

The Dread Lord of Essos

Chapter 14

In his opinion, his Aunt Cersei looked just as beautiful as he always remembered. Unfortunately, she was also wearing the same shit-smelling expression that she always did. Harry didn't think that the woman had ever been happy a day in her life. Harry walked by her and went straight for the trunks that his drones had unloaded and carried in.

"If you're here to verbally chastise me for harming your precious Joffrey, then save your breath. I have no patience to hear it," he told her as he opened a specific trunk. He pulled out a bottle of his private brand of whiskey. It was made for the sole use of him and his flunkies. He grabbed two glasses from the liquor-filled trunk and carried them over to the table. He sat down and poured himself a glass.

"You have made a grave mistake attacking my son. I will not allow it to happen again," she told him, trying to keep calm. Harry rolled his eyes and filled the other glass halfway.

"You have no say in what I do. If I decide to kill that little shit-stain, then I will, whether you like it or not ... Now sit down and drink," he ordered her. Cersei's face was angry and red, but she sat down nonetheless. She grabbed the cup and drank some down. Immediately she began coughing.

"Take moderate sips. You can't drink it like wine," he explained. Once she stopped coughing, she put her glass down.

"He will try and get revenge for the slight against him, I'm sure you know," Cersei looked at him, studying his handsome face.

"I don't doubt it," Harry smiled. "As with everything else he does, he will fail."

Cersei did not like how the bastard was so confident in his insults. He had always been confident. She remembered him as a child. He was very bright, even back then. He knew when to be assertive and when to hold his tongue. It seemed that he no longer wished to keep his tongue in check.

"What makes you so sure?" she wondered as she lifted the glass to her plump, pink lips and tilted her head back slightly. The smooth, hot liquid slid down her throat and warmed her belly. After only a few drinks, she was feeling like she had already downed three glasses of wine in quick succession.

"Because of the madness that lives within him," Harry told her, drinking from his own glass. "He only thinks about what gives him pleasure and ignores everything else. When things do not go his way, he lets his madness take over," he said, looking her right in the eyes. He could see that

her eyes were a darker green than his own emerald-colored ones. "In truth, I don't need to even raise a hand to him. Whether by my hand or not, he won't live long."

"Oh?" Cersei asked, her heart hammering while trying to remain even-tempered. "Is there a plot against my son that only you know of?" Harry chuckled.

"I know of no plots, but there are sure to be many," he smirked. Cersei wanted nothing more than to slap that expression from his beautiful face. "Joffrey is a twisted and hateful wretch. He is despised by everyone who meets him. There are certain to be plots against him that we know nothing about. Not to mention what the Starks will do to him if they get their hands on him."

Cersei swallowed a lump in her throat. At least the last part was true. Joffrey should have taken her advice and let Ned Stark live. If Robb Stark captured her son, there was no doubt his head would roll.

"But right now, my dear, the Starks are the least of his worries," Harry carried on, finishing his glass before pouring another. He topped Cersei's off as well, even though she didn't ask for it.

"What do you speak of?" she asked him, her head beginning to feel fuzzy from too much drink. Still, she took another sip. There were times when she enjoyed the numbness that only alcohol could provide.

"The Iron Bank," he simply said.

"What of them?"

"Joffrey has not been keeping up with the payments," he explained. "I was not jesting when I said they call him the Pauper King."

Cersei's face turned ghostly pale. Defaulting on a loan from them was a death sentence, pure and simple. "Why would he do such a thing?" she whispered.

"Because he is delusional. He considers himself untouchable. The war he started is expensive, and the money has to come from somewhere," Harry chuckled. "I personally know several Key Holders in Braavos. They have told me that the Crown was nearly two million Dragons in debt to them before Joffrey took out another loan. Now the debt is nearly five million gold coins. If not repaid, they will move against him soon."

Her hand trembled as she sat her glass down on the dark wood table. "Surely father will step in?" she looked up at him. All Harry could see was a scared, little girl looking back at him. Harry shook his head.

"Not this time. While the mines at Casterly Rock aren't dry yet, it is getting harder by the day to pull gold from them. There are, of course, many mountains in the Westerlands that likely have

gold in them, but finding the gold and digging new mines will take years ... possibly decades," he said. Those were years that Tywin didn't have. The old man didn't want to leave his legacy on a shaky foundation. "I know for a fact that he has been searching for new mines since before I was born. Only a few potential mines have been found, and even if they pan out, they won't start producing for at least another five to ten years."

"You also have to remember that Lannisport and the fleet were burned not so long ago. That alone cost grandfather a fortune to rebuild. He had been indulging Robert's careless spending for years, and now he spends even more on a war that he did not start. Grandfather is not poor by any means, but he will be if he takes on Joffrey's debt on top of the cost of everything else. Now that the debt is in default, the entire balance is due immediately. There will be no more quarterly payments accepted."

Harry enjoyed seeing her face turn white. "But what can be done?" she asked desperately.

"Pray?" Harry joked. Judging by the look on her face, he guessed that she wasn't amused. "There is nothing to be done. Either pay in full or don't," he went on. "Joffrey will be the one to suffer the consequences, not you ... if you are lucky."

"What do you mean by that?" she quickly asked, not sure if she could take much more of this. Harry shrugged and stood up. He removed his armor pieces and placed them on an armor stand that the drones had also unloaded.

"Going by past actions, when a King refuses to pay his debts to the Iron Bank, a new King is chosen with the backing of the bank. When the new King takes the throne, they always honor the past Crown's debts to them. I imagine that they are seriously considering Robb Stark as a replacement." Harry didn't really know whether they were or not. He was just speculating at that point.

"They wouldn't!"

"Of course, they will." Harry looked at her as if she were crazy. "Now think back to what happened when the Lannister men were turned loose on the Targaryen women and children. I can only hope that the Northerners have a little more honor than those of the Westerlands," Harry said, shaking his head. Cersei's face was turning slightly green.

"If you were smart, you would take Myrcella, go back to the Rock, and stay there under lock and key while being ready to leave Westeros at a moment's notice."

Cersei just sat there, breathing heavily while in a world of her own. Finally, she turned to him. "Why am I just hearing about all of this?"

"When it comes to the gold mines and finances of the Rock, no one knows. I only know because I own so many businesses in the Westerlands. I could see the signs and carefully looked into it.

As far as Joffrey's debt ... Who can say? I imagine that it's not your job to look after the finances of the Realm."

"What will we do?" she asked in a near panic

"You can start by leaving my room. I wish to bathe before dinner," he said evenly, taking his shirt off while Cersei hissed at him drunkenly. She got up and left his room without another word. Harry smiled to himself. He really missed talking to that lovely lunatic.

The Dread Lord of Essos

A brown-skinned man dressed in black and hired by a certain blonde ponce pushed open the bedroom door slowly, hoping to avoid making it squeak. The room was dark, but thankfully, the moon was nearly full. The open window provided enough light to see an outline of the bed. He could see the Lannister bastard bundled up under the sheets. Pulling his dagger out, he silently crept up to the bed. Raising his hand high into the air, he said, "I am so sorry," before he brought it down violently. Once, twice, three times he struck. Finally, pulling the blade from the body, he put it back in its sheath. Pulling the sheet away, under the dim light he saw that it wasn't a body, but a burlap sack of red beans. His eyes widened, and he barely had time to yelp before someone grabbed him by the scruff of his neck and the seat of his trousers. He was dragged over to the window before being thrown straight out of it. He screamed all the way down.

"Apology accepted," Harry smirked, brushing his hands together. Joffrey must have paid quite the sum to get the Sorrowful Men to try and take him out. 'Perhaps I should pay that guild a visit and show my displeasure,' Harry thought.

In another room, Joffrey went to bed smiling even though his heavily bandaged arm was in considerable pain. With any luck, his annoying cousin would be dead by morning. He had good dreams of the bastard being skinned alive.

Deep in the night, Harry crept into Joffrey's room to study the boy. He looked down at the kid and shook his head. He could kill the idiot, but what he had said to Cersei was true. No matter what happened, he probably wouldn't live long anyway. In the meantime, Harry could have a bit of fun with him. He smiled and wiggled his fingers at the sleeping boy.

In the morning, when Joffrey joined his family for breakfast, he was very surprised to see his cousin still alive.

"What are you doing here?!" he cried out, looking at Harry.

"I'm here to visit my family. Surely, even a dimwit like you can remember," Harry chuckled. Everyone else was staring at Joffrey in shock.

"Y-Your hair, Joffrey!" Cersei stuttered. Joffrey smiled widely.

“Yes. It is particularly luxurious this morning, isn’t it?” she smirked, running his fingers through his long, golden locks. In fact, he had almost been late for breakfast since he was too busy staring at himself in the mirror.

“Think again, nephew,” Tyrion said, trying hard not to laugh along with Myrcella and Tommen. Tywin did not look pleased with his grandson’s disgrace. Tyrion slid a handheld mirror down to Joffrey. The blonde picked it up and looked at himself. At that moment, Harry removed the Confundus that he had put on the boy.

“AAACK!” he cried out, nearly dropping the mirror. “MY HAIR! What foulness has befallen me?!”

His head was mostly bald, but there were a few patches of thin, wispy, blonde hair growing here and there.

“Your head looks like a pubescent scrotum,” Harry commented, happily eating his eggs and ham. The children burst into a giggle fit.

“IT WAS YOU ... WASN’T IT!” he yelled, brandishing a butterknife and pointing it at him. “You did this to me!” Harry rolled his eyes.

“Sit down while you still have a shred of dignity. You’re embarrassing the family name,” Harry shook his head sadly.

“Here, here!” Tyrion cheered, raising his cup. Harry laughed softly as the arguing and name-calling commenced. He wondered who would be the first that Tywin would slap across the face. He looked over at Sansa, who was trying to make herself look small and unnoticeable.

“Sansa,” he grabbed her attention. She looked over at him. “I’ll be taking you to the Riverlands after breakfast. When you’re done here, pack a light bag to take with you.”

Her eyes widened as Joffrey blustered. The little shit looked at the pretty, young girl. “She will not be going anywhere! I have not given my permission,” Joffrey snarled, standing up.

“I don’t need your permission. I want my father back home, and the Starks want their sister. It will be an easy trade,” Harry told them. Joffrey continued to stammer in rage when his mother placed a hand on his arm.

“Perhaps it is for the best,” she told him in her sweet voice.

“Indeed it is. Now sit down, Joffrey,” Tywin said, making Joffrey give a sour expression. He sat down nonetheless. Harry noticed Sansa eating faster. ‘She must really want to be away from the little rat. Not that I can blame her,’ Harry thought as he too finished eating.

Once done, Harry stood up. "I'll escort you to your room, then we can go."

"Of course, My Lord," she bowed her head. As they left the room, they heard Joffrey belly-aching about how she called Harry a Lord. Harry heard the distinctive pop of someone getting slapped.

"I can imagine that it will be a great relief getting away from them," Harry said as he walked her to her room. He was escorting her because he didn't want any "accidents" to happen that would prevent her from going. He wouldn't put it past his cousin.

"N-No! Of course I ..." she stuttered. Harry waved her off.

"You don't need to pretend to enjoy their company around me. I know firsthand how hateful some of them can be. They are not pleasant people to be around," Harry assured her. She was quiet for a moment, the only sound was the clacking of their boots on the stone steps.

"It will be good to see my family again," she finally replied, looking up at him to make sure he wasn't mad. Harry smiled at her, causing her face to heat up.

"I'm sure it will be. Here we are ..." Harry pushed open the door to her room. "Only pack what you cannot replace. Only take what you're wearing and leave the rest of your clothing behind," he told her, pulling out a leather sack from his pocket. He handed it to her. "This should cover the cost of replacing your wardrobe once you're safely back at your brother's side. Now hurry," he told her, placing his hand on her lower back and gently pushing her into the room.

Thankfully, he didn't have to wait long. Sansa was very eager to get out of King's Landing it would seem. After she was back with him, they went to Harry's room. He donned his newest set of armor and cape and put Fiendfyre into its sheath at his side. Harry reached into one of his many trunks and pulled something out. He gave it to Sansa. "Transfer your items into this bag."

Sansa quickly followed his orders. Harry smiled at how fast she was moving. He grabbed a few more things before finishing up. Now that he was set, he led her out of the Red Keep and into the Outer Yard where again, he whistled loudly. The few early risers in the yard jumped from the sudden and startlingly loud noise. All color left Sansa's face when the massive, black dragon from the day before circled low and landed in the middle of the yard. She instantly heard people screaming and crying as they ran for their lives.

"You expect me to ride on that?" she gasped. Harry rolled his eyes.

"Unless you'd prefer to stay here," he told her. Immediately, her shoulders squared as she gathered her courage. She nodded in consent. Harry took the bag from her and dropped it onto the ground. "Turn around," he ordered. As she did, he helped her put on a beautiful, full-length winter coat made of spider silk and stuffed with goose-down feathers. The coat was the purest white that she had ever seen. Around the neck was white fur that came from an animal that was

similar to a mink from Earth. All of it was enchanted to resist stains and keep the wearer warm. While back home, Harry just created things when bored. Because of this, he had a large, magically expanded trunk filled with dresses, coats, cloaks, and anything else that one could imagine. It was always good to have gifts of high quality that he could hand out. He particularly liked the one that Sansa was now wearing. It was one of the prettier ones that he had created. He figured that since she was a Northern girl, she might like the wintery feel of it. He flipped the hood up to protect her head.

"Why am I wearing this?" she asked, confused. "Summer has only just ended."

"Yes, but we will be flying very high up where the air is very cold," he told her as he placed the backpack on her. Now done with the explanations, Harry helped her onto Daemon's back where she settled right behind him. Without even telling her, her arms wrapped tightly around his waist. He could feel her trembling before they even took off.

"Are you ready?" he called out.

"No!" she yelled back. Harry laughed.

"Too bad!"

Daemon's wings began to flap, sending anything that wasn't tied down flying around the yard. Up they went while Sansa closed her eyes tightly, holding onto her escort for dear life. The poor girl didn't know how long she had been squeezing him while praying to any god who would listen to see her safely back on the ground. Eventually, though, her arms began to tire. Her death grip loosened, and she opened her eyes. Seeing how high they were made her squeak in fright.

"Don't be frightened!" she heard the young Lord yell. "There's no chance of you falling off!"

That didn't lessen her worry, however. Looking up, she paled. The clouds were literally right above her head. Down below, fields of green dotted with trees and villages stretched out as far as the eye could see. It was an eye-opening experience for her. As a little girl, she learned the stories of the Dragonlords from Maester Luwin. Sansa had at times dreamed of being one of the Targaryen Princesses. However, she never dared dream that she would be on the back of a dragon.

As he had said, it was very cold this high up. The wind was whipping fiercely, and she couldn't help but press her face into his fluttering, white cape. How long they had been up there, she couldn't tell, but after some time, he called out and got her attention. "We're over the Riverlands!"

This made her heart jump. She immediately perked up. "Already?" she asked. Harry pointed down, and sure enough, she could see rivers branching out like veins on a muscular forearm.

"Look for a large army or party of people!" he told her. She kept her eyes open, despite the fact that the wind was making them water.

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It was just past midday, and though the day was overcast, those on the castle walls had a decent view of the land stretching before them. That was why one particularly vigilant guard squinted his eyes as a distant speck in the sky grew larger and larger. When it was too large to ignore, he asked, "What in the Seven Hells is that?" It was far too large to be a bird. When he finally realized what it was, his bowels loosened as he turned and yelled to a fellow guard, "RAISE THE ALARM!"

The deep trumpeting sound of the warhorn brought everyone to the wall, including Ser Brynden Tully and the newly crowned King of the North, Robb Stark.

"What's going on?" Brynden called out as he watched the castle guards running around in panic.

"A Dragon, My Lord!" one of them shouted.

"Impossible," he replied, thinking that they were all deep in their cups. The two men made their way to the top of the castle walls and looked to where the men were pointing. They looked just in time for a gargantuan, black dragon to swoop in low and land effortlessly near the western wall, beyond the massive man-made ditch that protected the third side of the castle.

"May the Gods help us all," Robb prayed as the dragon pulled his wings close to his body. But instead of bathing the castle in fire, they watched as a lone figure dismounted and began walking toward the gate. They waited atop the wall as the figure came to the gate and spoke with a guard down below. After a moment, the guard shouted out.

"Lord Stark! Harold Hill, son of Jaime Lannister, wishes to speak with you."

Both Robb and Brynden Tully looked at each other confused. They certainly hadn't been expecting someone from the Lannister family to come seeking Ser Jamie. The fact that he had a dragon was extremely troubling. Deciding not to invoke his wrath, they made their way down to the gate. As they walked through, they saw what was an imposing figure with armor finer than any they had ever seen. Though young, he was taller than most in the castle, and many times more handsome.

"Lord Stark," he dipped his head in respect. "I have come to make a trade for my father."

Trying not to act as frightened as he felt, he cleared his throat. "So it would seem," he said, taking a quick peek at the dragon that was looking their way. Was it just him, or did the dragon look hungry? "And what, pray tell, do you have to trade?"

"Your sister ... Sansa Stark," he answered him. Robb clenched his hands into fists.

"Where is she? You will release her at once!" he demanded, forgetting the bad position he was in. Harry just smirked.

"On the back of Daemon," he smiled. "You're welcome to walk over there and get her."

Robb suddenly remembered the dragon. Looking over at it, he could see that it was staring him right in the eyes. Robb Stark began to feel small and insignificant when the beast growled menacingly. Once again he cleared his throat.

"A trade will be fine."

"Good. I trust my father is in good health?" he asked, raising an eyebrow. It was clear he would not be pleased with the wrong answer.

"O-Of course! We treat our prisoners well in the North," he took a step back as Daemon took one forward.

"We shall see. I'll bring Sansa to the gate and make the exchange. Any tricks will be most unwise," he warned. Robb gave a slight nod and walked back into the castle yard. Harry made his way back to Daemon. Once there, he helped Sansa down.

"I'll walk you over to the gate where your brother will meet you," Harry smiled at her. She smiled back.

"Thank you for bringing me here," she told him, about to give him back his coat. Harry waved her off.

"Keep it. It looks good on you," he smiled sexily at her. Immediately, her face flamed red, and her ears felt hot. She stammered her thanks while trying to hide her embarrassment. She suddenly wished that Joffrey was like Harold. Perhaps she would have had the happy ending that she dreamed of as a child. As he led her over to the gate, he steadied her when she almost fell over, drawing even more blushes from her face. When they reached the gate, they were forced to wait a few minutes until finally, they saw Robb and Brynden walking up to them with Jamie Lannister in tow.

"ROBB!" she cried out and ran to him. He captured her in a hug while Jaime walked up to him, a smile on his thin and dirty face.

"Are you well, father?" Harry asked, looking him over.

"Nothing a shower and a few hot meals cannot cure," he smiled and hugged his son.

"Whew!" Harry waved his hand in front of his face. "Start with the shower." They laughed and punched each other on the arms a few times before Robb joined in.

"What of my youngest sister, Arya?" he asked. Harry shook his head.

"From what I know, she escaped King's Landing. No one knows what has become of her," he told him honestly. Robb looked downcast as he nodded. Not wanting to stick around, he bid them a quick goodbye.

"Farewell, Lord Stark. Until we meet again," he said and walked his father back to Daemon. Of course, he stopped short.

"Am I seeing things?"

"I don't know. What do you see?" Harry replied.

"A big ass dragon."

"Your vision is fine then. I'll explain on the journey home where fine wine and buxom whores await us," Harry said proudly, slapping him on the back.

"I'll start with the wine and work my way up to the whores," he said as his son helped him climb up the monstrous beast before him. Soon after, he was sailing through the sky with his freedom intact.