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DAEMON entered the godswood to find a pack of ravenous wolves before him. The weirwood tree bled bitterly under a starless abyss. Darker than oblivion itself. Crimson leaves laden with resentment and woeful retribution.

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He brought forth the boy, throwing him at their feet. Snivelling snot and tears stained his soiled face. Daemon looked to Rickon Stark, Lord of Winterfell, who wielded Ice between his hands.

Forged by magic and Valyrian steel, the ancestral greatsword of the Starks was more of an executioner's axe than a battle weapon. Standing as tall as any man, and sharper than any blade that could be forged by common fire.

Daemon watched as Lyra stepped forwards to her father. A vision of frosted jade and flowing midnight. The edges of her jaw hardened.

"Brandon was the blood of my blood," she said with biting ferocity. "With the old gods as my witness, I claim his recompense in blood. The sentence should be by my hand. Who dares to disagree?"

Her lord father said nought a word nor did her cousins or their vassal houses. Daemon glanced towards his grandfather who kept an equally silent vigil over the grim proceedings. This was now a northern matter. Yet it was neither the old way nor customary practice for a lady of the house to carry out any sentence herself.

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Lord Rickon lifted his greatsword and held it out to her. Daemon watched in awe as she grasped the hilt with a firm grip and nary a tremor along her arm. Wolf princess, they had called her, he now saw it to be true.

Lyra stood in front of the boy with Ice now in her pale hands. Her face was as grave and cold as the crypts below Winterfell.

"Please have mercy, my lady," the boy begged for his life. "I only did it for mine own sister. Bedridden she is. There is no one else but me to care for her."

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His pleas may as well have fallen upon desolate winter winds. Lyra was unmoved, as still as carven stone.

Lord Rickon nodded to her and whispered, "Just as I had taught you."

Her red-rimmed eyes turned upwards, to the black heavens. "In the name of Jaehaerys of the House Targaryen, first of his name, King of the Andals, the Rhoynar, and the First Men, Lord of the Seven Kingdoms and protector of the realm."

"Please, my lords, have mercy," the boy cried in earnest. Daemon grabbed his collar and pinned him on his knees, pushing against his back to expose the nape of his neck.

"I, Lyra of the House Stark, daughter of the Lord of Winterfell and Warden of the North, sentence you to die."

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She lifted the greatsword with vicious resolve and cleaved the boy's head clean from his neck in one fell swing. Daemon released the breath that he had been holding. Deliverance. He felt his heart swell with pride for her. Always, he had known, there had lived a wildfire inside of her. Almost desperate for an escape.

The clouds finally parted as if by an accord, allowing silvery light to shine through. Lyra was sinfully beautiful as she was kissed by the moonlight. With blood smudged across her face and tousled hair, she looked like a feral creature emerging from a shimmering dream. He would paint a portrait of her in this moment if he could and wear it around his neck.

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Ice returned to the rightful hands of the Lord of Winterfell. The Starks and their retinue started to leave. Daemon gestured for the nearby Kingsguard to clear the body from the godswood. Lyra was waiting for him.

Daemon lastly looked to the old king who simply nodded and turned to leave for himself. The eulgence grew in radiance and glistening lustre. He took his lady wife's hand in his and pressed his lips against her brow in reverence.

"My love, do you wish to retire for what remains of the night?" he asked so ly.

She gazed up at him in thought then nodded. "Yes. Please." Her voice was in a fraught whisper.

Daemon wrapped an arm around her shoulders protectively, leading her out of the godswood. He could have sworn the weirwood tree had stopped bleeding as well. Perhaps the old gods had been appeased too with their blood offering.

They climbed the tower of Maegor's Holdfast, passing the guest apartments and onward. Daemon opened the door to his bedchambers and brought her inside. Lyra went to wash her face and hands, cleansing herself from the evening's events. Daemon sat on the bed to remove his boots then beckoned to her when she was done.

He wrapped his arms around her middle, leaning his head against her. "We do not have to do anything tonight. We can just sleep."

Her fingers ran through his hair with delicate, tender strokes. "It is our wedding night," she murmured.

"I know..." He looked up, beholding her with love and adoration. "A tragic one."

She held his face between smooth cold hands. "There is nothing tragic about this." A small smile lifted the corners of her lips. Daemon leaned forwards to kiss her lightly, his hands gliding up her bodice to undo its laces. Her dress fell away and her bare nakedness was a ravishing sight. He was enraptured by every inch of her body and soul.

Hastily, she helped removed his tunic, shirt and pants. He laid her down on the bed, ebony midnight cascading over the pillows. He waylaid her with more gentle kisses along her neck and jaw. His bewitched heart spilt with veneration for her, their breaths mingled fervently as one. Above all else in the known world, she was the most precious treasure he had ever held.

"I love you," he whispered in her ear. With every aching breath he took.

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Lyra gave him the sweetest smile that enchanted and mesmerised him, sending the breath fleeing from his lungs. "And I love you, for evermore."

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He leaned his forehead against hers, inhaling the scent of roses and lilacs. "My lady wife."

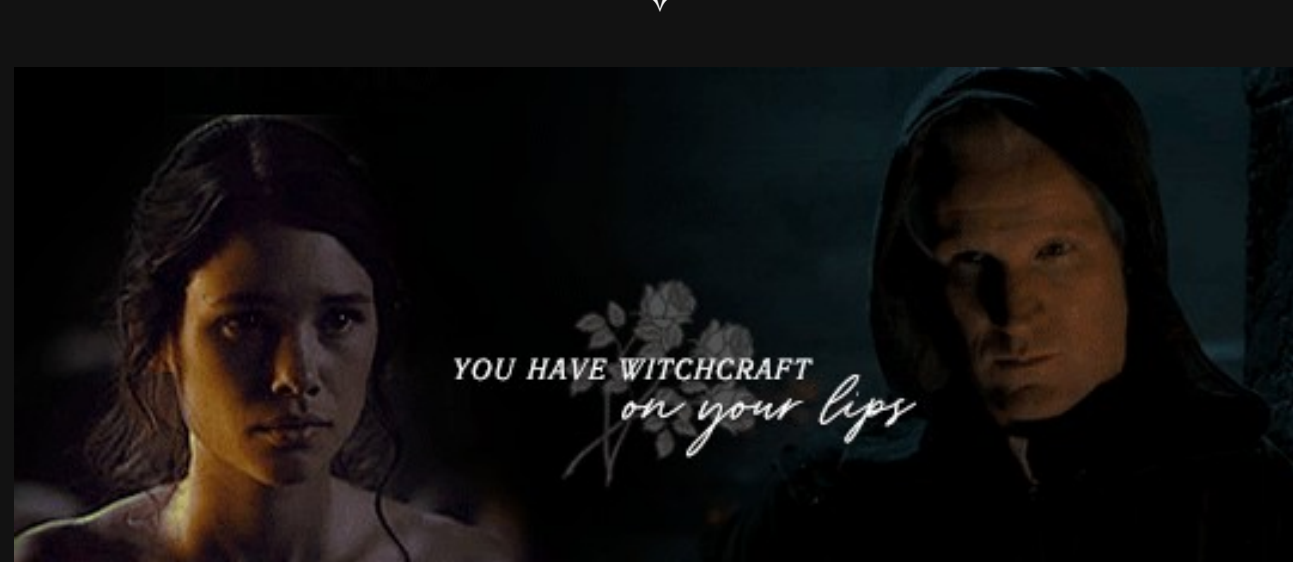
She chuckled. "My lord husband."

Their lips met once more, but never for the last, souls entwining within a lover's embrace. With pale stars falling over them and daylight breaking. They sealed their vows under the blessing of a hallowed dawn and slowly burning aurora. Until the vault of heaven shattered and the moon unravelled into shimmering strings of forgotten echoes.

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Yet despite that, he knew, he would always love her in this life and the next. His soul would always be bound to hers.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

wow what a hardcore life, executing someone then consummating their marriage in the same hour lmao. i'm keeping this story clean from smut hahaha. next chapter is gonna be packed with a lot of things happening and also i think, the great council is going to be held at last. love seeing your thoughts on the chapter and can't wait for the next!! xx

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