

G.O Thrones 481

Chapter 481: He Looks Sick

When they saw Viserys and heard his voice, everyone present stood up to show their respect.

Rhaenys and Rhaenyra rose from their seats, both looking at their cousin and father with surprise. Viserys's appearance, dragging his heavy body, was indeed unexpected by most.

"Father, you sit here," Rhaegar said, helping Viserys to his feet and leading him around the long table to the empty seat between Rhaenys and Rhaenyra. That was the main seat at the banquet.

"No need," Viserys said, shaking his head with a smile. "I prefer this position." He then motioned for Aegon and Aemond to move aside, taking a seat on the other side of the long table. Once seated, Corlys was on his left, looking surprised, and Helaena was on his right, holding her nephew.

Aegon and Aemond exchanged glances, abandoning their original plan to sit there, and instead sat down next to little Daeron, bypassing Helaena.

Seeing this, Rhaegar felt a strange emotion and whispered, "Father, you haven't seen Aunt Rhaenys in a long time, and you can still hug Baelon."

"You sit there," Viserys insisted, explaining, "I can see all of you better from here."

Rhaegar looked around and realized that from Viserys's position, he could indeed see everyone at the table.

"Very well. I will tell the servants to begin the banquet," Rhaegar said, smiling, and walked over to Rhaenyra to take his seat.

The father and son took their seats, and the others followed suit.

Corlys nodded to Viserys, glanced at his face, and made a judgment. The assassination attempt at Yronwood had taken its toll on the king.

Despite this, Viserys was not saddened; instead, he smiled brightly and took Aemon from Helaena's hands to play with him.

Daemon, sitting across the long table, kept a close eye on his brother. He noticed that despite Viserys's labored breathing, he maintained a smile, an expression of surprise in his eyes.

Laena sat between Daemon and Rhaenyra, with the key figures all seated on one side of the table.

Soon, the hall filled with light music, setting a pleasant mood for the evening. The servants hurriedly served the dishes, and the long table was lit with large white candles, dispelling the dim light.

In this peaceful and harmonious environment, everyone became lively once again.

Corlys toasted Viserys and briefly spoke about the fortifications of the Stepstones. With the Triarchy to the east and Dorne to the west, the Stepstones in the Narrow Sea were crucial.

Viserys smiled. "Aegon is a good boy. He will take care of the Stepstones for his brother."

"I hope so," Corlys replied, glancing at Aegon, who was drinking non-stop, a hint of contempt flashing in his eyes.

On the other side, Rhaegar took Baelon, who was kicking his legs about, and smiled. His father's temporary presence would be a great help at tonight's banquet, like a towering tree supporting the realm.

Rhaenyra rubbed her aching wrist and whispered, "Is anyone still missing?"

"Who are you talking about?" Rhaegar asked, his eyes narrowing in a smile.

Rhaenyra glared. "Alicent!"

Scandals in the royal family were not to be made public. Alicent was still the queen, and it would be very rude not to attend the dinner.

"Mm-hmm," Rhaegar said softly.

Rhaenyra was puzzled, a hint of suspicion flashing in her brilliant purple eyes.

Something's fishy!

Creak—

The door opened again, and the music picked up speed.

Rhaenyra glanced back.

Alicent walked into the hall, her head bowed in silence. Her eyes were red, and she looked as if she had just cried. She wore a red dress, a rarity for her, and appeared haggard.

Rhaenyra gave her a strange look and glanced sideways at the corridor behind Alicent. Two red-armored guards walked past, escorting a limping Otto between them.

Rhaegar leaned over to Rhaenyra's ear and whispered, "Otto is exiled to Myr to reclaim the wasteland. Before he left, he gave Alicent a reminder to keep her in line."

Alicent would be relatively easy to control. Without Otto's influence and the bonds of family, she would behave herself. It all depended on whether or not his father was willing to change her punishment.

Otto, however, was easier to deal with. The Oldtown faction was dispersed, and House Hightower had lost a lot of prestige. Exiled to Myr, Otto would spend the rest of his life cultivating the wasteland for the kingdom, a task he was already familiar with.

With Alicent's appearance, the atmosphere at the dinner subtly changed. Aemond's eyes widened in shock, and he almost stood up, unable to believe that his mother would actually attend the dinner.

"Mother!" Young Daeron, still a child, called out affectionately and rushed to Alicent like a swallow returning to its nest. Aegon only glanced up, then dropped his half-full wine glass. Helaena's eyes sparkled as she looked at Rhaegar and raised the corners of her mouth.

"Mother, I missed you so much," little Daeron cried, holding Alicent's legs.

He had always stayed by his mother's side, and Alicent's sudden confinement had especially hurt him.

"Don't cry, Mother will have more time to spend with you in the future," Alicent forced a smile, though the sadness in her eyes was hard to hide.

Judging from what had happened to her father Otto, it seemed unlikely that she would escape her dark room in the future. She feared her youngest son would not be treated as he should be.

"Mom, you sit with me," little Daeron wiped his tears and pulled Alicent to his seat. Rhaena gave up her seat and looked shyly at the mother and son.

"No," Alicent shook her head, taking little Daeron's hand and walking toward Viserys, who was watching silently. Viserys looked at her with a silent expression, a complex look in his eyes. This was his wife, although she often thought and acted irrationally.

Alicent saw Viserys sitting alone in a corner, where there was room for an extra chair, and said hesitantly, "Are you okay?" It wasn't really a question, just a simple greeting.

"Not bad," Viserys replied, looking away, his heart heavy. He called out to the servant, "Bring a chair for the queen."

The servant moved quickly. Alicent coaxed little Daeron back to his seat, then sat down and set the table for Viserys as she was used to doing. She lowered her head and said nothing. The couple looked left and right, as if they were strangers.

Rhaenyra, glaring at the scene, whispered unhappily, "Why don't we just lock her in the tower?"

"Alicent will be a problem again once she recovers," she added.

Rhaegar nodded slightly but said, "Father needs someone to take care of him, and no one is more suitable than Alicent."

They had been married for more than ten years and had raised children together. It was impossible to say that Viserys had no real feelings for her. Having Alicent back by his side would be more effective than a hundred Maesters and squires. His father had made sacrifices for him, and he would reciprocate.

The little episode soon passed. The cheerful tune ended, replaced by a more melodious piece suitable for a dinner party.

Corlys took a bite of the roast, his eyes growing deeper. He hadn't forgotten the purpose of the evening.

Clang!

The knife and fork clattered onto the table as Corlys wiped his mouth with a handkerchief, breaking the silence. "Your Grace, I have a question to ask."

Viserys, enjoying Alicent's attentive service, was slightly startled but managed a smile. "Tonight is a family dinner. We are all family here, so you can tell you anything."

He knew what was coming.

As expected, Corlys's gaze swept over Daemon and Rhaegar, his words sharp. "Dorne has not yet submitted, and House Velaryon has sacrificed everything for this. I even lost my eldest son. Why is the Iron Throne negotiating peace at this time?"

He summarized the situation, then complained bitterly, and finally questioned the decision.

Viserys frowned. "Lord Corlys, peace is a good thing for the country and the people. The realm needs to recuperate."

"What about the balance of power with the rebellious forces in Dorne that have yet to surrender?" Corlys pressed.

Viserys shook his head. "Block all the passages to Dorne, and with the help of Prince Qyle, it won't be a problem."

Sunspear was in Targaryen hands; the overall situation was already decided.

Dissatisfied with the king's evasions, Corlys raised his voice. "Your Grace, I lost my only son in this war. If the conquest of Dorne is ended hastily, I cannot accept it."

"Are you threatening me?" Viserys's smile vanished. Though weak, he was not easily intimidated. "Lord Corlys, the Targaryens started this war, and the Targaryens will end it."

Don't think you're still the Sea Snake of ten years ago just because of your power and position.

Corlys, frustrated, shouted, "I lost my eldest son. Shouldn't the kingdom give me a reasonable explanation?"

Rhaegar watched quietly, feeding Baelon a spoonful of goat's milk. Someone will speak for him.

Daemon leaned back in his chair, his head tilted to one side, and mocked, "Laenor's lover killed him. You should go find that guy."

"Daemon, you have no say here!" Corlys was furious and shouted at him.

Daemon, unperturbed, smirked. He deliberately spoke in a slow, drawn-out voice. "This is my brother's kingdom, and there is always a place for me in his castle."

Viserys glanced at him but said nothing.

"You should behave yourself," Laena warned, pulling her husband's hand under the table.

Daemon ignored her, shaking off her hand, his eyes dangerous. "You don't want to give up the war. Are you planning to die with Dorne?"

His eyes bored into Corlys, daring him to respond.

Aegon, watching the show, couldn't help but laugh. "Haha!"

Corlys's face instantly turned cold, glaring at Aegon.

Aegon, feeling aggrieved, was silenced by Helaena's dead fish-eyed glare, signaling him to shut up. Aemond quickly poured him a drink and pushed it to his mouth.

'Don't act like a fool when Mom is finally out.'

Corlys snorted, dismissing the brat, and spoke solemnly. "I lost my heir on the battlefield and the future Lord of Driftmark. Can no one give me an explanation?"

He looked pointedly at Viserys and Rhaegar, repeatedly emphasizing the issue of the heir. The royal family must give him a reasonable solution.

Viserys said nothing.

Rhaegar, scooping up another spoonful of goat's milk for Baelon, remained silent. The Sea Snake's intentions were clear. But you can't always get what you want. You only get what you want if I give it to you, and you can't use coercion.

Tonight, I will take care of you, Sea Snake and break House Velaryon's back!

Chapter 482: Viserys: I'll Just Step Down!

Seeing that neither Rhaegar nor Viserys responded, Corlys sensed something was amiss, and his anger grew. He had shed blood for the realm and lost his firstborn son to the Targaryens cause. Their silence stung. Do they despise House Velaryon?

In Westeros and on the continent of Essos, pride is always the greatest enemy of the nobility.

Just as Corlys was about to press further, Daemon spoke up again, his tone dripping with sarcasm. "What do you want an explanation for? To tear up the peace terms and reignite the war?"

Does House Velaryon have the right or the strength to do so?

Corlys glared at him, his expression darkening. "Daemon, if you dare challenge my authority again, I won't care about our old friendship."

Daemon looked ready to retort, but Laena's voice cut through the tension. "Daemon!"

Her eyes were brimming with anger. Daemon and his wife exchanged a look, and Daemon reluctantly fell silent. Laena, pained, raised a glass of wine to her father and drank it down. Daemon's disrespect for her father felt like disrespect toward her as well.

Viserys, observing the exchange, felt puzzled. What is Daemon up to now?

Ignoring his daughter's apology, Corlys focused on Viserys, his voice deep and resolute. "Your Grace, I want to know your stance."

His words were laced with coercion. If he did not receive a satisfactory answer tonight, he would have to reconsider the relationship between the two houses. He would resign as Master of Ships and withdraw Velaryon's fleet. He couldn't control Daemon, but he wouldn't allow his wife Rhaenys and daughter Laena to serve the Iron Throne on dragonback again. This would prove the indispensability of House Velaryon.

Viserys frowned, clearly displeased. "Sacrifice is part of war. Even I nearly lost my life, and one my children paid for it an eye."

"Compensation is also part of war!" Corlys's eyes burned with determination.

Rhaegar, having finished his half bowl of goat's milk, put Baelon to sleep with a little milk. He gave a subtle wink.

Aegon, catching the signal, slowly got up with a light cough.

Rhaenyra and Alicent both looked at the boy, their eyes filled with surprise.

What is this kid up to?

Aegon pushed his chair back, walked around the table to Corlys and Rhaenys, and tugged on Helaena's hair.

Helaena:...

Aemond glared at him, thinking, This guy is really sick.

"Ahem."

Aegon licked his lips, bent down, and toasted Rhaenys with a glass of wine, whispering, "Aunt, I am very sorry about what happened to cousin Laenor. I hope you recover soon."

Rhaenys glanced at him and replied politely, "Thank you. I will."

"Hmph!" Corlys snorted, clearly unimpressed.

He could see through Aegon's insincerity.

Aegon turned to Corlys, a gleam in his eye. He poured another glass of wine, drawing the attention of everyone in the room.

Leaning in slightly, Aegon whispered, "Lord Corlys, I'm sorry for your loss of your eldest son."

Corlys straightened his collar and ignored him.

Undeterred, Aegon stole a glance at Rhaenys, ensuring she wasn't paying attention, and leaned closer to Corlys. In a tactful tone, he said, "If you truly regret losing your heir, why not remedy the situation yourself? Although my aunt is older, I believe you're still in good shape."

Corlys froze, unable to believe what he had heard.

Aegon continued with a lewd smile, "Don't worry, even if you have a bastard child, it's not uncommon among the nobles."

Bang!

Corlys exploded like a firecracker. He stood up, his eyes filled with rage, glaring with murderous intent.

He promised himself that the second son of the king, who had no filter, would pay the price.

The table was slammed so hard that it startled everyone in the room. The Baela and Rhaena sisters looked at their grandfather timidly. Helaena and Aemond looked puzzled. Little Daeron, who was eating, choked and turned red.

Only Daemon remained calm, watching the scene with interest. He was curious to see what his second nephew had said to provoke the Sea Snake's fury.

"Gulp..."

Facing Corlys's terrifying aura, Aegon subconsciously swallowed and retreated guiltily. He quickly slipped away.

"Aegon, what did you say?" Alicent looked at her son in surprise, unable to understand why he would provoke Corlys.

Rhaenys and Rhaenyra were equally surprised, their eyes darting back and forth between the two.

Aegon shouldn't be so foolish as to provoke Corlys. And with Corlys's ability to control his temper, he shouldn't be provoked by a young kid.

At that moment, a creak echoed through the hall.

Rhaegar handed Baelon to Rhaenyra, pushed his chair back, and stood up decisively. Corlys glanced at him with a hint of coldness.

Rhaegar met his gaze calmly, openly provoking a confrontation. It was as if he was saying, 'Come at me if you dare!'

He was the heir to the Iron Throne, the leader of his brothers and sisters, and the strongest dragon rider of the Targaryens. If the Sea Snake had any complaints, he could bring them directly to him.

Aegon, head down, walked back to his seat, looking innocent. He had said all he needed to say.

“Prince, do you have anything to say?” Corlys asked coldly, his anger barely contained.

Rhaegar’s expression was impassive. “Who are you talking to, Sea Snake?”

It was a tit-for-tat negotiation, and the first to lose their temper would lose the upper hand. Corlys was asking for something and couldn’t afford to act superior. He had to understand that he couldn’t press a Targaryen without consequences. If he couldn’t figure out his place, Rhaegar wouldn’t hesitate to treat him like a second Ormund Hightower.

Creak—

Daemon also stood up from his chair, grabbing Laena's hand as he fixed Corlys with a burning gaze. His expression was like a hunter eyeing its prey.

Corlys glanced away, his eyes dark as they swept over the uncle and nephew, and he sneered inwardly. So, they were waiting for him to slip up, hoping to catch him in the act.

For a moment, the atmosphere at the dinner party froze, and the air seemed to drop to zero. Rhaegar stood like an insurmountable wall, his gaze unyielding.

Corlys clenched his fists. Despite his age, his tall frame still exuded the aura of a seasoned warrior. Daemon didn't need to say anything; he was already itching to start.

Tonight, someone would pay the price.

Bang! Bang!

Suddenly, a knocking sound echoed through the room. Viserys's fingers tapped on the table, his expression solemn as he slowly and stiffly stood up.

“Be careful,” Alicent, standing next to him, offered her customary reminder.

“Don't worry, I'm not that fragile,” Viserys reassured her, patting her hand on his arm. He looked at the three men standing in the room. “I'm not dead yet, and you argue in front of an old man who is about to die?”

He glared particularly at Daemon, his tone growing harsher. “You can't even tolerate a dinner party? Must everything be so tense?”

Daemon's face fell, and he sat back down in his seat. Viserys turned to Corlys. “Lord Corlys, you sit down too.”

Corlys remained unmoved, his gaze unfriendly. Rhaenys glanced at her husband and looked away helplessly.

Viserys's displeasure grew, and he almost shouted, “Your king commands you to sit down!”

Corlys hesitated for a moment, weighing the pros and cons, then sat back down in his chair.

“Very good,” Viserys said, taking a few breaths. He looked at his eldest son with a complicated expression, then addressed the room sincerely. “Everyone, I know that our family has many hidden dangers and misunderstandings.”

Alicent lowered her head in disappointment. Little Daeron noticed his mother was unhappy and said, “Father...”

“Don't interrupt me!” Viserys snapped, and his youngest son's neck retracted, his face turning pale.

The dinner hall fell silent, all eyes on the king.

Viserys took a deep breath and continued, “We are the dragons, descendants of the ancient Valyrians, and unity is the core of our strength. I hope everyone will set aside their resentments and forget the past.”

Rhaegar remained standing, listening intently to his father's words.

Viserys understood Corlys's request and said, “Lord Corlys, I understand your request, and the Iron Throne will respond appropriately.”

He preferred a gentle, conciliatory approach rather than his eldest son's hard-line stance. However, he made no immediate decisions.

Viserys's eyes welled with tears, and he sighed, “Look at me, I'm getting old, and I spend half the day sleeping.”

Daemon lowered his eyes, moved by the sight of his brother's tired face, so different from the man he remembered.

Viserys continued with a relieved smile, “Just as I woke up from bed tonight, I realized something.”

“I'm old!” He laughed at himself. “Of course, compared to the longevity of my grandfather, the Old King, I may still be ten years younger.”

No one in the room laughed at his joke.

Rhaenys, quick-witted, asked, “Viserys, what are you trying to say?”

“Cousin, you always know what I'm thinking,” Viserys replied, stopping his lamentation and resuming a serious expression. “The realm needs a young, responsible and energetic king, and I am no longer qualified for the job.”

He sighed deeply, acknowledging his shortcomings.

Viserys looked at his eldest son with deep love in his eyes and whispered, “I think it's time to abdicate and pass the throne to a qualified king.”

“Rhaegar!” Viserys called out.

Rhaegar, as if waking from a dream, hurriedly replied, “Father, you...”

Viserys waved his hand, a look of reminiscence on his face. "Don't be in a hurry to refuse. You are my eldest son, the boy Aemma gave her life for. You deserve everything."

He didn't mention Rhaegar's intelligence, strength, or ability to control the black dragon, nor his leadership in battle. To Viserys, Rhaegar's status as Aemma's firstborn son was more important than anything else. All other attributes were merely additional conditions, not the main reason.

Finally, Viserys's gaze swept over everyone present before returning to Rhaegar.

Looking at the handsome face that vaguely resembled Aemma, he solemnly said, "Rhaegar, my son, I entrust you with the Iron Throne that has hurt me the most."

"Come, inherit my throne!"

Chapter 483: Sea Snake: I Want a New Heir

Everyone was shocked and speechless. Since the founding of the realm, there had only been deceased kings, not rulers who voluntarily abdicated.

Viserys' heartfelt speech was like a hammer striking the hearts of those present.

"No!" Daemon stood abruptly, his face darkening. "I don't agree. You are my brother and I recognize you only as king."

If Viserys were to die of illness, he would not oppose anyone succeeding him. But as long as his brother lived, he should never step down from the throne and abandon him.

Viserys was silent for a moment before speaking with the severity of an older brother. "Daemon, you are my younger brother, and you should support my decisions even more."

Daemon's eyes were as sharp as a hawk's, staring straight at his brother. The two brothers locked eyes, and a silent battle of wills ensued.

Rhaegar, caught between the two, was in a state of confusion, unable to speak. He was stunned.

When he had gone to wake his father, they had discussed nothing more than punishing the Sea Snake and making a five-year development plan for King's Landing, the Stepstones, and the Free Cities. Abdicating the throne to a wise man? It was completely out of the question.

Rhaegar was taken aback, his mind swirling with a storm of thoughts. "Father, are you abdicating?" The importance of this matter was far greater than the beginning and end of a war.

"Rhaegar, Rhaegar," a soft whisper came from the side.

Rhaegar snapped out of his internal conflict and looked down. Rhaenyra looked nervous, quietly tugging at his sleeve, hurriedly reminding him, "You have to say something."

Rhaegar was taken aback. Rhaenyra's eyes widened and she whispered in a tone of frustration, "Don't let your father down."

His father's health was deteriorating, and he was no longer able to rule. Alicent, Corlys, Daemon, and other threatening figures were disorganized and unable to form an effective resistance. Taking advantage of the great achievements of the war, Rhaegar could succeed to the throne, inheriting the prosperous kingdom left by his great-grandfather and father.

Rhaegar's eyes narrowed as he stared at Rhaenyra, as he had when they were children. His gaze then moved down to Baelon, who was fast asleep. The little one was sleeping soundly, looking very cute, like a little animal clinging to him.

Rhaegar took a deep breath, and images of his father, Rhaenyra, and the two children played back in his mind. He suddenly felt at ease. A thought flashed through his mind.

"The time has come!"

Viserys looked away from Daemon and asked, "Rhaegar, tell your father what you are thinking at this moment."

Daemon's eyes darkened, and his grip tightened around his wine cup, his knuckles turning white. The sudden news was hard to accept. When he was young, his brother refused to even consider him as the heir. Now, in his middle years, he wanted to pass the throne to his nephew. Jealousy had made him unrecognizable.

Corlys, Rhaenys, and the others were all stunned into silence. The king abdicating and naming his heir was unprecedented in over a hundred years since the Targaryen dynasty was founded. This was no small matter.

Alicent lowered her head, her eyes tightly closed, silently praying to the Seven. Her slightly trembling body betrayed her fear.

"Father, I agree!" Facing his father's direct question, Rhaegar found his voice. He spoke with force and conviction. "If you are tired of sitting on that Iron Throne, I will take your place. I promise that the Targaryen dynasty will usher in a new era of dragons!"

His words were spoken with a steely gaze, like a sharp sword.

"Good!" Viserys exclaimed, his frail body trembling with excitement. "My boy, the Iron Throne is yours."

To occupy new territory, restore peace to the kingdom, and see his eldest son ascend the throne—these were the accomplishments that would make Viserys's life worthy of his youth.

Bang!

The wine glass smashed heavily on the table, sending the dinner plates jumping. Daemon's face darkened, and without regard for etiquette, he turned and stormed out of the room. It wasn't anger or jealousy driving him—it was the feeling of being perpetually excluded from his brother's plans, never considered a true part of the family.

"Daemon, stop!"

He had only taken a few steps when Viserys's weak voice called out from behind.

Daemon halted, looked back at his anxious brother, and said, "You have the world's best heir. What else do you want from me?"

“You bastard, do you want to make me die of anger!?” Viserys shouted, his face flushing with an unnatural redness. “You only have me as an ally at court, and everything I have given you, you’ve squandered.”

Daemon rolled his eyes and snorted.

Viserys continued, exasperated, “I’m abdicating, but do you still want to be spoiled and act like a child forever?”

Daemon’s expression changed slightly, and his inner defenses began to waver.

Viserys sighed deeply. “Rhaegar is my eldest son. His abilities are obvious to all. You are his uncle and his most capable assistant.” He looked Daemon in the eyes, advising earnestly, “Brother, don’t make me teach you how to treat a king again.”

With Viserys stepping back from power, Daemon would be completely alone. No one would protect a wayward, reckless man anymore.

The words hit home, and Daemon, unusually quiet, stubbornly turned his head to the side. His heart pounded, and his fingers, skilled at drawing a bow and wielding a sword, twitched slightly.

The last time he had a heated argument with Viserys was the night after his nephew was born. He had mocked his nephew as the “One Day Heir” at a brothel in Flea Bottom. Otto’s spies had discovered the incident and reported it to a grief-stricken Viserys. Daemon was scolded severely and nearly had his tongue cut out.

This time, it was also because of his nephew that they were at odds. Daemon’s mind raced with retorts, but none could be spoken. The last time, he had called Viserys a weakling, a man drained by the leeches of the Small Council. He was then banished from King’s Landing for the first time.

This time, Daemon chose to remain silent. He wasn’t afraid of Viserys; he knew his brother wouldn’t be so cruel as to strike him. But he couldn’t refute the truth: Viserys’s decision was not wrong, and his nephew was indeed capable.

He just...

Daemon lowered his eyes and glanced sideways at the younger Rhaegar, a flicker of jealousy in his indifferent gaze. Viserys could never trust him the way he trusted his nephew. He felt out of place at this dinner, in the Red Keep, like an outsider forced to fit in.

Daemon locked eyes with Rhaegar, who returned his gaze steadily. Rhaegar’s long hair fell over his shoulders, and his eyes seemed to look into Daemon’s very soul. He remained silent, neither advising Daemon nor comforting his father. This was a quarrel between the older generation, and it was not his place to intervene. Every word he said could affect the brothers’ relationship.

Like everyone else there, he chose to remain silent.

“Daemon!” Viserys commanded, his voice almost an order. “Sit back in your seat and don’t make me say it again.”

Laena quickly looked at her husband, her eyes filled with concern. She didn’t want him to anger the king and be banished from the royal family again. Daemon, however, paid no attention to his wife’s plea. What he was about to do could not be influenced by others.

Viserys shouted angrily, "Do not influence him! Let him decide for himself whether to stay or go!"

Before he abdicated, he needed to see Daemon's resolve.

Tapping, tapping...

The sound of footsteps echoed, followed by a thud on the ground. Daemon's face contorted, he turned and took three steps back to his chair. He sat down heavily, the chair legs making a loud squeaking sound as they rubbed against the marble floor. It was as if the scolded child was deliberately trying to make his presence known.

"Hmph!" Viserys snorted, his stern expression relaxing slightly as the anger in his mind finally cooled. At least the bastard has a conscience.

Daemon took a sip of his drink, his face sour. He would rather have his conscience licked clean by a stray dog on the street.

Viserys didn't care and turned to his eldest son. "Rhaegar, don't worry about Daemon being my brother. Use him as much as you want."

Rhaegar was speechless. Looking around at the two middle-aged men, he was at a loss for words. Had Aegon or Aemond dared to treat him with such disrespect, they would have been on the ground by now, teeth smashed, begging for mercy. Of course, his father was not a skilled fighter. He was simply asking, in a different way, that his good uncle not be harmed at will.

"Pfft!"

Daemon caught the deeper meaning behind Viserys's words and sneered in disdain.

Rhaegar's forehead creased, but he said nothing more than, "Yes, Father."

I will not hesitate.

"Good boy," Viserys said, satisfied. His face took on a healthier color as he changed the subject, turning his attention to Corlys, who watched the proceedings with amusement.

"While I am still in power, you can make any request you want," Viserys said sincerely.

He knew he was not a particularly good king, and the honor and shame of the realm depended largely on the political legacy of his grandfather, King Jaehaerys. He had benefited from the dividends of his predecessors and wanted to leave his eldest son with more invisible wealth.

The Small Council was capable and could share the king's burden, but they couldn't be everywhere. The kingdom had newly acquired territories: the Stepstones, the Disputed Lands, and the Dorne region. Daemon and the Sea Snake were important to ruling the Narrow Sea territories.

Rhaegar was ruthless, which made it difficult for him to tolerate Daemon and Corlys. Viserys had to put aside his prejudices and win them over personally.

Corlys, suppressing his emotions, showed his true skills. "Your Grace, your honesty touches my heart. Forgive me for speaking so openly."

Viserys waved his hand and smiled. "My court has always encouraged its advisors to speak their minds."

Corlys nodded in agreement. "I have lost an heir, and Driftmark has no lord to succeed me. I demand that the royal family compensate me with a new heir."

Rhaegar and Viserys exchanged glances, both surprised.

How can this be compensated?

Rhaenys, slow to realize, fixed her eyes on the Sea Snake.

Where could the royal family find a new heir?

Unless Corlys had other candidates in mind.

As the thought crossed her mind, even a confident woman like Rhaenys began to suspect him.

The children didn't understand, but the Lords looked at Rhaenys in a way that made her feel uneasy. Especially Daemon.

His face suddenly brightened, and after staring at the Sea Snake in surprise, his eyes gradually became playful.

They have something up their sleeve!

Chapter 484: Daemon Wants a Third Child

"Cough, cough, let me make myself clear," Corlys began, flushing as he coughed to hide his embarrassment. He couldn't help but feel guilty under his wife's piercing gaze. A thought that had just popped into his head was immediately extinguished.

Rhaegar exchanged puzzled glances with his father. What's going on?

Viserys returned a slightly reassuring look and asked carefully, "Lord Corlys, please state your conditions."

But he thought to himself, Could it be that the other party is so blind as to fancy his two adorable grandchildren? Don't even think about it!

"Your Grace, you need not worry," Corlys explained, turning his gaze to Daemon, who watched the scene with a smirk on his face. "Daemon married my daughter and she gives birth to children with Velaryon blood. I ask Your Grace to be so kind as to give me one of the children of my deceased son, Ser Laenor, as a foster daughter."

Laenor had been a knight before his death, and was therefore qualified to adopt a noble child.

Viserys was relieved to hear this. It was Daemon's children that Corlys wanted. It was not uncommon for a nobleman to adopt his nephews as his own.

Rhaegar's spirit lifted, and he and Rhaenyra turned their sights on Daemon. If he remembered correctly, his good uncle had once made a serious threat. Daemon had vowed never to give up any of his children to be adopted by others.

Sure enough, Daemon's face turned black in an instant, even more so than when he first sat down. Being in the spotlight was not a good feeling.

He glanced at Laena and then looked at the Sea Snake with a gloomy expression. That old bastard still hasn't given up on his daughter.

When Laenor was alive, he couldn't even share a room with his new wife, yet he was eyeing Daemon's two daughters. Now that Laenor had been killed, he was still eyeing them.

Damn him!

Daemon's dark thoughts began to wonder if he should pick a time to let his father-in-law die of illness.

Clang!

A knife fell with a crisp sound.

Baela and Rhaena, sitting at the side of the long table, were stunned to hear their grandfather demand that they be adopted.

Baela exclaimed in surprise, "What?"

Her young mind struggled to comprehend the full implications of the conversation.

Rhaena, dropping her knife onto her porcelain plate, looked around nervously. Unlike her confident and strong sister, she was naturally meek.

Like Moondancer, and Morning the young dragon who was slow to develop, they were still too young.

"Don't be afraid," little Daeron said, taking her hand and patting it reassuringly.

Rhaena didn't respond, but picked up her knife again and continued cutting her meat with trembling hands.

Viserys, watching the scene, said with a helpless look, "I'm sorry, they are Daemon's daughters. I can't make a decision without their parents' consent."

If the Sea Snake had asked to adopt Daemon as his son, Viserys might have considered it before refusing. But adopting his nieces was a different matter.

"Your Grace, if you support me, I will negotiate with Daemon," Corlys said, turning his attention to Daemon. "Baela or Rhaena could be adopted by the late Laenor. She would inherit the title of Lord of the Tides and Driftmark, and she would not be mistreated."

Throughout the continent of Westeros, House Velaryon of Driftmark was known for its power, wealth, and formidable fleet. These were not unattainable luxuries for the nobles.

"No!" Daemon sneered, refusing flatly. "Do not even think of it. My children will never change their name."

A Targaryen is a Targaryen. The Dragonlord's blood contains fire and will not change to Velaryon, whose blood is as salty as the sea.

Viserys attempted to persuade him. "The wealth of Driftmark is famous throughout Westeros. It would be better for a girl to inherit Driftmark than to marry into a marriage of convenience when she is older."

Daemon snorted, unimpressed. He had plans to take Tyrosh and would surely be a prince in the future. Laena was injured and might have difficulty giving birth to a male heir. His twin daughters were his only heirs, and he couldn't afford to lose either of them. In this era, women were far more likely to die than men.

Corlys frowned and tried to persuade him further. "I only want a granddaughter with Velaryon blood. I will raise her with the same care and attention as I did Laenor and Laena."

Daemon laughed bitterly. "Do you think you raised Laenor well?"

The eldest son of the most powerful noble family in the kingdom was impotent and preferred the company of men. If Laenor had been a normal man, the Sea Snake wouldn't be worrying about having an heir.

Corlys's face froze, clearly hit in a sore spot.

Viserys, never a man of endless patience, snapped, "Daemon, the dead are dead. Show some respect."

"Yes," Daemon responded lazily, then turned to his daughters and asked, "Have either of you thought about succeeding Ser Laenor?"

Baela immediately shook her head and said bluntly, "I am your daughter." She then looked firmly at her grandfather, Sea Snake, rejecting his proposition outright.

Corlys's eyes darkened, but he wasn't visibly upset. This little girl had a fiery temper, which he admired, but as Daemon's eldest daughter, she was certainly not a candidate for adoption.

He shifted his gaze to the other granddaughter.

Rhaena's face tensed, and she looked to her birth mother, Laena, and her foster mother, Rhaenyra, for help.

"Good girl, you have to choose for yourself," Laena said, her emotions mixed and conflicted.

Rhaena, feeling helpless, had tears welling up in her eyes.

Rhaenyra looked at the girl she had raised since childhood, feeling a sense of helplessness, and subtly reminded her, "Follow your heart, just as Morning wants to fly into the sky."

According to the Dragon's Code, Laenor's children would no longer have the right to tame dragons. But as Rhaena was adopted and hatched a baby dragon herself, she wouldn't lose her rights.

Rhaena, smart enough to catch her foster mother's meaning, felt a faint light of hope in her previously lost eyes.

Corlys, having watched her intently all morning, smiled kindly and said in a low voice, "Rhaena, if you are willing to carry on your uncle's line, the future of Driftmark will be yours."

He added, "If you are worried that Daemon will not like it and you will continue to live with Rhaenyra, you are still a member of the royal family."

Rhaena looked shy and unsure, not knowing how to refuse. She glanced at her indifferent father and silent mother, and her heart sank even deeper.

Baela tugged at her and looked at her. Rhaena understood immediately and looked at her foster mother.

By this time, Rhaenyra's eyes were almost dry, signaling the little girl to pay attention to Daemon.

Rhaena was stunned for a moment, half understanding.

Corlys then turned to Viserys, "Your Grace, if any of the children are adopted, will you guarantee that they will not be deprived of their dragon?"

Viserys hesitated. "Well..."

To be fair, he didn't want any of the Velaryons to have the opportunity to ride a dragon again. According to the rules of Westeros, adoption is a change of family. The royal family has the right to strip adopted children of their dragon-riding rights.

Suddenly, Viserys noticed that Daemon was also looking at him. His eyes narrowed slightly as he assessed the situation.

Viserys was familiar with that look - Daemon was weighing the pros and cons.

Realizing this, Viserys immediately chose silence. No initiative, no refusal, no responsibility. A complete change from his usual determined stance.

Corlys' eyes twitched slightly, realizing that the king's ability to play dumb had reached a new level.

Rhaegar watched quietly, enjoying the spectacle of intrigue.

Interesting, very interesting! It seems that Daemon is firmly against it but is leaving the choice to his daughters. Corlys, who demanded an heir, began to pick holes in the Dragon's Code. Father is a man who is used to acting dumb. Well, well, well, worthy of the old generation of nobles. He gave Rhaegar a hard time.

Rhaenyra also sensed something was off and whispered, "Is something wrong with them?"

Although she had cared for five children in succession, she still retained the innocence of a maiden.

Rhaegar sat down and whispered, "Watch and learn." He lightly stroked Rhaenyra's fair face, feeling the familiar warmth.

Rhaenyra blushed and looked away proudly. The first child she had taken care of was Rhaegar, and now he was not being good at all.

...

The twists and turns of the evening had cast a strange gloom over the atmosphere.

As the future king, Rhaegar watched the proceedings next to the future queen, taking the opportunity to take Aemon from Helaena's arms and hold him in his own.

Viserys, Corlys, and Daemon all kept quiet, planning their next moves. Each sought to further their interests while laying the groundwork for the new king's reign.

The most uncomfortable of all were Rhaenys and Laena, mother and daughter. One watched her husband snatch her cousin's child, while the other witnessed her husband stab her father in the back. Should they support their own family or their cause? Help their relatives or uphold their principles? Neither option brought them happiness.

Suddenly, Rhaena jumped off her chair and ran to Daemon. He was leaning on the table, one hand on his lap, the other subconsciously playing with a wine glass. Rhaena took one of his large hands and held it in her arms, resting her little head on his arm and rubbing it affectionately.

She didn't want her father to be angry, and she didn't want to refuse her grandfather's request. Uncle Laenor was very pitiful. And Driftmark was big and beautiful, with Hull more lively than King's Landing or Dragonstone.

With a child's mentality and the teachings of her foster mother Rhaenyra, Rhaena wanted to inherit Driftmark and be on an equal footing with her sister Baela in the future. But she was reluctant to give up her father and her current life and was afraid she would regret her choice.

Daemon lowered his head, feeling the tender touch of his daughter's face, and looked at her, seeing her reluctance to part with him. He asked, "Tell your father, do you want to inherit Driftmark?"

Rhaena didn't dare to raise her face but nodded her head. Driftmark was great. If she inherited it, she could help her foster mother and father. Unlike now, she would be a significant figure rather than a useless little girl with a sickly little dragon.

"Very good," Daemon smiled and nodded. "You are worthy of my blood."

Seeing Daemon softening, Corlys hurriedly said, "You and Laena will have the chance to have more children in the future, and Rhaena can be adopted by Velaryon. The two families can still form a marriage alliance."

In the unlikely event that Daemon could have a son, then the siblings could follow the family tradition and produce a child who could be adopted by Velaryon. By exploiting the loopholes in the Dragon Code, House Velaryon would ensure the right to tame dragons would be passed down for at least two generations.

Daemon pondered this in silence. He had married Laena, the only daughter of the Sea Snake, and Rhaena could be adopted by House Velaryon to become a female Lord. If the grandchildren had children, they could control House Velaryon's power.

Why not? As he thought about it, Daemon glanced at Laena, as if considering having a third child. Laena turned her head away, not wanting to look at him.

The two families were deep in their schemes.

Viserys kept a close eye on Daemon's micro-expressions, trying to guess what his brother was thinking. The royal family could strip Rhaena of her dragon-riding rights after the adoption, but there was no need.

Viserys glanced at his youngest son, who was chewing on a pig's foot, and smiled. "The only suitable male heir in the royal family who has not yet been betrothed is Daeron. If Rhaena is adopted, the Targaryens and the Velaryons can be united in marriage once again."

Chapter 485: Dragon Horn

"Huh?" Little Daeron was shocked. His oily fingers pointed at himself, innocently asking, "Me?"

"Pfft!" Baela laughed out loud, clearly enjoying the moment.

Rhaena blushed, clinging to her father's arm and huddling up shyly.

The three children laughed and played, gradually getting to know each other better.

The Lords reacted in different ways.

Laena smiled gently, quietly observing little Daeron's expression and stroking her daughter's cheek. A marriage to the royal family would be a significant bond connecting the three parties.

Daemon's face flushed, and he forced a smile. "My child hasn't even made a decision yet, and you're already making plans."

Little Daeron shrank his neck and put down his pig's trotters, feeling the weight of an unavoidable situation.

Viserys was delighted. "If you are willing to give up your succession, I will negotiate with Lord Corlys."

Corlys said earnestly, "The three children grew up together, so they are very compatible in both sentiment and status."

At first glance, it seemed like a harmonious family.

Daemon wanted to scold them for their presumption, but he decided to hold back. After careful consideration, he chose to be patient.

The situation improved and Corlys' mood lifted. He even took a sip of wine to comfort himself. Velaryon had no shortage of heirs with the blood of the merman king, but he wanted one with dragon blood, preferably one who could forge a closer relationship with the royal family. For decades to come, under Rhaegar's reign, Velaryon would enjoy the honor of being second only to the royal family.

Conversely, the royal family lacked a fleet that could sail the seas, and it was essential to win over House Velaryon. The Dragonlords and the sea families had been perfect partners since the time of the Free Cities. Otherwise, their ancestors would not have risked following the exiled Aenar to Westeros.

After a brief moment of thought, Daemon made up his mind and rubbed Rhaena's head, reluctantly saying, "Adoption is fine, but she must be raised by Rhaenyra until she comes of age."

It was inevitable that his daughter would marry one day. Marrying her to the youngest son of his brother would be a good match. The only condition was that she be raised in the royal family and have a Targaryen heart.

Corlys frowned slightly at the news, obviously not very happy about it. If she is adopted, she should be raised on Driftmark. Otherwise, just changing her surname, who knows what she's thinking? If she is an ungrateful wretch, his Sea Snake will be eaten by his son-in-law, and the family line will be extinguished.

Daemon looked at him with a fierce gaze, not afraid to meet his eyes. His first wife, Lady Rhea of Runestone, had been an arrangement made by Queen Alysanne, his grandmother. There was no shortage of people who wanted him to use his offspring to seize Runestone. But he didn't like that Bronze woman, and she was wary of him.

However, the Sea Snake was now in trouble and had come to him for help. His true nature had already fallen to the lower class.

Viserys looked around and gave Rhaenyra, who was watching the proceedings, a subtle wink.

Rhaenyra was taken aback for a moment but quickly composed herself. She rose and said, "I am Rhaena's foster mother. She will live with me to learn the court's etiquette better."

Both Corlys and Daemon were surprised. The mention of court etiquette was just a pretext. Rhaenyra, as the Princess of Dragonstone and future Queen, was in a better position to raise Rhaena than Driftmark or Tyrosh. With Rhaenyra, Rhaena would be guaranteed a higher status and fewer obstacles.

Daemon had to admit that the offer was tempting. It had been decided long ago that Rhaena would be raised by Rhaenyra.

While the men hesitated, the women took action.

Rhaenys stood up gracefully, placed a hand on her husband's shoulder, and asserted, "Rhaenyra is the foster mother of both girls. It goes without saying where they will be raised."

Laena agreed wholeheartedly, "The children will grow up with Rhaenyra and form a deep bond with the newborns from a young age."

Bang! The wine glass hit the table lightly as Rhaegar finally spoke, "Agreed."

The bloodline of ancient Valyria had returned to the continent of Essos. With Aegon and Aemond in charge, the Sea Snake and Daemon were indispensable. But...

Daemon glanced at his nephew and saw the smile on his face, narrowing his eyes involuntarily. He thought to himself, 'I should have beaten my nephew when he's young.'

Rhaenyra had taken good care of Rhaegar, but he had never had a full childhood.

With no objections, the matter was settled.

Baela and Rhaena were delighted. They cheered, "Princess!" and ran to Rhaenyra, their faces beaming with joy. One of them took Baelon, who was fast asleep, in her arms, while the other took Aemon, who was being naughty, and they volunteered to help care for the babies.

Rhaenyra was also very happy, stroking the two little girls she had raised alongside the twins, a slight smile on her lips.

Corlys watched silently, giving up on his unrealistic demands. Raising the girls with Rhaenyra was acceptable, as long as they maintained a heart that protected House Velaryon. Rhaena had half of Velaryon's blood in her veins. Blood is blood, he thought, believing the matter to be settled.

However, it was not yet enough.

Rhaegar smiled and said, "Rhaena is the daughter of Daemon and hatched the young dragon Morning. It would be wrong to deprive her of her right to ride her own dragons."

"But the Dragon Code cannot be tarnished. There can be no loopholes."

Corlys's face changed slightly, and he said anxiously, "Prince, what do you mean by that?" If they strictly followed the Dragon Code, his little plan would be doomed.

Viserys and Daemon looked at him simultaneously, their eyes full of surprise and a hint of doubt. It was a bit inappropriate to bring up the Dragon Code at this time. House Velaryon should not have been holding the dragon in the first place.

Rhaegar ignored all the stares and said frankly, "Rhaena is the adopted daughter of Rhaenyra. She changed her surname after being adopted and will be married to Daeron, thus becoming part of the Targaryen royal family."

"So Morning still belongs to her."

Hearing this, Corlys's eyes flashed, and he let out a sigh of relief.

Then Rhaegar continued, "Daeron and Rhaena's second child after marriage can be adopted by House Velaryon, but since Rhaena has already been shown leniency, the adopted child's cradle can no longer contain dragon eggs."

Some traditions cannot be bent. Rhaena, as one of us, can have dragons. But the next generation cannot.

Corlys frowned, understanding the implications. Viserys and Daemon, on the other hand, looked pensive. Rhaena is Daemon's daughter, so she has the right to tame dragons. By taking Laenor's name, she would automatically lose that right.

Rhaegar retained Rhaena's rights to maintain the alliance between the Sea Snakes and Daemon. Rhaena would still be a member of the royal family, marrying Daeron. However, the two adopted children could not continue the dragon-taming rights from their mother Rhaena in accordance with the Dragon Code since they would only be Velaryons.

At first glance, it seems cruel to take the highest honor away from a newborn. Rhaegar could only say that changing families was a very complicated matter. To protect the rights of the royal family, sacrifices are inevitable.

"I agree!" Daemon was the first to speak, everyone looked at him.

He took a sip of wine with a calm expression on his face. He was only concerned with the rights of his own children. And the children of his children? That wasn't his business. Children and grandchildren will take care of themselves. He had no interest in fighting for a grandchild who didn't even exist.

Viserys also said, "It's reasonable. Rhaena is the royal family's expectation, and she shouldn't expect more."

Corlys was saddened and knew he could not argue. He had already made a fortune by being so bold as to demand Rhaena.

On second thought, the immediate territory of the royal family extends beyond the Narrow Sea, and House Velaryon, also a descendant of Valyria, is an indispensable link. If the descendants are worthy, they can marry back into the royal family. Though the Targaryens had a special family tradition, it was impossible for every generation of male and female heirs to be married internally. He won Rhaenys's favor with his charm, after all.

So he gladly accepted.

...

The moon hung high in the sky, surrounded by a tapestry of twinkling stars.

Late that night, the dinner party finally came to an end.

As a result of the successful negotiations at the table, the three parties had forged a strong alliance for the time being. Peace terms with Braavos, the strengthening of the Stepstones garrison, and the resumption of trade with the Free Cities had all been agreed upon.

With these key points secured, the royal family-led alliance was poised to rapidly expand its military and political power. This would lay the foundation for the Targaryens' strategy of invasion, colonization, and expansion.

"The envoy from Braavos will leave tomorrow. See the Sea Snakes off properly," Rhaegar instructed, yawning as he walked alone down the corridor to his chambers. He was exhausted after the day's work. The war was over, negotiations had been successfully concluded, and yet, his father's sudden decision to abdicate weighed heavily on his mind.

"What a life of work! I can't rest for a moment," he thought.

Back in his bedroom, Rhaegar stripped off his clothes and threw himself onto the soft goose-down bed. Rhaenyra was not there; Baela and Rhaena, upset by the day's events, had insisted on sleeping with their foster mother and the two babies. Little Daeron, eager to join in the fun, had been unceremoniously grabbed by the collar and handed over to Ser Erryk. The seven-year-old boy was no match for the spirited four-year-old Baela, much to the embarrassment of the Targaryens.

Rhaenyra had conceived in April and given birth in August. The twins were born in mid-December, and their nameday celebration was approaching. It was now the year 122 AC, and Rhaegar was a year older. The 17-year-old heir prince was soon to be promoted to the role of a true Dragonlord.

"I'm so tired," Rhaegar murmured, closing his eyes. He snapped his fingers.

Pop!

The fireplace ignited, and the scent of incense wood filled the room, dispersing the dampness. Rhaegar, drowsy, gradually fell asleep. Just before he drifted off, a thought crossed his mind: King's Landing, adjacent to Blackwater Bay, typically experienced snowfall and freezing temperatures in winter. It was already January, yet not a single snowflake had fallen, and the temperature remained unusually warm.

"The climate is pleasant. The people can enjoy a good winter," Rhaegar thought.

Pop!

As he fell asleep, the flames in the fireplace flickered and danced seductively. In his dreams, he found himself in a familiar, misty fog on a bloody battlefield. Wearing black Valyrian steel armor, he held Truefyre and Dragonclaw in each hand. A scarlet cloak hung behind him, rustling in the wind like the blood of a thousand lives.

Crackling—

Suddenly, a thunderclap resounded, and red lightning streaked across the chaotic sky. Fog obscured his vision as light rain began to fall, washing away the broken limbs and bones on the ground.

Rhaegar took a step, his boot sinking into the mud, creating a small puddle. Rainwater and blood mixed together, forming a small stream that splashed a bit of water onto his cheek. He felt a chill, as clear as the coolness of the water.

“Where am I?” he wondered aloud. The scene looked eerily familiar, reminiscent of the dreamlike landscape he dreamed in the Starry Sept.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, a high-pitched roar echoed through the fog.

Rhaegar immediately looked up.

A shadowy figure darted through the mist, too quick to discern.

Rhaegar's eyes widened, letting the rain fall on his face as he whispered, "A young dragon?"

If he wasn't mistaken, it seemed to be a young dragon the size of a shepherd dog. Unfortunately, the thick fog obscured his view.

"Roar..."

Another roar echoed through the night.

Rhaegar reacted quickly, turning towards the sound.

A blue shadow zipped past, splitting into different directions before disappearing into the depths of the fog.

This time, Rhaegar saw it clearly.

It was a young dragon with blue scales, about the size of a large dog.

"Where did this dragon come from?" Rhaegar muttered to himself.

His first thought was Dragonstone. The nest in the Stone Drum Tower housed over a dozen dragon eggs of various ages. Silverwing and Vermithor had gone into hiding on Dragonmount, and it was possible that they had hatched a young dragon.

Rhaegar even considered Braavos, the Smoking Sea, and Sothoryos.

The three dragon eggs of Dreamfyre had gone missing and had not been found. According to Syrio's speculation, they were likely in the hands of the former Sealord of Braavos, who had mysteriously died in a wildfire.

The Smoking Sea was known to be a dragon's lair, home to the Fourteen Flames. Before Morghul flew out, it was unknown if it had laid any eggs.

Sothoryos was another possibility. The giant dragon skeleton there had always seemed mysterious.

The cave walls were carved with symbols of evil blood sacrifices, and three dragon eggs had been discovered there. One of the eggs, dark red, had fossilized before hatching. The other two had hatched around the time of the Doom, but the young dragons likely didn't survive.

Rhaegar frowned, pondering the possibility of an inaccurate age estimation.

He regretted not having had more time to explore Sothoryos thoroughly. He had only ventured to the northern half and the surrounding islands, not the core region or the south. There could still be dragons there.

The appearance of these two young dragons in the fog puzzled him. Who could have predicted that the Red Comet would descend, amplifying the tide of magic? The world was brimming with magic, leading to an explosion in dragon numbers. Like Stormcloud, Tyraxes, Morning, and Moondancer, young dragons had been hatching with increasing frequency.

Rhaegar pondered how to find these young dragons.

Suddenly, a deep, resonant horn sounded, echoing through the foggy battlefield.

Rhaegar listened intently. The sound was ancient, heavy, and imbued with a sense of heat.

As the horn echoed, the fog began to change.

"Roar!"

Roar...

The fog gradually dissipated, revealing two distinct dragon cries of pain cutting through the rain.

Rhaegar squinted, and his vision shifted.

He saw a vast sea under a dark, smoky sky. A rainy night in a ruined town, centered on a palace...

A ruined palace of black Dragonstone, the floor cracked and broken, with a shattered altar at the center.

Whoo-hoo-hoo...

A five-foot-long horn, shaped like a dragon's horn with black and blood-red stripes, was enshrined on the altar. Though no one was playing it, the horn echoed with an ancient melody, its dark exterior glowing with a faint red light.

Rhaegar was momentarily stunned and recalled reading about a magical item in an ancient book.

With a sudden inspiration, he blurted out, "The Dragon's Horn!"

Chapter 486: A Cheap Deal Between Brothers

The next day, the weather was clear. Rhaegar lay in bed, drifting in and out of a light sleep.

Knock, knock...

The door was knocked on, light and orderly.

Rhaegar woke up with a start.

"Shh!"

Rhaegar's head was spinning as he pressed his hand to his forehead, gasping. It felt like a hammer had struck him, leaving a migraine in its wake.

He shook his head, waiting for the dizziness to subside, and muttered, "A mist place, a young dragon and a horn!"

A sudden flash of inspiration cleared his mind immediately.

Rhaegar sat up abruptly, half-believing, “The dragon's horn... could it be in the Smoking Sea?”

Last night's dream seemed connected to the prophetic dream at the Starry Sept. The last time, he had a premonition that Rhaenyra would give birth prematurely. Last night, his vision expanded.

A land shrouded in mist, two young dragons without masters, and the Dragon Horn, an artifact comparable to a treasure.

Rhaegar did not dare to be negligent and took out an ancient book stored in his space necklace—a dragon training manual written by a Dragonlord family.

Flipping through the pages carefully, his hand paused at an illustration.

“Dragons nest in various places. The Dragonlord will not imprison his own companions, or he will face severe punishment... When war comes, sound the horn of the dragon to summon distant companions. Only those of Dragonlord blood may touch it!”

The pages were densely covered in ancient Valyrian writing, describing the existence of the dragon horn in a way that aligned with the dragon's habits.

Rhaegar glanced over the page and stopped at the simple illustration next to the text. It depicted a giant horn, its surface engraved with minute patterns, exuding an ancient and mysterious atmosphere.

He examined it closely, his eyelids twitching. The dragon horn in his dream was 70% similar to the illustration in the ancient book. The only difference was that the black horn in his dream had a different pattern engraved on its surface.

“It really is a dragon's horn,” Rhaegar thought, stunned. He closed the book with a bang.

Knock, knock...

As he pondered the meaning of last night's dream, there was another knock on the door.

Rhaegar took a deep breath, adjusted his state of mind, and said calmly, “Come in.”

Dreams have a reason. Since I dreamed of the dragon's horn, I might be able to dream of its general location in the future.

Crack!

The door swung open, and a figure in a white dress stepped inside.

Helaena's face was tense as she carried a covered plate in her arms, her big, clear eyes darting around the room.

She squeezed through the doorway and peered at Rhaegar in bed, trying to gauge his mood.

She looked amusingly out of place.

Rhaegar smiled and waved, “What are you looking at? Come on in.”

In the vast Red Keep, she was perhaps the only one who found any joy.

“Then I'll come in.”

Helaena tiptoed into the room.

It was modest, but the room had a full, curved, and upright back, and the door closed behind her.

Rhaegar adjusted his long hair and glanced at her.

Helaena wore a simple, slim white dress that outlined her well-proportioned body.

The baby fat on her face had disappeared, and her freckles had faded, revealing her fair and beautiful complexion.

Her silver-gold curls cascaded behind her head, loosely tied at the roots with a rubber band, giving her a fluffy look.

Rhaegar smiled, thinking to himself, what a lazy girl.

At 14, most noble families were already engaged or married, but she still seemed to drift through her days in a daze.

“Brother, I brought you breakfast.”

Helaena walked shyly to the bed, opened the lid, and presented the tray.

Classic white bread, milk, and ham.

Rhaegar drank the milk in one gulp, then looked up and down at Helaena, who hesitated to speak, and smiled, “If you have a request, tell me.”

If you're being nice to me, it must be...

You have a favor to ask.

He knew his sister very well, she was not lively, her thoughts were always written all over her face.

Helaena lowered her gaze, stealing glances at her brother as she whispered, "Last night, mother and father were together."

As she spoke, she nervously tapped her index fingers together.

Rhaegar paused, the piece of bread halfway to his mouth, struck speechless.

He nearly choked on the milk he had just swallowed.

Was this her idea of a joke, and at such an expensive breakfast?

Realizing her blunder, Helaena's head drooped, her cheeks brushing against her collar as she murmured a plea, “Brother, Father needs someone with him. Please, don't confine Mother.”

“Is that why you came?” Rhaegar surmised.

Without hesitation, Helaena nodded. “If Mother stays locked in that dark room, she'll lose her mind.”

Her small hand crept to rest on his lap, her touch tentative, like a timid puppy seeking comfort.

Their mother had been confined to the dark room again just that morning.

Her brothers, Aegon and Aemond, lacked the courage to plead with Rhaegar, leaving her to bear the responsibility.

Rhaegar sighed, recognizing the true purpose of her visit.

He caught her gently probing hand and held it firmly, his tone serious. "Mistakes must be punished. It is mercy enough that Alicent only in solitary confinement."

If not for the love of his father and siblings, he might have resolved the matter with poison.

Helaena bit her lip, her eyes pleading.

"No," Rhaegar said firmly.

"If you can't accept that, you may leave now."

He snapped the lid back onto the breakfast tray and handed it to her.

Helaena recoiled slightly, agitated, and edged towards the goose-down mattress.

Rhaegar's expression darkened. "Leave. I need to dress."

The pleasant atmosphere from earlier had evaporated.

Helaena nodded silently, set the tray on the round table, and walked slowly to the door.

She muttered under her breath as she opened it.

"Aegon's lying. My pleas are futile."

"Believing his lies..."

With a determined look, Helaena stepped out, resolving to confront the falsehoods with her Long Summer sword when she returned.

As soon as she stepped out the door, an impatient voice rang out.

"Alicent must atone for her sins in the chapel. Tell someone to move her to the quiet room in the inner hall to pray, and send two holy sisters to watch over her."

Helaena's eyes widened with surprise.

Without waiting for confirmation, Rhaegar barked, "Get out!"

"Okay."

Helaena, thrilled, dashed away.

In the bedroom, Rhaegar took a bite of bread, chewing thoughtfully.

Alicent may be a bit foolish, but at least she lacks any real power.

Father is nearing abdication and might retire to Dragonstone or Harrenhal to recuperate, where he'll need care.

Alicent will have to leave the Darkroom eventually, if only out of respect for Aegon and Helaena.

His siblings had been invaluable to him.

Whether in the Narrow Sea War or the Dorne War, they had proven their worth.

Even last night, Aegon's performance was heroic, taunting the Sea Snake's reproductive abilities.

Aegon was indeed a reliable second brother.

...

It was a sunny morning.

Rhaegar had just finished breakfast and was about to change into his regular clothes when he left the room.

"Prince."

Erryk stood at the door, dressed in silver armor and a white robe.

Rhaegar asked with concern, "How is your injury?"

Erryk held his head high and said confidently, "It's not serious."

Rhaegar smiled and stepped out.

After taking a few steps, a strange feeling tugged at his heart.

Erryk was the commander of the Kingsguard, and he wouldn't be here without reason.

"Is something wrong with Father?" Rhaegar asked.

Erryk bowed his head and said in a low voice, "Your Grace summoned Prince Daemon this morning, which delayed the fleet's departure from Driftmark."

"I see."

Rhaegar slapped his forehead and sighed. "Take me to see him."

Abdication was a significant event, and even the smallest detail could be debated for days.

'Let's go take a look.'

"Yes, Your Grace," Erryk replied, leading the way.

...

The King's Bedroom

"He is my child and will soon inherit my throne. You must love him as much as you love me."

"How can you say the word 'love' so easily?"

"Don't interrupt. I'll teach you how to be an adviser!"

"I admit my guilt, but I should not be punished by having to swear allegiance to a boy."

The bedroom, adorned with explicit wall paintings and filled with the strong scent of incense from the hand warmer, felt oppressive. Viserys panted heavily, facing Daemon, who appeared completely unconcerned.

“You brat! You’re not a child anymore. Do you have to drive me to my grave?”

“Don’t you dare die, or the white-robed man outside the door will say I committed kinslaying and stabbed the king.”

Daemon crossed his arms and looked at his brother, who sat on the edge of the bed with a raised eyebrow and a wry smile.

When they were younger, he had advised Viserys to exercise more and develop a strong physique. But his brother never listened, preferring banquets and tournaments instead. Now, he was paying the price.

Viserys coughed angrily. “Where are Rhaenys and the others? Have they left yet?”

“Not yet,” Daemon replied casually.

“You must prepare early. My body can’t hold out for long. Rhaegar must succeed to the throne as soon as possible.”

Viserys’ breathing grew labored, and he began to speak through clenched teeth.

Daemon couldn’t bear to watch, so he stepped forward to help him breathe more easily, whispering, “You’re not going to die so easily. Don’t be so self-deprecating.”

He had learned that the Smoking Sea might have a cure for his brother’s condition and had sent a scout to Tyrosh that very night, hoping for results soon.

“Don’t sweet-talk me. Give me something practical.”

Viserys opened his hand and said bluntly, “Rhaegar will meet with the emissary and see the Sea Snake off. You will help him.”

Daemon remained silent.

Viserys continued, unfazed by his brother’s lack of response. “I’m very pleased that Rhaena and Daeron are engaged. It’s a good way to unite our two houses.”

“Three parties,” Daemon emphasized, asserting his own importance in the equation.

“Okay, three parties,” Viserys conceded, as if placating a child. “Has your daughter Baela considered an engagement with the twins?”

Baelon, the eldest, and Aemon, the second eldest, were both excellent marriage prospects, strengthening the ties between Rhaegar and Daemon and easing any lingering animosities.

Daemon scoffed, about to retort with something akin to “a tiger’s daughter can’t be matched with a dog’s son,” but Viserys interrupted his thoughts with a deep gaze that made him uncomfortable.

“Laena mentioned that your eldest son turned her down.”

“Is that so? What a pity,” Viserys said, a note of disappointment in his voice.

Daemon snorted. “Your son is very different from you. He’s more like the Arryn bitch of the Vale, always proud and petty.”

“Watch your tone,” Viserys warned, his eyes narrowing as he revealed a painful truth. “Don’t forget the stupid thing you did once, attacking a six-year-old child, which is lower than the cheapest whore in Flea Bottom.”

“Huh!”

He spat out, mimicking the act of spitting phlegm. “Compared to you, even a whore is better.”

Daemon took a deep breath, reminding himself repeatedly, 'This is my brother, my brother.'

Had anyone else dared to mock him so, he would have already plunged a sword into their eye.

Seeing that Daemon wasn't going to respond, Viserys was about to kick him when he shouted, “Are you listening to what I'm saying?”

“What?” Daemon replied, feigning ignorance.

Viserys roared, “Do your duty to Rhaegar and don't disgrace your title of Prince.”

Daemon sneered, “When did I ever have a title of Prince, the Prince of the City?”

Though Tyrosh was under his control, it still belonged to the Kingdom in name. The only Targaryen to hold the title of Prince was Rhaenys, as the Master of Dragons. Neither he nor Aegon of Bloodstone had such a title.

The only one with a formal title was Rhaenyra, Princess of Dragonstone. The rest of the Targaryens were simply called Princes and Princesses, and he was no exception.

Sensing the discontent, Viserys coaxed, “When Rhaegar ascends the throne, he will make you Prince of Tyrosh.”

“I want you to give it to me!” Daemon turned his head, his eyes burning with intensity.

Viserys was at a loss for words and said helplessly, “Okay, but you have to promise to control your temper.”

“I have one condition.”

“Say it, as long as it's not too much.”

Daemon, straightforward as always, said, “Laena is having trouble conceiving, so I request the right to marry more women and produce more offspring for the family.”

Viserys was taken aback and frowned. “Did you promise Rhaena that you would adopt her to marry more wives?”

No wonder he agreed so readily.

Daemon nodded, his voice blunt. “I want a son. You made me lose a son. Do you remember?”

In the same year that Rhaegar was born, Mysaria, the White Worm, was pregnant with his child. He had even stolen a black dragon egg that belonged to Rhaegar, which was later retrieved by his niece Rhaenyra. Viserys ordered Mysaria to be deported to Lys. On the way, they encountered a storm at sea, and she miscarried. It was a fully developed boy.

Daemon had always been resentful, and after failing to seduce his niece Rhaenyra, he conceived a malicious plan to kill Rhaegar for his own child. Fortunately, he failed.

Daemon's eyes flashed as he glanced at his silent brother, unsure whether to feel glad or sorry that he had failed.

After a long pause, Viserys broke the silence, disappointed. "Does Laena know you have such thoughts?"

She was a good woman and almost became his second wife. Laena had done right by Daemon, bearing him two daughters who survived childbirth. She was pregnant and rushed to Tyrosh to support Daemon's invasion. She lost a son and almost her life.

Daemon said indifferently, "She doesn't know, and even if she did, I believe she would understand."

Bang!

Viserys slammed the bed frame and gritted his teeth. "What woman could possibly understand that? You're hopeless!"

He had thought that Daemon was slowly learning to be a better man by helping Dorne. The facts proved he was still the same bastard.

Daemon scoffed. "Remember, it was your son who suggested this kind of marriage. That Arryn bitch in the Vale is so pregnant that she can't take it anymore."

"I said watch your language!" Viserys was furious.

The Vale was his wife Aemma's family and their most loyal ally.

Daemon snorted. Jeyne Arryn, a treacherous woman. Before his ex-wife, the Bronze Bitch, died, the two most important women in the Vale were so close they might as well have worn the same dress. If it weren't for the existence of Jessamyn, he would have thought that the Bronze Bitch and the Arryn Bitch were a pair.

His animosity towards Jeyne Arryn stemmed from repeated attempts to take control of Runestone City, which she thwarted every time, even expelling him from the Vale. Despite the help of Jobert Royce, the Warden of the Valley, Jeyne remained an obstacle, even seducing his niece's husband.

Daemon's voice grew conflicted. "Do you want to see my bloodline die out?"

"You..." Viserys was furious but couldn't argue with that. His uncle Aemon Targaryen had only one daughter, Rhaenys. It should have been a branch of the Targaryen main line, but it was only supported by Rhaenys, who married outside the family. It existed in name only.

Viserys gritted his teeth. "I promise you, but only you can marry another wife."

"Haha," Daemon smiled contentedly. He knew his brother wouldn't refuse him.

Viserys, even angrier, scolded, "You still have the face to laugh. If the Sea Snake and Rhaenys find out about this, what will they think of you?"

Daemon's eyes darkened. "You don't need to worry about me. You should be more concerned about your eldest son. He's a real pain in the ass."

Not to mention the Arryn bitch from the Vale. The silly girl born to Alicent is clearly a natural Green member, but she is hanging out with her good nephew.

Viserys was confused. "What?"

"Nothing." Daemon shook his head. He was not so low as to gossip behind his back.

Let's wait the silly girl's belly starts to show and his brother and nephew are worried.

Crack!

The door opened, and Rhaegar peered through the bead curtain, curiously surveying his father and uncle.

"I'll leave first," Daemon said arrogantly, turning to go.

Viserys did not stop him and asked his eldest son, "What's the matter?"

Rhaegar watched Daemon's retreating figure, sensing that the two had been plotting behind his back. After a moment's hesitation, he remembered the two young dragons in his dream and said, "I had a dream. After saying goodbye to the Sea Snake, I flew to Dragonstone to take a look around."

There might be dragons.

Chapter 487: A Parent's Love for His Son Is Far-Reaching

"A dream?"

Viserys picked up on that, putting his bad mood aside.

Rhaegar was a rare Dreamer in House Targaryen, and each of his special dreams symbolized something that intersected with reality. Viserys had long coveted such a gift and valued it highly.

"I dreamt that two young dragons hatched at the end of the world," Rhaegar said, frowning slightly as he recounted part of his dream.

Viserys sat up straight, his face growing serious. "Dragons on Dragonstone?"

As the last surviving family of Dragonlords, every dragon was a treasure to House Targaryen. The loss of a dragon would be unthinkable; the problem was too serious.

Rhaegar understood this and said softly, "I don't know for sure, so I'm going back to Dragonstone to investigate and find out about some missing items."

He slightly embellished his words, omitting details about the Smoking Sea and the Dragon's Horn. Both were beyond the Targaryens' knowledge and carried an inherent danger.

"Then hurry up and leave. Don't miss any of the young dragons," Viserys urged, specifically reminding him, "The dragons must not fall into the hands of Braavos. Never!"

The nine Free Cities spread across the western continent of Essos, and Braavos was undoubtedly the most unique due to its geographical and cultural background. While dragons could fly over Braavos, its harbor was difficult for fleets to navigate, surrounded by reefs and shrouded in mist

year-round. For this reason, the Dragonlords in the Free Cities had not destroyed Braavos, instead strengthening trade with the Iron Bank.

Braavos now held a favorable geographical position and the Iron Bank was incredibly wealthy. The Targaryens had just fought a war, leaving both people and soldiers exhausted.

Rhaegar understood this and assured, "Don't worry, the Morghul incident was enough for once."

He had a hunch that the Targaryens and Braavos would not be at war anytime soon.

"That's good," Viserys said, slightly relieved by his eldest son's reassurance. For the sake of a Smoking Sea dragon—Morghul—he would rather go to war with the Triarchy than lose the wild dragon. Although the result was not satisfactory, it was good that Morghul had left behind a descendant.

Observing his father's weak complexion, Rhaegar did not bother to say more. "The Sea Snake and my aunt have just left the Red Keep. I'll see them off."

"Good," Viserys nodded, reminding him, "Rhaenyra will be acting regent while you're gone."

In his heart, his favorite daughter always had special privileges. Rhaegar readily accepted and opened the bead curtain to leave.

He had to go to Dragonstone, and the Sea Snake and Daemon were returning to Driftmark together, so they were both busy. Sea Snake and Daemon, with their formidable sea and sky forces, were a double-edged sword that needed careful handling to avoid constant worry for the royal family.

"Wait," Viserys suddenly called out, stopping his eldest son from opening the door.

Rhaegar looked back in confusion.

Viserys hesitated, then said slowly, "Leave the Sea Snake and Daemon alone for now. There will be some internal changes soon, and you should stay out of it."

Changes? Rhaegar's eyes flashed as he tried to deduce his father's plan.

"Don't guess. It has nothing to do with you," Viserys frowned, disliking his eldest son's scheming. He warned, "The coronation is being prepared, so you must not take any action against Alicent or Daemon. Did you hear me?"

Finally, his eyes turned serious.

Rhaegar, sensing his father's determination, promised, "Okay, I'll focus on the young dragons."

"Hmph, get out of here," Viserys snorted, waving his hand dismissively.

Rhaegar left the room, his mind swirling with mixed emotions. He thought about Alicent's fate and the entanglement with Daemon and the Sea Snake, realizing that his father was paving the way for his succession during this period.

"Prince!" Steffon, at guard, and Ser Lorent greeted him in low voices, their appearances immaculate.

Rhaegar looked at the two Kingsguard and nodded with a smile, "You've worked hard."

...

Rhaegar was dragged to a corner and asked in surprise, "Helaena, what are you waiting for me here?"

The two siblings stood face to face in front of the main gate of the armory. Helaena, wearing a green cloak, looked serious. "Mother is praying in the chapel. I've come to give you something," she said.

She took out a stick wrapped in black cloth from her cloak.

Rhaegar laughed as he watched her carefully unwrap the black cloth to reveal a long, delicate sword.

Swish!

Helaena unsheathed the sword, and a flash of cold light accompanied the sound of a clear blade.

Rhaegar's smile faded as he took her seriously. The cross-shaped blade was carved with a seven-pointed star, a symbol of the Seven Gods. The blade was silvery white and translucent, with a layer of evenly rippling water covering the surface.

"Vigilance?" Rhaegar recognized the sword at once. "This sword should be in the High Tower."

Valyrian steel long sword - Vigilance, the family sword of House Hightower in Oldtown.

Helaena raised her face and said proudly, "You like to collect old things. I wrote to Selena to discuss it. Little Lyonel sent it by horse."

Selena was Aegon's betrothed and a direct cousin of Ormund and Otto. Little Lyonel had taken over as Lord of Oldtown and head of House Hightower. Both were her little followers, and a letter was gently persuasive.

Rhaegar was impressed and asked with a smile, "Is it for me?"

"Well... that might not be possible."

Helaena's face flushed, and she stammered, "The Hightower family sword. The letter says it's a loan, but I'll have to return it after a while."

Her face flushed with embarrassment.

Rhaegar smiled wickedly and pinched her cheek. "I'm just teasing you. I'll return the sword in a couple of days."

"Oh!" Helaena was stunned for a moment. Under Rhaegar's gaze, she covered her slightly protruding chest with her small hands, relieved.

“I’ll leave first.”

Rhaegar’s gaze paused for a moment, then he decisively withdrew. Vigilance in hand, it was time to run.

In fact, when he was living in Oldtown, he wanted to use “Vigilance” to trigger the Explorer System. Unfortunately, their relationship was tense, and there wasn’t a good opportunity. He thought he would borrow it again when he visited Oldtown in the future.

Helaena had brought it to him, so it couldn't have been better.

As soon as he took the sword, the system beeped.

“This exploration mission has begun. The target is the Valyrian steel sword, Vigilance.”

Leaving Helaena, he checked the system panel.

Vigilance

Exploration Progress: 0.5%

"There is already 0.5% progress in the quest. It should be an epic relic," Rhaegar muttered as he replaced Truefyre with Vigilance.

Over time, he had gradually figured out the rules for exploring relics. Valyrian steel swords were related to the material and were all within the scope of exploration. The sword itself carried historical events and time deposits, which would raise the grade of the relic. Blackfyre and the Dark Sister were the highest grade. The rest of the Valyrian steel swords were slightly inferior because they had not had a good owner. Vigilance, which had been passed down by House Hightower for thousands of years, was considered a very good relic.

Rhaegar was in a hurry.

Helaena took a long time to react, tilting her head. “Huh?”

No hug? He just left?

Helaena pounded her head, her pupils unfocused, and muttered unconsciously, “Who woke the sleeping giant.”

Then she turned around and went back to her room in a daze.

...

Blackwater Bay

The sea stretched as far as the eye could see, dotted with dozens of large ships, their distinctive seahorse flags fluttering in the wind.

“Grandpa, are we coming back?” Rhaena stood on the deck, looking back at Mud Gate with a downcast expression.

The Sea Snake, standing beside her, gently stroked her petite, thin body and whispered words of comfort, “We will return. Your foster mother is here. Don’t forget.”

“Mmm,” Rhaena murmured, feeling her grandfather’s love. She rested her little head on his lap, still too young to stand tall beside him.

Her grandfather, the strongest adventurer who had made nine voyages, held her close.

"Roar!"

Their intimate moment was interrupted by a sudden, arrogant roar.

In King's Landing, near the Mud Gate, a black dragon with green eyes soared over the city walls. Its wings cast shadows across the sea as it pursued the fleet.

"Roar!"

Another thunderous roar ripped through the air.

From Dragonpit, Vhagar, with clouded pupils, ran and leapt into the air with surprising agility for its age. The ancient dragon’s roar was a demonstration of its enduring power.

Vhagar’s pupils sharpened, focusing on the black dragon ahead. Summoning its inner strength, the old dragon’s heavy, hole-riddled wings flapped vigorously, trying to increase speed.

In no time, the two dragons, one black and one green, were soaring towards Blackwater Bay.

Cannibal, unperturbed, cast a shadow over the entire fleet as it flew past, its tail swaying lazily.

The Sea Snake looked up, half his face hidden in the shadows, holding the still small Rhaena in his arms.

“It’s so big!” Rhaena exclaimed softly. She glanced back at the cabin, where her young dragon, Morning, was locked in a cage.

The Sea Snake sighed, looking at her with a complex expression. “Your dragon will grow to be this big someday.”

Rhaena was skeptical. She measured the Cannibal’s size with her hand as it gradually disappeared, then placed her hand on her stomach and measured again. Disappointed, she said, “My Morning is so small, only the size of a fingernail compared to my cousin’s dragon.”

“No, that’s not true,” the Sea Snake smiled, stroking Rhaena’s head.

"Roar!"

Vhagar slowly flew in, keeping its body level with the ship, soaring up and down at a controlled speed.

Rhaena looked up again, admiring her mother’s dragon.

"Roar!"

"Roar..."

Soon, two scarlet dragon shadows flashed by, overtaking old Vhagar and keeping pace with the fleet on either side.

Thump, thump...

The cabin door opened, and Baela dragged little Daeron along with her, both of them gazing at the dragons in amazement.

When Baela saw the green Vhagar, she exclaimed, “Look, look! It’s my mother’s Vhagar, the biggest and oldest dragon in the world.”

As Targaryens, dragons were not creatures to be feared. However, adult dragons like Vhagar, Cannibal, and Vermithor rarely showed themselves to humans—they were too massive and powerful.

After a few steps, little Daeron panted, shook off Baela’s hand, and pointed to the black dragon disappearing into the distance, saying proudly, “See that? That’s the Cannibal. After devouring Morghul, it’s grown bigger than Vhagar. It’s the largest dragon in the world now.”

Baela was unconvinced. She pointed at Vhagar and retorted, “Vhagar is the biggest, the godness of war!”

“You’re blind,” Daeron crossed his arms. “It’s too old. Have you ever heard of the Deathwing?”

“No, but I’m going to beat you up,” Baela glared at him, angrily rolling up her sleeves.

The little girl’s character was deeply influenced by her mother and father; she never hesitated to get physical. She grabbed her playmate and started pounding him.

Little Daeron, three years older, was no match for her. Baela chased him all over the deck.

“Haha, naughty kids,” the Sea Snake smiled knowingly.

Far away at the Mud Gate, which was about to disappear from view, a figure stood silently on the city walls, gazing across the miles of water at the departing dragons and fleet.

They looked at each other silently, though neither could truly see the other.

And so, they each withdrew their gaze.

Chapter 488: Dragon Compass

Dragonstone

“Prince, thank you for seeing me off. Braavos will always be your loyal ally.”

On the beach, the messenger Baelus was moved to tears and bowed deeply.

Rhaegar stood with his hands behind his back, smiling faintly. “Say hello to the Sealord for me. I’ll visit Braavos when I have time.”

“It would be an honor,” Bael said, his voice filled with gratitude. After bidding farewell, he reluctantly boarded the ship.

Rhaegar watched him go, then turned his gaze to Dorys Dayne from Dorne, who stood solemnly nearby.

“Prince, Prince Qyle sends his regards,” Lys said, bowing respectfully.

With Sunspear under the control of the Iron Throne, young Qyle Martell harbored no rebellious thoughts, only a deep sense of fear and anxiety.

Rhaegar looked around, noting the presence of several Dorne nobles behind Dorys. He waved his hand dismissively.

“Prince.”

An elderly, disheveled Dragonkeeper stepped forward, holding a huge, milky-white sword in both hands.

Rhaegar took the sword, inspected it carefully, and said indifferently, “Return it to its rightful owner.” He flicked his fingers against the blade, handing it over with a hum.

Plop!

Dorys immediately dropped to one knee, his face flushed with excitement. “Prince, House Dayne will always be grateful for your kindness.”

“You will be well rewarded for your service.” Rhaegar looked down condescendingly, his eyes deep. “In the name of the Targaryen Regent, I appoint you as the Sword of Dawn and Lord of the Torentine.”

The Torentine is a major river in the Red Mountains that flows into the Summer Sea. House Dayne’s Starfall is located upstream of the Torentine.

“I will not fail you!” Dorys’ voice trembled as he took back the clan sword, Dawn, with both hands.

When news of Sunspear’s fall and his cousin’s death reached him, Dorys had surrendered on behalf of House Dayne. He knew that surrender was the only way to survive, especially with six dragons bombarding the city in turn. If they didn’t surrender, they would die. Moreover, the sword Dawn was in the hands of the Targaryens.

Rhaegar waved his hand. “Go now. Say hello to Qyle for me and ensure he accepts the Maester’s teachings well.”

A child should have a childhood of spoon-feeding.

Dorys, deeply moved, led the fleet away, carrying Dawn in his arms. The fleet gradually grew smaller as it sailed into the distance.

"Roar!"

The black dragon roared, circling the island as if inspecting its long-lost territory.

Rhaegar stood in the wind, looking at the two fleets, and rubbed the back of his fingers together.

The peace agreement has been reached. The Iron Throne and Braavos would both win, while the Triarchy and Dorne fall.

“Not bad. The Iron Bank is very generous with its loans,” Rhaegar mused, already planning how to put the money to good use.

As for repaying the loan? I borrowed the money on my own merits, why should I pay it back? What if Braavos comes to collect? Ask them how many fleets the Sealord has. If you don't believe me, try me.

"Roar!"

Cannibal sensed its rider's emotions, its mouth opening in a hideous arc as it roared furiously.

Rhaegar clapped his hands and turned to walk back. His feet sank into the soft sand, with the blue sky and sea, and white clouds floating leisurely behind him. The arrogance of a man and a dragon relying on each other was palpable.

Entering the iron gate of Dragonstone, Rhaegar remembered his business and asked, "Are there any newly hatched young dragons on Dragonmount?"

He spoke in High Valyrian, which is short and to the point.

The old dragonkeeper trailed behind him, his expression full of bitterness. "No, Dragonmount is very quiet."

Rhaegar did not believe him and continued to ask, "What about Vermithor and Silverwing? Has it not laid new eggs?"

After Vhagar, Silverwing and Dreamfyre had always been fertile egg layers.

The old dragonkeeper shook his head. "Silverwing is sleeping. There are no eggs." He leaned on a bamboo stick.

Rhaegar frowned slightly, thinking to himself, "Dragonstone has no young dragons, so it must be the Smoking Sea."

Commonly known as wild dragons, they are hard to catch, especially young dragons with inconspicuous bodies. It's hard to find them even if you look for them.

"Maybe they're in Braavos or Sothoryos?" Rhaegar thought as he walked, recalling his encounter with the Braavosi emissary, Baelus. A shrewd politician, Rhaegar had caught a glimpse of guilt in the man's eyes. What was he hiding?

Rhaegar's eyes grew dangerous as he speculated, "There must be a secret behind the death of the previous Sealord."

Compared to the Smoking Sea and Sothoryos, where new young dragons might be hatching, he would rather believe that the three missing eggs from Dreamfyre had hatched.

"I must visit Braavos and plant more spies there," Rhaegar thought, not wanting to alert the enemy. There was some doubt about the hatching of the dragon eggs in Braavos. If there are young dragons, the news can't be kept secret.

With the death of the former Sealord, the two young dragons must be the target of competition from the forces behind the Iron Bank. It shouldn't be so quiet. Unless...

Rhaegar had a flash of inspiration. "They don't have the young dragons." Wildfires had destroyed a harbor, and there were very few witnesses around. Unless someone had set it up in advance, the

young dragons would have definitely escaped. Speaking of arrangements, the former Sealord was blown up. Even if there was a plan, they would have died in the wildfire.

The old dragonkeeper saw that the Prince was thinking and said hesitantly, "There are many dragon eggs in the nest." Not only were there eggs, but also Wyverns' eggs. The Wyverns' eggs were well-preserved under the dragonkeeper's careful care, but it was unclear whether they would hatch.

Rhaegar came back to his senses and said thoughtfully, "Tell the dragonkeepers to step up patrols on Dragonmount and monitor the movements of Vermithor and Silverwing." There are only two dragons left on the island, but we still need to keep an eye on them.

The old dragonkeeper did not dare to be negligent and said humbly, "Yes, sir."

At Rhaegar's signal, the team headed for the towering Dragonmount.

...

Stone Drum Tower, the Greenhouse

Though called a greenhouse, it was actually a special cellar designed to keep the dragon eggs warm.

Click!

Rhaegar lit the oil lamps on the walls, using the dim light to guide him through the deep tunnel. The greenhouse was spacious, resembling an underground palace, with hollowed-out walls holding one furnace after another.

"They're all dragon eggs!" Rhaegar lifted the lid of one furnace, releasing a sulfurous white smoke that revealed a dark dragon egg.

Each furnace contained a dragon egg, with colors ranging from green to blue-white to dark red. Rhaegar counted them one by one, totaling sixteen healthy eggs. These included the three eggs that Syrax had laid for the first time: green, gray, and orange. Syrax had laid two batches of three eggs each. The second batch of eggs hatched almost simultaneously, producing Moondancer and Morning. The last bronze egg had been placed in the cradle of his eldest son, Baelon.

"The family is small; otherwise, we would have hatched several eggs by now," Rhaegar mused, looking hopefully at the dark egg and rubbing it against his cheek. "Old buddy, when will you hatch?"

The dark dragon egg, produced by Dreamfyre and personally selected by Rhaenyra, had been placed in Rhaegar's cradle. Unfortunately, the egg and the person were not destined to be together. The black dragon inside the shell had not hatched, benefitting the large black dragon that consumed young dragons.

Rhaegar played with the black dragon egg for a while before reluctantly putting it back in the oven. "Let's keep it well and save it for the children of the future," he said to himself.

After all, Jeyne had been pregnant for several months, and the baby was expected in early summer. Rhaegar thought for a moment and shook his head. "I'd better choose another dragon egg."

He wandered around the greenhouse, looking for a dragon egg that he liked. Rhaenyra had broken her relationship with Jeyne, and if he gave Jeyne's child the egg that Rhaenyra had chosen for him—well, his life would be short.

As he continued to pick, Rhaegar became accustomed to the dim light of the greenhouse, and a wave of drowsiness came over him.

“Yawn~”

After checking the last Wyvern egg, he yawned again. “I’m so sleepy,” Rhaegar muttered, feeling a strange sensation. He needed to sleep!

He walked back to the greenhouse and took out the dark egg. Rhaegar spread out a blanket and fell asleep with the egg in his arms.

Clang!

The sword Vigilance, tied to his waist, fell and was pressed under the weight of a person and an egg. Gradually, Rhaegar drifted into sleep.

...

Outside,

Hoo-

A black dragon broke through the clouds, its green pupils surveying the mountains below, its snout sniffing eagerly.

It had caught a special scent.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the Cannibal's green pupils flashed with murderous light, and it let out an excited roar. A trace of dragon saliva slipped from its mouth.

It remembered what the smell was.

It was the scent of prey!

The pair of jet-black dragon wings flapped, and the huge body immediately turned, diving deftly into the clouds before soaring high into the sky.

The target: Dragonmount.

...

It was getting late.

In the greenhouse, Rhaegar lay half-asleep. His handsome face was confused, his eyes half-open and half-closed, resembling a lost and broken teenager.

As expected, he fell asleep again.

Continuing from last night's dream, fragments of mist, waves, and young dragons kept flashing before him, as if compressed knowledge was being forced into his brain. Rhaegar passively endured it, and the images froze on the last frame: mist, a mountain, a young black dragon...

"Roar..."

The black dragon panicked, broke through the layers of fog, and plunged into Rhaegar's arms.

Yes, Rhaegar's arms.

Rhaegar's eyes widened as he hugged the baby dragon without hesitation.

Plop!

The force of the impact sent Rhaegar reeling. The pain made it hard for him to breathe. He fell to the ground, hitting his head hard.

Then he hit his head on the ground again.

A voice suddenly sounded.

“This exploration is complete. Please pick up the lost treasure.”

Rhaegar was startled awake by the sound and looked around in confusion.

He reached out and grabbed a hard dragon egg and a light purple halo.

Poof! The purple aura burst open, turning into a small purple light that entered his hand like cotton wool.

“Relic successfully picked up, testing...”

"The test was successful. It was determined to be an epic relic, a treasure of the Seer."

Rhaegar was slightly startled and hit his head hard to wake up.

“Epic relic, the Seer?” he muttered to himself and tried to summon the relic.

Vigilance of House Hightower that gave him the treasure of the Seer is still there. It can only be said that they are worthy of being top nobles with a thousand-year heritage.

Hum

Rhaegar sat up, and a stone compass appeared out of thin air. The compass was gray and white, with tiny cracks all over it, about the size of two adult palms. It was very round, with a dozen ferocious dragon patterns carved on the surface.

“Inscription?”

Rhaegar flipped through the compass and faintly saw the inscriptions in a circle. Unfortunately, the years had blurred the inscriptions. Rhaegar looked forward to seeing the font change on the system panel.

“The Dragon Compass, made by a bloodmage Seer, is useful to find dragons.”

“Find dragons?”

Rhaegar whispered, seeing the keywords “blood” and “dragon.”

Zila!

He cut his palm with a knife, and a drop of blood fell onto the compass.

Chapter 489: Grey Ghost: You Promised Me a Reward.

The blood drops, bright red like jade, dripped into the cracks on the surface of the compass stone. They quickly spread out, covering the stone plate with a spider web-like layer of blood red.

Hum

The compass absorbed the blood, and the spider web bloomed with red light. The surface of the stone body crumbled and fell off inch by inch. In front of Rhaegar, it metamorphosed into a simple gray disc at a speed visible to the naked eye. The difference between the disc and the stone plate was not significant, except that it looked newer. The inscriptions and dragon patterns on the surface were so vivid that they seemed to dance when no one was looking.

The blood-red spider web had turned into blood vessels, intertwined with the dragon patterns. A needle was embedded in the center of the disc, and its point, missing a corner, swayed slightly, pointing to each of the dragon patterns.

Rhaegar examined the compass closely and tried to move the needle. A system prompt sounded in his ear.

“Congratulations, the treasure of the Seer has been activated, and you have obtained...”

[Dragon Compass]

Level: Epic (Purple)

Function: Breathe in the dragon's breath and find the disobedient partner.

Comment: “A high-end dragon taming tool, the life's work of a Seer.”

The disc was officially named, and the stone crumbs floated down, turning into dust and blending into the earth. Rhaegar held the disc in his hands, his mind momentarily blank.

“Dragon compass, dragon taming tool.” The words entered his mind and immediately took high priority. Rhaegar was overjoyed and couldn't help but grin. “I was just looking for a dragon, and now I have a way to find it without any trouble.”

Dragon-taming tools are extremely precious, each one worth a fortune. A relic used to track down a dragon's trail is a treasure from heaven.

"Roar!"

Just as he was about to activate the compass, a roar like a thunderclap spread across half of Dragonstone. A gust of wind blew through the Stone Drum Tower, causing the entire castle to hum like a drum.

Clatter...

Dust fell from the ceiling, and Rhaegar felt his eardrums shake and his head spin. He reached out to embrace the dark dragon egg and rose unsteadily to his feet.

“The roar of the Cannibal,” Rhaegar muttered, his heart racing. Fortunately, the dragon's roar disappeared as quickly as it had come.

Rhaegar quickly stored the black dragon egg and grabbed Vigilance and the compass. The greenhouse was built into the mountain, so there was no need to worry about the dragon eggs being destroyed.

Buzz

As soon as he ran out of the closed stone door, the compass emitted a faint halo of light.

Rhaegar checked it immediately, sensing something strange. The needle on the compass spun rapidly, searching for a dragon pattern on its surface.

Ding!

The needle suddenly stopped, covered with cobweb-like blood-red veins, pointing to the first young dragon pattern. The carving of the young dragon was small, its fangs and claws in a fierce display. The dragon's head, with its dorsal fin turned sideways, had a single vertical pupil full of panic and fear. Surrounded by other dragon patterns, it looked like it was struggling in vain, desperately trying to escape.

"Where is the young dragon?" Rhaegar stared at the compass, his brain working overtime. There had to be a reason why the compass was pointing in this direction.

Buzz

The needle began to spin again, and the red web on the surface of the compass glowed brightly. Eventually, it turned into a red beam and attached itself to the needle.

Click!

The compass made a small sound, and the needle stopped at the pattern of a dragon returning to its nest. Rhaegar's pupils narrowed as he immediately realized the key factor.

"Dragonstone, the young dragon!"

In all of Westeros and the continent of Essos, the only place that could be called a dragon's nest was Dragonmount, the dormant volcano.

"Cannibal is chasing the young dragons," Rhaegar muttered, a wild grin spreading across his face. He quickened his pace, eager to find the baby dragon.

Without another word, he headed straight for the nest.

...

Meanwhile, on Dragonmont

A towering active volcano stood in the center of the island, with barren mountains extending for more than ten miles to the east and west. Within a radius of tens of miles, the landscape was jagged with rocks.

"Roar..."

A black and red dragon shadow flashed past, accompanied by a shrill cry. The dragon flew swiftly, its red wings flapping and leaving a trail of shadows. It dove into the clouds and disappeared into the dense jungle, moving like a large bird.

"Roar..."

Suddenly, a deep, thunderous roar crashed through the wind, dominating the landscape.

Chirp, chirp...

Birds in the jungle were startled, and small animals scattered, as if a natural disaster had struck.

Whoosh!

A gust of wind blew through, making the leaves dance wildly. The sky darkened.

"Roar..."

A young black and red dragon looked up in panic, its pupils wide with fear.

Above the jungle, a massive black dragon, as large as a mountain, with wings that covered the sky, soared through the air.

Tick-tock!

A drop of foul-smelling dragon saliva fell, hitting the branch of a towering ancient tree.

Zilala...

The branch rotted instantly, emitting white smoke. The rot spread throughout the ancient tree, stripping off a layer of bark and turning it into a bare, dead husk.

Cannibal's pupils were cold and indifferent, with a hint of madness and cunning, like a killing machine with its own consciousness. It reveled in the hunt.

"Roar..."

The young black and red dragon screamed in agony. A drop of hot dragon saliva had stained one of its wings, and it struggled to crawl away. Its body rolled on the moist soil, its scales scraping against the mud and stones, leaving behind a trail of scars. A shallow furrow was plowed into the ground.

The young dragon lay on the ground, dejected and low-pitched, trying to flap its wings. After a long effort, it realized something was wrong. It held up both wings, inspecting them.

One wing was intact, only a little dusty. The other wing had a fist-sized hole in it.

"Gah!"

The young dragon widened its pupils and screamed in alarm. It was small, about the size of an ordinary dog. Its body was covered in black scales, with red dorsal fins on its neck and tail, and bright blood-red wing membranes. The dragon's head was not fierce, but its horned crown was magnificent. Its white fangs and strange amber pupils formed a striking combination.

If Viserys were here at this moment, he would exclaim at the sight of this wild young dragon, "Balerion has returned!" This young dragon resembled the fallen Black Dread and the Cannibal, another black dragon.

"Roar..."

Suddenly, a strong smell of ash wafted through the air, and a huge shadow completely covered the sky above the jungle.

"Roar?"

The young dragon froze, lifting its head slowly and mechanically. Its amber pupils filled with fear as they stared at the giant beast above them.

Dark scales, cold eyes, and an unparalleled murderous aura...

"Roar..."

A low growl emanated from the depths of the giant dragon's throat, enough to scare away the weakest of beasts.

The young black and red dragon froze for a moment, helplessly raising its wings and hugging itself. The sky was like a night curtain, blocking out all the sunlight. All that could be seen were two ghostly, green pupils staring intently at it.

...

The Stone Drum Tower

"Prince, be careful!" Castellan Robert panted heavily as he chased Rhaegar out of the castle gates. A group of guards followed closely behind.

"Don't worry about me. Tighten the news blockade along the coastline!" Rhaegar, holding a compass in his hand, ran excitedly.

Within a few steps, he reached the stone steps and bridge. The sea of clouds around him moved constantly, listening to the rhythm of the wind and waves. He glanced down at the compass, watching the needle spin wildly. Each time it stopped, it pointed to Dragonmont behind the bridge.

"A young dragon in the wild, don't run away," Rhaegar muttered, overjoyed as he followed the compass's guidance. He predicted that the young dragon would appear on Dragonstone. Cannibal's strange behavior was likely due to it hunting the wandering young dragon.

"Don't become an appetizer for the Cannibal!" Knowing the Cannibal's cruel nature, Rhaegar sped up, praying silently. He hoped he would be the first to arrive or that the young dragon would be fortunate enough to evade the Cannibal.

Roar!

As if on cue, a wave of turbulent clouds appeared, hiding a gray dragon shadow within. Rhaegar caught a glimpse and smiled. "Grey Ghost, come out!"

There was only one dragon with gray scales in all of Westeros.

Roar!

Hearing the familiar call, Grey Ghost poked its head out of the clouds, looking around suspiciously. Rhaegar stopped, opened his arms wide, and smiled. "Don't look, I'm alone."

Roar~

Grey Ghost lowered its head, disappointed, and slowly emerged from the clouds, its well-proportioned body descending gracefully.

Bang

The slender body crouched low, stretching out a pair of large, thin, flexible dragon wings.

"Good friend, help me," Rhaegar asked. "The journey is too far. Take me for a ride." The Stone Drum Tower was at least ten kilometers from Dragonmont. Climbing the stone staircase and bridge would be a long trek on foot, and the young dragon might not survive the wait.

Roar!

Gray Ghost did not refuse. With a long, grumpy neck, it offered Rhaegar a ride on its back. The dragon's nest at God's Eye Lake had become too boring, so it had sneaked back to Dragonstone. It smelled the dragon's food and came to see Rhaegar and his baby. Sadly, the baby was not there.

Rhaegar climbed onto the dragon's back and patted its delicate scales. "When my baby grows up, if you like him, you can take him to the sky."

Roar~

Gray Ghost snorted and looked back at him suspiciously. Rhaegar, with his thick skin, continued to paint a grand picture. "You are so beautiful and children will love you."

Roar!

Upon hearing this, Grey Ghost immediately became more spirited, holding its head high to show off its posture. It wasn't ugly; its appearance was quite impressive, certainly more so than the Sheepstealer's ugliness and the Cannibal's horror.

Rhaegar, suppressing his uneasy conscience, urged, "Hurry up, we're going to save a baby dragon, just like I saved you."

Roar!

...

In the blink of an eye,

The man and dragon leapt over the stone steps and bridge, arriving at the dense jungle in the inner reaches of Dragonmont.

"Roar!"

The Grey Ghost let out a shrill cry, sniffing the strong smell of ash, and landed warily in an open area.

Rhaegar picked up the compass and spotted a pool of blood on the ground. He jumped off the dragon's back and rubbed a piece of blood-stained dirt between his fingers. The smell was strong, and the soil was still warm, proving that the young dragon had indeed been there and was injured.

Rhaegar looked around, seeing no traces of the Cannibal's footprints. He smiled. "You're so big, Cannibal, it must be hard for you to catch small things."

Cannibal was enormous, with a head and tail more than 140 meters long. A baby dragon was only about a meter long at most, making it difficult to catch in such a confined space.

"Roar!"

The Grey Ghost spread its wings, hopping up and down, pointing its tail at the towering Dragonmont. It had smelled it—the scent of the dragon was drifting in the air.

Rhaegar did not hesitate and jumped onto the dragon's back. "Grey Ghost, pick up the pace."

The young dragon had escaped for the time being, but that didn't mean it would survive. The Cannibal was a big, bad dragon with a terrible temper. He not only coveted the eggs and bodies of his own kind but also enjoyed the thrill of the hunt. The young dragon might not have died in the jungle, but it was very likely the Cannibal was playing a game of cat and mouse.

Chapter 490: How to Train Your Dragon

Dragonmont

"Roar..."

The black and red young dragon was in a terrible state, dragging its injured wing and fleeing for its life. It flew crookedly, as if a gust of wind could blow it down.

Its vertical pupils glanced down at the rugged mountain range and desolate wasteland below. Ahead, a towering black peak loomed.

"Roar..."

The young dragon's pupils flashed with fear, sensing the rich fire element, and it sped up, beating its wings faster. This land was more fertile than the terrain it had been wandering over. Especially after flying over the salty water, the climate was much harsher and unsuitable for dragons.

"Roar..."

The young black and red dragon regretted its decision, glancing back at the deep cave it had chosen. In the next second,

"Roar!"

The young dragon was horrified, wishing it had two more wings.

"Roar!"

Cannibal's green pupils were full of mockery. It leisurely shuttled through the clouds, its massive body overshadowing the young dragon. In contrast, the young dragon looked even smaller, like a single scale plucked from the Cannibal's body.

Terrified, the black and red young dragon squeezed its potential to accelerate. The Cannibal remained unmoved, its snout curling into a mocking grin as it slowly followed behind.

The Cannibal sensed the rider's mental connection but ignored it. It was hunting, and a hunt should look like a hunt. Cannibal intended to play around for a while, deciding later whether to feed or not depending on the situation.

The young dragon in front of it was too small, not even enough to fill a gap in its teeth.

Cannibal considered raising it for a while and then hunting it when it reached a young dragon size. But the young dragon's presence could not be kept secret. Given the rider's determined character, he would certainly not allow it to become a snack.

Cannibal was torn between eating and not eating.

...

The black and red young dragon fled frantically, finally escaping the dragon-eating Cannibal's prying eyes as it neared Dragonmont. With a burst of speed, it disappeared into a narrow, cramped cave, where the light dimmed suddenly.

"Roar..."

The young dragon didn't have time to catch its breath. It sniffed the lingering dragon scent around it, and after a while, determined that the smell was weaker in one direction and chose a passage.

"Roar!"

The black and red young dragon squealed with joy, spreading its wings as it crawled deeper into the cave. Instinct told it to build a nest here. There were human towns outside the mountain, with flocks of sheep and cattle—plenty of food. The only worry was the ferocious dragon-eating Cannibal outside. It also wondered how the other wild dragons on the island had managed to hatch and grow up safely without being hunted.

Boom!

Suddenly, a huge dragon's head crashed into the cave, causing the mountain to shake slightly and the ground to tremble.

"Roar!"

The young dragon turned around to see a massive mouth in the abyss, gathering a ball of dark green dragon breath. In the next second, it burst forth.

Boom!

The smoky, green Dragonfire poured into the cave, spreading like a plague and bringing with it the heat of molten rock.

"Roar!"

The young dragon was shocked and fled, flapping its wings hard.

Bang!

The black dragon's head got stuck at the entrance of the cave, its hard scales scraping against the rocks, dragging off pieces of gravel. The young dragon fled, its green pupils glowing with cold light as it silently watched the Cannibal.

Bang!

The two dragon wings supported the mountain, and the Cannibal roughly pulled out its head, sending boulders the size of baskets flying in all directions. Immediately, the single claw of its wing dug into the main rock body, and its hind legs climbed up, using the force to climb higher.

Dragonmont was huge, with caves leading in all directions. Cannibal knew a wide tunnel that was convenient for burrowing underground when it was sleeping.

"Roar!"

Cannibal climbed to the top of Dragonmont, found a cave opening in a remote corner, and poked its head in. Then its massive body, wings, and long tail followed, until the entire dragon disappeared into the cave.

...

At this moment, Rhaegar was on his way.

"Roar!"

Grey Ghost sped forward at full speed and soon reached the vicinity of Dragonmont. As they approached, Rhaegar was shocked by what he saw. A black dragon slowly and powerfully climbed the mountain, finally entering a cave.

Crack!

The dragon's tail, as thick as a tree trunk, flicked back and forth, cracking the rocks at the mouth of the cave. Then it disappeared like a black snake.

Rhaegar sat on the dragon's back and watched the scene unfold. He couldn't help but marvel at how a dragon's size could change everything. Dragonmont, a towering mountain rising more than 3,000 meters above sea level, seemed like an inconspicuous "small mountain" in front of Cannibal.

"Grey Ghost, let's go," Rhaegar commanded, taking a deep breath and planning to teach the Cannibal a lesson. How dare it reject their metal connection?

Grey Ghost tilted his head, as if to say, "Huh?" Do I have to fight Cannibal alone?

Rhaegar patted its neck and laughed at the hesitant dragon. "Go on, I don't expect anything from you."

Hum...

The compass in his arms trembled slightly, and the needle kept spinning. With so many dragons in Dragonmont, the compass couldn't tell which one it was tracking.

Rhaegar put away his vigilance, took out his dragon-taming whip from his collection, and looked around with the compass in his hand. The compass needed dragon blood to activate. To find a specific dragon, he needed something that had been in contact with the dragon.

Suddenly realizing this, Rhaegar picked a bit of dirt from his fingers, which was stained with the blood of a young dragon.

Hum

The compass immediately stabilized, and the needle pointed firmly in one direction. There was a matching engraving on the surface of the compass: two dragons lying on the ground as if sleeping.

One young dragon was trembling, and the red spider webs were interlinked, showing its fear of the two larger dragons.

Rhaegar quickly deduced that these were Vermithor and Silverwing. The compass was truly amazing. A dozen or so simple dragon carvings, connected by blood-red spider webs like veins, formed hundreds of different images.

"Roar!"

Grey Ghost flapped its wings and selected a hidden cave, carrying Rhaegar into it.

...

Dragonmont, Deep within

Hoo-hoo!

Hot breath spewed out, and the sound of panting echoed in the empty cave. Cannibal's dilated pupils probed the surface, crawling slowly and relying on its keen sense of smell to find the young dragon's trail.

Soon, the sniffing stopped.

"Roar!"

Cannibal roared loudly, its massive body crashing into the ground, excitedly digging into a dark tunnel.

Hundreds of meters away, in a narrow tunnel, water dripped from the crevices of the rocks, creating a ticking sound. The black and red young dragon crawled cautiously, nervously dodging when water droplets fell. Dragons don't like water. But in the scorching heat of Dragonmont, there is water hidden in some dark corners.

The young dragon hid all the way until the tunnel ahead opened up. The steep, bumpy path disappeared, replaced by a long stone bridge. The bridge led deep into the darkness, exuding a strong sulfuric fragrance and the stench of dragon dung.

The young dragon crawled along the bridge, its pupils dilated with fear, constantly looking back to see if the Cannibal was following. It was afraid the larger dragon would catch up.

Click!

The young dragon lost its footing on one of its hind legs, crushing a loose stone.

Quiet! The cave was dark and silent as death.

The young dragon looked left and right to ensure there was no immediate danger and let out a big sigh of relief. It was so scared. It thought something was going to happen.

Phew!

Suddenly, a hot breath blew in its face, burning its fragile scales. The young dragon instinctively took a step back and trembled all over.

Crash!

The sound of gravel rubbing and heavy objects being stepped on filled the air. The young dragon was terrified, staring straight ahead. In the darkness, the outline of a hideous dragon wheeled into view, its scales flickering in the faint light.

"Roar!"

Suddenly, the dragon's head thrust forward, and it spat out a jet of golden Dragonfire like molten lava. But that wasn't all. While the young dragon was terrified of the Bronze Fury, a green dragon head quietly appeared from the other side of the bridge.

The long, slender neck turned, revealing two glaring gaps. Below, the dragon's body, hidden in the underground caverns, and the pair of silver wings that gave it its name.

After Vermithor roared, its pupils flashed with rage, and it snorted heavily.

Plop!

The air current was so strong that it blew the young dragon over, knocking it out cold.

"Roar?"

Silverwing glanced at its partner, slowly extended its neck, and fixed its large copper-colored pupils on the young dragon. The black and red young dragon lay limp on the ground, its pupils flashing with fear and unease. It was so small that it seemed no bigger than a dragon tooth compared to the two larger dragons.

Intrigued, Silverwing spread its wings and climbed up the bridge, snorting at the young dragon. Below the bridge was a messy pit filled with dragon droppings and the bones of sheep and cattle. Vermithor and Silverwing slept here, and the bridge was built to allow riders to mount the dragons. This structure, built by King Jaehaerys and Queen Alysanne decades ago, was no longer in use.

"Roar!"

Silverwing's provocations finally angered the young dragon. The black and red dragonlet quickly dodged, raised its tail high, and spat a jet of black Dragonfire at the green dragon's eyes. The Dragonfire, as deep as the night, formed a pillar of flame.

"Roar!"

Silverwing quickly closed its eyes, and the Dragonfire hit its eyelids. Though uninjured, it was extremely humiliated. In a fit of rage, it opened his blood-red mouth wide, attempting to swallow the young dragon whole.

"Roar!"

The black and red young dragon screamed in agony, unable to resist. Silverwing pressed in tighter and tighter, the sticky dragon saliva on its teeth about to tear into the fresh young dragon. At the critical moment, a high-level High Valyrian command full of magic was issued, carrying an unyielding air of authority.

"Dracarys!"

"Roar!"

Greenish Dragonfire filled the entire underground cave. Silverwing, about to pounce, was instantly overwhelmed as the Dragonfire rushed into its mouth, nearly suffocating it.

"Roar!"

Silverwing let out a cry full of grievance and pain, shaking off the sticky Dragonfire and swaying back and forth. Vermithor, instantly furious, ignored its partner's injuries and rushed out of the cave toward the tunnel.

The young black and red dragon, caught between several dragons, was scared out of its wits. It wrapped its wings around its body, shrinking into a blood-red ball.

"Vermithor, obey!"

At the end of the tunnel, the young High Valyrian voice was heard again. A black dragon slowly crawled out, its green pupils showing reluctance, and its snout emitting wisps of flame. It was the Cannibal, found and subdued by its rider.

Rhaegar sat on the back of the dragon, his face solemn, his back straight, heading towards the underground cavern. In his hand, the compass hummed softly, and the dragon whip hung at his side. Upon entering Dragonmont, he had contacted the Cannibal. The big guy still wanted to disobey, but a whipping made him obedient.

"Roar..."

Grey Ghost sneaked up behind him, peering at the imposing Cannibal, its pupils showing visible signs of tension. When it glanced at Rhaegar, its tail tip shook involuntarily. It was painful just to be a witness to the beating.

If it even subdues Cannibal, it has no chance against it.

"Roar!"

Vermithor burst out of the tunnel, its head smashing through the surrounding rock walls, its fangs bared in a display of wild dominance. Cannibal stopped moving, its green eyes gleaming with murderous intent, and its long scarlet tongue licked its lips.

"Behave yourself," Rhaegar commanded, kicking the black scales with his right foot to warn the green-eyed dragon. Then his gaze fell on Vermithor. He raised his arm slightly, and the dragon whip stretched out naturally.

Crack!