

The Dread Lord of Essos

Chapter 65

As soon as the day broke, they set sail for the island empire of Leng. The waters of the Jade Sea were rougher than normal, but it was nothing Harry's monstrous ship couldn't handle. The magically reinforced bow cut through the white caps like a hot knife through butter. The trip was largely uneventful, and they arrived that afternoon.

Leng was a large island off the southern coast of Yi Ti and was largely covered by thick forests and jungles. Harry had heard stories of the wildlife that occupied those jungles. There was hardly a place where you couldn't hear the call of a monkey or the deafening caw of the jungle birds that so closely resembled parrots. However, monkeys and birds were the least of your concerns if you ventured into the jungle. Tigers were abundant and nearly invisible through the densely packed trees. Tales were told about tigers sneaking into the cities at night and dragging unexpected children back to their lairs. Harry didn't know how true these tales were, but he would wager that there was at least some truth to them. But in the jungles of Leng, even the tigers weren't the most feared.

Great apes prowled deep in the jungles, and it was said that some, like the spotted humpback apes, were as intelligent as men. The most feared of all were the hooded apes, which were said to be as big as giants and just as strong.

Kiana of Leng stood excitedly on the deck of his ship, watching as the southern coast of her home island grew ever closer. She explained that she lived in the port city of Turrani where most of those with native blood resided. She further explained that the people native to Leng, like her, were called Lengii and lived in the southern half of the island, while the people descended from Yi Ti lived in the upper half.

Harry stood further back, watching Kiana closely as she stood at the bow. As tall as she was, she was still a young girl and prone to the normal curiosities of such. She would lean over the rail and watch the dolphin-like sea creatures as they swam spirals around each other and even occasionally jump out of the water. Harry didn't stop her from satisfying her childish curiosity, but he did make sure she didn't fall overboard. Melisandre joined him and pressed her back against his front. Leaning against him, she smiled when he wrapped his arms around her slender waist and kissed the side of her neck. She subtly rubbed her shapely ass against his groin and purred when he kissed her shoulder.

"Are we planning to spend time in Leng, My Lord?" she asked him.

"I was thinking about it," Harry replied, breathing in her intoxicating scent. He wasn't sure when he would get back to this part of the world, and he wanted to take advantage when he could. Leng had an abundance of flora and fauna that he could potentially collect and add to his growing list of products he produced and sold. Leng was one of the few places he didn't do

much business with. As a tropical island nation, they produced plenty of food and lumber for themselves. They did not need his silk since they cultivated silkworms the size of sausages. There wasn't much they needed or wanted from the outside world. Until recently, outsiders were forbidden, and trade was non-existent. All in all, Leng was very self-reliant. Harry wanted to poke around and see what they could potentially desire.

"Is there anything you wish to do while there?" he asked her. Melisandre nodded.

"Sadly, religions beyond their own are forbidden, so we were unable to build a temple in R'hllor's honor," she explained. "Still, our priests have a presence in every major city on Leng to try and spread the word. I wish to consult with the local chapter," she told him.

"Just be careful. I'm unsure how well they tolerate priestesses of outside religions," he warned her. Melisandre tickled the back of his hand with her dainty fingers. "I would hate to have to go to war with them if they were to hurt you," he teased. Melisandre's sultry laughter rang out. She turned around and wrapped her arms around his neck. She then leaned in and softly kissed his lips.

"I've traveled to places much more dangerous than this. I'll be fine," she assured him. Harry knew she would be. Melisandre was a very capable woman. "Would you allow me to offer my fellow priests aid?" she asked him.

"Aid in the form of what exactly?" he asked in return.

"This ship always carries more food and wine than we can use," she commented. This was true. His ship was always packed to the brim with supplies he never ended up using. Resupplying it using his magic was hardly a difficult task. "May I offer the priests some of our supplies as a show of your generosity?" she asked with a soft, sexy smile. He gently played with the hair on the back of his head. She then leaned in and whispered into his ear.

"I promise to show you how generous I can be," she whispered, her warm, pleasant breath tickling his ear. Harry chuckled as he ran his hands down her sides and over her flared hips.

"I suppose we can offer our assistance to the local priests. I am a generous man, after all," he teased as he cupped her bottom and squeezed. Melisandre smiled kindly and kissed him passionately.

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The docks were full of onlookers as Harry's massive ship came to rest in the harbor. His ship contrasted dramatically with the rest of the aging ships docked beside him. It was likely the largest ship they had ever seen. Harry left his armor on the ship since he didn't want to project any hostility. Instead, he wore his finest clothes that screamed wealth. With Melisandre by his

side, he escorted Kiana down the ramp, and they were quickly followed by a group of his drones who would take care of any docking fees.

The docks smelled like any other he had visited. It stunk of fish and dirty men. Carts full of fish were being pushed and pulled in every direction. Some were being carted into the city, while others would be loaded onto trade ships for transport. As they walked down the dock, his small group garnered a lot of attention. It seemed the peasant workers couldn't decide who to look at. Harry was tall and handsome and gave off the air of power. Melisandre was a walking wet dream in her blood-red, skin-tight dress, but it was Kiana who drew much of the attention. Whether it was because she was Lengii or for another reason, he didn't know. Just to make sure it wasn't for nefarious reasons, he kept close to her.

The warehouses along the dockfront were made from a mixture of rough-cut ancient stones and wood. Just by looking at them, Harry could tell that they had been standing for thousands of years, with only the wood being replaced once it rotted. A man walked by pushing a wooden wheelbarrow with a single crab inside. That crab, however, was the size of a wagon wheel, and its long, spindly legs hung several feet over the sides. Its massive claws were bound tight with thin ropes but looked like they could sever a hand if left free. Kiana saw him looking at the crab and smiled.

"We call it an emerald crab because of the green spots on the shell," she commented. "The meat is very good," she told him.

"I'll have to try some," he responded. "Where is your home? Is there somewhere we can take you?" he asked her. He didn't want them walking around blindly. Before she could answer, a large group of what appeared to be guards came rushing up to them. Most of them were making a beeline for Harry with menacing looks. A few of the others were going for Kiana. He wasn't having that. His hand had just found the handle of his sword when Kiana's hand touched his forearm.

"They are my mother's guards. They will escort me home," she assured him.

"Will you be safe?" he asked her. The men stopped short of them and stood staring. None of them seemed pleased that she was speaking to him. Most had their hands resting on the handles of their daggers.

"I will," she said softly. She stood face to face with him and smiled softly. She then lightly touched his forehead with two fingers before touching his heart with the same fingers.

"I thank you in the name of my mother. We will meet again, Harold," she smiled sweetly before walking the short distance to the guards. Just to be safe, Harry placed a Tracking Charm on her as she left. She had a short and quiet conversation with them before being whisked off under their close protection. A group stayed behind, glaring at him until she was out of sight. When she was gone, they too disappeared in the same direction, leaving Harry alone and confused.

“What was all that about?” Melisandre asked as they began walking.

“I don’t know, but she assured me they would take her home safely. I’ll try and track her down before we leave just to make sure,” he told the red priestess. “Do you want me to help you find your wayward priests?” Melisandre shook her head.

“There’s no need. The Lord of Light will always guide those who search for him,” she smiled prettily.

Soon after, they split up and went their separate ways. Harry had one of his drones discreetly follow her to ensure she stayed out of trouble. Free to go about his business, Harry did just that. The first thing he did was walk further into the city. One thing was clear from the start. Those who were poor were very poor, and those who weren’t were incredibly wealthy. Their two major exports were spices and gems, which the kingdom had in abundance. After leaving the fishy smell of the port behind, the pleasant aroma of various spices became apparent. Small shops littered the street, and almost all of them dealt in spices. Vendors displayed woven sacks filled with everything from cinnamon to cloves. There were small sacks for the more casual buyers and crates for those who bought in bulk. Harry was definitely a bulk buyer and made a mental note to check it out further.

The further he traveled into the city, the more ornate the buildings became. All of them were constructed out of the same dark gray stone that had likely been quarried from the closest mountain. Stone arches were prevalent, and all were adorned with carvings of beasts. Roofs were made from fired-clay shingles, layered and sloped. The shops became more ornate as well. The further he strayed from the port, the fewer spice shops he found. Instead, they were replaced by jewelers. Harry walked up to one shop whose outer facade was decorated with magnificent stone carvings of hundreds of flowers. The front of the shop didn’t have any windows, only a thick wooden door. In fact, Harry had seen very few windows in any of the buildings. The few he did see weren’t protected by glass, but wooden shutters painted green. Intrigued, Harry went inside.

As soon as he entered, he was nearly overwhelmed by the thick haze of burning incense. He wrinkled his nose and fought back a sneeze. The scent wasn’t bad. It was just very strong. At first, he thought that he was incorrect. He didn’t see a single piece of jewelry. The walls were lined with shelves, displaying dozens of ceramic jars, pots, and vases. The largest of which was a vase a few inches taller than he was and thicker than he was wide at the shoulders. It was creamy white with golden animal designs accentuating it. It was a beautiful piece that probably cost a fortune.

“May the Empress bless you on this day,” he heard from around the corner. Harry walked over and found a Lengii man who must have been eight feet tall. Though much taller than Harry, he was also much thinner. His arms were long and spindly, and his bony fingers were tipped with

long nails filed down to sharp points. His eyes were large and golden, and his long, ebony hair was worked into a thick braid that fell over his shoulder and down his chest.

"May she bless us all," Harry answered, hoping it was an acceptable response. It seemed like it was since he smiled softly and slightly bowed his head.

"Are you seeking my fine crafts ...?" he began, waving his giant hand at the many ceramics on display. "... or perhaps it is a trinket you desire?" he continued and opened the door of a wooden cabinet behind him.

Dozens of pieces of jewelry were displayed in the cabinet. None of them were as high-quality as the stuff belonging to Kiana, but they were still very good. His eyes immediately went to a beautiful spiral armband made of gold. It was shaped like a thin, twisting flame inset with small rubies. He must have noticed Harry studying it and plucked it from its place.

"A beautiful piece I crafted in honor of Lianma, the year the mountain breathed fire and the night was unending," he explained in his native tongue. From the brief description, Harry knew he was talking about a volcanic eruption. He then spoke quieter. "It is said that the Old Ones became angry and cursed the sky when the Yi Ti sealed off the cities below."

"The Old Ones?" Harry asked him.

"Few would openly speak of them. Doing so would risk torture. Seeking them out, a sentence of death," he warned. Now, Harry was very intrigued. He felt a slight tingle in his head like someone was trying to break through his magical mental protections. He reinforced them, and the tingling stopped. He knew it wasn't coming from the merchant. Whatever it was, it was coming from far away.

Harry dove into the Lengii's mind and found what he knew. The Lengii groaned and swayed until Harry pulled out. Harry quickly erased the last few seconds from his mind and watched as he blinked in confusion. "I would like to purchase it," Harry stated.

"Purchase?" he asked as the fog lifted from his mind.

"The armband you are holding," Harry reminded him. The Lengii looked down and remembered he was trying to sell him something.

"Ah," he said, happy to have a sale.

The Lengii didn't have their own currency, so they accepted any form of copper, silver, or gold. He pulled out a scale, and Harry added coins until the correct weight had been reached. He then took possession of the armband and left after sharing a few kind words. As he left the building, Harry looked at the beautifully crafted armband. It would make a nice gift for Melisandre, he thought. He placed it in his bag and carried on.

What he had found in the man's head was strange. The Old Ones supposedly lived underneath the ancient ruined cities deep in the jungle. He didn't know much about them, only that the conquering Yi Ti had the tunnels sealed long ago. There were tales that the Old Ones would speak to the god empress and command her to do strange and terrible things. Harry wanted to meet these Old Ones, but as it was getting dark, he didn't think it was a very good idea to go traipsing around the jungles in the dark in search of them. He decided first to enjoy the city and go in search of them before leaving Leng.

As he continued down the street, the people suddenly appeared much more nervous and paranoid. Some of them closed shop early while others walked down the street, looking over their shoulders. The tension was palpable. Harry lowered his mental shields a bit and felt that strange tingle return. Did everyone else feel it as well? He strengthened them again, and the tingle went away. Something was trying to affect his mind, and he had a good guess as to what it was.

He was no stranger to the pseudo-gods of this world. The Seven and the Drowned God were actively trying to snuff him out, though he hadn't had a run-in with them for a while. The Old Gods of the North didn't really bother him, nor did Melisandre's Lord of the Light. The gods of this world were definitely strange, Harry thought. They were powerful compared to normal men, but they were far down the food chain when compared to Harry. Even in his human form, he was vastly more powerful than them.

'These Old Ones might now even be gods,' Harry reminded himself. They could be like the frozen freaks marching south from the Lands of Always Winter ... less than gods but more than men. He was interrupted by the sound of shouting. Harry turned in that direction and spotted several guards rushing up to him. They didn't look like they wanted to have a friendly conversation with him.

Harry slipped between two shops and quickly strode onto a backstreet. He heard them shouting again. He moved across the street while the few people still outside quickly bolted in the opposite direction. Harry then cut between two more shops and hid in the shadows behind a protruding arch. The guards burst out onto the street and stopped. They looked around, trying to spot him. Not seeing him, the leader gave out his orders, and the group scattered to search for him. Only one of them came down the alley he was in. The guard walked slowly, his curved dagger held firmly in his hand. Harry waited patiently until he was within reaching distance. He jumped from the shadows and grabbed the guard by the throat. His hand tightened, and the towering guard's eyes bulged as his air supply was cut off. His mouth was open in a silent scream, and Harry took the opportunity to pierce the man's mind to see why they were after him.

What he found was a jumbled mess. The man's natural thoughts were mixed with another set of thoughts. Before Harry could fully analyze it, the second set of thoughts pulled back and disappeared, leaving only the man's confused and terrified mind. Harry stunned the guard,

wiped his memory, and left him in the darkened alley. Harry faded back to his ship and thought about what had just occurred.

‘Definitely the Old Ones,’ Harry thought. ‘They didn’t want him here ... but why?’ he asked himself. He couldn’t answer that right now. He’d have to find out for himself later. Until then, he’d do his best to keep a low profile.

As it was getting late, Harry decided to cut his exploration short and call it a night. His drone had followed Melisandre throughout the afternoon and knew where she was located.

The walk there was short, as she stayed just outside the port area. The building she was in was old and somewhat rundown. The dark gray stone was covered in a dusting of mossy green, and the carvings in the walls were eroded to the point where he couldn’t even tell what they once were. Harry rapped his knuckles against the door and waited. Melisandre answered the door and smiled happily at the sight of him.

“My Lord,” she happily greeted him and stepped back to let him in. She closed the door behind him.

“My Lady,” he teased her as he looked around the room. There wasn’t much to see. An old, wooden table stood in the corner on rickety legs with a matching chair next to it. Papers were stacked on the surface of the table, along with an ornately decorated silver inkwell with a feather quill in the holder. A wardrobe was in the other corner, and along the furthest wall, a thin mattress lay on the floor and looked to be stuffed with hay. “I wouldn’t expect you to be comfortable in such a room,” he commented.

“I’ve lived in much worse,” she reminded him. Her arms slipped around his waist, and she tilted her head, waiting for his lips to meet hers. She didn’t have to wait for long. Harry sent a mental ping to his drones before capturing her lips in a heated kiss. Melisandre immediately moaned into his mouth as he explored her talented tongue. Harry moved his hands down her back and onto her ass. He squeezed her thick cheeks, which seemed to turn her on more. She pulled back and smiled sexily at him. Melisandre slowly peeled the front of her dress down, baring her breasts. Her rosy nipples were stiff and ready to be sucked. She continued pulling her dress down until it reached her wide hips. Harry, ever the gentleman, decided to help her further. He knelt in front of her and pulled the dress over her flared hips. He was immediately hit with the smell of her arousal. As the dress pooled around her ankles, she stepped out of the material, leaving herself fully nude.

Harry ran his palms up and down the backs of her thighs while he peppered her lower belly and smooth mound with kisses. Melisandre gasped and mewled cutely as he tasted her sweet skin. Harry stood, kissing his way up her belly until his lips reached her stiff, crinkled nipple. He captured the little bead between his lips and sucked while his hands mauled her bare bottom. Melisandre squirmed in his grasp, loving how he treated her body. His hand slipped between her cheeks, and he found her slit to be wet and ready for more. They were interrupted by a knock at

the door. Harry let go of her nipple and answered it. His drones entered, carrying supplies to make her small room more comfortable. They dropped off food, wine, and of course, a much bigger and better mattress. The drones removed the old, smelly one and added silk sheets to the new one. They also dropped off her personal items like clothing and makeup. Melisandre didn't bother covering up. She was used to his drones' presence. She stood there straight-backed with hard nipples perched upon her incredibly perky tits. Her inner thighs were streaked with droplets of her arousal and glistened in the candlelight. The drones quickly left, and Melisandre smiled at him.

"Thank you, My Lord," she said lovingly, crawling onto the new mattress and rolling onto her back. Her knees parted wide, displaying her glistening slit. Her invitations were always obvious. It was something he greatly liked about her. Harry removed his clothes and settled between her parted legs. Soon after, the room was filled with her cries of ecstasy and raucous moans of pleasure.