

The Northern Tyrant [Game of Thrones] Chapter 50 - Travel Plan, Blood Blessing, Bribing Talents & Troublesome Magic

"I'll stop at White Harbor first," Wylis mumbled to himself, all alone in his solar with a crude map of Westeros on his table.

Stannis' wedding was simply an excuse for him to visit the southern regions, as far as Dorne. But since it was going to be a long trip, he wanted to make the most out of it. He wanted to dig for every treasure on land. So, he planned the route carefully while consulting the treasure locations in his mind.

It wasn't just treasure, however. It was also all forgotten, Valyrian Steel and dragon eggs. So, he tried to pick locations marked for both treasure and steel or eggs as well.

"I'll ride to the Twins and see if they're raising that bridge again. If need be, I'll see it sunk once more. Then on to Stoney Sept to tend the breeding and inspect the supply works. I'll make a round of the Westerlands, visit Genna at Casterly Rock, then turn east for Summerhall."

As he stared at the marked ruins on the map, he felt a little excited for this one. This was one of the few places that were marked for both treasure and the others. The likelihood of it being both Valyrian Steel and dragon eggs was very high.

"Then ride straight for Highgarden, maybe discuss trade if they've no stick up their ass like Tywin. And end it at Brightwater Keep for the wedding."

He scribbled a route for himself. As for the return journey, it was going to be straightforward, as he'd go to Starfall, collect Ashara back, and sail to Ramsgate. But it would take more than a month, so he hoped to stop at King's Landing and Gulltown on the way. Maybe Sunspear as well, if he felt like it. The place was marked for both treasure and steel or eggs as well.

In short, the trip was going to take him months, he reckoned. He felt nervous, leaving his loved ones at home, and all the construction. But he had Brandon and Benjen, and at least Brandon was trained from early to be a lord.

Finishing up the plan, he rolled the map aside and put it in a safe.

Being in his tower's top floor solar, he walked out, went another floor up, and reached the open terrace. It was the highest terrace in the entire castle, and it was only accessible to him, as one could see everything from there. From the town, the docs, to his private spring and forest.

He looked at all the activity. The Industrial district was coming along well, the docks were nearly done, and the city itself was starting to take shape as streets and buildings were being marked with stones and lines on the dirt.

The fleet for Essos had left that morning with Archmaester Marwyn. Gold was being dug out of the river as well; already, gold worth 60,000 Gold Dragons in weight had been recovered. It was a great sum of money, more than what Winterfell earned in a year. But again, Winterfell was a rich land, and taxation was paid in grain, timber, and furs rather than coin. Still, not having coin meant a great many things couldn't be done.

Wylis had decided to spend this gold on building his city, building permanent roads with road markers and mapping, and expanding select towns based on their trade outlook. This was something only money could buy.

"Should give Qyburn some work to do..."

He left the terrace and headed down into the dungeons that he constantly expanded whenever bored. At this point, it needed a whole map to fully traverse, as it was starting to feel like an unescapable maze. That was the plan, in fact.

"M'lord."

"Seamas." Wylis nodded at the guard.

He was taking the other entrance into the dungeon. There were a total of two entrances, one from inside the castle, which was only accessible by him with the help of Earthbending. And the other entrance was from deep within the barracks adjacent to the outer courtyard, separate from the main keep.

There was a reason why he had made the entrance there. Qyburn alone couldn't do everything. And by now, there were multiple printing presses running constantly. It required men to work them and print books at scale. They were highly vetted, ensuring they had roots in Ramsgate, meaning that they had a family with children, parents, and a wife. Something they would fear losing.

There were also others, such as the Midwives Qyburn was teaching to become childbirth specialists. Also, the first batch of workers to learn the Cotton Gin, Spinning Wheel, and Power Loom were now teaching others.

He passed by them all, crossing more guards, and eventually reached the final guarded door beyond which was Qyburn's large lab. As he entered, he found the reinstated Maester reading a book about Hearts that he'd gifted.

"My lord?" Qyburn quickly cleaned his entire workbench, as if an excited boy ready for some crazy experiments. "What are we making today?"

"We're saving lives, Qyburn. Going to, at least. Recall the book I gave you on the nature of blood. I'll show you how to tell the kinds apart, most of them at least. The work is simple, though it takes its time. What we seek are those of O-negative and those who bear it we shall value as gold itself."

Wylis walked around and started preparing the whole bench for the project ahead. As he had bought the Chemistry Mastery as well as the Medicine to Surgery Package, he knew how to do this. He wanted to be prepared for any emergency, and that was his whole motivation behind his willingness to do this boring job.

"Now, how many blood types are there?" He asked, questioning Qyburn like a student.

"Eight common ones, my lord."

Wylis nodded and took a test tube, made a little cut on his finger, and let the blood spill into the tube, and finally covered it with a cork, and placed it in a cooled storage, as ice wasn't in short supply there. He then took another tube, walked over to Qyburn, and took some blood from him as well.

"Follow me, bring the whole first aid kit and test tubes. We're collecting blood."

"Ah!" Qyburn suddenly understood what they were doing. "Are we the... Uh... Serums, my lord?"

"We are," Wylis muttered and walked into the room where men were manning the printing press. He called them out one by one, asked them if they were willing, and informed them that this would help save lives.

The people of Ramsgate, the original ones, were very patriotic and loyal to him due to the reward he'd received from dealing with that steward. Once he revealed the reason, they puffed their chest and offered their damn fingers whole.

He collected the samples, a total of ten, wrote names on the wooden cork, and returned to the almost sterile lab. He allowed the samples to clot after that and discussed the process with Qyburn the entire time.

"Recite the reaction chart for both types of serums to me," Wylis questioned his loyal student.

Qyburn thought only for a moment and spoke excitedly. "Wonderful, I'm unable to believe we are to uncover secrets of blood. Aye, with A serum, blood type A..."

Wylis listened to everything. He had to give it to Qyburn; the man had an amazing memory. Not a single mistake.

At least he's competent enough that I can trust him.

"Let's begin, then."

Once the blood clotted and settled at the bottom of the test tube, the clear liquid remaining at the top was the serum he needed. He separated it using pipettes into further tubes. After that, he returned outside to gather more blood samples.

After returning, he made ten glass slides for all twelve people, twelve times each, to remove any possibility of exceptions and mistakes. Finally, he took the serum from each tube and dropped some on the group of twelve slides reserved for that serum alone.

He repeated it for each serum. Qyburn's job was to look for clumps and smoothness and record it all. Since the start, he wasn't even planning to seek anti-Rh serum. That wasn't produced in humans naturally, and needed to inject Rh-negative donors with Rh-positive blood and hope for an immune response. It was a long process with a high level of failure.

For now, he used simple methods.

Very quickly, they had the results. Anti-A Serum made clumps with A+, A-, AB+, and AB-; the rest were smooth. Anti-B serum made clumps with B+, B-, AB+, and AB-.

Just from that, he had the O type separated, as no serum caused clumps with them. The next part was finding the universal donor, O-. The likelihood of it being in that group was slim, but still there.

The next test was simple. They took raw O-type blood and dropped it on some raw drops of other types. Then they used a magnifying lens to check for grainy clumps. The real problem with

finding O- was that they also needed A- and B-. Which meant they needed a much bigger sample size.

As expected, they saw no clumping in any sample. They had two O types, and the rest were likely Rh-positive of all other types.

"We have a whole barrack of healthy lads. I shall call them." Wylis left the dungeon for a quick moment and then returned with a long line of soldiers, led by Chett at the front.

One by one, blood samples were taken and quickly tested with the two types of serums. They quickly separated the O groups and the rest. He let Qyburn do the testing while he helped the men tie a quick bandage on their fingers.

He also didn't want any strange rumors, so he explained what he was doing.

"Some among you are favored by the Gods. Nothing is certain, yet one of you may bear blood fit to aid any soul in need. Think of a woman bleeding in childbirth. You would stand between her and the grave. The lucky man shall earn a safer work, better coin, and better meals. But mark this. If I see you grow fat and idle, you return to the ranks, and I'll work you like an ox. Understood?"

Bam!

All of a sudden, the door opened, and Qyburn peeked out. "My lord! I found one!"

Wylis perked up, ordered the men to stay put, and rushed back inside the lab. He looked at the slides Qyburn had placed aside, and truly, a reaction was there. There were clumps in the blood, grainy.

But he wasn't satisfied. He did the test again, used that same blood, and poured drops of O-type. Again, clots very quickly, sooner than actual clots occur.

"We found a negative type!" Wylis exhaled.

This wasn't the O-negative, however. What they had found was one of the other negative types. But now they had blood, they could test the O on. So, Qyburn gathered all the O-type samples from soldiers, and they performed the clump test on the negative type.

"There! There! My lord! This one shows no clumps!"

Wylis quickly looked, and it was as said. But he didn't believe it instantly. He ran the blood through a serum test again to ensure it was actually an O type. Then he ran the supposed negative type through the serum test as well.

Once he was sure that they were an O and a non-O type, he repeated the blood on blood test. A gulp echoed from Wylis after a few seconds. There was truly no clump. The blood remained smooth until actual clots started to form many minutes later.

However, all the excitement vanished once he looked at the name on the cork of that tube. His shoulders fell, wondering what kind of joke this was.

Without saying anything, he ran the test a few times, but the result was the same. The first O-negative donor had been found.

He said nothing to Qyburn and walked out of the room again, finding almost fifty men seated with hopeful smiles on their faces. No matter how good they were as soldiers, and happy, a safer and gentler job was everyone's dream.

Except for one.

Pinching the bridge of his nose, Wylis looked up at the tall man. "Chett... It's you."

"Lucky bastard!" Someone from the soldiers cursed.

"His mum must've prayed to the Gods, eh?"

"Gods, I wish I were him."

However, there was a frown on Chett's face mirroring Wylis.

"No!" Chett roared, his feet moving backwards. "My lord! I'm your squire, how can I sit idle? I don't want some idle task. Take my blood as you will, but I won't abandon your service. I swore an oath to you, my lord."

Wylis sighed, rubbing his beard. Now this was a double-edged sword to him. On the one hand, Chett had the blood that would work on anyone. On the other hand, Chett would always be at risk as he could only receive blood from another O-negative. It made being a knight in Westeros a tougher job.

But again, blood transfusion wasn't a thing to begin with. Yet, he felt troubled because he didn't want to bench Chett. The man had boundless potential to become a great knight.

"Enough of that. From this day, you train twice as hard. Should you falter or spill too much blood, there will be no saving you. So be a master of steel, one none can lay a hand upon. You will spar with me each day I'm in the castle. And we will search all of Ramsgate for more of your kind. Ramsgate counts near five thousand. There must be others."

And he knew that O-negative wasn't the rarest type of blood. What mattered was that they had a rh-negative template. With that, his eyes landed on the soldier who had the negative, non-O type.

"Herbart, your blood is a rare thing. No blessing in it, but it leads me to one who is. I have need of you alive," he ordered the average-height man of mid-thirties. "On your feet. Back to your duties. The castle and the cit—town won't protect itself. Chett, send the others when their watch is done."

Quickly, the men stood up and left the dungeon one by one. That night, Wylis planned to feed them extra meat and flavors to erase any distaste left for using them as test subjects. He still, however, felt conflicted about Chett.

And he knew he wouldn't feel right unless he found another O-negative.

Why stop at Ramsgate? I've got women giving me babes outside.

With that, an idea was born. To make the world as safe as possible for women to give him children and lifespan.

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King's Landing, Flea Bottom,

"What in the Seven's holy arse is this? Bolga, come look at this! You can read, can't you? All I make out is one big bloody sigil."

Putting aside the tray with stew of questionable contents, thirteen-year-old Bolga walked outside the rundown, almost-tavern. He walked beside his father, staring at a large parchment stuck to the shop's wall. A small crowd had gathered already, as paper was rare, and paper with something written on it was even more rare. At least for them.

"That's the sigil of House Kaiser!" Bolga declared, recognising the sigil instantly. He'd known about it since young, now, having heard so many heroic tales of the Hero of the North, or the dozen other names smallfolk came up with.

"House Kaiser? You mean that giant fella? The Tyrant of the Trident, savior of King's Landing? Why in the seven hells would Lord Kaiser waste such fine paper on me, stinking little shop? When'd he slap that up here?"

Bolga stared at his father dumbly. At times, he wondered how he was able to gain half an extra brain than his father. Maybe it was his mum, may her soul be at peace. He sighed and gave the words a read.

"I doubt Lord Kaiser put this poster up himself. It says here... 'I need you! Ramsgate needs you! Good people of King's Landing and all beyond, a grand new city is rising in Ramsgate, with many shops and foundries soon to open. There'll be steady work, fair pay, and proper food for the belly. If you've skill running a shop, working a smithy, sewing cloth, laying bricks, reading or writing, or even tending horses, then Ramsgate calls for you.'"

"By the gods, what kinda nonsense is this! Who'd be stupid enough to quit the capital and drag his ass up to some cold, godforsaken, backward northern town?"

Splash!

Before Bolga's father could say more, a woman opened the upper floor's window and spilled out an entire bucket full of piss and shit right onto the street. He jumped in time; others weren't as lucky.

"Backward?" Bolga stared at his father. "Anywhere is better than this stinking hole. I've lived in shit so long, I can't even tell the smell of shit anymore."

Woosh!

All of a sudden, he felt his father's tight grip on his shoulders, staring down at him.

"Here now boy, don't you go dreaming up foolish hopes like them lords give a damn about the likes of us. That giant crawled outta shoveling horseshit, but he's a proper lord now, ain't he? They all look down on us smallfolk. It's all lies, always has been. Go on inside and fan the fire proper. That stew won't boil on its own."

Bolga sighed and gave a nod. He knew better than to argue with his father. So he went inside and worked as he usually did. Only when it neared evening, close to sunset, did he leave. The little tavern had helping hands who worked only during the evening when the crowds came.

He was allowed to leave, however. As he had a different source of income. At thirteen, he had learned to read and write by visiting the nearby sept of the Seven. It wasn't easy getting the Septon to teach him; he only learned the basics by watching, and impressed the man enough to take him in.

But learning was the easy part; he even enjoyed it. Now, he wondered where to put those skills to work.

At the docks, he was able to help some sailors write letters to their loved ones for a little coin. It wasn't a valued profession, as those letters rarely ever reached the destination, usually lost during transportation by some trading caravan. Even when reached, it would take months.

But that night, he saw an unusual crowd at the docks. A lot of people had gathered around ships flying House Kaiser's sigil. Curious, he walked over to the nearest one and saw the same parchment as before stuck on a wall of wooden crates.

Bolga watched what was happening in silence. The sailors seemed particularly enthusiastic about talking, answering questions, and then taking in names. After listening a little, he knew what this was.

The people of King's Landing, some of them, were putting their names down to go to Ramsgate for a better life and work. Those very ships would take them for free when they make the return journey to King's Landing.

With a sigh, he ignored and went away. He did his usual thing, set up two crates, a quill, ink, and a handful of precious rolled paper. He waited, and eventually a sailor came. He wrote down the letter for him and handed it over, receiving two pennies for it.

A few hours later, when the night dawned, he packed his items and walked back towards that previous Ramsgate ship. By now, there was no crowd left, yet a man was seated near the gangway with wooden crates, a thick ledger spread open.

He eyed the man at first. Looked like a sailor, but the clothes were clean, and his beard was shaved clean. Too clean to be a common sailor. But again, he reckoned knowing how to read and write helped.

"Are you from Ramsgate?" he bluntly asked, stepping closer to the crate.

"I am, boy."

"How much do you earn for each man you bring to Ramsgate?" Bolga asked, as though it were the most natural question in the world.

"..."

Unsurprisingly, the sailor became speechless.

So, Bolga continued. "I saw you smiling and talking away. I saw others doing the same. There's no cause to chat so much with strangers all day, smiling like that and working so hard, unless you've got something to gain from it as well."

"By the gods, lad. You picked up all of that simply from watching me?"

Bolga nodded. "I did."

"Aye, I earn a silver for every good man, woman, or child I bring to the blessed lands of Ramsgate. You strike me as a clever one, lad. Care to go with us?"

Bolga frowned, a hand brushing over his unkempt, greasy brown hair. "To do what? I have my father here. I live—"

"In Flea Bottom. The stench and those rags gave you away quick enough. I'm Rolan, captain of this ship. And you are?"

"Bolga."

"Bolga, Ramsgate is the land of opportunities. Our lord has invented a medicine that heals any wound, any infection. He taught the midwives himself, and now hardly any mothers die in childbirth. Our lord built this whole ice trade, lad. Tell me, have you ever tasted ice cream?"

Bolga shook his head. "Not yet. I'm saving coin for it."

"Why wait?" Captain Roland glanced back at a sailor. "Tobin! Bring me a scoop of ice cream."

Bolga dumbly stared back and forth. "You have ice cream on the ship?"

"Who else but us? Ours is the Ramsgate ice fleet; we never run short of ice. Wherever we make port, we buy milk and churn our own. We sell some on the docks now and then too, brings us a bit of extra coin. Lord Kaiser doesn't mind these small things."

Before Bolga could fully even digest what was happening, he found a small wooden bowl with creamy, melting scoops of ice cream in his hand. A total of two scoops of all. He stared at it, hungry, wanting it. But then he looked up at the man.

"Is this a bribe?"

"Hah? Do you work for this city?"

"I starve for it," Bolga said.

"Then it's alms."

To that, Bolga couldn't help but chortle a little. The man was truly too friendly, or he was about to get snatched. But his young heart couldn't take it anymore. He grabbed the spoon and took the first bite.

It melted in his mouth. All this time, he had only heard of it, thought of it, and now he finally tasted it. He loved it, the sugary coolness on his tongue. It was the most unique and delicious taste he had ever felt in his life.

"What is this... spice?" he asked.

"Ah, nothing too fancy. Just a pinch of cinnamon, that's all. It costs a fair bit, but that's what makes the ice cream sell so well. Now, lad, that you've eaten it, you owe me two silver stags. If you cannot pay right away, you'll have to come to Ramsgate and settle the debt with honest labour."

"..."

Bolga froze; the bowl almost slipped. He felt his scalp tingle, his chest thump. He considered running, but he was young, and he knew his legs were shorter than the men's. He'd be caught easily. He considered paying, but he only had twenty pennies total as his savings.

Pat!

He flinched when the rough hand of the captain slapped on his shoulder.

"Bah! Look at that face. I'm only jesting, lad. Gods, Lord Kaiser would have my head on a pike if I did that. You owe me nothing. Hand me the cup, and I'll give you another scoop or two. But do think on it, you seem a sharp one to me. What is it you do?"

"Serve at my father's tavern and write letters for sailors?"

"You can read and write? That makes you the best sort of man for Ramsgate. Lord Kaiser puts real value on learned men. Make your way there, and a job will be waiting for you at once. They'll even train you proper so you can master any craft you set your hand to."

"I can choose?" Bolga asked.

"You can indeed. I still recall the day I completed my learning. Lord Kaiser said that work ought to feel rewarding, and therefore, it must be a personal choice. I love the sea with all my heart, so I took to the waves and became a captain."

Bolga stared at the man's face for a very long time. Another scoop had also arrived in his cup. But he was still staring, thinking. He knew he was slightly different from other kids. They wasted time chasing girls, swords, or begging. He spent his time reading and working.

But the work wasn't rewarding, and living in Flea Bottom was no different from being a sewer rat. He didn't exist for anyone outside. But if Ramsgate really offered so much.

Maybe it truly is a land of opportunity...

"Can I also be a ship captain?"

"Boy, you could be admiral of the whole damn fleet if you wanted. The only question is... do you have it in you?"

Bolga looked down at the melting scoop of ice cream. Then, for whatever reason, he rammed his face down into the cup and gobbled down the entire scoop.

"How long will you be here?" Bolga asked.

"We leave in four days, at dawn."

"Then I—Uugggh!"

Bolga quickly held his head; a sudden brain freeze jolted through him. He just heard the captain laughing, telling him his mistake of eating the ice cream too fast.

In shame, he turned for the night and headed home.

That night, he knew he had a lot of thinking to do. And decide what to do with his father.

####

Ramsgate,

Bolga wasn't the only one who experienced something similar. The truth was, it was Wylis' directive to offer ice cream to exceptional talents to lure them in, make them feel welcomed, and make them think that Ramsgate was a land of opportunities.

It was the little things that mattered. Just as he now stood in his private garden beside a weirwood tree, the only one in his forest that he'd allowed to stay for Lyanna. A small crowd had gathered there, including Caliburn, but Lyanna, Elia, and Rhaella weren't there.

Barbrey Dustin had arrived at the castle, and just as he had promised Brandon, he allowed them to get secretly married. Besides, the woman was already pregnant with Brandon's child. But it had to be kept a secret for now, as she wasn't prepared to face the extended Dustin family.

Heavy robes had hidden her pregnancy until now, but with the final months approaching, it was growing too big to hide. Naturally, Ramsgate was to be where she was going to give birth. However, Wylis didn't trust her yet to reveal his secrets.

Silently, he watched Brandon and Barbrey in their chosen attire, followed by a ceremonial conversation where the identity of the bride, the groom, and of the person giving the bride away was established. Since Barbrey had no one, Wylis filled that ceremonial role, after taking a small oath to be Barbrey's sworn brother.

Wylis, standing between them, asked Barbrey as her brother. "Do you accept this man as your husband?"

"I take this man," she replied.

Wylis stepped away after that and watched Brandon and Barbrey join hands and kneel before the heart tree, and bow their heads. Once they rose, a short moment of silent prayer was held before finally, Brandon removed Barbrey's cloak and placed another one on her shoulders.

"No, we do—"

"We do," Brandon snapped, hauling Barbrey up in his arms anyway. "Might be your second go, but it's my first, damn it. And by the Gods, I'm taking all I can from it."

Wylis whistled from behind to tease the couple and then led them into one of the private halls in the castle that had been turned into a small feast hall. Barbrey was alone there; none of her guards or aides were allowed inside.

Chett and Small Paul were the only two men allowed to guard the inside of the castle, so the two men stood at the small hall's entrance.

Wylis, at the lead, walked inside. The place was decorated with lanterns hanging from the ceiling, candles everywhere, and the scent of food heavy on the nose. There were no maids inside as the food had already been served.

However, a few figures were already seated in chairs. Three women and four children.

Wylis winked at Lyanna and watched his wife get up with chunky Magnus in her arms. He deliberately slowed down to keep Barbrey and Brandon behind him. When Lyanna was finally close, he stepped aside.

"Barbrey, welcome to the family," Lyanna greeted.

Immediately, Barbrey froze in place, her one arm wrapped around her husband's. "L... Lya... No, that's impossible."

At that point, Wylis stood right behind Lyanna, slung an arm over her shoulder, and took Mangus in his arms since the boy was too damn heavy. "Barbrey, meet the lady of Ramsgate, and my first love. Welcome to the family."

Barbrey looked at Brandon's face beside her, then back at Lyanna's face. She frowned hard; she could recognise her. Of course, she could; she had seen Lyanna before. "But... how?"

"I'll explain." Brandon caught his wife's arm. "Come, sit with me. There are two more faces yet, and they may shake you worse than this."

As they approached the table, Barbrey froze again. But this time she couldn't recognise the two women. What she did recognise were hints. The violet eyes, silver hair, and the dusky, Dornish complexion. Then there were the children, the two boys were both bald, and the girl had a silver lock of hair in her brown hair.

Wylis didn't intervene. He allowed Barbrey to sit between Brandon and Lyanna as they both explained everything to her. He, meanwhile, sat with Benjen as he had better things to discuss with the youngest of the Stark siblings.

"We ride for Winterfell come morning. Have you sent word to Lady Lyarra?"

"Aye. I told her little and no more. Best she knows nothing till she stands here herself. I'll say Brandon is to wed, and that a child is soon to come. Mother would wish to see his firstborn."

Wylis glanced at Barbrey. As far as he knew, she was still two months from giving birth.

At least she's taking this well.

He failed to notice anger or hate on her face. It was there initially when she was told that it was Rhaella and Elia. But when Brandon and Lyanna revealed Rhaella's cruel life until the rescue, and that Elia was nearly murdered and raped, pity took over.

Personally, he didn't like this. The more people learned of his secrets, the harder it would be to hide. But it was Brandon's wife, and he couldn't refuse her a place to secretly go through childbirth. For now, he hoped that Barbrey's desire to keep her own affair a secret would hold her tongue.

"Let's do that," he said and focused on the food.

How would Eddard react to all this? He originally kept Jon's existence a secret till his dying breath. But... I'm not Jon.

Wylis felt conflicted. Eddard that he had influenced to be had no regrets, no shame, no secrets. There was no affair, no bastard of Winterfell. Catelyn didn't feel dishonored by her husband's debauchery.

All that meant was Eddard considered himself far more proud and upright than the one he knew. Furthermore, he knew Eddard didn't like him for a lot of reasons, too dumb to make sense. With all that known, what would Eddard do?

Go suck Robert's cock, what else?

In this world influenced by him, Wylis couldn't bring himself to fully trust Eddard. For all he knew, Eddard would somehow self-justify that his marriage to Lyanna was false and treason to the Crown.

Man isn't that wise to begin with. Honor means shit if misplaced.

He sighed and thanked whatever gods were out there that he only had to deal with the better Starks: his wife, Brandon, and Benjen.

Woosh!

All of a sudden, he felt something under the table. Then, like a rabbit digging out of the ground, the tablecloth moved, and Rhaenys' head popped out. She climbed and then settled on his leg, her little hands moving to his face so her index fingers could massage his furrowed brows.

"There, there. I make the worry go away."

It did work. Instantly, his shoulders relaxed, the crease on his forehead vanished, his brows relaxed, and a smile formed on his lips. "Gods, seems you really got magic in you, Rhaenys."

"Hehe, I know. I can even talk to the trees."

"..."

Just like that, the frown returned.