

THE Red Keep had not changed in the least from what Lyra remembered. From the pale red stone to the mossy moat surrounding the Holdfast. The labyrinthine gardens and the cliffs overlooking the bay. It was not her ancient birthplace of Winterfell but it still felt like returning home.

Daemon had flown Caraxes over the keep earlier to announce their arrival. The dragon's long, dramatic screech was a recognisable one. So a small group was already awaiting them in the courtyard when their carriage arrived.

It had been five long years since Lyra had seen her young son. Her firstborn. Baelor had grown fast, with raven hair hanging shaggily over his shoulders. He reminded her so much of Brandon in their youth, and there was a little bit of Cregan in him too. But his eyes, brilliant dark amethysts forged from dragonfire, were unmistakably from Daemon.

Baelor had run up to his father first, tugging on his shirt with quiet excitement in his violet eyes. Daemon grinned back, nudging him forward as he seemed uncertain. "Go on," he urged so ly.

Lyra bent down with an arm outstretched. "My boy, I have missed you so much." She wondered if he really remembered anything of her at all.

The yearning in his eyes turned to fulfilment. With a bright smile, he ran forwards and embraced her tightly. "Mama, where have you been?" he asked, voice muffled against the crook of her neck. Her heart poured forth with love and regret, overflowing down her arms as she clasped him tightly.

"I'm so sorry," Lyra murmured against his ear, pressing a kiss to his temple. "I thought of you every single day, sweetling."

Vaegon, always the wary one, tugged on her sleeve then. His eyes were expectant as if he already knew. Lyra released Baelor and turned him towards his two younger siblings. Alyse was more reserved, peeking from behind her brother's shoulder with curiosity. Yet she had the most savage temper of them all.

"Baelor," she introduced them, "this is Vaegon and Alyse, your siblings. Sweetlings, this is your older brother."

"Do you have a dragon too?" Alyse was the first to ask. When Baelor nodded, it sent the twins into another frenzy. They pulled first on Lyra's arm then on Daemon's leg, both demanding dragons of their own.

"It is usually tradition to have an egg placed in the cradle at birth," Daemon said while laughing at them. "Perhaps Baelor can choose the eggs for them, as Princess Rhaena had for the late King and Queen."

Lyra blinked in sudden realisation. That was rightshe thought. There was a new king now. Her mind attempted to conjure an image of Viserys sitting on the Iron Throne just as King Jaehaerys did before. She came up short. It was hard for her to picture him on it, the baleful seat was ill-suited to his pacifistic nature.

Though he had been the last to ride Balerion the Black Dread, a er all. At least there might have been a part of him that was resilient and tenacious.

A shrill shriek suddenly pierced the air, startling everyone at present. Lyra was catapulted against by a tangle of limbs and silvery gold hair. Smaller hands wrenched against the white silken fabric of her dress. Then lavender eyes looked up at her with unshed dew.

"Where have you been!" Rhaenyra cried angrily, her tone rebuking. "Do you have any idea how sad we all were when you—" She choked on her own words. "You should have come back sooner! Why didn't you!"

Lyra could not help the grin that spread across her face like wildfire. She went on her knees to embrace Rhaenyra in a firm lock. "My darling niece!" she exclaimed delightedly. "You have grown so big now!"

Tense indignant shoulders gave way to a sigh of relief and happiness. Rhaenyra returned the hug fiercely, burrowing her face in Lyra's neck just as Baelor had before. Moist tears touched her skin.

"You can never do that again," the girl ordered.

Lyra rubbed her back affectionately. "I would never dream of it."

Viserys had demanded a feast to be held in her honour. Revelry and celebration to mark an auspicious day. Lyra wished to sleep instead.

Though it was good to see him and Aemma again. The many days they had spent together within the comforts of the nursery felt like a faraway dream now. People from a different lifetime ago.

Courtiers came to greet her and gave their regards. The small council had changed once again since Lyra remembered. There was now a Tyland Lannister and a Lyonel Strong. Poor Grand Maester Runciter had only lasted a year after her unfortunate accident. Lyra was quite saddened at the loss, as he was the one who helped deliver Baelor alongside the midwives.

Even Otto Hightower came to pay his respects to her, though it would have been expected of him. He was still the Hand of the King. There was always something about Otto's presence that made her skin crawl. By the way his eyes swept over her from head to toe, and the curling pretence of his smile.

As if he were performing an act with the court as his stage.

They laughed and talked until their voices grew hoarse, cup in hand never seeming to empty. The children played and danced with each other amidst the bards and lyres. Candles burnt short within the hall, golden reverescence surrounding them all.

It was only when the hour grew late indeed that Viserys withdrew from the feast. Relief washed over Lyra as she was finally able to collect her children, sending them to bed with their attendants. Only then she could return to her own chambers.

It was still the same one she shared with Daemon before her abrupt departure. The climbing thorns had grown even more unruly on the balcony. She would need to get them trimmed soon.

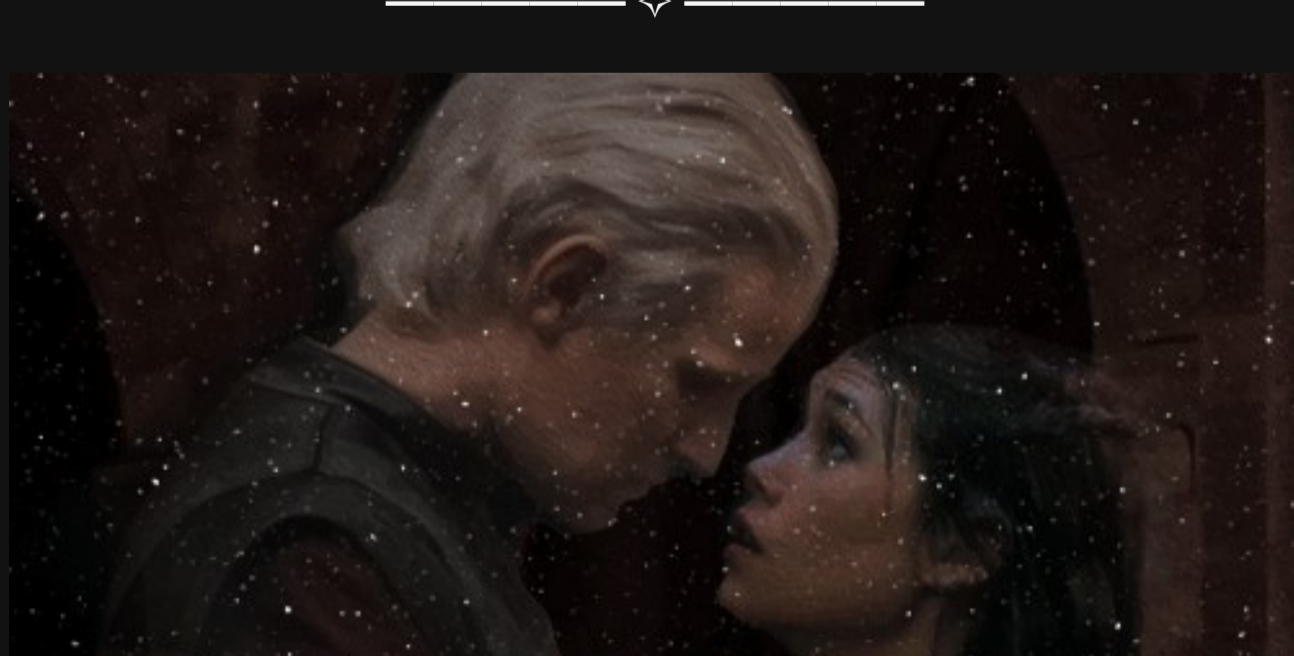
"Alone at last." The door closed behind her like a signal fire.

Lyra turned from the moonlit clouds, finding Daemon standing before her. A sight of starry allure captured against a canvas of midnight shadows. He still managed to set her heart ablaze with just a look and she was brought back to the Great Hall so many years before.

Like winter giving way to spring, melting so ly under a pastel bloom. They approached each other and she recalled the glimmering rainbows of the sept when they made their vows. His touch both warmed and chilled her skin. Longing burned inside her, rising to a roaring crescendo.

Their lips met with fire, with frost, and everything in between. Her hands would worship his body as he did with hers. Until the skies fell into a watery abyss, until eternity would end with devastation.

She was his and he was hers.



AUTHOR'S NOTE

oops short chapter but at least lyra is back in king's landing now. please leave a comment if you're still enjoying the story, let me know if there's anything you want to see next! feeling kinda demotivated recently ngl so your comments really help me out a lot to continue writing! <3 xx

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