

Harry ducked and backpedaled as quickly as a cat avoiding the jabs and swings of Nymeria's attempts to tap him with her spear. Calling the piece of wood in Nymeria's hand a spear would be an insult to all proper spears out in the world. The butt ends of this particular 'spear' were blunted to soften the blow. For training purposes, this was more than enough in Harry's opinion considering the safety features were more for his benefit.

While he was satisfied with keeping weapons training as less dangerous as possible, Nymeria was not at all happy with the restrictions. Ever since she got taken on a flight around Avalon on that flying carpet, she was trying her best to get back at him. She was embarrassed before the castle as she screamed her throat out in fright, and she hated the nickname Harry bestowed upon her.

"Oh look. The sands are flying." Harry snarked, earning a frothing look of contempt from his training partner who was covered in sand from head to toe thanks to Nymeria trying too hard to get him with that stick of hers.

"Okay, that's enough Nymeria. Make the switch. Harrion... you are on the offensive while Nymeria defends." Oberyng ordered from the sidelines.

Nymeria let out a frustrated growl at her inability to touch him.

"You cannot possibly be this good with a few weeks of training." Nymeria groused as she took hold of her spear with both hands while setting herself in a defensive position.

Harry agreed with that assessment. It has only been barely a month since he entered the tutelage of Prince Oberyng. There was no way he could have possibly outperformed Nymeria who has trained for years under the Red Viper. But when you have access to magic the scope of impossible things tends to shrink. And that's exactly what happened in his case. He was no super prodigy when it comes to handling weapons. He never needed to handle melee weapons in all his years barring that brief stint with stabbing the Sword of Gryffindor through the Basilisk's mouth in his second year at Hogwarts. But he wouldn't characterize that particular event as evidence of his nonexistent sword skill. He was sort of blindly stabbing at the snake and it was a big ass snake. The sword was bound to hit somewhere despite his lack of skill in handling a weapon like the Sword of Gryffindor.

Right now he was enjoying superiority in the training yard all thanks to a little ritual he designed to increase his physical prowess. Technically speaking, it was not a complete ritual. It was a combination of ritual and potions. The ritual he had undergone would strengthen his muscles and bones as he grows faster than normally possible and there was a potion regimen that complimented the ritual that increases his speed and reaction time. The potion was a lucky find as he was mostly experimenting with the roots of asphodel he nicked from Skane with the powdered roots of a Heart Tree. It turns out that the potion made with the two powdered roots enhances the nervous system within the body. Which made him wonder about the magical properties of the sap from a Heart Tree. But that was for another day.

Harry spun the spear in his hand kicking up the loose sand against Nymeria as a distraction before he went on an all-out offensive. It was quite exhilarating really. He could feel the blood pumping through his veins at an unprecedented rate as he danced around the training yard taking quick sharp jabs at Nymeria.

"Slow down Harrion. The whole point of the training is to make your body endure more strain and familiarise yourself with the techniques." said Oberyng.

'Now that's disappointing.' Harry thought as he slowed down to a more suitable pace.

“First, you must train again and again with different techniques so that these techniques are ingrained in your mind and the body. Speed will come naturally after you can execute these techniques flawlessly. Now, wield your spear more slowly.”

Harry didn't disobey the advice of Prince Oberyn. He'd assume the Red Viper was more knowledgeable in weapons training.

He went slowly through the techniques with a spear as he attacked while Nymeria defended herself from his assault. There was hardly any strain felt on his body as he jabbed and smacked testing Nymeria's defences. The ritual seems to have worked wonders on his body allowing him to endure more strain than normally possible. The only caveat was that he had to take the potion every full moon so that the effect lasts for a month. For now, keeping the ritual's benefits permanent was out of his grasp. But it won't be long before he comes across a solution to that particular problem. He always does just like he found a way to have those maesters flee from Avalon.

All it required was some imaginative use of Confundus charms and illusions to have those gaggle of grey-robed men flee his home and the North like their lives depended on it. All it took was to conjure some illusions of ghosts and convince the maesters their lives were in danger.

Harry blinked in surprise stopping his thoughts as his spear stopped dead in its tracks as it connected with Nymeria's right shoulder. In this dance of spears, he had side-tracked and paid less attention to the yard in favour of his internal musings. And yet, he managed to score a hit on Nymeria who was seven years his senior. He took in the dishevelled and out-of-breath Nymeria and realised she was at her last legs as far as stamina was concerned while Harry felt like he could run a marathon without breaking a sweat.

“That's...(gasp) not possible.” Nymeria breathed out, trying her best to regain her composure as she held on to her spear to stand upright.

Harry recovered from his shock and struck up a pose that projected confidence.

“We Starks are made of tough stuff. It was only a matter of time before I surpassed you in the field.” Harry said, arrogantly looking down on Nymeria further infuriating the Sand Snake.

“Why you little...” Nymeria growled.

“Daughter. What have I told you about losing your composure in a bout?” Oberyn asked, moving close to Nymeria and Harry.

“Not to.” Nymeria growled.

“Is that all?” Oberyn raised an eyebrow.

“No.” she groaned, huffing a bit and standing straight as she regained her composure. “Always be the one to provoke but never get provoked myself.”

“Yes. Now, take some time to cool off and regain your composure. Find where you failed and correct train more to correct that mistake.”

Harry watched Nymeria leave the training yard to take a break.

“Your improvement is truly baffling. In a few days, you seem to have made a significant leap in stamina and speed. That's impressive for someone your age.” Oberyn observed.

“As I said, we Starks are made of tough stuff.” Harry said with a shrug.

“Hmm. I’ll be the judge of that.” Oberyne said before calling on his three Valkyrie and having them train with Harry one after the other.

It was safe to say, his limits were truly put to a test.

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“The castle looks beautiful from this vantage point.” said Oberyne, looking at the castle of Avalon from the boat he was sitting.

Harry was also in agreement. The darkness that fell on his castle only emphasised the light supplied by the oil lamps burning all around the castle.

“Yeah, it looks beautiful.” Harry agreed before focusing on the task at hand.

He was fishing in the dark, a hobby he picked up from Prince Oberyne. Unsurprisingly, the Red Viper took his interest in fishing and turned it into a training exercise and that’s why he was fishing under the cover of the night.

Oberyne reached out and slapped the back of his head.

“Ow!”

“Close your eyes and focus.” Oberyne said sharply.

“I should’ve known better.” Harry growled, before going back to closing his eyes and focusing his mind on the fishing pole.

“You should’ve. Learn to let go of impulsive actions. One day, it’ll save your life.” said Oberyne.

‘I suppose that’s as good advice as any.’ Harry thought.

Harry just wanted to fish to pass time. It’s not as if he could spend all his time in a day on training and looking over the different construction works that were happening around the castle. More and more people were arriving at Avalon each day to take up residence. Some came out of the prospect of a new start while others were lured by his reputation as a blessed soul or by his lucrative promises. From early on, Harry knew he needed to attract more people in his own way to establish a thriving port rather than depend on the goodwill of the neighbouring Northern lords.

To that end, he charged some of the minimal support of men his father gave him and used them as messengers. He had them sent away with a horse and provisions to spread the word in every squalor about the abundant jobs and lucrative offers like assured food rations until these people land a job in Avalon. He also managed to arrange some heart-to-heart conversations with the merchant-class citizens of the North. He offered them access to grapes for a new budding wine-making industry and he offered to store grains in Avalon free of cost to speed up the migration of the workforce. One of the major functions of a castle was to store grain and other crops that get collected from the peasants and then get bartered to the merchant class for a price. But the merchants won’t be taking out the grain the moment they buy out the stocks. Instead, the grain and crops remain safely stored in the castle and methodically get released to the merchants over time. For this service, the lords charge a fee for the number of days the grain is stored in their castles. It also has the added

advantage of diverting essential supplies to the whim of the lords and landed knights in the case of long winters, famines and floods.

If more merchants came to Avalon it'd also increase the flow of more peasants that depend on these merchants. There is also his reputation as the Greenhand to consider. It was well known in the North that he can increase the yield of any farmlands with his magic. Undoubtedly, his reputation would ensure more people would seek out his lands if nothing else for food security.

The fishing pole in his hand slightly shook alerting Harry that the bait was getting due attention. He waited patiently noting every slight tremor that he sensed from the pole. At the right time, he pulled the pole back sharply depositing a flailing fish on the deck of the BOAT.

"Nicely done. Now, again." said Oberyne, patting his shoulder making Harry sigh.

He was really starting to hate fishing.

The next morning Harry was sitting inside his solar with Oberyne and Vayon Poole. The steward of Winterfell was loaned out to Avalon to set up the new household staff and also to keep watch over Oberyne. While his father has given his blessings for Oberyne to stay at Avalon that doesn't mean the Red Viper was trusted completely.

"We have nearly cleared the path through the Wolfswood. Once Lord Glover sends some additional men, we can complete the path far earlier than we expected. I'm also happy to report that the Mountain Clans have started supplying us with paving stones. The paving has already started from the Kingsroad and will progress through the Wolfswood as planned." Vayon Poole reported.

"The stones are up to standard scale?" Harry inquired.

"We have men working on ensuring the dimensions are kept uniform as agreed upon."

"It's impressive that you have managed to act promptly. I'd not have expected for the construction to be sped up this fast." Oberyne commented, his feet on the table while peeling off an apple with a small knife.

"Tis no secret that Avalon is going to develop a port and house a fleet on its shores. The smallfolk are moving from all across the North to work in the building of the fleet and perhaps to become a sailor in those ships. The airship has also been a tremendous help in transporting paving stones from the Northern Mountains and near Winterfell." said Vayon Poole.

Harry supposed the airship must have been a huge advantage when it comes to shortening the transportation time as well as cutting the expenses. Fewer people working on transporting the stones means more people working on mining the stones for the roads. The many assorted safety charms he added to the airship that also increased the manoeuvrability of the airship made it easier to fly even for a novice like Vayon Poole. The man was certainly skilled when it comes to logistics and any management role which was a rare quality in itself.

"Have there been any new developments in Winterfell that I should be aware of?" Harry asked, leaning forward in interest as he had not visited Winterfell for weeks. With his usual chores of entertaining the Archmaesters, training with Prince Oberyne and his experimentation with potions and rituals, he was a little bit busier than usual. The airship was also otherwise engaged in speeding up the transportation of workers and building materials.

"Well, the news is not yet made public by Lord Stark but Lady Catelyn is with child. Maester Luwin confirmed it yesterday."

“Congratulations are in order then. Please extend my hearty well wishes to Lord Eddard and Lady Catelyn.” said Oberyn.

“I shall convey your well-wishes, Prince Oberyn.” Vayon Poole nodded appreciatively.

‘Huh. It seems they did forego their fight and made up.’ Harry thought, knowing well that it must have taken quite a lot of energy on his father’s side to mellow out his mother.

“There is also another matter.” said Vayon Poole, eyeing Prince Oberyn warily.

“Oh. Do go on.” Harry prodded.

“A raven came from Dragonstone. Lord Stannis’s daughter Shireen has been afflicted with greyscale. After much effort from some of the brightest maesters of the Citadel the child survives, for now. Lord Stannis has come to know of your magic and how you developed a cure for the Spring sickness. He has requested Lord Stark whether it’ll be possible for your magic to cure his daughter.”

Harry was immediately interested in the prospect of making his attempt at taking on Greyscale, a magical malady as some maesters classify the infectious skin disease. There was no known cure for Greyscale except for a surgical procedure which rarely ever worked. Ever since he got access to Rhoynar blood he has been devouring any and all tales related to the old Rhoynar principalities of Essos. It was truly a sad tale as far as the Rhoynar were concerned. They seem like a thriving community of water magicians that got enslaved and wiped out by clashing with the Valyrians. It was a popular story of how Prince Garin the Great assembled a massive army to resist the Valyrian Freehold’s expansionism. But Prince Garin’s army was laid waste by the Dragonlords of Valyria and in return, Garin was supposed to have unleashed a curse that drowned his enemies. It is claimed that many of the victors of Valyria and Volantis fell prey to Greyscale after decimating the Rhoynar army.

If this Greyscale was indeed a magical malady, then he was quite interested in trying his hands at finding a cure. He could even experiment with the malady and see how it behaves against a Rhoynar descendant’s blood. If it was indeed a blood curse, he wanted to see whether it’d spare infecting one with Rhoynar descent. It’d be a nice magical exploration and he could also get access to Dragonstone, the ancient seat of Targaryens. There were bound to be some mysteries remaining unearthed in the old castle that could prove beneficial for Harry in the long run. He was still woefully ignorant of the fire dragons of the world and he’d really appreciate some relevant information on the subject before he hatches the egg.

It remains to be seen whether something useful remains at Dragonstone after all these years. As Marwyn alleged, it might be possible that the maesters swept the castle for anything important during the reign of Aegon III. The Dragonbane was supposedly so broken and fearful of dragons that he allowed the maesters to purge the knowledge of dragons in his early reign which robbed House Targaryen of their ability to hatch their last remaining dragon eggs.

This was the tale spun by Marwyn. He’d see for himself whether this tale holds any merit.

“It’s only a month and a half away from the next auction, is it not?” Harry mused aloud.

“That’s correct.” Vayon Poole nodded.

“I think I can accommodate curing the affliction that is plaguing Lord Stannis’s daughter before the auction.” Harry said, after thinking it over in his mind.

It'd be a tight schedule taking into account the development of Avalon planned in the coming months especially when he was expecting the arrival of builders promised by Lord Manderly for building the port facilities and ships.

"I don't think Lord Eddard is keen on letting you come in contact with Greyscale. That accursed disease has struck down many men since its conception. There is no cure for Greyscale." said Vayon Poole, looking a little green perhaps thinking about Greyscale.

"Hmm. I like to cure incurable diseases. This Greyscale sounds like an interesting challenge. I think I'll have a word with my father on the subject." Harry said, turning his attention on Oberyn on a dime.

"So, how about it? Up for a visit to Dragonstone?"

"Are you serious?" Oberon asked incredulously, a sentiment that was shared by Vayon Poole as well going by the steward's eyebrows disappearing into his hairline.

"Oh yeah. It'll be fun. A wolf, snake and a stag in the lair of a dragon. What could go wrong?"

