

**LYRA** watched from outside the Dragonpit as Caraxes flew circles above King's Landing. Crimson body undulating like the wind itself under his wings, serpentine tail trailing as a winding ribbon. After the fifth round, he finally started to descend. His shriek tore through the air, blowing Lyra's dark locks about her shoulders.

Caraxes loomed above her, bronze eyes blinking underneath the noon sun. He brought his scaled face close to hers and growled with fangs bared. Serrated knives awaiting the taste of flesh and blood.

He shrieked again before nudging her, the force of it almost sent her stumbling. Lyra shook her head in consternation before finally reaching up to pat his snout. "Lykiri, Caraxes!" she scolded him. Soon, a deep rumble reverberated from deep within his chest.

Just like his rider, Caraxes took great pleasure in teasing her. She would not be surprised if he ate her whole one day only to spit her back out for his own amusement.

Daemon dismounted his great beast with Baelor in his arms. Two pairs of violet eyes gazed back at her, identical in both hue and expression. She could not help the smile creeping onto her lips.

Baelor had been born a month early and was smaller than a normal babe. But after having celebrated his first nameday, he had started to grow fast. Daemon was grinning with delight as he held their child aloft.

"He loves it," he told her boastfully. "He'll be the greatest dragonrider yet."

Lyra chuckled, holding her arms out to him. "But first, he needs to feed." Daemon passed the babe back to his mother. "So that he can grow strong and insurmountable, just like his father. Isn't that right?"

Baelor made a gurgling sound and Daemon's grin grew wider. "Look, he agrees."

They bade Caraxes farewell as the dragonkeepers came forward to usher him back into the Dragonpit. Lyra and Daemon got onto their waiting carriage to bring them back to the keep. Her decidedly new sworn sword, Ser Elwyn Scales, followed on horseback.

Once returned to the Red Keep, they went their separate ways. Daemon to his cabinet and Lyra to the nursery where she passed Baelor to the wetnurse. She then went to her bedchambers, but not to rest.

Daemon had said that there was a maze of secret passages connecting everything within the Red Keep itself. Lyra was sure that she knew almost all of them by now. She grabbed a hood then carefully turned the mechanism in the wall to reveal the hidden doorway.

Lyra snuck through the gap, closing the door behind her before walking down the darkened hallways. It led out directly onto the Hill of Rhaenyrs where a fog of Lysene perfumes hung thick in the air from the surrounding brothels.

But a figure suddenly intercepted her as she was exiting the tunnel, causing her heart to stop momentarily with a sharp gasp. Through the shadows and light of day behind his hood, she found violet eyes and silver hair. He pinned her between the wall and his outstretched arm.

"Daemon," she hissed.

"Lyra..." His tone was low and reproachful. "How many times have I told you to stop sneaking out by yourself? You're making Ser Elwyn's job rather difficult."

"How did you know I was coming this way?" she questioned, eyes flitting around their vicinity.

"Because I know you." He studied her with a pointed yet gentle stare. "It wounds me that you do not bring me along with you."

Restless green eyes settled back on his face and she raised a hand to cheek, warm as a summer breeze. "Daemon, you know why... there are some things I must do alone, not because I do not want you by my side."

"You need not do it alone," he whispered.

She pursed her lips for half a second before taking him by the hand. "Come."

They meandered through the Street of Silk, along dingy alleyways filled with urchins and narrow cobbled streets packed with patrons. Lyra could already hear the complaints brewing in Daemon's mind at the thought of her walking these paths on her own. But she had to. She needed to.

Approaching the end of the street, Lyra and Daemon slipped inside the last dimly lit brothel. Sighs and moans of ecstasy could already be heard from the threshold. Whispers of dark depravity and sinful desires. Lyra slipped a pouch of coins to the proprietor before traipsing across the corridors of the house.

Her muted feet climbed the stairs and entered a private chambers at the end of the short corridor. Inside, a beautiful Lysene girl with flowing hair and large eyes was waiting for her amidst glowing candlelight. Daemon slunk into the room after her and closed the door. The young girl approached, placing raven letters within Lyra's hands. They spoke in hushed voices.

"There were two with him today," she said with a thick lilted accent. "A Myrish prince and a Lysene nobleman."

"Do you know their names?" Lyra asked.

"No..." The girl's eyes fell to the floor in shame. "But I can find out."

Lyra nodded to her. "Please. Their ships?"

"They are docked on the far eastern side of the harbour," she said. "I heard they are taking orphan boys from Flea Bottom now. The pretty ones. They fetch a good price in Essos, sold into slavery. In the pillow houses, or the temples. They will leave upon the waning moon."

Lyra exchanged a look with Daemon. "That is three days from now."

"We should inform the Lord Commander and the City Watch," Daemon said.

Lyra's lips parted slightly but she stayed her tongue. Daemon still did not know of the impoverished state of their own City Watch. Though he could not be blamed, no one usually cared for them anyway. That's how they could do the things she asked of them, with a helping hand of course.

She had tried before, to depend on the king's justice, and it had always failed her. Instead, she nodded to him before pressing another pouch of coin into the brothel girl's hands. "Thank you, Mysaria. I will leave you now." They nodded to one another before she left.

Lyra looked out over the harbour and the bay, mindful not to prick herself on the now unruly thorns that climbed the tower walls in earnest. The City Watch had freed the orphan boys from their holding cells earlier, but that was not Lyra's true purpose. Her fingers grasped a new letter, fresh upon the eventide winds.

Daemon would be crossed with her again, she knew. But she needed to act now. There was no time to summon him. She quickly tossed the letter into the hearth and picked up her cloak. Perhaps it was her hasty footfalls or perhaps Ser Elwyn had now memorised her restless patterns.

He knocked politely before opening the door. "My lady," he started, eyes immediately settling on the hood that now adorned her shoulders. "The prince will not be happy if you leave without informing him."

"There is no time, Ser Elwyn," she advised him. "I must go now and you can come with me. Or you can inform my lord husband in my stead but I would be long gone by then."

"It is my sworn duty to protect you, my lady," he told her, stepping into the chambers and closing the door.

"Then let us not tarry longer," she said as she pulled the wall mechanism to uncover the hidden passageway. Ser Elwyn looked in awe before briskly following after her.

This time, she took the paths that led to the harbour. Long shadows stalked their feet under the sickly starlight. The moon a bare sliver of its true glory. The night was dark and filled with malice, overflowing from its cup of owl light.

Lyra treaded softly, carefully, across the narrow cobbled paths. In the distance, she saw him upon the docks just as she knew she would. He was alone and drunk, if the gods were on her side. At last, she had him within her grasp.

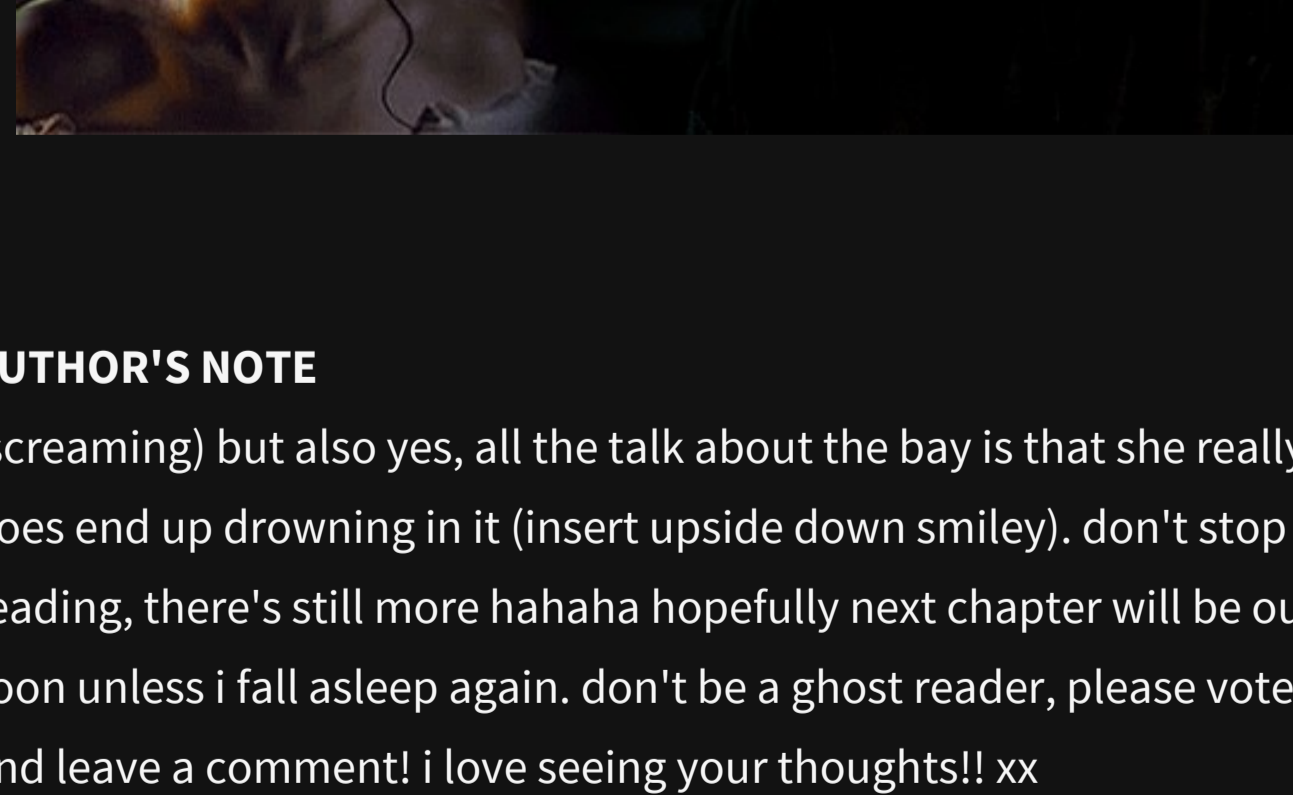
Motioning for Ser Elwyn to stay back, she approached the captain slowly. Silver gleamed from beneath her sleeve, pale and faint but no less lethal. She grabbed hold of his collars, turning him around so that she could see his scarred face. Shock and fear were reflected within his dark eyes as she wasted no time to slit his throat.

Blood flowed thick and splendid. Wet, throaty gurgles filled the air as she leaned in close with a satisfied smile. "Tell him when you see him," she whispered, "that the North remembers."

She pushed him backwards, watching and relishing every moment as he stumbled. His feet slipped against the edge of the platform and he started to fall against the breeze. Then her face fell upon a grim realisation.

Before his body could hit the glass surface of the bay, his fingers had caught against her cloak in a vice. He pulled her with him and her eyes widened in trepidation. Heart fluttering for freedom, breath trapped within her lungs. Powerless in the face of her own foolish error and destined death.

She plunged after him into the icy cold waters.



#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

(screaming) but also yes, all the talk about the bay is that she really does end up drowning in it (insert upside down smiley). don't stop reading, there's still more hahaha hopefully next chapter will be out soon unless i fall asleep again. don't be a ghost reader, please vote and leave a comment! i love seeing your thoughts!! xx

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