

G.O Thrones 131

Chapter 131: On The Way To Driftmark

"Sister, you don't have to worry about me," Rhaegar said, feeling warmth and a sense of ease from her words.

"Nonsense," Rhaenyra shot back. "You are my younger brother. If I don't worry about you, who will? Alicent?" She grabbed his ear and fiercely added, "I said all this for a reason, so remember it!"

"Of course, I won't forget," Rhaegar replied. The warmth and softness of their shared moment brought back memories, and he began to feel a hazy sleepiness overtaking him.

As he drifted off, a smile formed on his lips, and he murmured, "Sister, you and I are born of fire and blood. We have nothing to fear from treachery..."

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The night deepened over the Red Keep.

In another room, the candlelight was pushing back the darkness. A delicious meal was laid out on the round table, and two people were seated across from each other.

"Your Grace, the Prince is too cautious, and I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help," Larys said, pausing with his knife and fork mid-motion and looking down.

Alicent sat across from him, her face expressionless, her eyes cold. She sipped sweet wine from her goblet and replied flatly, "It doesn't matter. As long as he stays away from King's Landing long enough for my father to return."

Larys glanced at her and smiled slightly. "With all due respect, Prince Rhaegar is the rightful heir. Even your father's ingenuity can't sway the King's decision."

"Rhaenyra was his appointed heir as well, and she was still pulled down," Alicent countered, her tone steely. "Our goal isn't the throne but to unite all the allies we can and ensure we can defend ourselves."

As she'd told Viserys, Rhaegar was set to become heir, and there was nothing she could do to change that.

It was a source of her nightmares and fears. Rhaegar didn't want her as a stepmother and was mean to his half-brother, Aegon, undermining his confidence.

What would happen to her and her children if Viserys died?

She had considered showing weakness to ease relations with Rhaegar, but she was tired of being subservient and at the mercy of others. As queen, she had borne several princes and princesses for the kingdom and deserved high honor. She refused to live under anyone's thumb.

"Then you should join forces with the Velaryon House. They are quite influential," Larys suggested, his eyes darting. "Lady Laena has given birth to twin daughters, and your youngest son, Daeron, is four. We could propose a marriage alliance."

"Impossible," Alicent replied sharply, frowning. "The Sea Snake is a shrewd politician. We lack sufficient leverage to sway him."

"Uh..." Larys hesitated, then shrugged. "What's our next move then, Your Grace?"

His talents lay in gathering intelligence, not strategizing—unless The Queen was willing to consider more sinister tactics.

"There is no next step," Alicent said, draining her goblet and covering her forehead. "Viserys promised my father a return to King's Landing. Only then can we secure House Hightower's aid."

"The Three Daughters have shown signs of invading the Narrow Sea recently. "Maybe we can use that to our advantage," Larys added, revealing more hidden information with a sly smile.

Outside the window, a lush canopy swayed in the wind, with a bird's nest perched on top. A sparrow hopped between the branches, its beady eyes unblinking as it observed the room.

In the Dragonpit, Tormund, dressed in coarse linen, sat by a window, his pupils eerily vanished, leaving only the whites of his eyes. After a while, he blinked, and his pupils reappeared.

He looked puzzled but committed what he had seen and heard to memory. "There are traces of the Three Daughters in the Narrow Sea..." he muttered to himself.

Rhaenyra was right. There were no secrets in the big city of King's Landing, except for those within the Dragonpit, which was under Rhaegar's jurisdiction.

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Seven days later,

A loud, deep dragon roar echoed over King's Landing, drawing the attention of onlookers.

Before long, three shadows crossed the city's skyline, heading towards the harbor. The busy townsfolk looked up to see three massive dragons soaring between the clouds, their wings outstretched.

"Dragons, three of them!" they marveled.

The people of King's Landing were used to seeing dragons—after all, the king had three dragon-riding children—but it was rare to see more than one dragon at a time. Sometimes Prince Rhaegar and Princess Rhaenyra would ride together, but it was pretty unusual to see three dragons at once.

This extraordinary event was due to Rhaenyra's insistent request. Her father, King Viserys, unable to refuse her, agreed for her to accompany Rhaegar to Driftmark. Encouraged by Alicent, Viserys decided that if one dragon-rider was good, then two were even better.

On a whim, he pulled a sleeping Aegon from his bed, commanding him to join Rhaegar for the journey. This display was meant to showcase the royal family's power and their dragons' might.

It wasn't just the three siblings making the journey; Lord Lyonel Strong, the Hand of the King, had already arrived at Driftmark a day earlier, bringing a ship laden with gifts.

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The sky was a beautiful blue.

Leading the way, Rhaegar rode his dragon Cannibal, its broad black wings slicing through the white clouds like a dark meteor.

Behind him, two golden dragons followed closely. Rhaenyra, riding Syrax, wore a joyful expression, occasionally letting out cheers. Aegon, on Sunfyre, trailed far behind, his face a picture of dejection, punctuated by long sighs.

He had resigned himself to his fate. All he wanted was to stay hidden in the Red Keep, flirting with the maids and enjoying the privileges of a prince.

But his father had suddenly assigned him a mission, one that required him to accompany his elder brother to the Velaryon House—who weren't on good terms with them. He wasn't exactly thrilled about it.

Not only was Aegon reluctant, but Sunfyre also seemed equally resistant. The dragon's eyes were fixed on Cannibal ahead, and his usually agile wings were moving stiffly, as if he was afraid that the larger dragon might suddenly turn and devour him.

However, their concerns were unfounded. No one paid them any mind.

Rhaegar stood firmly on the saddle's footrests, arms outstretched, relishing the cool moisture from the crashing clouds. He glanced back at Syrax, who was struggling to keep up, and laughed heartily, proud of Cannibal's speed.

"Rhaenyra, you're too slow!" he called out, his voice filled with playful pride.

Rhaenyra, chained at the waist and only able to sit upright in her saddle, looked sideways at her brother, shouting, "Slow down, you're losing Aegon."

Aegon, far behind, could only sigh.

Rhaegar, reminded of his younger brother, signaled Cannibal to reduce speed, ensuring they didn't leave Aegon and Sunfyre too far behind. Soon, Rhaenyra caught up, and Syrax began flying alongside Cannibal.

She loved riding dragons and loved her brother Rhaegar, but she especially loved flying with him, feeling the exhilarating freedom of the skies. Rhaenyra smiled and played along, enjoying the ride.

Though it was just a formal trip, she was happy to be there.

The three dragons flew swiftly, crossing Blackwater Bay, and arrived at Driftmark just before afternoon.

Chapter 132: Vhagar

Noon.

After a long flight, the dragons finally reached Driftmark. This island was geographically closer to King's Landing than Dragonstone and had a strategic advantage over Dragonstone in controlling the Narrow Sea.

Driftmark had three main settlements: There were three main settlements: High Tide, Hull, and Spicetown. As they flew over the island, Rhaegar, Rhaenyra, and Aegon took in the sights below.

The westernmost part of the island had a castle perched on a craggy cliff, which made it easy to defend. The other two towns were located near the narrow sea and were quite busy.

Rhaegar noticed the many ships docked at the ports of these towns, a testament to their prosperity.

“Let's go, we should land at High Tide.”

The dragons flew around in the sky, their riders getting a better understanding of the island's layout before they landed. As they got closer to High Tide, they heard a loud dragon roar from below, which caught their attention.

"Roar..."

Cannibal, sensing a potential threat, let out a warning growl, its green eyes alert. Rhaegar quickly scanned the area and identified the source of the roar as a clearing next to the beach, surrounded by grassy fields.

There, a massive green dragon lay prostrate, its amber eyes fixed on the sky. Rhaegar's heart raced as he recognized the dragon: Vhagar, the last surviving dragon from the Targaryen family's early days.

Born on Dragonstone in 51 BC, Vhagar was once ridden by Visenya Targaryen, sister and queen to Aegon the Conqueror. Later, Vhagar was claimed by Rhaegar's grandfather, Baelon Targaryen, the Prince of Spring.

Most recently, Laena Velaryon became Vhagar's rider. Now, the dragon was 169 years old, a testament to its long and storied past.

Rhaegar marveled at the sight, silently acknowledging the accuracy of Larys' intelligence. Laena had indeed returned to Driftmark in secret.

"That's Vhagar? It's enormous!" Aegon exclaimed, eyes wide with shock.

Rhaenyra shot him a look of contempt. "I told you to get out more. Staying cooped up all day is making you useless."

"Roar!"

Vhagar saw the three dragons above it and twisted its massive body, roaring again to assert dominance over the territory.

"Rhaegar, let's get out of here. We shouldn't provoke this old dragon," Rhaenyra urged, her voice edged with urgency.

Everyone knew Vhagar's reputation for being bad-tempered. It was wiser to keep a safe distance.

Rhaegar nodded. "Agreed. Let's move away."

"Roar..."

Cannibal, Rhaegar's dragon, growled lowly, a deep rumble emanating from its throat, clearly harboring hostility toward Vhagar. The green dragon was older and larger than Cannibal, and it left an impression.

Cannibal's charcoal-black scales gave him a dark, intimidating look, like a dark god. In contrast, Vhagar's skin was wrinkled and sagging, its jaw hung loose, and the crown of its horns had fallen off long ago.

Despite this, Vhagar exuded an aura of power and experience.

Vhagar's body was covered in battle scars, with holes in its wing membranes from scorpion crossbows. Its cold, merciless eyes surveyed the newcomers, and it felt like an ancient war machine coming back to life.

Rhaegar could tell that Cannibal was eager for a confrontation, so he chuckled bitterly. "We're not here to fight."

Rhaegar couldn't help but feel a mix of admiration and apprehension. Vhagar had fought for House Targaryen for over a century, and its combat experience was unmatched by any other dragon.

Although Cannibal had beaten Vermithor and Silverwing, Vhagar's prowess was not to be underestimated.

If a fight were to happen, Cannibal would need to wait until he reached his full strength, which could take over a hundred years.

"Roar..."

Heeding Rhaegar's guidance, Cannibal reluctantly turned away, snorting in frustration but wisely choosing not to provoke the ancient dragon.

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Far from the beach, Rhaegar and his siblings rode their dragons towards High Tide.

The three dragons flew around the city twice before landing, which was a clear signal to the locals that the Targaryen princes and princesses had arrived.

With a resounding boom, Cannibal was the first to land, its massive body kicking up a gust of wind as it touched down in the open space near the tidal walls. Syrax and Sunfyre followed, but kept a respectful distance from Cannibal, wary of the black dragon's aggressive nature.

"Welcome, Prince and Princess," greeted a knightly dressed guard captain, stepping forward from a group of stationed guards.

"Lead the way, Ser," Rhaegar commanded, assuming his role as the eldest and heir.

"Follow me, Your Grace," the guard captain replied. With his silver hair, he appeared to be of Valyrian descent.

Rhaenyra and Aegon joined Rhaegar, following the captain. High Tide Castle, perched on a high-altitude island, required them to traverse a path of verdant stones laid over the tides.

Although the dragons could land directly in front of the castle, such an act would be seen as disrespectful to its owner. They were here to celebrate, and proper decorum was necessary.

After about ten minutes of walking up the cliffside path, the stone archway of High Tide Castle appeared before them.

"This way, please, Prince and Princess," the guard captain said, leading them through the archway into a lush, open garden.

The castle stood tall and proud, facing the stone archway.

As they stepped through the door, they heard the clash swords. Rhaegar glanced over to see two men engaged in a sword fight in the garden.

One of them, with dark skin and silver hair, Rhaegar recognized him. It was Laenor Velaryon, the eldest son of the Sea Snake, a cousin who had always been fond of him.

As the group passed through the archway, Laenor saw them. He wiped the sweat from his brow and called for a truce, then approached with a warm smile.

"Rhaegar, Rhaenyra, Aegon, welcome to Driftmark," Laenor greeted them, sheathing his sword gracefully.

"It's been too long, cousin," Rhaegar replied with a warm smile, returning the gesture.

At that moment, the castle gates swung open, revealing a man bearing a striking resemblance to the Sea Snake, accompanied by a silver-haired, dark-skinned butler.

Rhaenyra leaned in close to Rhaegar's ear, whispering, "That's Vaemond Velaryon, the Sea Snake's younger brother and Laenor's uncle."

Nodding in acknowledgment, Rhaegar focused his attention on Vaemond. With a dignified bearing and an air of arrogance, Vaemond approached and bowed respectfully.

"Welcome, Your Grace," Vaemond greeted formally.

"Greetings, Ser Vaemond. Your reputation precedes you," Rhaegar replied with polite courtesy.

Then, casting a curious glance toward the castle, he continued, "I expected Lord Corlys, the Sea Snake, to welcome us. We've come to celebrate Aunt Rhaenys's nameday. Is he not joining us?"

Chapter 133: The Sea Snake's Difficulties

Rhaegar asked the question deliberately. The Sea Snake's domain was merely an earldom, and given Rhaegar's status as the heir, Rhaenyra's title as Princess of Dragonstone, and Aegon's position as the king's second son, proper etiquette dictated that Corlys Velaryon should have led his entire household to greet them as a sign of respect for the royal family. However, they were met only by Vaemond and a steward, a clear insult to the Targaryen siblings.

Vaemond, unfazed by the prince's inquiry, responded calmly, "My brother personally invited guests and, after a long journey, arrived home a bit earlier."

"He has already rushed to the Driftwood Throne Hall to properly welcome the prince and princess," he added.

Rhaegar's smile faded, and his expression grew cold as he glanced at Laenor. His hand tightened around the hilt of the Dark Sister sword at his waist, and he addressed Vaemond with a measured tone, "Lord Vaemond, do you understand the proper etiquette for welcoming the heir to the throne?"

"Of course, but my elder brother has just returned from a voyage and hasn't had time to change his clothes. He didn't want to offend you with his appearance," Vaemond replied smoothly, clearly having prepared his excuse.

"Oh, you make a valid point," Rhaegar said, his tone laced with sarcasm, his gaze hardening. The Sea Snake was clearly trying to make a statement.

Sensing Rhaegar's displeasure, Laenor quickly interjected, "Father has just returned from Claw Isle and meant no disrespect."

"No! I feel no respect from Lord Corlys or the Velaryon House," Rhaegar countered, shaking his head.

He stared directly at Vaemond and commanded, "Fetch Lord Corlys and have him personally greet the royal guests he has sworn allegiance to."

Vaemond attempted another excuse, but Rhaenyra, her temper flaring, cut him off, "Enough, Lord Vaemond. Your excuses are increasingly inappropriate."

Having once been belittled by her own bannermen as the King's heir, Rhaenyra would not tolerate any slight against her brother. The atmosphere turned icy.

Laenor started to speak again, but the knight beside him discreetly pulled him back, signaling him to remain silent. Vaemond's frown deepened as he muttered, "Prince, Lord Lyonel is also in the Driftwood Throne Hall, you should—"

Swish—

Before he could finish, the Dark Sister's blade flashed, its sharp edge pressed against Vaemond's neck.

"Rhaegar..."

Rhaenyra and Laenor exclaimed simultaneously, the tension in the air palpable.

"Rhaegar, Uncle Vaemond didn't mean any disrespect. What are you doing?" Laenor, as the heir of Driftmark, couldn't remain silent and pleaded helplessly.

Rhaenyra pressed down on Rhaegar's sword arm, her expression tense. "Rhaegar, we are here for peace. Put away the sword."

"Quiet, you should be convincing Ser Vaemond, not me." Rhaegar was unmoved, ignoring their pleas and maintaining his stance, his sword steady.

At this moment, he knew the only thing he could do was to assert his authority. Compromise was not an option.

"Prince, you shouldn't be so impulsive." Vaemond's voice trembled slightly, feeling the cold steel of the Dark Sister against his neck.

Being threatened by a teenage prince with a sword was unnerving. Who knew if the young royal, in a moment of hot-blooded impulse, might actually decapitate him?

Rhaegar's expression remained cold and unyielding. "Summon Lord Corlys to meet us. Don't make me repeat myself a third time!"

This visit was indeed meant to strengthen ties with the Sea Snake, but as the kingdom's heir, Rhaegar represented royal honor and could not tolerate humiliation.

If the Sea Snake intended to challenge his authority, Rhaegar had only one response: No!

The chill of the blade seeping into his spine, Vaemond's face paled. He hastily said, "Calm down. I'll fetch my brother immediately."

As a warrior who had seen battle, Vaemond knew when to avoid danger. The murderous glint in the prince's eyes made it clear that continued defiance would end badly.

Hearing this, Rhaegar's icy expression softened into a chilling smile. "So be it, Ser Vaemon."

He lowered the blade of the Dark Sister and stroked its spine, his voice soft but firm. "You should hurry."

Vaemon, humiliated and seething, managed to hide his anger behind a tanned face. He turned and walked back toward the castle.

Rumor had it that the heir was known as the Kind Prince, a young man with a temperament similar to his father's.

Experiencing this firsthand, Vaemon silently cursed. Kindness? Nonsense. This prince was a completely different person.

"Rhaegar, I truly apologize for the poor hospitality," Laenor said, his face reflecting his internal conflict. He understood his father's intentions but couldn't openly defy him.

"No matter, just a few twists and turns," Rhaegar replied, sheathing his sword. He didn't enjoy these power plays but knew they were unavoidable. The sharpness of his blade had earned him the respect he needed.

Moments later, the castle doors opened again, and this time, the dignified Sea Snake, Corlys Velaryon, emerged instead of Vaemon.

"Father," Laenor called, rushing forward, fearing a confrontation.

Corlys waved his hand, his expression calm. He approached Rhaegar, bowed respectfully, and then smiled pleasantly. "Prince, I sincerely apologize for the earlier misunderstanding. It was due to my hasty return. High Tide welcomes your arrival. Please accept the Velaryon House's apology, regardless of the past."

His words were carefully chosen to convey both an apology and a subtle assertion of his position.

Rhaegar gave him a surprised look, then laughed. "I accept your apology, and it's also my fault for arriving so suddenly."

This was a polite facade. Lyonel had arrived at Driftmark a day early, and even with a raven, the Sea Snake should have known they were coming. It was a deliberate test of Rhaegar's reaction.

Rhaegar's response had been clear and decisive. Whatever Corlys thought of it, he couldn't afford to be slow in his response again.

"Please come in. I'll take you to the Driftwood Throne Hall, where both Rhaenys and Lyonel are waiting," Corlys said, his smile fading as he regained his dignified bearing.

Rhaegar nodded and followed. He took a moment to glance at Aegon, who was slouching.

"Straighten your back and show your royal demeanor. Don't let outsiders look down on you," he chided.

His words were a lesson for Aegon but also a message to everyone present. Corlys remained unfazed and continued leading the way. Aegon, though internally grumbling, straightened up out of fear of his elder brother.

Rhaenys, amused by the situation, took Rhaegar's arm, sharing in the royal honor. Despite Rhaegar's rough approach, it was effective, and she admired his boldness.

They walked through the castle gates, up the corner stairs, and into the Driftwood Throne Hall. It was, in essence, a replica of a throne room: spacious, with stone walls adorned with the Velaryon House crest of a seahorse and a series of wave paintings.

Chapter 134: The Queen Who Never Was

The interior of the hall was decorated with exquisite crystal chandeliers and various exotic treasures. In the center, flanked by lamps on either side, stood a weathered wooden seat.

Laenor took the opportunity to introduce it proudly, "This is our family's Driftwood Throne, symbolizing the Lord of the Tides."

Before Rhaegar could respond, the impatient Aegon interjected, "Oh, it's just a pile of rotten wood, isn't it?"

Rhaenyra quickly glared at him, signaling him to watch his words. "Aegon, don't talk nonsense."

Aegon glanced at Rhaegar, whose expression remained unchanged, and seeing that he didn't care, he crossed his arms and huffed. He wasn't afraid of his sister, and if Rhaegar hadn't rebuked him, why should he care?

"Is the Driftwood Throne more legendary than the Iron Throne of the Red Keep?" he mocked.

Laenor, maintaining his composure, responded with grace, "It doesn't matter. In addition to the Driftwood Throne, the hall is filled with trophies from my father and ancestors, including the mask of the Crab Feeder."

Rhaegar finally spoke up, "All right, Aegon, show some respect." It was a soft reprimand, but enough to signal the end of the episode.

The truth was, Rhaegar didn't care much for the Driftwood Throne or the Velaryon family's airs. It was a calculated move to allow Aegon to express disdain openly, gauging Laenor's reaction and pushing boundaries.

Out of the corner of his eye, Rhaegar noticed Laenor's face darkening, and he couldn't help but smirk slightly.

His Father was right, it was useful to bring this stupid little brother along.

"Prince!"

A familiar voice echoed as Rhaegar entered the center of the Driftwood Throne Hall. He turned to see Lyonel rising from the wine closet, his eyes somewhat agitated.

Lyonel's pace was brisk, and his usually stout frame seemed energized. He reached Rhaegar quickly, without pausing to catch his breath.

Rhaegar glanced at the Sea Snake, who appeared unperturbed, and asked, "Lord Lyonel, what's the matter?"

"Prince, Lord Corlys placed me in the Driftwood Throne Hall, forgive me for not being able to greet you in person," Lyonel replied, his tone carrying a thinly veiled anger. He shot a glare at the Sea Snake's back, making it clear that Corlys had intentionally slighted him.

Understanding the situation, Rhaegar embraced the trembling Lyonel and patted him on the back. "You have been wronged, my lord."

There was no point in retaliating openly. Rhaegar had already asserted his dignity and power. He could only offer Lyonel comfort for the slight he had suffered.

"As long as you remain unharmed, my own troubles are insignificant," Lyonel said, regaining his composure. He understood the political maneuvering at play and had anticipated such treatment from the moment Vaemond had staged Corlys's appearance.

"You are a loyal Hand of the King, and the kingdom is fortunate to have you," Rhaegar said, releasing Lyonel and offering sincere praise.

Laenor stepped forward, changing the subject. "Wait a moment, cousin. Mother will be here soon." He began introducing the antiquities of the hall.

Rhaegar cooperated, casting a few appreciative glances around the hall as they awaited Rhaenys's arrival.

Meanwhile, the Sea Snake seemed detached, lost in his own world. He remained silent, walking to the Driftwood Throne and gazing at the half-broken mask with a blissful expression.

He had anticipated a meeting with the king, a negotiation of sorts. Instead, he was faced with the children of the king, the Hand of the King, and the the heir of the throne.

"Heh, with the change of heir, our majesty has become more assertive," he mused with a smile, deciphering the king's attitude.

But Corlys Velaryon didn't care. He was the greatest navigator Westeros had ever seen, having crossed the ocean nine times. He was responsible for the vast wealth of the Velaryon House.

His wife, Rhaenys Targaryen, is known as the Queen Who Never Was.

Their family owned three dragons, including the mighty Vhagar, such formidable power allowed him to stand proudly on the continent.

Bang...

Not long after, a side door in the hall opened and a figure stormed in with an air of urgency.

"Children, I'm late."

Rhaenys entered, dressed simply, a joyful smile on her face.

"Aunt."

Rhaegar and Rhaenys met each other's gaze and smiled warmly before embracing.

"Good boy, you've grown so much, stronger than your father even."

Rhaenys pinched Rhaegar's sturdy arm, her bright eyes reflecting her pride. As a princess of the Targaryen dynasty, she had been estranged from her family due to tensions between her husband's family and her own. This reunion was a rare and precious moment for her.

"Aunt..."

Rhaenyra stepped forward, greeting her with a smile.

Rhaenys immediately let go of her nephew to embrace her niece. Surveying her, she complimented, "You look wonderful, and you've grown into a beautiful young woman. Life has been kind to you."

"And you look as beautiful as ever, Aunt."

Rhaenyra knew exactly how to please her aunt, and her lovely smile reflected her genuine admiration. She had always looked up to her aunt and cherished their bond.

After Rhaegar and Rhaenyra's greetings, Aegon finally approached, albeit a bit reluctantly and formally.

"And a fine lad you are. You'll be your brother's greatest ally."

Rhaenys embraced Aegon as well, her words wise and affectionate. Aegon, though feeling awkward, managed a shy smile.

"Well, Rhaenys, we must properly entertain our guests from afar."

The Sea Snake turned, a smile playing on his lips as he observed his wife's joyous reunion with her family.

Rhaenys chuckled, "Indeed, it's good that you won't be kicking us out while discussing grand plans."

She exchanged a knowing look with Rhaenyra, who walked over to the liquor cabinet and retrieved a bottle of wine.

Rhaenyra patted her brother's shoulder and followed her aunt, preparing to pour the wine.

After all, they were failures in politics and important matters were best left to the men appointed to do so.

Laenor, reading the room, pulled Aegon aside, clearing the floor for the upcoming discussion between the Sea Snake, Lyonel, and Rhaegar.

Rhaegar and Lyonel exchanged glances before Rhaegar began, "Lord Corlys, my father has heard that the Triarchy is showing signs of resurgence. I assume you've heard the same."

"I won't lie, Prince. The pirates of the Triarchy have indeed reemerged, and my family's ships have already been plundered."

Corlys spoke candidly, initiating the conversation.

He went on, "The Triarchy has been pretty much inactive for years. With their previous defeat still fresh in their minds, they won't back down this time."

"You're right, my lord."

Rhaegar, recalling his father's instructions, said earnestly, "In the face of this renewed threat, the kingdom must respond decisively."

"I am here not only to celebrate Aunt Rhaenys's birthday but also to invite you to King's Landing for a crucial discussion."

The Velaryon House boasts the most powerful fleet and admirals in Westeros. To defeat the Triarchy, the full support of the Sea Snake is indispensable.

Rhaegar looked intently at Corlys, waiting for his reply.

"It is the duty of a servant to serve his kingdom, and I am honored to do so," Corlys responded without hesitation, placing a hand over his chest solemnly.

He continued, "My family has been greatly affected by the Triarchy's capture of the Stepstones. Your arrival here is a great relief to me."

His words were sincere, without arrogance.

Rhaegar was slightly taken aback by Corlys's willingness. Upon reflection, he realized that although the Stepstones were barren, they occupied a crucial geographic position.

If the Triarchy controlled the Stepstones, the entire shipping route would be vulnerable to their raids, causing significant harm to the Velaryon House, whose livelihood depended on maritime trade.

Corlys's acceptance demonstrated his foresight and pragmatic approach.

The exchange went smoothly. Lyonel, looking pleased, added, "Lord Corlys, I hope that after Princess Rhaenys's banquet, you can return to King's Landing with me."

His mission was to secure Corlys's support in the capital for strategic military discussions. With Corlys's agreement, Lyonel felt a weight lifted from his shoulders.

"Of course, I haven't seen His Grace in a long time, and I miss him," Corlys lamented.

He was a shrewd politician, aware that no matter how powerful his House was, they couldn't thrive in isolation. Aligning with the royal family was essential for maximizing their benefits.

"It seems you've had a productive discussion," Rhaenys approached with a tray, smiling warmly.

Seeing his wife's smile, Corlys mirrored her expression and said proudly, "Conversations among smart people are always easy and pleasant."

"You are right; Viserys has chosen a worthy heir," Rhaenys kissed her husband's cheek and whispered in his ear, "Keep in mind that the Targaryens have no shortage of both geniuses and madmen."

"Just a little test," Corlys replied softly, taking a glass from the tray and toasting Rhaegar.

He preferred personal encounters over relying on rumors to judge a person's worth. The new heir's hardline stance made the upcoming battle for the Stepstones seem more manageable.

"Would you like a taste? It's the red wine of Dorne," Rhaenys asked, pushing past her ambitious husband to hand the tray to Rhaegar.

"Thank you, Aunt," Rhaegar said, hesitantly reaching for the fragrant drink.

"Drink this, Rhaegar," Rhaenyra called from behind, carrying a glass of some beverage.

Rhaegar smiled apologetically at Rhaenys and withdrew his hand, taking the glass from Rhaenyra instead.

"Rhaegar is a lightweight," Rhaenyra teased, taking his arm. "One glass of wine and he'll miss the dinner."

"Rhaenyra," Rhaegar protested, trying to stop her from revealing too much. He didn't despise alcohol to that extent, but he preferred not to drink.

The scene drew laughter from the others.

Corlys downed his drink in a single gulp and, with the air of an old sailor, laughed heartily, "A man should know how to handle his drink, especially a Targaryen of blood and fire. Alcohol is the best fuel."

"Yes, how can an heir who can't drink entertain his advisers?" Rhaenys added, smiling warmly at her nephew.

The others, not daring to laugh too loudly, took wine cups from the tray one by one and toasted Rhaegar.

Rhaegar shook his head and smiled ruefully. Amid the laughter, the tension in the room dissipated, and the two families seemed to be on good terms again.

Rhaenys approached Rhaegar with a serious expression, "There is one matter I need to discuss with you."

"What is it, Aunt?" Rhaegar asked, remaining vigilant. Vhagar was still resting on Driftmark.

Rhaenys sighed and spoke bluntly, "You've seen Vhagar. She's the dragon of Laena."

"Vhagar is the last of the great dragons from the previous generation of Targaryens. Of course, I recognize her," Rhaegar replied, his eyes narrowing slightly, emphasizing Vhagar's rightful place in Targaryen lineage. The dragon belonged to the Targaryens, not just anyone who could claim to master her.

"I understand your point, but I'm not here to argue about that," Rhaenys said, shaking her head.

"Laena is my daughter. She carries the blood of both Targaryens and Velaryons. She's back on High Tide."

"What do you mean?" Rhaegar asked, cautious about revealing his stance.

"I'm not here to plead for Laena's mistakes," Rhaenys continued resolutely. "But her daughters are of pure Targaryen blood. They should not suffer for their mother's actions and deserve their legitimate rights as part of the Crown."

"If you're pleading for your granddaughters, I may be able to help," Rhaegar said, frowning slightly. "But Laena should make her own case for them."

"She's at the castle. I can call her—"

"No need, I'm right here!" came a magnetic female voice, cutting Rhaenys off.

The side door swung open, revealing a figure of delicate dark skinned beauty.

"Laena!"

Rhaenyra's surprise was evident in her voice, her gaze reflecting a mix of emotions.

Laena had been her closest childhood companion besides Alicent.

After all these years, she had blossomed into a wife and mother.

"Rhaenyra, it's good to see you again."

Laena's features bore the strong lines of her mother, her silver curls cascading elegantly around her tall, voluminous body.

"Sister, what brings you here?"

Laenor hurried forward, a hint of nervousness evident in his demeanor.

"Why the nervousness? We only have family in the room," Laena assured, her smile softening her words as she retrieved two swaddled bundles from the maid behind her.

Observing this, Rhaenys sighed in resignation. "Well, since you're here, you might as well explain it yourself."

Rhaegar inclined his head, his gaze drifting to the swaddled forms in Laena's arms.

Noticing his interest, Laena approached, gracefully extending the bundles towards him. "Cousin, would you like to hold them?"

After a brief pause, Rhaegar accepted to hold the swaddled infants.

Laena spoke tenderly, "Father named them; the elder sister is Baela, and the younger, Rhaena."

As he held the swaddled bundle, Rhaegar's posture stiffened slightly, his gaze resting upon the two tiny beings.

To be honest, they weren't particularly adorable.

Their skin had a reddish hue, and their eyes remained tightly shut, their small bodies appearing frail and delicate.

"Eeeya..."

Apparently sensing his discomfort, the little girl named Baela squirmed in his arms, emitting a soft cry.

Chapter 136: Daemon's Reappearance

"Eeeeeee..."

As the cool air touched her skin, Baela's movements became more animated, her tiny mouth forming bubbles of excitement.

"Quite amusing," Rhaegar remarked with a chuckle, unable to contain his amusement.

Turning his gaze to Rhaenys, he offered a smile. "Consider it done, Aunt."

"Thank you, Rhaegar," Laena expressed her gratitude with a warm smile.

Rhaegar waved off her thanks, his expression somber. "There's no need for thanks; the child is innocent."

"Let me have a look too," Rhaenyra chimed in, joining Rhaegar's side to inspect the infants.

Rhaegar exchanged a meaningful glance with Rhaenyra, their unspoken agreement reaffirmed.

They had already discussed their strategy and were both committed to it.

...

Night had fallen.

Rhaegar was lying on the bed in a sumptuous guest chamber at High Tide, idly thinking as he closed his eyes for a moment's rest.

"We need to get ready soon; we can't be late for dinner downstairs," Rhaenyra said, carefully putting on her clothes at the dressing table.

"I can get ready faster than you," Rhaegar said, his restlessness preventing him from moving as quickly as she wanted.

His thoughts turned to the day's discussions—the tentative alliance between the royal family and the Sea Snake.

Not only did he agree to give the two babies their legal rights, but he also forgave the mother.

It was a gesture of goodwill and favor from the crown towards the Velaryon Hous, It is now the Sea Snake's turn to reciprocate..

Only one thing remained, both sides avoided mentioning Daemon, Laena's husband, the father of the two babies, seemed to have been forgotten.

Rhaegar had a feeling that Daemon's involvement in their lives might soon change.

"Come now, there's much to discuss at dinner; we cannot dally," Rhaenyra interjected, interrupting his reverie and coaxing him out of bed with a gentle tug.

"Fine, fine, I hear you," Rhaegar said, reluctantly getting up from his bed.

"You're not a child anymore; behave accordingly," Rhaenyra admonished playfully, delivering a light swat to his shoulder.

"It's still early," Rhaegar said, hugging her back. He didn't want to let go of this moment.

The weight of his responsibilities as heir weighed heavily on him, overshadowing his youthful spirit. Sometimes he wished he could be an explorer, not worrying about what others expected of him.

"Rhaegar, I know it's been tough for you, but you must remain resilient for both me and Father," Rhaenyra offered comfort, tenderly caressing his head.

Rhaegar was only thirteen years old, but he was already bearing a weight far beyond his years.

Every night when she woke up, she could hear Rhaegar's struggles and it ached her heart.

She often wondered if she would be able to withstand the pressure if the burden of the heirship were still on her shoulders.

...

The castle hall exuded an air of grandeur and festivity.

A long table took up most of the space in the center of the room, with the Sea Snake, Lyonel, and Aegon sitting around it, chatting away as they waited for the other guests to arrive.

Rhaegar made his way down the stairs, Rhaenyra and Laena flanking him. Each was holding a swaddled infant.

"Come, join us for tonight's feast; we're indulging in a golden lobster—it's quite the delicacy," Rhaenys said, her eyes sparkling with joy as she welcomed them to their seats.

The day had been pretty good, all things considered. There had been a reconciliation of sorts between the Houses, the royal family had recognized Laena's daughters, and Rhaenys's upcoming nameday celebration was on everyone's mind.

As the guests settled into their seats and toasts were made by the Sea Snake and Rhaenys, the feast started.

Rhaegar and Rhaenyra found themselves seated across from each other, right before Laena. They were laughing together and seemed to be enjoying each other's company.

Before them, each had a plate of marinated lobster, a testament to the culinary skills of a House with a close connection to the sea. Rhaegar's eyes lit up as he enjoyed the delicious flavors.

"Rhaenyra, you must try this plum cake—it's divine," Laena offered, extending a slice to her childhood friend.

Graciously accepting the gesture, Rhaenyra's taste buds were transported to the days of her youth as she relished the sweet flavor of the cake.

"Here, Rhaegar, have a taste," Rhaenyra said, playfully offering him a bite of the delicious dessert.

As the evening wore on, the feast continued, with laughter and conversation filling the hall with joy.

Meanwhile, outside High Tide, the Cannibal was lying on the cliffs, blending into the shadows.

But as the wind howled and dark clouds gathered ominously overhead, the creature's eyes snapped open and it fixed its gaze on the approaching storm with intensity.

...

The party kept going, with lots of laughter and good cheer in the hall.

Laenor and Aegon were having a great time, drinking and singing and eventually dancing.

Meanwhile, Corlys and Lyonel engaged in amiable conversation, exchanging drinks and sharing stories.

Rhaegar was enjoying the show, amused by Laenor and Aegon's antics and relishing the moments of closeness with Rhaenyra as she fed him.

Despite the calm atmosphere, there was still a sense of unease.

Out of nowhere, a loud bang reverberated through the hall as the door swung open, admitting an unexpected guest.

The sudden gust of wind that accompanied the newcomer's entrance caught everyone's attention.

"Daemon?"

Laena was the first to react. She looked at her husband standing in the doorway and her surprise was clear.

As the others turned their attention to him, Daemon, dressed in his distinctive garb, greeted the assembly with a casual grin.

"Hey there, Laena. Are you missing me already?"

His nonchalant demeanor belied the gravity of his unexpected return.

"Daemon, who invited you back? Have you forgotten our agreement?" Laena's composure faltered, her urgency clear as she urged him to leave.

Daemon, however, seemed unfazed by her concern, his gaze sweeping over the gathering.

Before anyone could interject, Rhaegar's hand slammed against the table, his expression darkening.

"Rhaegar, calm yourself," Rhaenyra urged, her voice low as she attempted to defuse the tension.

Undeterred, Daemon sauntered further into the hall, his tone mocking as he addressed his great-nephew.

"Well, well, everyone's here. Missed me, dear nephew?"

Rhaegar's icy glare pierced through Rhaenyra's attempts to restrain him, his voice laced with contempt.

"Uncle, do you dare to show your face here?"

With swift strides, Rhaegar rose from his seat, his demeanor rigid as he advanced towards Daemon.

Unfazed, Daemon met his gaze with a sardonic smirk, his stance defiant.

"What, only my wife is welcome home? Can't I come back for a visit?"

Chapter 137: Custody of Children

"You're a sinner who doesn't deserve the light of day," Rhaegar's voice cut through the tension, his grip tightening on the hilt of the Dark Sisters' sword. "Uncle, last time we met, you left your own sword behind. What will you leave this time?"

"Tsk ts, you're not as charming as you used to be," Daemon replied, disappointment in his voice as he shook his head. His eyes were cold and determined, and he was still haunted by memories of a rainy night seven years ago.

Were it not for Laena's timely rescue, he and Caraxes would have been buried at sea.

The clash was inevitable. With a resounding bang, Rhaegar and Daemon collided, their gazes locked in a fierce struggle. Daemon, towering over Rhaegar, exerted his strength, forcing Rhaegar back a step.

"Uncle, have you no weapon left after losing the Dark Sister?" Rhaegar's voice was sharp as he swiftly unsheathed his sword, aiming a strike at Daemon's waist.

"Stop!" Several alarmed voices rang out as Daemon deftly sidestepped Rhaegar's blow, countering with a press to Rhaegar's shoulder.

"You're outmatched, kid," Daemon sneered, his experience evident as he attempted to grapple Rhaegar.

But Rhaegar wasn't finished yet. He quickly came back with a counterattack, aiming for Daemon's heart with his elbow.

"Stop, no fighting in my castle!" Corlys stepped in with a loud order, calling for an end to the fight.

One was the heir, the other the husband of his daughter.

The atmosphere was charged with tension. Any harm done would have serious consequences.

For either of them to die on his castle would be an unbearable disaster.

One was the heir, the other the husband of his daughter.

Neither of them bothered to listen to what he wanted to say.

Rhaenyra and Laena sprang into action, rushing to separate the uncle and nephew.

Rhaegar's hand moved to stab Daemon in his belly, but he was halted by Rhaenyra's intervention, her grip firm as she pulled him away.

"Rhaegar, no," Rhaenyra's voice was stern, her furious gaze fixed on Daemon, while Laena held him tightly, restraining his movements.

At the same time, a blood-red figure was seen in the night sky above Driftmark.

"Roar..."

A loud, thunderous roar suddenly shattered the silence, reverberating like a bell. From the dark clouds emerged a massive beast, its green eyes gleaming with menace as it fixed its gaze on the intruder.

"Roar!"

The blood-red figure was startled by the appearance of the dark beast and let out a warning roar before quickly retreating and distancing itself from the threat.

...

Once Corlys and the women got involved, the tension inside the castle eased up for a bit.

Daemon, not happy about the confrontation, walked over to Laena's seat and sat down.

Rhaenyra forcefully pulled Rhaegar back to his seat. Corlys, his expression stern, spoke in a deep voice, "I don't care what grudges you have. In my castle, you will not act recklessly."

"Don't take it personally. I just came back to have a look," Daemon said, taking Laena's hand and stroking it.

"Shut up!" Corlys immediately rebuked, his tone a sharp warning. "You've seen everything you wanted to see. Do you want me to kick you out?"

Though they were technically of the same generation, Corlys was 28 years older and had no qualms about reprimanding his son-in-law.

Daemon snorted and turned his head, saying no more. He and Laena had already planned for the children's return to Westeros to restore their legal status. While the plan was originally to follow this step, Daemon, as their father, wanted to do it himself.

"What was the response?" Daemon asked.

"The prince has recognized the royal status of Baela and Rhaena," Ranelle replied, pinching Daemon's waist discreetly to warn him not to cause trouble.

Rhaegar sat across from Daemon, staring coldly and contemplating whether another ambush was necessary. He had never liked his arrogant uncle and couldn't tolerate someone who disregarded the law.

"Calm down, he's just a lost dog," Rhaenyra whispered, stroking Rhaegar's cheek, worried that the conflict would reignite. After all, Daemon was a seasoned warrior, and she feared Rhaegar might suffer.

Rhaenys, deciding to end the farce, stood up and raised her glass. "Tonight is a feast for me to reunite with my loved ones," she announced loudly. "Everyone here is a pillar of the kingdom or a member of my bloodline."

Sweeping her gaze around the room, she continued, "Whatever your grievances, I don't want any surprises, at least tonight."

Laena and Laenor were the first to respond, raising their glasses as their mother spoke. Corlys, intending to follow suit, glanced at Lyonel and raised his glass. Lyonel, catching Rhaenyra's signal, clinked glasses with her.

By the end of the night, only Rhaegar, Daemon, and the watching Aegon remained silent.

"I agree," Daemon finally said, tapping the tabletop after Laena's persistent nudging.

"I respect your wishes, Aunt," Rhaegar echoed, his eyes darkening as he also knocked on the tabletop.

Aegon watched in awe and quickly followed suit, tapping the tabletop with excitement. It was a rare treat to see his brother Rhaegar and uncle Daemon clash. "This trip to Driftmark was worth it," he thought to himself.

With the tension eased, Rhaenys took a sip of wine, indicating her approval.

The feast continued. A servant brought Daemon a chair, and a maid carried the two babies into the hall. Daemon, who was experiencing fatherhood for the first time, took his twin daughters in his arms and gazed at them with a mix of wonder and tenderness.

He had almost been a father once before, to a boy, but the child's mother, a woman of low status, had been cast out by his ruthless brother, leading to a tragic miscarriage.

Seizing the moment, Laena raised her glass and said sincerely, "Cousin, thank you for forgiving my sins and restoring the identities of my two children. I offer you a toast."

Rhaegar raised his glass and exchanged a meaningful glance with Rhaenyra.

"Laena, you have been away from Westeros for too long. Would you like to return to King's Landing with us so my father can see the children?" Rhaenyra asked.

"Of course, it would be my honor," Laena replied, her smile bright with hope for her children's future.

Rhaenyra pondered for a moment, then raised her glass again. "Laena, I love these two children, and I have an important request."

Laena looked puzzled, unsure of what her friend meant.

"The children's last name is Targaryen, but their father is a sinner," Rhaenyra continued. "I believe they should live in the Red Keep and be raised by the crown."

Rhaenyra's request was logical. The children were indeed Targaryens by blood, and being raised at the Red Keep would ensure their integration into the royal family. It would be inappropriate to allow them to remain with Daemon or to be raised by Laena in Driftmark.

Laena's eyes widened in horror. "Rhaenyra, you want to take away my children?" she exclaimed, her voice trembling with resistance. She had just given birth; how could she part with her babies?

Chapter 138: The Ambition of Return

"Laena, calm down," Rhaenyra said, understanding her friend's distress. "The children will return to King's Landing, and naturally, as their mother, you can follow, care for, and be with them."

This arrangement had been part of the initial plan she and Rhaegar had devised.

The presence of a strong dragon rider and two new Targaryen heirs would be in the royal family's best interest.

Laena's frown deepened, her eyes flickering with mixed emotions. She understood Rhaenyra's reasoning, but it didn't make the situation any easier.

Her children were indeed Targaryens by blood, born into the royal family.

"Wait," Daemon interjected, frowning and resting his chin on his hand. "When discussing the future of my daughters, shouldn't my opinion count?"

Rhaenyra glanced at him with a bemused expression, unwilling to engage. In her eyes, Daemon's words carried no weight.

"Prince Daemon, you are a wanted criminal of the kingdom," Lyonel said, his face furious.

"Allowing you to sit at this table is already a courtesy for Princess Rhaenys's sake."

"It's ridiculous that you're fighting over my daughters and yet won't allow me, their father, to voice my opinion?" Daemon mocked, leaning down to kiss his daughters' cheeks.

"Daemon, what is your true purpose for being here?" Rhaegar demanded, his patience wearing thin. Daemon's sudden appearance was too suspicious to ignore.

The room fell silent as everyone turned to Daemon, curiosity and skepticism in their eyes.

Returning home seemed impossible for him. Since his betrayal, he lost his position.

Daemon's arrogance melted away as he bowed his head and looked at his daughters. After years of wandering through the Free Cities, he was uncertain about what to do next.

He and Laena, with their unbeatable dragons, were in high demand. Princes, nobles, and wealthy merchants were eager to offer them estates and riches.

Daemon knew this was just a business transaction. He couldn't suppress his pride and submit to a foreign kingdom for wealth, using dragon power in exchange for comfort.

He was of dragon blood, a pure Targaryen. The people of the Free Cities were unworthy of his service.

In his dreams, he often recalled the glory of old Valyria, where the Free Cities once belonged. Those fat-bellied fools should have been slaves to the House of the Dragonlords.

Laena wasn't the only one longing for home. Daemon missed it too, especially after the birth of his daughters. He began to understand his brother Viserys's anger towards him.

This realization spurred him to plan for his family's future, leading Laena to write to Rhaenyra, seeking mercy.

"Rhaegar, you're as sharp as ever," Daemon said, lifting his head high as he addressed his nephew directly for the first time. "War is coming, and the kingdom needs my strength."

Rhaegar eyed him with disdain. "Uncle, the kingdom has the might of all the major lords and knights. Your help isn't indispensable."

"The pirates of the Three Daughters Kingdom are no small matter. The battlefield needs a wise and brave member of the royal family to lead the army," Daemon insisted, his face calm and confident.

"In the current House Targaryen, I am the only adult male with the ability to command on the battlefield and possess a dragon."

"Don't you think you're too full of yourself?" Rhaegar frowned, questioning Daemon's intentions. He couldn't believe Daemon was actually considering rejoining the family.

"Not at all. I'm simply stating the truth," Daemon replied, crossing his legs and speaking calmly. He was aware of his own situation and the challenges Westeros, and his brother Viserys, faced.

Viserys couldn't go to war, and his nephews were still young and untested. This upcoming battle was Daemon's chance to clear his name and reunite with his brother.

Rhaegar looked deeply into Daemon's eyes, trying to discern his true intentions.

"Rhaegar," Rhaenyra called softly, leaning down to whisper in his ear, "What are you going to do?"

She understood the gravity of Daemon's words. The last Battle of the Stepstones had lasted for years, and Daemon, along with the Sea Snake, had endured heavy losses. She didn't want her brother to risk his life in battle.

Daemon could be a useful substitute if they could use Laena and the children as leverage.

"No! I won't!" Rhaegar ignored the implication of his sister's words. Looking straight into Daemon's eyes, he said solemnly, "The kingdom doesn't need a criminal like you, and you're not the only Targaryen who can go to war."

He stood up, a strand of silver hair falling into his eyes, and declared forcefully, "When war comes, I will ride my dragon into battle and make the enemy pay with blood and fire."

He then warned Daemon, "As for you, you'd better leave before the feast is over."

"Well said. Targaryen has no shortage of bloodthirsty men," Rhaenys, who had been watching silently, applauded. She then glanced at Daemon, her expression stern. "Daemon, adjust your attitude. No one is indispensable."

She was reminding Daemon that if he wanted forgiveness, he needed to humble himself and seek Viserys's mercy, not negotiate with the younger generation.

Daemon, anticipating rejection, remained silent. He knew he should have approached his brother Viserys to make peace, even if it meant risking his life. Anything was better than wasting his time here.

Once again, the atmosphere dropped to a freezing point.

Laena nudged her husband, urging him to leave. Daemon, however, remained seated, defiant.

"Rhaenyra, I won't leave my children," Laena asserted, "but I'll consider your offer carefully."

Rhaenyra reiterated her proposal. "If you are not sure, I can adopt the children myself."

"But you're not married," Laena pointed out.

"It doesn't matter," Rhaenyra replied with a slight smile. "I have Dragonstone as my fiefdom, and I am qualified to adopt a daughter. As their adoptive mother, I will place dragon eggs in their cradles."

"Dragon eggs..." Laena was a bit taken aback by the mention of such a precious gift.

Restoring her children's royal status was important, but securing dragon eggs was equally critical. Several dragons resided on Driftmark. Vhagar, the Mother of Dragons, had laid many eggs. Dreamfyre, Vermithor, and Silverwing were her direct descendants.

Though by the time Laena tamed Vhagar, she was too old to lay more eggs. Sea Smoke and Caraxes had never laid eggs.

Meleys, known as the Red Queen, had a connection to egg-laying due to her distinctive red scales, but the royal family controlled all her eggs strictly, taking them all.

To place dragon eggs in her daughters' cradles, Laena knew she had to seek the royal family's forgiveness and secure the eggs from them. This was a rare opportunity, and Rhaenyra's offer was tempting.

Chapter 139: Uncle, You Have to Leave Something Behind!

"Rhaenyra, you are truly generous," Laena said, her mind racing with thoughts about the fate of her children.

If possible, she wanted to renew the alliance between the Targaryens and Velaryons. After all, her mother, husband, and children were all Targaryens.

Rhaenyra smiled and said, "Think about it. You still have a few days before you return to King's Landing."

She knew Laena to be sensitive and intelligent, and she trusted that Laena would make the right choice to avoid potential conflicts between the two Houses.

Their conversation served as a good diversion. The banquet had lost its lively atmosphere, and everyone present seemed disillusioned. Aegon looked around, amazed, as he cut into the roasted meat on his plate. Laenor snorted and rose to raise his glass, trying to lighten the mood, but no one paid him any mind. Most people were lost in their own thoughts, considering their interests.

It was getting late, and the banquet was nearing its end. Daemon held his two daughters in his arms, lost in thought. He was only snapped out of it when one of the babies cried.

"Laena, the baby seems to be hungry," Daemon said, frowning as he handed the swaddled infant to his wife.

Laena was quick to pick up the baby and hand her over to the nursemaid behind her. Her corseted dress made it difficult for her to breastfeed.

Like Daemon, Rhaegar remained silent, leaning back in his chair, chin resting on his hands, his eyes scanning the room. Daemon noticed his nephew's unease, and irritation welled up inside him as he walked over to Rhaegar.

Daemon walked over to Rhaegar, putting one hand on the tabletop as he went. "How is my brother?" he asked.

Viserys had often been cut by the Iron Throne, and after all these years, Daemon wanted to know how he was doing.

"No one has angered him. Father is doing well," Rhaegar replied slowly, his eyes narrowing slightly.

"And what about Alicent? That woman hasn't been rejected yet? Daemon's eyes twinkled with curiosity as he brought up his old adversary.

"She's fine, too. She has father another son to look after," Rhaegar responded.

"None of the Hightower women are any good, just trouble for the men," Daemon said with disgust. "She's given you a lot of trouble, hasn't she?"

Rhaegar remained silent.

"What, did I guess right?" Daemon leaned closer, trying to get a better look at his nephew.

"Uncle, do you remember what I told you when you first came in?" Rhaegar asked, his head hanging low, hair messy around his ears.

Daemon was slightly stunned, not understanding what he meant. Suddenly, realization dawned on him, and he followed Rhaegar's line of sight to the gold-plated clock on the wall.

Tick-tock, tick-tock...

The second hand of the clock completed its revolution, and the minute and hour hands jumped to 12:00.

Tick-tock...

The clock struck midnight, marking the start of a new day.

"A new day has begun, Uncle." Rhaegar said.

As the clock chimed, Rhaegar jumped up and hit Daemon's head against the table. There was a crunching sound as the impact broke Daemon's nose.

"My good uncle, you haven't learned your lesson from seven years ago!" Rhaegar's pupils narrowed with rage as he grabbed a table knife and plunged it into Daemon's left hand, pinning it to the tabletop.

Rhaenys had said there would be no accidents last night, and he would honor that. He'd been waiting patiently for midnight.

Pfft.

Blood splattered as the silver dinner knife stabbed through Daemon's palm and nailed it to the tabletop.

"Ah!..." Daemon let out a cry of pain as soon as he felt the knife pierce his palm.

...

Outside the castle.

"Roar..."

A sharp roar pierced the night as Caraxes revealed himself, sensing his master's danger.

Without hesitation, it dove towards the castle.

"Roar..."

Cannibal, more prepared and faster, burst from the castle with a flap of its wings.

Its coal-black body slammed into Caraxes, and it had been waiting for this moment for a long time.

This time, it was decided to tear this slim red worm apart.

When attacked, Caraxes screamed in terror, slashing with its claws and opening its jaws to unleash scarlet dragonfire at Cannibal.

"Roar..."

Cannibal dodged the flames and bit down on one of Caraxes' wings, shaking its head and tearing the wing apart.

After Rhaegar's training, Cannibal was really skilled at dragon combat. Destroying the wing first would make the opponent an easy target.

As his flesh and blood were torn apart, Caraxes twisted his body frantically, using his long neck to bite Cannibal's neck.

Stab...

Sharp teeth pierced scales, and Cannibal roared with rage as blood spilled.

It tore off a piece of flesh with one bite, and its huge dragon head swung around, smashing into Caraxes' head.

With a thud, Caraxes was momentarily blinded, his sharp teeth yanking off more flesh.

Cannibal wasn't fazed by the minor wound and became even more ferocious.

The dragon aimed for Caraxes' head and shot green dragonfire like a fountain.

"Roar..."

The flames bombarded Caraxes' face, causing him to scream as his sharp claws frantically tore at Cannibal's belly, desperately seeking a chance of survival.

Inside the castle.

Daemon's screams echoed terrifyingly through the halls.

"Rhaegar!" Rhaenyra's eyes widened, not expecting Rhaegar to strike so suddenly.

"Uncle, I told you, you have to leave something behind!" Rhaegar's smile grew wilder as he nimbly pulled out his Dark Sister and slashed at Daemon's pinned palm.

"Get off!"

At the critical moment, Daemon reacted quickly, kicking Rhaegar in the abdomen. The force of the kick made Rhaegar stagger, and the sword he was swinging struck Daemon's shoulder.

"Ah! Damn it!" Daemon, his spirit tense from the intense pain, quickly pulled the table knife from his left hand and threw it at Rhaegar's chest.

Clang—

Rhaegar's quick reflexes allowed him to block the dinner knife with the spine of his sword.

"Go to hell!"

Seizing the opportunity to turn the tables, Daemon picked up dinner plates from the table and threw them at Rhaegar, getting in the way of his sword swings.

He then grabbed a chair and slammed it down on Rhaegar's face.

"You're the one who deserves to die!" Rhaegar raised his sword to block the chair and then kicked Daemon in the chest.

Wham...

The Dark Sister couldn't block the blow, and the wooden chair shattered on Rhaegar's head, blood oozing from the wound. Almost simultaneously, Daemon was kicked in the chest, spitting blood as he flew backward.

"Rhaegar!"

"Daemon!"

The uncle and nephew were too quick for anyone to intervene until it was too late.

Rhaenyra, standing next to Rhaegar, was hit by the broken pieces of the chair, cutting her face and neck. In the emergency, she rushed to support the swaying Rhaegar.

On the other hand, Laena sprang from her seat and ran to her husband's side.

She was well-read in poetry and had some knowledge of medicine, so she knew the fight between uncle and nephew had been deadly and aimed at vital points.

Chapter 140: Vhagar vs Cannibal

"Go away, I don't need you!"

Laena was about to check her husband's injuries when Daemon pushed her aside and laboriously climbed to his feet on his own.

Pfft...

Out of breath, Daemon spat out another mouthful of blood. He staggered towards Rhaegar, picked up what was left of the solid wood chair, and raised it high in the air, ready to slam it down again.

"Stop!"

Rhaenyra, shocked and disoriented, instinctively grabbed Rhaegar and turned to shield him.

"Get out of the way!"

Before Rhaenyra could fall, Rhaegar hurriedly dragged her to the side and seized her chair.

Compared to the dazed Daemon, Rhaegar seemed uninjured, and his strikes were still fast and hard.

Before Daemon could strike, Rhaegar rounded the side of the wooden chair and smashed his legs.

Wow...

The second solid wood chair shattered, and Daemon was knocked over, his head hitting the cold floorboards hard.

"That's enough, stop it!"

Seeing this, Corlys was shocked and moved to intervene.

On one side, Lionel rushed out, his bloated body blocking the way, his eyes sharp.

"What do you mean?" Corlys glared.

Lionel puffed out his chest and said in a deep voice, "We have complied with Princess Rhaenys' request, and now it's the second day!"

Though Lionel appeared obese, it was just middle-aged fat. In his youth, he had been a warrior who could wield a hammer, and his eldest son, Harwin, had inherited his strength.

Laenor's face changed when he saw his father being stopped. Just as he stood up, a grease-stained table knife was pressed against his throat, forcing him to remain still.

Turning back, he saw an excited Aegon, knife in hand, saying with a sinister smile, "Stay still, cousin!"

He too was a pure Targaryen, with madness lurking within him, and he couldn't afford to let a big show be interrupted.

...

On the other hand, the fight between the two dragons continued.

Caraxes, having battlefield experience, did not lack battle prowess. In a panic, its claws stabbed into Cannibal's belly, trying to gut it.

"Roar..."

Cannibal, not willing to let that happen, roared and kicked Caraxes away. With a flap of his wings, he rose quickly into the air and circled around the unsteady Caraxes.

Soon, it found a weak point. Its huge body swooped down again, jaws wide open to attack Caraxes' neck.

Boom!

As it approached, Caraxes continued to spew dragonfire, trying to force the approaching black dragon to retreat. The flames seemed endless, as if they were inexhaustible.

Cannibal, with his thick skin, managed to break through the fire with his eyes closed.

Realizing the situation was dire, Caraxes stopped spewing fire and twisted its slender body to avoid the charge.

"Roar..."

Cannibal, faster, bit down on Caraxes' tail, dragging it. The tail, crucial for Caraxes' balance, was now a liability. Caraxes immediately turned its head and bit into Cannibal's neck.

Boom!

Cannibal let go of the tail and spat dragon fire, roaring.

Pfft...

Cannibal continued his attack, biting into Caraxes' wing. Dragon blood spurted into the night sky.

Amidst Caraxes' screams, Cannibal's eyes were filled with rage as it greedily tore at the flesh, violently ripping one wing apart.

With its wing severely damaged, Caraxes remembered the rainy night seven years ago when it crashed into the sea. In fear, it struggled desperately, burning Cannibal's head with dragon fire.

Cannibal twisted his head, sinking his claws into Caraxes' flesh and opening his mouth to bite at its neck.

"Roar..."

At that moment, a dragon's roar, like muffled thunder, filled the night sky with fury.

In the next second, a huge beast comparable to a mountain rushed out of the clouds and opened its bloody mouth to attack the defenseless Cannibal.

In response, the Cannibal bit down on Caraxes' neck, using it as a shield.

Boom!

A monstrous force struck, knocking Cannibal off balance and sending him tumbling to the ground.

"Roar..."

Caught in the middle, Caraxes let out a miserable scream and fell with Cannibal.

At that moment, Cannibal got a good look at the beast that attacked him: the fierce and tyrannical Vhagar.

A dragon shares the heart of its master. Rhaegar and Daemon fought, and Cannibal attacked Caraxes.

Laena worried about Daemon, and Vhagar came to rescue his long-time companion, Caraxes.

However, Caraxes was now in a terrible state.

The three dragons were entangled, with Cannibal in the most dangerous position, back on the ground.

Vhagar slowly descended, and Cannibal flapped its wings desperately to escape.

"Roar..."

Vhagar recognized Cannibal and immediately chased after it as it fled. As the two giants disappeared, Caraxes managed to move, flapping its intact wing to break its fall and avoid death.

Still, it let out a mournful cry at the impact. It lay on its back, writhing in the shallows below like a long red snake.

In the sky, Vhagar and Cannibal chased each other, creating a storm that swept across half of Driftmark.

Cannibal quickly disappeared into the night clouds, planning to sneak up on them the old-fashioned way. Vhagar, more experienced in battle, spewed orange and yellow dragonfire that covered the sky.

"Roar..."

Cannibal burst through the flames, bloodthirsty eyes locked on Vhagar, biting into the opponent's thick neck.

"Roar..."

"Roar..."

The struggle between the two dragons had just begun. Several roars were heard on Driftmark, one after the other. First appeared a red dragon with fierce reddish scales and a crown.

Following was a slightly smaller white dragon with a light silver-gray body. Both dragons roared upon seeing Cannibal biting Vhagar.

At the same time, two more golden dragons of similar size emerged from the night sky. The four dragons faced each other in the air, an uneasiness rising.

"Roar..."

The most handsome Sunfyre, with the strongest temperament, locked his pupils on the larger Meraxes and charged.

Its courage was immense; last time it had dared to attack Dreamfyre, and now it had no fear of Meleys.

"Roar..."

Sunfyre sounded the horn of war, and Sea Smoke roared, swooping down to face the angry Syrax.

In an instant, the six dragons faced each other, fighting each other within the sky.

The roar of the six dragons was so loud it woke countless people from their sleep.

On the night sky, various colors of dragon fire competed and erupted, painting the sky in gold, scarlet, orange, and ghostly green.

"Roar..."

The battle intensified as Cannibal bit down on Vhagar's neck, its claws piercing through the scaled armor. After years of growth, Vhagar was still a formidable force. With excellent speed, it was not without a fighting chance.

"Roar..."

Bitten by the neck, Vhagar let out a dull roar. Its claws immediately ripped open the belly of Cannibal, tearing a bloody gash.

The old dragon's fury would make the younger generation understand the consequences of offending it.