

Vol3: The Long Night

Baelor Hightower stared at the darkened skies and sighed. It was snowing, making him shiver because of the cold, and he was stuck in a battle of attrition with an enemy that refused to surrender even in the face of defeat.

“These Ironborn scums are idiots and barbarians.” Baelor muttered, watching coldly as his levies fought against the Ironborn invaders holed up in their last stronghold in Greysshield.

“It’s in their nature to be mindless barbarians.” Ser Jon Cupps said, agreeing with him. “They’d rather fight and die for a stupid cause doomed to fail from the beginning.”

Baelor couldn’t have agreed more with his goodbrother’s assessment. Despite Lord Paxter Redwyne managing to beat the Iron Fleet out of the coasts of the Shield Islands, the Ironborn trapped in the islands refused to surrender. Not that he’d have allowed any of the barbarian scum free even if they surrendered. It was going to be either the Wall or the chopping block, as the scum had decimated the populace of the Shield Islands. The widows and children of the butchered men were sold to slavery by the Ironborn, making it impossible for a Hightower like him to ignore such heinous crimes going unpunished.

He had taken Greenshield, Oakenshield and Southshield from the Ironborn. Of all the islands, Oakenshield suffered the most under Euron Greyjoy's heel. The butchery he saw on the island was horrifying, to say the least. Baelor still remembered the corpse of Lord Humfrey Hewett chained to the head table of the feast hall in the man’s castle with his body half eaten alive by worms. Lord Hewett’s daughters were made into salt wives of the Ironborn pirates, raped day and night in their castle by the barbarian men of the Iron Islands. Lord Hewett’s sons were hanged to death, while the man’s bastard daughter Falia Flowers was taken as a salt wife by Euron Greyjoy. If rumours were true, Falia Flowers had become pregnant with Greyjoy’s child, but the cruel Lord Reaper of Pyke had taken her abroad on his ship. Baelor found Lord Hewett’s wife on the beach with her head on a spike, with the rest of the body nowhere to be found.

With all these deaths, House Hewett was extinct. The last Hewett with direct blood relations to House Hewett was Falia Flowers, and she was nowhere to be seen.

‘Probably, she is once again warming the bed of Euron Greyjoy after she whelped out his bastard.’ Baelor thought grimly, feeling some sympathy for the bastard girl.

House Hewett’s suffering was nothing compared to the smallfolk and other knightly houses of Oakenshield. Not a single landed knight or their families were spared. The men were all murdered, and their women were all taken for the pleasure of the Ironborn reavers. The children and women that managed to survive the ordeal were either too broken or sold off to the slave markets of Essos. Some survivors ended up as thralls of the Ironborn and were

ferried away in their longships. Baelor had sworn a vow that he'd see to it that every child of the Reach would be returned to the islands once the Redwyne fleet and Hightower fleet finished off the Iron Fleet.

Although, he was not entirely certain how he'd go about completing such a monumental task when the Reach lords and the Iron Throne refused to send aid to his campaign. He was not exactly keen on the details of what happened at Highgarden, but he and his men heard a tell that the Targaryen king had ordered the Reach lords and knights to march on Casterly Rock and Lannisport. If the rumours were true, Baelor knew the only way forward was to sweep the Ironborn from the seas and confine them to the Iron Islands before using Lannisport and Fair Isle as their base to invade the Iron Islands.

"Lord Hightower. There is movement from behind enemy lines." Ser Edmund Ambrose pointed out.

Baelor looked into the distance, and sure enough, he could make out some banners coming into his line of sight.

"They are coming from the direction of Grimston. Perhaps, the Ironborn have ridden out of Grimstone rather than cower behind the walls of the castle." Ser Jon commented.

"A white bone hand on a field of red. That's the banner of House Drumm." Baelor muttered, looking at the first banner he saw.

"So, Lord Arthur Ambrose was not wrong then. Andrik Drumm escaped from Southshield to take refuge in Grimston under Ser Harras Harlaw." Ser Jon said thoughtfully.

"My lord, the banners of House Harlaw." Ser Edmund Ambrose said, looking at the enemy.

Baelor finally noticed the black banners bearing the silver scythe emerging in the distance carried by the Ironborn.

"Keep in mind that Ser Harras Harlaw is rumoured to wield a Valyrian steel sword, Nightfall. Engage him with caution on the battlefield." Baelor warned.

Seeing the men among his company nod, Baelor unsheathed Vigilance from its scabbard.

"Ser Ambrose, make sure that the Ironborn engaging in the melee with our men are put to the sword. Spare no one. Ride them down and cut down all of them." Baelor ordered.

"Aye, my lord." Ser Edmund nodded and led a contingent of men to ride down from their position.

"Ser Jon, with me. We'll put an end to Harlaw and Drumm. For the Reach!" Baelor raised his sword high in the air and rode down from their position atop his horse, followed by his mounted knights.

“For the Reach!”

The men took up the shout as they rode like the wind with swords and spears in their arms. The banners of House Hightower fluttered in the wind as they charged against the Ironborn to bring the might of justice upon them. Baelor twisted Vigilance in the palm of his right hand as his horse gained speed, building up the anticipation. His grip on his sword tightened, and he gritted his teeth as he neared the charging Ironborn.

“Ahhhhhh!” Baelor cried as he swung his sword with all his might.

The sharp edge of Vigilance cut through the sword of the mounted Ironborn, cutting the enemy’s sword into two pieces down the middle. Baelor didn’t wait to watch as he quickly swung his sword and slashed through another enemy’s neck while Ser Jon Cupps stabbed a spear through the unarmed Ironborn’s neck. Baelor manoeuvred his horse to a side, stood on his stirrups a little so that he could have better leverage and brought his sword down so quickly on another Ironborn. Vigilance cut through the helmet into the man’s skull. He wrenched his sword out as the Ironborn fell dead from his horse and parried a sword that came close to his neck. Deflecting another sword, he stabbed Vigilance straight through his enemy’s right eye.

Baelor cut through many Ironborn atop his horse with his trusted knights by his side. He felt not an ounce of regret as he spilt blood without flinching. He had grown accustomed to all the blood by fighting in this bloody war. He felt like he could kill a thousand Ironborn without a hint of remorse. And that conviction made him a dangerous opponent who killed and fought with precision and discipline the Ironborn grew to fear. Soon, the corpses of the Ironborn began to pile up as the overwhelming advantage his men enjoyed in numbers brought down the pirate scum.

Out of the corner of his eyes, Baelor saw Ser Edmund Ambrose jump from his horse and tackle an Ironborn down from the horse and fight it out in the mud. A little further back, he saw his goobrother Ser Jon fighting an armoured figure holding a Valyrian steel. He immediately manoeuvred his horse around and rode straight for the Ironborn, whom he assumed was Ser Harras Harlaw. He could see Ser Jon was struggling; therefore, he acted quickly with no mercy. He stabbed the Harlaw knight from behind straight through the back of the neck. The knight choked on his own blood and fell from the horse as Baelor pulled his sword back.

‘Honour and chivalry only exist in tourneys. In war, there is only life and death.’ Baelor remembered his father’s words before he departed Oldtown to fight the Ironborn.

“You, okay?” Baelor asked his goodbrother.

“I’m okay, Baelor. Thank you.” Ser Jon muttered, catching his breath for a moment.

Baelor nodded at the knight. He was not going to stand by and watch as his sister became a widow.

“Come, goodbrother. There are more Ironborn to kill.” Baelor said, swinging his sword in his hand and pulling the reins of his horse, making it turn around to engage the surviving Ironborn.

The battle raged on for hours. The Ironborn refused to surrender and fought to the last man. Baelor was only all too happy to cut down every single accursed Ironborn. When all was said and done, he had the heads of Andrik Drumm and Ser Harras Harlow with him on his way to the castle Grimstone.

Baelor watched the heads of the two Ironborn on the walls of Grimstone. But that was not the only head going to adorn the walls of Grimstone. He watched as Grimstone’s Septon was hung on a rope.

“Is that really necessary?” Ser Jon asked him hesitantly.

“Yes. Septons should mind the gods and their sept, not interfere in the duties of the lords. That idiot opened the gates of Grimstone because Ser Harras Harlow defeated seven men in single combat. The next septon of Grimstone would not ask the guards to open the gates even if someone were to defeat the men of Greystone seven hundred times.” Baelor said, glaring at the septon hanging on the rope.

“These septons are not Baelor the Blessed for the realm to tolerate their idiocies, and it’s high time that they remember that.”

Baelor thought of all the innocent lives lost all because one idiot septon thought some idiotic thing about the gods and made the guards open the gates of Grimstone to the Ironborn. Something similar had happened with the Faith Militant uprising in King’s Landing. Giving septons and septas any kind of political power was folly, and he was not going to let it stand if he could help it. If the Targaryens had done something great in their three-century-long rule, it was curbing the power of the Faith. The last thing he wanted was for the Starry Sept to gain ideas about reclaiming their former power over the Seven Kingdoms.

“Perhaps, it’d be a good idea for you to spend some time in the sept. We can spread the word that you’re asking the forgiveness from the Seven. That should stave off any overt reaction from the Faith.” Ser Jon commented.

“I don’t think that is necessary, goodbrother.” Baelor shook his head.

“On the contrary, it’s necessary. This is not the time for making enemies of the Faith. There is ample time for our men to take Fair Isle. It’ll take a considerable amount of time for our fleets to get rid of the enemy fleets from the straits of Fair Isle. You should use that time wisely by cultivating allies.” Ser Jon advised.

Baelor wanted to dismiss his goodbrother’s counsel, but he was getting weary of the war. He supposed there was some merit to Ser Jon’s advice. Perhaps, paying a visit to his family in Oldtown was not such a bad idea. Besides, he had to visit Oldtown to confirm the rumours

he had heard about the Tyrells getting expelled from the Reach. While he wasn't fond of Lady Oleana or his late goodbrother, he had a duty to see his sister Alerie and her children safe.

"Very well. I'll be visiting Oldtown. You have the command of Hightower army and fleets, goodbrother." Baelor finally said.

"Make sure that you pay a visit to the Starry Sept as well and do what you can for Lady Alerie. If the rumours are true, they'll need your help. I'll keep you informed of our campaign against the Fair Isle." Ser Jon said.

Baelor nodded at his goodbrother. He just hoped no further tragedy visited his family. Then, there was the task of finding a solution to the current problem faced by the Tyrells. He could not abandon his sister's family in these trying times. Perhaps, he could petition the Iron Throne and rescind the order of expelling House Tyrell from the Reach.

Jaime kept his head down as he was led through the familiar corridors of the Red Keep in chains. He didn't know why the new foreign guards of the Red Keep bothered with the chains. It was not as if he was going to escape from the capital city, thereby placing his son in danger. After all, Daeron Targaryen had made it clear that Tommen's continued existence depended on his behaviour in the court. He remembered the conversation all too well.

"You'll speak no falsehoods in the trial, Kingslayer. You shall be called to the court for the crimes of theft of House Stark's ancestral sword, attempted murder of Eddard Stark, attempted murder of Brandon Stark, murder of innocent Riverlanders and incest. You'll also be called as a witness for your sister's trial, and there, you'll claim Joffrey, Myrcella and Tommen as your children. Failure to comply with my orders shall result in the death of your last remaining bastard, Tommen Waters." Daeron Targaryen said, looking down at him coldly without a shred of mercy in his grey eyes.

"I ask nothing from you but the truth. That is my weapon against Tywin Lannister's legacy. Should you speak the truth in your trial, I give you my word that Tommen shall live a normal life. So long as I sit the Iron Throne, he shall be allowed to live his life like a normal person with his wife, Margaery Tyrell."

It was this conversation that made the decision for Jaime. He had lied and cheated for so long, and he could feel the weight of those lies bearing down on him like a massive boulder on his heart. It was finally time to set that weight aside and free himself from this burden. Besides, he didn't have much of a choice in the matter. Whether he spoke the truth or not didn't matter as far as his fate was concerned. His life was at its end, and he was confident

this was the same case for Cersei. The only thing that remained now was the safety of Tommen.

'Tommen will be ridiculed because of the circumstances behind his birth. But Tommen will at least live.' Jaime thought.

The giant oak doors of the throne room were open when he was led towards the Iron Throne. On either side of the aisle, nobles and foreign guests stood, all waiting for the trial to begin. Jaime found Ser Wylis Manderly sitting on the Iron Throne with the badge of the Hand made out of silver pinned on his blue tunic, visible to all. Jaime found the kneeling form of his sister, a few feet away from the dais holding the Iron Throne. Once touted as the most beautiful woman in the Seven Kingdoms, his sister now looked nothing of the sort. Her once golden mane was now unkept and lacked the lustre he was intimately familiar with.

Jaime turned his eyes away from Cersei and tried to focus on something else in the throne room. That's when he saw the silver throne adjacent to the monstrosity that was the Iron Throne. He became momentarily confused about whether the throne was added for the Queen to sit on or whether it was a replacement for the Iron Throne. He saw many familiar and unfamiliar faces among the courtiers. Most of the faces he saw were daughters, aunts, and mothers of the Crownland lords. There were some Narrow Sea houses in attendance as well, with few Stormlords, Riverlords and Reachmen. He searched among the courtiers for his son but could not find Tommen anywhere.

'Perhaps, that's a good thing. No child should witness what's about to follow.' Jaime thought.

Jaime came to the startling realisation of the true depth of his mistake. By copulating with his sister and siring three children, he had acted on his lust but not love. Out of that lust, Joffrey, Myrcella and Tommen were born. Not only did he partake in such a sin, but he also became the catalyst for the destruction of the lives of his children.

'My lust tarnished not just my life but the lives of my children.' Jaime thought guiltily.

"Jaime Lannister."

Jaime was startled when his name was called, bringing him out of his musings.

"You stand as a witness to the crimes of your sister Cersei Lannister. The Crown accuses her of incest, regicide, plunging Westeros into a disastrous war and several counts of murder. The Crown realises you have something to share as a witness and partner in her crimes." Ser Wylis Manderly said, looking down at him from the Iron Throne.

Jaime couldn't help but think how the situation had changed. The last time he had seen Ser Wylis was when he found the man being held as a prisoner in Harrenhall. He had released the Manderly knight from prison after seeing the poor condition of the prisoners. The Mountains' men were cruel to their prisoners, especially the noble-born prisoners.

'If I had not acted on my lust, Cersei would've sired Robert's children, and the war would've never happened. So many lives would have been saved.' Jaime thought.

No amount of lies would save him or his children from the truth. It was now time to accept responsibility for the calamity that was unleashed on Westeros and own up to the truth. He just hoped Daeron Targaryen would honour his promise to leave Tommen to live a normal life.

"I have some information to share, Lord Hand. The accusations the Crown has levelled against my sister are true." said Jaime.

"Jaime!" Cersei hissed while the courtiers murmured amongst themselves at his admission.

But Jaime paid them no mind and began narrating his story from the very beginning.

The skies were thick with dark clouds, and snow was falling aplenty. Despite that, creatures that call the sky their home roamed freely. There was fish aplenty in the blue waters of the ponds near Castle Cerwyn, which was being hunted by the flock of birds flying nearby.

Arya remembered seeing those small ponds while travelling with her father on their journey to King's Landing. Unlike Winterfell, which sat on a hill, the lands of Castle Cerwin sat on a plane land. The Kingsroad stretched through their lands, and the ponds provided water for weary travellers along the road.

"It's no wonder why little girls like you turned out to be a cold-hearted bitch. This is one cold frozen piece of hell." A rough voice grunted from behind Arya.

Arya turned her head on her horse to stare at Sandor Clegane as she slowly rode upon her horse just behind the Queen's wheelhouse.

"Why're you staring at me like that?" Sandor grunted, squinting his beady eyes at her.

"Just wondering whether I should cleave you in two or merely slit your throat." Arya snapped back coldly.

"You had your chance, girl. Why didn't you?" Sandor snapped back.

"Now... now, Sandor. You might not want to say the wrong things before Lady Stark." Thoros warned.

“Why? You scared of losing your shiny new title the King bestowed on ya?” Sandor asked, turning his accusing eyes on the Red Priest, who was now inducted as the newest member of the Kingsguard.

“Look to your right, Clegane.” Beric Dondarrion flippantly said, letting out a chuckle.

Nymeria had sneaked right next to Sandor Clegane’s horse, and the large she-wolf let out a threatening growl. Sandor’s horse jumped in fright, letting out a whine of fear, and thrashed around while Nymeria snapped her jaws at the horse. The unexpected reaction of the horse threw Sandor out of the saddle, and the large burly man fell to the ground with a grunt. Arya grinned as she watched Sandor slowly pick himself up from the ground covered in mud and snow. Nymeria moved closer to Clegane and growled, making the Hound stumble back in fear. Arya laughed as she watched Sandor Clegane fall face-first into the snow.

She was not the only one to stop and watch the Hound get humiliated. She could hear the men around her laugh at the expense of the former servant of House Lannister.

Before she could insult the man further, Arya heard the flap of wings. She looked up just in time to see two massive forms of dragons flying over her head, spooking her horse. The dragons were quick to reach the castle and circle the seat of House Cerwyn twice before landing near the gate.

“Come, Nymeria.” Arya called off her wolf from further antagonising the Hound.

After all, she had the duty of escorting the Queen to her cousin before they accepted the hospitality of House Cerwyn. She turned her horse around and trotted forward to fall in step with the Queen’s wheelhouse. It was mainly because of her cousin’s insistence that they were stopping at the castle of the Cerwyns. Apparently, there was some issue between House Manderly and Cerwyn. She lost all interest in knowing precisely what the problem was when she learned it was related to a broken betrothal.

Arya rode beside the wheelhouse as she watched the dragon handlers approach the two dragons cautiously with some bulls and goats. She supposed the handlers had learned their lesson when it came to approaching the dragons empty-handed. The last two handlers that tried to keep the dragons on the ground without giving them anything learned it the hard way at Lord Harroway’s town. She had seen the dragons feast on their bones that day. She also saw the Queen become quite upset with the dragons and even suggested to her cousin to ride the dragons straight to Winterfell to avoid further incidents. Of course, Daeron refused. But Daeron had ensured the dragon handlers approached the dragons with food since the incident. True to his word, the dragons barely paid any attention to the handlers and focused on their food.

The gates of the castle were wide open, and they smoothly rode in without much fanfare. Only a small portion of the retinue remained with her cousin and the queen, while the rest continued their journey towards Winterfell. It was only half a day’s ride from Cerwyn to Winterfell, and the army was not going to wait around when they were also escorting vital

supplies for the war. The whole journey was fraught with perils and great risks. After all, they were transporting enough wildfire to melt the Wall from the Bay of Ice to the Bay of Seals.

Once the wheelhouse came to a stop inside the courtyard of the castle, the servants immediately placed caravan steps near the wheelhouse for the queen to disembark from the wheelhouse. Arya swung herself down from the saddle and gave the rein of her horse to a stable boy before she waited by the wheelhouse for the queen. The doors of the wheelhouse swung open, and the first to walk down from the wooden wheelhouse was none other than Ghost.

“You’re becoming lazy.” Arya commented with a snort when her cousin’s wolf nuzzled against her side before moving aside.

“He was not lazy. He was on guard duty protecting his queen. Isn’t that right, Ghost?” Daenerys asked, a fond smile on her lips as she carefully stepped down from the wheelhouse.

Ghost let out a purr as the giant white wolf waved his tail around happily, showing his apparent support for the statement. Arya watched Daenerys Targaryen reach out with her hand and scratched Ghost behind his ears. The wolf happily closed his eyes, enjoying the ministrations. To this day, Arya remained astounded at how easily Ghost accepted her cousin’s wife. She could never make Nymeria behave like that with someone else. Missandei followed the queen out of the wheelhouse.

“Perhaps we should not keep his grace waiting.” said Missandei, reminding everyone why they were here.

“Yes. The faster we leave this place, the better. I have missed the comfort of a good bed and warm hearth.” said Daenerys, her face flushed and rubbing her arms to alleviate the cold she was feeling.

Arya was a tad surprised that Daenerys and her foreign friend Missandei had forgone any colourful dresses in favour of taking up a leather-bound grey coat that fits in with the Northerners. She especially liked the fact that her cousin’s wife chose practicality over the pompousness of royalty by always wearing trousers beneath her dresses, even if it was of a colourful sort. Not that there was anything wrong with wearing colourful dresses. Arya was sure Sansa would love to discuss such inane things with Daenerys.

Then there were the rumours going around to consider.

The further north they had travelled, the queen had fallen ill, leaving her confined to the wheelhouse. At first, Arya had assumed Daenerys was not accustomed to the frigid air of the North. Travelling through the Neck might have also contributed to the queen’s illness. But their travel party was fraught with rumours that the queen was with child. If there was any truth to such rumours, Daenerys had yet to share the veracity of the claims with Arya or Daeron. She supposed she’d know sooner once the queen gets comfortable in Winterfell.

Arya stayed by Daenerys' side as Lord Cley Cerwyn welcomed them into his halls.

"Lord Cerwyn looks like he is about to die from lack of air." Lyra Mormont whispered.

Arya grinned at the Mormont girl, who was only two namesdays older than her. Like her, Lyra Mormont was given the task of protecting the queen. And like her, Lyra was a wielder of a Valyrian steel sword.

"How long do you think it'll take for Lord Cley to fall to his knees and cry like a baby?" Lyra asked.

"That depends on the ire of my cousin. What exactly did Lord Cerwyn do to attract my cousin's ire?" Arya asked.

"You really don't pay much attention to rumours, do you?" Lyra asked, smiling amusedly at Arya.

"So long as the rumours involve matters of dresses, balls, feasts and marriages, I have a penchant for turning them out." said Arya, shrugging her shoulders.

"Well, his grace brokered a betrothal between House Manderly and the natural-born son of Lord Halys Hornwood. It was on the condition of this agreement that his grace legitimised Larence Snow and elevated him as the Lord of Hornwood. Otherwise, the Tallharts would have been the choice as Lord Halys' sister has sons with Lord Leobald Tallhart." Lyra explained.

"I see. Then why is my cousin mad at the Cerwyns?" Arya asked, frowning at Lord Cley Cerwyn, who looked like he was about to melt like ice on a warm summer day under the scrutiny of her cousin.

"Because Lord Cley's sister married Larence Hornwood and cheated House Manderly out of the agreement brokered by his grace. The Tallharts are also angry for obvious reasons." said Lyra.

"So stupid." Arya muttered.

This was why she remained uncomfortable with feasts, marriages and other social conventions that 'ladies' found interesting for some reason. The entire apparatus of the social traditions of Westeros was pernicious in nature. There was always bound to be conflict in one way or the other. And she hated the war of words more than anything because of the conformity imposed on all those social gatherings. In comparison, she liked Braavos better. Not that she had any fallacies about women's lives in the elite circles of Braavos.

'At least in Braavos, I'm not Lady Stark or cousin of the King.' Arya thought.

As her cousin remained in a heated conversation with Lord Cley Cerwyn, Arya couldn't help but think about her status if she survived the Long Night. Would Daeron and her siblings

insist on her continued presence in Winterfell? So far, her cousin had not talked to her about such matters. But she could not help but wonder how long that would last.

Rickon was supposed to look all serious and stern, as Sansa and Lord Weirman explained to him, but he really couldn't stop himself from showing his excitement. His mood was quite palpable to anyone who set their eyes on him. When the guards spotted the chequered banners of Jon, Winterfell became ready to receive the king and queen of the North. But that was yesterday, and despite high hopes, Rickon later learned that Jon was not among the army.

But today, Jon was coming, and so was Arya!

His father, mother, and Robb all lied to him and never came back despite promising otherwise. But Jon kept his word, and he was coming back with Arya. Although, he wondered why everyone insisted on calling his brother Daeron. Sansa had told him Jon was not his brother but his cousin. But Rickon didn't believe her. After all, his father has always told him Jon was his brother, just like Bran and Robb.

A distinct screech was suddenly heard, making Rickon perk up and abandon his musings. He looked to the skies and stared in wonder as two dragons merged out of the clouds high above Winterfell.

"Look, Sansa! Two dragons! There are two dragons!" Rickon excitedly said, his eyes glimmering with joy.

"I know, Rickon. Now, look presentable." Sansa whispered to him.

Rickon pouted and looked at Bran, who stared at the gates of the courtyard, unmoving like one of the statues in the crypts. He disliked Bran's mannerisms. He didn't know why Bran was like that. He was hoping to make Jon do something to Bran so that Bran became old Bran. The dragons continued to circle the castle, and Rickon audibly counted the circles the green and black dragons made.

"Ten! The black dragon finished ten circles." Rickon said, only to get his shoulders squeezed by Sansa.

Before he could make his displeasure known, his attention was taken by the knights riding into the courtyard atop their horses in full plate armour, carrying the chequered banners of dragon and wolf. Rickon finally saw Jon riding atop a horse with Ghost by his side, wearing black boiled leather and a black cloak wrapped around his shoulders. On the other side,

there was a beautiful silver-haired lady. Rickon was certain this was the most beautiful lady he had ever seen.

'The silver lady is even more beautiful than Sansa.' Rickon absently noted.

Rickon scoured with his eyes, looking for Arya until finally, he came across his black-haired sister, who was on a horse wearing bronze-shaded boiled leather and black breeches. The moment his brother and sister dismounted their horses, Rickon broke free from Sansa and ran towards his siblings. He slammed into Jon with his hands wrapped around his brother. For a moment, it felt like he was hugging his father. And that was a feeling that he was not willing to let go.

Rickon could feel several eyes on him, but he could care less about them. He finally had his whole family back in Winterfell, which was something to celebrate.