

As was expected, rumours of Daemon's misdeeds had spread like wildfire throughout the keep. It had been reported that the king was livid when he learned of it and severely reprimanded his grandson. The man himself had not sought Lyra out as he had nor had she seen him for the next few days as well.

In that period, she had spent her time in the company of Daemon's brother, Viserys, along with his wife and daughter. Soon, she would come to call them family by law but they had already welcomed her into their hearth.

Viserys Targaryen and Aemma Arryn were a good match for one another. Lyra envied them for that. Viserys was an amicable man, pleasant and well spoken. The only thing he wished upon anyone was everlasting happiness and peace. He found that for himself in his wife, who was the apple of his eye.

Their daughter, Rhaenyra, was a sweet child at the tender age of five. Lyra adored Rhaenyra from the moment she sat down with the girl. For Rhaenyra did not play with dolls or learn to sew. Instead, she studied the histories of the world and gazed ever upon the sky where her ancestor, Aegon the Conqueror, descended upon Westeros.

In that aspect, Lyra found a kindred spirit as Rhaenyra would beg her to tell stories of the North. Of her forefathers and Bran the Builder who constructed the mighty Wall to protect them against dark winter nights. Of the First Men and the Old Gods and the Children of the Forest.

"Have you been to the Wall?" Rhaenyra asked. "Is it really taller than the Red Keep itself?"

"Ten times as high," Lyra told her. "And a hundred fold of its length. But no, I haven't been to the Wall. It is not a place for you or I."

"Why not?" the young princess inquired.

"Because it is a black place for men with even blacker hearts."

When she said that, Lyra could not help to envisage her father sending Daemon to the Wall. It would certainly be a sight to behold.

"You will give her nightmares," Viserys warned but it did not seem that he found their conversation distasteful.

"It's not scary," Rhaenyra protested.

Aemma chuckled as she fanned herself. At four months expectant, her belly was already pronounced. Lyra thought she may have twins. "You say that now, my sweet child, but I will be the one to stroke your head in the middle of the night."

The girl hesitated before changing the subject. "I heard that you can fight with swords. Are girls allowed to hunt in the North?"

Lyra exchanged glances with Viserys who did not seem to mind the question. "I can hold a sword, aye, though I am more skilled in archery. And yes, I have participated in hunts when I was younger. I did grow up with five male cousins, as well as all."

"But not anymore?" the child persisted.

"No, not anymore," Lyra responded with an air of sadness. She understood her role as a daughter long ago and had come to terms with that. Lyra would no longer ride alongside direwolves for the rest of her remaining days.

"When will I be able to hunt and hold a sword?" Rhaenyra then asked her father.

"When you are old enough, Rhaenyra. By then, you may also choose a dragon to claim and soar the skies with. Just as I had with Balerion when I was six and ten." Viserys smiled wistfully.

"Would you like to soar the skies with me, Aunt Lyra?" Rhaenyra offered.

Lyra beamed. "Nothing would please me more."

"But you can ride Uncle Daemon's dragon first!" Rhaenyra told her innocently. "Then tell me whose dragon is the fastest!"

Lyra felt her mouth sour as she forced a smile for the girl.

Viserys noticed and announced, "Look how the time flies! Rhaenyra, it is time for your bath."

"But my bath is tomorrow," the child whined, looking up at him indignantly as he stood from his chair.

"I say your bath is today." Viserys bent to scoop her into his arms. He then waited patiently for Aemma to push herself to her feet. "Will you return with us, Lyra?"

"No, thank you, I wish to admire the sunset a little bit more," she told him.

He nodded and they bade her good night before retiring to their apartments. They exited the nursery together then parted ways. Lyra decided to take the air of the main courtyard and listened to the running waters of the fountains into the moat. Hemlock grew in abundance there and it reminded Lyra of the snow trenches in Winterfell.

She turned her attentions to the gate when she spotted an approaching figure. Even from a distance, she recognised Daemon's long gait. As he had not having seen him for a while, she was shocked to find his face and hands bloodied. He sauntered across the courtyard, passing Lyra with only a mere glance, before continuing on his way to the royal apartments.

She thought that was odd.

A guard lingered by the gates to watch Daemon safely disappear into the tower. Lyra approached him. "What has happened?" she asked.

The man hesitated. "The Prince was engaged in a brawl, my lady, in one of the taverns in Flea Bottom."

"For what purpose?" she continued.

He cleared his throat uneasily. "It is said that he was defending your honour as well as hearing of some salacious rumours."

Lyra frowned, then forgot to thank the guard before she followed in Daemon's footsteps. On the way, she halted the servant who was carrying a fresh basin of water, rags and ointment on a tray. Then she ordered him to bring her to the prince's chambers. He knocked on the door for her.

"Enter," Daemon's voice bade from inside.

The servant opened the door for Lyra and she walked in to find Daemon nursing his cuts on the bed. He looked up in surprise, eyes watching her carefully as she set the tray things down on the table.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Would you rather I leave?" she retorted. He made no indication of such so she pulled the chair from the table. "Come."

As if what seemed like careful consideration, Daemon stood from his bed and walked over. "I can do this myself," he said.

"Sit." Lyra motioned to the chair once more and he heeded her. She soaked a rag in the basin and started to trace the edges of his cheek. Crimson quickly stained the cloth as she dabbed against the bleeding.

Daemon fidgeted under her. "You're not obligated to do this."

"Do you want me to leave?" she repeated.

This time, he shook his head. "No ... I thought you were angry."

"I am, but I heard you defended my honour," she told him.

He chuckled morosely. "Yes, as well as I besmirched it." She pressed hard against his wound which earned her a lukewarm protest of pain. "Are we meant to forget it ever happened then?"

"I do not wish to speak of it again," she said. "You made an effort and I acknowledge that. We can not change the past."

"Spoken like a true Stark," Daemon remarked. "So honourable and good."

"Would you rather I fed you to direwolves?" She raised a bemused brow. "Or perhaps you would like a view from the top of the Wall?"

He gave her a genuine smile then, eyes dancing with mirth. His voice was low and alluring to her ears as he laughed. "Very good," he praised. "Though I fear you may find a dead husband to be wanting."

"I suppose I will just have to find a new one," she said.

"And who would you have in mind?" he inquired curiously.

Lyra hummed in thought. "I heard the Lannisters have an eligible son."

"Gods be good." His face was stricken with dismay. "Surely you could do better than that."

"They are fairly golden-haired."

"I find they lack a certain luster," he told her with an apathetic tone. The corner of her lips twitched in amusement.

Once Lyra had cleaned the blood from his wounds, she proceeded to apply the ointment. To her surprise, he did not flinch once. Brandon used to always complain that she was not gentle enough.

"Tell me, my lady," Daemon started. "Do you find me despicable?"

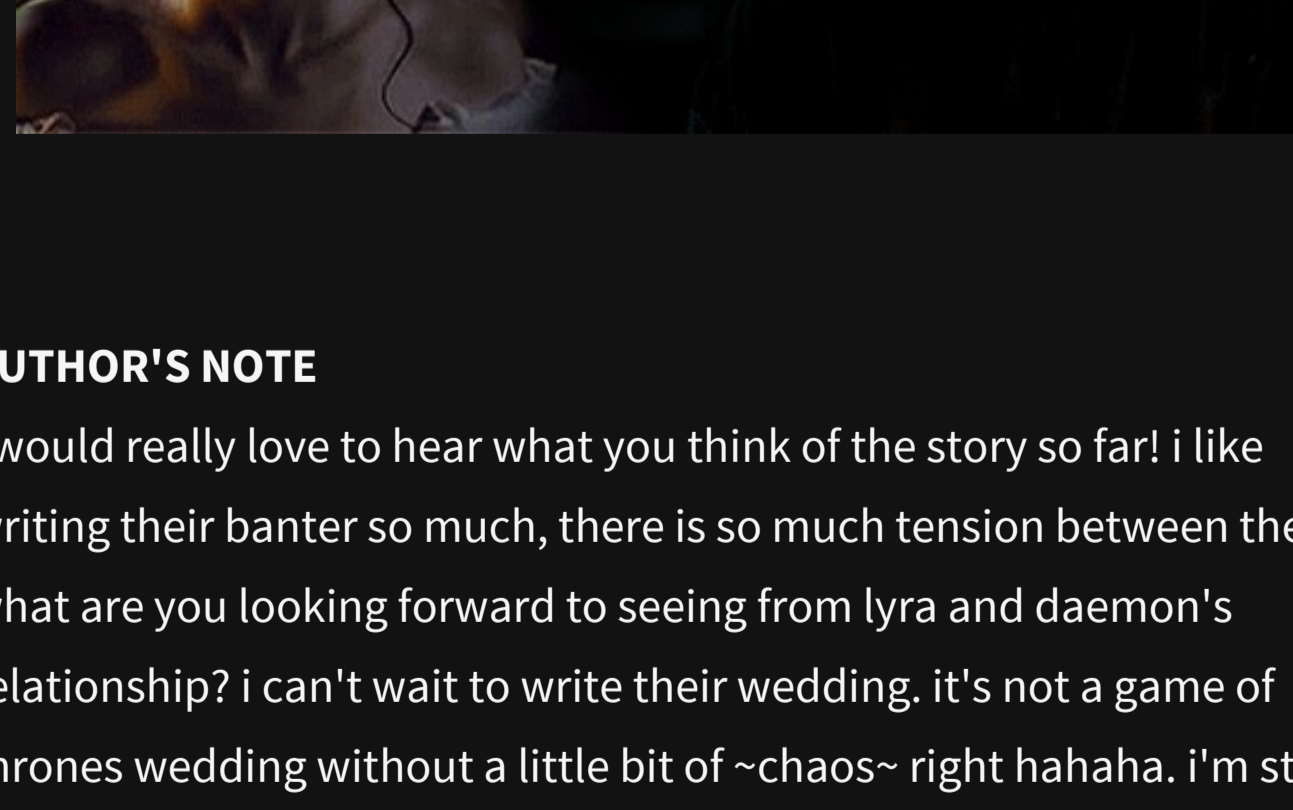
She studied him closely before responding, "You are insufferable, my prince. That is the truth."

"And would you love an insufferable man like me?" he asked.

She shook her head in exasperation as she placed the ointment back on the tray. "This is why you're insufferable. Good night."

Lyra swiftly moved towards the door and wrenched it open. Daemon watched her with delight.

"It will only be a good thing when I have dreams of you, my lady," he said and his silky laughter followed her out the door as she slammed it shut.



AUTHOR'S NOTE

I would really love to hear what you think of the story so far! I like writing their banter so much, there is so much tension between them. What are you looking forward to seeing from Lyra and Daemon's relationship? I can't wait to write their wedding, it's not a game of thrones wedding without a little bit of chaos~ right hahaha. I'm still undecided on whether to continue into hotd, but I think I will need to wait for the season to end before deciding. There is still a whole 10 years to cover before that too! xx