

The face etched into the weirwood tree seemed as though it were truly alive, as though there were someone watching him. It's blood-red sap leaked from the eyes down to its very roots. Harry breathed deeply and he could feel the magic in his lungs, faint but there all the same.

He reached out to touch the pale white wood, and felt a slight tingling beneath his fingers, but nothing more. He was so lost in his own reverie that he didn't hear the footsteps as they approached, though he didn't jump as a voice spoke from just over his shoulder, "They're quite something, aren't they?"

He found Rhaenyra standing behind him. It seemed to him that the only colors she owned were those of her house. *Not that they don't suit her.* The difference today was that she wasn't wearing a dress, instead it was a pair of black riding pants, gloves and a crimson red vest. Her hair was neatly braided and hanging over her left shoulder. Ser Criston, her ever-present shadow, stood stoically behind her.

His eyes flitted back to the weirwood before he answered, "I couldn't agree more."

"Is it the first you've seen?" There was something in her voice that he couldn't quite place, and a keenness in her eye as well. But then it hit him. *She's testing me.* Rhaenyra seemed a clever woman, and he was willing to wager that she still wasn't convinced by the story of his beginnings.

"No, princess." If she was expecting him to slip over something as simple as that, she'd be sorely disappointed, "The Riverlands don't have them in great abundance, but they can still be found there."

That only made the corner of her lips tilt up that little bit more. She looked around the courtyard where the weirwood stood, solitary. It was clear from the look in her eye that she held some affection for the place, "I've come here since I was a little girl. My mother used to watch me play around the foot of the weirwood when I still stood lower than her knee. At least before she had to hurry me off to some lesson or another."

"I'm sure you miss her dearly." He knew that Alicent wasn't Viserys' first wife. Since taking the Stepstones, and with the constant invitations from nobles across Westeros and Essos, he'd had the good sense to brush up on at least some history, the most recent first.

"She was a kind and gracious woman... and my father adored her just as much as I did." She seemed lost in her own words before shaking herself, "But I didn't seek you out here to talk of childhood memories."

"No, why then?" Harry woke that morning half-expecting an audience with the king. He was well aware Viserys hadn't brought him here out of simple respect. *Like every other person*

*that's come knocking at my door, they surely are looking for an alliance. It's just a matter of finding out how far they're willing to go.* Since the Princess Rhaenyra had been made his de facto guide, he was rather confident he already knew the answer.

"I believe you wished to meet my dragon, and I can think of no time like the present." That explained the choice of attire.

"Ah, well then, lead the way."

Rhaenyra smiled and gestured, "Come." They made their way through the Red Keep and down to the central courtyard. There were two horses waiting for them there. One was pure white with an ornate saddle decorated with inlays of gold. He was unsurprised when the princess approached it. The other was chestnut brown with a white stripe along its nose and a simple, sturdy saddle of black leather.

As Ser Criston went to ready his own, Rhaenyra stopped him, "Ser, no harm will befall me with the king. I'm sure he'll protect my life as though he were one of your own order."

He got closer to the princess, close enough that he surely thought his words wouldn't be overheard, but he didn't quite manage, "It isn't the smallfolk between here and the dragon pit that concern me."

Rhaenyra was unmoved by his concerns, "And Syrax can protect me better than either of you, so truly, there's no need to worry." The knight's mouth tightened, and his nostrils flared, but he managed to hold back the tide of his anger and nod his head dutifully.

Throwing her leg over the horse, she looked down at Harry from above, "Shall we?"

Following her example, he didn't do it with the same ease as she did, and looked rather unsteady in his saddle. Rhaenyra noticed with a light bit of laughter, "You have ridden before, haven't you?"

"Once or twice." Even if it was a hippogriff rather than a horse, he still thought that it counted, "But, I've never had much need." Given what he'd shown her the previous afternoon, he knew that she would get his meaning.

"I'll be sure to go slow, that way you can keep up." With that, she kicked her heels into the horse's haunches and spurred it forward. Harry did the same, and they cantered through the gates of the Red Keep with him just behind her.

As he expected, the streets of the city were busy. There were vendors hawking their wares to every passerby. Men, women, and children stopped and stared as they passed. The guards of the city were easy enough to spot thanks to their gold cloaks as they patrolled the

streets. Rhaenyra was right to be unconcerned about the smallfolk. They seemed to only look at her in awe.

They made their way along the road from the Red Keep until they came to a square. There five roads diverged, one out and all the way to the furthest gate of the city, the Gate of the Gods, another to the Iron Gate, one went to Visenya's Hill where the city's sept to the Seven sat, the fourth was the Street of Steel, where the best craftsman in King's Landing plied their trade. The final one, and the one they turned along, was the Street of the Sister that led to Rhaenys' Hill. Even from a distance he could see the huge, cavernous building that sat atop it.

As they made their way along the street, they climbed ever higher, but there was something that caught his attention. There was an unpleasant whiff of something, a mixture of piss and excrement that could leave the stomach turning, that wafted up from the streets below and he couldn't help but scrunch up his nose. His hand twitched toward his wand as he found a sudden desire to cast the Bubblehead Charm.

"That's Flea Bottom," Rhaenyra noticed his reaction, "where the poorest and most destitute of the city live. In the height of summer, the stench can be smelled clear across the city. Though, it is never so bad elsewhere as it is here."

"And no one's ever thought to find a solution? You all just accept it as though it's commonplace?" Harry was genuinely baffled by the very thought. He knew that proper plumbing didn't happen overnight in his own world, but to have a city stand for over a hundred years and never even consider fixing the stench seemed utterly ridiculous.

"To fix the problem would mean displacing thousands of people... not to mention the coin, manpower, and actual engineering that would be necessary." Rhaenyra didn't seem bothered by the situation, but then when something was just accepted as a reality, it wasn't surprising, "They make do as does the rest of the city."

As the Street of Sisters rose higher toward the Dragonpit, he could see down onto the streets of Flea Bottom. The people below wore tattered tunics and had dirty faces. There were flies thick in the air thanks in no small part to the excrement that sullied it.

*The people deserve better.* And Harry knew that he could do something about it, without the need for coin or manpower. Magic could solve so many problems that common men simply couldn't. It was a stark reminder that Bloodstone should be built to be greater.

As they neared the Dragonpit, the stench dissipated. The building was colossal, as one would expect of a structure built specifically for housing dragons. The great doors alone were taller than ten men and as wide as thirty. *They could build such great structures for*

*their dragons but didn't think to build pipes for their smallfolk.* They were met at the door by three men wearing simple white robes.

Rhaenyra talked to them in a language he didn't understand, but that sounded familiar. Bastardized Valyrian was common amongst the people of the Free Cities that made up his army, and he'd picked up a few phrases. But this was cleaner, almost melodic in its nature. It was High Valyrian, as it was spoken before the Doom.

The dragon keepers bowed their heads and hurried off down one of the tunnels that connected to the central room. As Harry looked at the walls curiously, he asked, "Is there a Dragonpit on Dragonstone?"

"No, there's no need. The dragons live below the very rocks on which the castle was built, just as they did when Aenar the Exile first came from Old Valyria. There are natural currents of heat that suit them well."

"Why build this one then?"

That caused Rhaenyra to stop and think, "I... can't honestly say. I only know that its construction began during the reign of Maegor the Cruel as a 'great stable for dragons.' Had it been any other king, I'd say he hoped to quell the fears of the smallfolk, but Maegor didn't get his moniker for nothing."

There was movement in the tunnel as she continued, "It wasn't finished until the reign of my great-grandsire Jahaerys nearly sixty years ago." Shadow was cast on the wall at the entrance of the tunnel and then the dragon appeared. Being in its presence, Harry felt as though he could breathe in the magic from the beast. It was palpable to someone like him and not entirely dissimilar from the magic of the weirwood.

Rhaenyra smiled at the sight of her before finishing her thought, "Though I sometimes wonder if it would've been better if he hadn't. From what I've seen, our dragons are far happier in the open air around Dragonstone than they are here in the pit."

The she-dragon had yellow scales and was at least as big as the Hungarian Horntail that he'd faced in the Tri-wizard Tournament. But then, he already knew that the dragons of this world were massive compared to the ones of his home. *Caraxes dwarfed the Horntail. And that is to say nothing of the rumors I've heard about Balerion... or Vhagar.*

Rhaenyra hurried over to her dragon, speaking softly to her in Valyrian as she stroked her nose. But the great beast's slitted eyes kept flitting over to Harry where he stood, and he couldn't help feeling like he was being judged.

When Rhaenyra turned to him, she was grinning, “Come, your grace, you did say that you wanted to meet her.” Even with her rider there, it would be foolish for Harry to be anything less than cautious. Carefully, he made his way over with Syrax watching him all the while.

Once he was standing near enough to touch her, he greeted the dragon, “Hello, Syrax, you paint quite the striking figure.”

“She is a beauty, isn’t she?” She scratched Syrax along her neck, and the dragon leaned into her touch, “I’ve been her rider since I was seven... I don’t think there’s anything in the world I enjoy more than riding her.”

“There’s nothing quite as freeing as flying. It’s my greatest joy as well.” When he found things particularly trying, he went up for a flight on his self-made broom. It was a far-cry from his old Firebolt, let alone a dragon, but it did the job well enough.

She was watching him, something between curiosity and fondness in her eyes, “Very few people in the world will ever know the feeling... the privilege.” Taking hold of his arm, she guided it toward Syrax.

She placed his hand on Syrax’s chin. As he scratched, much to the dragon’s enjoyment, he remembered there was something that he’d wanted to try for years now, ever since the Horntail, but he hadn’t had the chance. When next he spoke, it was sibilant and hissing, the language of snakes, “**Your teeth are like razors and your claws like daggers.**” He thought flattery might be the best way of approaching a living, breathing harbinger of death.

The dragon hummed in its throat, and while it didn’t respond in kind, Harry reckoned that it at least had some understanding of what he said. Rhaenyra heard and couldn’t help her curiosity, “What was that? It was like nothing I’ve ever heard before.”

“I’d be surprised if you had. I doubt there’s anyone else alive who can do it.” He patted Syrax once more on the nose before taking a step back, “I call it parseltongue, the language of snakes. While a dragon is far from a snake, I’ve always been curious if they might have some understanding of it.”

Rhaenyra shook her head in disbelief and no small amount of awe, “I feel as though I could spend every waking minute with you for a month and not even scratch the surface of all the outlandish things that you have to tell me.” With that, she stepped around him and toward the dragon’s legs. Syrax bent low to let her rider on.

When she was on the saddle and safely hooked on, she offered her hand, “Aren’t you coming?”

He'd come to the Dragonpit to meet a dragon, not to ride one, but he wasn't one to turn such a thing down, "So long as Syrax doesn't mind."

Patting the dragon, Rhaenyra giggled, "Oh, you've already made fast friends... that much is obvious." Syrax seemed to agree as there was a rumble from her chest.

Climbing on behind her, He made himself as comfortable as he could. Whether it was intentional or not, he was acutely aware of Rhaenyra's bum wiggling against him as she instructed him, "Now hold on tight. I don't want you to fall, your Grace."

His lips were nearly brushing against her ear, and he was sure that he felt her shiver, "As you say, princess." His hands wrapped around her waist as he pulled himself just that little bit closer to her.

She was looking at him out of the corner of her eye, a coy smile on her lips, before she commanded, "Naejot, Syrax." Her strides shook the ground as she approached the gates. As they reached the sunlight outside, she spoke again, "Sovetes." Leathery wings unfurled as Syrax threw herself up into the air. They beat heavily against the air as she climbed into the sky.

Within seconds they were looking down on the sprawl of King's Landing. To the south, the great expanse of the Kingswood stretched for miles, to the north the line of the Kingsroad cut along the land. They kept climbing until they were in the very clouds. They dipped and dived, spun and wheeled about for a good long while. It felt as though Syrax was showing off.

But eventually, Syrax evened out and just glided through the air. Harry let go of Rhaenyra's hips and held his hands out and gave a joyous yell. There was nothing quite like flying, and this was a fair bit more pleasant than his last time on a dragon's back. *Which isn't surprising considering I'm not trying to escape a high security bank this time around.*

Rhaenyra's laughter carried back to him and then she said something that he couldn't quite make out. A second later, he found himself laughing deep in his belly as Syrax dove toward the ground at a blistering speed, far faster than he'd ever gone before. Daring as Harry was, he had the good sense to hold onto something. In his haste, he got a handful of more than he intended, though the princess didn't seem to mind.

He held tight as the world below grew bigger by the second. They were near the coast, blue water stretching out to the east as they flew northward. He could see Dragonstone in the distance, dark and imposing. As they neared the ground, Syrax evened out again and Rhaenyra commanded, "Ninkiot."

On a solitary, sandy beach the dragon landed. Rhaenyra jumped from the saddle, and he followed her. She pulled her braid back over shoulder as she turned to him, "So... was it everything you were expecting when you asked to meet Syrax?"

"That and more, I can assure you, princess." He meant every word, there were few things he could think of that he enjoyed more, "I'm amazed that you don't take her flying every day."

"At times, I do." Rhaenyra admitted, "But much as I love it, other things must take priority at least some of the time."

"I know that all too well," Harry's days were filled with far too many important dealings ever since his arrival. At first it was staying alive, then waging a war, and now ruling a new kingdom.

"I'm sure." She stepped closer to him, and placed her hand upon his chest, "Now, I believe we had an agreement."

One eyebrow quirked up in curiosity, "Did we?"

"Indeed," There was a sparkle of mischief in her eyes, "I agreed to introduce you to Syrax, and in return you would take me along as you apparate. I think that I've upheld my end and then some, don't you?"

"You did, undoubtedly, princess." He smiled down at her, they were close enough now that he could feel her breath against his neck, "Though, there was nothing to say that I must fulfill my end immediately, was there?"

Rhaenyra frowned at that, "You're telling me no?"

"If I were to guess, that's something you're rather unaccustomed to hearing, isn't it?" She nodded and he could only chuckle, "But you have the right of it, no... at least not yet." There was a practical reason behind his decision, and it had a great deal to do with the hulking great dragon laying along the coast. He couldn't imagine that Syrax would take it well if her rider suddenly disappeared.

He found her look of frustration rather cute, but that was probably only because he knew there was nothing she could do to him. *Save maybe have Syrax try to eat me...* But even that would be unsuccessful, "I'm afraid I must insist. I'm..."

"A princess, and a spoiled one at that." Her mouth fell open in shock, "And as I've reminded you, I'm a king."

“Why...” She stammered and blustered, at a loss for words for the first time since he’d met her, “The gall of you! I thought a king would know the importance of holding to his word! But it seems...”

Her words caught in her throat as his hand hooked around the back of her neck and he pulled her into a kiss. She leaned into him as her tongue flicked against his lips tentatively.

Then she pulled back, though her body remained conveniently pressed to his, “If this is your way of distracting me, then... oh...” Her last word came out in a needy whimper as his hand darted below the waist of her riding trousers and small clothes beneath.

One long finger stretched her tightness. She was already so wet and ready. He gathered just a bit of that stickiness on his thumb and flicked against her super sensitive nub. One dainty hand tried to wrap around his forearm, though not to stop him, merely to steady herself as she shuddered, “Oh... oh... gods...”

The squelching sounds of her wetness as he thrust his finger back and fourth were the sweetest kind of music, “I’m not distracting you from anything, princess...” The word held a whole new world of meaning for them now, “I’m giving you an object lesson.” Her full lips were parted in growing pleasure. Her hips were moving in little circles as she tried to get herself to the peak just that little bit more quickly.

“It seems that no one ever taught you about delayed gratification... I think it’s time that we change that.” A second finger joined the first and her thighs began to shake as she got closer with each new plunge. Her eyes closed, but he was having none of it. He pressed his forehead to hers, and commanded, “Look at me, princess! I want to see your beautiful eyes.”

“So close... so close... please... Harry, just...” Her pleas were desperate and sent a pulse of heat right to his crotch.

There was a part of him that wanted to give in and let her quiver on his finger, but he knew that would defeat the point. She was breathy, her nails digging into his forearm, her eyes wide open, and then, as quickly as it all started, it stopped. She tried forcing his fingers back to her dripping heat, but he was far stronger.

“No... please. I need it...” Her amethyst eyes were wild, the hint of tears forming at the corners, “I promise I’ll be patient... just please.”

He brought his fingers to his lips, and licked some of her slick, sweet juices from them. It did nothing to help her wanton need, “It wouldn’t be much of a lesson if I gave you what you want now, would it, princess?” He leaned down and kissed her on the top of the head

“Tonight, when you think of this moment in your bedchambers, as we both know you will... touch yourself, bring yourself right to the precipice if you must, but stop. Do this and I promise you I’ll make things all the sweeter.”

Rhaenyra was still breathing heavy as she slumped against him. Her words were muffled against his chest, “I could simply lie to you.”

“I would know, princess, trust me.” She pulled back to look at him, and something about his appearance made her think he was telling the truth. *Given what’s she’s seen of my magic, I can’t blame her.*

“I... I’ll do as you bid.”

He gave her one last kiss on the forehead, a sweet tender thing before he suggested, “Shall we return to the city.”

Rhaenyra sighed, but nodded her head, “Yes, I think that would be for the best. Otherwise, I might have to throw myself into the sea just to cool off.” He manage to hold back his laughter.

Harry helped Rhaenyra up onto Syrax this time, her legs were a bit too wobbly to manage it herself. As they flew back to the Dragonpit, Harry found her wiggling to be far less subtle and far more frequent. He wasn’t going to begrudge her teasing him back for what he’d done. *It doesn’t mean I’ll forget it either.*