

The Dread Lord of Essos

Chapter 15

As they silently made their way to the Tower of the Hand in the Red Keep, they stopped outside the door. Inside they could hear the yelling of a spoiled brat.

"He is here at my request," they heard Tywin say.

"I know why he is here," snarled Joffrey. "He came here so I can legitimize him. He's tired of the ridicule of being a bastard. Well he can remain a bastard for all I care!"

Harry rolled his eyes and pushed open the door. Everyone in the room looked over as he and Jaime walked in. Tywin immediately stood up, as did his Aunt Cersei.

"Jaime!" she happily cried out, stepping around her son and hugging her twin brother tightly.

"We've returned, grandfather," Harry declared as he watched Joffrey sneer and kick his feet up onto Tywin's desk. Harry kicked his feet and sent his chair tumbling backward.

"AHHH!" Joffrey yelled as he hit the floor hard and rolled out of the chair.

"Show some respect, boy," Harry glared at him. "And for the record, I couldn't give two shits about being legitimized. Personally, I enjoy being a bastard. There are no obligations or rules I must follow. I'm free to live my life as I see fit. I especially enjoy it when highborn shits like you are groveling at my feet," Harry smirked, looking down at the boy who scrambled to his feet.

"Enough! Both of you," Tywin glared, which was enough to keep Joffrey from talking. Harry didn't care one way or another. He turned to his son.

"I'm glad to see you safely home, Jaime," he said. "Go get cleaned up, and I will speak with you later. I need to speak with your son in privacy," he told them, leaving no room for argument. Jaime nodded while he quickly left the room with Cersei right behind him. Joffrey sent him one last sneer before stomping out of the room, rubbing the back of his sore head.

"Must you enrage him so?" Tywin asked when the door slammed shut.

"He has a madness that goes unchecked. It will only lead him to ruin," Harry responded, sitting opposite his grandfather with the large desk between them.

"Yes, but he is the King. There is nothing to be done about it."

Harry simply shrugged, not really caring either way.

“What I really wish to speak to you about is this dragon. How did you come by it?” he asked eagerly. If the Lannisters could become the new Dragonlords of Westeros and Essos, the whole world could be brought to heel.

“I came across it while exploring the Ruins of Valyria. It was the only one I found,” he quickly said, already knowing what his grandfather wanted. The old man showed no disappointment on his face.

“And how did you become its rider?”

“I found a way to hatch it, deep in the jungles of Sothoryos. I would not recommend going there.” It technically wasn’t a lie. “After that, I raised it off the Sothoryan coast until it was big enough to ride. The free space to fly and hunt made Daemon grow fast and large, as I’m sure you can see.”

“With you and the beast in our ranks, we ...” Harry stopped him right there.

“I have no plans to fight for Joffrey.”

“You will turn your back on your family?” he asked, clearly challenging him.

“Any kin of mine is welcome in my kingdom. If they need protection from the war, I will provide it, but I will not waste my time on a war that was started by a spoiled child pretending to be King.” Harry clearly stated.

“I have my own kingdom and my own subjects to protect. Besides, as I’m sure you remember, I’m not actually a Lannister,” Harry smiled knowingly. The fact that he was a bastard had been used against him since he was very young. Now it benefited him. His grandfather could see that his opinion wasn’t going to change at the moment. He would work on him at a later time. He decided to change the subject.

“I spoke with my daughter,” he suddenly said.

“Oh?” Harry guessed that she had talked to him about their conversation. He was proven right a moment later.

“How did you find out about the mines?” he scowled

“As I told Cersei, I own many taverns, inns, and warehouses all throughout the Westerlands. People talk. You have done a good job keeping anyone from knowing. No one knows all ... each only a small piece. I, however, was smart enough to put all of the pieces together. Was I correct to assume that you won’t be handing over five million Dragons to get him off the hook?”

His grandfather had a sour look on his face. “I have not decided.”

'That means no,' Harry smirked internally.

"The real shame is that Joffrey has already spent half a million of the borrowed money to redecorate the Throne Room. That gold would have been better spent on the war ... or anything really." Harry knew that his grandfather had no idea about this. He found out earlier when one of his spies relayed the message to one of Harry's drones hiding deep in Flea Bottom. Harry could see only the smallest twitch on the old man's face. He definitely wasn't pleased.

"Indeed it would have," was all he could say. Clearing his throat, he went on.

"Speaking of wealth ... I assume you found the Valyrian Steel armor and sword with the egg?"

"I did. I have another set of Valyrian Steel armor that I use for battle, but I left it back at Summerstone," he told the truth.

"Summerstone?" he asked, raising an eyebrow.

"The name the locals have taken to calling my castle. The castle is blinding white, but during sunsets, the waning light makes the castle and its walls burn bright like the summer sun," Harry smiled, thinking about the beauty of his castle and the surrounding land.

"I see ... I would very much like to see this castle, Harold."

When his grandfather requested anything, it was as good as an order. Harry didn't mind if they visited though.

"You and the family are always welcome, grandfather," he told him.

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Harry wrinkled his nose as he walked the festering shithole that was Flea Bottom. Shithole was an adequate term, he decided. All along the bends and lanes, rivers of shit and piss flowed freely. Even during the best of times, the slums of King's Landing were absolutely disgusting. Now that times had turned bad, the atmosphere of the slum turned rancid along with it.

With the blockade orchestrated by Mace Tyrell, the city was quickly running out of food. Famine was taking over, and the evils within only got worse. Murder and rape were on the rise, as was theft. The Gold Cloaks barely even tried to stop it. They knew that the city was a powder keg waiting to go off. None of them wanted to be the first dragged off of their horse and beaten by an angry mob. Judging by the looks he was receiving, the smallfolk thought very little about their Lords or Ladies right then. Harry couldn't say that he blamed them.

Harry was forced to use magic so that his horse's hooves never actually touched the ground. If they did, he would find himself shin deep in human shit and animal entrails. Just breathing in the air was vomit-inducing. Looking to the right, he saw a whore's severed head rotting away, half-buried in a pile of horse dung. To the left, a child was squatting and relieving himself right there in front of everyone. No one paid him any mind. Everyone was looking at him. That didn't surprise him in the least. It wasn't often a man of his stature visited the slum, especially decked out in his beautiful and shining armor. It wasn't long before a half-crazed man ran at him with a knife, hoping to kill him and take his money sack.

All he received was a boot to the face. He fell back unconscious and landed on his side. Within seconds, people were ripping at him, taking whatever he had that held any value. Harry simply carried on. It was sad to see the smallfolk like this. This was why he promised that his city would be the cleanest in all of Planetos. Shaking his head, he went back to the Red Keep. Not long after, he met up with his family for lunch.

"Things are getting bad out there," Harry said, sitting down at the table as a serving wench put a plate of beef stew in front of him. Of course, they still had delicious, fresh food. None of them cared much about the state of the smallfolk as long as their bellies were full, and the children didn't even know what was going on out there. All for the better, in his opinion. With his perfect hearing, at night he could hear the angry screams of the unruly mob from the open window of his room. The sounds of hatred and rage were creeping closer to the Red Keep with every passing day. At the very least, he wouldn't let anything happen to Myrcella and Tommen.

"What do you mean, Harold?" Tyrion asked as he swigged down a mouthful of wine.

"The smallfolk. It won't be long until the angry mob turns violent," he honestly told them.

"Who gives a shit about them? They are worms and will do as I command ... or they will lose their heads," Joffrey smiled evilly. Harry rolled his eyes.

"They outnumber you and the City Watch five-thousand to one. If they turn on you, nothing you can do will stop them," Harry said, spooning some stew into his mouth.

"Is it truly that bad?" his father asked. It had been a couple of weeks since he had brought him back home. Since then, he had been off-duty, trying to gain his strength back after being starved for so long.

"They are starving. Reports of cannibalism have even reached my ears. If the famine isn't bad enough, the Bloody Flux has begun spreading through the cesspools of Pisswater Bend. Soon, most of the city could be infected."

The Bloody Flux was known as Pale Mare in Essos, but from Harry's original world, it was simply called dysentery. It came from living in the incredibly unclean manner that they did. While treatable in First World countries on Earth, these people he was now living with didn't have the

medical expertise to handle it. Because of that, the mortality rate was very high. It was considered the bane of every army that had ever existed in this world. Estimates were that it sometimes killed three out of every four soldiers that were unlucky enough to contract it. It would even wipe out entire battalions.

“Why haven’t I heard of this from the Gold Cloaks?” Jaime asked, confused.

“They refuse to enter Flea Bottom any more. They are just as scared as the smallfolk ... but for different reasons, of course.”

Myrcella and Tommen both looked frightened while Cersei tried her best to keep them calm.

“What can be done about it?” Tyrion asked, putting down his cup.

“There is little to be done,” Tywin joined in, giving his deformed son a look of contempt. Of course, he knew about the situation. He didn’t like getting caught with his pants down. “Mace Tyrell will not provide his enemies with food and is actively blocking the Roseroad. No other Kingdom can or will provide the food and supplies we need.”

“Soon, riots will break out if nothing is done. I would suggest having Cersei and my cousins take a ship to Casterly Rock where they will be safe. Of course, Joffrey will need to remain here where he can lead us all with his bright mind and military expertise,” Harry tried hard not to crack a smile. He heard a snort from his dwarf uncle. Cersei threw him a dirty look. To be honest, it was no more loathful than the normal looks she gave him.

“I will not throw my son to the wolves!” she glared at Harry.

“If he leaves and the smallfolk storm the Red Keep, it is likely your family will lose the throne. If he stays ...” Harry simply let his comment stand. As if on cue, they heard the loud, deep blare of the emergency horn through the open window. The family hurried to it and looked out.

“There’s a fire in the distance ... near the Great Sept,” Jaime said, looking over his father’s shoulder. Harry didn’t bother getting up. He didn’t care all that much. Instead, he enjoyed his warm stew. It wasn’t nearly as good as the food back home, but he had drones cooking their meals who used the recipes in Harry’s head. “I need to speak with the Kingsguard so we can help,” he declared, turning to leave.

“You’ll do no such thing! You’ll be killed,” she hissed. After that, Harry ignored their arguing until he was done eating. Once finished, he stood up and stretched. He was about to go back to his room and put on his armor. He had business in town and didn’t feel like taking a knife to the back.

“Where are you going?” his father asked. It didn’t look as if he was too concerned. He knew that Harry could handle himself.

“Out there,” he answered, jerking his thumb toward the window.

“To help fight the fire?” he asked, raising an eyebrow. Harry snorted.

“Heavens no,” he chuckled. “I couldn’t care less about that. I do have quite a few businesses in the city that I’d prefer not to see burn though, and I have people to meet.” With that, he left them behind and went to his room.

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“You need not worry,” Harry told the group of Madams that were sitting around the room during their meeting. He was meeting with the Heads of all of his businesses and reassuring them that he had their best interests in mind.

“I’ll see a steady supply of fresh vegetables, fruit, and meat make their way to you. You and all of the girls will remain fed. They instantly looked relieved. They still had plenty of food, but they saw how bad things were getting.

“Can you tell me what happened to Joslyn, My Lord?” one of the Madams asked.

“Joslyn?” Harry asked, not knowing most of the prostitutes that he employed.

“The Gold Cloaks came by and hired her. They claimed she was to provide service to the King last night. She should have been back by now,” the older woman said, clearly worried. Harry sighed.

“I’ll see what has become of her,” he promised. “In the meantime, return to your posts. If things become dangerous, bar your doors. No one will be able to enter. They are special, reinforced doors which are very hard to break down,” he explained. They all nodded and got up. Now he just needed to figure out where the girl was. Finding a hidden place to Apparate, he disappeared and went back to the Red Keep.

Going invisible, he went into Joffrey’s room expecting the worst. However, he found the boy laying in bed, clearly under the weather. Harry looked into his mind to find out what he did last night. As it turned out, he felt ill and went to sleep early. The girl definitely wasn’t here. Leaving him, he then went down to the Barracks underneath the Tower of the Hand. Remaining invisible, he looked over the group of men that were still in there. Not seeing her, he then checked the room of Commander Janos Slynt. It was here he found the woman. Resting on the bed completely nude and reading a book, the girl didn’t appear to be in any distress. As he did with Joffrey, he looked into her mind. What he saw annoyed him greatly.

The girl was taking bribes and reporting on what was going on in his brothel. Because the girl was such good friends with the Madam, she was privy to information that only she and Harry knew. Joslyn then passed that information on to Slynt.

Harry knew about Janos Slynt. The man was as corrupt as they came. Not only that, but Harry was sure that he was dealing with Petyr Baelish as well. He needed to look into this further, but first, he needed to deal with the whore. Going visible, the girl immediately reared back and dropped her book. Harry held out his hand and summoned her to him. She screamed as she floated through the air until her neck was securely in his grip.

“You made a terrible choice when you betrayed me, girl,” he told her before holding a finger to the side of her head. His finger glowed with light as she went limp. Placing compulsions in her mind, he made sure that she would never tell them the truth ever again. The best part was that with a single command, she would kill Slynt or anyone else he desired. He normally didn’t like messing with people’s minds, but in her case, he made an exception. Setting her feet back on the floor, she walked back to the bed, grabbed her book, and got back in her previous position, not caring that Harry was watching her. With a nod, he went invisible again and went to look for Baelish.

The little weasel wasn’t hard to find. He was hiding out in one of his many brothels, having a delicious meal while everyone around him was half-starved. ‘What a great fucking Master of Coin,’ Harry thought as looked through his head. Not really caring about any of his plots or schemes, he only looked for information regarding him. Baelish found it difficult to place spies in Seven Swords, and as such, he knew very little about Harry beyond what everyone else knew. Joslyn was being used to fill in those gaps, along with handing over any other information that she came across from her clients. The girl also filled him in on the goings-on in the brothel that she worked at.

Baelish knew that Harry had money, but how much was a mystery to him. If there was one thing that he loved, it was money and power. He was already draining the Crown dry by siphoning off large amounts of gold, but now he had eyes for Harry’s fortune. How he could go about getting some of it, he hadn’t yet come up with a plan. He was already thinking about kissing up to his father and grandfather so that they could put in a good word about him. Maybe Harry would end up investing money into his businesses. Of course, Harry would never see any profits ... or his original investment again if Petyr had his way. Smirking, Harry thought of a way to repay Baelish’s kindness toward him. That would have to wait for later though. It was getting late, and he needed to have dinner with his family.