at his words. She was Sansa. Not just “Your Grace”. When it was just the two of them, she was Sansa and he was her dear, dear friend.

She knows Jon hadn’t wanted her to make this journey with him, but he couldn’t possibly expect her to just sit in Winterfell with absolutely no idea of what was happening here. She knows this is dangerous, but she is Queen in the North and she’s tired of others looking at her and think that she’s weak and absolutely can be taken advantage of.

The Starks are known for being good and fair people, causing people to pledge their loyalty and love to them. But they are also wolves and that seems to have been forgotten.

Sansa smiles down at her baby bump as she runs her hands over it. She is looking forward to showing this Daenerys Targaryen just what wolves can do.

...

Chapter End Notes

I hate when real life prevents me from writing and updating. THANK YOU very much for reading! Who's ready for BAMF Sansa, homicidal-angry Jon and Daenerys finally meeting them both?

Chapter 34

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Is this good, Your Grace?” Aggie asks, leaning over in her chair, as Sansa leans over in hers to inspect Aggie’s embroidery closer. Like most girls, Aggie can sew, but the art of embroidery is a skill that not everyone has the opportunity to learn. Not only does Aggie get to learn, but she gets her lessons from the Queen herself, who is known all throughout Westeros for what she can do with a needle and thread.

Sansa looks at the practice pattern of the House Stark direwolf sigil that she has given Aggie and bursts into a smile. “You’re doing so well, Aggie,” she compliments the girl and Aggie straightens in her chair with pride, just making Sansa smile wider.

Together, Cora and Sansa are working on repairing Jon’s cloak; he having worn it so much, the fur collar and the leather straps have become frayed and worn. Sending Ghost out on a hunting excursion, the direwolf returned with the winter fox Sansa had requested of him and Robin had his kitchen clean and skin it, treating the fur so that Sansa and Cora may now sew it into Jon’s cloak once more.

Ghost is sleeping in front of the fire in front of the three in their chairs and he is the first to hear it. He lifts his head, his body still, and then he quickly rises himself to all four legs. His head is tilted up towards the ceiling, obviously hearing something that hasn’t reached the others’ ears yet.

Sansa stops her needle and looks to Ghost as if she is waiting for him to tell her what he has heard.

Her body is tight, tense, and her heart feels as if it has paused in her chest. What has Ghost heard? Will she soon be able to hear it herself.

And then, she does. Cora and Aggie then hear it, their eyes going up to the ceiling as well. Ghost then begins to growl, his fur standing on edge. It sounds like a great whoosh of wind outside; like a gust of wind that threatens to knock everything over with its strength. And then, another whoosh followed by a third. And then the cries call out, making all three jump and Ghost continues to growl, crouching down low. The cries are so loud, it drums against Sansa’s chest and hurts her ears.

Setting Jon's cloak aside, Sansa flies from her seat to the window, Cora and Aggie following after her. People down below are running or pressing themselves down to the ground as if hiding themselves. Three shadows sweep across the sky and Aggie gasps, stepping behind Sansa and Cora so she doesn't have to see. Sansa feels herself frozen to the spot even if she wants to close her eyes and hide as well.

The dragons are real. Tyrion wasn't lying. Daenerys Targaryen has dragons.

And she has brought all three of them to the Vale.

It's one of the most terrifying things she's ever seen and she recognizes this fear. This fear paralyzes her. She doesn't even hear the door to the chamber open behind her or Aggie and Cora dip into curtsies.

"Go to your rooms and stay there until you hear something otherwise from myself or your Queen," Jon tells his wife's maids and they dip into curtsies again before leaving the room.

Sansa still has not looked away from out the window. The dragons have landed faraway enough from the Vale where they have room for their wingspan, but they are still too close. Being anywhere near Westeros is too close.

She jumps when she feels a hand on her back even though she is aware of Jon being in the room with her.

"I'm sorry," he murmurs to her as he always does when he startles her.

Sansa shakes her head, not saying anything to that, and she stares at the three beasts the whole world had thought were gone forever. These three have already declared war on Westeros even if they hadn't attacked armies and food. They have already declared war just by being here.

"Robin and Lord Royce will be meeting her and her party in the courtyard and Robin will send for us once he gets the woman settled in the Hall," Jon tells her. Sansa has no reaction to that, still staring out the window, and Jon tucks a strand of her hair behind her ear. "Sansa?"

“Promise me,” Sansa whispers, tears pooling in her eyes, and she doesn’t care how vulnerable – and scared – she sounds right then. She finally turns away from the window to face her husband. “Promise me you won’t... I hear that she is beautiful.”

Jon stares at her and he admits that he can’t even believe she’s saying these words.

But then he remembers what Davos told him when Sansa’s pregnancy became known to everyone. Davos had warned him that his wife’s emotions were going to be as up and down as a hill and it could happen as quick as a flash of lightening. The best thing a husband can do with a pregnant wife’s emotions, according to Davos, is to just go with it.

Jon steps to her and with his hands on her cheeks, he holds her face and stares into her eyes. “I promise you. You are my only Queen and you always will be.” He leans in and presses his lips to hers. “I love you.”

Sansa nods and snuffles, closing her eyes. “I love you, too. And I know... I don’t know why I’m worried,” she then admits. Opening her eyes, she looks right into his as his hands stay on her cheeks. She can see his concern for her and she snuffles again. “I don’t know what’s wrong with me.”

“Davos warned me about this,” Jon informs her.

“What did he warn you about?”

“Your emotions can be a quite... our babe will make you unpredictable for the next few months,” Jon explains as diplomatically as he can without getting a switch in emotions and getting her angry.

“Gilly told me the same thing. I just didn’t... I guess I didn’t know what she meant until just now.” Sansa exhales and she lifts her hands, wrapping her fingers loosely around his wrists. “I’m scared,” she whispers.

“Me, too,” Jon nods and his admission makes the smallest smile pull at her lips. “I am scared that I’m going to make a horrible mistake I can’t take back. I am going to need you. I already know I’m

going to want to kill her as soon as I lay eyes on her and I'm sorry for doing this to you, but I need you to keep me from doing that."

"That's a very big responsibility to give me," Sansa notes.

"That's why I'm apologizing, but I know that if anyone can do this, it's you."

Sansa releases her fingers from his wrists so she can guide his hands down to her tiny, but noticeable, bump. It might look as if she's had a very large breakfast or that she is early in her pregnancy with the next heir to the North.

"If you begin to feel so much anger and I'm not able to keep you reigned in, just remember that we have our child to think of and this child of ours will not lose their father to dragon fire."

Jon keeps his hands over their child and closing his eyes, he brings his forehead to hers.

He thinks of his father. How can he not; about to meet the daughter of the man who murdered Brandon Stark? He wonders what his father had thought, leaving his baby son with his brother and new wife in the Riverlands as he rode South to confront a mad king and demand retribution for his kidnapped sister?

Did Brandon think of his son as he died? Was Jon the last thought on his father's mind in this world?

Sansa's right. Together, they are having a child and this baby will know their father. Jon will not leave Sansa alone in this world to raise their child; his child having to grow up, only hearing stories of their father from their mother and those who knew him.

He knows his father was an admirable and brave man, but sometimes, growing up, Jon had felt such anger towards him, for leaving him to grow up in this world without his father. Jon loves his father, but will not make the same mistakes his father made while coming face-to-face with a mad Targaryen.

...

“You stand in the presence of Daenerys Stormborn of House Targaryen, the first of her name, Queen of the Andals and the First Men, protector of the Seven Kingdoms, the mother of dragons, the Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, the-”

“Are you fucking kidding me?”

Sansa immediately digs her nails into her husband’s arm at his interruption.

The woman who had been introducing the smaller, beautiful woman with hair so blonde, it is nearly white, stands there with her mouth still open for a moment before she glances nervously towards Daenerys. The woman remains sitting in the chair where Robin, as Lord of the Vale, would normally sit and she produces a smile with her lips remaining pursed.

Davos quickly steps forward. “Allow me to introduce Jon and Sansa Stark, King and Queen in the North.”

For a moment, no one speaks. Daenerys looks down at them and Jon and Sansa look up to her. Sansa makes sure to keep her face blank. She doesn’t look at anyone else in the room. Tyrion is with Daenerys as well as the woman who had been announcing her and another man in a soldier’s garb, standing tall and straight with a blank face to match hers. She doesn’t look at Jon or Davos, Edd, Brienne, Pod or Varys.

Robin and Lord Royce is there as well – acting as a neutral party though surely, Tyrion has told his Dragon Queen that they are far from neutral.

“It is a pleasure to finally meet you, Jon Stark,” Daenerys speaks and Sansa doesn’t take her eyes from the woman as she stands and begins making her way towards them. “I have heard so much about you.”

“I’ve heard plenty about your family as well,” Jon responds and his voice has an edge to it and Sansa looks to him, but he is staring at the woman approaching them.

Daenerys smiles then and for not having lived in Westeros, the smile is so familiar to one that Sansa has received from countless people; a smile with venom. Sansa's entire body is frozen at the sight of it. She doesn't know this woman at all. She knows things about her – a woman who rides a dragon and burns those who disagree with her. Sansa supposes that's all she needs to know about her, and yet, she thinks of Littlefinger and Cersei and what they would do if they were here, facing this woman.

Sansa must learn *everything* about this woman. Surely, there is more to her. There has to be. There is even more to Cersei, who has a love for her children above anything else. What does this woman love? Her dragons, surely. What else? The Iron Throne and from what Sansa can gather, a near obsession to sit on it.

What can Sansa do with that knowledge?

Daenerys is still giving Jon that pursed smile that would probably make anyone else nervous, but Jon Stark is not just anyone. He has defeated the Night King. He has faced death so many times. He has *died*. Her husband is not the sort to feel fear.

"I would hope that the noble King in the North who I have heard such praises for would not blame a daughter for her father's sins," Daenerys comments.

"I hold people responsible for their own sins," Jon retorts. "You've only been in Westeros, what? A handful of months. If your goal was to screw so many things up as immensely as you could in that time, you've far succeeded. A true talent you have."

From behind her, Sansa hears a snort and she knows that it's Edd, smothering his laughter quickly with his hand over his mouth, pretending to cough.

Daenerys' smile disappears in a flash. "What do you mean by that?"

"Burning men who won't subject themselves to a foreign invader and burning much needed food for winter? If your goal was to have the people embrace you with open arms, you've already lost."

Daenerys stares at Jon, her jaw visibly clenching, and Jon just stares right back, not saying anything.

Then, her eyes dart over to look to Sansa. “Are you in agreement with your husband, Lady Stark?”

“*Your Grace*,” Jon bites out. “Don’t disrespect my wife again.”

Daenerys looks back to Jon. “The North is not independent and is still a part of Westeros. Just because you declare it does not make it so.”

It is Jon’s turn to give the woman his smile with a side of venom. “Just because one declares themselves Queen of Westeros does not make it so.”

“My husband is not wrong,” Sansa suddenly speaks up and both Jon and Daenerys break their attention from one another to look at Sansa. She is grateful for that. The looks in one another’s eyes as they stared at the other made the room tight with a lack of air to breathe. The anger is radiating off of both and Sansa is struggling to maintain some semblance of restraint.

This woman has dragons and clearly, she has no qualms in using them against those who disagree with her. Jon’s fury is already reaching maximum levels and he will not be thinking clearly. Sansa knew that coming to the Vale, this would be her role – even before Jon told her of it in her chamber just earlier. Sansa must keep her head.

“The majority of those in Westeros will not consider you their Queen. Dragons terrify them and someone who uses these dragons to burn their food will not be someone they will wish to kneel to,” Sansa says.

Tyrion steps in then. “Westeros will accept it. They just need to be reminded of the peace House Targaryen’s rule brought to them.”

“The people of Westeros wish to eat,” Varys takes his turn to speak. “And they *will* remember who was responsible for burning their needed food.”

Daenerys looks past Jon and Sansa to look to her former advisor, her eyes narrowed. “It speaks of what kind of rulers Jon and Sansa Stark are if they permit a traitor in their circle.”

Jon takes a step forward then and Sansa can see Davos, Edd, Brienne and Pod tense, their hands going to the swords at their sides. The soldier with Daenerys, who hasn't spoken a word or even moved, now moves his hand towards his own weapon.

Sansa doesn't think. There is no time for thinking. Jon kills this woman and they have her dragons and armies who will slaughter them immediately. In situations like this, thinking must be put second.

Quickly, she puts her body between Jon's and Daenerys', staring at the Dragon Queen. She feels Jon stiffen behind her and he has his hands on her arms, about to move her to his side, or even behind him, but Sansa will not move.

He has his father's temper and she will not lose him because of that.

"A wife who protects her husband," Daenerys notes, another smile forming. "I was told that you only married because it was demanded of you both." She glances back to Tyrion.

"I'm actually protecting *you*," Sansa corrects her. "And my marriage with my husband will not be discussed as there is no reason to discuss it."

Daenerys now focuses her smile and purple eyes on Sansa. She can feel Jon's hands tighten on her arms. From the corner of her eye, Sansa can see Lord Royce take a step forward as if he's about to aid Jon in sweeping Sansa out of the way, but Sansa will not allow herself to be moved. She is a wolf and they do not cower; not even in front of dragons. And wolves protect their own.

Caw!

They all turn their heads and look up when they see that black raven fly into the room. And though he is a raven, Sansa feels relief at seeing that Bran has arrived.

Daenerys, however, gasps at the sight. "That bird," she says, hushed, watching the black bird flap in the air. She then spins around and shouts, her voice echoing in the room. "It's that bird, Greyworm!"

“No!” Sansa shouts out and she doesn’t even realize that swords have been drawn by the others and Jon has pushed her towards Robin and Lord Royce.

All Sansa can see is the soldier named Greyworm not even hesitating after his Queen’s words. He pulls out his dagger and with precision, flings it upwards so it spins through the air right towards Bran. Jon rushes forward and swings his sword down, cutting Greyworm’s arm off, the man screaming and falling to the ground, the other woman with Daenerys screaming, too, as she rushes to Greyworm, but it’s all too late. Sansa screams as the dagger strikes Bran, the raven screeching out as it begins to fall to the floor.

And then, Daenerys stands in the middle of the chaos. “*Dracarys!*”

...

Chapter End Notes

Well, that went to Hell quickly, but as I warned, these next few chapters are going to be moving quickly.

Thank you so, so much for reading. I have gotten behind on responding to reviews and I am so sorry for that, but please know that I read every single one and it all means the absolute world to me. Thank you again!

Chapter 35

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“Dracarys!”

Bran opens his eyes slowly, his mind taking a few long moments to get used to this change. A dragon is much different than a raven. For one, it’s much larger and it uses more of Bran’s concentration. He then shakes the dragon’s head back and forth as if clearing its mind. The dragon’s eyes are sharp like a bird’s and they can see far distances ahead.

Upon her arrival, Daenerys had ordered her dragons to stay in this valley between two mountains with the Vale still in eyesight, but far enough away where they would have room to stretch their wings if wanted. Through the dragon’s eyes, he can see the Vale ahead; more specifically, he can see Daenerys at one of the windows of the Hall where the meeting had been taking place.

“Drogon! Dracarys!” She shouts out again, her angry, and yet desperate, voice carrying to the three dragons on the wind.

The other two dragons, a bit smaller than the great black one, but not by much, don’t move. Instead, they look to the one Bran is inside of – Drogon – and wait to see what he will do. In the times Bran has practiced warging into this dragon, he quickly learned that Drogon is the leader; the favorite of Daenerys. What he does – or doesn’t do – is followed by the other two.

Bran as Drogon rises himself up at Daenerys’ call to him. He lets out a snort and stretches his wings, bringing them up and down a few times. They are obviously much heavier than a raven’s wings and again, Bran takes a moment to accustom himself to using them. The other two dragons follow his lead. And when Bran pushes himself upwards from the rock into the sky, he holds himself in the air, making sure he keeps facing the Vale for another minute before he turns and begins flying in the opposite direction.

Sure enough, the other two dragons rise up and fly on either side of him, not questioning. In Drogon’s mind, Bran smiles to himself as he can still hear Daenerys’ voice in the wind, shouting after him.

...

“Jon!” “Greyworm!” Sansa and the woman who had been at Daenerys’ side – her maid, her slave, Sansa doesn’t know and it doesn’t matter – shout at the same time to the two separate men.

Despite his arm on the floor, detached from his body, and he bleeding out quickly, the Unsullied soldier is not giving up. With his other arm, he manages to grab his other dagger – one he hadn’t thrown at the bird – and just as he plunges the dagger into Jon’s thigh, Jon brings his sword down, right into Greyworm’s chest; into his heart. He gurgles on the blood, flooding his mouth, and within seconds, he goes limp.

The woman screams again and Sansa tries to get to her husband, the dagger sticking from his thigh, but Brienne is guarding her and refuses to move.

“Keep her there, Brienne,” Jon orders, his eyes sweeping around the room, quickly taking stock of everything that has transpired all within seconds.

Daenerys is standing at one of the windows, staring out in disbelief, and Jon can see the three dragons, quickly becoming mere dots in the distant sky as they fly further away from the Vale. He then looks to the dead raven on the ground. That’s not Bran. Jon knows it with every part of himself. Bran warged out in time and with the dragons flying away and ignoring Daenerys and her orders... Is his cousin a dragon now? Bran mentioned that he was practicing. Jon had just assumed he meant practicing with the raven.

Pod and Lord Royce both have their swords drawn, guarding the Dragon Queen in case she tries anything else; such as ordering her soldier to pull his weapon during what is supposed to be a “peaceful” meeting? Bran flying into the room and Daenerys ordering that he be taken care of has actually given the others enough reason to combat against her. Jon can’t believe Tyrion – or *anyone* – explain particular Westeros rules to her. With her soldier drawing a weapon and Daenerys summoning for her dragons, it’s very easy to confuse her actions as a declaration of war and they are just defending themselves.

Robin is holding Tyrion at the moon door opening in the floor, his hand fisted in the man’s hair as he holds his sword at the other man’s back. Davos is on the other side of the door, his sword raised and pointing it to Tyrion’s front, the man looking understandably terrified as the wind from the opening blows strongly up to hit him.

“Robin, not yet,” Jon orders as Edd comes to look at the dead man on the floor, keeping his sword drawn and fixed on the woman kneeling at his side, crying; none of them having an idea if she will try anything.

Robin looks at him in disbelief, his mouth open.

“I mean it,” Jon says firmly while doing his best to not grimace in pain. He leaves the dagger in however. Pulling it out will make it even worse. “We will choose some to escort him down to King’s Landing. He can be his sister’s problem. Would you like to see your sister again, Lannister?”

Tyrion wisely doesn’t say anything.

Robin frowns and keeps holding Tyrion at the moon door, but brings him back a single step so he’s not immediately at the opening. “Lord Royce, please go fetch the maester for Your Grace,” he then says.

Lord Royce looks to Pod, who nods to him, and with a bow, Lord Royce leaves the room. Pod doesn’t take his eyes, or his sword, away from Daenerys.

“Fuck,” Jon mutters to himself as the pain begins throbbing throughout his entire body and he wants to do nothing more than sit down. But he can’t yet. “How many men have you brought with you?” Jon asks, not having to specify who he’s talking to.

Daenerys doesn’t answer him. She’s still staring out the window, too shocked that her dragons have abandoned her. Her children have abandoned their mother. *Why?* Why did they leave her? She can’t even see them in the sky anymore.

Her dragons are gone.

She wants to crumble to the floor and weep. She wants to scream in anger and burn everything around her, but she can’t even do that without any dragons.

Slowly, she turns away from the window and sees one of the men standing in front of her with his sword drawn in her direction. She flares her nostrils at him, daring him with her eyes to use that on her. She then sees Greyworm, dead, on the floor and Missandei kneeling next to him, weeping. Tyrion is being held by the Lord of the Vale by his hair at some open door in the floor.

How had this all gone so wrong so fast?

That bird.

That bird has been everywhere, watching her through the windows of Dragonstone. She would wake up in the mornings and that bird would be perched outside, watching her. During meals and meetings, that bird would be perched outside and looking in through the glass, Daenerys swears it was *staring* at her.

And when that bird swooped into this room, all the way in the Vale, she couldn't take it anymore. She doesn't know what this bird is or who has sent it, but it's obvious to her that this bird is spying on her and she would not allow it any longer.

Was this a spy from Cersei? Or was this bird a trick of the North?

"You will tell me how many men you have brought with you," Jon orders and his voice is able to stay strong despite his thigh searing with pain and he can feel himself beginning to shake.

"Two dozen Unsullied," Tyrion answers, his voice loud, his eyes glued to the moon door opening.

"And the rest of the Unsullied and Dothraki?" Jon asks.

"On Dragonstone, Your Grace," Tyrion answers again, Daenerys' eyes cutting to him at the use of the title.

“I hope they can swim because if they can’t, they will be staying there to starve,” Jon reaches out and puts a hand on Edd’s shoulder, gripping it, Edd standing still and strong so not to cause Jon any more pain. “Robin, if you agree, perhaps you will call on your men to deal with the two dozen Unsullied?”

“You do not have the authority,” Daenerys finally speaks.

Jon cuts his eyes over to look at her. “You have declared war on all of Westeros. You have burned men who had already surrendered and you have burned food that would feed millions. You had your man pull a weapon during possible peace talks in neutral territory.”

“You just tried to burn everyone inside of the Vale with dragon fire,” Varys adds and Jon nods to him.

“It is my right!” Daenerys suddenly shouts at them all. “I am the rightful Queen of the Seven Kingdoms!”

“You are nothing,” Sansa speaks and after her words, the entire room goes absolutely silent.

Daenerys slowly turns towards her and Brienne places herself in front of her Queen. Sansa won’t have it though and steps out from behind Brienne so she and Daenerys can look at one another. Jon squeezes Edd’s shoulder and together, they begin to help him move closer.

“You are an invader,” Sansa continues, not cowering; standing straight and jutting her chin out, keeping her eyes on Daenerys and no one else. “Your father brutally executed Rickard and Brandon Stark. Your father went mad and murdered without thought and would have murdered countless more if given the chance. He was mad and Robert Baratheon ended your House’s reign. You have *no* claim here.”

Daenerys is staring at Sansa, growing more and more angry, making her practically shake.

Sansa isn’t finished. “*No one* will ever want you on the Iron Throne.”

“When I get my dragons back, you and your baby will be the first public execution I hold,” Daenerys spits at her. “And when the smell of your flesh is still in the air, I will take your husband to my bed.”

Sansa has a sudden mental image of jumping on this woman and clawing her purple eyes out.

Before she can though, as if she can read her Queen’s thoughts, Brienne is in front of her again, this time, keeping her behind her and not even allowing her to think about stepping out from behind her.

Daenerys looks at everyone in the room. “I’m going to kill every single one of you and you’ll never-”

There is so much anger coursing through Jon’s body, he can’t even feel the pain as he pulls the dagger from his thigh and before she can finish her mad threat, Jon lunges at her. Daenerys cries out as Jon knocks her over to the floor, the blade of the dagger plunging into her chest.

Her eyes widen as she looks up at him on top of her and Jon stares into her eyes, wanting her to look at him and have Brandon Stark’s son be the last thing she sees in this world. He wants her to know that Jon Stark, son of Brandon, is the one who’s killing her.

“You are no Queen,” he whispers to her as her eyes begin to cloud over and he is glad that those are the last words this woman will ever hear.

When she gasps her last breath, Jon rolls off of Daenerys’ now-dead body and clenches his eyes shut as he lays on his back next to her.

“Jon,” Sansa gasps and comes rushing to him, kneeling at his side. Without thought, she takes the hem of her dress and rips at it, tearing a strip of fabric. He grinds his teeth in pain as she tightens it around his thigh, binding his wound, but she can’t get it tight enough. Davos appears next to her and ties it himself, Jon nearly screaming with the pain of it. “Robin, where is the maester?” She demands to know.

Robin is still holding Tyrion by sword at the moon door and he looks to Varys. “Find Lord Royce. I had everyone hide when she had arrived. He might still be trying to find those we need.”

Varys bows at everyone before turning and hurrying from the room.

“Where’s Ghost?” Jon coughs. “Why didn’t he stay with you?”

Sansa shakes her head, putting her hands on his cheeks. “I ordered him to stay with Aggie, Meg and Cora. He would keep them safe and I knew I had all of you.”

“That was stupid, Sansa,” Jon frowns.

“He says after tackling a mad Queen to the ground,” she says dryly.

Despite the excruciating pain taking over his entire body again, Jon feels himself smiling and Sansa smiles, too, when she sees it and she leans down, giving him a light kiss. Her heart is racing so quickly in her chest and she feels like she can throw up at any moment, but the Targaryen is dead and the dragons are gone. Did they truly just succeed?

“Where’s Bran?” She whispers then, keeping her face above his. “Is he...” she can’t even finish the thought.

Jon shakes his head. “He said he’s been practicing,” he whispers back.

He says nothing more than that, but he doesn’t need to. He can see the moment Sansa’s eyes flash with understanding and she leans down to give him another kiss.

Hearing quiet sobbing from behind her, Sansa looks over her shoulder. That woman is still kneeling on the floor next to the dead Unsullied soldier, her body shaking with tears. Sansa hesitates for a moment, not sure it will be safe to approach her. She was in Daenerys’ service. Perhaps she’s as mad and blood thirsty. But she keeps crying and Sansa can’t stay away.

Rising up, she closes the distance between them, aware of Pod following her. Sansa pauses before she kneels down on the other side of the body and looks to the woman.

“I am sorry,” Sansa says to her, not sure what else to say; not sure how this woman will react to her.

The woman’s sobs cut off abruptly and despite Pod standing with her, sword drawn, ready to protect her, Sansa feels her entire body go still as the woman lifts her head to look at her.

“She was going to burn all of us,” the woman whispers, her tone one of complete disbelief.

Sansa hesitates and then gives her head a single nod. “She was.”

The woman stares at her as fresh tears flood her eyes and she bends down, resting her head on the dead man’s chest, her fingers curling into his clothes. Her sobs echo in the cavernous room and Sansa doesn’t know what to do. She doesn’t touch her or offer her any comfort, but she remains kneeling with her.

...

“Remember what the littlest crow said!” Tormund shouts to those rushing around the battlements. “Do not fire until we see a raven!”

Theon licks his lips as he stands at one of the scorpions, aiming it towards the sky. His eyes are sharp; unblinking. His heart seems to seize in his chest, stilling like the rest of his body. The other scorpions on the battlements of Winterfell are manned, all of them watching the sky and waiting.

He still can’t quite believe it, but he doesn’t doubt it. Whatever happened to Bran when he escaped Winterfell, he can now put himself inside of animals. Ravens and dragons. And as a dragon, he’s leading the three of them here. That is the plan anyway. Bran hadn’t been sure if he had been able to do it, but it’s the only way, he had told him, Tormund and Sam. It *has* to work.

Caw!

Everyone on the battlements whips their heads around at the sound and Theon finds himself breathing again. A black raven flaps through the air and lands himself right on Tormund's head, who grins.

“Good to have you back, littlest crow.”

Caw, Raven Bran replies and then bends his neck down, giving a peck on Tormund's head.

Tormund's grin instantly wipes away. “I've warned you about that.”

Theon looks at the raven and tells himself that it's too unbelievable and yet, why couldn't this be Bran?

“When you see the three dragons in the sky, fire at will!” Tormund commands at them all and Theon snaps his attention back to the scorpion and to the sky, waiting.

For Winterfell, he thinks to himself. For home.

...

Chapter End Notes

THANK YOU so, so much for reading! I think it's time to check in with Arya and Meera in King's Landing.

Chapter 36

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

As soon as they see that it's her who has come into the room, Melessa and Talla Tarly are quick to stand and then dip into curtsies. Sansa gives them a small smile even if she is much like Jon in that she doesn't find that necessary whenever someone sees her. She knows though that it's everyone's way of showing their respect and loyalty and Sansa can't tell them to stop.

"I hope I'm not interrupting," Sansa says, looking to the book in Talla's hands she was reading out loud from.

"Not at all, Your Grace," Melessa answers.

Sansa is not sure how to continue before she reminds herself that she literally just faced down a woman with three dragons at her disposal. Surely, this should be one of the easiest things she has had to do in recent memory.

"I was hoping to have a word with you, Lady Tarly. In private," she is sure to add.

"Of course, Your Grace," Melessa says and looks to Talla.

The young woman curtsies and smiles at Sansa as she walks past her for the door.

"Forgive me, Your Grace, if Talla has done anything to offend you," Melessa says as soon as the door is shut and it's just the two of them. Sansa turns to the woman, her brow furrowed and confusion clear on her face. "I have caught her a few times, staring after your cousin, Lord Arryn."

"Has she?"

The idea nearly makes Sansa smile. That *is* interesting. It has been discussed with Sam of what will happen with his mother, sister and Horn Hill now that his father and brother are both dead. As the only living Tarly male, it would naturally fall to Sam – if Sam had any desire to take the role. But Sam’s response to that had come as a surprise to no one. Sam is Maester at Winterfell and he wants to stay right where he is.

“My father sent me to the Night’s Watch for a reason. I’m not meant to be Lord of anything.”

And though while Jon and Sansa hadn’t necessarily agreed with the view he had of himself, they had respected his decision. Sansa hasn’t had that much time with Sam’s sister and mother – there obviously have been much more pressing matters to see to – but she doesn’t doubt that Lady Melessa Tarly of Horn Hill is a capable woman. She was married to Lord Tarly long enough to see how things are done.

Robin’s marriage will be an important one, Sansa knows, and she and Lord Royce have already been talking about possibilities. Robin has publicly declared the Vale for the North and depending on what Arya and Meera do in King’s Landing, the North having some tie to the South might not be the worst thing. Perhaps a marriage between the Vale and a House in the Reach – especially a House with ties already to the North – would be a wise move to make.

“I have told her to not insult the King and Queen in the North by looking at their cousin,” Melessa says as they move to the two chairs in front of the hearth, sitting themselves down.

Sansa smiles and shakes her head. “From what I have seen of her, your daughter is very kind and pretty. My cousin should be so lucky to have her looking at him.”

Melessa’s cheeks turn a faint pink at that. “Thank you, Your Grace.”

“Lady Tarly,” Sansa begins and reaches a hand out, resting it on Ghost’s thick neck as the Direwolf has planted himself at her side; as if Sansa can draw courage from him. “My mother, unfortunately, was taken from me and I’m not able to ask her certain questions in regards to...” she stops herself and swallows, still deciding how to go about this. “Gilly has been so sweet and has told me some things to expect while I carry my and Jon’s child, but I admit that I’m too embarrassed to talk to her about this particular thing and I...” She trails off again and looks to Melessa, the woman already smiling, but is obviously trying her hardest to hide it. Sansa has to wonder if the woman, somehow, already knows what Sansa is struggling to ask her.

“You may ask me anything, Your Grace,” the woman then assures her. “I would be honored.”

Sansa exhales a breath. “Is it alright if Jon and I continue intimacy when I’m with child?” She plunges ahead, forcing herself to keep looking to the woman’s face as she asks. *Courage, Sansa.*

“You certainly can, Your Grace,” Melessa’s answer is given immediately. “And I recommend that you do because it’s either do that with your husband or kill your husband.”

Sansa feels her eyes widen at that and Melessa smiles.

“You are carrying another life inside of you, Your Grace, and for the next few months, that little body is going to be wreaking havoc on yours.

Sansa thinks of how she had been when Daenerys had arrived; how emotional she had been and how she had insanely pleaded with Jon to not do anything with the other woman. As if she *had* to plead with him because it was such a possibility. She had known she was being irrational and yet, she hadn’t been able to stop herself.

“It will last the *whole* time until I give birth to this one?” Sansa asks, somewhat in horror, somewhat in disbelief, and Melessa’s smile grows.

“Your emotions will be up and down, yes. And also, your desire for your husband will increase.”

That makes Sansa pause and look at the woman as if she doesn’t quite believe that. And yet, Jon is in their bed, keeping weight off of his wounded thigh until it is deemed fit enough to stand on again, and Sansa had to leave their chamber because all she had wanted to do was mount him like some sort of animal. Isn’t that why she had come here to speak to Lady Tully? Obviously her desire for Jon is already increasing.

“It’s all perfectly natural and *normal*, Your Grace.”

“Should I... should I let Jon know?” Sansa wonders.

Melessa continues to smile. “I would, yes. Unless you want him to be so confused and concerned, he goes to Sam to ask him about it.”

And Sansa knows that the woman is thinking of her son, blushing and bumbling as he tries to answer Jon’s questions, because Sansa is thinking the exact same thing and together, both begin to laugh.

...

They crawl over the wall surrounding the Red Keep in the dead of the night, when it’s the darkest hour, with rope they have brought with them and quickly dispatch of the two guards on duty that are walking their rounds on top of the battlements.

“Look away if you don’t want to watch,” Arya warns her in a whisper.

“Watch what?” Meera has no idea what she’s talking about, but then her mouth falls open and the sharp gasp dies in her throat as she watches, frozen, as Arya begins cutting one of the guard’s faces away.

A few minutes later, when she stands again, she is not Arya. She is a Red Keep Guard and though she had just watched her do it, Meera still takes a step back as if this guard is about to skewer her.

“How...” Meera tries to ask a question – ask *anything* – but what the hell can she possibly even ask?

“I’ve gotten lessons from someone,” the guard answers and it’s Arya, but her voice is a man’s now. “We must be careful of Ser Gregor.”

“The Mountain,” Meera nods in agreement. The Mountain’s reputation certainly precedes him and though she and Arya both know how to fight, there would be no way they would be able to defeat that man.

“I have an idea, but we have to get inside first and find a man named Qyburn,” Arya instructs. “He is on Cersei’s council and he will be the key to Ser Gregor.”

“How do you know this?”

“I’ve heard many things on my travels.”

With the face of a guard, no one looks twice at them. Meera walks at Arya’s side and keeps her eyes down and she certainly doesn’t speak. The other guards they pass, they either think Meera is a whore or someone who is being led down to the jails in the bottom of the keep. No one cares enough to ask about it and Arya leads them up the stairs, going higher and higher.

It might have been years since she was last here – and she has tried so hard to forget the time she was here – but Arya’s steps are sure and Meera doesn’t question her. In the times she was a young girl, exploring this Keep, she remembers rooms and who belonged to those rooms. She doesn’t know if Qyburn will be in these particular rooms, but she’s going to start there and if she has to take someone else’s face, she will. She and Meera will go free Yara Greyjoy after they deal with Ser Gregor. After they deal with him, seeing to anyone else will be that much easier.

“Wait here,” she whispers to Meera outside of a closed door and points to an alcove that is pitch black and the perfect place for her to hide since neither of them know where anyone is.

Meera nods without argument and Arya waits until she slips into the darkness, hiding, before Arya turns to the door. It opens silently and she slips inside just as silently. Candles dance in the soft wind blowing in from the open windows, blowing the sheer curtains inward. Arya takes a moment to take in everything in the room. All she needs is a moment.

She doesn’t know Qyburn – only knows of him – and she goes to the stacks of parchment on the large desk in the center of the room. Her eyes scan over the words and allows the softest breath of relief when she sees the man’s signature on so many of them. She is in the right room. She then looks over to the bed and hears the snores rising from the shape lying in it.

From what she has heard of Qyburn, this man does not deserve a quick death, but unfortunately, this is the only thing that can be done.

Silently, Arya as the Red Keep Guard, stares down at the sleeping man, his breathing deep and even and he has absolutely no idea what is about to happen; that he will never wake up again.

Arya pulls out her dagger and not waiting another breath, she plunges the blade into the man's temple.

...

A somewhat young man had gone into the chamber and now, an older, smaller man stands in front of her.

"It's me," the man says to Meera as he stands at the opening of the alcove.

"Prove it," Meera demands, her fingers tightening around the hilt of her sword.

"My brother is a raven."

"Where to now?"

The man smiles and steps back so Meera can step back out.

"The Queen's chamber. I think Ser Gregor will be outside, keeping watch." They begin walking down the quiet, candlelit hallway. "You're going to be one of my little spies. You won't say a word."

"Fine by me. I hate this place," Meera mutters. "The sooner we get this all done, the sooner we can leave."

Arya can't agree more, but keeps quiet without saying it.

Sure enough, when they turn the corner, outside of Cersei's closed door, the Mountain stands and Gods, Arya nearly wants to turn right around and walk away. He's easily the biggest man she's ever seen; far bigger than Sandor. And the armor he's wearing... even as Qyburn, Arya feels fear that he's going to take one look at her and *know* that this really isn't Qyburn.

But she and Meera keep moving forward.

"Ser Gregor," Arya speaks. The man doesn't move, but his eyes do. "I need you to come with me."

She as Qyburn holds her breath, waiting to see if such a simple command will work on this monster. He doesn't even seem human; which, according the stories she's heard of him, he's not.

But then, the man takes one step forward and Arya breathes again. Arya and Meera lead the way, Gregor's feet behind them heavy. Arya depends on her memory of where she wants to guide them. Qyburn, she imagined, moved with complete confidence and she forces herself to do that now as well. Qyburn would know exactly where in the Red Keep he would want to go and his steps would not falter.

Up and up they go until they reach a tower that Arya remembers from her days of exploring this place.

"Come with me, Ser Gregor."

The man follows right to the open balcony. Beneath them and stretching before them, the Narrow Sea is endless black ink, sparkling beneath the moon.

"Queen Cersei and I have discussed you, Ser Gregor," Arya tells him. "We both know that you are loyal to us, but there are so many around us who have proven to be false. We need to test everyone. Even you."

Ser Gregor stands silent, looking forward. Arya wonders if he can truly see anything.

“Will you prove your loyalty, Ser Gregor? Will you jump over this balcony and fall into the Narrow Sea with your armor on? Will you show us that you will do anything if commanded by me and the Queen?”

Still, Ser Gregor does not move or say anything. Arya wonders if he can speak.

And then, suddenly, the man hoists himself up onto the balcony and without pause, he pushes himself forward. Arya can't help, but gasp at the suddenness of it. He falls from the balcony, his body like lead with all of his heavy armor weighing on his body, and Meera rushes forward, both she and Arya leaning over to watch him fall. It seems to last forever, but the speed in which he plummets down, it probably takes just seconds until they hear a splash in the water below.

Arya and Meera look at one another.

“Will he drown?” Meera asks.

“I have no idea,” Arya admits. “But it will give us time. And that's all we need.”

Meera nods in agreement. “Now to Cersei?”

Arya is still looking below, but it's too dark to see anything. She envisions Ser Gregor pulling himself from the water and walking back into the Keep as if nothing had happened at all. But what if he doesn't? What if he stays there in the water, sunk to the bottom, never to be seen again?

It doesn't matter. She tries to tell herself that. Because she just needs a bit of time for her and Meera to take care of Cersei, get Yara Greyjoy and get the Hell out of King's Landing for home again. And this time, she truly means to never to return to this place again.

“To Cersei,” Arya nods.

...

Chapter End Notes

As always, thank you so, so much! I made an outline when I started this story, but as I write it, it is taking me other places and some of the scenes I had planned initially are looking like they might no longer happen. I am still trying to stick to my outline as much as I can. We'll get back to Jon in the next chapter and we'll get some updates on what has happened after Daenerys dying.

Chapter 37

Chapter Notes

A somewhat heavy duty sex scene in this one.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

...

“Sansa’s going to kill you,” Robin says with a grin as Jon makes his fourth circle around the room.

“Only if someone tells her,” Jon responds to that, giving Lord Royce a look as he does.

“I’m insulted by your implication, Your Grace,” Lord Royce frowns.

“Forgive me, Lord Royce,” Jon smiles a little. “I have no idea what you and my wife actually talk about during your daily afternoon tea together.”

“Mostly you,” Royce replies with an easy shrug and Jon’s smile stretches into a grin.

Meg giggles at that as she stands at the window, feeding Bran the Raven a bit of biscuit, his beak gentle with the girl’s fingers, and her fingers of her other hand stroke gently down the back of his neck.

It feels good to be out of bed. He had been laid about for two days before he wasn’t able to take it anymore; despite Sansa’s insistence that he isn’t healed and needs time to recuperate. He walks the room when she’s not there to be angry at him for it, easing himself into putting more weight on his healing thigh. He has told her that it was just a dagger wound – he’s lived through far more serious wounds – but Sansa hasn’t wanted to hear it and prefers to treat him like an invalid.

His thigh is still a bit tender so he does his best to not put too much weight on it for too long, but he also knows that just lying around, letting his strength dissolve into nothing is not desired either.

Jon loves how his wife loves and cares for him, but he is the greatest swordsman in the North – some say in all of Westeros – and he intends on keeping such a reputation.

“I believe I have finished it, Your Grace,” Varys speaks up and everyone immediately looks to him.

Jon comes to him as the others gather around to look at the piece of parchment in front of him as well as the smaller map of Westeros.

“As written to Cersei,” Varys begins and points to the map as he reads the letter he has just written. “The Riverlands and the Vale will join all of the North and we will be separate from the South and the Iron Throne, completely independent. King Jon and Queen Sansa will lead us. I don’t doubt that Dorne will wish to be its own Kingdom as well. That will leave the Crownlands, the Westerlands, the Reach and the Stormlands to follow the Iron Throne. Also, you will approve of the marriage of Talla Tarly of Horn Hill in the Reach to Robin Arryn of the Vale.”

“She is going to hate all of this,” Davos mutters to himself.

“She might be more willing to listen with Arya holding a dagger to her belly,” Edd responds to that.

“And we have two dragons to give her that can easily feed millions as well as some of our own wheat to give her,” Robin reminds them all.

They may not like Cersei, but none are looking to have all of the South starve to death. It has already been decided that the North, Riverlands and Vale will keep the third dragon, butchered equally among the three lands, cleaned and salted to be stored and distributed to their people. None of them have obviously tried dragon meat, but Meg had wondered out loud that it must taste like chicken.

“Jon!”

All of the heads in the room whip over to see Sansa standing in the doorway of the solar, a frown heavy on her face, staring at her husband as everyone else quickly bows – or curtsies – to her.

“I laid down for a brief nap and come to find you putting weight on your leg with no regard to your injury! And all of you have let him do it!”

“With due respect, Your Grace, your husband has a very thick head and can’t be told what to do,” Meg smiles, it only growing when Jon gives the girl a look.

“That is the truth, Meg,” Sansa agrees.

“I wanted to let you nap as long as you could, but Varys has finished our letter to Cersei,” Jon tells her.

Without a word, Sansa comes into the room and Robin gives up his seat for her to sit. Varys hands her the parchment and she reads through the general list of demands that will be fact that they have all agreed to.

“It might be easy for her to agree to this with Arya there, but what’s to stop her from going back on her word once Arya and Meera leave King’s Landing?” Sansa wonders. She then answers her own question. “*Nothing* will stop Cersei from betraying any vow she declares or oath she swears.”

“Lady Brienne,” Jon suddenly speaks to his wife’s guard who has come into the room silently with her.

Brienne stands straight and at attention. “Your Grace.”

“You know Ser Jaime Lannister, don’t you?”

Brienne hesitates for a moment; as if the answer gives her pain to think of. “I do, Your Grace.”

“And would you find him to be an honorable man?”

Brienne hesitates once again and her eyes move to Sansa, who looks to her with a small smile.

“He is, Your Grace. He has helped many times in our time together that would prove that,” Brienne tells everyone in the room. “And even with one hand, he might not be as strong a soldier as he used to be, but he still has a soldier’s mind. If Cersei would even suggest of marching North, I believe Ser Jaime would wisely talk her out of declaring war against the North, the Riverlands *and* the Vale all joined together.”

Jon nods at the answer and then looks to Sansa again.

“Cersei does what she wants,” Sansa reminds them all. She then looks to Varys. “You know her just as well as I do. What do you think will be her reaction once she receives this?”

“She won’t be happy,” Varys agrees and Lord Royce can’t help, but snort at the understatement. “But,” Varys continues, keeping his eyes on Sansa. “What else can she do? She has lost. Whether she ever admits it or not, that is the truth of it.”

“A person who can’t admit defeat is a dangerous person,” Sansa notes to him, thinking of Daenerys and how even after she lost her dragons and the upper hand, she still shouted murderous threats to them all like a rabid, cornered animal.

“You have every right in the world to be frightened and weary of this woman,” Varys continues. “But what will we do if not this?”

Sansa is quiet at that, knowing she doesn’t have an answer. Perhaps there isn’t one to give. What can they do? They have protected all of Westeros from an army of the Dead. They have killed three dragons and a Mad Targaryen. What more do they have to do? Robb declared their independence and they have more than earned it. No one – not even Cersei – will take it away from them.

Cersei would be a complete fool – desperate or not – to try and march an army North. Even if they did breach the Riverlands and the Vale successfully, they would never be able to make it past the Neck. An invasion would be detrimental, cost her thousands of lives, and maybe, the people in the South would *finally* turn their back on her completely as a result.

Sansa exhales a deep breath and gives the barest nod.

“Bran,” Jon says and the raven comes flying from the window to sit himself on the table.

Davos hands the quill first to Sansa to sign her name to the letter and then Jon signs it as well. Both the letter and map are then tied to one of Bran’s legs.

“I know you’re tired,” Jon tells him with a stroke down his back. “But to King’s Landing and Arya as quick as you can. This will all be done soon,” he promises.

Caw! is Bran’s soft reply to that.

They all watch as Bran hops across the table to the edge, testing the weight with the letters to his leg and flapping his wings, he then takes off, soaring through the window and disappearing from view. When he is gone, Sansa sighs heavily and Jon leans down, kissing her head.

“Jon!” She suddenly admonishes, frowning at him, remembering. “Get off your leg!” She orders. “Meg, could you please visit Missandei again? She still has hardly eaten anything.” She says to the girl in a much kinder tone than what she just used on Jon.

“Of course, Your Grace,” Meg smiles and dipping into a quick curtsy, she then hurries from the room.

Jon settles himself into the chair Edd has stood from, his friend giving him a cheeky grin and Jon scowling at him in return as he gets comfortable, per his wife’s order. “Keep it up and I’ll have you escort Jorah Mormont to Bear Island,” he threatens, but Edd just keeps smiling at him.

Jon has absolutely no idea what Lyanna Mormont is going to do with her cousin, but knowing the small, yet formidable, young woman, Jon isn’t sure he wants to necessarily be privy to her plans. He just knows that when he contacted her and told him that Jorah Mormont had been taken prisoner in the Vale once Daenerys Targaryen had been slain, Lyanna asked her King for permission for Jorah to be brought back to Bear Island where House Mormont would see to his just punishment.

“Robin, I think now would be a good time to show some of the Vale to Talla, don’t you think? Since this will be her home?” Sansa looks to her cousin.

“Do you have orders for all of us, Your Grace?” Robin gives her a teasing grin.

“I do. Now go.” Next, she looks to Lord Royce. “Could you and Varys please look over the Vale stores and see if any help is needed with the accounts? We’ve been here for some time now and I don’t want to be responsible for depleting their food or other supplies.”

“It is an honor to have both of our Graces here,” Lord Royce tells her as both men rise to their feet and bow to both Sansa and Jon.

“Still, I would feel better if I knew those from Winterfell weren’t using everything the Vale has kindly sacrificed to us.”

Both men leave and then, Davos and Edd are next. Jon speaks before Sansa can.

“Go oversee training in the lists,” Jon tells them simply. “Brienne, go with them.”

As soon as the three are gone and the door is closed behind them, Jon looks to his wife immediately, reaching a hand out and taking hold of hers.

“I have missed you,” he says to her as Sansa blushes and smiles, almost shyly. “And it’s normal that the babe makes you this tired?”

“Among other things,” Sansa nods and Jon tilts his head at that, wondering what she means. Her blush noticeably – noticeably to him – darkens. “I very much wish to kiss you,” she bravely tells him.

Jon tightens his hold on her hand and gently tugs at it. “Then kiss me.”

Sansa remains sitting though despite his tugging. “Your thigh... kissing between us leads to other things and I will not aggravate your injury more.”

“You are so stubborn.”

“So are you,” she laughs. She watches as Jon stands up then and walks to their bed, she noting the way he is still limping. It’s not as bad as it was even two days ago, but still, a limp is a limp and she will not be the cause of making it worse. “Jon!” She exclaims, shooting to her feet when he begins to undress himself.

“Come, wife. This will only help with my recovery.”

Sansa rolls her eyes, but she is thinking of Lady Tarly’s words and what she has assured her of. Wanting her husband so much is *normal* and Sansa must admit that Jon wanting her so much – all of the time – does her ego and confidence good. But he *is* injured and still recovering no matter what he insists.

Completely naked, Jon settles himself on their bed, laying down on his back. “Come, My Lady. I have an idea if you would like to try it.”

Sansa is completely prepared to further protest, but she must admit that his words intrigue her. Jon watches her with nearly black eyes as she begins to remove her dress and shift. (She has noticed that Cora no longer ties her dresses as tightly as she once did and Sansa assumes that that’s because of the baby, but she’s always had the inkling that it’s because of something else.)

Naked now herself, she brings one knee up onto the bed and then the other. “What is this idea you have?”

Jon smiles at her curiosity. “I would like you to sit yourself on my face.”

“Jon!” Her face instantly feels as if it’s on fire from the mere suggestion. “How do you even know of such a thing?” She suddenly has the worst feeling that he’s done such a thing with Ygritte.

Jon can clearly read her mind for he sits up and takes both of her hands in his. “I heard it from Theon, years ago when we were all still in Winterfell. He told Robb and I about it after going to the brothel.”

That only makes Sansa frown though. She doesn't necessarily want to do something with her husband that is done in such establishments.

"I have never done such a thing, Sansa, but with you insisting that I stay on my back, I would very much like to bring you pleasure. I just think of how much you like when I place my head between your thighs."

Sansa feels embarrassment at that even if that's very much the truth. She *loves* when Jon does that for her.

"Please tell me what you are thinking."

She shakes her head as if she won't, but then she speaks. "That's different though when I'm the one on my back. This is... if I'm above you, like that... it's too exposed."

"We will not do it if you don't want to. I would never force you to do anything you don't want to do, Sansa," he tells her; as if *he* has to tell her such a thing. Jon has always been greatly concerned over her comfort; long before they consummated their marriage.

Sansa looks at him. This is Jon, her husband. She loves him. And she trusts him more than anyone.

And... perhaps this will help with the constant ache she has in regards to her desire for him. Perhaps this will help quench it for a little bit of time.

"If I don't like it-"

"I will stop immediately," Jon swiftly promises and she finds herself able to smile. She leans in and gives him a soft kiss before Jon lays down again. He moves the pillow aside so he is completely flat and Sansa takes a deep breath, pulling her braid over one shoulder.

She leans down for one more kiss and with one more deep breath, she slowly slides one leg over his chest, bringing herself on top of him, straddling him. Jon's hands go to her hips, soothingly

rubbing her there, looking up at her as if he's never seen anything like her before. She slowly scoots forward, raising herself up on her knees until she is above his face.

She promptly snaps her eyes shut, feeling embarrassment and her wetness growing all at the same time.

"You're beautiful," Jon murmurs, staring up at the most intimate, private part of her as if he has stumbled upon some hidden temple far within the Godswood and his fingertips glide up the outside of her thighs. He can't take his eyes off the sight above him.

Sansa's eyes are still closed, feeling his warm breath with each exhale, his thumbs drawing circles on the inside of her thighs, his eyes staring at her. Sansa feels her heart pounding and she presses her hands flat to the headboard in front of her.

"Beautiful," he whispers again and she gasps as his mouth scrapes up the inside of one of her thighs and his hands curl around her hips, bringing her closer.

When he licks her with the flat plane of his tongue, she gasps and almost lifts herself up from his mouth. He must have sensed what she was about to try because his hands tighten their hold on her hips, keeping her on his face. He licks her again, his nose brushing against her little bud, and Sansa clenches her eyes shut, her entire body tight with tension. She can't believe that he is doing this. She can't believe that he *wants* to do this.

"So wet," Jon murmurs, feeling it against his tongue as he continues licking her and he can hear Sansa moan just a bit louder above him. She probably isn't even realizing that she has done it, but her hips rock against his face once, silently asking for more. And Jon is more than happy to give it to her.

Sansa lets out a sharp cry that she is certain everyone in the Vale hears when Jon opens his mouth and covers Sansa completely with it, thrusting his tongue inside of her. She arches her back and she doesn't mean to, but her hips grind down on his mouth. Jon certainly doesn't mind and his hands simply hold onto her hips.

Her hands leave the headboard to first grab her breasts, rubbing them herself. She needs to do *something* because she is sitting on Jon's face, rocking against him as his tongue stretches deep inside of her, licking her and loving her, and it is almost too much, but not enough at the same time.

“Jon!” She cries out, her hands dropping down to his hair, grabbing it too hard.

He nearly winces when he feels her fingernails in his scalp, but he controls himself. If he winces, she will stop and right now, he doesn’t want her to stop for anything. He tastes her deeply, arching his neck, pressing more of his face against her, and she tastes so damn delicious, Jon knows that he will do this for her every day if she ever feels comfortable enough to ask.

Sansa moans his name and cries out with pleasure and her hands slap back onto the headboard when Jon’s tongue reaches that one spot inside of her that only he has ever been able to reach. She can feel her ending coming – her entire body is bursting into an inferno like she is a dragon herself, surrounded in flames. She feels sweat everywhere and every nerve begins to tingle, getting ready for one more final push that will set them all off.

Jon pulls his tongue out, but Sansa doesn’t have time to realize it because it is replaced with two of his fingers, easily finding that bundle of nerves inside of her again and he begins rubbing against it in earnest while his lips close around her bud and looking up at the beautiful woman above him, he begins to suck, adding more and more pressure as the seconds go by. And that is the push that is needed for Sansa to fall completely apart. Her thighs clamp over his ears and she screams – an actual scream – as she breaks, flexing and bucking against his mouth. Jon’s fingers and tongue stay with her, lapping her up as if she is a treat, and when the most intense part of it begins to pass, Sansa feels as if she still can’t breathe as she slowly slides from his face, laying down, curled onto her side next to him.

“That was...” Her body is still trembling and she still can’t think, let alone speak. It feels as if her heart will never slow down again.

Jon rolls after her, moving his body close to hers, and sliding an arm over her hip, he brushes his lips across hers. “Are you okay?” He asks softly even though he knows she is.

She nods, closing her eyes and resting a hand on his chest. “I was actually hesitant for that?” She then asks and he grins, she letting out a breath of laughter at the sight. He seems quite pleased with himself, but Sansa supposes he has every right to feel that way.

Jon kisses her forehead, the bridge of her nose and then her lips again. Tasting herself, Sansa slips her hand to the back of his head – his hair is back in its little knot, and her fingers grasp the back of

his neck instead of letting his hair down – and pushes herself up a bit, pressing her lips firmly against his.

...

Chapter End Notes

I have a Meg/Missandei scene planned in the next chapter (I might add Aggie to it) as well as seeing Arya and Meera with Cersei and Jaime down in King's Landing. This story will be winding down shortly. THANK YOU!

Chapter 38

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

“I’ve brought food!” Meg happily announces as she comes into the small chamber that has been given to Missandei, unlike the cells in the bottom of the Eyrie where Tyrion Lannister and Jorah Mormont were both being kept.

As she has been for the past days, Missandei sits in a chair by the window, looking out. Meg wonders what she is looking at, so intently, but she also gets the feeling that Missandei isn’t really looking at anything; or rather, seeing anything.

“I haven’t brought much. Queen Sansa said you wouldn’t have much in your stomach and too much would actually make you sick,” Meg explains as she slides the tray onto the table next to where Missandei sits. “Bread and soup. Once you get this down, we’ll be able to get you something a bit more filling. The Cook here at the Vale makes a delicious pheasant. At least I think it’s delicious. I’ve never had pheasant before. Have you ever had it?”

Missandei remains silent, still looking out the window.

“I heard you are from Naath,” Meg changes subjects.

That gets Missandei to move her eyes from the window to the young girl. “How did you know that?”

Meg sits straighter in her chair, pleased with herself for getting the other to say something. “I find things out. It’s what I’m good at and it’s what I do for the King and Queen.”

“Am I your King and Queen’s prisoner?”

“No.” Meg’s response is immediate with a shake of her head. “If you were, you would be down in the cells.”

“Is that where Jorah Mormont and Tyrion are?”

“Jorah Mormont has left and is being transported to his family home on Bear Island in the North to answer for crimes he committed against his family. And Tyrion Lannister is on his way South to King’s Landing with soldiers of the Vale where he will be executed. The King promised his cousin she could be the one to do it. Otherwise, he’d already be dead.”

Missandei doesn’t say anything to that, but she keeps looking at Meg instead of looking back to the window. “So, what will your King and Queen do to me?”

“You are free to leave when you wish,” Meg answers with the words both King Jon and Queen Sansa have told her. “The only reason you’re still here is because you haven’t eaten and they worry for your state of mind. But when you want to leave, you can. My King and Queen are good and kind people.”

“Your King murdered the man I love.”

“And the man you love was going to kill my King. And your Queen was going to kill everyone.”

Missandei looks at her for a moment after Meg says that before exhaling a shaky breath and looking down to her hands in her lap. “Could I go back to Naath?” She asks in a quiet voice.

“Yes. The King and Queen have friends with ships. If that is where you wish to go, they’ll see to it.”

Missandei turns her head to look at the steam swirling from the bowl of soup on the table. It smells good; meaty. She can’t remember the last time she ate and her stomach feels hollow within her. Still, she makes no move to collect the spoon. Instead, she looks to the young girl sitting across from her. A young girl who seems so much older than how she looks on the outside. Missandei recognizes that.

“Have you been with the King and Queen in the North your whole life?” She asks.

“No. Just for a few months,” Meg answers. “And it’s the best my life has ever been. I’m from King’s Landing. I never knew my father and my mother... I don’t remember her too much. I remember she never seemed happy. She never seemed to like me that much, but I know it was because she was always working and worried about making sure I was fed. And then she died and a little after that, I began working for Varys. And now, I’m in the service of the King and Queen.”

Missandei slowly picks up the slab of bread and Meg tries not to smile as she watches her rip off a bit of the crust and begin to nibble on it.

“You might like the North,” Meg then says. “It’s a bit cold, yes, but there’s so much space up there. Open as far as your eyes can see. And Winterfell is wonderful. The King and Queen are going to have a baby soon so everyone is looking forward to that and it’s safe and people are kind.”

“They wouldn’t be to me,” Missandei says before Meg can continue. “I’m not from Westeros and I was in the service of Queen Daenerys. They will not be kind to me.”

“If you come to the North with us, they will be kind to you because the King and Queen will demand it.”

Missandei doesn’t speak as she continues eating more of the bread.

“You could go home to Naath, if that’s what you truly want. You can go anywhere you want,” Meg says.

Finished now with the piece of bread, Missandei’s eyes float back to the window, looking to the mountains that surround the Eyrie. *You can go anywhere you want.* Why does it feel like, even when she was with her Queen, that she never had that option?

...

Euron Greyjoy's body laid on the bottom of the steps, dead for two days, courtesy of Yara, her blade still stained with his blood. Cersei sits in a chair, Meera behind her, a blade "casually" resting at the spot between Cersei's shoulder and neck, ready to plunge at the first sign of this woman ready to turn on them. Arya sits at the table as well, feeding her brother bits of bread brought from the kitchen, honestly too bored, but knowing that she can't leave yet.

She curses both Jon and Sansa. If it wasn't for their comments, she would have killed Cersei and be gone from this place already, but instead, she couldn't forget what they said about a power vacuum if Cersei was to die and how these wards would never end. Westeros deserves peace and this woman is not worth even more unforeseen times of unrest.

"Yes," Ellaria Martell replies once she has finished reading. "I agree to these terms."

Arya releases a sigh of relief. "Sign it." She will not leave King's Landing without the word of the new Queen. "And you will not go back on it and declare war against losing the North, Vale and Riverlands?"

Ellaria shakes her head, already signing the bottom of the letter. "Going to war would not be worth it. The North has earned their independence and in this letter, you were going to see to Dorne's independence as well. Not to mention you set me free, saw to Ser Gregor and Dorne has no reason to see House Stark as an enemy. We've all had enough wars."

She blows on her signature so the ink dries faster.

"And the marriage between Lord Robin of the Vale and Lady Talla of Horn Hill?"

"It will keep both Crowns tied," is all Ellaria says before sliding the parchment to Arya, who picks up the quill to sign the letter along with Jon and Sansa's signatures so it will be known that there was a witness.

Arya has no idea if this is the right move. She doesn't have the mind for this business that Sansa has. She tries to think what Sansa would do if she was here with Arya. There honestly doesn't seem to be that many options though. *When* she kills Cersei, who would rule after her? There is no one left and this is almost poetic in a way; House Martell taking up the Iron Throne after what happened to Elia Martell.

Perhaps this is exactly what Sansa would have done.

She doesn't know what kind of Queen Ellaria will be or what kind of Lower Westeros she will rule over, but Arya reminds herself that anyone would be better than a Targaryen or a Lannister. The world has had enough of them for several lifetimes.

It also makes her feel good enough that Bran isn't pecking at her hand as she signs, alerting her to the grave mistake she is making. Instead, her brother sits in front of her, watching her with his black eyes and does nothing to stop her as her signature joins the others.

Guards stand at every door, but they make no move to rescue their once-Queen Cersei. It seems that they have no loyalty to the woman, even as she first commanded them to protect her. It would seem that perhaps those within the Red Keep are ready for the Lannister hold on the Throne to end as well.

The only thing Arya hates is that Jaime Lannister is gone. His absence is a loose end she would rather not have hanging.

Left, according to Cersei. Just after Euron Greyjoy arrived. "He didn't like what I was becoming," Cersei had sneered at Arya as she answered Arya's question. "As if I haven't always been this. As if he and I aren't the same person."

Arya doesn't know where Jaime has gone, but if he's smart, wherever he is, that is where he will stay.

"Let me leave, too," Cersei had said and Arya had nearly burst out into the laughter at that.

She looks to the woman now. For having a dagger held to her skin and her death coming so soon, Arya must admit that she almost admires how the woman isn't even trembling. Her jaw is clenched and she is staring at Arya as if willing her to drop dead with just her eyes.

It had all been so easy. With Qyburn's face, moving around the Red Keep had been done so easily, Arya had nearly begun to think that somehow, this was all a trap. But getting down to the dungeons to find Yara Greyjoy and Ellaria Martell, Meera explaining to them who they were, and then finding Cersei and Euron Greyjoy, it had all be so easy. So easy, in fact, Arya had nearly been

aggravated by it. Half of the Stark family had died because of this woman and her House and family and ridding the world of her should have been more of a challenge, Arya had thought.

(If training to take faces from people could ever be considered an easy feat to accomplish because without this face, she and Meera wouldn't have been able to be here at all.)

"I wish my sister was here," Arya speaks, not looking away from Cersei; not allowing the woman to intimidate her. This woman is *no one*; just a woman who used to be Queen and will now soon be dead. "I wish you could see the Queen she has become."

Cersei looks as if she is snarling now and Arya only smiles.

"You may not see my sister again, but I've already made certain that she will see you one more time."

One of the doors opens and a guard leans in, whispering something to Yara, who nods. She then turns and comes to them.

"Tyrion has arrived," Yara informs Arya.

"Finally," she sighs and looks to Meera as she stands up. "We will be going home after this."

"Thank Gods," Meera sighs as well.

"We will go to the courtyard," Arya tells the women. "I will see to it there."

Ellaria nods, standing as well, collecting the parchment. "I would try to argue, but I suppose you and your family have earned this one."

Arya nods her thanks to her. She supposes Ellaria has her good reasons as well, but she is right. Cersei and Tyrion Lannister are going to be no one else's than the Starks.

Two of the guards suddenly appear and one on either side, they pull Cersei from the chair to her feet. And for the first time, Arya looks at the woman and sees that she is afraid.

“Wait. Wait,” she begins to speak rapidly. “I am pregnant. I am pregnant! I have a child!”

Arya stares at the woman for a beat as Bran comes to land on Arya’s shoulder. He gives her a light nip on her ear; as if to let her know that she’s not alone. Arya swallows and doesn’t take her eyes from Cersei, wanting these to be some of the last words she ever hears. “I had a mother, father and brother.”

...

Aggie gasps. “Forgive me, Your Grace,” she rushes out.

Sansa only smiles. “It’s fine, Aggie,” she assures the girl. “I didn’t even feel it.”

Aggie doesn’t seem to believe her and begins to bring the brush barely through her hair at all. Sansa bites back a smile and allows the girl to practice combing her hair as she and Lord Royce continue sitting in their chairs, looking at one another. It is almost time for bed – for both of them and for Aggie. Jon is already in their bed on the other side of their chamber, snoring away.

They will be leaving early tomorrow – finally leaving the Vale to return home to Winterfell – and Sansa knows that her tears aren’t just from the baby inside of her.

“I will follow you anywhere, Your Grace,” Royce tells her what he has already told her.

“I know,” she smiles still despite her tears pooling in her eyes. “But Robin needs you. And the Vale is your home. I could not ask you-”

“I wish you would,” Royce gently interrupts.

Sansa feels herself shake her head even if she wants this man to return with her more than anything.

“Robin is still finding his footing without Baelish whispering in his ear. He needs *good* guidance and there is no one better to get that guidance from than you.”

“Your Grace,” Royce reaches his hand out and Sansa clutches it with both of hers. “I know it’s a very easy thing to think, but Lord Robin is not an idiot. As much as I loathe to admit it, Baelish had his useful lessons for both of you and Robin has a better handle on things here than either of us would expect. And there are those here, loyal to Lord Robin and to the Vale. They will aid him if he needs it. I also think his soon-to-be wife is no idiot either.”

Sansa allows herself to smile and she snuffles, taking one of her hands to wipe at her cheeks.

“Your home...” she whispers.

“Is serving my King and Queen. Wherever you are, that is where I will be as well.”

Sansa lets out a breath, sobbing, mixing with a laugh. She clutches his hand with both of hers again and Lord Royce smiles, placing his other one on top of hers. “Jon and I would be honored if you, Lord Royce, would return to Winterfell with us and serve on our Council and remain in my confidence.”

He bows his head to her. “As Your Grace wishes.”

Sansa lets go of his hand so that she can lean forward in her chair and hug him tight, sobbing into his shoulder, and Lord Royce smiles, closing his eyes and hugging his Queen, his hand to the back of her head. Aggie remains standing on the small stool behind the Queen, hugging the brush to her chest and looking at the embrace with a beaming smile.

...

I was going to have Lord Royce stay in the Vale, but I couldn't separate him and Sansa. The next chapter, we'll finally see that Catelyn/Jon flashback I've been talking about, Jon and Sansa will have a conversation about the truth of some things, and Sansa will see Cersei one more time.

THANK YOU to those still sticking with this one! Two more chapters to go!

(And thank you to SainTalia for helping me "solve" a little problem I was having with this chapter)

Chapter 39

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

...

Even though she sent for him, Jon still knocked on the open door and waited for her permission. His Aunt Catelyn was sitting in a chair by the fire, mending one of her husband's shirts, and when she lifted her head and saw that it was him, she smiled.

"Jon," she said and held out a hand.

Jon stepped into the room, coming straight to her, reaching his hand out. Catelyn took hold of his and gave it a squeeze before ushering him into the chair next to hers. He loved his Aunt Catelyn and he knew that she loved him and yet – and Jon didn't know why – there was always a slight nervousness when she asked to speak with him. Perhaps it was because Catelyn had overseen the education and discipline of the Stark children and it was known that she was not the one with which to mess.

"Is everything alright?" Jon had to ask.

"I can't just have my favorite nephew to come see me for no reason?" Catelyn wondered and Jon knew it was petty and he was fourteen and too old for it, but he couldn't help, but smirk a little – doing his best to hide it – when Aunt Catelyn said that to him.

Sorry, Robin, Jon thought to himself.

"Of course you can," Jon answered her.

Catelyn squeezed his hand once more and then pulled hers back to continue with her mending. "I told myself I wasn't going to get involved. You are fourteen and Sansa is ten and you both must figure this out for yourselves without too much meddling from myself or Ned."

Jon frowned, not understanding. “What do you mean?”

Catelyn shook her head. “Sansa was in here and she was so upset. I told her to talk to you-”

“Why was Sansa upset?” Jon demanded, unable to stop himself from interrupting.

He felt a rush of heat, starting in his stomach and moving upwards to his chest; hot anger at the mere idea of anything happening to Sansa or anyone upsetting her.

Even before they were betrothed, Jon had always been protective of Sansa and all of his cousins, but since his Uncle and Aunt arranged a marriage between him and Sansa, Jon admitted that he began to look out for and care for Sansa in a different way; certainly different than how he looked out for and cared for Arya and that was how it *should* be. Sansa was going to be his wife someday.

Catelyn gave him a soft smile. “You were her first kiss, Jon.”

Jon didn’t need her to say anything more. He winced at what happened in the stables just that morning. No, not what happened in the stables; what happened *after* what happened in the stables. Stupid Theon. He needed to give him a black eye after this.

But it really wasn’t Theon’s fault, Jon admitted. Theon was just being Theon and ribbing Jon as he ribbed everyone. Jon should have just ignored him or better yet, he should have proudly told him that hells, yes, he and Sansa kissed and it was amazing.

He hadn’t done that though. Instead, he had shoved Theon and told him he hadn’t liked it and now, he learned that Sansa had been so upset about it, she had cried and confided to her mother.

Jon exhaled a heavy breath he was holding. “I’m sorry. I didn’t...” He didn’t know what to say though.

“I think it would be best if you spoke to Sansa about it,” Catelyn advised. “The best, strongest marriages are those with a husband and wife who talk about things with one another. No matter how small it might seem to you, it might not seem small to Sansa and vice versa.”

“I don’t think our kiss was something small,” he told her.

Catelyn smiled again and reached a hand out, squeezing his arm.

“Your father could be careless when it came to women and their hearts. He tried to work on that though it was a difficult change for him to make. Women just loved him. But when he learned your mother was carrying you, he vowed to be someone completely different – for her and for you.”

Jon swallowed at the mention of his father. Brandon Stark’s reputation amongst women was no secret to him. He was *nothing* like that. Yes, he had kissed a few girls, but he hadn’t laid with anyone and he was fairly certain he hadn’t broken any of their hearts. Until now.

He wished his father was here now. He always wished his father was here. And his mother. Perhaps, both could guide him in the best way to speak with Sansa. There was only his aunt though and he was grateful for Aunt Catelyn, but his aunt and Sansa had such an incredibly close relationship with one another. Jon had felt as if he had disappointed her deeply even if his aunt hadn’t said such a thing.

“I... I care for Sansa,” Jon said then. “So much more than I ever thought I would when Uncle Ned first told me that we were to marry.”

Catelyn nodded. “She cares for you, too. She hasn’t told me that exactly, but I can tell. When she speaks of how her life with you will be, there’s a softness to her face. She is looking forward to it.”

“I’ll go speak with her and...” And what, he didn’t know. “I’ll speak with her,” he said again.

...

But for whatever reason, one he can’t remember anymore, he never did.

...

With his belly warm and full with roasted dragon meat, potatoes and mead, Jon sinks contently into his chair in his and his wife's chamber, toeing off his boots and stretching his legs out. The fire's flames licks at his feet, warming them since Ghost is laying across Sansa's feet, doing the same for her.

Sansa sits beside him, knitting a blanket, and Jon turns his head, watching her as he always does. He smiles a little as he sees that the blanket has grown since just last night when she had begun working on it; grown just like her pregnant belly. Sam has said she is only in her fourth month of pregnancy, but her bump seemed to explode overnight and he would *never* say such a thing – he hardly even wants to think it – but Jon wonders how big she will get with their babe for his wife is a thin thing and he doesn't want her to fall forward from the sudden weight on her front.

He can't stop from sitting up in his chair and leaning over, sliding a hand over her bump. Sansa looks at him with a smile and then looks back to her knitting, her needles never stopping their rhythmic movements. She begins to hum softly and Jon rubs her bump.

"I already can't wait to hold them," he says.

"Me, too," Sansa nods and then, her needles stop, moving to one hand so her other can join his. Jon instantly covers her hand with his and for a moment, they are quiet, both lost with their own thoughts of the babe that is growing inside of Sansa right now. *Their* babe.

"When King Robert arrived, I should have put up a bigger fight when the talks began of you and Joffrey marrying," Jon suddenly blurts out.

Sansa's eyes fly to look to his face.

"I should have told them all to sod off and that you were mine."

Sansa's entire body is still and he thinks she might not even be breathing.

"Why didn't you?" She then is able to ask; barely just above a whisper.

Jon sighs and shakes his head as if he won't answer, but he has every intention of doing so. He's kept this in for so long and Sansa deserves to finally know.

"I loved you," he says and Sansa sucks in a breath at his words, seeming to hold it and not let it go. "I really did, but I was seventeen and you were thirteen and I wanted you to be happy. I couldn't imagine you being happy with me when there was an actual Prince smiling at you."

Sansa breathes out and her hand pulls out from under his. "That's thinking rather lowly of me."

"What?" Jon's eyes widen. "Sansa, no," he begins to quickly shake his head. "I didn't mean, I just meant, you were meant to be a Queen. You've *always* been meant to be a Queen and I couldn't believe in myself enough to ever think I could give you remotely the kind of life you deserved, Brandon Stark's son or not."

Sansa looks at him and she looks so sad, it makes Jon's stomach ache that has nothing to do with eating too much at the evening meal. He slides from his chair and gently pushing Ghost out of the way, he kneels down in front of his wife. He takes her knitting and sets it aside so he can hold both of her hands.

"I wanted to be like my father and your father. Good and honorable and I thought letting you go and freeing you to marry someone else *was* the good and honorable thing instead of keeping you bound to me," Jon tells her.

It's Sansa's turn to shake her head. "Jon... I loved you, too."

Jon goes still and he stares at her; hardly able to believe that she has said such a thing. Tears begin slowly rolling down Sansa's cheeks, but he can't even find the strength to wipe them away for her.

"I did. I'm fairly certain I loved you from our first kiss. And I just thought..." she sniffles. "You were able to give our betrothal up so easily, I just thought..." she tries again to finish that thought, but she's unable to; not that Jon needs her to. He can easily read her unfished words.

Jon rises to his knees and his hands cup his wife's cheeks.

“We’ve wasted so much time,” she sobs. “This whole time, we could have...” Her words are broken, her tears falling faster, and Jon feels his own eyes become wet.

He shakes his head. She’s absolutely right, but he doesn’t want to think about that. He *can’t* because if he does, he’ll never stop thinking about it and the ‘what ifs’ it will bring with it is a dark hole he’ll never pull himself out of again.

“Don’t think about that. We’re here, Sansa. We’re here and we’re together and married and we’re having a baby together.”

She keeps crying, but she does her best to nod her head. Jon begins pressing kisses to her face.

“I love you,” he murmurs, hardly lifting his lips from her skin to do so. “I love you. I love you.” Sansa’s arms slide around his shoulders and she hugs him as tightly as she can; obviously having plans to never let him go again. “And I’m never letting anyone come between us again,” he then vows.

Sansa’s breath is shaky as she exhales and she pulls her head back so that his lips might leave her and she can look into his eyes. “We will kill them if they try,” she says softly and firmly.

Jon cups her face and kisses her fiercely on the mouth.

They already have to those stupid enough to threaten them and both know neither will hesitate to do it again. Gods help the idiot who tries.

...

At the end of the council meeting, Bran gives them all a small smile. “Arya and Meera are coming.”

Jon and Sansa look at him for a moment – as if their brains both need that time to register his words – before the room quickly empties. Sam pushes Bran’s chair along so they can all go out into the courtyard. It’s a rather large welcoming party, Sansa notes with a smile.

She and Jon, Bran, Davos, Edd, Sam, Brienne and Pod, Varys, Meg and Lord Royce. She doesn’t doubt that Tormund and Theon would be there, too, but both have declined to be part of meetings. Tormund has begun the habit of going back and forth between Winterfell and the Wall and he is gone now, returning to the Wildings for a bit before he promised to come back and Theon is in the training yards. For the moment, he is staying in Winterfell instead of returning to his sister – not sure what he wants to do – and neither Jon nor Sansa demand an answer of him; letting him know that Winterfell is his home as well.

Sure enough, two horses are drawing nearer and nearer and when they can see, clearly, that it’s Arya and Meera, everyone seems to breathe in relief.

Jon is the first to greet them, both with crushing hugs, and then Meera is hurrying to Bran – everyone pretending to not watch as she practically throws herself against him, the two hugging one another. Arya says something to Jon, holding up a heavy sack in her hand, and he nods. Arya then comes rushing to Sansa, the two sisters embracing.

“Gods, look at you,” Arya smiles and looks down to her middle. “I haven’t missed it then.”

“You definitely haven’t,” Sansa laughs. “I’m so glad you’re home.”

“Me, too. Gods, I’m glad. The Dornish Prince arrived just as we were leaving and he is...” she trails off with a shrug. “We’ll see. Together, he and Ellaria might do some good.”

“We’ll see,” Sansa agrees.

“Not that it has anything to do with us,” Lord Royce is the one to say; speaking their thoughts.

“Speaking of that, I need to show you something,” Arya says. “All of you.”

“Not here,” Jon tells them all. “No one else needs to see.”

Sansa looks to her husband, confusion clear on her face, and Jon gives her a small smile, his hand sliding onto the small of her back and not giving anything away.

Back in the meeting room, Jon looks to Meg.

“I need you to wait outside, Meg,” he tells her. “This is not for your eyes.”

Meg frowns, but doesn’t think of arguing. Instead, she curtsies. “I’ll be right outside, Your Grace.”

“You better be. I can’t have one of my advisors too far from me.”

That gets her smiling again and Jon smiles, too, waiting for her to step back into the hallway before he closes the door, bolting it in place.

Arya has grabbed a nearby fur and spreads it over a bit of table before she drops the heavy sack down. Everyone stands, watching her, as she reaches in for the first item. Varys is the one to gasp as Tyrion’s head is set on the fur and then, Arya reaches into the sack again.

Sansa already knows whose head will be next and her body is tense and she feels scared though she tells herself there is no reason to be. And able to feel it coming off of her, Jon slides an arm around her waist, silently telling her that he’s right there with her; silently promising that no one can harm her again.

Arya pulls out Cersei’s head next and sets it down on the fur next to Tyrion’s.

Sansa can’t breathe as she looks at the woman’s head. She can’t even think. She’s staring right at it and yet... is it real? Is Cersei truly gone from this world and her hatred towards Sansa and her threats are no longer hanging in the air above all of them? This woman had tormented her for so long, for a time, Sansa had wondered if their hatred for one another – and their fear – was the only thing keeping them both alive.

She feels herself leaning into Jon, feeling the room move around her, and Jon's arm tightens around her.

Again, Lord Royce is the one to speak what they are all thinking.

"It's done."

...

Chapter End Notes

I didn't want to show Tyrion or the executions, to be honest. I feel like we got way too much of Tyrion in S8 and I'm sick of him. I'm excited for the last chapter, but of course, sad as well. You have all been amazing, reading and loving this story. THANK YOU!

Chapter 40

Chapter Notes

I have gotten so behind with replying to comments for this story, but please know that I read every single one I get and they all mean so much to me. THANK YOU so, so much for reading my random show rewrite story. There were certain things I wanted to write for this one and while I did write some of those things, sometimes, this story seemed to write itself and just take itself where it wanted to go. I hope some of you aren't too disappointed with the things that were left out. THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

...

When news of the birth breaks, all the bells in all the North ring all morning in celebration.

“Good morning, Grandpa!” Marian Shae exclaims with a beaming smile from one of Jon’s arms as they stop in front of Brandon Stark’s statue in the crypt.

Jon smiles and looks to his son in his other arm. “It’s your turn to light it this morning, Brandon.”

Brandon nods and Jon steps in close so the boy can lean over and light the candle. Marian Shae lifts a hand and rubs it over the cheek of the statue. Once it’s lit, Jon takes a step back again and the three look to Brandon Stark’s face flickering in the light.

The three are quiet as they look at him. It’s probably the only time the three-year-old twins are quiet.

At first, Sansa had been the only one to feel the movements inside of her and had just thought she and Jon were going to have a very active baby. But then, she kept getting bigger and bigger and she began feeling far too many kicks and movements at the same time. And then Jon and Sam felt them, too, and with a grin, Sam declared to them that they would be having twins.

Jon feels no shame in admitting that he just about damn near fainted when he heard the news. Sansa, though, was so happy and so excited – as was everyone else when they found out the news – and Missandei told Jon that twins were considered a sign of good luck.

“Blessings for your reign, Your Grace,” she said to him.

During the long and difficult labor, Jon never left Sansa’s side, letting her scream at him and crush his hand; not even thinking of or concerned of how that was his sword hand. His wife could break anything of his as she pushed their children into this world.

Brandon arrived first, Sam shouting out that it was a boy, and Jon and Sansa staring at their boy as he screamed his head off, demanding to be put back in and how dare they for forcing him out. Sam quickly passed the boy off to Cora, who was standing next to him, before ordering Sansa to push again. And then their daughter followed after her brother, her screams somehow even louder.

When Jon and Sansa were discussing names for the babies, Jon knew he wanted to name one of their sons after his father and if they had two, they would name the other after Uncle Ned. With girls, he admitted to being a little lost and Sansa had decided on Catelyn and Marian, after both of their mothers.

When the twins were born, Brandon was quickly settled on – Ned for the next one, Jon promised though Sansa didn’t need a promise like that to be made – and Marian was chosen for their daughter. It was Jon who mentioned Shae, remembering the woman’s name from the one and only time his wife had talked about her; the woman who had helped her in King’s Landing when there had been no one else.

“She’s just as important to me even if I never met her,” Jon told her as Sansa’s eyes flooded with tears upon hearing his suggestion. “She helped keep you safe when I couldn’t.”

Jon now holds his son and daughter – and honestly, sometimes, he looks at them both and can’t believe that he is actually a father with children and he has a wife who he loves and who loves him and in addition to all of that, he’s King to an *independent* North – and the three of them look to Brandon Stark’s statue.

The twins come with him down here every morning when Jon comes to see his father and Jon asks Brandon silently to look after his family though he doesn’t doubt that his father already does exactly that.

“The bells still ring,” Brandon notes as Jon carries them back through the crypts to the stairs.

“They do,” Jon confirms. “When you two were born, the bells rang all day and night to celebrate and again when Kit was born.”

“I remember!” Marian exclaims, pleased with herself that she does.

Jon smiles and at the bottom step, he bends down, setting both on their feet and watching them as they scurry up, he following behind, prepared to catch one if they stumble. He has learned that that is a large part of being a parent – letting them run ahead, but always nearby to help them up again when they stumble. That’s how Uncle Ned and Aunt Catelyn was and Jon imagines that that’s how his own father and mother would have been if they had both lived.

“Let us stop at the training yards, first, and then we’ll go see mama,” Jon suggests and then smiles as both Brandon and Marian take off, obviously in agreement to that plan.

The activity outside is steady with a constant buzz, but everyone he passes stops to bow or curtsy when they see their King. All this time later and Jon wishes they didn’t do that, but he has also learned that there’s just no stopping it.

Edd suddenly appears at his side, instantly falling into step with him. “She’s back,” he informs him.

Jon releases a breath at that. “Is she unharmed?”

“She is. Sansa ordered a bath for her immediately and when she’s done, we will all meet in your chancery.”

Jon nods at that. He hides it, but his stomach is always tight when Meg is away from Winterfell. Jon knows that the girl – almost eleven now – is good at what she does for him and Sansa. Varys had trained her well and she seems to only be getting better; her talent undeniable as Master of Whisperers despite her age. Sometimes, Jon knows that Sansa feels guilty because he feels that, too, that Meg is still such a young girl with such responsibility, but they have asked her time and

time again if this is what she truly wants to do and Meg always tells them that this is the *only* thing she wants to do.

As they near the training yard, Jon looks ahead and then hurries to his children, crouching down between them and putting his arms around their fronts, making them both laugh when he stops them from taking another step.

“Remember. You must not distract anyone when they are sparring,” he tells them both.

Brandon and Marian nod their heads and Jon gives them a kiss each before releasing them again and Jon and Edd follow them the rest of the way into the yard. There are dozens of men and boys and some girls training with their wooden swords, sparring together or practicing against the wooden dummies. On the other side of the yard, Theon is conducting archery lessons.

Arya is one of those sparring and her partner is Meera, the young women turning around one another, attacking and thrusting with the skill of seasoned warriors. Jon knows his children would have shouted for their Aunt Arya and possibly gotten her to get whacked with the wooden sword swinging at her if he hadn’t been able to stop them in time.

Marian turns to Jon, holding up her arms, and Jon swings her up so that she may get a better look and Edd does the same with Brandon. They watch all of the training, focusing most on Arya and Meera, their session ending with Arya’s blade to Meera’s throat, but Meera’s blade to Arya’s belly.

“Yay!” The twins both begin to cheer, clapping.

Arya grins, hurrying over to see her niece and nephew. She takes Brandon from Edd’s arms and blows a kiss on his cheek that makes him laugh with delight.

“I heard Meg’s back,” Arya says to Jon. She sets Brandon down and he sets Marian down and Arya hands Brandon her wooden sword. It’s far too heavy for the three-year-old and the twins hold it together.

Jon nods. “I just heard.”

Caw!

Everyone looks up to see a familiar black raven flap in the air over them and then comes swooping down, coming to a gentle land on Meera's shoulder. She smiles as he affectionately nips at his wife's ear with his beak and she smiles and lifts her fingers, stroking down his beak.

"Uncle Bran!" The children exclaim and Bran leaves Meera's shoulder to fly around the children, cawing at them and then leading them off on a chase, the children screeching and squealing as they chase their uncle back towards the Keep.

But then, suddenly, Bran stops and seems to hover in mid-air before turning back towards the others. He flies right to Arya and lands on her head.

"What is it?" She asks, instantly alert.

They all are. Jon's hand goes to curl around Longclaw's handle and he wonders if he should order Brandon and Marian into the Keep for safety.

Caw!

Bran begins guiding Arya forward, towards the front gates of Winterfell and the others follow after them.

"Brandon. Marian." Jon's voice is hard and even at three, the children know that when their father speaks in such a tone, he is King and is not to be disobeyed. They all can see the rider drawing nearer, but still too far away to see who it is. "Get behind me and stay there," he tells them.

Brandon and Marian hold hands and hurry to go behind Jon and Edd as ordered.

"Who is it, Bran?" Arya asks her brother, still on her head, in a quiet voice.

Bran, obviously, doesn't answer, but holds onto her hair a little tighter.

“Is it Davos?” Edd asks, his own hand around the hilt of his sword.

The man had left Winterfell the month before to go visit his wife and Jon had told the man that when he came back to bring her with him. This rider can’t be Davos though. It is a single horse and single rider with no cart behind it and not only that, Davos wouldn’t be back so soon. It is someone else.

They all watch the rider draw nearer, all tense as they wait, Jon glancing back every few moments to see that Brandon and Marian have stayed where he told them to, both being quiet as well.

Arya is the one to gasp first and Bran releases her hair, lifting himself from her hair to sit himself back on Meera’s shoulder as Arya steps forward.

“Gendry,” she whispers and Jon watches as the horse draws to a stop and a man – older than Arya, Jon notes – drops down, Arya already halfway to him. He looks at Arya and nothing else as he takes a step towards her. “Where the hell have you been?” She then demands of this man, loud enough for all of them to hear, before she launches herself at him, the man catching her and with her arms around his shoulders, he holds her around her waist, her feet swinging off the ground.

Jon watches for a moment, frowning, having no idea who the hell this person is and he then looks to his other cousin. “Who the hell is Gendry?” He asks.

Caw! is Bran’s only answer.

...

She and Jon share the chancery and Sansa sits at the table now with Varys to her left and Lord Royce to her right. Of course, underneath the table is Ghost, sleeping on her feet, keeping them warm for her despite the roaring fire in the hearth.

Baby Kit had been getting fussy and Lord Royce had taken it upon himself to sweep the little girl into his arms so that Sansa may continue her work as they go over the harvest reports from the fields and various correspondence and she works on penning a letter to her cousin.

Brienne stands at the door as Pod had been on duty all night and is asleep now. Since the birth of the three royal children, Pod or Brienne have become more intense in their guard duty, alternating twelve-hour shifts. The children have so many eyes looking out for them, but Brienne and Pod remain devoted to Sansa's safety. Though the North is Independent from the South and all of Westeros has not known peace such as this for so long now, all who survived the wars for the Iron Throne remember – and know – that a person can never be too safe.

It is known by all how much King Jon loves his Queen and the surest way to hurt him is through her. Jon fully supports Brienne and Pod's constant watch over his wife.

She lifts her eyes from reading to see Lord Royce, her dearest friend and closest advisor, making faces at the baby in his arms and she smiles at the display. All of her children look to the man as a grandfather and it makes Sansa so happy that they do. They couldn't ask for a better one, in Sansa's opinion, since their true ones can't be here with them.

Brandon and Marian Shae have the Stark look of their father and aunt and both Grandpas. Kit though already has the look of her mother; the Tully in her blood. When their daughter was born, they named her Catelyn, but instead of 'Cat', Brandon and Marian both began calling their sister 'Kitty' and now, four months after her birth, she is Kit, for short.

"Could you open this one from my Uncle Edmure?" Sansa asks Varys, handing him a sealed piece of parchment and Varys takes it as Sansa continues her letter to Robin and Talla.

The bells are ringing for them this morning. Talla has given birth to the couple's first child; a son they have named Jon, both after Robin's father and after their King. Sansa is three pages into her letter of congratulations to them and also telling them that the Stark family will come and see them all soon.

"Your Uncle writes of the Riverlands' trout surplus, but the haddock seem to be below of what it was last year," Varys informs her.

"Did he mention wheat? If not, ask him how their wheat harvest is and if he needs any. It seems like we are going to have quite the surplus of bushels this year," Sansa says, lifting her eyes when she hears Kit coo and she sees that the baby has freed her foot from the blanket she is wrapped in. Lord Royce is quick to bundle her once again, the man's smile never leaving his face as he looks down to her.

“Mama!”

She hears the familiar running of light feet and Brienne opens the door in preparation. A moment later, Brandon and Marian Shae burst into the room, running right for her, giving her just enough time to set down her quill and turn in her chair, laughing as the twins run right into her arms.

Ghost lifts himself up from under the table to go to the twins, sniffing at them and nuzzling at them. Upon all births of the Snow children, Ghost imprinted himself to them as well. Sansa knows Jon hasn't told the twins – wanting to keep it a surprise – but he has asked Tormund to be on the lookout for any direwolf pups that could be brought back to Winterfell on one of Tormund's journeys back beyond the Wall.

“Oh, my loves, you bring the cold with you,” she gives them a dramatic shiver and then taking both sets of hands, she rubs them between hers. “Go sit by the fire and we'll get you some warm cider to drink. Aggie, would you mind fetching some drinks for all of us?”

The girl smiles and curtsies. “Of course, Your Grace.”

Cora had gotten married the year before to a soldier of Winterfell and no longer serves as Sansa's maid. Though she is only eleven, Aggie remains as Sansa's only one. Like Sansa had asked her to help Cora, Sansa knows she must ask another woman to be another of her maids to help with Aggie's workload. Aggie is still far too young to be her only maid.

For a time, Sansa had thought to ask Missandei, but the woman had been a Queen's Maid enough and Sansa wanted something more for the woman who had chosen to stay in the North. And actually, she has proven to be quite helpful to Sam in his work as Maester and he can't seem to say enough good things about the woman who has helped him when it comes to medicines and caring for others. Missandei has picked up knowledge from her former masters on different ways to cure illness and Sam has told both Jon and Sansa that she has quite a knack for it.

(Missandei has gone with Sam, Gilly and Little Sam to the Eyrie for even though, obviously, Robin has his own Maester, Talla had wanted her brother with her and Missandei had gone to help with the birth.)

At the moment, Aggie doesn't seem to mind at all of having such a huge responsibility, but still, Sansa can't expect her to continue without aid of some kind.

"Meg!" Aggie gasps at the sight of her best friend as Meg steps into the chancery with Jon and Edd behind her. Meg grins and both girls rush to each other, practically colliding and embracing in a tight hug. "I'm going to get warm drinks for everyone. Do you need something to eat, too?" She asks and then looks behind her to the King to see if she does.

"I can always eat," Meg smiles and Aggie smiles as well and with one more hug to her, she leaves the room, Brienne closing the door behind her.

Jon glances down to Meg before looking to the twins, still standing in front of Sansa. He doesn't know all that Meg has to report, but perhaps, it's not for little ears.

But as if they know Jon is going to have them leave, Marian Shae climbs onto Sansa's lap then and sits down and Brandon sits down at her feet, Ghost joining him. He sighs, but doesn't tell them to leave. He supposes them staying can be necessary. Though only three, they are different from most three-year-olds. Their papa is the King and their mama is the Queen and things like this will be things they will do one day. It is never too early to begin their lessons.

"Shall we?" He says to those who remain in the room.

Meg comes to the table and smiles when Varys puts an arm around her in a hug. Jon spreads the map of the known world in front of them on the table and Sansa turns forward, Marian still on her lap. Brandon gets to his feet and stands on his toes so he might see as well and Edd swings the boy up so that he can stand on the table.

"He's in Tyrosh," Meg gets right to it, pointing to the harbor city on the island off the coast of Essos.

Sansa gasps. "You went to Tyrosh?" She asks, nearly whispering it. Tyrosh is deeply involved in the slave trade and it is said they even sail to the North of the Wall to find free folk to take back as slaves.

“I was fine, Your Grace,” Meg smiles at her. “He has dyed his hair and beard blue.” Tyroshi people are known to dye their hair and beards all sorts of bright colors.

“And you’re sure it was him?” Varys asks.

Meg nods to him while also giving him a look for asking her that. *He* was the one to train her. “He can dye his hair whatever he wants. He can’t hide that he’s missing a hand.”

Sansa glances towards Brienne, who remains standing guard at the door and is pretending to not listen. It has been years and though her guard isn’t the sort to talk of such things, Sansa knows that the woman still has feelings for the man they are discussing.

“What is he doing there?” Lord Royce is the one to ask, still holding Kit in his arms.

“He makes and sells pear brandy in the city’s market.”

“And when he’s not doing that?” Jon is the one to ask.

“He goes to the pleasure houses in the evenings. He doesn’t do *anything*, Your Grace. I followed him for three weeks and that’s all he does. He doesn’t even talk to anyone except those he sells to and if he’s at one of the gambling tables. He certainly isn’t talking to *anyone* about storming the shores of Westeros.”

Jon looks to Meg before to the map and then back to Meg again. He then moves his eyes to Sansa and neither of them say a word, but that doesn’t mean their eyes aren’t speaking volumes.

Jon then gives a nod. “I’ll write to King Martell and let him know.”

...

“You went surprisingly easy on him at the meal this evening,” Sansa notes with a smile as she and Jon lay in bed at the end of their day.

The children are in their own chambers, asleep, and Kit is asleep in her cradle at the foot of their bed – Ghost lying next to it on the floor and keeping watch – and more than likely, Brandon or Marian or both will come into their room sometime during the night to sleep in their bed; both still not quite used to being in their own rooms.

“You know Arya terrifies me,” Jon says with a smile and Sansa laughs softly. “And if Gendry looked out for her, I can’t really hate him at all, can I?”

Sansa doesn’t give an answer to that and instead, she moves in as close as she can to him, snuggling into his side and Jon wrapping both of his arms around her, resting his cheek to her head as she rests it on his shoulder. They lay there, quiet, listening to the crackling of the fire and the other’s breathing.

Sansa lifts a hand and rests it over his heart, feeling the bump of the scar beneath her fingertips. And beneath the scar, she feels her husband’s heart beating.

She tries to snuggle even closer to him though she’s already as close to him as she can be.

“I’m so glad that this is where I am,” Sansa whispers because even after everything they’ve been through – both apart and together – she feels like she can never say that enough; even if the words are such a gross understatement to just how glad she is. How happy.

For so long, she thought she would never be happy again.

Jon rests his lips to his wife’s head and holds her in his arms as tightly as he can. “This is the only place I was ever meant to be.”

...

Chapter End Notes

The End.

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