

G.O Thrones 61

Chapter 61: A Leap of Faith

As he watched the prince plunge into the torrent of lava and fire, Cole felt his resolve waver.

This was the king's eldest son, and any mishap would be a stain he couldn't bear.

Summoning all his courage, Cole tried to charge out of the cave once more.

But the temperature inside the cave was rising rapidly.

Lava cascaded over the floor, creating an impassable barrier for any normal person.

Cole could only watch helplessly as the prince led the young dragon, Gray Ghost, up the slope, his heart heavy with the weight of uncertainty.

"Roar..."

Finally, the Cannibal landed smoothly, his head held high as he let out a resounding roar in the lava-filled cavern.

It seemed to announce the hunter's death sentence on his prey.

At that moment, Rhaegar and Grey Ghost climbed up the slope, moving cautiously with their backs to the scorching stone wall.

Following its roar, the cannibal turned its gaze toward Rhaegar and Gray Ghost, its huge vertical green pupils flashing with a teasing glint.

The two small creatures struggled to climb higher, but in reality they barely reached its chest height.

Even to consume them, he would only have to lower his head to swallow them.

The Cannibal twisted his neck and scanned his surroundings, his keen sense of smell picking up the scent of an intruder.

This was a fierce dragon with a voracious appetite.

It usually hunted large fish in the sea, occasionally stole eggs from female dragons on the island, or hunted weak young dragons.

Humans were not usually on its menu.

However, those who entered its sight became fair game.

With its paws bent at the knees, its spine arched downward, the Cannibal's massive head lowered, eyeing the human snacks hidden in the cave.

Its indifferent green vertical pupils dilated as it prepared its dragon flame.

"No..."

Cole stood at the edge of the cave, his gaze locked on the Cannibal's gaping maw, directly in line with the boiling, eerie emerald dragon flame.

His entire body stiffened, as if he were witnessing the beckoning of his deceased grandmother.

He recognized it as an invitation from the Stranger.

As the dragon flame was about to be released, a cry echoed through the underground cavern.

"Cannibal! Look at me!"

Dragons could understand a fraction of High Valyrian, and the nearly century-old adult dragon Cannibal naturally understood some of its meaning.

With a disdainful glance at the terrified and stunned humans in the cave, the Cannibal withdrew its dragon flame, closed its mouth, and turned its head back.

Across the expanse, a human youth stood on a steep cliff, a young dragon snack at his feet.

Indifferent, yet slightly annoyed by the interruption, the Cannibal locked eyes with the human, deciding to devour this oblivious prey first.

Meeting the gaze of a ferocious adult dragon, Rhaegar's eyes sparkled with excitement, shedding the fear he once felt when confronted by Dreamfyre.

He was Rhaegar Targaryen.

A pure-blooded descendant of the Dragonlords, and any fear of dragons faded into insignificance at this moment.

Pulling Gray Ghost's head behind him in a gesture of command, Rhaegar ordered, "Stay where you are, cowardly dragon!"

Though Gray Ghost did not yet understand High Valyrian, he sensed the human's intent.

Trembling, he huddled close, burying his head under his wings, too afraid to look.

Rhaegar's expression wavered between annoyance and amusement. "How can a dragon be as timid as you? A shame to your kind."

"Roar!"

Cannibal couldn't resist the tyranny in his heart and roared, showing his killing intent, the dragon flames converging in his throat.

In the moment of crisis, Rhaegar patted the gray ghost's bright white wing membrane and said, "Take care of yourself, I'm off on my own adventure."

Having said that, Rhaegar took a step forward and fearlessly faced Cannibal in a prostrate position below.

"Big guy, fate has destined you to be conquered by me!"

Rhaegar shouted in High Valyrian, summoning every ounce of courage in his body and defiantly leaping down the steep cliff.

"Roar!!!"

The moment Rhaegar leapt down, dragon flames erupted with a low roar, and a green curtain of fire spread destruction.

Watching the scene from afar, Cole sat down limply, both eyes lifeless.

"Mad, the rumors are true, all Targaryens are mad..."

How could he have imagined that a 6 year old child would dare to challenge an adult dragon? But none of that mattered.

He had a premonition of what this demonic dragon would do.

His life was about to end, and his honor had no meaning.

However...

The dragon flame was always a step slower than Rhaegar.

Between the whiskers of the ethereal green dragon flames, Rhaegar spread his hands wide like a bird and narrowly avoided the torrent of dragon flame.

His tiny body slammed into the broad spine of the hulking cannibal on the ground.

Bang...

Rhaegar fell heavily, the hard dragon scales felt like steel plates, and the recoil shocked him to the point where he nearly fainted.

A strong desire for conquest filled his brain, straining his nerves and urging him to get up!

Rhaegar staggered to his feet, his head spinning as he let his broken voice out and shouted, proving his determination to put his life on the line.

"Cannibal, fly!"

Following the guidelines of the Dragon Taming Handbook, Rhaegar gave the Cannibal his first command in High Valyrian.

"Roar!"

But the truth was very cruel, the Cannibal ignored his command and roared angrily, twisting his body wildly.

As it was about to strike down the human who was trying to tame it, a mouthful of dragon flame combusted into flying ashes.

It was the oldest and largest wild dragon Dragonstone, and even the continent of Westeros, had ever seen.

Many men had tried to tame it in the early years, and not one of them was not turned into charcoal.

The little thing on his back was no exception.

His feet shook so violently that Rhaegar couldn't even stand, and he fell with a thud.

In the moment of need, Rhaegar grabbed the Cannibal's back scale and used his whole body to stabilize his body from being thrown out.

"Hahaha!"

Crisis descended on his head, but Rhaegar had no trace of fear in his heart, instead, he could not help but laugh out loud.

He was skating on thin ice at that moment.

But it seemed that the danger that was about to overthrow him could not crush his will.

It only stimulated the madness hidden deep in his blood.

"Cannibal, I command you to fly, carry me to the sky!"

Laughing maniacally in High Valyrian, Rhaegar steadied himself on his hands and knees and gave the command to fly once more.

"Roar!"

This time the Cannibal did not refuse his command.

His vertical pupils filled with rage, his limbs supported his body, and the sharp claws on his wings gripped the stone wall as he quickly climbed out of the narrow cave.

You want to fly? Then let us fly!

On the steep slope, the Gray Ghost that had been attacked by the dragon flame was bleeding and prostrating on the ground, its head lying helplessly on its side on the ground, and the dragon's mouth flowing with blood.

Its gray-blue vertical pupils reflected the thin figure of Rhaegar.

As the Cannibal climbed out of the cave, this clear reflection gradually blurred until it disappeared.

This caused it to let out a mournful cry and look reluctantly at the massive Cannibal.

...

The Cannibal's body was as huge as a mountain, but his movements were still incredibly smooth.

In a few moments, it climbed out of the underground cave and reappeared under the vast and boundless sky.

"Cannibal, fly!"

The blinding light forced Rhaegar to open his eyes, and he repeated the command as he gripped his back scales with both hands.

He showed the Cannibal his own will.

This dragon would not recognize a coward with a weak heart; he had already experienced failure once and would never repeat it.

Under the blue sky and white clouds, the Cannibal's dark, scaled body resembled a mountain of coal, his wings flapping to stretch his majestic frame.

Distracting sounds came to his ears as the Cannibal's neck snapped back and his hideous dragon head closed in on the small creature on his back.

A bloody mouth opened like an abyss, and the dragon let out a murderous roar.

Chapter 62: Sky and Sea

The dragon did not breathe fire, nor did it intend to tear Rhaegar apart.

Instead, with a sweep of its powerful wings, the colossal figure of the Cannibal left the mountaintop and soared into the sky.

As a sensation of weightlessness enveloped him, Rhaegar's eyes fluttered open, revealing only a narrow slit, and he saw a view with nothing above but the drifting clouds.

"Flight..."

His eyes widened in astonishment, Rhaegar murmured softly, momentarily speechless at the miracle unfolding before him.

In an instant, elation overcame Rhaegar and he laughed exuberantly, "I am flying, I have successfully mounted a dragon's back!"

Adjusting his posture to find a more secure position on the dragon's back, Rhaegar leaned forward to look down at the earth.

The Cannibal rose quickly, gliding above the clouds with effortless grace.

The island of Dragonstone, an area of land that would take a day to traverse on foot, now appeared unremarkable in Rhaegar's eyes.

Rhaegar understood that it was not the island that had shrunk in size, but rather, from the vantage point of a dragon's back, all things seemed smaller.

Just as he began to relax, the Cannibal sent a burst of fire into the sky and propelled himself into the flames.

Rhaegar's pupils constricted slightly and he quickly twisted his body to avoid the dragon flames.

Each dragon had different characteristics, and the hue of their flames followed the same logic.

The Cannibal's dragonfire manifested as a ghostly green reminiscent of death, its form resembling smoke that alternated between gaseous and liquid states, with formidable adhesive properties.

Once tainted by his dragonfire, extinguishing the flames proved as difficult as plucking a maggot from a bone.

While Rhaegar could temporarily withstand the searing heat of dragonfire, prolonged exposure was dangerous.

With a resounding roar, the Cannibal plunged into the engulfing green flames, flapping his wings with great force.

Pinned against its spine, Rhaegar felt the heat of the dragonfire burn the back of his clothing, leaving reddened, swollen burns.

Once again exposed to dragonfire, his injuries were less severe this time.

Perhaps because of his purer bloodline, his resistance to the dragonfire had increased.

Rhaegar, a defiant expression etched on his face, plucked at a smoldering strand of hair and shouted, "Dracarys!"

He felt the Cannibal's stubborn determination.

The black dragon refused to acknowledge him.

Very well, then. Let me face your flames and challenge your stubbornness.

Let us see if this enraged dragon yields first, or if I am consumed by the flames.

Hearing the High Valyrian's command, the Cannibal grew increasingly agitated, twirling in the air and unleashing jets of dragonfire in an attempt to dislodge him.

Rhaegar gritted his teeth, convinced that victory would go to the one who held out to the end.

...

Inside the cave, the imposing silhouette of the Cannibal had vanished.

The king's eldest son had also vanished without a trace.

After a brief pause, Cole regained his composure and quickly made his way out.

The prince was missing, and he had to inform the princess and the king.

Regardless of the outcome, he bore the responsibility.

Emerging from Dragonmont in disarray, Cole encountered the Dragonkeeper, who had returned from his exploration of the canyon.

Though the Dragonkeeper tried to stop him, Cole slipped past him and made a beeline for the castle.

At some point, the once-clear sky changed color and was covered by darkening clouds.

Bean-sized raindrops fell to the ground, the cold wind mirroring the coldness in his heart.

Returning to the castle proved to be a challenge, arriving just in time for the royal family's reunion in the hall.

Observing Cole's disheveled state, Viserys was the first to address him, inquiring, "Ser, why do you seem so agitated?"

Cole bowed his head, his mind in turmoil as he replied, "The prince was carried off by a dragon."

"A dragon?" Viserys' reply was tinged with disbelief.

Rhaenyra sprang to her feet, her gaze piercing as she asked Cole, "And you made no attempt to pursue the young dragon?"

"We were led to Dragonmont under false pretenses, where we encountered a young dragon, only to be ambushed by a formidable adult dragon," Cole explained wearily, shaking his head. "Despite sensing danger, the prince refused to retreat and leaped onto the dragon's back alone, seemingly intent on... taming it."

"Gods, you stood by while Rhaegar mounted a full-grown dragon?" Viserys snapped in anger.

Rhaenyra rushed to Cole's side, her voice filled with fear, "Where is Rhaegar? Where is the dragon?"

"I do not know. The prince gave a command to the giant dragon and took flight before we could intervene," Cole admitted helplessly.

Cole had followed Rhaenyra for years, and though his knowledge of High Valyrian was rusty, it remained somewhat familiar to him.

The resounding slap echoed through the empty hall.

Pointing her stinging hand accusingly at Cole, Rhaenyra's heart seethed with rage as she gritted her teeth and declared, "I have only one brother, and I trusted you to protect him!"

"I am deeply sorry..." Cole's face bore the mark of her slap as he hung his head in shame.

"Save your apologies! Send out search parties immediately, now!" Rhaenyra's voice, clear and cold, echoed as she stormed out of the hall.

Taming a full-grown dragon was no easy task.

Every year on the island of Dragonstone, brave individuals harbored secret ambitions to tame wild dragons.

But not one soul ever succeeded.

Inevitably, they met their demise, reduced to ashes or left unrecognizable.

At first, Rhaenyra thought that the lesson of the Dreamfyre incident would dissuade Rhaegar from attempting to tame a full-grown dragon.

But to her dismay, Rhaegar still had the ambition to tame a full-grown dragon.

The wild dragons of Dragonstone had long roamed without a master, their ferocious nature a challenge far beyond the chain-bound Dreamfyre.

Rhaegar's newfound desire to tame an adult dragon stemmed from his desire to help her.

If any harm came to Rhaegar as a result...

She dared not think of the guilt that would weigh on her for the rest of her days.

...

Compared to the ferocity of dragonfire, every flame in the mundane world seems mild by comparison.

The unleashed fury of a dragon has the ability to lay waste to entire cities.

Despite his best efforts to dislodge the stubborn human rider on his back, the Cannibal's green eyes glowed with madness, each thunderous roar echoing through the clouds.

"Cannibal, Dracarys!"

Rhaegar lay prone on the dragon's back, commanding tirelessly.

In response to these commands, the Cannibal veered off course, maintaining a steady rhythm.

Its body straightened, wings outstretched, neck slightly arched, slitted pupils fixed on the sea below.

Intent on ridding itself of the nuisance clinging to its back, it plunged into the ocean at breakneck speed.

As the rushing wind pressed against him, Rhaegar's body stiffened, leaving only his bloodied hands clutching desperately to the dragon's scales.

The air pressure made it hard to breathe, and Rhaegar squeezed his eyes shut, his mouth open.

He tried to scream, but his voice was lost in the rushing air.

Plop!

The Cannibal crashed directly into the rolling sea, sinking his entire body into it.

Rhaegar was engulfed in salt water.

Seawater filled his lungs, choking him, leaving him gasping for air.

For a fleeting moment, a sense of helplessness washed over Rhaegar.

Instinctively, he considered releasing his grip.

"Roar..."

On the ocean floor, the Cannibal let out a resounding roar, snatching at passing fish with hunger, tail flailing and head rising with force.

After breaking through the surface of the sea, the dragon spread its wings and soared back into the sky.

Although dragons could dive into the sea for short periods, they could not stay there for long.

Despising the seawater, the Cannibal quickly emerged from the ocean's depths and rode the waves once more.

This break gave Rhaegar a chance to catch his breath.

As the Cannibal broke free of the sea's grip, Rhaegar beat his chest and expelled seawater with a violent cough.

Through a blurred vision, he saw the dragon glide across the surface of the water, its mighty wings churning up the waves in its wake.

Chapter 63: Successful Taming

"Cannibal, do you still not recognize me?"

Rhaegar lay helplessly on the dragon's back, trying to communicate with the creature beneath him.

At first, he did not expect an answer.

But in a surprising development, the Cannibal's gaze shifted backward, its green vertical pupils no longer filled with madness, but instead tinged with a hint of humanity.

It had to be said that the unwavering will of the insignificant creature on its back had made an impression.

Cannibal snorted at Rhaegar in disdain before pulling its head back and resuming its flight.

At that moment.

Rhaegar locked eyes with the Cannibal.

Reflected in the Cannibal's vertical pupils was Rhaegar's face.

A brief but powerful connection was formed between them.

In that brief connection, Rhaegar sensed the essence of the Cannibal's being.

Fierce, lonely, and cold.

Such were the depths of this black dragon's mind, wild and free.

It didn't care about the world, and it didn't want a rider to disturb its peace.

Now, however, the cannibal sensed Rhaegar's resolve.

It was willing to give him the opportunity to bend its will.

Reading this, Rhaegar grinned, "Come on, the harder the test, the greater the reward."

"Roar!"

The Cannibal roared into the sky, lifting his wings to rise violently.

The Cannibal soared through the air at high speed, piercing through the dark clouds laden with water vapor.

Reaching its highest point, Cannibal slowed down.

It looked back at the tiny figures below it.

Whoosh-

The Cannibal's thick neck arched backward, performing a mid-air backflip.

Once, twice...

Three times in a row, the Cannibal used the momentum of each somersault to maintain its posture before leaping downward, wings outstretched.

Rhaegar clung desperately to anything he could reach.

After enduring the onslaught of the three flips, dizziness enveloped him and his body went limp.

The Cannibal roared triumphantly above the clouds.

Unable to maintain his grip on the dragon's scales, Rhaegar tumbled from its back.

The Cannibal had been keeping a watchful eye on the insignificant pest that had clung to its back.

Satisfied with the release of its prey, the Cannibal let out a victorious roar.

Diving even faster, it positioned itself beneath Rhaegar's falling body.

Opening its jaws directly beneath him, the Cannibal ignited a fire in its throat.

Intent on burning him to a crisp before devouring him whole.

Boom!

Green dragon flames erupted in the cloudy sky.

Despite the danger, Rhaegar remained conscious.

His descent continued, and as the fire drew closer, he braced himself for the searing heat.

Death was near, but Rhaegar still sought a solution.

With the Cannibal positioned directly below him, his chances of survival were not entirely lost.

Spreading his limbs, he tried to change his trajectory in mid-fall.

But the dragon's flames descended, leaving him no way out.

"I am Rhaegar Targaryen and I am capable of subduing any dragon in existence."

Reciting these words as a mantra, Rhaegar closed his eyes and embraced the heat.

Protected by blood and fire, he still wanted to tame the black dragon.

The dragon's flames consumed Rhaegar's clothing, exposing him to the intensity of the fire.

Just as it was burning his flesh, a system beep interrupted.

"Congratulations, the Last Flame has been activated. You have received..."

[True Dragon's Blood]

Grade: Legendary (Red) Effect: Fire Elemental Affinity +50%.

Review: "An ancient bloodline filled with mysterious power. They are the epitome of blood and fire."

A fiery tendril emerged from the system panel, plunged into Rhaegar's chest, and fused with his heart.

In an instant, Rhaegar's eyes snapped open, an unnatural flush spreading across his pale skin, veins pulsating in his temples.

The system panel floated in front of him and changed.

[Rhaegar Targaryen]

Talent: Dreamer (Gold), Longevity (Green) Bloodline: Old Valyrian Dragonlord (+20%)

Skill: Old Valyrian Language Proficiency

Relic: Blood and Fire (+50% Resistance to Flame), True Dragon's Blood (+50% Fire Affinity)

Evaluation: "The ancient bloodline continues to grow, its purity unmatched."

He stepped forward, his eyes fixed on the bloodline section as the percentages continued to rise.

20%, 23%, 27%...

In a single breath, the bloodline jumped to 33%, the "+" icon disappearing.

Unknown to him, a shroud of flame enveloped his body, merging with the dragon's flames.

Though he was unaware of the change, he felt a surge of power erupt from his heart, coursing through his veins.

He continued to fall, not slowing down.

Green flames still engulfed him, their heat electrifying his senses.

Rhaegar made no sound, allowing the flames to consume him.

Yet his skin remained unblemished, even as his body temperature rose.

He was adapting to the fire.

Still falling, Rhaegar maneuvered out of the dragon's flames.

He avoided falling into the Cannibal's maw.

He altered his trajectory, brushing the dragon's jaws before crashing into its spine.

The Cannibal's head and tail lay close to him.

Rhaegar reached for something, finally grabbing the tip of the tail as he prepared for the next descent.

Silence!

At that moment, the sky and the sea seemed strangely still.

The wind and rain stopped.

The Cannibal hovered over the surface of the sea, its wings no longer stirring the wind.

Perhaps it began to doubt its own Dragon Flame, and wonder what happened.

It was taken by surprise by this insignificant human intruder.

Seizing the opportunity, Rhaegar regained his position atop the Cannibal's spine.

Gripping its scales tightly, Rhaegar braced himself for the resistance.

But to his surprise, the Cannibal remained motionless.

Rhaegar lifted his head to meet the dragon at eye level.

Cannibal turned his head to look at Rhaegar with a calm gaze.

At that moment, man and dragon locked eyes, their silhouettes mirrored in each other's gaze.

The dragon's mouth was close to Rhaegar, its breath scorching hot against his skin.

Rhaegar hesitated, then cautiously held out his palm.

The Cannibal's green pupils narrowed suspiciously and he let out a growl that nearly knocked Rhaegar off balance.

Turning his face to shield himself from the sulfurous stench, Rhaegar's palm remained in the air.

After a brief moment of anticipation, a rough texture grazed his palm, causing Rhaegar to slowly turn his head back, his brows relaxing.

The Cannibal craned his neck, allowing the scales to brush against Rhaegar's palm in a gesture of acceptance.

Rhaegar watched in awe, his lips curling into a gentle smile, his heart brimming with pride.

In return, the Cannibal looked at him with a hint of condescension in its vertical pupils, as if acknowledging his victory.

It seemed to say, "You earned it, boy!"

Rhaegar's smile widened, his hands caressing the Cannibal's scales with a sense of accomplishment.

"Cannibal, take flight!"

With a command in High Valyrian, Rhaegar gripped the Cannibal's scales tightly, ready to take flight.

The Cannibal responded with a roar, but this time without resistance.

With a powerful flap of its wings, it rose into the sky, its flight smooth and seamless.

Rhaegar marveled at the experience, unaware of the Cannibal's extraordinary flying skills.

As he loosened his grip and closed his eyes, enjoying the cool breeze on his face, the bond between Rhaegar and the Cannibal deepened.

Though still adjusting to their newfound connection, both could sense each other's thoughts and intentions.

In a sign of understanding, the Cannibal slowed his pace and glided gracefully over the sea, occasionally letting out a proud roar.

It knew that Rhaegar had never ridden a dragon before, and it wanted to show him its best.

Rhaegar, amused by the Cannibal's behavior, couldn't help but feel emotional.

Pressing his cheek to the cool scales, he embraced the moment, knowing that this was his dragon - uniquely his.

With hope in his heart, Rhaegar closed his eyes, inhaled the Cannibal's scent, and whispered softly, "Our story, from this moment forward, shall echo through the ages."

Chapter 64: Taming the Dragon and Returning

Dragonstone Island, the castle.

The rain pattered and dripped as cloaked soldiers marched from all sides of the castle.

Viserys sat alone in the dimly lit hall, listening to the rain with deep eyes.

The castle hall opens.

A drenched Rhaenyra strides in.

"Any news of Rhaegar?" Viserys said in a low voice.

Rhaenyra said in a dejected tone, "A fisherman saw a pitch-black dragon leaping toward the Narrow Sea."

"Gather more men, mobilize all the manpower in the castle, and send out all the ships on the island that can go to sea." Viserys' face changed and he sighed deeply.

He had already researched the origin of the pitch-black dragon.

It was the largest and oldest wild dragon on the island.

Often preying on young dragons and dragon eggs, it was known to the fishermen as the Cannibal.

It was a vicious black dragon.

Rhaegar was only a six-year-old child, and the chances of taming the Cannibal were slim.

For now, they could only pray that the Cannibal's distaste for human flesh would allow Rhaegar to save his life.

Wiping the water stains from her face, Rhaenyra said in a trance, "All the manpower that can be sent has already been dispatched, and I have also asked the people to prepare a great ship for the return voyage to King's Landing."

"Return to King's Landing?" Viserys looked at her in disbelief.

Rhaenyra's face was filled with worry, "If there is no word from Rhaegar tonight, I will return to King's Landing to take Syrax and set out to the sea in search of the Black Dragon."

"That's not a good idea, the Black Dragon is much bigger than Syrax, you and your dragon will only become its food."

Viserys was very clear-headed and rejected the suggestion immediately.

"If it comes to that, I will slaughter that wild dragon." Rhaenyra said stubbornly.

....

On the third floor, Alicent sat on the edge of her bed.

A black-robed man stood before the floor-to-ceiling windows of the balcony, overlooking the castle's tumult below.

"You set the boy up for the wild dragon to devour him." Alicent's face was tense and her tone irritated.

The black-robed man turned and said indifferently, "That was his bad luck, I had originally planned to lure in Silverwing who had lost her dragon eggs, who knew a wild dragon would intervene."

"It was you who asked me to reveal the information to Rhaenyra and trick him into traveling to Dragonmont." Alicent's eyes were red with inexplicable fear.

Naturally, she knew that the man in black had found her so that he could set a trap for Rhaegar.

But the panic she felt after having done that made her uneasy.

The man in black knew this about her and said sarcastically, "If the king's eldest son dies, your son Aegon is the first male heir, shouldn't you be happy?"

"But I'm afraid, if Rhaegar isn't dead..."

Alicent was a bit uncomfortable.

"The Cannibal is the most savage of the wild dragons. The boy had no chance to tame it. I'm afraid he's met his end in the dragon's mouth by now."

He did not believe that a wild dragon that had survived alone for decades could be tamed by a small child.

He had already moved the Dragonkeeper who had delivered the false message, and nothing could be learned from the two guards who had been taken into custody for questioning.

Alicent closed her mouth and covered her face with her hands in distress.

She was still frightened and her resolve was weak.

The black-robed man said indifferently, "Don't worry, even if the boy gets away with it, I have other ways."

...

The bickering in the castle was non-stop, and Rhaegar became the center of the conversation.

Rhaegar knew nothing of this and enjoyed the pleasure of riding a dragon.

After a long journey across the wide, narrow sea, Rhaegar finally had enough.

"Cannibal, let's return to Dragonstone Island."

Rhaegar spoke in High Valyrian and gave his orders to Cannibal.

The connection between them was still new, and he had to rely on language to convey commands.

But Cannibal was an adult dragon with a sense of self-respect.

As soon as it recognized Rhaegar, it stopped resisting.

The dragon's head reversed direction and flapped its wings to accelerate forward.

The speed of the Cannibal at full power was extremely fast.

It was like a black meteor streaking through the dark clouds.

It didn't take long for the Cannibal to arrive and for Dragonstone Island to appear beneath it.

"Cannibal, let's fly low, I'll show Rhaenyra and the others how powerful you are." Rhaegar's face was filled with anticipation.

He had tamed the mightiest of the wild dragons and now he had to surprise everyone.

At that moment, the castle was in chaos.

Rhaenyra argued with Viserys and ran out of the hall.

When she found Lord Robert, she ordered him to prepare the ship for the return voyage.

"I want to be back in King's Landing by morning, not a moment too soon." Rhaenyra urged.

Lord Robert had a troubled look on his face and didn't dare take the liberty of arranging the princess's return without the king's consent.

"Roar..." In an instant, a deafening dragon roar echoed throughout the castle.

Rhaenyra raised her head as a gust of wind whistled, blowing her long, wet hair away.

In her line of sight, a huge beast, black as charcoal, soared above the castle.

A pair of sky-covering wings enveloped half of the castle, stopping half of the rain.

"Dragon! It's a black dragon!"

A guard was the first to speak, screaming in panic.

The others snapped to attention and stared fearfully at the dragon above their heads.

Cole, who was in a sorry state, ran from the corner to Rhaenyra and said eagerly, "Princess, it's that dragon that took the prince."

"I know, I saw Rhaegar."

Rhaenyra was lost in thought as she looked up at the black dragon circling overhead, her eyes unblinking as she stared at the figure on the dragon's back.

Despite the distance, it was hard to make out.

Rhaenyra knew only that it had to be Rhaegar.

Under the horrified eyes of the crowd, the Cannibal circled the castle three times.

Then he glided down slowly.

Rumbling

Accompanied by a thunderous blast, the Cannibal circled the castle's towers and landed smoothly on the towering walls.

With both limbs stepping on the wall, the Cannibal's wings spread wide, its neck stretched out and roared at the sky, and a ghostly green dragon flame cut through the pouring rain.

Seeing the dragon flames, the guards were all frightened to the ground, not daring to move an inch.

"Cannibal, let me down," Rhaegar said softly, riding on the dragon's back.

The Cannibal let out a low roar, its wings curled up on either side of its body, and its slender neck was lowered so that it stuck close to the ground of the castle's school yard.

The Cannibal exposed Rhaegar to a multitude of eyes as it lowered its head.

Rhaenyra looked up from below. She was staring at him excitedly.

"Rhaegar!"

Rhaenyra cried in concern, running quickly toward the wall.

Rhaegar did not jump off the dragon's back, looking down at his sister.

He followed the neck of the dragon to the top of the Cannibal's head.

One hand held the dragon's horn, bent to the side, and he looked down from above.

Rhaenyra ran to the top of the Cannibal's head, gulping unconsciously as she saw the green eyes.

The Cannibal was worthy of being the strongest wild dragon.

Never mind its massive size and ferocious character.

Just looking at him was enough to make you want to cry.

His entire body was as black as charcoal without a hint of mixed color.

Indifferent to everything, the green eyes were like two clusters of ghostly flames.

The head of the fierce dragon was full of sharp horns and spikes, and one pair of large horns and two pairs of small horns were bent back to form a crown of gray horns.

If you stood in front of Cannibal and stared into his eyes, you would think that you had just seen an evil god, incomparably evil and terrifying.

Rhaenyra felt the searing breath of the Cannibal. She took half a step back, signaling that she meant no harm.

"Great, Rhaegar, I thought something had happened to you," she said ecstatically, looking at Rhaegar on the dragon's head.

God knows how worried she had been.

She had only one brother, and without him, she was as good as gone.

"I said I could tame a full-grown dragon, and now I've done it," Rhaegar said calmly.

Chapter 65: Nightmare

"You really did, you showed great courage!"

With tears streaming down her cheeks, Rhaenyra's heart swelled with a mixture of relief and gratitude as she spoke.

Rhaegar's smile widened as he heard her words. "Indeed, I have sworn to protect you."

But his fleeting joy was cut short.

Rhaenyra's laughter erupted, her cheeks flushing with amusement. "A true gentleman should dress appropriately before facing a lady."

A breeze whispered past, and Rhaegar looked down in embarrassment.

Exposed and naked, he hurried to cover himself, his cheeks burning with embarrassment. "Let's not dwell on the details."

"Get down, there's much to discuss." Rhaenyra wiped away her tears and stifled a laugh.

Rhaegar humbled himself and obediently dismounted from the dragon's back.

Approaching him, Rhaenyra wrapped her cloak around him, shielding him from the cold.

Struggling to hide his shame, Rhaegar gestured to Cannibal. "This is my dragon, Cannibal."

"Isn't that the name the fishermen gave it?" Rhaenyra, indifferent to dragon names, hugged her brother tightly.

Rhaegar grinned. "Cannibal likes the name, and so do I. It suits his dark nature, devouring all light."

"You're getting smarter, Rhaegar," Rhaenyra's eyes shimmered with a myriad of emotions as she planted a kiss on his cheek.

"Come on, Father nearly fainted when he heard you were captured by Cannibal."

Reluctant to let him go, Rhaenyra held on tightly.

With no clothes to cover himself, Rhaegar offered no resistance.

Turning back to Cannibal, he shouted, "Stay close, I will seek you out tomorrow!"

"Roar..."

Cannibal echoed the call, leaping down from the castle wall to perch on the surrounding cliffs.

Only when Cannibal's eyes closed did the castle guards cautiously emerge and gather around the siblings.

Rhaegar singled out one of the guards. "Prepare plenty of cattle for my dragon."

"Yes, Your Grace!" The guard's response was swift, filled with urgency.

Without delay, the guards obeyed their prince's command and ran to prepare offerings for the dragon.

...

As they entered the hall, Viserys was waiting at the door.

When Rhaegar saw Rhaenyra's embrace, his eyes bright with excitement, he nodded earnestly. "It's good to have you back and in one piece."

Rhaegar's grin faltered as he bowed his head. "Forgive me, Father, for not seeking your consent before secretly taming the dragon."

"It is forgiven. We were concerned for your safety, yet you accomplished what we thought impossible."

In a rare show of tenderness, Viserys moved closer and gently cupped Rhaegar's forehead. "Well done, my son. Your sister clarified your intentions in taming the dragon; it was not an act of selfishness."

"Not quite. I was looking for an adult dragon."

Rhaegar's sudden confession surprised him, revealing his true intentions.

He could not fathom settling for a young dragon; only a formidable adult dragon was worthy in his eyes.

When he heard of Vhagar, the mightiest dragon in existence, his fantasies soared.

Though Vhagar had been tamed by Laena Velaryon, fortune smiled upon him.

The fearsome beast, Cannibal, was waiting for him.

Its ominous face and brute strength stirred something primal in him.

Viserys smiled, his tone neutral. "As long as you remain dedicated to protecting your loved ones, that is all that matters."

Then, as if remembering something vital, his expression changed to one of determination. "You have both endured the rain. Go and take a warm bath, and I will have Lord Robert prepare a sumptuous feast to commemorate your conquest of the wild dragon."

His emotions had been on edge all day.

He had feared for the safety of his eldest son when he dared to tame a wild dragon.

But he had underestimated the boy.

With his noble lineage and the favor of the gods, he had miraculously tamed the fierce black dragon.

Born alongside Dreamfyre, Vermithor, and Silverwing, Cannibal had remained untamed, growing larger and more powerful as a wild dragon.

Heeding her father's advice, Rhaenyra led Rhaegar back upstairs.

Only now did she realize that her clothes were soaking wet, leaving her cold and drenched.

Pride and worry warred in his eyes as Viserys watched his children leave.

As he thought, he muttered, "The family now commands a grown dragon, another source of power."

He had no idea of Cannibal's true size.

He imagined it to be nearly eighty percent the size of Vermithor.

It should be a colossal creature, filled with destructive potential.

...

Alicent was absent from dinner.

The maid reported that she was indisposed and in shock.

Viserys felt a pang of disappointment, but he hid it from his children, maintaining a facade of contentment.

Rhaegar also felt a sense of disappointment; he had been eager to show off his dragon.

After dinner, Rhaenyra grabbed him and dragged him by force into her chambers.

Without a word, he was pushed onto the large, plush bed.

Rhaegar's expression was tense, his voice trembling as he asked, "Sister, what are you doing?"

"What do you think?" came her curt reply.

As soon as he crossed the threshold, Rhaenyra's demeanor changed abruptly, fixing him with a puzzled, cross-eyed stare.

"I did not mean to deceive you, but I wanted a full-grown dragon," Rhaegar murmured, his tone tinged with concern.

"Given your previous statements, what are your intentions now?"

Rhaenyra had not forgotten his earlier comments and was genuinely concerned that he might lead a dragon to the Driftmark and cause havoc.

A reckless child.

He dared to mount a wild dragon and then rode it recklessly as it spat fire into the sky.

"Don't worry, I'll behave myself. I understand that dragons aren't just tools," Rhaegar promised seriously.

Rhaenyra pinched his cheeks, pulling them sharply as she spoke, "When have you ever kept your word? Your credibility with me is nonexistent."

"So what's the verdict? I've tamed Cannibal. You can't stop me from riding him, can you?" Rhaegar lay sprawled on the bed, resigned. His mouth formed a retort, but his mind was already planning tomorrow's dragon ride, far away from here.

He longed for a short escapade to explore the world beyond King's Landing, now that he had a dragon at his command.

"Hmph, no funny business, at least until you're safely back from the Driftmark. You need permission for that," Rhaenyra said.

"All right, I'll obey," Rhaegar feigned obedience like a mischievous child.

Rhaenyra pinched his chin and nipped his cheek, a warning in her actions. "You better not forget!"

Her brother was a wild one, unparalleled in his boldness. Left unchecked, she feared he might challenge the gods themselves.

As their conversation ended, the room fell into darkness. Rhaenyra and Rhaegar sat on opposite sides of the bed, their backs to each other, a heavy silence enveloping the room.

In a haze, Rhaegar drifted off to sleep.

In his dream, he flew atop Cannibal, traversing the continent and leaving a trail of legendary exploits in his wake.

Returning to Dragonstone after a triumphant journey, the ominous dragon roars echoed from the island and jolted Rhaegar awake.

In an instant, two adult dragons emerged from Dragonmont and attacked Cannibal from either side.

With a command, Rhaegar urged Cannibal into battle, narrowly avoiding the onslaught of the massive dragons.

At the edge of safety, nestled against the cliffs of Dragonstone, Rhaegar believed they had escaped.

But from the shadows, an unseen behemoth lunged forward, unleashing a torrent of scarlet dragon flames that sent Rhaegar tumbling from Cannibal's back.

The other two dragons rejoined the fray.

Cornered and badly wounded, Rhaegar could only watch helplessly as Cannibal was torn apart by the attack of the three dragons, his once majestic form reduced to mere fragments.

In the aftermath, only the lifeless head of Cannibal remained, its emerald eyes gazing back at him reluctantly.

Chapter 66: Dance of the Dragons

As expected, Rhaegar was awakened from his sleep by a familiar nightmare.

Unlike before, he did not wake with a scream, but opened his eyes with a blank stare.

"Dragons surrounded me, and the Cannibal..." His murmur faded, lost in the remnants of his dream.

As a dreamer, the vivid images lingered, refusing to leave his mind.

"Hmm...hmm..." A soft moan broke the silence, reaching Rhaegar's ears from beside him.

Turning his gaze to the source, Rhaegar found Rhaenyra, the only other occupant of the room, in the throes of discomfort.

The distraught Rhaenyra was oblivious to his gaze, her moans revealing that she was in severe pain.

"What is it, sister?" Rhaegar's concern spurred him to action as he approached her side to assess her condition.

Bathed in the moonlight, Rhaegar saw Rhaenyra's face contorted with pain.

Her once beautiful features were now pale, her eyebrows furrowed, and beads of cold sweat adorned her forehead.

Rhaegar had read several volumes of Herbology, so he could tell immediately that Rhaenyra was unwell.

"Rhaenyra, do you have a fever?" he asked, gently pressing his palm to her forehead to check her temperature.

"Handmaiden, quickly! My sister needs help!" Rhaegar hurriedly summoned Rhaenyra's handmaiden, who promptly entered the room and lit a candle to examine Rhaenyra's condition.

"The princess's fever is alarmingly high. I will fetch the Maester," the handmaiden exclaimed, her concern evident as she hurried to seek medical assistance.

The Maester arrived quickly and took Rhaenyra's temperature before hurrying off to prepare some remedies.

In the midst of her discomfort, Rhaenyra stirred from her slumber, her eyes opening in pain.

Rhaegar, watching her distress, tried to soothe her forehead with a damp cloth, but Rhaenyra turned her head away, unable to bear the sensation.

With trembling lips, Rhaenyra struggled to communicate, her throat sore and inflamed.

Leaning closer, Rhaegar strained to hear her words. "What is it?" he asked anxiously.

"It hurts... my stomach..." Rhaenyra managed to whisper, tears welling in her eyes as she clutched her stomach in pain.

Perplexed by his sister's illness, Rhaegar was concerned.

"Hang on, the Maester will be here soon," he reassured her, warming his hand and applying gentle pressure to her belly under the blankets, hoping to provide some relief.

As Rhaegar reached for the basin of water, a shiver ran through him, the unexpected coldness startled him and Rhaenyra alike.

"Your Grace, the Maester has arrived," the maid announced, returning promptly with the elderly healer, who entered the room dressed in his customary robes and carrying a medicine bag.

After assessing Rhaenyra's symptoms, the Maester offered his diagnosis. "It seems to be a case of chills brought on by exposure to the rain. Drink some ginger tea and make sure you stay warm."

With efficient haste, the handmaiden set about preparing the ginger tea while Rhaegar provided Rhaenyra with a basin of hot water to ease her aches and pains.

Suddenly, a resounding boom echoed from outside the castle walls, interrupting their attentions.

Rhaegar's grip on the basin slipped as a dark thought crossed his mind.

Handing the basin to the maid, Rhaegar strode to the window and peered out at the commotion outside the castle.

Though the rain had stopped, his attention was drawn to a fire at the edge of the castle where the city wall once stood.

A section of the wall lay in ruins, engulfed in flames and billowing smoke, while a smaller dragon hovered above, roaring furiously.

"It's not Cannibal," Rhaegar muttered, furrowing his brow in confusion at the unexpected attack.

A resounding roar pierced the night, followed by a torrent of golden flames that fell from the sky and rained down on the cliffs outside the castle.

Rhaegar's heart quickened as he realized it was the cliff where Cannibal had taken shelter.

Before he could fully comprehend the situation, a deafening noise echoed through the castle, rousing everyone from their sleep.

Lord Robert emerged from his chambers in disarray, hastily organizing the guards to ensure the King's safety within the main castle.

Meanwhile, Rhaegar's focus remained on the commotion at the edge of the castle.

Amid the chaos, a familiar sound reached his ears - the ominous roar of the Cannibal, the black dragon, as it emerged from the flat ground beneath the cliffs, its gaze fixed on its attackers.

In response to the Cannibal's appearance, two colossal dragons emerged from the darkness of the night sky, illuminated by the flames engulfing the castle.

Their shapes became clearer in the flickering light.

One was a gigantic dragon with bronze scales and brown wing membranes, while the other, slightly smaller, had dark green scales and silver wing membranes.

Though unfamiliar to Rhaegar's eyes, their identities were unmistakable, thanks to his extensive knowledge of Targaryen dragon lore.

They were Vermithor, known as Bronze Fury, and his mate, Silverwing-two dragons once under the care of Rhaegar's great-grandfather, King Jaehaerys Targaryen, and his queen.

Since the death of the revered monarchs nearly two decades earlier, these magnificent creatures had made their home on the island of Dragonstone, free from the command of any master.

At the sight of the two adult dragons, Rhaegar's breath caught in his throat, and a chill of realization ran through him. "Damn, it's like the nightmare has come to life," he murmured, his words drowned out by the rumbling noise.

The cacophony inside the castle was deafening enough, but the sight of the three mighty dragons against the backdrop of the sky was a terrifying spectacle in itself.

As Vermithor and Silverwing attacked Cannibal from opposite sides, unleashing torrents of dragon flames, the air crackled with their clash.

Cannibal refused to give in to the onslaught, dodging their attacks with deft maneuvers while his own emerald flames illuminated the darkness, casting an eerie glow over the landscape.

The battle escalated, and the three dragons went from spitting flames to melee, their forms intertwining in a fierce dance.

Even from a distance, Rhaegar could sense the Cannibal's fury.

"Hang on, I'm coming to help," Rhaegar said, looking away from the window with determination.

As he made his way across the room, Rhaenyra's faint voice reached his ears.

"Rhaegar, what's happening?"

Trying to comfort her, Rhaegar replied softly, "The Cannibal was upset about something, I want to calm him down."

Rhaenyra struggled to keep her eyes open as she lay on the bed, her voice strained with urgency.

"Do not deceive me. I heard the sound of dragons fighting."

"It's nothing serious, I'll go calm Cannibal and return shortly," Rhaegar assured her, wiping the sweat from her brow as he spoke.

Unexpectedly, Rhaenyra grabbed his wrist, her voice shaking. "Please don't go. Dragon battles are dangerous, and you're too young."

"I am no longer a child; I am a Dragon Rider now," Rhaegar countered firmly, pulling his hand from her grasp. "My bond with the Dragon obliges me to fight by its side."

"You mean more to me than any dragon," Rhaenyra protested weakly, her reluctance obvious.

Rhaegar met her gaze with unflinching determination. "The dragon is as important to me as I am to myself."

With a kiss on her forehead, Rhaegar turned to leave. He was bound to Cannibal as her knight, and he could not ignore the danger. To retreat would betray their bond and abandon him.

The noise of the dragon battle echoed throughout the castle, rousing everyone from their slumber.

Viserys rose early as well, dressing hastily and retiring to his chambers under the watchful eye of his guards. The corridors were swarming with guards, their tense demeanor reflecting the gravity of the situation.

The sight of three dragons engaged in battle on the outskirts of the castle would unsettle even the bravest of souls.

Eager to aid Cannibal, Rhaegar evaded the guards and slipped out of the castle through a side staircase.

In the distance, the aerial skirmish raged on as Cannibal battled the coordinated attack of Vermithor and Silverwing.

Cannibal was at a disadvantage from the start, pinned down by the synchronized attacks of his opponents.

The coordination between Vermithor and Silverwing, honed over years of partnership, left Cannibal with little room to react.

Their combined assault, golden and orange flames intertwined in a deadly dance, left Cannibal no choice but to endure the attack, his massive body unable to dodge each blast.

Vermithor and Silverwing maintained their dominance of the skies, their coordinated attacks forcing Cannibal to retreat.

Despite his size, Cannibal's retaliation with his green dragon flame had remarkable power and range, serving as his only means of counterattack.

Chapter 67: One Against Two

"Roar....."

As Rhaegar burst from the castle, the thunderous roar of the two dragons reverberated through the air, signaling the commencement of a fierce battle against the Cannibal.

As a seasoned wild dragon, the Cannibal wielded formidable combat prowess honed through countless battles.

It deftly parried the onslaught of the two dragons, denying them any opportunity to exploit its vulnerabilities.

With its colossal size, the Cannibal exuded an aura of fearlessness, confronting its adversaries with confidence in its ability to emerge victorious.

Yet, faced with the simultaneous assault of both dragons, the Cannibal found itself overwhelmed, its disadvantage starkly apparent.

It unleashed a barrage of dragon flames, retaliating against its foes with relentless fury.

Meanwhile, one dragon soared aloft, raining down streams of flames, while the other descended upon the Cannibal with ferocity, determined to kill it at any cost.

Despite its efforts, the Cannibal began to falter under the relentless assault, a grievous wound searing its wing as it plummeted uncontrollably towards the earth below.

With a deafening crash, the Cannibal's descent shattered the city wall, sending stones and debris hurtling into the sky amidst clouds of smoke.

"Cannibal, hold fast!"

Amidst the choking dust, Rhaegar raced to the fallen dragon's side.

"Roar....."

The Cannibal's massive body twisted as it strained to see Rhaegar standing before it.

A flash of vigilance flickered in its green vertical pupil as it assessed the situation.

In response, Rhaegar extended his palm, the familiar gesture comforting it, and spoke in High Valyrian, "Cannibal, I stand with you!"

The tension in the Cannibal's eyes gradually softened as it locked gazes with its master, reassured by the confidence he exuded.

With a heavy snort, it raised its neck, unfurling one wing protectively over Rhaegar.

"Very well, let's fight together," Rhaegar declared with determination.

Stepping onto the outstretched wing, he made his way down to the dragon's spine.

With Rhaegar securely in place, the Cannibal shook off the debris clinging to its body and braced its wings against the ground.

At Rhaegar's command to "Fly", it unfurled its wings and ascended into the sky.

"Roar....."

As the black dragon rose to its feet, the two wild dragons circling above showed their fangs in a feral display of aggression, launching a fresh assault.

Rhaegar, perched atop the Cannibal's back, observed the dragons with a keen eye, issuing instructions to his companion, "Follow my lead, Cannibal!"

Aware of their recent bond, Rhaegar sought to establish trust and coordination in the middle of the battle.

Responding with a low roar, the Cannibal unleashed a burst of green dragonflame, a sign of acknowledgment and readiness.

Boom-

As the Cannibal soared into the air, a burst of orange dragon flame descended, aimed straight at its head.

With remarkable agility, the Cannibal twisted sideways, narrowly evading the flames.

The sudden maneuver caused Rhaegar to sway, but he quickly regained his balance.

"Cannibal, focus your attack on the dark green dragon, Silverwing. We must take one down quickly," Rhaegar commanded, pointing decisively at the target.

He had noted the distinct tactics employed by Vermithor and Silverwing in their aerial assault.

Vermithor, the Bronze Fury, relied on its sheer size and unleashed dragonfire from above, aiming to restrict the Cannibal's movements.

Meanwhile, Silverwing, despite its smaller stature, engaged in a frantic and relentless skirmish, displaying an uncharacteristic fervor in its attacks.

This deviation from their usual behavior puzzled Rhaegar, but he pushed aside his thoughts, focusing instead on the immediate task at hand: neutralizing the threat posed by the two dragons.

The prospect of allowing all three dragons to continue their battle was unthinkable, as it would undoubtedly result in catastrophic destruction for Dragonstone Island.

Responding to Rhaegar's command, the Cannibal surged upward, its massive wings propelling it towards Silverwing, while conjuring a blast of dragonfire.

Silverwing, agile and nimble, deftly dodged the fiery assault, evading the Cannibal's attack.

Meanwhile, above them, Vermithor unleashed another torrent of golden dragon flame, targeting the Cannibal once more.

Rhaegar monitored Vermithor's movements, issuing commands to evade the attack.

The Cannibal, in the midst of attacking Silverwing, abruptly altered its flight path, narrowly evading the oncoming golden dragon flames.

The heat scorched the air, burning Rhaegar's hair and sending a wave of panic through him. Swiftly, he extinguished the fire, sparing himself from a potentially embarrassing predicament.

"Cannibal, trust me. I am your eyes in the sky," Rhaegar reassured, his tone firm despite the tension from their close call.

Rhaegar's focus sharpened as he contemplated the crucial bond between dragon and rider. The Cannibal's split-second decision to dodge the attack the importance of their cooperation.

Had the Cannibal hesitated, Rhaegar would have borne the full brunt of Vermithor's dragon flame—even with Blood and Fire he would probably die.

As they resumed their pursuit of Silverwing, the Cannibal acknowledged Rhaegar's guidance with a roar.

Cannibal surged forward, its target clear: Silverwing, the green dragon who had dared to challenge it.

Meanwhile, Silverwing, undeterred by the Cannibal's advance, met its adversary head-on, wings outstretched in defiance. Its goal was to stall the black dragon long enough for its ally to join the fight.

Fuelled by a primal fury, the Cannibal roared in response, its ferocity unleashed as it lunged at Silverwing with lethal intent. In a clash of titans, the two dragons collided, their immense forms entwined in a frenzied dance of claws, teeth, and wingbeats.

Rhaegar clung to the back of the Cannibal, his grip tight as he crouched low to avoid any accidental injury.

His gaze remained fixed on Vermithor, vigilant against the berserk dragon's unpredictable movements.

At the slightest hint of danger, Rhaegar would swiftly issue commands, guiding the Cannibal to evade the imminent pincer attack from the two dragons.

As Vermithor unleashed a deafening roar and dove towards them, Rhaegar's heart raced. "Cannibal, Dracarys!" he commanded urgently, bracing for the impending clash.

The Cannibal, sensing the threat, obeyed without hesitation, spewing a torrent of dragon flame backwards, aimed directly at the descending Vermithor.

With a deafening boom, the two majestic flames collided in a dazzling display, engulfing the sky in smoke. In the ensuing chaos, it was Cannibal's emerald flame that emerged victorious, piercing through Vermithor's golden fire to strike the dragon's body.

Stunned by the assault, Vermithor faltered mid-flight, his massive form momentarily frozen.

Seizing the fleeting opportunity, Rhaegar's eyes gleamed with determination. "Now's our chance! Vermithor's vulnerable—target Silverwing!" he commanded.

Without hesitation, he issued the order to strike. "Cannibal, Dracarys!"

In the heat of battle, the Cannibal and Silverwing clashed furiously, their instincts driving them to claw and tear at each other. Sensing an opening, the Cannibal deftly evaded Silverwing's snapping jaws, then unleashed emerald dragon flames.

The resounding boom echoed through the air as the dragon flame found its mark, striking Silverwing's head with force. The silver dragon let out a scream, wings flailing in panic.

Cannibal pressed its advantage, lunging forward to sink its teeth into Silverwing's thrashing neck, its fangs gleaming with icy resolve.

With a sickening sound, the Cannibal's jaws closed around Silverwing's flesh, drawing forth a gush of crimson blood.

"Roar..."

The anguished cry of its mate spurred Vermithor back to action, snapping him out of his momentary stupor. With a roar of fury, the bronze dragon launched himself towards Cannibal once more, intent on avenging his companion.

"Cannibal, fall back!" Rhaegar's voice rang out, a command urgently. He knew that once Vermithor attacked, there would be no second chances, dragon fire could only work once.

Yet, driven by the scent of blood and the heat of battle, the Cannibal seemed deaf to his master's plea. Ignoring the retreat order, it continued its relentless assault, jaws snapping shut with lethal intent, determined to deliver the final blow to Silverwing.

Chapter 68: Greatness or Madness?

"Roar..."

In the throes of battle, Silverwing drove its sharp claws into the Cannibal's abdomen, unleashing a furious torrent of dragon flame.

But with its neck clamped tightly in the Cannibal's jaws, the aim of the flame was erratic, dispersing into the sky.

Enraged by the blow, the Cannibal let out a primal roar, its grip loosening instinctively.

In that split second, Vermithor swooped in, his golden dragon flame blazing like a fiery lance, striking the Cannibal's head with devastating force, tearing into its scales.

The impact sent the Cannibal reeling, dazed and disoriented. Its wings faltered, unable to maintain flight, and it was sent tumbling through the air by Silverwing's desperate counterattack.

Forced apart, Silverwing, with blood streaming from its neck, staggered backward, struggling to maintain balance.

Meanwhile, Vermithor, with a low, rumbling growl, turned his attention to the falling Cannibal, his intent clear.

Rhaegar felt a pang of pity for the Cannibal. Despite his instructions to obey commands, its primal instincts had overridden reason, leading to this situation.

As the Cannibal plummeted, Rhaegar gripped its back scales tightly, fighting against the sensation of weightlessness.

"Cannibal, snap out of it!" he shouted, desperately trying to awake the dragon before impact.

If the Cannibal did not awaken in time, the crash to the ground would spell Rhaegar's demise.

"Roar..."

Finally, Cannibal shook off its dizziness and spread its wings wide, stopping its descent with a powerful stroke.

As a wild dragon, its rugged constitution proved its greatest asset. A mere blow to the head couldn't defeat it.

Regaining control just before crashing to the ground, Cannibal adjusted its trajectory, gliding upward against the steep cliffside.

Observing the dragon's injuries, Rhaegar grimaced. The Cannibal bore wounds on its neck, wings, and abdomen, each a testament to the ferocity of the battle. Blood seeped from gaping holes, revealing the pulsing internal organs beneath.

Realization dawned on Rhaegar; the battle could not keep going. Silverwing and Cannibal were bloodied and battered, but Vermithor remained unscathed.

If Cannibal continues fighting Vermithor, even if he wins, the consequences could be disastrous.

Unable to bear the thought, Rhaegar issued a command.

"Cannibal, head for the sea."

With a glance back at the approaching Vermithor, Rhaegar commanded Cannibal to retreat. As long as they withdrew, the battle would end.

"Roar..."

Vermithor pursued, his golden dragon flame slicing through the darkness.

Sensing the threat, Cannibal's ferocity gave way to rationality.

Obedying Rhaegar's command, it unfurled its wings and soared over the cliff, aiming for the beach below.

Rhaegar maintained a vigilant gaze behind him.

Silverwing, incapacitated by its injuries, lay sprawled on the ground, emitting feeble roars as it attempted to rise and fall.

"Silverwing is out of the fight, so there's a chance to escape," Rhaegar breathed a sigh of relief.

As Vermithor closed in, Rhaegar steered Cannibal to evade, periodically turning to unleash emerald dragon flames in resistance.

Cannibal's dragon flame proved formidable, overpowering Vermithor's attempts to close the distance.

In the blink of an eye, Cannibal soared over the beach, the sea within reach.

Suddenly, Rhaegar's eyes caught sight of the cliffs lining the shore.

A of realization struck, and a sense of dread surged within him.

Recollections of his nightmares flooded his mind—the dragon emerging from the cliffside.

With a gut-wrenching feeling, Rhaegar instinctively cried out, "Dracarys!!!"

Bonded through their recent fight, Cannibal responded to Rhaegar's call, swiftly turning and unleashing a torrent of dragon flame toward the cliff below.

Boom—

Instantly, another scarlet fire erupted from beneath the cliff, colliding head-on with Cannibal's emerald flames.

The scarlet dragon flame dissipated in the face of Cannibal's assault.

The collision unleashed a shockwave, buffeting Cannibal's form.

Swiftly adjusting its wings, Cannibal surged forward, fleeing Dragonstone Island without a backward glance.

Rhaegar maintained his composure on Cannibal's back, though the gusts threatened to disorient him.

Lying down, he squinted back at the cliffs, his gaze piercing.

"Who... orchestrated this ambush?"

Rhaegar fixated on the crags, searching for any sign of the hiding dragon.

He was certain that tonight's dragon encounter was no happenstance—it was orchestrated.

Unfortunately, the moss-covered cliffs revealed nothing.

"I'll find you, whoever you are!"

With thoughts of Silverwing on Dragonstone Island and Vermithor in pursuit, Rhaegar gritted his teeth and urged for a swift departure.

This plot targeted him directly.

Remaining on Dragonstone Island endangered not only himself but also his family within the castle walls.

Leaving swiftly was the only prudent choice.

Bolting away with remarkable speed, Cannibal outpaced the sluggish Vermithor.

After a brief chase, Cannibal put considerable distance between them.

Cannibal melted into the darkness night, disappearing from sight.

...

On Dragonstone Island, a figure cloaked in black lingered in the shadows of the beach, peering into the darkness where the dragon had vanished.

"Blocked! Was it chance or foresight?" the cloaked figure muttered, withdrawing a gold coin from his pocket.

"When a Targaryen is born, the gods flip a coin. One side greatness, the other madness."

"Which are you?"

His voice, deep and laden with skepticism, echoed softly on the night breeze.

He tossed the gold coin high into the air, catching it effortlessly as it descended.

With a slow reveal, he displayed the coin, its gleaming surface reflecting the moonlight.

As he stared at the coin, a contemplative silence enveloped him.

Several more times, he angrily hurled the coin into the sea before departing, his departure as silent.

...

In the castle, Viserys stood before a towering window, his gaze burning with fury as he surveyed the ruins of the city walls.

Fresh news had just reached him.

Rhaegar had slipped away amidst the chaos of the dragon's fight, joining his own dragon.

The memory of the clash of dragons sent shivers down Viserys' spine, fearing the potential consequences of his eldest son's actions.

Fortunately, the black dragon had managed to outmaneuver Silverwing and escape, with Vermithor hot on its trail.

As long as Rhaegar was with the dragon, he was safe, for the moment.

"Have you gleaned any information from those guards who delivered the false message?" Viserys inquired sharply, turning to Lyonel, his Hand, who stood beside him.

Lyonel shook his head, his expression troubled. "No, Your Majesty. The guards are unyielding, and the dragonkeepers messenger vanished without a trace."

"Continue the investigation," Viserys commanded, his voice taut with frustration. "No secret remains buried forever."

Turning his attention to the recent dragon attack, Lyonel offered his insight. "According to the tower guards, Vermithor and Silverwing launched the attack on the Cannibal immediately upon encountering it."

Viserys' brow furrowed in contemplation. "The Cannibal's reputation precedes it. Its natural that stealing dragon eggs and hunting young dragons would undoubtedly provoke Silverwing's ire."

"Search every corner of the castle!" Viserys ordered, his fists clenched with determination. "This is an affront to the crown, and those responsible will face justice!"

Chapter 69: Crackclaw Point

Rhaegar and Cannibal were flying high above the Narrow Sea, soaring through the night sky.

Cannibal had a deep wound on his belly, and blood was trailing behind him and mixing with the sea below.

Despite the rush of the flight, Rhaegar's thoughts kept returning to the recent attack. He gently patted Cannibal's scales, wondering, "Why did those two dragons come after you?"

He thought there might have been foul play, but he was curious about how Vermithor and Silverwing had been enticed into the scheme.

Cannibal growled softly, expressing his displeasure.

Rhaegar understood the message.

Someone had tempted Cannibal with a feast of cattle and sheep, even tossing a dragon egg his way, under the cover of the night.

As a wild dragon with a taste for dragon eggs, Cannibal couldn't resist the offer, especially after failing his hunt for the young dragon.

Rhaegar sighed and guessed that Cannibal must have orchestrated something remarkable to lure Vermithor and Silverwing into attacking it.

"No more stealing in Dragonstone—dragon eggs and young dragons are off-limits!" Rhaegar said firmly.

Cannibal responded with a loud roar.

Despite his injuries, Cannibal remained defiant, letting out a low roar to express his reluctance.

Rhaegar tried to reason with him, discussing the need to stop focusing on dragon eggs and young dragons.

Cannibal was a straightforward creature, so he was noncommittal about stealing dragon eggs.

"Is the territory of Dragonstone Island too small? Are you worried that if you stop eating dragon eggs and smaller dragons, they'll take your place on the island?" Rhaegar guessed again.

Rhaegar got the message. "Don't worry, Dragonstone Island can't take in too many dragons. I'll make arrangements for the new generation."

"And as for you, my friend," Rhaegar continued, "no more stealing. I'll ensure there's plenty of livestock for you."

Offering a solution to Cannibal's concerns, Rhaegar hoped to find common ground. Cannibal remained silent, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Rhaegar understood that territorial disputes were difficult to solve, so he let the matter rest.

Expanding the land available for dragons would naturally change Cannibal's behavior.

As Cannibal flew farther away, Rhaegar grew unsure of their destination, likely somewhere near the Narrow Sea. Cannibal's flight slowed and his breathing became labored, indicating severe injuries.

"You're hurt badly. We need to find a place to land," Rhaegar urged.

Noting Cannibal's wounds, Rhaegar's concern grew.

"Roar..."

Cannibal's response was weaker than before.

At dawn, Rhaegar, exhausted, spotted land ahead, with lush forests and mountains gradually coming into view.

"Quick, we've found land, Cannibal!" Rhaegar exclaimed.

Without a word, Cannibal adjusted their course downward. He knew exactly where to land; as a wild dragon, he was familiar with suitable resting places.

From sea to land, Rhaegar experienced a new kind of journey, and now he's traveling without a clear plan.

Cannibal navigated through the terrain and eventually landed in a valley rich with forests and rivers.

Upon landing, Cannibal's injuries took their toll, and he collapsed heavily onto the ground, leaving a deep impression in the earth.

Rhaegar hadn't slept all night and was exhausted. He failed to hold on as Cannibal landed, tumbling off the dragon's back and passing out when he hit the ground.

For a brief moment, both human and dragon were displeased by the rough landing.

Yet, despite his injuries, Cannibal managed to rise, blood still flowing from his wounds.

He paused for a moment when he saw Rhaegar unconscious, but then gently adjusted his position to make sure he was safe.

Luckily, Rhaegar had landed on soft grass and wasn't hurt, just tired.

With no immediate threats and plenty of caves for shelter, Cannibal carried Rhaegar to one with a good vantage point, ensuring his safety before venturing out to find healing herbs.

He knew his rider wouldn't withstand the harsh terrain, so he opted for hiding, confident in returning quickly. Before departing, he marked the area with his dung to deter other creatures.

Satisfied, he took off into the sky once more, leaving Rhaegar sheltered and secure in the cave.

...

As the sun reached its peak, warmth flooded the forested valley.

Inside the cave, Rhaegar stirred, eyelids flickering as if awakening.

Outside, voices echoed through the valley.

"Look, a massive bloodstain! Wonder what creature left it?"

"Tormund, watch out. This valley feels off."

Silence followed the cautious exchange.

Amidst the murmurs, Rhaegar slowly blinked awake, scanning his surroundings in confusion.

"Where am I? Where's Cannibal?" he wondered aloud, puzzled by the cobweb-covered cave.

Recollections of their arrival at a hidden valley flashed through his mind, followed by a blank.

"Someone lured me into a trap... a dragon ambush..." Rhaegar suddenly realized.

But who could have breached the security of Dragonstone Island to orchestrate such a scheme?

Only one name emerged as Rhaegar's thoughts raced - the only one with the means and motive.

"When I return, you won't escape," Rhaegar vowed silently, fists clenched in determination.

...

"Hey, Sister, come take a look! There are fresh tracks outside this cave!" A child's voice called out excitedly from beyond the cave.

Rhaegar's senses sharpened as he heard the approaching footsteps.

He quickly rose from his spot, silently retrieving a dagger from his storage bracelet and preparing for whatever awaited outside.

The sounds drew nearer, causing Rhaegar's grip on the dagger to tighten.

As a child and alone in an unfamiliar place without Cannibal by his side, he knew he couldn't afford to take any risks.

"Who's in there? Show yourself!" A young girl's voice demanded from outside.

Rhaegar quickly assessed the situation. Based on the voices, there were likely three individuals outside—two boys and the girl one of them called sister.

Rhaegar blinked. He felt a wave of relief wash over him as he sensed the small threat.

He was confident in his noble birth and harmless look. He doubted anyone would dare harm him, unless they were truly foolish savages.

The thought of encountering a noble hunting party brought a glimmer of hope to him. Perhaps he'd be welcomed with a grand celebration and treated to fine food and drink.

At the very least, he was hoping for a safe escort back to King's Landing.

Chapter 70: Free Folk

"Okay, I'm coming out!" Rhaegar decided to be honest after thinking it over.

With a sigh of relief, he stowed the dagger back in his bracelet and emerged from the cave, hands raised in surrender.

As soon as he stepped out into the open, Rhaegar saw a bow aimed at him. He instinctively took a half-step back.

"A child?" The archer, a young girl in a leather skirt and cloak, looked at Rhaegar with a hint of suspicion.

Rhaegar's heart sank when he saw her attire. It was clear that she came from a different world than he did.

The girl kept her weapon ready but approached carefully, asking, "Is anyone else in there? Come out now!"

Rhaegar stood frozen in place as he said, "There's no need to shout. I'm alone."

"Nonsense! How could a child like you navigate the swampy jungle?" The girl scoffed and looked him over closely.

At that moment, Rhaegar realized she was judging him by his clothes, assuming he was the son of a noble.

Rhaegar was quiet for a moment, then asked, "Are... you from the free folk?"

He chose his words carefully, trying to avoid using the term "savage." The Maester called the free folk "savages," which was a term for people who were seen as disobedient and uncouth.

The girl in the leather skirt didn't look at him, her attention focused on the cave entrance.

Behind her, two boys came out, dressed in animal skins and carrying bone axes and shovels.

One of them grabbed Rhaegar pretty firmly, which made him uncomfortable. "Easy there, no need to be rough," he said, but they didn't listen.

One of the boys, about ten years old, seemed a bit on the frail side, while the other, taller and stronger, had a darker complexion.

They didn't pay any attention to Rhaegar, completely focused on watching the girl in the leather skirt.

As it turned out, Rhaegar was right. The girl walked to the front of the cave and shot an arrow that whizzed past her and embedded itself in the rocky wall.

When she scanned the empty cave, there was no sign of anyone hiding, not even a mouse.

The tension eased, and the girl in the leather skirt took a deep breath of relief as she got her bow and signaled her brother to bring Rhaegar inside.

The skinny boy tied Rhaegar with twine and put him in a dusty corner, prompting Rhaegar to squirm away from the cobwebs in disgust.

The girl approached him and grabbed his chin, her tone a bit intimidating. "Who are you? What house do you belong to? And where is your lord?"

Rhaegar winced at the pinch, but met her gaze defiantly.

The girl tightened her grip, her threats clear.

But as they locked eyes, Rhaegar found himself feeling braver.

He looked at the girl—her brown curls, high nose, and confident demeanor—but none of it mattered to him.

What caught his attention were her wheat-colored skin and the blood blisters on her knuckles.

Rhaegar's eyes lit up as he spoke, "You're not one of the free folk, are you?"

The young girl's demeanor shifted slightly, her tone becoming somewhat colder. "I'm the one asking questions here. Get to the point."

"This is your brother. Neither of you are from the free folk."

The change in the girl's attitude confirmed Rhaegar's suspicions.

Rhaegar met her skeptical gaze and continued, "A child raised in the wild wouldn't have such smooth skin, let alone a frail one like your brother."

Rhaegar looked the skinny child over carefully and noticed something was wrong. A skinny kid with poor health doesn't match the image of a child raised in the wild.

The girl's expression turned sour as she let go of Rhaegar's chin and spoke in an indifferent tone. "So what? Clever words won't save you."

"Tell me where you're from, or I'll have to take further action."

"No, please! I'm only six years old. You can't hurt a child," Rhaegar said, suggesting, "Untie me, let's talk. Maybe I can help."

Insisting, he added, "I know some skilled healers who can help your brother."

"He's not sick!" The girl shot back, prompting Rhaegar to doubt her. "His pale face suggests otherwise," he countered.

"That's enough!" If you don't stop, I'll have to take action! The girl threatened, raising her fist.

Rhaegar sighed and decided to be honest. He didn't want to go through any more pain.

Given Rhaegar's frail appearance, the young girl hesitated before deciding to untie his grass rope.

"He might be a noble child..." the skinny boy murmured. "Nonsense! Look at his clothes; he's definitely from a noble family," the stout boy interjected.

Silenced, the skinny boy retreated resentfully, crouching to the side.

The young girl shot a stern look at the stout boy. "Teson, go fetch Uncle Falcon and the others. Tormund and I will question him," Tormund said.

"But..." Teson hesitated, but met with the girl's determined gaze, he reluctantly scurried out of the cave.

With one less person around, the young girl's demeanor softened, and she introduced herself, "I'm Skylar, and this is my brother Tormund. We're from the Hawk tribe."

"What's your last name?" Rhaegar asked.

"We don't have one. We're bastards, hated by men and dogs alike," Skylar replied, clearly upset about her origins.

Rhaegar was taken aback by her frankness. He considered the possibility of such a child being accepted in her community.

Skylar continued, "Who are you? Why are you the only one in the cave? And what's with all the blood and dung outside?"

Rhaegar was reluctant to reveal his true identity. If he told a reasonable person who he was, they might try to hold him to ransom. He wasn't sure what Skylar's intentions were, given her dislike of her own birth.

Sensing his unease, Skylar reassured him, "Don't worry, we won't hurt you. Our tribe takes care of children and women."

Relieved, Rhaegar introduced himself, "I'm Rhaegar, son of King Viserys Targaryen. I was traveling the continent riding my dragon."

Although there was some truth to it, Rhaegar was trying to show his origins and give the siblings a heads-up.

"Targaryen! So, you're a prince?" Skylar was quick to respond, while Tormund was eager to know, "Where's your dragon?"

Rhaegar remained calm and insisted, "Let's take it one step at a time. Yes, I am a prince. My silver hair and purple eyes are symbols of the Targaryen House."

Rhaegar was hoping the siblings wouldn't act rashly, to make sure he was safe.

Before him stood the siblings, their expressions a mix of anxiety and anticipation. They were still enjoying the consequences of their audacious feat. Capturing a Targaryen was definitely an unexpected turn of events for them.