

The Dread Lord of Essos

Chapter 74

Further up the side of the steep, unforgiving canyon, they reached an ancient courtyard. The courtyard was vast and surrounded by dark, eerie structures that menacingly loomed over them. Below their feet, broken and upturned cobbles slowed their ascent. All around them, statues hewn from greasy, black stone lay in dust-covered ruins. Some had been shattered into hundreds of pieces, while others were simply broken in half. "The air is colder here," Melisandre commented as she looked around. Clouds of mist blew from her sweet lips with every spoken word. Her pale, porcelain skin was pink and goosebumped from the cold.

"And the light wanes," Kinvara nervously added as she kept close to Harry. "I can hardly see what's ahead of us." Shadows stretched across the ground from every direction, and the only light was provided by a crescent moon partially hidden by a layer of gray clouds.

It was eerily quiet, and only the faint sound of the river could be heard far below. Harry held up his palm and conjured three orbs of light. Each one drifted up and hovered above each of their heads, providing enough light to ensure they didn't accidentally fall and break their necks on the tough terrain. The women became slightly less nervous now that they could see further than a few feet ahead of them.

The closer they got to the hulking main castle of the abandoned city, the more he felt a suffocating presence. The sensation did nothing to him. The mortal shell he wore was beyond anything the false gods of this world could inflict. The girls, however, were a different story. Melisandre and Kinvara were clearly nervous and uneasy, and he didn't blame them. Whatever was hiding in the castle didn't want him here, and the feeling was significantly more potent than what he had faced in the jungles of Leng. Harry could feel tendrils of its presence creeping through every worn crack and hiding among every shadow. He suddenly heard a rattling breath behind the broken statue of a woman in a dress that bared one of her breasts.

"What was that?" Melisandre asked, sounding slightly panicked. Both girls edged closer to him and searched for the source of the disturbing noise. The unsettling rattling sound seemed to be coming from all around them. Their hearts began pounding even faster than they already were. Melisandre harshly swallowed the lump in her throat while Kinvara's clammy hands trembled. Melisandre then gasped and jumped, pointing to a massive statue ahead of them. "Did you see that?" she quietly asked them. "Something moved within the shadow."

Harry had seen it, too, so he pulled out his sword, and the black metal of the blade glowed orange. Within the Valyrian steel, swirls of orange, red, and white churned like a pit of magma waiting to burst free of the planet's crust. He pointed the tip of his sword to the overcast sky and held it high over his head. He focused within and pushed all his power and might into it. The area surrounding the blade grew gray and colorless before darkening to pitch black. The orange glowing blade suddenly erupted into a blinding white radiance that sliced through the unnatural

darkness and illuminated the entire area. Screeches of agony assaulted their ears from every direction. Just ahead of them, a humanoid, shadowy shape, standing roughly twelve feet in height, stumbled into the light. As it did, the translucency became solid, and its unfocused edges became crisp. The spectre before them was something he recognized and knew well. He had faced the wraiths as a human child and knew it to be amongst the most foul dark creatures in existence. It hovered above the ground, writhing and twisting as its bony, skeletal hands desperately tried to shield it from the pure light of his sword. Its tattered, black robe fluttered and snapped in the stiff wind of the canyon, and the air carried the scent of a rotting corpse. Desperation set in, and the creature charged. Hovering above the ground, it rocketed toward the group, its death rattle sending shivers down the girls' spines. Mere feet away, it lowered its hood. Two empty eye sockets stared back at them, and Kinvara squealed in disgust when a fat, deformed cockroach crawled out of one of the sockets and skittered across its face. Its slimy, gray skin was stretched thin across a misshapen skull, like that of a decomposing corpse, and when it rattled again, a foul glob of greasy sludge dripped from its chin. Where the mouth should have been was a gaping hole ... an endless, black void used to devour the soul. It screeched in pain and anger, stretching its long, thin arms toward him. The flesh covering the bones of its hands was also covered in gray, scabby skin that was stretched way too thin. The horrific stink grew much stronger as it neared. Harry returned the favor and lifted his hand.

He stretched out his arm, and out of his palm burst a bright, silvery light. The light nearly blinded them all, but none more so than the Dementor itself. It let out a dreadful wail and turned its head, desperately trying to avoid looking directly into the silvery light. The radiant light formed into a charging, translucent stag, standing equal in height to the Dementor, and after three long strides, it lowered its head and attacked. The sharp rack of antlers pierced the wraith in the chest and hoisted it high into the air. The rattling scream cracked across the canyon and echoed off the many stone walls. It was so loud and unsettling that the girls had to cover their ears. Writhing in the air, the Dementor clawed and kicked at the Patronus, but its decaying hands seemed to pass right through. It violently thrashed as the stag swung its head back and forth, driving its antlers deep into its chest and gut.

Behind them, he heard another furious screech. Harry turned and swung his sword just as another Dementor reached for his neck. Harry's glowing white sword cleaved it in half from shoulder to hip. The top half tumbled forward and came to rest on top of his boots, smoking from within the dark robe. Harry kicked it away right before he heard the girls scream.

On their other side, a Dementor had grabbed Kinvara by the hair and was pulling her back. Its hood was lowered, and it was twisting her body around to administer its evil kiss. Harry flung his sword, and it whizzed by Kinvara's head with no room to spare. The tip of his blade entered the rotting, circular mouth and exploded out the back. A disgusting gurgling noise emanated from the creature, and its head began rapidly vibrating. Melisandre and Kinvara squealed and quickly moved away when acrid, foul-smelling smoke poured from the dark depths beneath its hood.

A hand grabbed Harry from behind, and he grabbed the bony wrist and ducked under it while moving aside, twisting it in the process. The Dementor cried out as the bones in its shoulder

loudly popped. Harry's sword appeared in his hand, and with a powerful swipe, he cleaved the arm clean off. As the severed arm dropped to the ground, the Dementor threw its head back and howled at the sky, leaving its chest unprotected. Harry responded by driving his sword straight through. Like a hot knife through butter, it effortlessly pierced its flesh and sliced through bone. A spartan kick from Harry sent the Dementor tumbling backward, where it hit a statue with bone-breaking force. More Dementors swooped down, and the girls huddled together, shivering from the numbing cold.

As they dove down on them, Harry hacked and slashed at them, cutting limbs and slicing heads, sending them rolling across the ground. He saw Melisandre trying to fight through the mental effects of the Dementors as she raised her hand. Unfortunately, she couldn't focus, and the small ball of fire in her hand quickly disappeared. Luckily for them, Harry didn't need their help. He was having the time of his life, twirling his blade and separating limb from body.

Suddenly, from the castle above, a thick, gray mist began creeping down toward them, and the air became bone-chilling. The crippling and overwhelming feeling of despair and emptiness settled over them, though he was unable to feel it. Harry's Patronus finished goring the Dementor and faded away, letting the dead creature drop to the ground. Beside him, the Dementors had taken their toll on the women. Both were shivering and trembling, their eyes wide with shock and fear. A swarm of hundreds of Dementors flooded from the castle, intent on avenging their fallen brethren. Then, from the top of the canyon, Daemon dove down. Its mighty maw opened wide, and a spark of fire ignited in the back of his massive throat.

Out of the impenetrable darkness, a lance of swirling fire, as thick as a Sothoryosian oak, erupted. It descended upon the wraith swarm, setting their tattered hooded cloaks ablaze. The sudden burst of orange light and intense heat in the pitch-black sky could be felt by them below. High above them, hundreds of agonized screeches filled the otherwise silent air, but even that was drowned by the booming roar of a furious dragon. The blazing Dementors scattered as Daemon swooped by, raking them with his sword-length claws and knocking some out of the sky, but even the monstrous dragon couldn't keep all from charging them.

Harry turned his hand over, and in the middle of his palm, the tiniest of sparks quickly grew into an undulating ball of fury. He flung it toward the charging Dementors and watched the ball of fire swell and twist into a flaming bird almost as large as Daemon. Fiendfyre was notoriously difficult to control, and a fiery creature of that size would have instantly turned on any normal human. Luckily, Harry had a will stronger than Valyrian Steel.

The giant bird roared with unbridled rage, and the ground beneath their feet trembled. It soared through the sky, scorching anything in its path. The Dementors nearest the Fiendfyre scattered, trying to avoid the cursed flames, but not all could get out of its way. Its two massive wings beat down on dozens of them, instantly turning them to ash while its flaming beak opened and swallowed many whole. Daemon wasn't done yet either. He continued to circle overhead, breathing fire on the swarm and sending them into a panicked frenzy. The panic made it easy for the Fiendfyre to feast. Dozens of burning Dementors dropped from the sky, while the

swooping firebird completely devoured others. At some point, the Dementors had finally had enough and changed direction. They flew away from Harry and his group and tried to retreat back into the castle, but the Fiendfyre blocked their path. They screeched in panic and drifted up and over the wall of the canyon while Daemon continued to breathe a jet of dragonfire at them. The rock wall of the canyon glowed orange from the constant torrent of fire, and several massive chunks of rock broke free and knocked some blazing Dementors out of the sky. It was quite the sight, Harry had to admit.

As they got further and further away, their panicked screeches eventually quieted, and Daemon flew a circle above them, making sure they didn't return. The Fiendfyre dove down, consuming the fallen Dementors in its flames, and when there was nothing left, it turned on Harry.

The firebird roared at him, its fury palpable. It shot through the sky and turned its wrath on him. In striking distance, it opened its beak, and just before it could swallow them, Harry waved his hand. "Begone!" he ordered with authority, and the bird screeched in rage as the cursed flames were snuffed.

All around them were the charred remnants of hundreds of wraiths, their cloaks smoking and their burnt skin sizzling. The stench was unbearable, and Harry wrinkled his nose. Beside him, both girls retched from the nauseating smell. Not a single Dementor could be seen flying around. He was unsure where the rest had gone, but he was certain they wouldn't return any time soon. With the Dementors gone, the unnatural chill quickly dissipated, and the rocks and stone walls that were glowing red with heat actually made the area feel relatively warm. The stifling feeling of despair also left with them, and when he turned to the girls, he saw that they were no longer trembling. However, they were still in shock, and he knew it wouldn't be smart to continue until they had time to rest and regroup. He whistled loudly, which snapped them out of their shock. They looked at him, waiting for his orders. He smiled handsomely at them and wrapped an arm around each of their waists while Daemon flew down and landed in the middle of the courtyard, crushing several statues as he did. Melisandre and Kinvara pressed tightly against him, and he lovingly rubbed their backs. "Let's go to camp," he told them. They both nodded and let go of him. He helped them onto the back of Daemon, and they flew down to the bank of the Ash.

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"What were those things?" Kinvara asked as she sipped her cup of tea. They were sitting close to a blazing campfire to keep warm. When she set her teacup back onto the saucer, Harry heard the ceramic rattling as her hand shook.

"Cursed wraiths," Harry told them, sipping his own cup of tea. His hands were as steady as they ever were. "As a child, I knew them as Dementors. They can be ... unpleasant to deal with," he said, trying to find the right word.

"I felt such hopelessness in their presence," Melisandre shivered as she clutched her hot cup between her palms. Harry placed his hand on her knee and rubbed her thigh.

"They feed on human happiness. It's almost as though they suck it from the air," he explained. "Remaining in their presence for too long can lead to madness."

"I can believe it," Melisandre replied, shuddering when she remembered the horrid feeling when they were near. "Will there be more of them?" she asked, fearing the answer. Thankfully, Harry shook his head.

"No. Most were killed, and the few that survived have fled. You won't need to worry about them," he said, and the girls breathed a sigh of relief. Kinvara's unsteady hand was still slightly trembling as she brought the rim of the cup to her soft lips. Eventually, she grew annoyed with the state of her shaking and put the cup down. Harry smiled amusedly at her and chuckled.

"Don't fret, my dear. When I first met a Dementor as a child, I fainted. Your reaction to them is nothing to be ashamed of," he assured them. His kind words didn't make either of them feel better. They had both been next to worthless during the fight, and that was something neither of them could tolerate. Seeing this, Harry stood up and took Kinvara by the hand. "Come along. A warm bed is what you need right now," he told her. Kinvara smiled prettily and silently nodded as she rose to her feet. Melisandre stood as well and followed them into the large, luxurious tent.

They entered the warm, inviting interior and found a large tub in the middle of the floor. Melisandre walked over and brushed her delicate fingers along the water's surface. "It's warm."

Kinvara began stripping as soon as she heard the word warm. "A bath is just what I need right now," she told them. Melisandre nodded and began removing her clothes as well. She removed her top and bared her breasts to him. Harry helped them out by adding bubbly soap to the tub.

"Will you join us, My Lord?" Melisandre asked while bouncing her hips from side to side while trying to push her tight trousers down over her wide hips. Kinvara looked at him with a hopeful expression as she pushed her pants down her thighs.

"Do you even have to ask?" he jested as his amor disappeared from his body. Harry removed his clothes, and all three stepped into the large tub of hot water, hand in hand. Harry sat down with a groan, and his women sat on either side of him. They snuggled into his sides, and Melisandre rested her head on his shoulder while Kinvara caressed his chest with her wet hand. Harry placed a hand on each of their thighs and began slowly moving it up and down. The incredibly delicate skin of their inner thighs was slick and soapy, and both women shuddered when the sides of his hands rubbed against their pussies. They instantly opened their legs to him, tempting him to go further. Harry didn't disappoint. He dragged his fingers up the length of their slits and quickly found their hard clits. He pressed down on them, moving his fingers in a circular pattern. Melisandre and Kinvara began squirming and rubbing against him, cutely

mewling from the pleasure. The pleasure he was providing was greatly needed after dealing with those wretched creatures, the ladies thought to themselves.

Melisandre lightly nipped at his shoulder with her teeth, and her hand sank beneath the water. Her hand lowered between his legs, and her fingers firmly wrapped around his girth. Slowly, she began to move her hand up and down, stroking his length. Kinvara leaned in and pressed her naked, soapy breasts against his skin. Her lips edged closer to his, and Harry threaded his fingers through her thick, dark hair and passionately kissed her. Kinvara moaned deeply and opened her mouth. Her tongue slipped into his mouth while her hand joined Melisandre's. His impressive length provided more than enough room for both of their hands. Both of them squealed when Harry lightly pinched their clits and rolled them between his fingers. Kinvara broke the kiss and breathed heavily against his cheek while her hand worked in tandem with Melisandre's.

It wasn't long before all the negative emotions they had been feeling had completely left their bodies, and the only thing going through their minds was that they wanted more of what Harry was offering. Melisandre pushed her hips forward, pressing herself against his fingers. Harry knew exactly what she was hoping for, and he was happy to provide it. Two of his thick fingers slipped between her plump lips, and her silky folds immediately clamped down on them, contracting and fluttering the deeper he went. Melisandre let out a sexy moan, and her gorgeous eyes fluttered. It seemed that Kinvara knew what was going on below the bubbles, and she wanted some of that for herself. She grabbed Harry's hand and moved his fingers to her opening. Harry happily accommodated her and buried his fingers deep within. Like Melisandre, her pussy instantly hugged his digits, and it repeatedly squeezed and tugged on them. "You're insatiable," Harry teased the High Priestess. All Kinvara could do was moan like a whore and shudder while she bucked her hips and attempted to fuck herself on his fingers.

It only took a few minutes before both women squealed and squeezed his hands between their thighs. Harry pulled his hands from them and began soaping up their naked bodies while the squirmed and cooed in delight.

"Let's go to bed," Melisandre sultrily suggested while laying soft kisses down his neck and shoulder.

"A splendid idea," Kinvara quickly agreed while her hand continued to pump his shaft. Harry wasn't about to say no to that.

"Let's go," he told them, and they both squealed happily and stood up. Soapy water cascaded down their curvy bodies, making them smooth glisten in the soft candle light. As they stepped out of the tub, Harry snapped his fingers and dried their bodies. He watched them crawl onto the bed, their naked backsides tantalizingly swaying from side to side. Harry smiled. He was ready for his reward after a night of bravery, and eagerly crawled after them.