



**THE** scent of freshly baked goods enticed Lyra upon her awakening as she left her chambers that morn. So soft and warm, she discerned the aromas of sweet honey and berries upon a spread of golden crumbed beds. Her mouth watered as she felt her stomach respond to the summons.

It had already been a moon since she first arrived in King's Landing. Preparations for the wedding were still underway and her mother had insisted that Lyra leave the majority of the arrangements to herself and the servants. Invitations had already been sent out and there was no doubt that the guests would soon arrive within the next moon.

It was, after all, the wedding of the crown heir's youngest son. Lyra was still struck breathless at the thought. Third in line to the succession of the throne, that was who she was marrying. Not just any highborn, not just any Targaryen.

Even more daunting still was the idea that her children would propagate that line. They would be born dragons with flowing silver hair and eyes of crystallised amethyst. Their legacy would be the skies and the flames, not winter and frost. Lyra had always been proud of her heritage, of being a Stark. Only her brother and cousins would carry on the name.

A sudden thought flitted across her mind, dancing across an ephemeral stage that faded as soon as it began. "Maybe they would look like you. Maybe we'll have a pack of wolf pups instead."

Glowing candlelight flickered across a tender smile. Then it was all lost once again beneath a haze of oblivion. Something inside her stirred restlessly.

"Good morning, cousin." Brandon's greeting woke her from her reverie. She glanced to him, then to the basket of fresh bread on the table. "I heard that Prince Viserys sent these with his regards."

Her lips parted with surprise and she allowed the severed strings of her memory to float away once more. "That is very kind of him. I shall enjoy his hospitality."

She sat down and reached eagerly for a sweet bread. A light dusting of sugar snowed over her fingertips and palms as she ate. Brandon returned to his disorganised parchments and Lyra caught sight of unfamiliar nautical sketches amongst them.

"Are you planning to travel somewhere?" she asked. It looked like a map of the Narrow Sea and its many islands. Without sparing a glance, Brandon attempted to discreetly flip the map over to hide its contents. Lyra tutted, "It is too late, I have already seen it."

"Then I hope no one else does," he said enigmatically.

She arched a brow at his peculiar behaviour. "Whatever it is you're trying to hide, you know that I will find it out eventually."

"It is not that I am trying to hide it," he claimed. "It is just too difficult to explain."

"I am not a simpleton," she insisted.

He shook his head. "That was not my meaning. It's just ... I don't actually know what it is about but I feel compelled to find out."

Lyra could not remember ever seeing her cousin so perplexed. Concern started to grow on her as she furrowed her brows. "Well, what is it?"

"I'll tell you when I learn more," he said. Then to her dismay, he gathered his items and prepared to leave. "I will be in your father's solar, if you need me."

Stubbornness ran thick in their family and Lyra knew not to press the matter. He had already decided that whatever troubles he had was his alone. She just hoped that he knew what he was doing. It was certainly strange to see, he had never acted like that back in Winterfell.

The ringing silence of her solitude bit against her skin. Lyra hurriedly finished her breakfast and fled the refectory of its sudden desolation.

Her few weeks in King's Landing had been nothing short of routine, pointless decisions and aimless wandering. Her only source of pleasure was visiting Aemma and Rhaenyra but she knew it would be about time for the little princess' studies.

Lyra had not seen Daemon for almost two whole weeks either after their abrupt parting in the gardens. Only snippets of that supposed night together would haunt her and tried as she might, she was unable to conjure the rest. Damned Dornish wine, like a potent poison she cursed.

She wondered where was Daemon. It was unlike him to leave her alone for such an extended period of time. She felt as if he would round a corner any moment to torment her as usual with his teasing. But he never had.

Nor have the servants gleaned any knowledge of his whereabouts except the one evening he was seen flying on his dragon. That had been three days ago.

Perhaps it was time for Lyra to break her routine. She sent her handmaiden away on other tasks and snuck through the tower on light feet. The halls of the royal apartments were mostly empty as everyone was out.

Lyra spotted the door to Daemon's personal cabinet ajar. She smiled to herself upon finding it empty then closed the door behind her. The walls were thick and she could barely hear a sound from the outside. There was only one window next to a lounging chair that was covered in soft pelts, overlooking the blooming gardens.

The cabinet was decorated lavishly with paintings, tapestries and other manner of ornaments. There was a table in the middle that was heavily dishevelled and almost spilling with an assortment of items. She looked through tomes of history and books of outlandish tales around Westeros. There was a manuscript titled *Strange Stone* that piqued her interest.

Amongst Daemon's other effects were trinkets and artifacts from faraway lands that she had never seen before. A jade decoration of a lion head, coins stamped with a goddess of love spilling from a satchel of rainbow coloured silk, polished ivory carved into a miniature elephant.

She wondered where he had gotten them from. Briefly, she wished she could travel across the Narrow Sea herself.

A low yet familiar rumble of stone grating against stone startled her into dropping a silver ring in the shape of a curling dragon. Lyra turned around to find the wall behind the writing desk slowly opening.

From it emerged Daemon and once again, her breath caught at the sight of him. His hair, his eyes, his lips, all committed to her memory. She could feel the gentle flutters of her heart against her chest, everything melting away into a springtide dream. The beginnings of a smile tugged on the edges of her lips.

He held a very familiar looking pastry in hand and looked at her in surprise from the entranceway.

"Oh." His expression was sheepish. "I suppose you have finally caught me."

She crossed her arms and tilted her head to the side. "And what exactly have I caught you in the act for?"

His lips slowly curved into a blithe smile that he could not resist. "Missing you, of course."

— ◆ —



#### AUTHORS'S NOTE

i'm deceased. this was a slow chapter but it needed to be written for the bigger plot. there's a lot of foreshadowing here. i'm so excited for them to reach the wedding, i'm trying to write as much as i can. i think you will all enjoy what i have in mind for the next chapter ahahaha. let me know your thoughts! xx

Continue reading next part