

The Dread Lord of Essos

Chapter 32

Harry slapped Daemon on the back and levitated off of him. The massive, black dragon let out a loud bellow as it flew off over the vast stretch of jungle. He always cheered up whenever they visited Sothoryos.

As Harry hovered high in the air, he looked over what his drones had accomplished since their creation. Hundreds of humongous, brick kilns were lined up stretching far into the distance. Each one was spouting a billow of smoke into the air as they cooked the wood inside to create charcoal. Every day a dozen shiploads of charcoal were created and then shipped all over the world. Orders were coming in faster than he could fulfill them. With winter on its way, everyone wanted a stockpile to keep their stoves going. Firewood wasn't a problem. The dark and twisted continent had more trees than he could ever dream of cutting down. Even so, a huge stretch of the coastline had been cleared of its trees and bushes.

In their place, farms had been built which were producing food at an alarming rate. If he so chose, he could sell his food for dirt cheap and still make a massive profit. Of course, he wasn't going to do that. If someone wanted his food but couldn't pay with gold, they would have to figure out another way to obtain his goods. Harry flew away from the clouds of smoke and dropped down on one particular farm. Walking up to a row of trees, Harry knelt down and brushed his fingers over the soft leaves. His drones had been siphoning off more magic than normal. The reason was these small trees. They had been pumping them with magic the last few days, getting them to grow much faster than normal. It obviously had worked. Already they were waist-high, and within a couple of months, they would be ready to produce fruit.

It was the Iron Bank that convinced him to start another massive orchard dedicated solely to cherry trees. Cherry trees were somewhat rare and were often controlled by the powerful or wealthy. As such, very few smallfolk had access to the little, red fruit. This made them decently expensive on the open market. The Iron Bank wished to corner the market on cherry trading. They were already planning to start mass producing the cherry wines that were so popular with the Braavosi upper class. Harry had tasted them before and found them quite tasty. The biggest money-maker, however, was their plan to sun-dry thousands of tons of them in preparation for winter. It seemed that they had been keeping an eye on Harry's financial interests and actions and had seen him putting huge amounts of effort into winter preparations. Inspired by his dealings, the bank decided to get in on the action themselves. In Harry's opinion, sun-dried cherries and other fruits were a very smart idea. If properly prepared and stored, they would last for a very long time. Scurvy was a serious problem in this medieval world, especially in winter when fresh fruits were extremely scarce. Anyone cornering the market would make a fortune. Of course, that was assuming that fresh fruit wasn't going to be available.

Knowing that Harry was the largest producer of food and that his food was superior in quality, they arranged a contract with him to provide them with the little fruits. He had three months to

start delivering the goods, which should be more than enough time. Flying back up into the air, he lazily flew over to another area which was further back behind all of the farms. All of his farms had hundreds of beehives each, both to provide honey and to help with pollination. Behind all of the farms, however, Harry kept a different type of bee.

These bees were unknown to the wider world and had no name. As far as he knew, they were native to the jungles of Sothoryos, and that was a good thing too. Each bee was the size of a small bird and had a stinger close to an inch long. Harry had seen one of these bees sting a monkey, and the results were not pleasant. Almost instantly, the poor monkey dropped to the ground convulsing and bleeding from its eyes and ears. It was dead in only a few seconds. Harry had a hunch that humans wouldn't fare too much better. They were mostly dark brown in color, so dark, in fact, that they were nearly black. They were speckled with tiny, bright red spots, and unlike normal honey bees, they actually dug down and built their hives in the ground. The honey they produced had an incredibly earthy flavor that went perfectly with cooked meats. Honey-glazed hams and honey-roasted ribs were some of Harry's favorites. In fact, they were the favorite among many Nobles and the wealthy elite. Unfortunately, the bees didn't do well in overpopulated areas. They tended to attack each other's hives. That meant that the hives needed to be spread out, making the honey scarce and expensive. The only good thing was that each hive produced roughly twelve pounds of honey a month. The Iron Bank also happened to be one of his largest buyers of the honey. From what he knew, they often gave jars of it as gifts when dealing with their valued customers.

Further down the coast, his shipyard continued to pump out ship after ship. A new section of the shipyard was dedicated to producing one particular type of ship. Massive in size, the hull was reinforced with an extra layer of fire-hardened wood, then layered with a thin sheet of magically reinforced steel. These ships weren't built for speed, but for power. His new Icebreakers would hopefully keep the northern shipping routes open to him. Already the seas were icing more and more every day, making the shipping of his ores from Beyond the Wall slow and burdensome. Harry made mental notes as he moved on, inspecting all aspects of his Sothoryosi holdings. He was beginning to run out of time, as was everyone else. Unfortunately for them, they were much less prepared than he was.

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Daemon unfurled his wings and slowly came down for a landing. Harry slid off of his back before the mighty beast flapped his wings and lifted off once again. At ground level, the air was thick and pungent with toxic gasses from deep within the planet's crust. The Bubblehead Charm he was using protected his lungs and eyes from the deadly fumes. His dragon preferred to stay high up where the air was clean.

It had been a while since Harry had visited the ruined lands that were once ruled by the Valyrians. Harry had left a small contingent of his drones on Valyria to keep searching for anything worth taking. Only a handful of artifacts and gold coins had been discovered by them. Everything else had been dragged deep underground where the magic of the area made it

difficult for them to be discovered using his powers. The drones only had access to a small portion of his power, making it almost impossible to discover deeply hidden treasures. That was why he had made a return. He was looking for more Valyrian Steel, and it was unlikely that his drones would find any significant amount any time soon. Harry already had two Valyrian Steel swords that he had taken from Valyria during his first visit. His drones had found several daggers, a ring, a scepter, and a few other knick-knacks during his absence that could be smelted to create a third sword.

His ultimate plan was to have six Great Houses ruling most of Essos with his House being the royal line. Each Great House would have their very own Valyrian Steel sword. He, obviously, already had his along with the three others. That still left three more, and Harry had no intention of trying to buy them. Valyrian Steel was rare even during the time of the Valyrians, but he knew for a fact that there were still some swords buried somewhere in that cursed land. All he had to do was find them. Rolling up his sleeves, Harry got to work.

Going to the few abandoned towns and cities that he failed to visit before, Harry levitated high off the ground and closed his eyes. Concentrating deeply, he released a pulse of magic that expanded in every direction. He could feel the different tingles in his body as some of the magic reflected back at him, much like a sonar. Not feeling anything noteworthy, he moved a bit further away and did it again. Once again, he felt nothing. Continuing to do this, it was over an hour later that he finally felt something. Using a lot of power, he summoned the object from deep below. Hot dirt and stones rained down on him as something large was violently ripped from the ground. With only a thought, he cooled, then cleaned it before holding it up to his face. Looking back at him was the face of some ancient Dragonlord that Harry had never seen.

The large, metal bust was quite heavy. In fact, he wouldn't be surprised if he could get three bastard swords from the bust alone. Had the piece of art been different, Harry possibly would have kept it for his own. However, he didn't see much beauty in it and wasn't opposed to smelting it down. Even so, he continued searching for a while to make sure that he had enough.

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Sansa yawned as her tired eyes fluttered open. She could feel the cool air tickling her warm cheeks, and she instinctively snuggled deeper into the covers. After a few moments of lying there without much thought, she suddenly remembered what had happened. Her boat was attacked by some horrible beast, and her savior had swooped down and rescued her ... like a prince rescuing a princess, she thought to herself as her face began to heat up. Sansa squealed and turned on her side, hiding her embarrassed face in the pillow.

She couldn't help her reaction though. She had already possessed quite the crush on the handsome, young man from when he rescued her from King's Landing. When her brother suggested that their mother should travel to Seven Swords to negotiate between their respective houses, Sansa, of course, demanded that she should go as well. She already knew him after all. She could be of use. At least that was what she had told her mother. Still not

wanting to let her go, Sansa had no choice but to confess that she wanted to see if she could spark some romantic interest between them. He had everything that they could ever desire. He had mountains of gold, political power, military power, trading partners spread out across the entire planet, and of course, a mammoth dragon that could easily burn their enemies to ash. Sansa didn't really care about all that though. She wasn't going by what her brain was telling her. Instead, she was following the throbbing need that she was feeling between her legs. Just thinking about him made her wet. Often she would be forced to find some privacy so that she could tend to her needs. When her mother discovered why she really wanted to go, she eventually caved to her pressure.

Finally awake enough to function properly, Sansa whipped the goose-down blanket off of her body and stood up. Raising her arms high above her head, she yawned and stretched her back. She heard a few pops and released a soft groan of relief. Taking a moment to look around, she saw that the room the servant girl had escorted her to was very large and luxurious. None of the rooms that she had ever stayed in even came close to comparing to the opulence of this one. Beautiful art hung on the pearly-white walls. The furniture looked as though it could be sold to feed all of Winterfell for a month. Even the curtains looked more expensive than any dress Queen Cersei had ever owned. Skipping over to them, she pulled them aside revealing a set of double doors that opened to a massive balcony. Peeking through, she saw only clear, blue skies instead of the gray, rainy weather from the day before. Pushing them open, she suddenly shivered when a gust of cool, ocean wind hit her. Instantly, her nipples hardened underneath her sleeping gown. Her skin goosebumped, and she began rubbing her arms to keep warm as she looked over the edge of the balcony.

"Quite the sight ... Isn't it?" a manly voice made her jump. Sansa spun around so fast that she nearly slipped. A hand reached out and gripped her arm, holding her steady. Tilting her head upward, she set her eyes on the tall, handsome man in front of her. Harold was looking down at her with a cute smile on his beautiful face. Sansa's cheeks turned pink as the wind whipped through her long, thick hair that was the color of burnt copper. As her deep, blue eyes met his bright, emerald green ones, she felt the familiar stirring deep in her lower belly. Certain parts began throbbing and became overly sensitive. Subtly, she pressed her thighs together as she breathed deeply.

"My Lord!" she gasped as her body shivered. Sansa had never felt so embarrassed in her life. She had just woken up. Her hair was a complete mess, she wasn't dressed, and she wasn't wearing any of the makeup that she had brought along. That was when she remembered that all of her possessions were at the bottom of the Narrow Sea. She quickly turned to face away from him, not wanting him to see her in such a state. She heard him chuckle softly and merrily.

"Am I so unsightly that you feel the urge to hide away?" he teased.

"N-No! Of course not, My Lord! B-But I'm not dressed for visitors," she told him.

"Ah, yes. You must forgive me for intruding, my dear. But I must say that even now, I can barely take my eyes off of you," Harry flirted. Sansa shuddered as her womanhood throbbed wildly. She was surprised that she nearly orgasmed right then and there. Her body had never reacted in such a way. She very much hoped that he didn't notice that she was rubbing her thighs together as beads of arousal rolled down her legs. Before she could say anything in response, he continued. "A servant is bringing you clothes and other products that a Lady such as yourself might need, along with your breakfast. Your mother is being treated likewise. When you are both done eating and are dressed, my advisor, Melisandre, will escort you into the city to replace everything that you lost while at sea," he told her. "I, of course, will be covering the bill," he promised.

"Thank you, My Lord. That is very generous," Sansa said, suddenly feeling a bit more confident after his compliments.

"I have business to attend to today, so I will not have the pleasure of seeing you until later tonight. Perhaps you, your mother, and I can have a private dinner. I'm sure we have things to discuss," Harry told her.

"I would like that, My Lord," Sansa said, her heart beating rapidly in her chest.

"Please, Sansa ... Call me, Harold," he said and smiled sexily at her as she peeked at him out of the corner of her eye. Sansa swallowed hard.

"O-Of course ... Harold."

"Now if you will excuse me." With that, she watched Harry leave her room. Several female servants walked in only a moment later carrying everything that she would need to get ready for the day.

While she and Catelyn ate and got ready for their outing, Harry escorted his uncle around the city, showing him exactly what made it the preferred destination for so many people.

"Once you're there, you'll need to survey the entire city and make notes of what's needed. I haven't looked into the city's infrastructure since taking over," Harry said as they walked through the streets and lanes of the Housing District.

"I think the sewer system is the most important," Tyrion replied. "I do not wish for it to become another King's Landing."

"Very true," Harry told him. "Beyond the wretched smell, untreated sewage is a breeding ground for diseases. Cities bigger and more prosperous than Volantis have been taken down from within by poor sewage management. King's Landing is an accident waiting to happen."

“The hard part will be figuring out how to pay for it. The ending of slavery has taken a portion of the city’s income away. New monetary avenues will need to be created. I’m sure that you’ll figure something out,” Harry slapped him on the back. “However, I do have a suggestion if you wish to hear it.”

“Of course, Nephew,” Tyrion looked at him.

“While I am the leading provider of fresh foods, I actually have very few fisheries, and those are all in the deep North. As a gift, I will provide you with one hundred fishing vessels and one hundred trade ships. The waters between Volantis and the Summer Isles are ripe with seafood, and very few actually fish the area due to its distance. Besides providing this part of the world with fresh fish, have your people learn how to dry fish, then you’ll have a useful commodity once winter hits. Dried fish usually lasts around twelve months before it spoils. The ice likely won’t make it this far south, so you can continue fishing even after winter hits. The only kingdom in Westeros that fishes on a large scale is the Iron Islands, and they’ll have their own problems this winter. They won’t be able to provide anyone with food. That gives you a great opportunity to deal with Dorne, the Reach, and the Crownlands. In fact, you’re more than welcome to ship some of that over here. Lobster, crab, and shrimp are in high demand here in the city.”

“That is a splendid idea, and it actually gives me some more ideas. You see I ...” Tyrion began chatting and didn’t shut up until they made it back to the castle. Harry would be dropping him off in a few days, and he wanted to be sure that his sword would be ready in time. Once he was done with Tyrion, he went to check in on the sword.

One of the many shops that had sprung up in the King’s Garden was an upscale blacksmith shop owned by a Qohorik metalsmith. Smiths from Qohor were known for their ability to work with Dragonsteel, and while Harry could have done it himself, he preferred letting someone else have a go at it. It provided jobs and helped circulate money through the city. “Master Poff,” Harry greeted the man as he strolled through the shop’s door.

Morto Poff was a short man with well-built arms. On his mostly bald head were wisps of snowy-white hair. His face and arms were marked with dark spots from old age. They greeted each other in the front of the shop where all of the displays were showing off various pieces of armor and swords that Harry was sure would cost a pretty penny. From the back of the shop, Harry heard the clanging of hammer on metal as Master Poff’s apprentice worked tirelessly to hone his craft. “Your Grace!” he declared, bowing deeply.

“I’m here to discuss the progress of the sword,” Harry told him, strolling through the shop and examining the different wares that were on sale.

“All is well, Your Grace. If the Black Goat wills it, it will be finished by midday tomorrow,” he said. Harry nodded. He really wasn’t sure about these Qohorik fellows. They worshiped the Black Goat of Qohor and made daily blood sacrifices. There was no doubt that Harry would find an altar of some kind in the back if he ever decided to check. As long as they only sacrificed birds

and rats, he was fine with it. If any of his citizens ended up on the chopping block, Harry would put an end to their religion in his city very quickly. As King, Harry needed to keep an eye out for such behavior. Essos was a crazy place after all and was filled with very weird people with strange customs. He wouldn't allow some of the stranger ones to creep into his city's culture.

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Catelyn Stark nibbled on her food as she looked back and forth between the other pair at the table. Her daughter, Sansa, looked gorgeous in her stunning new dress that King Harold had so graciously paid for. She too was wearing a beautiful dress, though it was less revealing than her daughter's. When Sansa begged to be able to buy some of the dresses that the high-class women of this city wore, she was hesitant to agree. They had high slits up the sides which showed off nearly all of their bare legs. The front dipped so low that she was afraid that Sansa's breasts might fall out. In the end, she agreed, if only to practically guarantee a match between the young couple. Having them together would be a great boon to her family. At least that was what she thought upon first coming here. Then she saw the bitch Cersei Lannister and that vapid whore, Alerie Tyrell, both eyeing him up like a piece of succulent meat. Then, Alerie's daughter was at his side, rubbing her chest against his arm as she seductively whispered in his ear. Princess Myrcella's eyes practically never left him, and from the look of longing that she often threw his way, Catelyn knew that it was only a matter of time before she made a move on him.

Of course, there was the dusky-skinned beauty that followed his every direction. Catelyn wondered how many times he had taken her to bed. There was the Targaryen girl that looked as though she might pin him on the lunch table and fuck him as though there was no tomorrow. The worst one was the Red Temptress. Her sultry body practically spilled from her tight dress, and every word that left her plump, red lips was sexually enthralling. Her gut twisted at the thought that her daughter would have some serious competition here. Even so, she seemed to be doing a good job. The young King kept his eyes glued to hers, and as she talked, his gaze would sometimes lower to the valley between her supple breasts. Harold admitted that tonight was just a dinner so that the three of them could get to know one another before they began negotiating in the coming days. She agreed that it was a smart idea. From the corner of her eye, she saw Sansa lick her upper lip in an enticing manner. Catelyn held back a smirk. It appeared that Sansa was putting the training that she had given her to good use. She laughed merrily with light glistening in her big, beautiful eyes, and she reached across the table and placed her hand on his forearm. Her thin fingers irresistibly brushed down the length of his arm as she took her hand away.

Sansa was doing a good job, but as her mother, she needed to make sure that it wasn't all for not. Perhaps she would knock on his door later this evening to discuss a few things away from Sansa's ears. Negotiations between his city and the North could wait. Right now, the most important thing to her was to ensure that her daughter ... and her family in general, was in the best possible position. With the war raging back home, there was no guarantee that the Starks would remain a Great House of Westeros. They needed a backup plan. They needed someone

with power on their side. Again she looked at the young couple. She was willing to do anything to keep her and her children safe. 'Family, Duty, Honor,' she thought to herself as she bit down on the juicy piece of steak and moaned from the delicious taste.